

Housing
Executive

Strategic Review of Temporary Accommodation

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Strengths and Limitations

All research has its strengths and limitations, this research and the resulting report is no exception. A multi-method approach has been taken; this has enabled the presentation of different kinds of data related to the use of temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland to be brought together in one place and for some key conclusions to be drawn. As differing kinds of data are presented throughout the report, the reader should note that the data provided includes subsets and exclusions of certain types of provision based on what is being analysed and compared.

There are limitations to the research however which mean that we need to be cautious in our claims. These limitations include the lack of truly comparative data; this is due to differing legislative context between jurisdictions and the use of different terminology and methods of capturing, recording and reporting information. It is also acknowledged that data was also gleaned from a snapshot survey of the use of temporary accommodation and a provider survey that was undertaken by the Housing Executive, and whilst guidance was provided by the Housing Executive’s Research department on this, it did not form part of the Research department’s formal programme. In addition, it should also be noted that some research insights have been obtained through the review and analysis of surveys and stakeholder sessions which were based on perception rather than statement of fact. Nevertheless, this has been an in-depth research study and provides much useful and sound analysis.

Research Methodology and Data Sources

The methodology used in the research has consisted of an analysis of a number of different data sources as well as a review of practice in other jurisdictions, surveys of providers/stakeholders and users of temporary accommodation, these are summarised below (a full list with further commentary is set out in Appendix 1).

The data used for the research was the Housing Executive Housing Management System (HMS) data, both raw data in relation to temporary accommodation placements and departures since 2013, and a series of 11 cross-tabulation reports from the HMS, covering 2016-2019 and the Department for Communities Bulletin Scores for the full financial year 2018-19.

A sample exercise of 125 cases in 2018/19 on the reasons for households leaving Single Lets (and where they moved to) and a similar exercise for a sample of 100 bed and breakfast placements was undertaken by the Housing Executive and provided to the researchers.

The Housing Executive's Strategic Contract Management Risk Assessment (Homelessness Services) data was used to identify the staffing levels and Supporting People grant amounts for relevant services.

Researchers also used a summary of outcomes data from Supporting People-funded services. This recorded the reason for departure from accommodation-based services in 2018-19 (based on returns submitted by providers).

Records were supplied by the Housing Executive of three separate week-long Snapshot Survey exercises undertaken at all Area Offices. These recorded the detail of all households presenting and asking for assistance with temporary accommodation.

Voluntary sector hostels were asked to complete information about people resident on 4th June 2019, including where they had been referred from, whether they had FDA status, what support needs they had, what risks they presented, how long they had been in residence, and whether they were judged to be tenancy-ready. Campbell Tickell undertook extensive analysis on the results of this Provider Census. The Housing Executive also supplied details of the service users in situ on the night of the voluntary sector hostel census date in other forms of temporary accommodation.

A similar 'Census' was also conducted of the residents receiving a 'floating support' service on the night of 15th August 2019, in which the provider organisations completed a data sheet for each service user.

Freedom of Information (FOI) requests were submitted to 25 Authorities across England, Wales and Scotland, with a response received from 22. Questions were limited to five, focussed on the numbers of different types of temporary accommodation placements made, the amount spent on temporary accommodation, where households moved to when they left temporary accommodation, and how long they spent in temporary accommodation.

Researchers made use of different published data sets for England, Wales and Scotland to draw comparator conclusions, in so far as this was possible given the different legislative frameworks.

Researchers also undertook a detailed review of 14 homelessness strategies drawn from within the same sample to whom the FOI request had been sent.

In addition to the data cited above, appendices to this report includes information on legislation and guidance on homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation in the United Kingdom (UK) and Republic of Ireland (ROI); Housing Standards; and the data gathered on homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation in England, Scotland and Wales.

Throughout this report the tables have included 'Not Known' as a category when the data was not available to provide the information as a separate category.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Executive Summary is in three parts:

- An overview of the research comparing the approach to homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland, Britain and the Republic of Ireland (ROI);
- An overview of the key findings from the review of homelessness and use of temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland;
- Conclusions and recommendations.

Comparative research on approach to homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation in UK and ROI jurisdictions¹

Use of temporary accommodation

Implications of the comparative research on use of temporary accommodation for Northern Ireland

- 1.2 The basic legislative framework for homelessness is similar across all the jurisdictions except ROI, where the rules are so different that a comparison is of limited value.
- 1.3 Northern Ireland has a lower proportion of households living in temporary accommodation than Scotland, but a significantly higher proportion than in Wales or the 'rest of England' (excluding London).
- 1.4 The main differences between the other jurisdictions and Northern Ireland are as follows:
- Scotland has abolished priority need and now accommodates a larger number of households in temporary accommodation as a result, especially within local authority stock some of which is rented as furnished accommodation.
 - Wales and England have legislated to place more emphasis on the prevention of homelessness rather than accepting a full duty to rehouse. Apart from the desire to reduce homelessness, there are two significant benefits from doing this: to reduce the number of households requiring temporary accommodation; and to reduce the pressure on social housing.

¹ This is a summary of Section 3 of the report together with Appendices 4, 5 and 6

- Both Wales and England have embraced the use of the private rented sector (PRS) much more extensively than Northern Ireland or Scotland, either to prevent homelessness or to end a homelessness duty.
- Policy in England and Wales emphasises the use of supported housing to prevent homelessness rather than as temporary accommodation.
- In England, moves from supported housing to the PRS are increasingly common, although by no means universal.

- 1.5 The combination of these factors led to reduced use of temporary accommodation in both Wales and in England after 2004. However, the number of households in temporary accommodation in England has risen again significantly since 2010, largely due to the decreasing affordability of private rented accommodation for households on low incomes arguably linked to welfare reforms.
- 1.6 Legislation regarding ‘accommodation not reasonable’ is remarkably similar in all jurisdictions. It seems that it is almost entirely differences in policy and interpretation that have led to the much higher proportion of households in Northern Ireland accepted as homeless for this reason.
- 1.7 The very high proportion of Single Lets in Northern Ireland is not replicated elsewhere. However, the distinctions are quite subtle.
- 1.8 In England and Wales, PRS accommodation would be more likely to be used to prevent or relieve homelessness or would be leased by a local authority or housing association to be used as temporary accommodation.
- 1.9 In both England and Wales, it is much more common for local authorities to lease accommodation from private sector landlords and managing agents. Housing associations also lease accommodation from private landlords and let it as temporary accommodation to local authority nominees (often known as Housing Association Leasing Schemes (HALS) in England). However, this differs from Single Lets, as the contractual arrangements are more highly developed in HALS between the local authority and the housing association. However, the number of such schemes has fallen dramatically in recent years as the financial returns available to housing associations have fallen.
- 1.10 In London and other parts of England where housing affordability is lowest, it has become increasingly common in recent years for private sector landlords and agents to let self-contained private sector accommodation, which might previously have been leased to a local authority, as temporary accommodation on a ‘nightly paid’ basis, for a higher fee. The legal arrangements for this are essentially the same as for B&B, even though placements can last for months or even years.

- 1.11 The option of leasing PRS properties and letting them by using a non-secure form of tenancy (i.e. a license) used by local authorities in other jurisdictions is also open to the Housing Executive in order to reduce its reliance on hostel accommodation, or as an alternative to single lets. It should be borne in mind that the Housing Executive would bear some or all of the void and bad debt risk and, depending on the arrangements, might be required to take on some maintenance responsibilities. On the other hand, there would be a reduction in the risk of landlords withdrawing their properties at short notice, as they can currently do with single lets, as there are no contractual arrangements in place.
- 1.12 In Britain, greater emphasis is placed on duties for other organisations to work with housing authorities in discharging their homelessness duties than in Northern Ireland. Examples include the duty to assess a homeless person's support needs and provide appropriate support in Scotland, the duty to refer someone who is thought to be homeless or potentially homeless to the housing authority in England, and the duties on housing associations to support local authorities in exercising their homelessness responsibilities in both Wales and Scotland.

Country by country – Scotland

- 1.13 There are striking differences in the use of temporary accommodation between Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- There is much less use of private rented accommodation as temporary accommodation than in Northern Ireland. What is used is recorded within the 'Other' category and not published separately.
 - There is a very large number of local authority-owned furnished properties being used as temporary accommodation instead of being let as social housing.
 - There appears to be two likely reasons for the prevalence of council accommodation used for temporary accommodation:
 - One is the proportionately larger amount of social housing in Scotland, which may make using some of it as temporary accommodation more feasible than in other jurisdictions.
 - Housing Benefit subsidy rules in Scotland favour the use of own stock as temporary accommodation because of the rules in relation to local authority Housing Revenue Accounts.

Country by country – Wales

- 1.14 In Wales there is a 'Directly with a private sector landlord' category which is similar to Single Lets in Northern Ireland. However, in Wales private rented accommodation is more likely to be used as settled accommodation to prevent homelessness rather than as temporary accommodation.

- 1.15 Accommodation leased from the private sector by a local authority is much more commonly used as temporary accommodation in Wales than it is in Northern Ireland or Scotland.

Country by country – England

- 1.16 Hostels are used less frequently as temporary accommodation in England than elsewhere. This may be partly because supported housing in England is more likely than in Northern Ireland or Scotland to accommodate single homeless people with support needs without this being classed as temporary accommodation – i.e. it is treated as settled housing in the sense that a homelessness prevention or relief duty can be ended by a placement in supported housing, providing that relevant conditions on suitability of accommodation and length of stay are met.
- 1.17 The total numbers in temporary accommodation per thousand households is much higher in London than in the rest of England. However, the use of B&B establishments in England outside London is higher as a proportion of all temporary accommodation than any other jurisdiction.

Country by country – ROI

- 1.18 While local authorities in ROI do not have a statutory obligation to house homeless people, they do have general responsibility under the Housing Act 1988 for the provision of housing for adults who cannot afford to provide it for themselves, and they do use temporary accommodation.
- 1.19 Temporary accommodation in ROI includes hotels, B&Bs, hostels with onsite support and emergency accommodation with minimal support. Around two thirds of the temporary accommodation in use is in Dublin.
- 1.20 Differences in the information provided in statistical releases makes it very hard to compare ROI homelessness figures with the UK jurisdictions, but it is clear that the use of temporary accommodation has risen very significantly there between 2014 and 2019.

Housing standards

- 1.21 There are variations in the existence and application of housing standards specifically for temporary accommodation.
- Northern Ireland is the only UK jurisdiction that has no rules on standards or suitability set out specifically for temporary accommodation placements.
 - There are statutory minimum housing fitness requirements for all housing stock across all tenures in the UK and ROI.

- In England and Wales, the statutory Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is much more detailed than the Housing Fitness Standard in Northern Ireland and applies to all housing, including temporary accommodation.
- There is voluntary guidance on standards in temporary accommodation in Scotland and a number of references to suitability of accommodation in the statutory guidance on homelessness in England and Wales.
- Many local authorities in the other jurisdictions have adopted detailed local standards for temporary accommodation. Typically, these form part of the contract between those local authorities and temporary accommodation providers.

1.22 Stakeholders in Northern Ireland reported that standards vary across the different types of temporary accommodation types. For example, facilities can be poor in older hostels, whereas purpose-built accommodation is generally of a high standard. Likewise, some Single Lets are of a poor standard and repairs can be lengthy, while others are in new build developments and are of a very high standard. It was noted that high standard temporary accommodation can act as a barrier to residents moving into settled accommodation if the standard of the settled accommodation is lower or the location is not as good.

Comparative costs

1.23 The net costs of temporary accommodation to local authorities in the different jurisdictions are not published in any format which makes comparison with Northern Ireland possible. It is also very difficult to make a robust comparison of costs based on our Freedom of Information (FoI) requests and interviews with local authorities. However, it would appear on the limited evidence available that the cost of temporary accommodation placements in Northern Ireland is generally high, and in particular high compared with English authorities. This is partly because of the high proportion of Supporting People funded hostels used in Northern Ireland as temporary accommodation, but there is also evidence to suggest that top-up payments for Single Lets may be higher than for equivalent accommodation in other areas where there are similar differences between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and market rents.

1.24 The increased use of temporary accommodation required because of relatively low levels of homelessness prevention, also drives an upward pressure on overall homelessness costs in Northern Ireland. The increased use of B&B in Northern Ireland, at what seem to be very high average rates compared to many other areas, has also driven up costs.

Alternative approaches to temporary accommodation

1.25 Seven alternative approaches to the provision of temporary accommodation are suggested in the report as being potentially relevant. They are:

- Reducing the use of temporary accommodation by preventing or relieving homelessness through a move into the PRS;
- Leasing properties direct from landlords and agents for use as temporary accommodation;
- Purchasing properties for use as temporary accommodation or as privately rented accommodation;
- Partnering with another organisation who purchase accommodation for long term use as temporary accommodation or as private rented accommodation;
- Demountable modular accommodation;
- Change of use conversion to temporary accommodation; and
- Use of social housing stock as temporary accommodation.

Key findings from the review of homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland

Levels of homelessness²

- 1.26 More than **18,000** households presented themselves to the Housing Executive as homeless in 2018/2019. When households presenting on more than one occasion during the year are eliminated from the count, there were around **17,500** discrete households presenting as homeless. Around **12,500** households were awarded FDA status. Between 2013/14 and 2018/19, there was an increase in homeless acceptances of **30%**.
- 1.27 One of the main reasons why homelessness rates may appear to be higher in Northern Ireland than in some parts of the UK is that people whose current housing is inappropriate because of their health/disability are treated as homeless, whereas elsewhere in the UK their needs would be responded to in a different way (e.g. through adult social care, aids and adaptations, improvement grants or allocation of social housing through medical priority points rather than homelessness processes).
- 1.28 Breakdown in sharing arrangements is the next most significant reason for homelessness in Northern Ireland. The loss of rented accommodation is less significant as a cause of homelessness than in the rest of the UK but is still significant.

² See section 4, paragraphs 4.3 to 4.21

- 1.29 The most common reason for acceptance as an FDA household in Northern Ireland in terms of a priority need category is on the grounds of vulnerability due to youth, old age, mental ill-health, physical ill-health, or disability.

Temporary accommodation³

- 1.30 There were around **1,500** units of supported temporary accommodation funded from the Supporting People programme available to the Housing Executive, a further **1,200** places in privately-owned Single Lets, and on average around **50** households each night placed in B&B accommodation.
- 1.31 Just over half of the available Supporting People funded temporary accommodation is located in Belfast (**51%**), with **14%** in Derry and Strabane. There are smaller clusters in some of the larger market towns, but relatively small numbers of units available in small towns and rural areas. The balance between supported and un-supported temporary accommodation is also very inconsistent between areas.
- 1.32 The lack of provision in smaller towns and rural areas was cited by participants in the stakeholder consultation as a significant cause of out-of-area placements and households having to make their own arrangements. The clustering of voluntary sector hostels and Single Lets around Belfast, and to a far lesser extent around Derry/Londonderry, is very clear. Rural provision is sparse. This raises important questions for the Housing Executive in terms of rural policy, in that homeless people living in small rural communities would usually be required to relocate to a larger town or city if they required temporary accommodation. This has implications particularly for those who are in work, and for families with children at school. The lack of provision outside towns may be a factor in homeless households turning down offers of temporary accommodation.

Placements into temporary accommodation⁴

- 1.33 The Housing Executive made a total of **3,354** referrals to temporary accommodation during 2018/2019. **37%** were placed in Single Lets, **29%** were placed in B&B accommodation **19%** were placed in voluntary sector hostels, **8%** in the Housing Executive's own hostels, and the balance of **7%** in DIME Accommodation.
- 1.34 There was a **23%** increase in the number of referrals into temporary accommodation between 2016 and 2018. Most of the increase was due to an expansion of the use of B&B accommodation from **319** placements in 2016 to **917** placements in 2018 (an increase of **187%**).

³ See section 4, paragraphs 4.22 to 4.25

⁴ See section 5, paragraphs 5.18 to 5.31

*Matching demand and supply*⁵

- 1.35 Comparing the statistics on demand with those for supply, there is a mismatch between the number of households that present themselves to the Housing Executive as homeless and that are awarded FDA status, and those placed in temporary accommodation at any moment in time. The majority of households accepted as homeless in 2018/2019 were neither provided with settled housing nor temporary accommodation within the year. Housing Executive data show that the majority of households waiting to be re-housed must have made their own arrangements in some way to find temporary accommodation. The Housing Executive's current information systems do not record information that would allow an analysis of whether this is appropriate on a case by case basis as a basis for further analysis
- 1.36 In the Snapshot Survey exercises only **43%** of the households who were looking for temporary accommodation but were not already placed, were in fact placed in temporary accommodation, even when crisis accommodation⁶ is included.

*Homeless with support needs*⁷

- 1.37 A high proportion (77%) of those accepted as homeless who needed temporary accommodation also had additional support needs. The most common type of support needed resulted from a history of mental health problems.
- 1.38 Analysis of the Housing Executive's Housing Management System (HMS)⁸ data and of bespoke surveys carried out by the Housing Executive for this research, found that there was no clear relationship between the existence of significant support needs and referral to supported hostel accommodation. **37%** of the households placed in temporary accommodation in 2018/19 had 'Complex Needs' points awarded by the Housing Executive; **55%** of households placed in temporary accommodation had specific vulnerabilities identified by housing staff; yet only **one third** of these were placed in temporary accommodation that had support built in.
- 1.39 The Housing Executive relies significantly on crisis and to a lesser extent on B&B accommodation to meet the needs of households with significant support needs and those at high levels of risk. These forms of accommodation provide very short-term solutions and can be unsuitable for vulnerable people. Yet a significant proportion of people identified as vulnerable appear from the data to be returning there repeatedly.

⁵See section 5, paragraphs 5.127 to 5.129

⁶ 'Crisis accommodation' – see Appendix 2, Definitions.

⁷See section 5, paragraphs 5.38 to 5.56

⁸The HMS is the Housing Executive's primary record system for homeless and other waiting list applicants

- 1.40 In contrast, **30%** of Supporting People funded hostels for single people had low or unspecified support needs, as did **55%** of homeless family hostel residents. This suggests that a significant proportion of the people placed in supported hostel accommodation might not have needed this kind of provision.
- 1.41 These results suggest that referrals to temporary accommodation were not always sufficiently and clearly related to the needs of households, although in line with the Housing Executive's legal duty.
- 1.42 The results were supported by an analysis of the individual judgements as captured by the Provider Census and the Snapshot Survey, both of which were carried out for the research by the Housing Executive. Based on the combined results, the Campbell Tickell research team found that:
- The allocation of Supported People funded temporary accommodation does not appear to favour high and medium risk applicants over low and no-risk applicants;
 - Not all of the current resident population in Supporting People funded temporary accommodation may actually need this level of input. Bearing in mind that not all residents in accommodation funded by the Supporting People programme are referred by the Housing Executive, and that not all Housing Executive referrals have FDA status, the results appear to indicate that a significant number of residents in these schemes at the time of the Provider Census had low or no support needs.
- 1.43 Furthermore, the Snapshot Survey showed that while around **20%** of people with high needs who were at risk were placed in supported temporary accommodation, **80%** were not. This last finding may partly be a question of the available capacity in hostels and their ability to take in the numbers of vulnerable people who need support; but it may also be partly a result of these hostels housing people who do not need, or no longer need, the levels of support that they offer.
- 1.44 These findings were confirmed by participants in the stakeholder consultation exercise. One strong conclusion that was drawn was that there needs to be a much stronger link between the Homelessness Strategy and planning/strategy for temporary accommodation provision.

*Pathways into temporary accommodation*⁹

- 1.45 Referral and therefore access to most types of temporary accommodation is effectively controlled by the Housing Executive through the homelessness assessment process.

⁹ See section 5, paragraphs 5.13 to 5.17, and 5.130 to 5.156

Voluntary sector hostels are an exception, as they take referrals from a wider range of agencies as well as self-referrals.

- 1.46 Data obtained from the bespoke Provider Survey showed that the number of households in Supporting People funded voluntary sector accommodation on the census night with FDA status who were referred by other agencies or who self-referred was significant. Only **45%** of single homeless hostel residents with FDA status had been referred to the accommodation through the Housing Executive.
- 1.47 Taken together with the finding that **30%** of single homeless hostel residents and **55%** of homeless family hostel residents had low or unspecified support needs, this suggests that Supporting People funded accommodation could be used more effectively if the accommodation was allocated only on the basis of the assessed needs of the households being referred.
- 1.48 The research findings also suggest that access into voluntary sector hostels for single persons appears to be managed by the Housing Executive in a non-strategic way. Not only was there a significant proportion of the residents that did not need supported accommodation, but a significant proportion of the residents were not referred by the Housing Executive and their exact status is therefore unclear.
- 1.49 The research established that, in addition to the lack of control over access to supported accommodation shown by these results, there are two other contributory causes for significant numbers with low or no support needs gaining access to it.
- 1.50 Firstly, the homeless application process does not currently involve recording support needs in a trackable way, which easily identifies those households who are a priority for referral to supported temporary accommodation.
- 1.51 Secondly, the Housing Executive adopts a 'hierarchy' of referrals to temporary accommodation in which a referral to Supporting People funded accommodation takes precedence over referrals to Single Lets, which in turn are preferred over B&B accommodation. (In this categorisation 'Crisis Accommodation' counts as Supporting People funded accommodation.)
- 1.52 A concern with this approach, is that homeless households are being referred to supported temporary accommodation where a bed-space is available on a first-come first-served basis irrespective of their need for support. Additionally, it could be contributing to repeated use of crisis accommodation.

*Length of stay in temporary accommodation*¹⁰

- 1.53 The data indicate that households stay in temporary accommodation longer in Northern Ireland than in the other UK jurisdictions. The average length of a stay in temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland for those who left the accommodation in 2018/2019 was **220** days. The only other UK jurisdiction that monitors length of stay of all temporary accommodation placements coming to an end is Scotland. The average length of a stay in temporary accommodation in Scotland in 2018/2019 was **180** days. All of the comparator local authorities that responded to this question in the FoI request also had a lower average length of stay than was found in Northern Ireland.
- 1.54 The overall time spent in B&B is relatively short. In part, this is because households frequently move to other forms of temporary accommodation after an initial B&B placement.
- 1.55 The Provider Census showed that if the 'Unknown' and 'No response' categories are excluded, **77%** of FDA households in supported temporary accommodation were considered by their provider to be ready to move into settled accommodation. This suggests that residents stay longer in hostels than is necessary. Two reasons for this were suggested in the research: residents may be staying longer than necessary because there is a shortage of move-on accommodation; and in other cases, residents may be turning down offers of settled accommodation if their current accommodation is of better quality or in a better location.
- 1.56 The cumulative impact of this is potentially very significant. If only half of all hostel residents stayed on average 3 months more in the hostel than their needs dictated, then it would be possible to refer an additional **12%** of households at risk or with support needs into supported temporary accommodation. The data analysed elsewhere in the report show that a very significant percentage of FDA households identified as being vulnerable or having support needs were referred to B&B or Single Lets, not into supported temporary accommodation. If access was based on a risk assessment and the household's need for support, better and more appropriate use would be made of this resource. Furthermore, if those households that could move on did so in a timelier fashion, possibly with floating support, then it would be possible to refer a higher proportion of those inappropriately referred to B&B or Single Lets to supported temporary accommodation.
- 1.57 When a hostel bedspace costs approximately £16,000 per annum, being able to improve productivity by making more appropriate referrals and by reducing the amount of overstay

¹⁰ See section 5, paragraphs 5.57 to 5.84

would free up considerable resources elsewhere in the system. Investing in ways to improve faster move-through would provide value for money.

Outcomes in terms of a move to settled housing¹¹

- 1.58 Campbell Tickell estimates, on the basis of data for 2018/2019 and the bespoke surveys carried out for this research, that around **68%** of households who moved out of temporary accommodation moved to settled housing.¹² Across the comparator authorities in Britain, the comparable figure was **70%**.
- 1.59 Hostels for women escaping domestic abuse had the best performance in terms of numbers of settled housing outcomes per unit of accommodation in management.
- 1.60 The lowest number of settled housing outcomes per unit was for Single Lets even though this type of accommodation had the highest proportion of residents achieving a settled housing outcome. This apparent contradiction is because Single Lets have a relatively high average length of stay, and potentially a number of households remain in this accommodation for a considerable period of time until they find settled accommodation.

Cost and cost effectiveness of temporary accommodation¹³

- 1.61 The costs of accommodation we have used are not the gross costs, but the net costs of accommodation to the Housing Executive after rental and service charge income received from the tenant or through Housing Benefit are taken into account. We have not assessed levels of rent arrears or bad debts. The costs included therefore break down into Supporting People costs, single let top up payments from the Housing Executive, and in the case of DIME, additional housing management costs which are not recoverable from Housing Benefit. In the case of B&B, we have not assumed any rental income is received by the Housing Executive. Single Lets have the lowest unit costs. The research found that the Housing Executive's hostels, and Single Lets are the most cost-effective form of temporary accommodation overall. In terms of cost per settled housing outcome, we estimate that Single Lets cost the Housing Executive **£4,486** per settled household in terms of top-up payments to landlords but provide no support to residents. The Housing Executive's hostels provide the best value in terms of cost per settled housing outcome among services funded by the Supporting People programme at **£3,146** per settled household.
- 1.62 DIME accommodation has the highest unit costs. However, in terms of cost per settled housing outcome, voluntary sector hostels for the single homeless were the most

¹¹ See section 5, paragraphs 5.165 to 5.203

¹² This is referred to below as a 'settled housing outcome'.

¹³ See section 5, paragraphs 5.204 to 5.214

expensive form of temporary accommodation. Hostels for single people had the lowest proportion of departures that led to settled housing outcomes; they also had by far the highest proportion of residents who disengaged from the service. This is not incongruous with the results that you would find elsewhere in this sector, but it does raise questions about cost effectiveness and value for money in this form of provision being used as temporary accommodation.

- 1.63 By comparison, DIME accommodation has a high success rate in enabling people to secure settled housing and a very low rate of disengagement. DIME accommodation was also clearly different from other forms of Supporting People funded temporary accommodation in that all its residents have support needs and 70% of its residents were assessed as having a high level of support needs. This is more than twice as high a proportion as in other forms of Supporting People funded single homeless provision. It is difficult not to conclude that this model of provision therefore works relatively well.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A duty to prevent and relieve homelessness

- 1.64 There could be considerable value in Northern Ireland legislating to introduce duties to prevent and relieve homelessness, along similar lines to the recent changes in Wales and England. There would be an added benefit of being able to learn the lessons from the way the new duty has been implemented in these jurisdictions.
- 1.65 New legislation could include requirements on relevant third party organisations to cooperate with the Housing Executive in preventing homelessness, although these would need to be considered carefully in the specific context of Northern Ireland.
- 1.66 It is acknowledged that the Housing Executive has adopted a preventative approach in its Homelessness and Interim Supporting People Strategies. This includes the introduction of a 'Housing Options' service with the aim of increasing homelessness prevention and relying less on temporary accommodation. However, we believe that legislation would strengthen and provide a fresh impetus if prevention were to become the primary aim.

RECOMMENDATION 1**CONSIDER THE INTRODUCTION OF A LEGAL DUTY TO PREVENT AND RELIEVE HOMELESSNESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

- 1.67 In making this recommendation it is recognised that the Housing Executive does not have the ability to make this significant policy change of its own volition. New legislation would be required. Nevertheless, we commend this proposal for consideration by the Housing Executive's Board to be communicated to the Department for Communities in due course.
- 1.68 Legislation on its own will not work unless there are accompanying changes in administrative practices within the Housing Executive and between the Housing Executive and its current and potential partner agencies, and the deployment of resources which allow it to be implemented successfully. Some of these changes are considered below.

Supply

- 1.69 The demand for temporary accommodation exceeds supply in all council areas in terms of the ratio between available temporary accommodation and FDA acceptances overall¹⁴, and the need for and supply of particular types of accommodation.

RECOMMENDATION 2**THE HOUSING EXECUTIVE SHOULD TAKE ADDITIONAL STEPS TO ENSURE THAT AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF SUITABLE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION IS AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT**

- 1.70 This should be based on a comprehensive assessment of demand and supply, aligned to both the Homelessness and Supporting People strategies.
- 1.71 Amongst other things this alignment would inform the future commissioning and or remodelling of existing services being considered by the Supporting People Regional Thematic Group and Strategic Advisory Board as part of the governance process for future commissioning / remodelling of services.

Use of the private rented sector (PRS) to prevent or relieve homelessness

- 1.72 The PRS is used in other jurisdictions as a basis for ending a Local Authority's homelessness duties provided that there are checks on standards and a minimum period of security. The shortfall between housing need, demand and supply in Northern Ireland is sufficient to justify considering this as a key component of any homelessness strategy.

¹⁴ The implication of this statement is that a higher level of FDA acceptances can reasonably be an indicator of a higher demand for temporary accommodation. Demand as such for temporary accommodation is not currently derivable from the HMS.

- 1.73 The research found that there is insufficient social housing to discharge all FDA cases, and that there is insufficient temporary accommodation in all council areas to meet the current demand. In particular this is the case in small towns and rural areas.
- 1.74 An increased use of PRS accommodation has the potential to help meet this demand without an increase in temporary accommodation, and also to reduce the current use of temporary accommodation, including the most expensive types, such as B&B. This would help to slow and could reverse the increase in Northern Ireland's temporary accommodation costs.

RECOMMENDATION 3

MAKE USE OF THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR TO DISCHARGE THE HOUSING EXECUTIVE'S DUTY TO HOUSE HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS

- 1.75 Consideration would need to be given to the suitability of privately rented accommodation in terms of security, standards (property and tenancy management) and affordability. This is particularly relevant given the numbers presenting as homeless due to loss of private rented accommodation.
- 1.76 Use of the PRS as part of a prevention strategy cannot be seen in isolation from its continued use as a temporary accommodation option. There is a need to adopt a twin-track approach. The Housing Executive should explore use of the PRS to both prevent homelessness through the provision of settled accommodation, and as a basis for the provision of temporary accommodation through Single Lets as at present. A new approach is required and as of September 2017, the Department for Communities has launched a public consultation on a Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations and proposal 4 suggests that NIHE can meet their duty to homeless applicants on a tenure-neutral basis, provided that the accommodation meets certain conditions.

New approaches to the procurement of temporary accommodation

- 1.77 The Housing Executive should investigate options for commissioning new accommodation in council areas where there is insufficient settled or temporary accommodation and for decommissioning or re-shaping accommodation, particularly if there is found to be more highly staffed provision with 24-hour cover than is required.

RECOMMENDATION 4

DEVELOP NEW APPROACHES TO THE PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION IN AREAS WHERE THERE IS A SHORTAGE

- 1.78 It is acknowledged that the Housing Executive does not itself have either the legal powers or the obligation to procure housing for use as temporary accommodation. In the event that new legislation to award such powers is not forthcoming, the Housing Executive could consider the kinds of partnership arrangement that some English local authorities have entered into with housing associations, or with either in-house or arm's length property

investment companies in order to buy accommodation for use as temporary or settled accommodation for homeless households.

- 1.79 Another source of temporary accommodation could be found by using the Housing Executive's own stock to help each council area achieve a certain level of available accommodation, targeted therefore on areas where social housing or Single Lets are difficult to find, or where market cost appears to be prohibitive.
- 1.80 The Housing Executive might also be able to purchase additional 'fit for purpose' stock or convert existing 'low demand' housing.
- 1.81 Other options might include:
- Re-commissioning or converting existing social housing properties;
 - Purchase or leasing of existing 'fit for purpose' housing directly, or if there are legal or financial barriers, buying 'fit for purpose' accommodation via e.g. a trading subsidiary, housing association or private partner;
 - Use of modular or mobile accommodation as a temporary resource if suitable sites exist.

Standards in temporary accommodation

- 1.82 The comparison of legislation and policy on homelessness and temporary accommodation found that there is voluntary guidance on standards in temporary accommodation in Scotland and statutory guidance in England and Wales. However, there is no specific guidance on either standards or suitability in Northern Ireland. Stakeholders reported that standards vary across the different types of temporary accommodation types and said that some Single Lets are of a poor standard.

RECOMMENDATION 5

THE HOUSING EXECUTIVE SHOULD CONSIDER THE INTRODUCTION OF A CODE OF PRACTICE GOVERNING THE STANDARD AND SUITABILITY OF BOTH TEMPORARY AND SETTLED ACCOMMODATION IN THE PRS TO WHICH HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS ARE REFERRED

- 1.83 This would be particularly beneficial in light of recommendations 3 and 4. Given that Supporting People funded hostels are already subject to the QAF review process, it is not considered appropriate at this stage to include them within the scope of the code of practice except on a purely voluntary basis.

Alignment of the Homelessness and Supporting People Strategies

- 1.84 The research found that there is no clear relationship between the existence of support needs and referral to voluntary sector or Housing Executive Supporting People funded hostel accommodation. The research also found that that some of those referred to

voluntary sector hostels had relatively low or unspecified support needs. There is therefore a mismatch between the types and levels of need for support and the type of accommodation to which households are being referred.

- 1.85 Supported housing is an expensive resource. These findings suggest that it is not being used as effectively as it could be for those homeless households that have the greatest support needs. This derives from the confusion created by treating supported housing as a resource to meet the Housing Executive's homelessness duties, as well as treating supported housing as a resource that is designed to meet the need for housing-related support among a proportion of the homeless population.

RECOMMENDATION 6

THE ELEMENT OF THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME AIMED AT ASSISTING HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS NEEDS TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF THE HOMELESSNESS AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES

- 1.86 The homelessness element of the Supporting People programme needs to be closely aligned with the Homelessness Strategy and future temporary accommodation strategy.
- 1.87 In the context of greater use of the PRS to prevent and relieve homelessness, Supporting People funding for short-term hostel accommodation or floating support would have an important role to play in helping households that have significant support needs to avoid homelessness and develop capacity for independent living.
- 1.88 In terms of Supporting People funded hostel accommodation, there should be an assumption that people moving into this accommodation should have significant support needs as well as housing needs. There should be more structured pathways into supported accommodation over which the Housing Executive has greater influence. This relates to both the needs assessment process and referral to appropriate accommodation.

Support needs assessment

- 1.89 The research noted that the homelessness assessment process does not in many cases formally incorporate an effective mechanism of recording support needs.
- 1.90 The research also found that a significant proportion of those living in supported accommodation had lower support needs than many households that were in Single Lets or B&B accommodation; and a substantial proportion of the households in supported accommodation did not have significant support needs according to providers.

RECOMMENDATION 7

A SUPPORT NEEDS ASSESSMENT AS PART OF HOMELESSNESS ASSESSMENTS NEEDS TO BE CAPTURED MORE EFFECTIVELY

- 1.91 Given the pressures on temporary accommodation generally, and the findings in respect of the numbers of households at risk and with support needs that are being referred to Single

Lets and B&B accommodation, the Housing Executive should review the way in which temporary accommodation is organised and allocated. This should start from a more focussed approach to recording support needs and where necessary incorporating a multi-agency approach in complex cases.

- 1.92 Additional training may be required for Housing Services support staff involved in the assessment of homeless presenters to increase the skill levels needed to conduct such assessments. This could include training on needs, risk and vulnerability assessment procedures and could help to ensure that homelessness is prevented where possible.

Prioritising Supporting People funded services for households that have support needs

- 1.93 Referral, and therefore access to most types of temporary accommodation designed for homeless households is managed by the Housing Executive through the homelessness assessment process. Voluntary sector hostels are an exception, however, as they take referrals from a wider range of agencies as well as self-referrals. Voluntary sector organisations are independent bodies, many of which are charities.
- 1.94 The Housing Executive has very good engagement with these providers as evidenced by the full response to their surveys. There is a wide range of such providers in Northern Ireland willing to work with homeless households, many of whom have significant support needs. Nevertheless, evidence from the review of HMS data and the bespoke surveys carried out for the research suggests that a significant proportion of the people placed in voluntary sector hostel accommodation did not need that kind of provision.

RECOMMENDATION 8

THE HOUSING EXECUTIVE SHOULD ENSURE THAT IT HAS GREATER INFLUENCE REGARDING ACCESS TO SUPPORTING PEOPLE FUNDED ACCOMMODATION PROVIDED BY THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR SO THAT FDA HOUSEHOLDS ASSESSED AS BEING AT RISK OR AS HAVING SUPPORT NEEDS ARE PRIORITISED FOR REFERRAL

- 1.95 Hostels funded by Supporting People to provide both accommodation and support should only be used for households who are assessed as at risk of harm or with support needs. Those with either low or no support needs should not be placed into highly staffed hostels with 24-hour cover and alternatives should be secured.
- 1.96 Given the pressures on temporary accommodation generally, and the findings in respect of the numbers of households at risk and with support needs that are referred to Single Lets and B&B accommodation, the Housing Executive is recommended to improve its influence over access to voluntary sector supported housing.
- 1.97 A review of the allocation process for referral to voluntary sector hostels should be carried out to ensure that only those who need the support available are referred to this

accommodation. A proportion of beds could also be made available for initial assessment purposes.

- 1.98 This means that the Housing Executive's hierarchical approach to referrals to temporary accommodation in which supported accommodation is always the first choice regardless of the household's needs for support, should be ended.
- 1.99 There is a need either to avoid reliance on crisis/crash bed facilities for households that are at risk of harm or that have support needs, or to only use them for very short term placements while a needs assessment takes place. Repeat usage needs to be reduced with interventions put in place to provide more suitable, alternative arrangements such as Housing First.

Notification of vacancies and more controlled access to supported accommodation

- 1.100 There are two further requirements that need to be met if the Housing Executive is to be able to exercise greater control over access to supported accommodation operated by voluntary organisations.

RECOMMENDATION 9a

THE SYSTEM FOR NOTIFYING THE HOUSING EXECUTIVE ABOUT VACANCIES IN VOLUNTARY SECTOR HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION SHOULD BE MODIFIED TO ENSURE THAT ALL VACANCIES ARE NOTIFIED IN A TIMELY FASHION

RECOMMENDATION 9b

BETTER REFERRAL AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS ARE NEEDED TO ENSURE THAT HOUSING EXECUTIVE IS GIVEN PRIORITY TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE IN MOST URGENT NEED CAN BE ACCOMMODATED

- 1.101 As part of a closer working relationship between the Housing Executive and voluntary sector providers, all vacancies in Supporting People funded accommodation should be notified to the Housing Executive's homeless and housing solutions service which should have first call on vacancies.
- 1.102 An appropriate IT system should be secured to facilitate this process (see Information Systems below).
- 1.103 In response to these recommendations, Campbell Tickell understands that the housing support needs assessment and 'control of access' to other temporary accommodation and related services will be improved through implementation of the Housing Solutions Access & Assessment Project (HSAAP). It should also promote an increase in referrals to floating support and assist in identifying gaps in service delivery to inform the Supporting People Strategy 2020/23 which is under development.
- 1.104 Supporting People could introduce formal nomination rights to a proportion of the bedspaces as part of a new contractual partnership with the voluntary sector, but with

continued potential to take direct referrals for some beds or if there is no one that can be nominated by the Housing Executive.

Information about placements and outcomes in voluntary sector temporary accommodation

- 1.105 At present, the Housing Executive does not appear to have accessible information about which FDA households are making use of voluntary sector hostel accommodation or to be closely involved in provider plans for rehousing residents.
- 1.106 The number of FDA households in voluntary sector hostels stated by the Housing Executive based on HMS records was considerably lower than the number that were identified in the Provider Census. There may be a number of reasons for this, but the same problem did not arise in comparing FDA households living in DIME accommodation or Housing Executive hostels where the Housing Executive exercises control over the referral process.

RECOMMENDATION 10

THE HOUSING EXECUTIVE SHOULD USE THE SYSTEM FOR MONITORING PLACEMENTS IN AND DEPARTURES FROM VOLUNTARY SECTOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION TO SUPPORT MORE OF A CASE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

- 1.107 As part of a closer working relationship between the Housing Executive and the voluntary sector providers, the system for monitoring allocations and departures from all Supporting People funded accommodation has been reinstated. This should allow the degree of priority attached to those housed in this accommodation to be monitored alongside outcomes in terms of planned or unplanned departures, moves into settled accommodation, and numbers with whom providers lose contact (see Information Systems below). It should also be linked to the development of a more case management approach; whereby Housing Executive staff take an active role in overseeing the work undertaken by the support providers and finding the best long-term solutions for the household's long-term needs.

The DIME accommodation model

- 1.108 The DIME accommodation model of leased supported accommodation is working well, with positive outcomes for a difficult client group and relatively low levels of clients with whom contact is lost. It is also more cost effective than some other forms of specialised supported housing.

RECOMMENDATION 11

THE HOUSING EXECUTIVE SHOULD EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF EXTENDING THE DIME ACCOMMODATION MODEL

- 1.109 There are three features of the DIME accommodation model that make it stand out from other provision as set out in the research:

- The accommodation is provided in dispersed housing that is in close proximity to each other.
- There is a very close working relationship between DIME accommodation management and staff and the Housing Executive in respect of both allocations into the accommodation and move-on to settled accommodation.
- Work with residents is based on broad principles of assertive engagement and a strengths-based approach. This is important to the project's success with some clients who are potentially difficult to engage with. What the research team cannot say however is the extent to which this approach is shared by voluntary sector hostels.

1.110 Consideration should be given to extending a similar type of service to the North West region.

Floating Support

1.111 The research suggests that the Housing Executive funds a substantial number of floating support services but only a very few of the households that benefit are homeless households in temporary accommodation. The census of floating support providers undertaken identified that only 5% of FDA cases were in some form of temporary accommodation placement when their support programme started. By the time of the census a further 8% had moved into a temporary accommodation placement. From the information available, the research also suggests that the provision of floating support is likely to be a cost effective way of assisting many homeless households, and that the profile of need and risk dealt with by floating support services is not that different to the profile found within hostels.

RECOMMENDATION 12

INTRODUCE A PREVENTION AND RELIEF STRATEGY WHICH INCLUDES THE PROVISION OF FLOATING SUPPORT AS A MECHANISM FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

- 1.112 Development of an expanded programme of floating support is a key to prevention as well as sustaining households in their own homes, in temporary accommodation and in supporting move-on into settled accommodation.
- 1.113 This approach has significant implications for the Supporting People programme which currently funds floating support for a significant number of households in Northern Ireland even though few of these are in temporary accommodation. In terms of cost and value for money this would inevitably require extension of the floating support programme and at a time of fixed budgets, selective redirection of resources away from highly staffed accommodation-based services through remodelling and price benchmarking.

Costs

- 1.114 There are local variations not only in the types of temporary accommodation used in different council areas in Northern Ireland but also in the costs of each type of accommodation in those areas.
- 1.115 The cost analysis undertaken as part of the research shows that some types of accommodation are much more costly than others, with the important caveat that there are significant variations from the average within and between geographical areas and the level of support provided.
- 1.116 Although it is difficult to make a robust comparison of the costs of different types of temporary accommodation between Northern Ireland and the local authorities in England that were contacted, it would appear that the Northern Ireland placement costs are in general high compared with English authorities.

RECOMMENDATION 13

THE HOUSING EXECUTIVE SHOULD INVESTIGATE WHETHER COST DIFFERENTIALS FOR SIMILAR ACCOMMODATION IN DIFFERENT COUNCIL AREAS REFLECT LOCAL MARKET VARIATIONS, WHETHER THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS AFFECTING COST, AND WHETHER THERE IS POTENTIAL TO REDUCE COSTS THROUGH A CHANGE IN ACCOMMODATION TYPES OR CHANGE IN COMMISSIONING PRACTICES.

- 1.117 The need to reduce costs also suggests a number of possible courses of action, such as:
- Adopting new approaches to contracting, either directly or through the use of intermediary bodies to lease or develop accommodation.
 - Considering the possibility of making more use of Single Lets with floating support as an alternative to hostel provision in order to reduce costs where this would be beneficial to the households being accommodated.

Record keeping and monitoring systems

- 1.118 The Housing Executive's information systems generate very usable and pertinent information. This is not generally the case in other jurisdictions. However, there is scope for improving the range of information that is recorded as a basis for better monitoring of both demand and referrals to temporary accommodation.
- 1.119 Homelessness prevention is prioritised within the Housing Executive's Homelessness Strategy, but evidence of its effectiveness is limited because information about the steps that have been taken to help prevent homelessness are not recorded sufficiently on the HMS.
- 1.120 There are significant numbers of voluntary sector hostels that are occupied by households with FDA status that are not recorded on the HMS and are therefore not recorded in the published statistics. Where households have been referred by another agency, or where

they have self-referred, voluntary sector providers are not required to provide information to the Housing Executive on who they have housed. Given that a significant proportion of the residents in these schemes were said by the provider not to have significant support needs, this is a particular omission in record keeping as the Housing Executive does not know whether this expensive resource is being used efficiently and cost-effectively

- 1.121 The HMS records very little information at present on a household's support needs or their need for various types of adapted housing. It does not record the steps that are being taken in individual cases to prevent homelessness, the demand for different types of accommodation by different types of household, or which temporary arrangements organised by the applicant are satisfactory and sustainable, in a way that can be easily traced or summarised. The emphasis of the homelessness assessment process is on housing needs and finding a temporary housing solution until permanent housing can be secured.

RECOMMENDATION 14

DEVELOP ROBUST SYSTEMS TO ALLOW THE RECORDING AND MONITORING OF SUPPORT AND ADAPTED HOUSING NEEDS, PLACEMENTS AND OUTCOMES

- 1.122 It is acknowledged that the Housing Executive's HMS system is not capable of adaptation to meet these requirements. The HMS is based on a commercially available housing management software package that was not intended for the wide range of applications for which the system is now being used. In the short term therefore, it seems likely that a bespoke interface between the Housing Solutions database and the HMS would be needed possibly extended to accommodate the Housing Solutions Access & Assessment Project (HSAAP) requirements. However, this is unlikely to be sufficient to provide the information that is required to monitor referrals to both settled and temporary accommodation, manage the programme and provide a statistical basis for forecasting demand and supply.
- 1.123 Ideally, the Housing Executive's record systems need to be redesigned to show:
- Prevention options that are identified, and solutions agreed with the household, including interventions to meet the household's need for support, ameliorate family splits and use of the PRS as a prevention or relief measure.
 - Monitoring of demand for different types of accommodation by different types of household by housing need and by support need as opposed to simply placements needs to be standard part of the assessment process. Temporary accommodation offers being turned down with reasons also need to be monitored.
 - Which temporary arrangements organised by the applicant are satisfactory and sustainable and which are not as a basis for informing priority for available places in temporary accommodation. The homeless assessment process will need to facilitate that judgement.
 - Monitoring outcomes on exiting temporary accommodation.

- 1.124 Homelessness record systems should also be closely integrated with those Supporting People record systems that relate to homelessness, noting that the current Supporting People Oxford Computing Consultants (SPOCC) database does not collect information about individual service users.

2. INTRODUCTION

This section sets out the brief for the research, its aims and the key tasks required by the Housing Executive to fulfil the requirements. It also sets out the approach taken by the Campbell Tickell researchers, details the data sources used from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the stakeholder consultation activities undertaken.

The Brief

- 2.1 Campbell Tickell was commissioned to undertake a strategic review of the Housing Executive's portfolio of temporary accommodation for homeless households. The research was intended to inform the Housing Executive's broader Strategic Review of Temporary Accommodation which will examine the current portfolio and the systems for allocating it; consider how effectively these are meeting the needs of homeless households; then develop an action plan to address the issues that have been identified. It will also inform a Review of Single Lets, the Housing Solutions Assessment and Access Project (HSAAP), and other current projects.
- 2.2 The overall aim of the research was to provide the Housing Executive with an evidence base on which to assess whether its temporary accommodation is in the right locations, of the right type and quality, is cost effective and strategically relevant in the exercise of its duties towards the homeless. The research will also assist the Housing Executive in determining the best and most cost-effective model for the delivery of temporary accommodation.
- 2.3 The research specification set out a series of tasks to be undertaken in achieving this aim. These were of two types:
 - a comparative review of the legislation, policies and responses to homelessness and the accommodation duties of national governments and local authorities in the UK as a whole;
 - an analysis of the response to homelessness and the provision of temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland and of the way this compares to policy and practice in Britain.
- 2.4 The tasks specified in the brief were to:

UK and ROI

- Examine the legislative basis in relation to accommodation duties in which local authorities/jurisdictions in the UK and ROI operate;
- Examine the nature of other local authorities'/jurisdictions' homelessness temporary accommodation provision including access routes and occupancy, throughput and if possible, planned departures;

- Comparative analysis of temporary accommodation and homelessness accommodation with other local authorities/jurisdictions;
- Assess the portfolio of other local authorities/jurisdictions and how they acquire their temporary accommodation. In addition, how they address the suitability of accommodation type and location with regard to demand/need; and
- Compare different local authorities and benchmark compared to costs and analysed by temporary accommodation category with particular emphasis on an urban and rural analysis;

Northern Ireland

- Analyse the current portfolio in terms of type, location, access arrangements and usage;
- Reference a framework for establishing the quality, standards and regulation of temporary accommodation;
- Reference the existing framework for establishing the quality of housing support and assess the quality of support given to those in temporary accommodation. The research should also consider how the existing framework can be carried beyond Supporting People funded hostels;
- Explore the factors that need to be considered in a temporary accommodation strategy provision;
- Consider the Rural Needs Act and Equality Impact Assessment (Section 75) on current provision and changes to this for future provision; and
- Identify innovative models of temporary accommodation, particularly in rural areas where provision is most difficult.

The Approach

- 2.5 Campbell Tickell addressed these tasks by analysing data on the use of temporary accommodation to provide short term housing solutions for homeless households in Northern Ireland, comparative research on the way in which homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation are approached in the wider British and ROI jurisdictions, and consideration and evaluation of alternative models of temporary accommodation provision.
- 2.6 This involved combining a number of different methods:
- Desktop and online research on Britain and ROI sources, with follow-up enquiries to selected governmental agencies;

- Freedom of Information requests sent to twenty-five English, Welsh and Scottish local authorities with follow-up enquiries;
- Collection and analysis of data provided by the Housing Executive and by selected English local authorities; and
- Consultative workshops with Housing Executive staff, homelessness and statutory agencies in Northern Ireland and service users.

Data sources

2.7 The data sources used on which the analysis of homelessness and use of temporary accommodation in Britain and Northern Ireland was based were as follows:

Britain

- Published data on homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation by central and local government in England, Wales and Scotland;
- A freedom of Information response received from twenty-two different local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland;
- A review of homelessness strategies published by a selection of fourteen authorities drawn from the same list of comparator authorities to whom the FoI request had been sent (the selection was based on how up to date their strategies were); and
- A series of semi-structured interviews with eight local authority officers in England.

Northern Ireland

- Standard and bespoke reports drawn from the Housing Executive's Housing Management System (HMS);
- An extract from the HMS system of placements in and departures from temporary accommodation over the previous five years;¹⁵
- A summary analysis of why households moved out of Supporting People funded temporary accommodation based on an analysis by the Housing Executive's Supporting People team in which they provided a service by service summary of the results of their monitoring of where people who left temporary accommodation moved to in 2018/19 (referred to in the report as 'outcomes monitoring');

¹⁵ Note that the HMS does not contain information on why the household moved or where they moved to.

- A sample exercise investigating why households moved out of Single Lets accommodation¹⁶ based on data provided by the Housing Executive
- A sample exercise of why households moved out of bed & breakfast (B&B) accommodation based on data provided by the Housing Executive as above;
- Data recorded as part of a 'Snapshot Survey' undertaken by all the Housing Executive's Area Offices recording requests for assistance by homeless households that required temporary accommodation during three separate weeks between March 2019 and June 2019;
- A 'Provider Census' of the residents living in voluntary sector supported temporary accommodation¹⁷ on the night of 4th June 2019 in which the provider organisations completed a data sheet for each resident which was summarised on a spreadsheet by the Housing Executive and analysed by Campbell Tickell;
- A similar 'Census' of the residents receiving a 'floating support' service on the night of 15th August 2019 in which the provider organisations completed a data sheet for each service user which was summarised on a spreadsheet by the Housing Executive and analysed by Campbell Tickell;
- A further analysis of households that were resident in temporary accommodation on 4 June 2019 carried out for this research by the Housing Executive using information drawn from the Housing Management System (HMS) that identified households living in Housing Executive hostels, Single Lets and B&B; and
- Information from the Supporting People team detailing all current contracts for accommodation-based and floating support services for homeless households which are funded from the Supporting People programme referred to as the Strategic Contract Management Risk Assessment (SCMRA).

2.8 More information about methodology and data sources is given in the body of the report and data sources with commentary are summarised in Appendix 1.

Stakeholder consultation

2.9 The research specification included a requirement to carry out semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, mainly voluntary sector providers and relevant managers from the Housing Executive. Qualitative interviews were carried out with a group of service users/clients.

¹⁶ See Appendix 2 for a definition of 'Single Lets'.

¹⁷ Referred to as 'hostels' in the body of this report.

- 2.10 Campbell Tickell developed a semi-structured questionnaire, in consultation with the Housing Executive, that reflected the key research questions and focussed in the broad areas of: Support needs; Location; Quality; and Value for Money (VFM). The questionnaire was shared with the Housing Executive research project team for comments and refined accordingly.
- 2.11 In discussion with the Housing Executive it was decided to proceed with groups established for the purpose of consultation on the draft *Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022*. Five stakeholder consultation sessions took place:
- three groups representing organisations providing temporary accommodation, chosen to ensure both an urban and rural perspective;
 - a group representing Housing Executive Regional and Area managers, identified by the research commissioners as a priority from an operational viewpoint; and
 - a group representing service users.
- 2.12 Appendix 4 lists the group participants.
- 2.13 Semi-structured, thematic questions were discussed in small groups within each workshop. An answer sheet was completed by each small group and time was built in after the exercise for full group discussion.
- 2.14 The fifth group comprising service users was directly organised and facilitated by Campbell Tickell via The Welcome Organisation. The format adopted at this workshop was more informal. Other workshops with service users were considered but it was not possible to arrange them in time for the research.
- 2.15 Feedback from each event was analysed separately and then an overall analysis of the consultative workshops was compiled by Campbell Tickell.

3. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

This section of the report sets out the differences in the use of temporary accommodation, the rules governing welfare benefit payments and the homelessness and housing legislation operating in the different jurisdictions of the UK and the Republic of Ireland. It examines the types of temporary accommodation and its distribution across the UK and considers the factors, such as policy, regulations, market conditions, and funding arrangements that influence the differences between England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. It concludes with considerations for Northern Ireland, given the differences identified.

- 3.1 Differences in the use of temporary accommodation between Northern Ireland and the neighbouring jurisdictions of England, Scotland, Wales and ROI are driven by a number of factors. These include differences in the legal frameworks for tackling homelessness, and differences in housing law more widely.
- 3.2 The rules governing the payment of welfare benefits also apply differently, and Northern Ireland differs from the rest of the UK in that it is the Housing Executive which has the legal responsibility for tackling homelessness rather than local authorities as is the case in Britain and ROI.
- 3.3 The homelessness and housing legislation in the four UK jurisdictions share similar characteristics as they are all based on the same original UK-wide legislation. However, housing and homelessness have more recently become devolved matters and a number of legislative changes have been made in England, Scotland and Wales which are different in each case and different from the position in Northern Ireland.
- 3.4 The legislation in ROI differs significantly. In fact, there is no homelessness duty as such. Nevertheless, the same kind of practice is adopted. There is provision of temporary accommodation, and the government has been making efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness.
- 3.5 The position in Northern Ireland also differs from the rest of the UK in that the various welfare reforms introduced by the UK government from 2011 have been mitigated in Northern Ireland to date. This has some important consequences on housing affordability for households in receipt of welfare benefits.
- 3.6 Also important in Northern Ireland is that Supporting People funding has remained ring-fenced and has therefore been protected to some extent from the cuts which have been made by local authorities in England, in particular since that ring fence was removed. This is not, however, to say that Supporting People funding in Northern Ireland has not fallen in real terms. Core funding has remained static for the past 10 years. Although in some years this has been supplemented by additional discretionary funding, 2017/2018 research on

cost pressures showed that over the previous nine years the capping of the Northern Ireland Supporting People core grant amounted to a real term cut of 27%¹⁸.

- 3.7 As well as legal differences, there are of course also differences in housing supply and demand both between jurisdictions and within each jurisdiction. These affect homelessness pressures, which are in turn impacted by differences in the policy and practice which have been adopted in the different jurisdictions that are not necessarily driven by legislation.
- 3.8 A detailed account of the main differences in the legislation on homelessness in Northern Ireland compared with England, Wales, Scotland and ROI is set out in Appendix 5. Appendix 6 summarises the differences in housing standards that apply to temporary accommodation in these jurisdictions. Appendix 7 summarises the sources of data on homelessness and use of temporary accommodation in the UK and ROI. Table 1 provides a summary of the differences in approaches to homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation between the UK jurisdictions described in the appendices.

¹⁸ Palmer J (2018), *Understanding cumulative cost pressures on Supporting People services* (unpublished) NIFHA on behalf of CHNI and CRISPP, page 19

Table 1: Summary of Differences between the UK Jurisdictions

Statutory Homelessness Responsibilities	
Northern Ireland	With the NI Housing Executive
Scotland	With local authorities
Wales	With local authorities
England	With local authorities
Applicable Homelessness Duties	
Northern Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide free advice • Make enquiries to determine if homeless or threatened with homelessness • Interim duty to secure accommodation • Duty to secure accommodation if accepted as statutorily homeless • Duty to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness
Scotland	<p>As in Northern Ireland, plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty to conduct a housing support assessment and to provide housing support if needed.
Wales	<p>As in Northern Ireland, but</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of free advice must be tailored to specific at-risk groups • Much stronger emphasis on duty to prevent homelessness and • An additional duty to relieve homelessness, which precedes the duty to secure accommodation for a household accepted as statutorily homeless.
England	<p>As in Wales, plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty to produce a personal housing plan for those subject to a prevention or relief duty

Northern Ireland	Very little statutory guidance
Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Guidance on Homelessness (2005) • Homelessness Prevention Guidance (2009) • Guidance on Best Interests of Children (2011)
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness (2016) • Supporting People Programme Practice Guidance (2018)
England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2018)

Length of time before likely homelessness to be considered threatened with homelessness

Northern Ireland	28 days
Scotland	2 months
Wales	56 days
England	56 days

Use of Private Rented Sector accommodation to end a main homelessness duty

Northern Ireland	Not in practice. Consultation ongoing ¹⁹
Scotland	Yes. Accommodation is only considered “permanent” if an Assured Tenancy and not a Short Assured Tenancy. However, with some safeguards, a 12-month Short Assured Tenancy is acceptable in the legislation
Wales	Yes. 6 months Assured Shorthold Tenancy is sufficient
England	Yes. 12 month Assured Shorthold Tenancy is sufficient

Intentional Homelessness

¹⁹ [The Department for Communities launched a public consultation in September 2017 on a Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations](#)

Northern Ireland	Intentionality applies to prevention and accommodation duties
Scotland	Intentionality applies to prevention and accommodation duties
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities have a power rather than a duty to apply intentionality and must inform the Welsh government for which categories of household they wish to use this power. Intentionality does not apply to prevention and relief duties
England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentionality does not apply to prevention and relief duties
Effect of Priority Need on Homelessness Duties	
Northern Ireland	Priority need applies to prevention and accommodation duties
Scotland	Priority need does not apply to homelessness duties.
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority need does not apply to prevention and relief duties but does apply to interim and main duties to accommodate. Use of priority need is currently under review by Welsh government
England	Priority need does not apply to prevention and relief duties but does apply to interim and main duties to accommodate.
Maximum length of time for families in B&B	

Northern Ireland	Not specified
Scotland	7 days
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger establishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Basic standard - 2 weeks – Higher standard - 6 weeks • Smaller establishments: May exceed 6 weeks, but choice tests at 2 weeks and 6 weeks
England	6 weeks
Use of Supported Housing for Temporary Accommodation	
Northern Ireland	Used extensively ring fenced Supporting People funding
Scotland	Used extensively
Wales	Used more for prevention/relief. Ring fenced Supporting People funding
England	Used more for prevention/relief.
Duties on other organisations	
Northern Ireland	Health and Social Services Boards, the Probation Board, and Registered Housing Associations must co-operate if “reasonable”.
Scotland	Registered Social Landlords must provide accommodation within 6 weeks upon request unless they have a “good reason” not to do so.
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Services and Housing must co-operate on homelessness • Requests to cooperate made to a local housing authority, a social services authority, a registered social landlord, a new town corporation, a private registered provider of social housing, or a housing action trust, must be complied with unless incompatible with their own duties or would have an adverse effect on their functions.

England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “Duty to Refer” service users to a local housing authority, if at risk of homelessness within 56 days, applies to prisons and a number of offender services, jobcentres, social services and hospitals. • Broadly defined requirements on Housing Associations to co-operate with local authorities on homelessness are included in the Regulator of Social Housing’s Consumer Standards.
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Temporary Accommodation standards

Northern Ireland	None
Scotland	Temporary Accommodation Guidance
Wales	Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2015
England	Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities

Statutory minimum housing requirements

Northern Ireland	Housing Fitness Standard
Scotland	Tolerable Standard
England and Wales	Housing Health and Safety Rating System
Republic of Ireland	Housing Act 1966 Section 66, Second Schedule

Types of temporary accommodation

- 3.9 The following paragraphs compare the types and distribution of temporary accommodation between the different UK jurisdictions at the end of September 2018,²⁰ and consider some of the differences in policy, regulation, market conditions and funding arrangements that lie behind those differences.

Northern Ireland

- 3.10 According to the Northern Ireland Homelessness Bulletin²¹ there were **2,077** households in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2018. This was equivalent to **2.9** households per thousand households in Northern Ireland. The breakdown of the households in temporary accommodation was as follows:

Hotel/B&B	3%
Leased Accommodation	4%
Housing Executive Hostel	7%
Private Single Let	68%
Voluntary Sector Hostel (including Women's Refuges)	18%

- 3.11 It is interesting to note the much lower use of B&B accommodation in Northern Ireland compared to all the other jurisdictions. It may be that this is in part because voluntary sector hostels in Northern Ireland are able to fulfil a similar function to B&Bs elsewhere.

Scotland

- 3.12 There were **10,955** households in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2018.²² This was equivalent to **4.5** households per thousand households in Scotland.²³ The breakdown of the households in temporary accommodation was as follows:

Local authority furnished	43%
Local authority other	1%
Housing association	17%
Hostel: Local authority	7%
Hostel: Other	8%
B&B	10%
Women's refuge	1%
Other	13%

²⁰ September 2018 was chosen as a date for comparison as data were available from all jurisdictions.

²¹ [NISRA: Northern Ireland Household Projections \(2016-based\)](#)

²² [Homelessness in Scotland: update to 30 September 2018](#)

²³ [Estimates of Households and Dwellings in Scotland, 2016](#)

- 3.13 According to the notes on the statistics, 'Other' includes households in other accommodation not owned by the local authority including mobile homes and caravans. It seems unlikely that mobile homes and caravans make up a significant proportion of temporary accommodation, so this bears no further investigation.
- 3.14 Compared to Northern Ireland there are striking differences. There are no Single Lets, unless some are included within the 'Other' category. On the other hand, there are a very large number of lets of local authority owned furnished properties. These are local authority homes which are being let as temporary accommodation instead of being let as social housing.
- 3.15 There appear to be two reasons for the prevalence of this type of accommodation. One is the proportionately larger amount of social housing in Scotland, which may make using some of it as temporary accommodation more feasible than in other jurisdictions. The other is that the Housing Benefit (HB) subsidy rules in Scotland allow high rents to be charged for this type of accommodation which can be fully recovered from HB.
- 3.16 The funding of temporary accommodation in Scotland is discussed in detail in the 2016 Shelter Report *Funding Homelessness Services in Scotland*.²⁴ The current HB regulations permit an unrestricted HB claim up to the level of the rent for 'Local Authority Owned Hostels' in Scotland and Wales. This has the consequence that charges for temporary furnished flats range from a social rent in some areas of Scotland to £400 a week in others.²⁵
- 3.17 The same rule applies in England, but only if the accommodation is outside the Local Authority Housing Revenue Account (HRA). A full discussion of the HRA rules is outside the scope of this report, but the practical consequence is that accommodating households in a local authority's own stock as temporary accommodation in England does not normally yield the same financial rewards as it can do in Scotland and Wales.
- 3.18 An in-depth discussion of temporary accommodation in Scotland is to be found in *Temporary Accommodation in Scotland*,²⁶ published in November 2018 and commissioned by Social Bite on behalf of the Scottish Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group.

²⁴ [Funding Homelessness Services in Scotland](#)

²⁵ [Temporary Accommodation in Scotland: Final Report November 2018 p27](#)

²⁶ [Temporary Accommodation in Scotland: Final Report November 2018](#)

Wales

3.19 There were **2,124** households in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2018.²⁷ This was equivalent to **1.6** households per thousand households in Wales.²⁸ The breakdown of the households in temporary accommodation was as follows:

Private sector accommodation leased by the local authority	21%
Private sector accommodation leased by RSLs	12%
Directly with a private sector landlord	4%
RSL stock	12%
Within local authority stock	11%
Hostels (including reception centres and emergency units)	24%
Women's refuge	3%
B&B	12%

3.20 The 'Directly with a private sector landlord' category is similar to Single Lets in Northern Ireland. However, in Wales this type of accommodation is more likely to be used to prevent homelessness than as temporary accommodation.

3.21 Accommodation leased by a local authority is much more commonly used as temporary accommodation in Wales than it is in Northern Ireland or Scotland. Use of hostels is similar to Northern Ireland as a percentage of temporary accommodation, and more than in Scotland. A significant proportion of Welsh temporary accommodation is local authority or housing association stock, but not as high a proportion as in Scotland.

England

3.22 Due to the disproportionate impact of London on the number of units of temporary accommodation, and its dissimilarity from Northern Ireland, the statistics for both England as a whole and the 'rest of England' excluding London are considered below.

3.23 According to government homelessness statistics²⁹ there were **82,310** households in temporary accommodation in England at the end of September 2018. This was equivalent to **3.5** households per thousand households in England.

3.24 For England excluding London, there were **25,760** households in temporary accommodation, which was equivalent to **1.3** households per thousand households. This

²⁷ [StatsWales: Households accommodated temporarily by accommodation type and household type \(Post 2015-16\)](#)

²⁸ [Wales - household-estimates-mid-2018](#)

²⁹ [UK Live tables on homelessness](#)

‘Rest of England’ figure, whilst by no means a perfect comparison, is likely to be a fairer comparison with Northern Ireland than the whole of England figure.

3.25 The breakdown of the households in temporary accommodation was as follows:

	<u>England</u>	<u>Rest of England</u>
B&B	8%	16%
Nightly paid self-contained	26%	15%
Hostels including Women’s Refuges	7%	10%
Private Sector Leased by LA or HA	31%	17%
LA or HA own stock	19%	32%
Other, including private landlord and not known	9%	11%

3.26 There are a number of striking differences with the other jurisdictions. Much less use is made of hostels as temporary accommodation in England than elsewhere, but it should be borne in mind that this may be partly because hostels in England are more likely than in Northern Ireland or Scotland to accommodate single homeless people with support needs, without this being classed as temporary accommodation.

3.27 The use of B&B establishments in England outside London is higher as a proportion of all temporary accommodation than any other jurisdiction, although this does not mean that the use of B&Bs per thousand households is the highest because of the much smaller total numbers in temporary accommodation per thousand households in England outside London.

3.28 There are many households living in nightly paid self-contained accommodation in England, and especially in London. This category of accommodation is not recorded at all in the other jurisdictions but has dramatically increased in England in recent years. In some cases, this is self-contained studio accommodation in B&B or hotels but in most cases, it is family-sized accommodation which might otherwise have been leased to local authorities. The combination of welfare reforms and the associated shortage of landlords willing to let to local authority nominees has meant that landlords and managing agents have been able to switch *en masse* to a more expensive nightly paid model which is more profitable for them but very costly to local authorities. In London this type of accommodation now accounts for **31%** of all temporary accommodation.

3.29 A comparison of homelessness acceptances and households in temporary accommodation per thousand households is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Homelessness Acceptances and Households in temporary accommodation

Country	Homelessness Acceptances – per ‘000 households (2017/18)	Households in TA – per ‘000 households (Sep 2018)
Northern Ireland ³⁰	16.4	2.9
Scotland ^{31 32}	11.4	4.5
Wales ^{33 34}	1.7	1.6
England ³⁵	2.4	3.5
England excluding London ³⁶	2.1	1.3

Considerations for Northern Ireland

- 3.30 It can be seen from the preceding analysis that Northern Ireland has less temporary accommodation per thousand households than Scotland, but significantly more than Wales or the ‘rest of England’. This is despite, and indeed perhaps partly because of the workings of the Common Selection Scheme which results in the letting of around **80%** of social housing to homeless households. This means that move-on from temporary accommodation is accelerated, but it also limits the amount of social housing available to households on the waiting list that do not present as homeless.
- 3.31 ‘Full Duty’ (statutory) homelessness attracts 70 points in comparison to ‘other homeless points’ (50) under the Northern Ireland Housing Selection Scheme. Also, FDAs receive an additional 20 ‘insecurity of tenure’ points if living in temporary accommodation that has been arranged by the Housing Executive for longer than 6 months.
- 3.32 The basic legislative framework for homelessness is quite similar across all the jurisdictions, with at least some homelessness prevention being encouraged everywhere, and the possibility of using the PRS to end homelessness duties theoretically is in place in all jurisdictions, even if not practically applied.

³⁰ [Northern Ireland Household Projections \(2016-based\)](#)

³¹ [Homelessness in Scotland: update to 30 September 2018](#)

³² [Estimates of Households and Dwellings in Scotland, 2016](#)

³³ [StatWales: Households accommodated temporarily by accommodation type and household type \(Post 2015-16\)](#)

³⁴ [Wales: Household Estimates](#)

³⁴ [UK Live tables on homelessness](#)

- 3.33 The main differences between the other jurisdictions and Northern Ireland are as follows. Scotland has abolished priority need and now accommodates a larger number of households in temporary accommodation as a result, especially within local authority stock. Wales and England have legislated to place much more emphasis on prevention of homelessness rather than accepting a main duty and placing households in temporary accommodation. Both countries have also embraced the use of the PRS to prevent homelessness or to end a homelessness duty much more extensively than Northern Ireland or Scotland.
- 3.34 Another important difference is that policy in England and Wales emphasises the use of supported housing to prevent homelessness rather than a use as temporary accommodation. Although the designation of the supported housing as a homelessness prevention rather than temporary accommodation may be different, the ultimate outcome may be similar if residents move on from supported housing to general needs social housing through nomination quotas, rather than because they have been accepted as homeless. At least in England, though, moves from supported housing to the PRS are increasingly common.
- 3.35 The combination of these factors has led to reduced use of temporary accommodation in Wales and in England outside London.
- 3.36 The legislation regarding accommodation being unreasonable to occupy appears to be remarkably similar in all jurisdictions. It seems to be almost entirely differences in policy and interpretation which have led to the much higher proportion of households in Northern Ireland accepted as homeless for this reason. Such households in other jurisdictions may still gain access to social housing, as homeless households in general take a smaller proportion of social lets in those jurisdictions, leaving more lettings available for households who have priority in the allocations scheme for other reasons.
- 3.37 In Britain it is common for households living in unsuitable accommodation that contain someone who has a long-term health condition, mental health issues or is disabled to be given priority for accommodation because of their health needs rather than because they are considered homeless. In contrast, under the Northern Ireland Housing Selection Scheme, it can be difficult to attract sufficient points on health reasons alone. People who are living in unsuitable housing would normally present as homeless due to their accommodation being not reasonable to occupy. If accepted, they would receive 70 points which increases their ranking on the waiting list.
- 3.38 Considering the different types of temporary accommodation, the very high proportion of temporary accommodation provided as Single Lets in Northern Ireland is not replicated elsewhere. In Scotland this is because of a greater supply of social housing, but also because it is often financially advantageous to Scottish local authorities to let their social housing as temporary accommodation. In England and Wales, the private sector accommodation, which in Northern Ireland is used for Single Lets, would be more likely to
-

be used to prevent homelessness instead, or to be leased by a local authority or housing association to be used as temporary accommodation.

- 3.39 The option of leasing private sector properties and letting them by using a non-secure tenancy, used by local authorities in other jurisdictions, is also open to the Housing Executive or its partners in order to reduce its reliance on hostel accommodation.
- 3.40 Article 25 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1983³⁷ defines a secure tenancy as a tenancy where the landlord is the Housing Executive or a registered housing association. This definition is, however, subject to exceptions set out in Schedule 2 to the 1983 Order.³⁸ The exceptions include accommodation provided for homeless persons. Schedule 2 states that: *“A tenancy granted by the landlord in pursuance of any function of the Executive under Part II of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 (housing the homeless) is not a secure tenancy unless the landlord has notified the tenant that the tenancy is to be regarded as a secure tenancy.”*
- 3.41 There are also a number of issues on which greater duties to work with housing authorities in discharging their homelessness duties are placed on other organisations than in Northern Ireland. Examples include the duty to assess a homeless person’s support needs and provide appropriate support in Scotland, the duty to refer in England, and the duties on housing associations to support local authorities in exercising their homelessness responsibilities in both Wales and Scotland. It may be, however, that the relatively small geographical scale of Northern Ireland compared to the other jurisdictions, alongside the centralisation of homelessness responsibilities under the Housing Executive, means that similar results can be achieved there without the necessity to resort to statute.

³⁷ [The Housing \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1983: Section 25 - Secure tenancies](#)

³⁸ [The Housing \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1983: Schedule 2 - Tenancies which are not secure tenancies](#)

4. HOMELESSNESS AND THE USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

This section of the report examines the data that describe the number of homeless households, particularly those owed a full duty (FDA), the demand for temporary accommodation, including Single Lets and Supporting People funded accommodation, and the location of this accommodation by local council area.

Demand for temporary accommodation

- 4.1 The Housing Executive has a statutory duty under the provisions of the Housing (NI) Order 1988, as amended, to investigate the circumstances of all applicants presenting as homeless. In carrying out its statutory duty to make enquiries into homelessness applications, the Housing Executive should consider whether or not the applicant is:
- Homeless/threatened with homelessness
 - Eligible for homelessness assistance
 - In priority need
 - Unintentionally or intentionally homeless
- 4.2 Where an applicant meets all of the legislative criteria, the Housing Executive awards Full Duty Applicant status (FDA), and undertakes a housing need assessment, with the award of relevant points in line with the rules of the Housing Selection Scheme. Any household that meets the four tests outlined above is therefore accepted as a FDA; the full housing duty owed to them includes ensuring that accommodation is made available for the household as well as the provision of temporary accommodation where necessary and assistance with the protection of the household's belongings. The Order also places a statutory duty on the Housing Executive to provide interim accommodation under certain circumstances pending a decision.
- 4.3 There are two main drivers of demand for temporary accommodation at any point in time. The first is the number of households applying to the Housing Executive for assistance on the grounds that they are homeless, who may need temporary accommodation as part of the interim duty while their circumstances are being assessed. The second group is those households who, after their circumstances have been assessed, are those for which the Housing Executive has accepted a phased discharge of the duty to rehouse. Throughout the report the second group is referred to as FDAs. FDAs form the majority of households that are placed in temporary accommodation. The following analysis focuses on FDA households who were placed in temporary accommodation in 2018/2019.
- 4.4 On 1 April 2018 the total number of households that had FDA status was **17,520**. In the following twelve months, 2018/2019, there were **18,202** applications to the Housing

Executive’s Area Housing Solutions Teams from households that said they were homeless (referred to as ‘homeless presentations’). There were **1,088** repeat homeless presentations (i.e. not necessarily discrete households) on at least one other occasion within the previous 365 days.³⁹

- 4.5 In 2018/2019, the Housing Executive accepted a statutory duty to re-house **12,512** households. This represents **71%** of our estimated number of discrete households. Table 3 and Figure 1 show the reasons why households that did not meet the Housing Executive’s homelessness tests⁴⁰ were not accepted as FDAs.

Table 3: Breakdown of reasons for non-acceptance as FDA of households presenting, 2018/2019

Reason for not being accepted as FDA	Number of Applicants	% of All Applications
Homelessness clearly prevented ⁴¹	15	0.08%
Household assessed as not homeless	1,652	9.08%
Household not in a priority need group	1,753	9.63%
Household considered intentionally homeless	213	1.17%
Household judged ineligible	233	1.28%
Application cancelled	194	1.07%
Application concluded ⁴²	1,225	6.73%
<u>Sub-total</u>	<u>5,285</u>	<u>29.04%</u>
No decision yet or subject to appeal	405	2.23%
TOTAL	5,690	31.27%

Source: Standard Reports drawn from the Housing Executive’s HMS

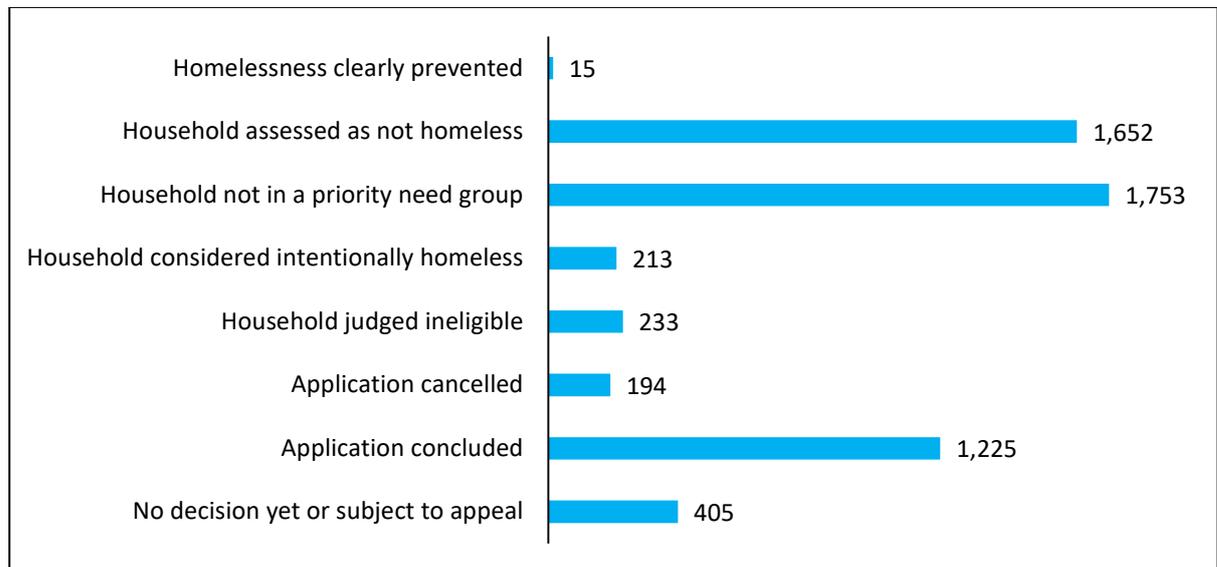
39 This figure assumes that the previous presentations were exactly evenly distributed throughout the period.

40 See Appendix 2, Definitions.

⁴¹ This is likely to be an underestimate as it is not a category staff routinely use on the HMS. It is possible that prevention activity may be taken, and that staff would then simply key ‘not homeless’. The mechanisms for recording prevention and sustainment activity need examination.

⁴² “Application concluded” includes circumstances where the applicant withdraws their application and where the Housing Executive loses contact with the applicant.

Figure 1: Reasons for Non-Acceptance of Households as FDA (N)



4.6 The priority needs accepted by the Housing Executive as being the basis for granting FDA status and the number of households with each type of need are set out in Table 4 and Figure 2.

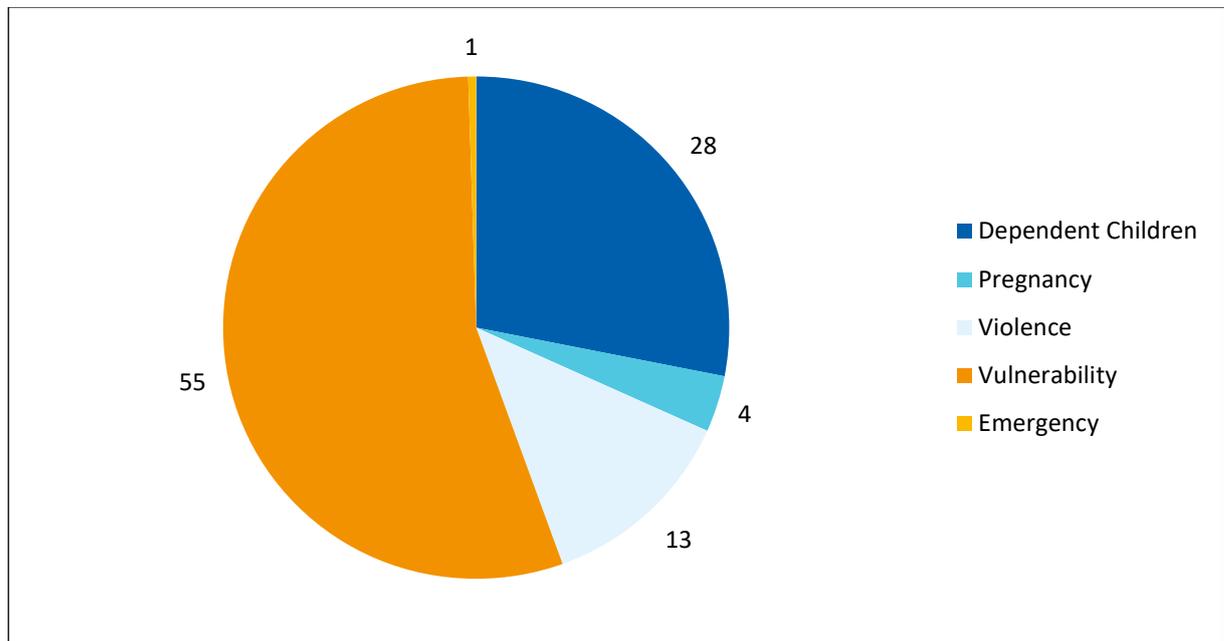
Table 4: Number of households accepted as FDA by priority need category

Priority Need Category	No of Households	% of all FDA households
Dependent Children	3,516	28.10%
Pregnancy	454	3.63%
Violence	1,591	12.72%
Vulnerability ⁴³	6,888	55.05%
Emergency	63	0.50%
TOTAL	12,512	100%

Source: Standard Reports drawn from the Housing Executive's HMS

⁴³ Vulnerability on grounds of old age, mental ill-health, physical ill-health or disability or youth

Figure 2: Households Accepted as FDA by Priority Need Category (%)



- 4.7 It is noticeable that the majority of FDA cases are accepted on the basis of vulnerability. This suggests that there may be a similar proportion of additional support needs alongside the need for accommodation.
- 4.8 The number of households accepted as an FDA in 2018/19 by council area is shown in Table 5 and Figure 3. This is presented as the proportion of the total number of applicants; and then indexed against the resident population of Northern Ireland as an indication of the prevalence of statutory homelessness in each area.

Table 5: Number of households accepted as FDA by council area

Council area	No of Households accepted as FDA	% of Total	Rate per '000 Resident Households
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,052	8.41%	18.87
Ards & North Down	1,156	9.24%	17.4
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	790	6.31%	9.79
Belfast	3,790	30.29%	26.39
Causeway Coast & Glens	689	5.51%	12.35
Derry & Strabane	1,315	10.51%	22.71
Fermanagh & Omagh	467	3.73%	10.77
Lisburn & Castlereagh	716	5.72%	12.71
Mid & East Antrim	1,088	8.70%	19.41
Mid Ulster	542	4.33%	10.61
Newry, Mourne & Down	907	7.25%	13.82
TOTAL	12,512	100%	

Source: Standard Reports drawn from the Housing Executive's HMS

Figure 3: Households Accepted as FDA by Council Area as a proportion of N.Ireland total (%)

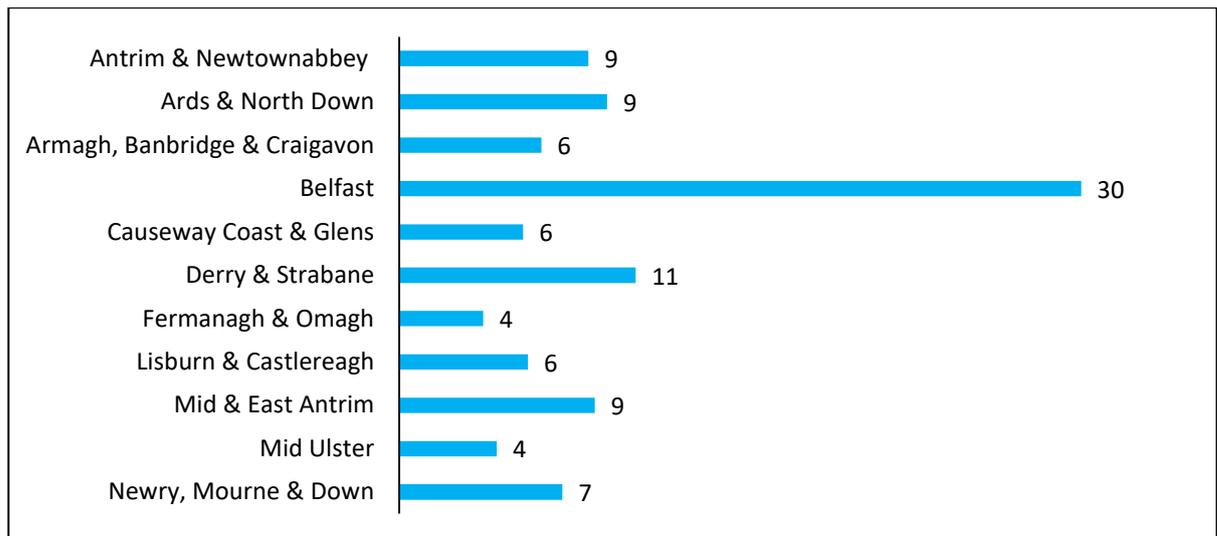
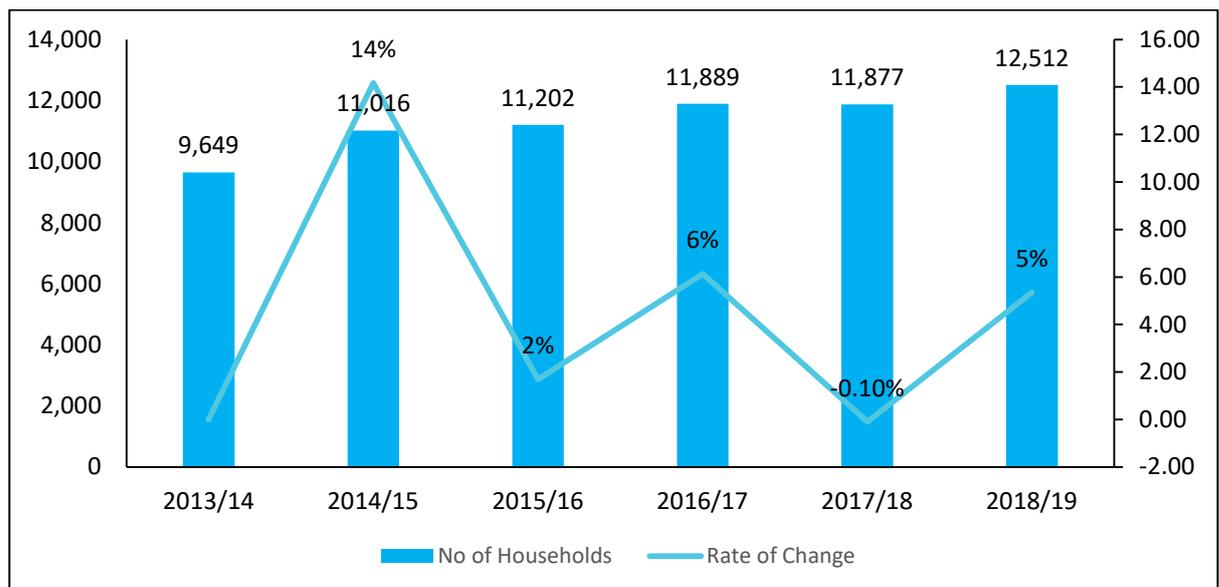


Table 6: Total FDA acceptances between 2013/14 and 2018/19

Year	No of Households	Rate of Change
2013/14	9,649	-
2014/15	11,016	+14.17%
2015/16	11,202	+1.69%
2016/17	11,889	+6.13%
2017/18	11,877	-0.10%
2018/19	12,512	+5.35%
2013 to 2019	68,145	+29.67%

Source: Homelessness Strategy Annual Progress Report, Housing Executive, 2019

Figure 4: Total FDA Acceptances between 2013/14 and 2018/19 – numbers and percentage change



4.12 The underlying trend is therefore one of a steady increase in FDA numbers. The number of FDA households between April 2013 and March 2019 increased by **30%**. Over the same period the number of presentations has fluctuated, but overall there is no increase, with the 2018/19 being lower than that in 2013/14. The same source shows that the rate of change in acceptances has been greater for childless households (increase of **33%** since 2013) than households with children (**24%** since 2013).

4.13 Table 7 (following page) and Figure 5 show the main reasons why people were homeless, what percentage this represents of the total of homeless households, and what percentage

of the households presenting to the Housing Executive as homeless for this reason were accepted as FDA cases in 2018/2019.

- 4.14 The most significant reason for homelessness is that the current Accommodation was judged Not Reasonable (ANR) because of either the household’s physical health or because of disability-related issues (**20%** of all applications). Elsewhere in the UK, it is likely that these needs would be dealt with by other means than accepting a homelessness responsibility (e.g. through adult social care services such as aids and adaptations or the allocation of social housing through medical priority rather than homelessness).
- 4.15 It is also interesting to note that the next most significant reason, a breakdown in sharing arrangements or family dispute, is high (**18%**) even though a relatively low proportion of applications on these grounds are actually accepted (**59%**).

Table 7: Breakdown of primary reason for homelessness — households accepted as FDA, 2018/2019

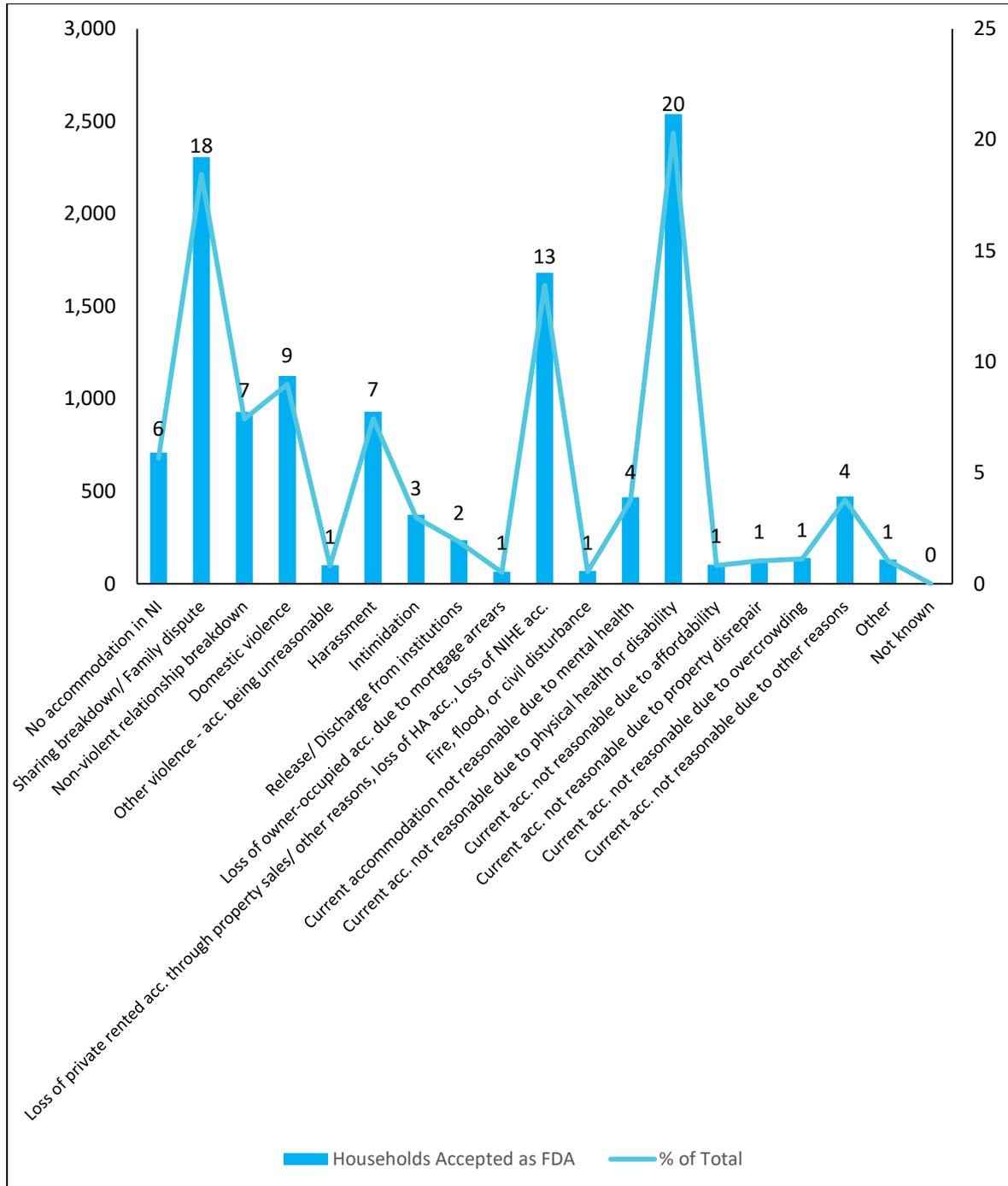
Primary Reason for Homelessness	Households accepted as FDA	% of Total accepted as FDA	Number of Presentations for that reason	% of Presentations with that Primary Reason Resulting in a Duty
Sharing breakdown / Family dispute	2,307	18.44%	3,890	59.31%
Loss of private rented accommodation through property sales	1,681	13.44%	2,779	60.51%
Loss of private rented accommodation for other reasons				
Loss of housing association accommodation				
Loss of Housing Executive accommodation				
Current accommodation not reasonable due to physical health or disability	2,540	20.30%	2,548	99.69%
Non-violent relationship breakdown	929	7.42%	1,804	51.50%
Harassment	931	7.44%	1,448	64.30%
No accommodation in Northern Ireland	710	5.67%	1,245	57.03%
Domestic violence	1,124	8.98%	1,174	95.74%
Current accommodation not reasonable due to other reasons	472	3.77%	946	49.89%
Intimidation	374	2.99%	481	77.75%

Current accommodation not reasonable due to mental health	468	3.74%	460	101.74% ⁴⁴
Release / Discharge from institutions	236	1.89%	339	69.62%
Current accommodation not reasonable due to affordability	104	0.83%	193	53.89%
Other	131	1.05%	174	75.29%
Current accommodation not reasonable due to property disrepair	130	1.04%	162	80.25%
Current accommodation not reasonable due to overcrowding	140	1.12%	162	86.42%
Loss of owner-occupied accommodation due to mortgage arrears	65	0.52%	123	52.85%
Other violence resulting in accommodation not reasonable	101	0.81%	117	86.32%
Fire, flood, or civil disturbance	69	0.55%	98	70.41%
Not known	0	0.00%	59	0%
TOTAL	12,512	100%	18202	68.74%

Source: Standard Reports drawn from the HMS

⁴⁴ The HMS table had 460 people presenting for this reason and 468 accepted with this reason. This may reflect the fact that by the time that the case is accepted as FDA there is a better understanding of the household's true needs.

Figure 5: Primary Reason for Homelessness amongst Households Accepted as FDA (%)



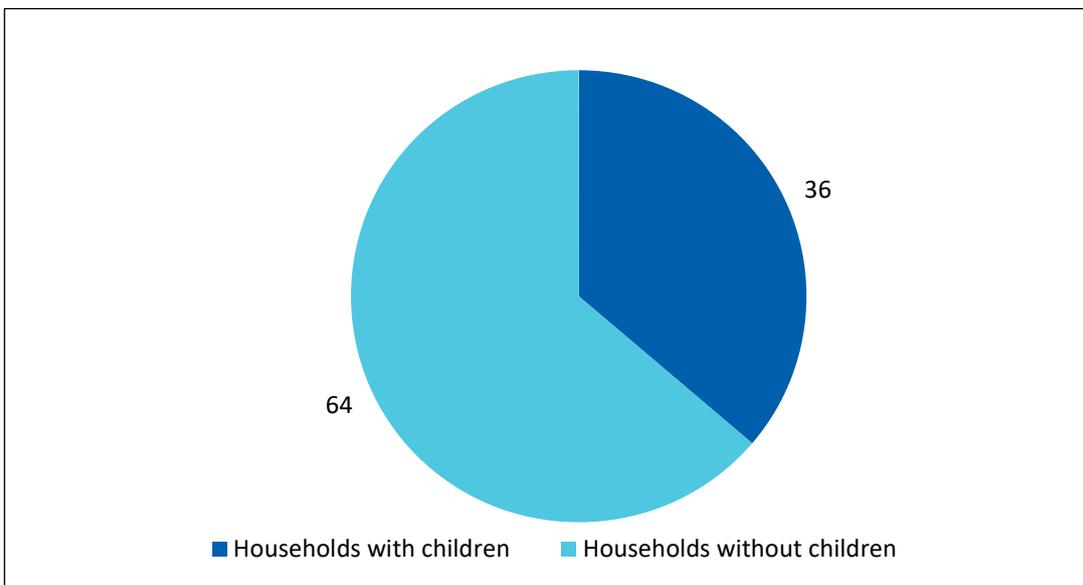
4.16 A simplified analysis of those accepted as FDA and the proportion of those households with or without children is presented in Table 8 and Figure 6.

Table 8: Number of households accepted as FDA by whether the household contains children or not

	Total	% of Total
Households with children	4,535	36.25%
Households without children	7,977	63.75%
TOTAL	12,512	100%

Source: Standard Reports drawn from the HMS system

Figure 6: Households with/without children accepted as FDA (%)



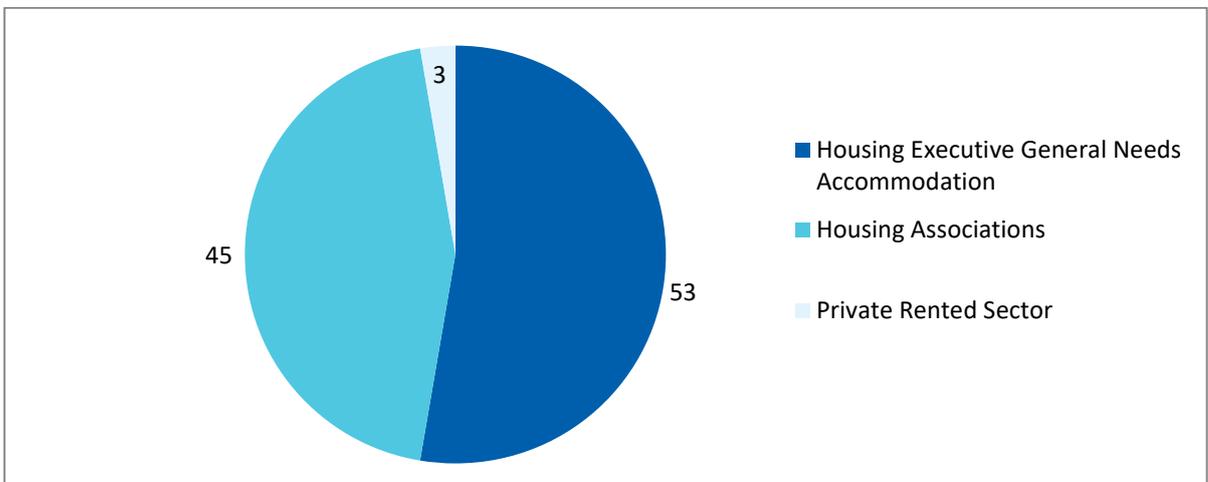
- 4.17 The Housing Executive met its housing duty to **6,949** households in 2018/19 (i.e. this is the number who were re-housed as FDA). This included **2,618** households who received FDA status during the year (**21%** of the total FDA cases accepted during the year and **30.83%** of the total number of households where duty was discharged).
- 4.18 In the 12 months to 31 March 2019 there were **9,784** households who had been awarded FDA status in 2018/19 but who were still in some form of temporary arrangement, including homeless at home or sharing with friends or family. This takes into account **110** households where the Housing Executive’s duty had ended because they had refused three reasonable offers of accommodation.
- 4.19 The following table (Table 9) and Figure 7 show the ownership of secure accommodation into which the **2,618** households accepted as FDA and re-housed during the year, moved when the Housing Executive’s duty was discharged.

Table 9: Type of accommodation into which households securing FDA status in 2018/19 were rehoused

Type of Accommodation household was rehoused in	Total	% of Total
Housing Executive General Needs Accommodation	1,379	52.67%
Housing Associations	1,169	44.65%
Private Rented Sector	70	2.67%
TOTAL	2,618	100%

Source: Standard Reports drawn from HMS system

Figure 7: Accommodation Types used to Rehouse FDA Households (%)



4.20 At the end of the year **19,679** households were registered as FDA. This is an increase of **2,159** on the previous year and represents a **12%** increase.⁴⁵

4.21 Only a minority of households (**2,097** households) who were still statutorily homeless at the end of the 2018/2019 year were living in temporary accommodation into which they had been placed by the Housing Executive. This number represents **11%** of the total FDA cohort. The question that this raises is: how satisfactory and how sustainable are the temporary accommodation arrangements that the remainder of the FDA cases have made? This issue is explored later in this report.

⁴⁵ There is an anomaly in the data provided by the Housing Executive. Taking into account the fact that 6,949 households were re-housed, but 12,512 households were added to the list, the total number of FDA cases should have increased by +5,563 households rather than +2,519 as indicated above.

Supply of temporary accommodation

- 4.22 A description of the various types of temporary accommodation commissioned or procured by the Housing Executive is set out in Section 3 above. In summary, there are five categories:
- Housing Executive hostels;
 - Voluntary sector hostels;⁴⁶
 - DIME (Dispersed Intensively Managed Emergency accommodation – leased accommodation);
 - Single Lets; and
 - B&Bs and hotels.
- 4.23 The number of ‘units of accommodation’⁴⁷ in each category varies from time to time. For that reason, it has not been possible to give precise numbers. The following table (Table 10) and Figures 8 and 9 are intended to give a guide to the number of units in each type of accommodation at 31 March 2019.

⁴⁶ This includes what is at different times referred to as “crisis accommodation” and “crash beds”

⁴⁷ The type of accommodation varies from scheme to scheme depending partly on the household size, and partly on which category of accommodation is being reviewed. There are a number of terms that can be applied to particular types of accommodation – for example, ‘bed spaces in hostel accommodation for single people; ‘flats’ for households of two or more people in mainstream accommodation; ‘rooms’ in B&B/ hotels. We have used a generic term – ‘units of accommodation’ – in this paragraph and elsewhere in the report to cover a variety of different types of accommodation.

Table 10: Approximate number of units of each category of temporary accommodation at 31 March 2019

Type of Unit	Approx. Number of Units	% of HE Contracted Units	% of All Units
Housing Executive Hostels ¹	146	9.71%	5.30%
Voluntary Sector Hostel ²	1,280	85.16%	46.49%
DIME accommodation	77	5.12%	2.80%
<u>Total – Supported Accommodation Units</u>	<u>1,503</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>54.59%</u>
Single Lets ³	c. 1,200		43.59%
Hotel B&B ⁴	c. 50		1.82%
Approx. TOTAL – All units	2,753		100%

Source: Housing Executive HMS

Notes:

1. The Housing Executive hostels total includes 43 units that are staffed as floating support.
2. Voluntary Sector hostel numbers are based on the Strategic Risk Assessment spreadsheet for the homelessness sector, which did not include schemes specifically for young people, but under certain circumstances these may be used by the Housing Executive as temporary accommodation. Between 50% and 67% of these units might be used as temporary accommodation at any time, depending on the pattern of allocations and the % referred by the Housing Executive vs. % referred by other agencies or housed through self-referral.
3. This number might vary between 1,000 and 1,250 depending on the balance between demand for temporary accommodation and the availability of contracted units. As of 4/6/19 for example this was 1,187 units if the Syrian Resettlement Programme was excluded as not being relevant to this analysis.
4. This number refers to a typical number of placements rather than the number of B&B units the Housing Executive can access.

Figure 8: Categories of Temporary Accommodation Units (% of HE contracted units)

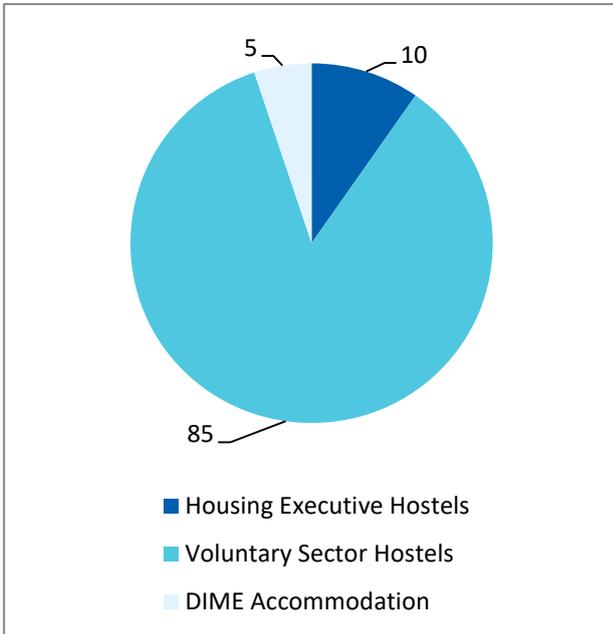
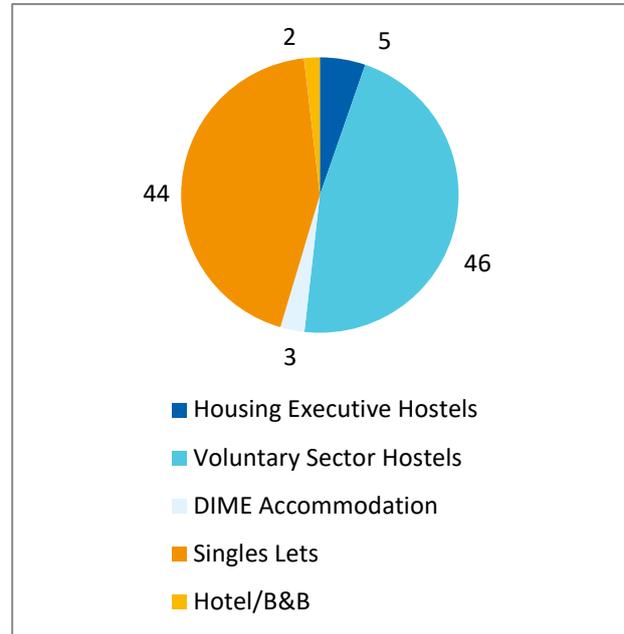


Figure 9: Categories of Temporary Accommodation units (% of all units)



- 4.24 The number of formally contracted units available to the Housing Executive from its own hostels, voluntary sector hostels and the DIME accommodation scheme is around 1,503 units. The shortfall in demand for temporary accommodation is made up from a variable number of units purchased from private landlords as single lets or from B&B/ hotels.
- 4.25 Participants in the stakeholder consultations highlighted a number of gaps in provision. These included the need for specialist temporary accommodation for people with complex needs, addiction issues, criminal records, learning difficulties, with further gaps in provision for older offenders with mobility concerns, prison leavers and harder to reach categories such as those without a mental health diagnosis and those not engaging in services. Participants said that people with accessibility and mobility issues have very limited choice.

Location of temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation funded by Supporting People

- 4.26 More than three quarters of the temporary accommodation funded by Supporting People⁴⁸ is provided by the voluntary sector (**83%**); **11%** of units are provided by the Housing Executive; and the leased accommodation owned and managed by a provider of

⁴⁸ At 31 March 2019, the Supporting People budget funded voluntary sector hostels, DIME accommodation and Housing Executive hostels

DIME accommodation under a contract with the Housing Executive accounts for **6%**. Table 11 and Figure 10 show the distribution of these units between council areas.

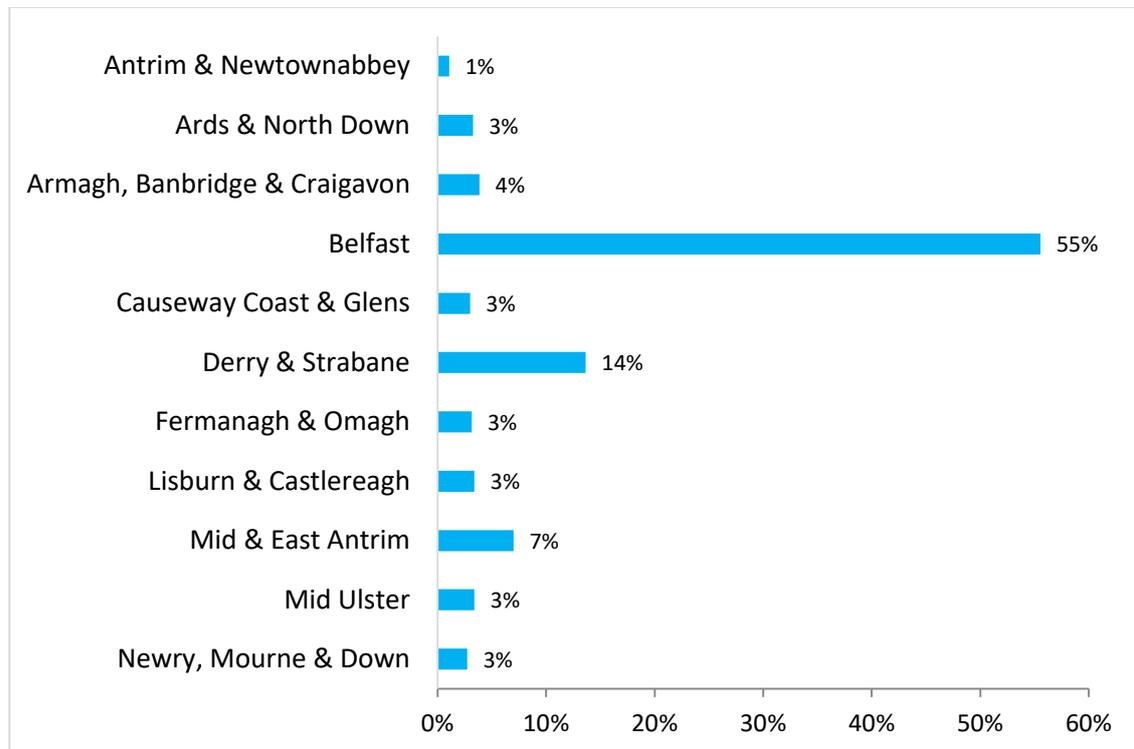
Table 11: Breakdown of SP-funded temporary accommodation by Council area

Council Area	Number of Units	% of Total
Antrim & Newtownabbey	16	1.06%
Ards & North Down	49	3.26%
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	58	3.86%
Belfast ⁴⁹	835	55.55%
Causeway Coast & Glens	45	2.99%
Derry & Strabane	205	13.64%
Fermanagh & Omagh	47	3.13%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	51	3.39%
Mid & East Antrim	105	6.99%
Mid Ulster	51	3.39%
Newry, Mourne & Down	41	2.73%
TOTAL	1,503	100%

Source: Supporting People Strategic Risk Assessment

⁴⁹ This total includes 43 units of temporary accommodation at Grainne House and Laburnum Walk, which is categorised by Supporting People as Floating Support

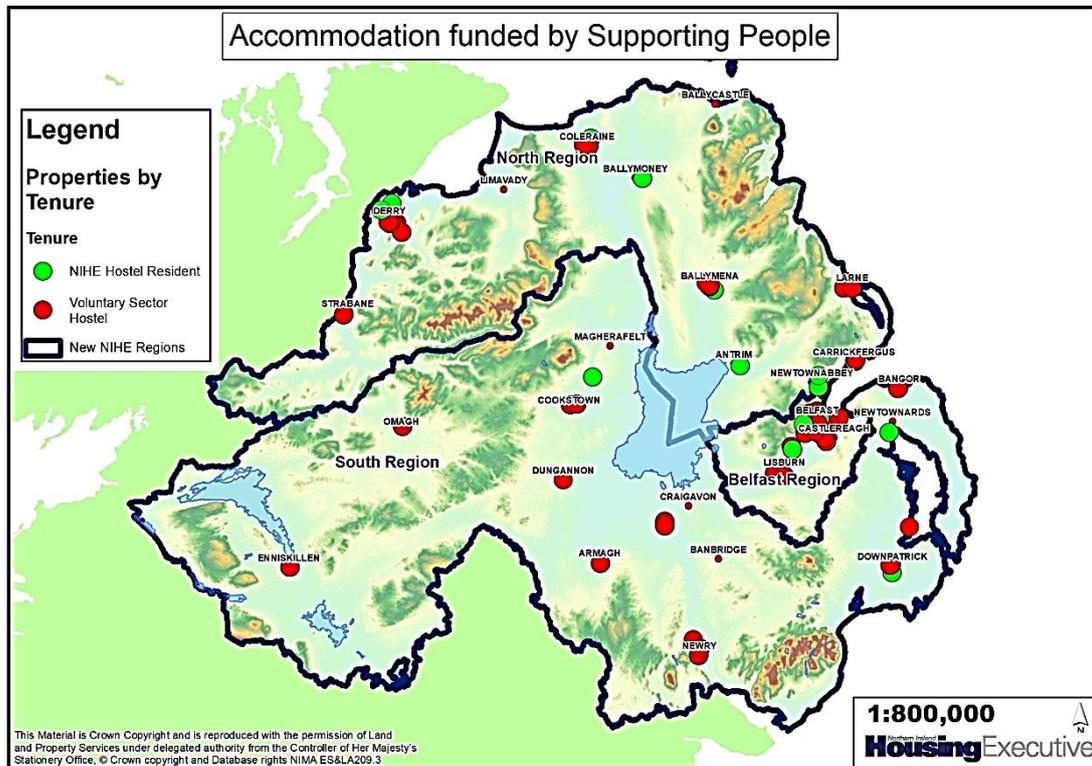
Figure 10: SP-Funded Temporary Accommodation by Council Area (% of Total)



4.27 Just over half of the available Supporting People funded temporary accommodation is located in Belfast (**56%**), with **14%** in Derry and Strabane. There are relatively small numbers of units available in the other council areas.

4.28 Map 2 shows the geographical distribution of accommodation funded by Supporting People

Map 2: Accommodation funded by Supporting People (Source: Housing Executive GIS Department)



4.29 The map shows that much of the provision is clustered around Greater Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, with the remainder being in most cases single hostels located in the larger market towns. There is very little provision in rural areas.

4.30 Participants in the stakeholder consultations agreed that provision of temporary accommodation across Northern Ireland as a whole favours Belfast and Derry/Londonderry with very little in rural towns. It was said that the lack of temporary accommodation in rural areas results in referrals having to be made outside the area. Housing Executive.

4.31 Supporting People funded provision for homeless households is intended for a series of broadly defined client groups. The number and percentage of units in each type of accommodation are shown in Table 12 and Figure 11 (following pages).

Table 12: Breakdown of Supporting People funded temporary accommodation by client group

Client Group Category	Number of units	% of units
Homeless Families with Support Needs	386	25.68%
Offenders or People at risk of offending ⁵⁰	82	5.46%
People with Drug and Alcohol Problems ⁵¹	147	9.78%
Single Homeless Crisis Accommodation	38	2.52%
Single Homeless with Support Needs	711	47.31%
Women at Risk of Domestic Violence	139	9.25%
TOTAL	1,503	100%

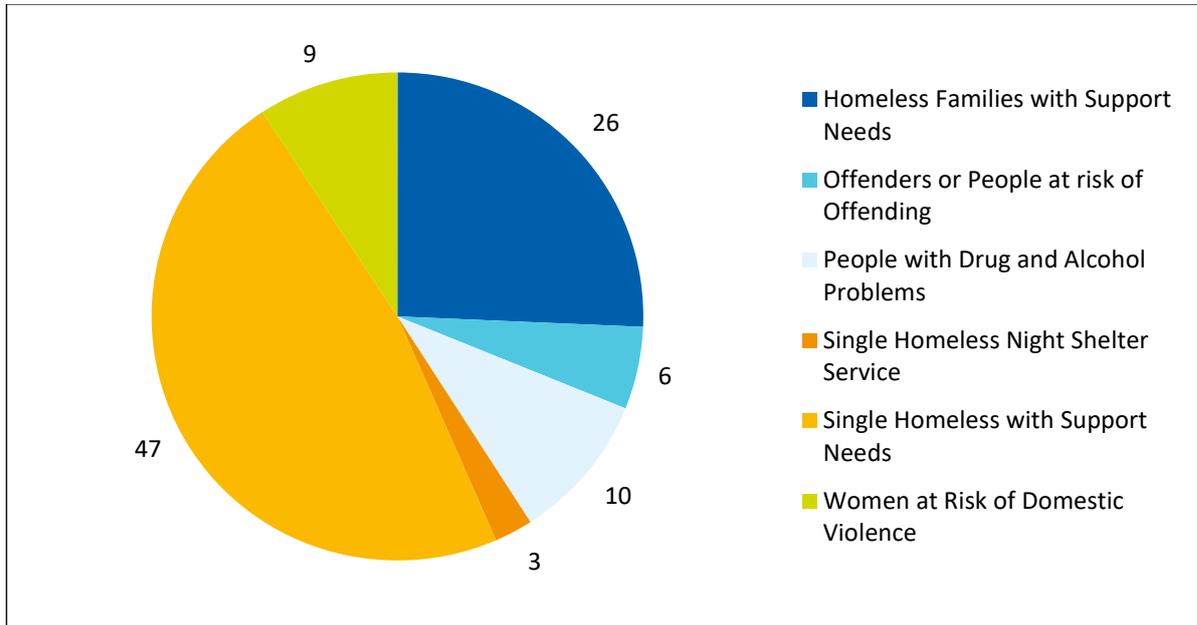
Source: Supporting People Strategic Risk Assessment

4.32 There is no single homeless provision in Antrim & Newtownabbey or Fermanagh & Omagh. There is no supported provision for homeless families in Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, Lisburn & Castlereagh or Mid Ulster.

⁵⁰ Accommodation for offenders and people at risk of offending, and for people with alcohol problems is included in the definition of temporary accommodation for single homeless households by Supporting People but may have specialised features which give it a dual function.

⁵¹ The Cuan Mhuire service in Newry has been removed from this analysis because, although counted in the HE number of schemes for people with drug and alcohol addiction, it is part of a treatment centre and is not temporary accommodation *per se*.

Figure 11: SP Funded Temporary Accommodation by Client Group (%)



Temporary accommodation provided in Single Lets

4.33 The following analysis examines the number and location of temporary accommodation bed spaces available through Single Lets. The number of Single Lets available is changing all the time. A census of provision on 4 June 2019 found that there were **1,187** Single Lets occupied.⁵² This was broken down by council area as follows (Table 13 and Figure 13).

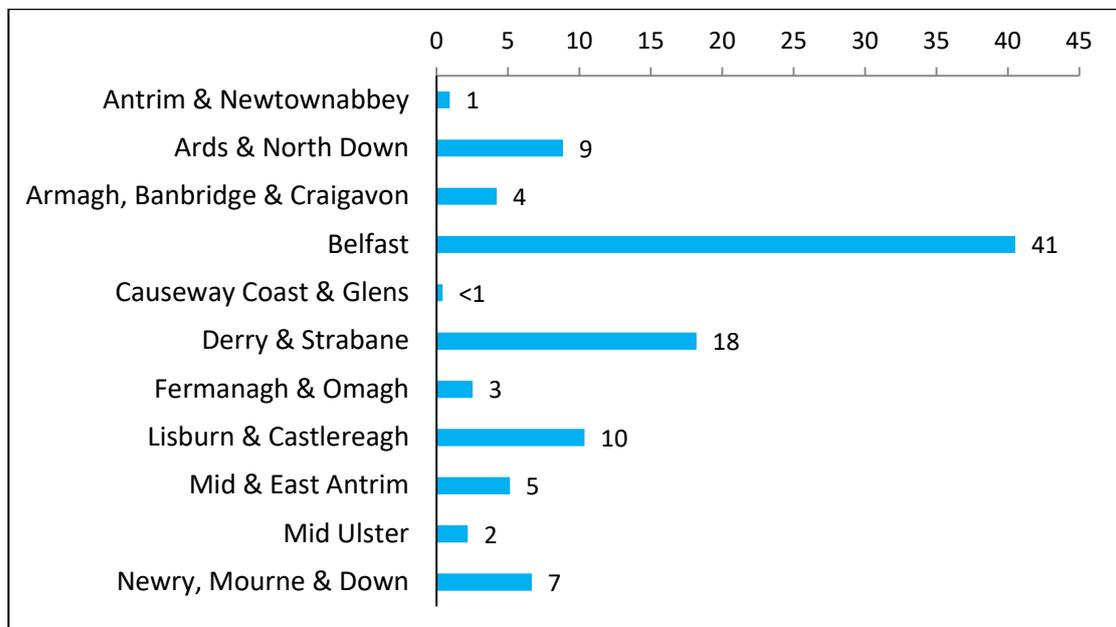
⁵² This excludes the Syrian resettlement Programme.

Table 13: Breakdown of Single Lets properties by Council Area

Council Area	Number of Properties	% of Total Single Lets
Antrim & Newtownabbey	11	0.93%
Ards & North Down	105	8.85%
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	50	4.21%
Belfast	481	40.52%
Causeway Coast & Glens	5	0.42%
Derry & Strabane	216	18.20%
Fermanagh & Omagh	30	2.53%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	123	10.36%
Mid & East Antrim	61	5.14%
Mid Ulster	26	2.19%
Newry, Mourne & Down	79	6.66%
TOTAL	1,187	100%

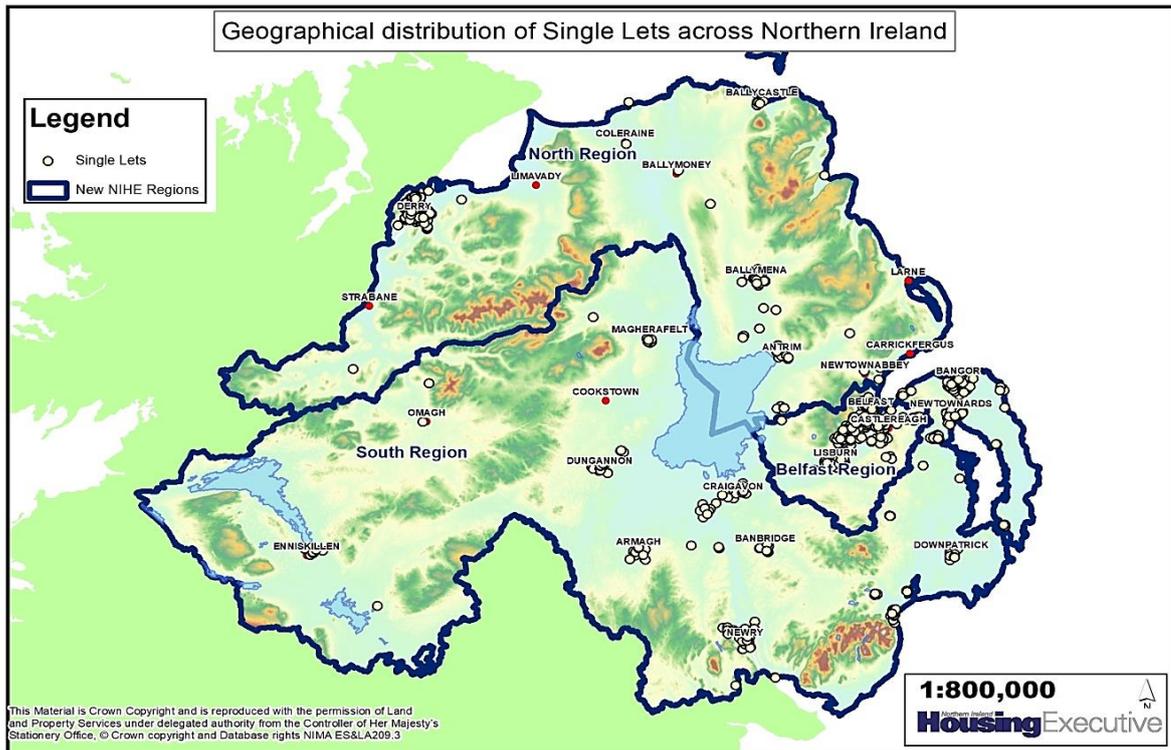
Source: Census of Single Lets on 4 June 2019

Figure 12: Breakdown of Single Lets Properties by Council Area (% of Total)



- 4.34 Map 3 shows the geographical distribution of Single Lets across Northern Ireland. The accommodation clusters are mainly in Greater Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, with some smaller clusters in the South East and in market towns like Enniskillen, Omagh, Ballymena and Newry. There is almost no provision in rural areas away from the larger market towns.

Map 3: Geographical distribution of Single Lets across Northern Ireland (Source: Housing Executive GIS Department)



Overview of Supporting People funded accommodation and single lets by location

- 4.35 Putting both types of temporary accommodation together (Single Lets and Supporting People funded temporary accommodation), the distribution by council area is set out in Table 14⁵³ (following page) and Figure 13.
- 4.36 Following Figure 13, Map 4 shows the combined distribution of accommodation funded by Supporting People and Single lets.

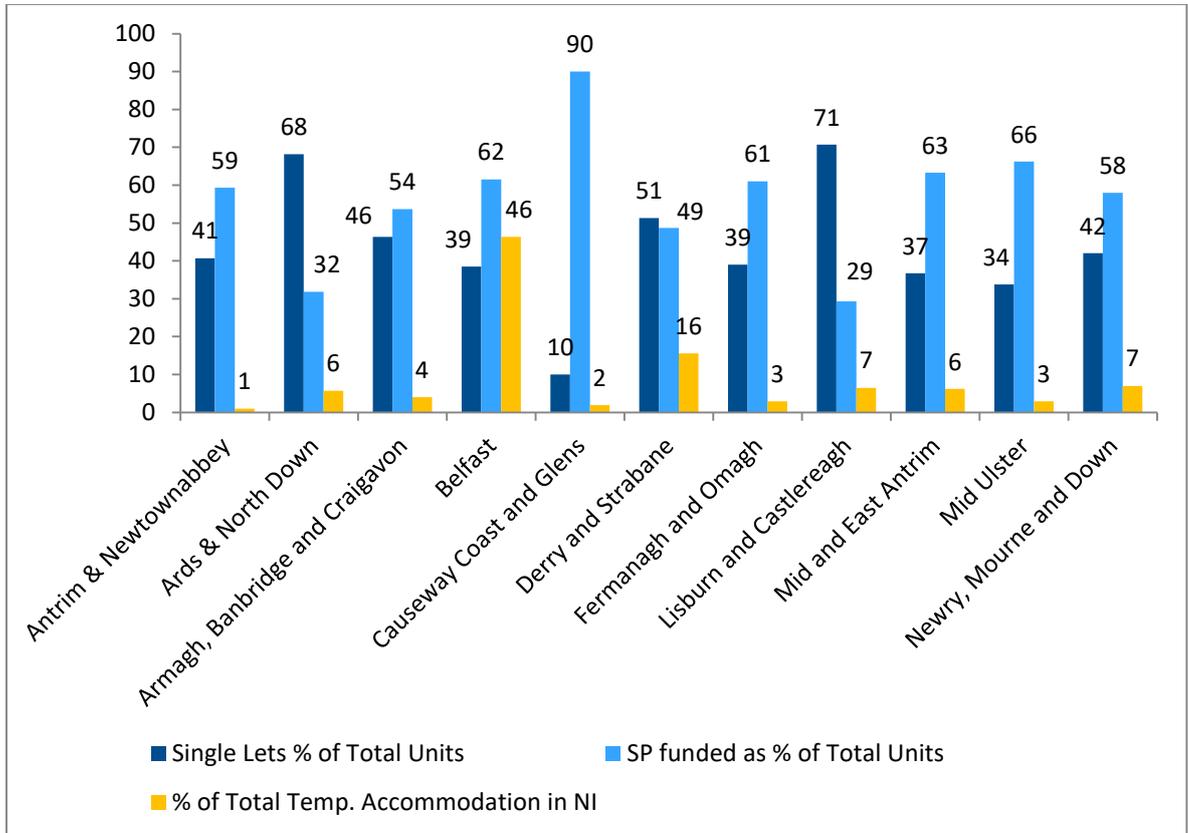
⁵³ The total number of Supporting People funded units plus Single Lets shown in this table differs from that shown in Table 7 because Table 7 included an estimate of the number of units at 31/1/19 whereas this table is based on the census of 4/6/19.

Table 14: Distribution of all temporary accommodation resources by Council area

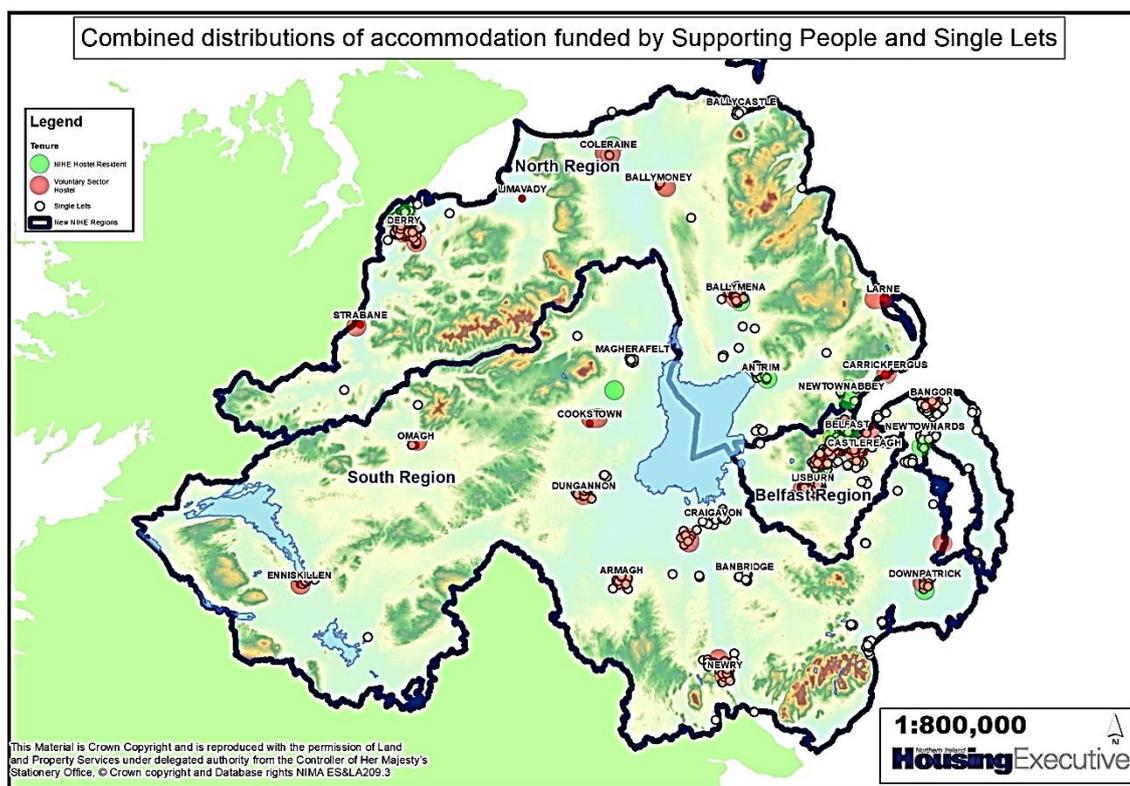
Council Area	Number of Single Lets Properties in area	Number of SP-funded units in area	Total Units of Temporary Accommodation in area	Single Lets as % of Total Units	SP-funded as % of Total Units	% of All NI Temporary Accommodation in area	% of Total NI FDA Acceptances in area	% of total placements made
Antrim & Newtownabbey	11	16	27	40.74%	59.26%	1.00%	8.41%	2.36%
Ards & North Down	105	49	154	68.18%	31.82%	5.72%	9.24%	4.92%
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	50	58	108	46.30%	53.70%	4.01%	6.31%	5.40%
Belfast	481	835	1,316	36.55%	63.45%	48.92%	30.29%	39.39%
Causeway Coast & Glens	5	45	50	10.00%	90.00%	1.86%	5.51%	3.37%
Derry & Strabane	216	205	421	51.31%	48.69%	15.65%	10.51%	19.08%
Fermanagh & Omagh	30	47	77	38.96%	61.04%	2.86%	3.73%	4.47%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	123	51	174	70.69%	29.31%	6.47%	5.72%	6.41%
Mid & East Antrim	61	105	166	36.75%	63.25%	6.17%	8.70%	7.57%
Mid Ulster	26	51	77	33.77%	66.23%	2.86%	4.33%	3.19%
Newry, Mourne & Down	79	41	120	65.83%	34.17%	4.46%	7.25%	3.85%
Total Temporary Accommodation in NI	1,187	1,503	2,690	44.13%	55.87%	100%	100%	100%

Sources: Supporting People Strategic Risk Assessment and Census of Single Lets on 4 June 2019

Figure 13: All Temporary Accommodation Resources by Council Area (%)



Map 4: Combined distributions of accommodation funded by Supporting People and Single Lets
(Source: Housing Executive GIS Department)



- 4.37 When the two main types of temporary accommodation are mapped in combination, the clustering of such accommodation around Belfast and to a far lesser extent around Derry/Londonderry, becomes clear. Rural provision is sparse. This raises important questions for the Housing Executive in terms of rural policy, in that homeless people living in small rural communities would usually be required to relocate to a larger town or city if they required temporary accommodation. This has implications particularly for those who are in work, and for families with children at school. The lack of provision outside towns may be a factor in homeless households turning down offers of temporary accommodation.
- 4.38 The data in Table 14 show how dependent some offices that do not have very much Supporting People funded accommodation are on Single Lets. For example, **71%** of the temporary accommodation available in Lisburn & Castlereagh is composed of Single Lets. Even in Derry & Strabane, which has a relatively high proportion of accommodation funded by Supporting People, **51%** of the area's temporary accommodation is Single Lets.

- 4.39 Furthermore, Table 14 shows that the provision of temporary accommodation is very much concentrated in Belfast – **49%** of Northern Ireland provision is situated in the city, compared with 30.29% of homeless acceptances (2018/2019). Derry & Strabane council is also well provided with **16%** of all temporary accommodation, and **11%** of homeless acceptances. Potentially this reflects the fact that the two principal urban areas act as a magnet for the immediately surrounding areas, but the extent to which this is a true reflection of consumer choice is unknown.
- 4.40 The council areas that appear to be most under resourced are Antrim & Newtownabbey which has **8%** of homeless acceptances but only **1%** of temporary accommodation provision; and Causeway Coast & Glens, which has **2%** of all temporary accommodation, but **6%** of all homeless acceptances.

5. EVALUATION OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION BY TYPE, LOCATION AND QUALITY IN RELATION TO NEED

This section of the report focusses on two themes: the difficulty faced by the Housing Executive in matching the demand for temporary accommodation with supply; and the need to find ways of providing both temporary housing and support for the high proportion of homeless households that have complex needs or are at risk of harm to or from others or themselves.

Access to temporary accommodation

- 5.1 For most types of temporary accommodation, the access arrangements are straightforward in that the Housing Executive refers the household directly to the temporary accommodation provider. This applies to Single Lets, the Housing Executive's own hostels and DIME accommodation.
- 5.2 However, this does not apply to voluntary sector hostels. As independent, charitable bodies, these hostels do not exist solely to meet the demands of the Housing Executive in discharging its homelessness duties. Hostels take referrals from a wide range of sources including other homelessness and advice agencies and by self-referral.
- 5.3 The Housing Executive does not at present require voluntary sector providers funded through the Supporting People programme to notify it when a household is admitted to their services.
- 5.4 Due to the lack of comprehensive information about households using temporary accommodation in the voluntary sector, a bespoke exercise (termed 'Provider Census') was carried out by the Housing Executive to establish who was using this accommodation and what proportion came directly from the Housing Executive to meet its statutory temporary accommodation duty to FDA households. The Provider Census recorded the status of the people living in voluntary sector and DIME accommodation on the night of 4 June 2019 in relation to three aspects of their situation:
 - Whether they had 'registered as homeless' with the Housing Executive;
 - Whether they had FDA status; and
 - Whether they were referred to the hostel by the Housing Executive or gained access through some other route.

5.5 It became clear as the analysis progressed that there was broadly a hierarchical relationship between these three factors, and the following analysis is structured to reflect this.

Registered as Homeless

5.6 Initially, the total number of households where the provider stated that they were registered with the Housing Executive as homeless across all types of Supporting People funded temporary accommodation was **1,045** households (**91%** of the total population on that night). It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the majority of the hostel population are known to the Housing Executive’s homelessness teams and have at some point made an application to them as homeless.

FDA status

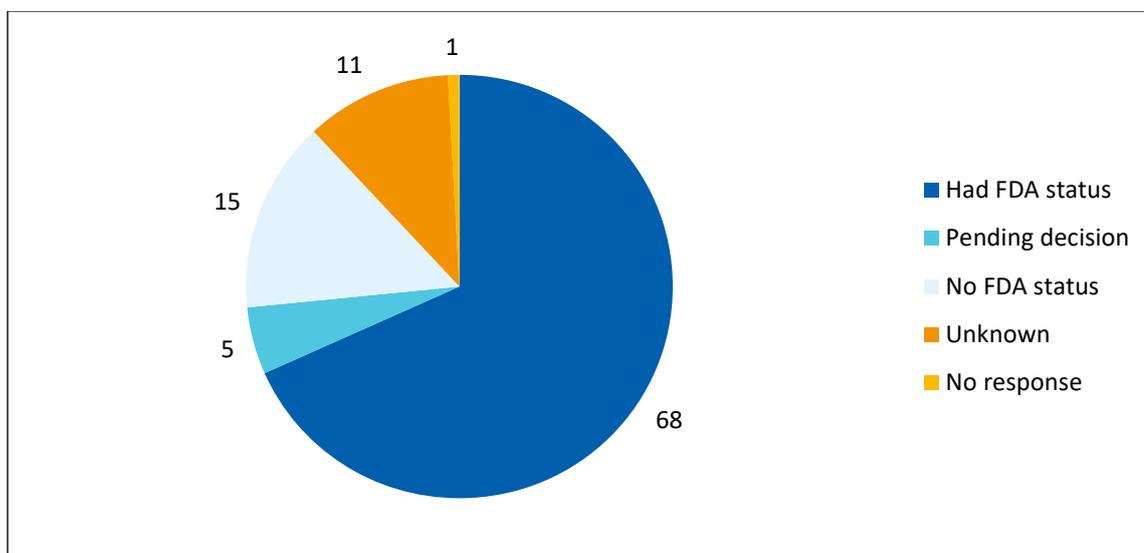
5.7 Next, providers were asked whether each household had FDA status. The results were as follows (Table 15 and Figure 14).

Table 15: Number of households identified in the Provider Census that had FDA status

FDA status	No. of Households	% of Households
Had FDA status	784	68.29%
Pending decision	59	5.14%
No FDA status	168	14.63%
Unknown	127	11.06%
No response	10	0.87%
Total	1,148	100%

Source: Provider Census

Figure 14: Households (%) in voluntary sector hostels with FDA Status



- 5.8 Providers said that **784** households had FDA status (**68%** of all households in the census).⁵⁴ If the unknown and no response categories are removed, the proportion with FDA status increased to **78%**. **168** households (**17%** of households if unknown and no response are excluded) were not FDA.
- 5.9 Given that there is a shortage of temporary accommodation for FDA households, it was considered interesting to establish whether the **17%** of non-FDA households would have been considered as FDA had they applied to the Housing Executive and therefore would have qualified for temporary accommodation. The Provider Census showed that in **37** of the 168 non-FDA cases the provider said that they believed that the resident would be considered FDA if they presented to the Housing Executive.
- 5.10 To put the issue another way: is this a route through which households that would not qualify for Housing Executive assistance (possibly because they did not meet all the statutory tests) can receive supported temporary accommodation?

⁵⁴ This figure differs markedly from the published figure for temporary accommodation in voluntary sector hostels in the HE homelessness statistics.

Type of accommodation

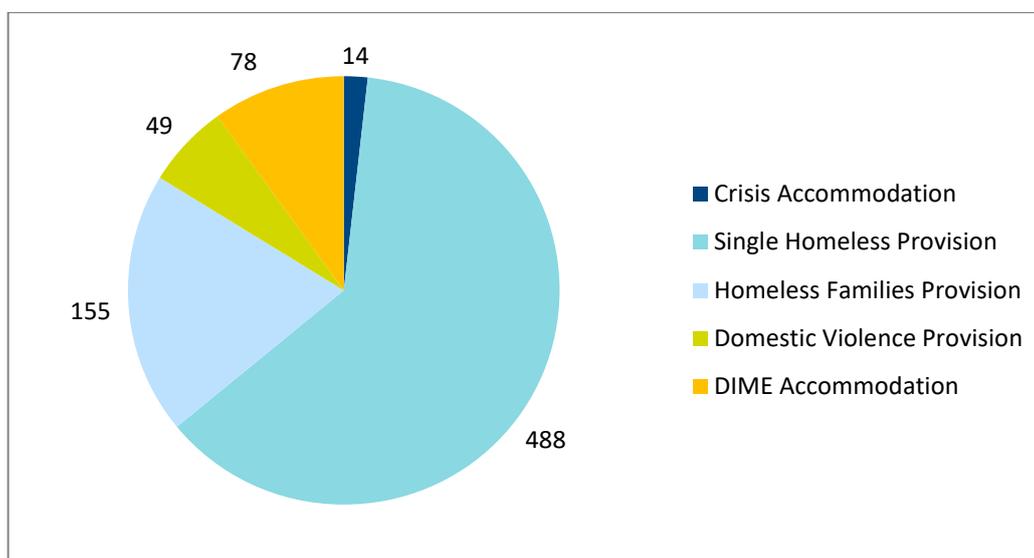
5.11 The number of households that were categorised as FDA and resident in the different types of Supporting People funded accommodation were also identified (Table 16 and Figure 15).

Table 16: Numbers of households who are an FDA by Type of Hostel

Hostel Sector	No. of FDA Households	% of all Households in Hostel Type
Crisis Accommodation	14	73.68%
Single Homeless Provision	488	59.30%
Homeless Families Provision	155	98.10%
Domestic Violence Provision	49	70.00%
DIME accommodation	78	100%
Total	784	68.29%

Source: Provider Census

Figure 15: FDA Households by Type of Hostel (N)



5.12 The proportion of residents in each sector that are FDA varies significantly. Homeless families' provision (98%) and DIME accommodation (100%) were almost entirely occupied on the census night by households that had FDA status – reflecting the referral

arrangements for these services. In contrast, only 59% of households in voluntary sector single homeless accommodation had FDA status. This result would seem to reinforce the need for the Housing Executive to find out more about the housing status and needs of the non-FDA occupants in voluntary sector single homeless hostels.

Sources of referral

- 5.13 Providers reported that of the **784** cases that were FDA, only **485** were referred through the Housing Executive (**62%**). According to providers of the accommodation, a number of the households referred by the Housing Executive were not in fact FDA cases. It could be that when those who were not FDA were initially referred this was on the basis that their homeless status was under investigation but subsequently they were found not to meet the criteria, but they stayed in the accommodation.
- 5.14 The stated source of referral for all households reported as FDA is set out in Table 17 and Figure 16 (following page).

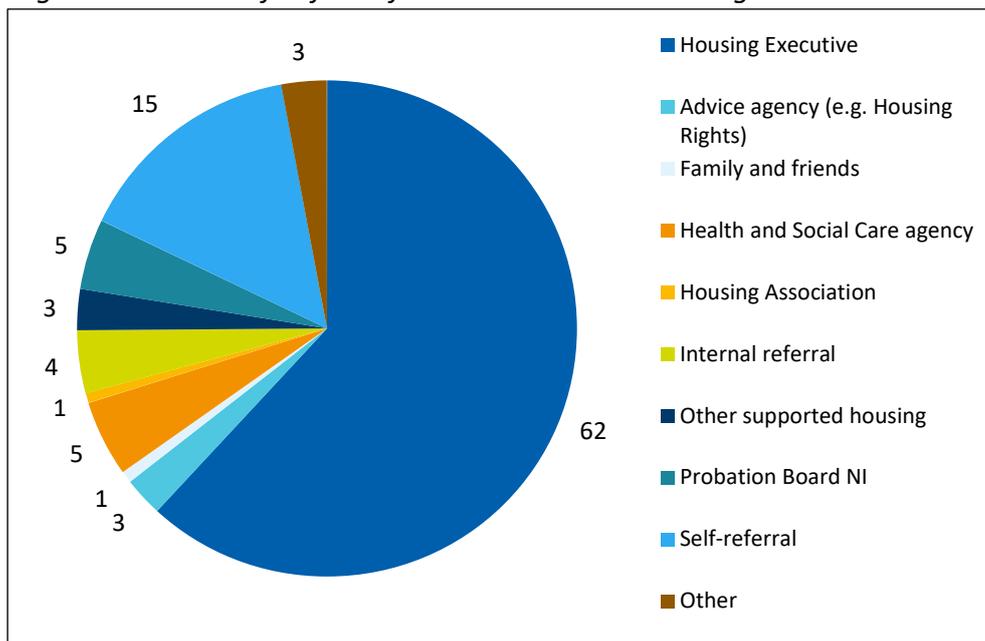
Table 17: Source of referral for households on census night who had FDA status

Referral Route	No of Households classified as FDA	% of Households classified as FDA
Housing Executive	485	61.86%
Advice agency (e.g. Housing Rights)	20	2.55%
Family and friends	6	0.77%
Health and Social Care agency	39	4.97%
Housing Association	5	0.64%
Internal referral ⁵⁵	32	4.08%
Other supported housing	21	2.68%
Probation Board NI	36	4.59%
Self-referral	117	14.92%
Other	23	2.93%
Total	784	100%

Source: Provider Census

⁵⁵ This figure may include households whose original referral was from NIHE or any of the other options

Figure 16: Source of Referral for Residents on Census Night who had FDA Status (%)



5.15 If the judgement that these households were FDA is correct, then this indicates that in many cases the household has either taken the responsibility to refer themselves into temporary accommodation or allowed another agency to take the initiative after having presented to the Housing Executive as homeless. It should be noted, however, that the census reported on what was essentially a self-declaration basis by the provider organisation rather than a declaration by the resident or on the basis of documentary evidence.

5.16 Reviewing the source of referral by type of temporary accommodation:

- The Housing Executive makes some referrals to each type of accommodation, but numerically, most referrals go to single homeless provision, homeless families’ provision and DIME accommodation;
- The Housing Executive’s referrals account for **100%** of those people living in DIME accommodation, **92%** of those living in homeless families’ accommodation and **68%** of those living in crisis accommodation;
- There is a significant number of self-referrals to single homeless provision (**22%** of referrals to that type of accommodation);
- **26%** of referrals to crisis accommodation are described as ‘internal referrals’, which the research team understands as predominantly being referrals from

within the provider organisation, which would fit a pattern of nightly bookings or of a move from one room to another.

- 5.17 There is a spread of different referral organisations to domestic violence provision including advice agencies (**17%**), Health & Social Care Trusts (**17%**), self-referral (**13%**), internal referral – i.e. moves within the provider’s services (**17%**) and ‘other’ (**19%**).

Usage of temporary accommodation – details of placements

- 5.18 This section of the report analyses the number of households that were placed in temporary accommodation during 2018/2019. The difference between a ‘placement in temporary accommodation’ and an ‘episode of homelessness’ is explained in Appendix 2, Definitions.
- 5.19 The Housing Executive made a total of **3,354** placements in temporary accommodation during 2018/2019. This represented **2,384** discrete households being placed in some form of temporary accommodation (several in more than one placement over the year). The average number of placements per household was **1.4**.
- 5.20 Campbell Tickell used the record of temporary accommodation placements since 2013 to identify separate temporary accommodation episodes as opposed to placements for those temporary accommodation episodes that ended in 2018/19. In order to do this, we treated any placement that started within 5 days of the previous placement ending as part of the same “episode”. On this basis the total number of separate temporary accommodation episodes was calculated as **2,149**.⁵⁶
- 5.21 A further analysis was carried out of the Housing Executive’s data on the number of households leaving temporary accommodation in 2018/19. This sought to identify the number of cases where the same household had multiple placements in the year, and whether these could be said to be part of a single episode of homelessness or of more than one episode of homelessness. The analysis was also based on the assumption that the gap between placements had to be at least five days in order to count as a separate episode of homelessness.

⁵⁶ This exercise required a considerable amount of data cleansing and certain assumptions had to be made in order to resolve data entries that were contradictory or impossible in practice to be true e.g. start dates being set after termination dates. The results therefore have to be viewed with some caution and as indicative rather than totally accurate.

5.22 **425** households were found to have had more than one temporary accommodation placement in the year, but only **120 (28%)** of those could be said to have had more than one episode of homelessness. Otherwise they were simply moving from one address to another or indeed one room to another in a hostel. This illustrates the point but is not a complete analysis of repeat episodes.

5.23 Keeping the possibility of multiple placements in mind, Table 18 and Figure 17 shows the number of placements into different types of temporary accommodation in 2018/2019.

Table 18: Total number of placements into temporary accommodation by type in 2018/19

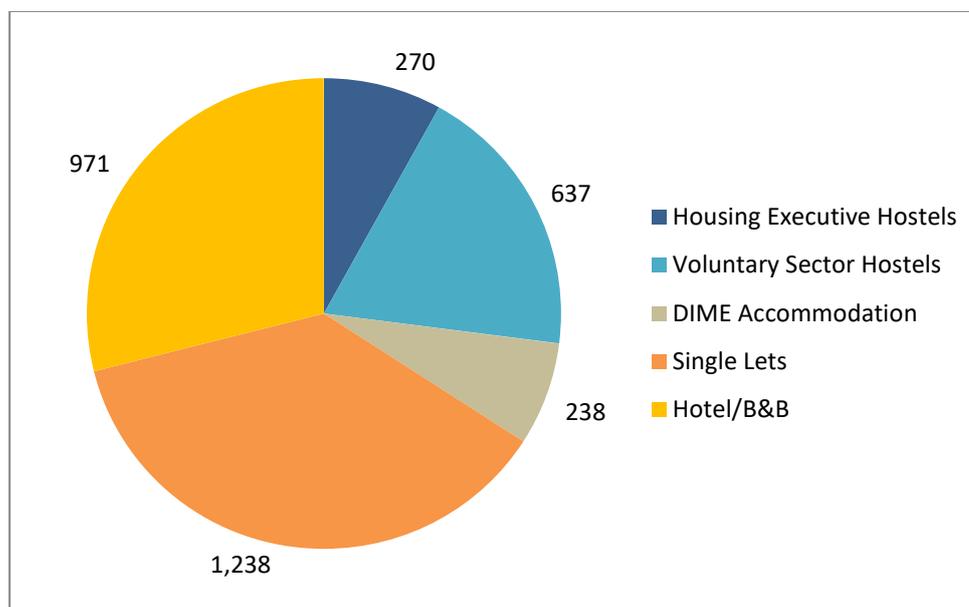
Temporary Accommodation Type	No of Placements	% of Total
Housing Executive Hostels ⁵⁷	270	8.05%
Voluntary Sector Hostels ⁵⁸	637	18.99%
Leased Property/DIME accommodation	238	7.10%
Single Lets	1,238	36.91%
Hotel/ B&B	971	28.95%
TOTAL	3,354	100%

Source: Standard Reports drawn from HMS system

⁵⁷ The number of placements in the Housing Executive’s own hostels will be over-stated in these figures as two hostels – Grosvenor House and Moyard House – are routinely recorded as HE hostel placements although they are in fact voluntary sector hostels. Voluntary Sector Hostels are consequently under-stated.

⁵⁸ There are 1,280 voluntary sector bed-spaces but 637 placements in them during the year by the Housing Executive. Supporting People data show that occupancy rates in these schemes are high. There are two possible explanations for this apparent anomaly: Residents might stay in a hostel for more than one year so that the vacancy rate is a better measure of the proportion of placements taken up by FDA applicants. More significantly, voluntary sector homelessness hostels frequently take in homeless people who are either self-referring or referred by agencies other than the Housing Executive. Referrals from other sources are not required to register with the Housing Executive as homeless. Thus, the Housing Executive does not have a record of all placements in voluntary sector hostels.

Figure 17: Total Number of Placements into Temporary Accommodation



- 5.24 For the remainder of this section the analysis is based on placements rather than households or episodes.
- 5.25 **27%** of placements were into Housing Executive and voluntary sector hostels; **34%** of placements were in accommodation funded from Supporting People (i.e. including DIME accommodation); and **37%** were into Single Lets. However, **29%** of all placements were into B&Bs/hotels, which is cause for concern.
- 5.26 This analysis is potentially misleading however, because the average lengths of stay in each temporary accommodation type are different. Using the same figures as those above and those included in below which identify the average length of placement in the different temporary accommodation types, it is possible to show that these B&B placements will only constitute **3%** of the days spent in temporary accommodation whereas the placements in Single Lets are likely to constitute **69%** of the total number of days spent in temporary accommodation from these placements.
- 5.27 Tables 19a and 19b, and Figure 18, show the number and percentage of placements by the Area Office in each council area.
- The largest number of placements in most types of temporary accommodation are from Belfast, and Derry City & Strabane District

- However, the highest proportions of all placements in the voluntary sector and Housing Executive hostels are from Mid Ulster, Causeway Coast & Glens, and Lisburn & Castlereagh;
- The proportion placed in Single Lets is particularly high in Ards & North Down;
- More than **50%** of homeless households are housed temporarily in hotels and B&Bs in Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, Derry & Strabane, and Fermanagh & Omagh.

Table 19a: Number of placements by temporary accommodation type by Council area

Council area	Vol Sector Hostels	Single Lets	Leased Property	Housing Executive Hostels	Hotel/ B&B	Total Placements
Antrim & Newtownabbey	15	16	5	19	24	79
Ards & North Down	1	145	5	6	8	165
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	21	58	2	4	96	181
Belfast	281	450	203	157	230	1,321
Causeway Coast & Glens	36	10	5	16	46	113
Derry & Strabane	85	180	3	25	347	640
Fermanagh & Omagh	23	49	0	0	78	150
Lisburn & Castlereagh	61	114	4	2	34	215
Mid & East Antrim	51	112	2	28	61	254
Mid Ulster	62	18	4	4	19	107
Newry, Mourne & Down	2	85	5	9	28	129
TOTAL	638⁵⁹	1237	238	270	971	3,354

Source: Additional reports requested from HMS system

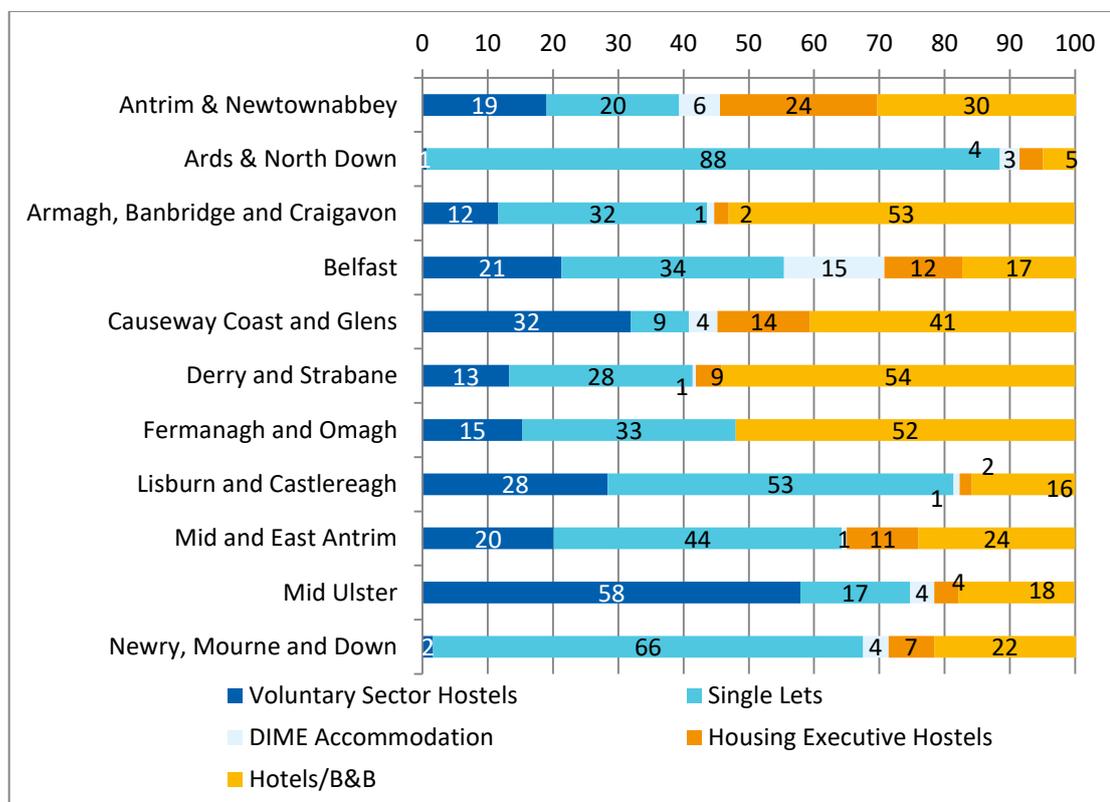
⁵⁹ This figure is possibly an understatement because a placement in a voluntary sector hostel is less likely to be recorded on HMS because it has no direct financial consequences in terms of triggering a payment

Table 19b: Percentage of placements by temporary accommodation type by Council area

Council area	Voluntary Sector Hostels	Single Lets	Leased Property	Housing Executive Hostels	Hotel/ B&B	Total Placements
Antrim & Newtownabbey	18.99%	20.25%	6.33%	24.05%	30.38%	100%
Ards & North Down	0.61%	87.88%	3.03%	3.64%	4.85%	100%
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	11.60%	32.04%	1.10%	2.21%	53.04%	100%
Belfast	21.27%	34.07%	15.37%	11.88%	17.41%	100%
Causeway Coast & Glens	31.86%	8.85%	4.42%	14.16%	40.71%	100%
Derry & Strabane	13.28%	28.13%	0.47%	3.91%	54.22%	100%
Fermanagh & Omagh	15.33%	32.67%	0.00%	0.00%	52.00%	100%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	28.37%	53.02%	1.86%	0.93%	15.81%	100%
Mid & East Antrim	20.08%	44.09%	0.79%	11.02%	24.02%	100%
Mid Ulster	57.94%	16.82%	3.74%	3.74%	17.76%	100%
Newry, Mourne & Down	1.55%	65.89%	3.88%	6.98%	21.71%	100%
TOTAL	19.02%	36.88%	7.10%	8.05%	28.95%	100%

Source: calculated from Table 19a

Figure 18: Placements (%) in Different Temporary Accommodation by Council Area



5.28 Details of the number of placements by type of accommodation were obtained through a bespoke analysis of HMS data carried out by the Housing Executive covering three years from 2016/2017 to 2018/2019. The total number of placements has increased from **2,746** in 2016/17 to **3,354** in 2018/19 (Table 20).

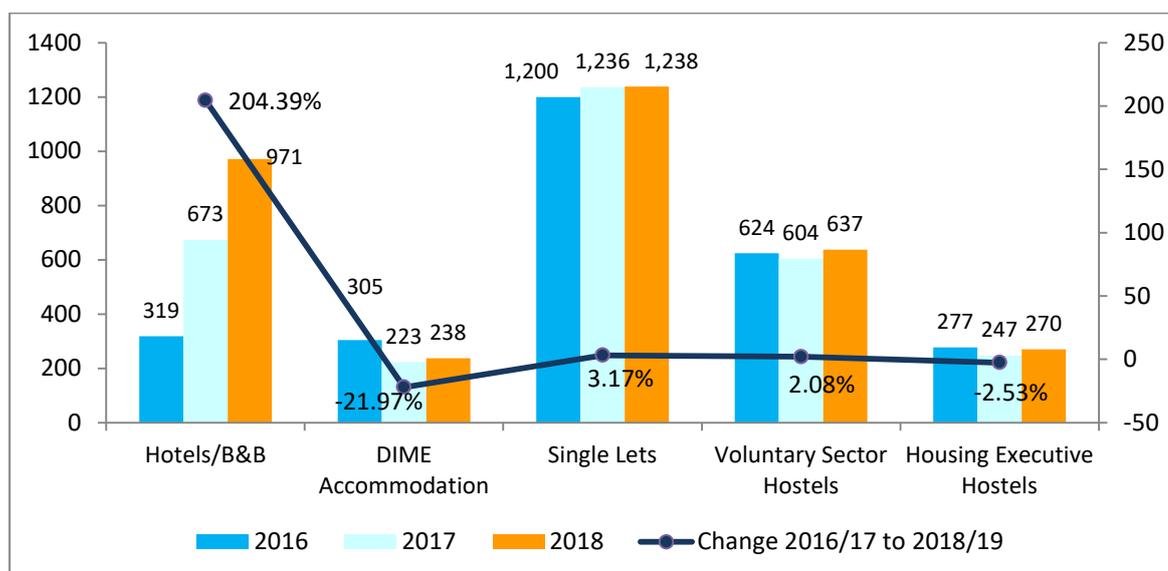
5.29 Table 20 shows an increase in the number of placements in temporary accommodation of **23%**. There was very little change in the number of placements in Single Lets, voluntary sector and Housing Executive hostels. However, there was a very significant increase in the number of placements in B&B accommodation over the three years (**204%**).

Table 20: Total number of placements by temporary accommodation type for last 3 years, and year on year percentage change

Temporary Accommodation Type	2016 Total	2017 Total	2018 Total
Hotel/ B&B	319	673	971
<u>% change 2016/2017 to 2018/2019</u>	<u>204.39%</u>		
DIME accommodation	305	223	238
<u>% change 2016/2017 to 2018/2019</u>	<u>-21.97%</u>		
Single Lets	1200	1236	1238
<u>% change 2016/2017 to 2018/2019</u>	<u>3.17%</u>		
Voluntary Sector Hostels	624	604	637
<u>% change 2016/2017 to 2018/2019</u>	<u>2.08%</u>		
Housing Executive Hostels	277	247	270
<u>% change 2016/2017 to 2018/2019</u>	<u>-2.53%</u>		
TOTAL	2,725	2,983	3,354
<u>%change 2016/2017 to 2018/2019</u>	<u>23.08%</u>		

Source: Additional reports requested from HMS system

Figure 19: Total Placements in different Temporary Accommodation for 2016, 2017 and 2018 and % change



- 5.30 The number of temporary accommodation placements has risen much faster than the number of FDA acceptances over the three years. There was a **5%** increase in the number of households accepted as FDA in the period (2016/18).
- 5.31 **1,118** households moved out of temporary accommodation in 2018/2019. At the end of the year **1,266** households who had moved into temporary accommodation in that year were still in residence. An additional **831** households placed in previous years were still in temporary accommodation at the end of the year. Thus, there were more than 19,000 FDA households at the end of the year of which **2,097** households remained in temporary accommodation.

Usage of temporary accommodation – profile of placements

- 5.32 A profile of households placed in temporary accommodation during 2018/2019 has been developed using four key characteristics:
- Primary reasons why the household was homeless;
 - Household type;
 - Additional support needs if any; and
 - Risk factors to themselves and to others.

Primary reason for homelessness

- 5.33 The number of temporary accommodation placements by primary reason for homelessness has been compared with the primary reason for homeless acceptances overall, to:
- establish whether temporary accommodation was being used in some circumstances more than others; and
 - to identify the potential impact of improving prevention rates on the demand for temporary accommodation on the assumption that some causes of homelessness are more amenable to prevention than others.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ This analysis omits the 126 cases where the primary reason of homelessness for those placed in temporary accommodation was unknown.

Table 21: Temporary accommodation placements - primary reason for homelessness and comparison with overall reasons for homelessness acceptances 2018/19

Primary Reason for Homelessness	Temporary Accommodation Placements	% of Placements	% of Homeless Acceptances
Sharing Breakdown / Family Dispute	638	19.76%	18.44%
No Accommodation in NI	561	17.38%	5.67%
Loss of Private Rented Accom for other reasons	427	13.23%	(see total for all loss of home below)
Harassment	307	9.51%	7.44%
Domestic Violence	225	6.97%	8.98%
Intimidation	207	6.41%	2.99%
Release / Discharge from Institutions	188	5.82%	1.89%
Non-Violent Relationship Breakdown	186	5.76%	7.42%
ANR due to other reasons	106	3.28%	3.77%
Loss of Private Rented Accom due to property sale	91	2.82%	(see total for all loss of home below)
ANR due to physical health or disability	32	0.99%	20.30%
Fire, Flood, or Civil Disturbance	32	0.99%	0.55%
Loss of Housing Association Accommodation	25	0.77%	(see total for all loss of home below)
Loss of Housing Executive Accommodation	23	0.71%	(see total for all loss of home below)
ANR due to mental health	23	0.71%	3.74%
Loss of Owner-Occupied Accommodation due to mortgage arrears	21	0.65%	0.52%
ANR due to property disrepair	20	0.62%	1.04%
Other Violence resulting in ANR	17	0.53%	0.81%
ANR due to affordability	9	0.28%	0.83%
ANR due to overcrowding	3	0.09%	1.12%
TOTAL	3,228	100%	100%
All loss of home instances	587	18.18%	13.44%
All Accommodation Not Reasonable	193	5.97%	31.61%

Source: Additional reports requested from HMS system.

5.34 Table 21 shows that, in most cases, the percentage of placements is similar to the proportion of FDA cases accepted as homeless. There are two exceptions:

- Households with no accommodation in Northern Ireland are considerably more likely to be placed in temporary accommodation than their proportion of FDA cases would suggest (17.38% vs 5.67%).
- Households whose current accommodation is 'Not reasonable due to physical health or disability' are far less likely to be placed in temporary accommodation than their proportion of FDA cases would suggest (0.99% vs 20.30%). This last finding may result from a shortage of adapted or supported accommodation.

Household type

5.35 Placements into temporary accommodation for each type of household as classified by the Housing Executive were also analysed (Table 22 and Figure 20).

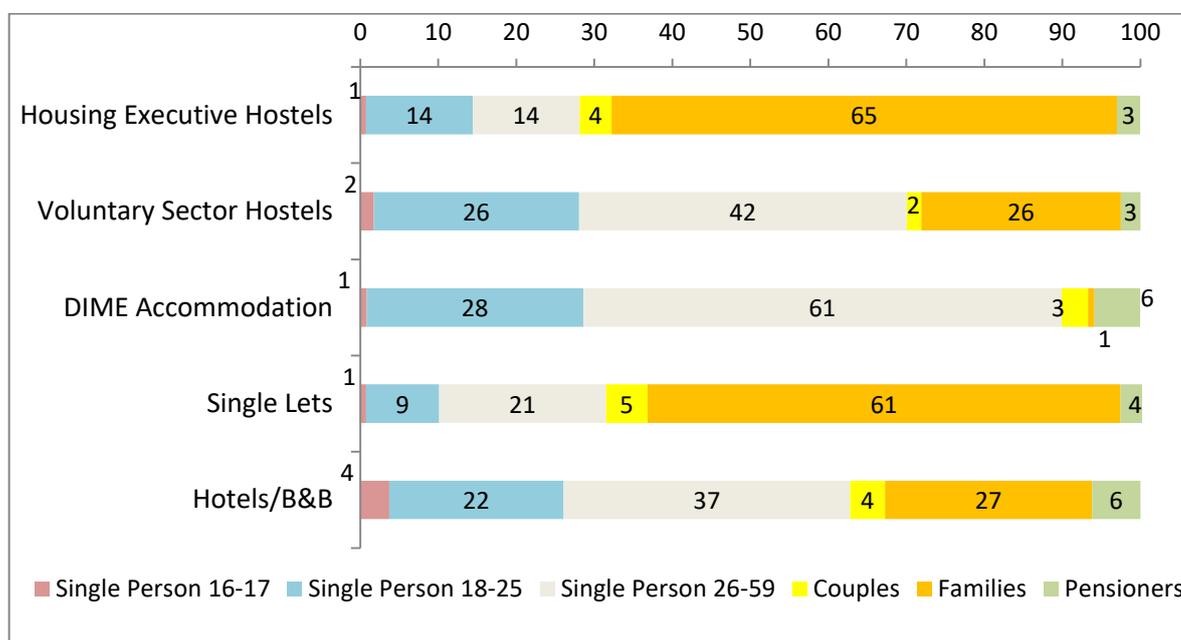
Table 22: Proportion of placements in each type of temporary accommodation by household type

Type of TA	Single Person, 16-17	Single Person, 18-25	Single Person, 26-59	Couples	Families	Pensioners
Housing Executive Hostels	0.74%	13.70%	13.70%	4.07%	64.81%	2.96%
Voluntary Sector Hostels	1.72%	26.33%	42.01%	1.88%	25.55%	2.51%
DIME Accommodation	0.84%	27.73%	61.34%	3.36%	0.84%	5.88%
Single Lets	0.73%	9.38%	21.39%	5.34%	60.63%	3.80%
Hotel/ B&B	3.71%	22.35%	36.77%	4.43%	26.57%	6.18%

Source: Additional reports requested from HMS system

Note: The data provided by the Housing Executive and percentages were rounded.

Figure 20: Proportion of placements in Different Temporary Accommodations by Household Type



- 5.36 B&B accommodation is used for all household types, with a significant percentage of homeless people aged 16-17 and 18-25 in B&Bs, at least initially. This is of concern, because young people would be considered vulnerable and would usually require support which is unlikely to be available in this type of accommodation. However, a B&B placement may be very short and lead ultimately to a different form of temporary accommodation, including supported accommodation for vulnerable young people funded under the Supporting People programme.⁶¹
- 5.37 Other findings of note are as follows:
- Almost all leased accommodation (**90%**) is used to place single persons;
 - **61%** of single lets are allocated to families;
 - **70%** of voluntary sector hostel places are allocated to single persons;
 - **61%** of Housing Executive hostel places are allocated to families with children.

Level of support needed

- 5.38 Initially, an analysis of Housing Executive's HMS data was carried out to investigate the level of support required by homeless applicants placed in temporary accommodation. There were two approaches: through the award of 'complex needs' points as part of the housing application and review process; and through identification of the numbers of applicants who had identified 'vulnerabilities' in relation to the award of Priority Need categories, as part of the homeless assessment process. Neither of these is necessarily a good indicator of the presence of support needs that can best be met through Supporting People funded provision, but they are the best indicators available within the data set provided by the HMS. There will of course be some overlap between these categories.
- 5.39 The analysis of HMS data found that:
- **37%** of the households placed in temporary accommodation in 2018/19 had Complex Needs points awarded;
 - **55%** of households placed in temporary accommodation had specific vulnerabilities identified.

⁶¹ The data that would allow examination of the extent to which this is true are not available.

Level of Support needed – Provider Census

5.40 As noted above, the Housing Executive conducted a Provider Census on the night of 4 June 2019. The census recorded the details of people staying in voluntary sector and DIME accommodation on that date. The number of households that were resident in each type of temporary accommodation on the census night was analysed using the same client group classification adopted by Supporting People. These categories are:

- Crisis Accommodation
- Single Homeless Provision
- Homeless Families Provision
- Domestic Violence Provision
- DIME Accommodation

5.41 The number of resident households within each category is shown in Table 23 and Figure 21.

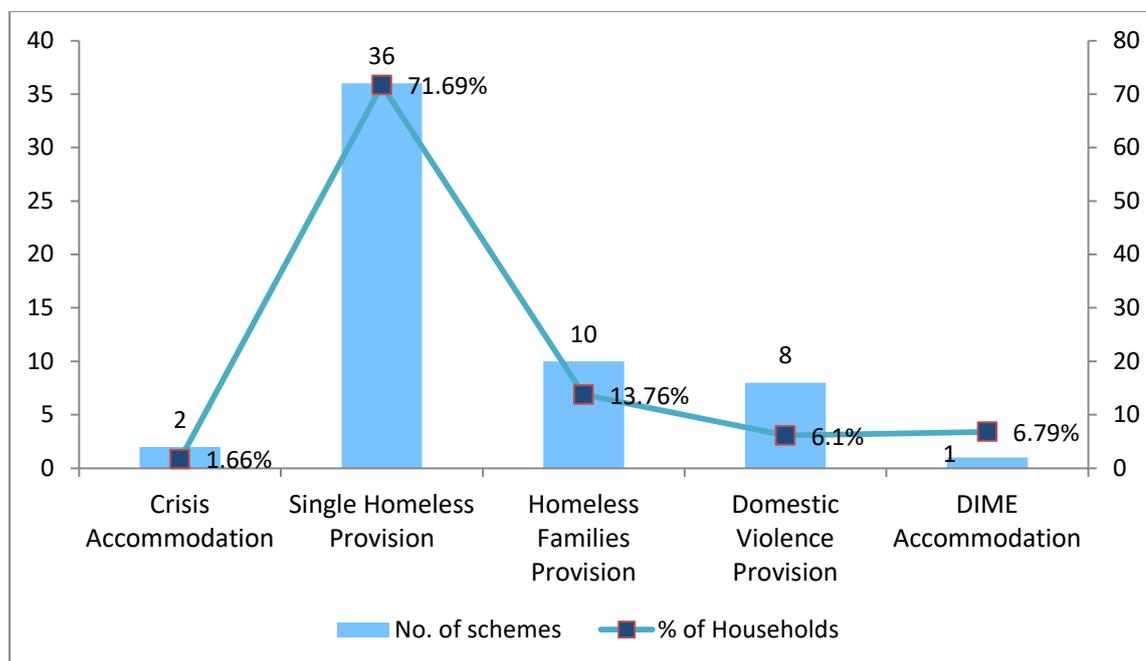
Table 23: Total numbers of resident households included in the Provider Census by hostel sector

Hostel Sectors	No. of schemes	Number of Resident Households	%
Crisis Accommodation	2	19	1.66%
Single Homeless Provision ⁶²	36	823	71.69%
Homeless Families Provision	10	158	13.76%
Domestic Violence Provision	8	70	6.10%
DIME accommodation	1	78	6.79%
Total	57	1,148	100%

Source: Housing Executive Provider Census

⁶² Single homeless provision here incorporates those services categorised by Supporting People as being for people with alcohol problems and those for people with an offending history.

Figure 21: Distribution of Households and Schemes in each Hostel Sector

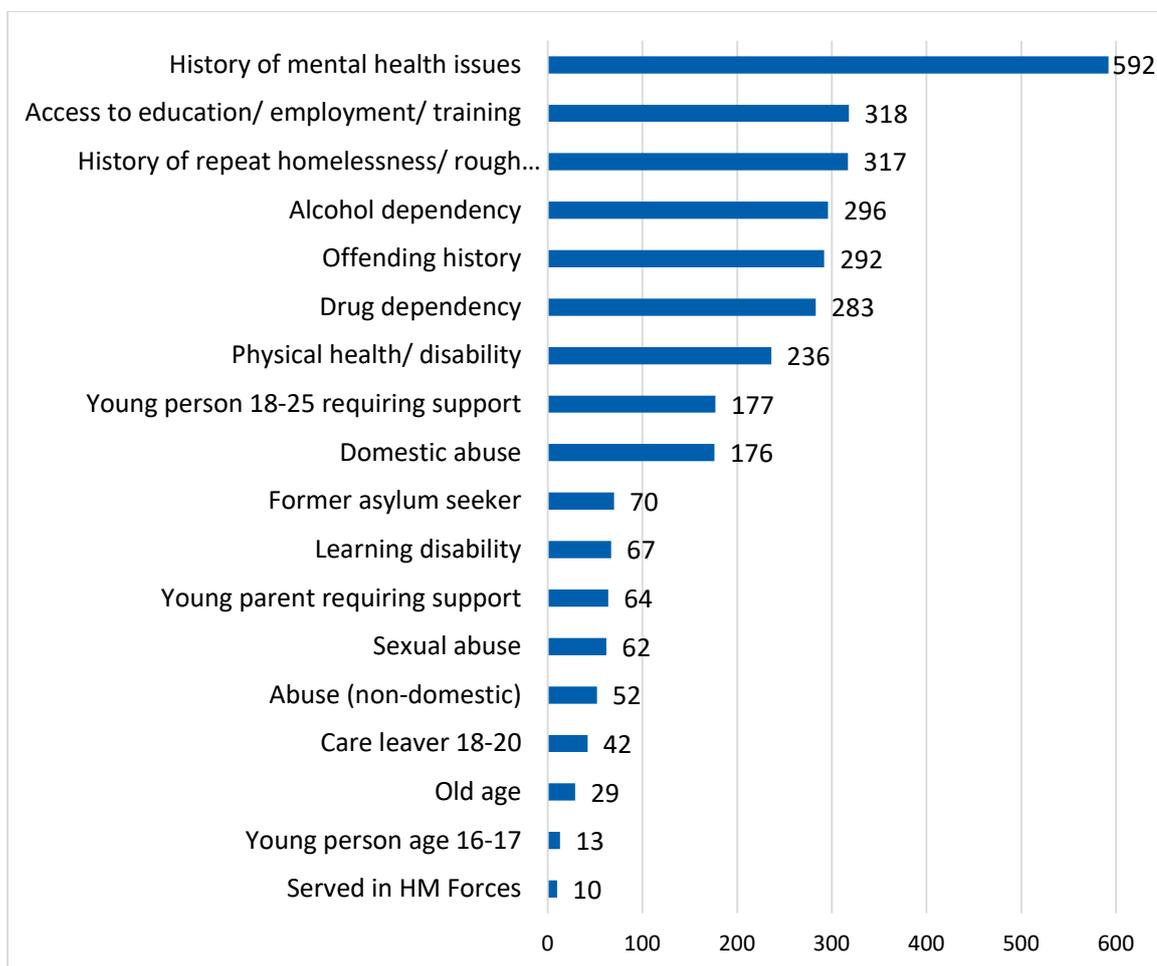


5.42 In total, providers recorded data on **1,148** individuals. This represented approximately **95%** of the potential services that could have replied, which is an impressively high return rate.

5.43 Providers were asked to identify the support needs of residents using categories developed for monitoring homelessness cases in England. The most common type of support needed resulted from a history of mental health problems. Mental health is the only type of support need that is found in more than **50%** of cases. The percentage of individuals described as having a 'history of repeat homelessness' was **28%**. This indicates a significant core of households that experience long-term homelessness.

5.44 Figure 22 illustrates the significance of particular types of support need associated with or arising from specific characteristics or experiences.

Figure 22: Types and Frequency of Support Need - Individuals in Temporary Accommodation



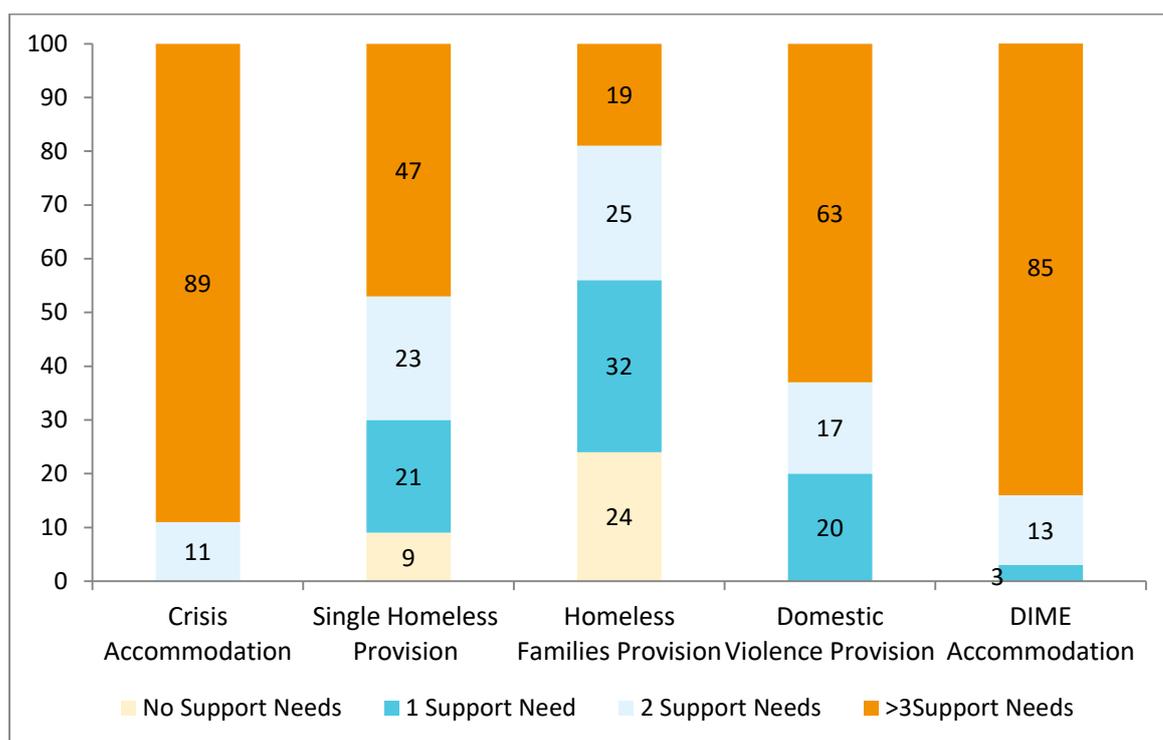
5.45 The complexity of households' support needs was also examined through the census results by counting the number of different support needs per resident, by hostel sector.

Table 24: Number of different support needs per resident by hostel sectors.

Hostel sectors	No. of different support needs										Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Crisis Accommodation	0	0	2	0	1	4	1	6	3	2	19
Single Homeless Provision	74	169	190	145	117	59	44	20	4	1	823
Homeless Families Provision	38	50	40	18	10	2	0	0	0	0	158
Domestic Violence Provision	0	14	12	15	14	7	5	1	2	0	70
DIME accommodation	0	2	10	19	16	17	5	6	2	1	78
Total	112	235	254	197	158	89	55	33	11	4	1,148

Source: Provider Census

Figure 23: % of Homeless Households in each Hostel Type by level of support needs



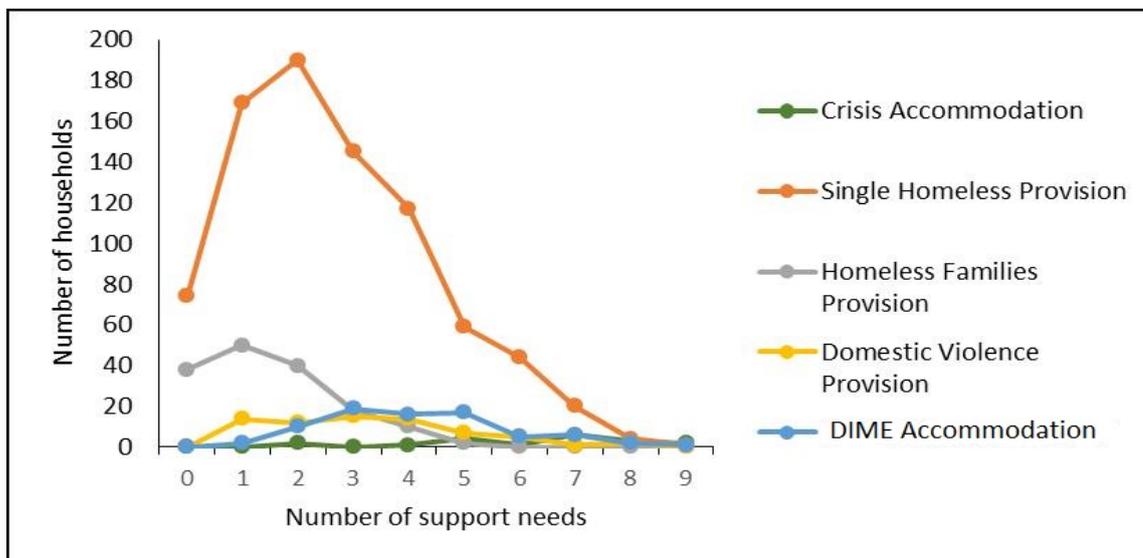
5.46 Table 24 and Figure 23 highlight the significant numbers of homeless households that have multiple support needs.

- **89%** of individuals in crisis accommodation, and **85%** of individuals in DIME accommodation had three or more support needs; as did

- **63%** of individuals living in domestic violence provision; and
- **47%** of individuals in single homeless provision.

5.47 Figure 24 shows the distribution curve for each of these accommodation sectors.

Figure 24: Distribution curve for Support Needs within each Hostel Type



5.48 Campbell Tickell investigated the possibility of identifying the prevalence of more complex needs. For the following analysis, a relatively crude indicator based on a definition of complex needs that included either four or more support needs, or three or more support needs from within the following groups was used:⁶³

- Alcohol dependency;
- Drug dependency;
- Domestic abuse;
- History of Mental Health Problems;
- Offending behaviour; and
- Physical Health Problems / Disability.

⁶³ This latter definition is more in line with the normal definition of “complexity” as used for example by Crisis research into sizing the cohort for Housing First initiatives – Price Waterhouse Coopers(2018)., *Assessing the costs and benefits of Crisis’ plan to end homelessness*, Crisis, London

5.49 The Provider Census identified **394** households (**34%**) that met one or the other definition of complexity. **304** individuals (**26%**) met the definition of three support needs from within the designated list of groups.

5.50 The census results were then further divided into four levels of support need:

- **High support need** included households that had complex needs on the basis of either definition given above;
- **Medium support needs** included households that had two or three different support needs, but who did not meet the definition for complex needs;
- **Low support needs** included households that had one support need; and
- Households where **no support needs** were identified.

5.51 These are inevitably fairly simplistic characterisations of the potential range of individual needs, but they form a basis for more detailed analysis. Table 25a shows the number of households with high, medium, low or no support needs for each type of temporary accommodation. Table 25b and Figure 25 shows percentages.

Table 25a: Level of support need exhibited by individual residents (number of residents)

Accommodation type	Level of support needed				Total
	High	Medium	Low	None / None Identified	
Crisis Accommodation	17	2	0	0	19
Single Homeless Provision	272	308	169	74	823
Homeless Families Provision	13	57	50	38	158
Domestic Violence Provision	37	19	14	0	70
DIME accommodation	55	21	2	0	78
Total	394	407	235	112	1,148

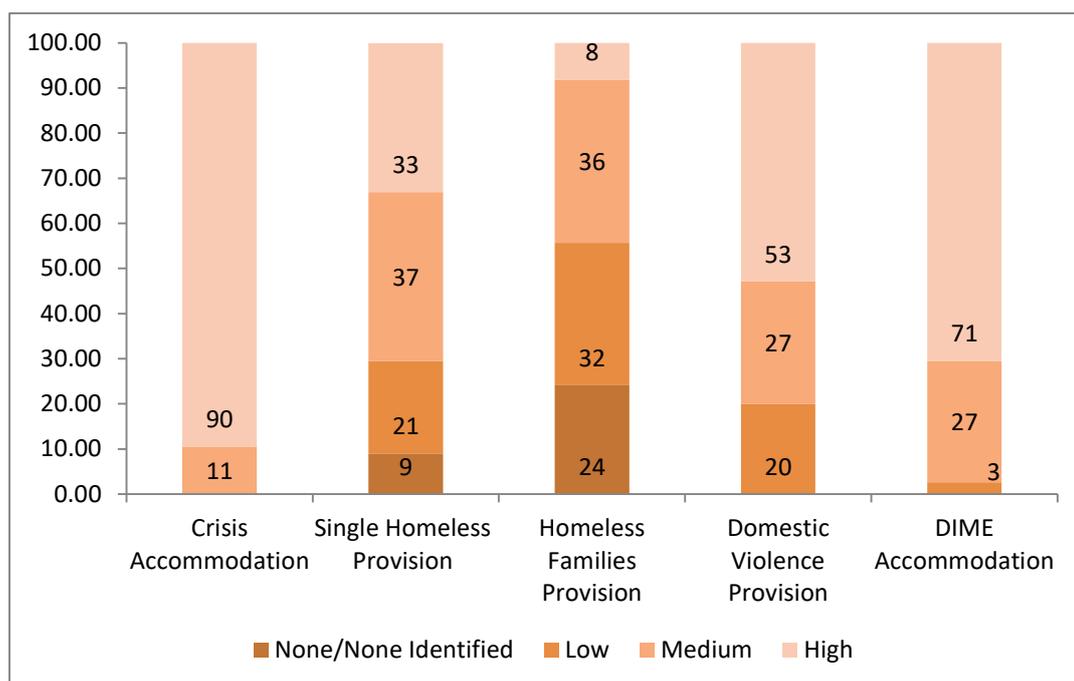
Source: Provider Census

Table 25b: Level of support need exhibited by individual residents (percentage of residents)

Accommodation type	Level of support needed				Total
	High	Medium	Low	None / None Identified	
Crisis Accommodation	89.47%	10.53%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Single Homeless Provision	33.05%	37.42%	20.53%	8.99%	100%
Homeless Families Provision	8.23%	36.08%	31.65%	24.05%	100%
Domestic Violence Provision	52.86%	27.14%	20.00%	0.00%	100%
DIME accommodation	70.51%	26.92%	2.56%	0.00%	100%
Total	34.32%	35.45%	20.47%	9.75%	100%

Source: Provider Census

Figure 25: Individual Resident Households (%) and the Level of Support they require



5.52 Across the Provider Census population as a whole, one third of the individuals (**34%**) had high support needs and one third (**35%**) had medium support needs. There was wide variation between residents in the different types of accommodation:

- **89%** of the individuals in crisis accommodation had high support needs and a further **11%** had medium support needs;
- **71%** of residents living in DIME accommodation had high support needs and a further **27%** had medium support needs;
- **8%** of households in accommodation for homeless families had high support needs, with **36%** having medium support needs;
- **24%** of households in homeless families provision and **9%** of households in single homeless provision have no identified support needs.

Risk of Harm

5.53 The census asked providers to assess the risk of harm that service users presented to others, and the risk of harm from others to themselves. These were assessed in terms of **High, Medium, Low** and **No Risk**.

5.54 The question of risk is important in determining the most appropriate form of provision. In total, **51** residents (**4%** of all households covered by the census) were considered to pose a high risk of harm to others, and **86** (**7%**) to be at a high risk of harm from others.

5.55 For the purposes of further analysis, the two scales were combined into a single indicator so that a resident was classified as '**high risk**' if they were categorised by the provider either as presenting a high risk of harm to others or experiencing a high risk of harm from others. They were classified as 'medium risk' if they were categorised by the provider either as presenting a medium risk of harm to others, or experiencing a medium risk of harm from others, unless they had already been classified as 'high risk' on one factor and so on. The results are shown in Tables 26a (number) and 26b (percentage).

Table 26a: Level of risk exhibited by individual residents (number of residents)

Accommodation type	Risk of harm to/from others					
	High risk	Medium risk	Low risk	No risk	No identified risk	Total
Crisis Accommodation	3	12	3	1	0	19
Single Homeless Provision	88	179	331	223	2	823
Homeless Families Provision	3	27	8	120	0	158
Domestic Violence Provision	20	25	17	8	0	70
DIME accommodation	8	29	40	1	0	78
Total	122	272	399	353	2	1,148

Source: Provider Census

Table 26b: Level of risk exhibited by individual residents (percentage of all residents)

Accommodation type	Risk of harm to/from others					
	High risk	Medium risk	Low risk	No risk	No identified risk	Total
Crisis Accommodation	15.79%	63.16%	15.79%	5.26%	0.00%	100%
Single Homeless Provision	10.69%	21.75%	40.22%	27.10%	0.24%	100%
Homeless Families Provision	1.90%	17.09%	5.06%	75.95%	0.00%	100%
Domestic Violence Provision	28.57%	35.71%	24.29%	11.43%	0.00%	100%
DIME accommodation	10.26%	37.18%	51.28%	1.28%	0.00%	100%
Total	10.63%	23.69%	34.76%	30.75%	0.17%	100%

Source: Provider Census

5.56 When this measure of risk is adopted, residents in domestic violence provision are identified as having the highest level of risk (**29%**). Residents in crisis accommodation are identified as having the greatest medium level of risk (**63%**). The majority of residents in accommodation for homeless families are identified either low risk (**5%**) or no risk (**76%**).

Length of stay in temporary accommodation

- 5.57 Assessing length of stay can be done in several ways. The simplest measure is to look at the average time spent in the accommodation for those who have left. Due to the nature of temporary accommodation, the length of stay in individual placements is not necessarily the key variable because in a number of cases people move from one temporary accommodation placement to another as part of what is effectively the same temporary accommodation episode.
- 5.58 The average length of time in separate temporary accommodation episodes is in many ways the most meaningful measure. By definition, however, this cannot be produced for separate temporary accommodation types, as a single episode can involve households living in a number of different temporary accommodation types.
- 5.59 Table 27 sets out the relationship between temporary accommodation placements and episodes by breaking down the number of placements within each separate episode.

Table 27: Breakdown of number of temporary accommodation placements per temporary accommodation episode in 2018-19

Number of placements within an episode	Total number of households	% of total number of placements per homelessness episode
1	1,588	73.89%
2	390	18.15%
3	114	5.30%
4	42	1.95%
5	9	0.42%
6 or more	6	0.28%
TOTAL	2,149	100%

Source: Housing Executive record of temporary accommodation placements 2018-2019

- 5.60 Table 27 shows that **74%** of households had only one placement; while **8%** of all temporary accommodation episodes involved three or more placements.

5.61 Table 28 summarises the key statistical measures in terms of length of time in temporary accommodation episodes in 2018/19.

Table 28: Statistical measures of length of time spent in temporary accommodation in 2018/19

Statistical measure	No of Days
Mean	227
1 st Quartile	18
Median	98
3 rd Quartile	281
Interquartile range	263

Source: Housing Executive record of temporary accommodation placements 2013-2019

5.62 Table 28 shows a wide spread of results with the majority of episodes being at the lower end of the scale, but the difference between the mean and the median suggests that there is a significant ‘tail’ of longer periods of time in temporary accommodation above the median. This is illustrated in more detail by Table 29, which sets out the length of stay of temporary accommodation episodes by dividing them into bands in terms of the number of days, for those whose temporary accommodation episode ended in 2018/19.

Table 29: Number of days spent in temporary accommodation per homelessness episode by time bands for those leaving temporary accommodation in 2018/19

Number of days spent in temporary accommodation by homelessness episodes	Number of households	% of total
0 to 30	679	31.60%
31 to 60	215	10.00%
61 to 120	280	13.03%
121 to 365	586	27.27%
366 to 730	242	11.26%
731 to 1,095	68	3.16%
1,095 plus	79	3.68%
TOTAL	2,149	100%

Source: Housing Executive record of temporary accommodation placements 2018-2019

- 5.63 Table 29 shows that more than **42%** of households actually spend two months or less in temporary accommodation, but more than **18%** spend more than a year in temporary accommodation, and nearly 4% spend more than 3 years in temporary accommodation.
- 5.64 A further analysis was carried out based on the reports drawn from the HMS which allowed the calculation of the average (mean) length of stay⁶⁴ for those leaving different types of temporary accommodation in 2018-19.

Table 30: Average length of stay in days for households leaving each type of temporary accommodation in 2018/19

Type of temporary accommodation	Mean No of Days
Hotel/ B&B	17
DIME Accommodation	100
Single Lets	323
Voluntary Sector Hostels	135
Housing Executive Hostels	187

Source: Housing Executive report drawn from the HMS

- 5.65 The enormous variety in terms of patterns of length of stay is revealed by an analysis of the results of the average length of stay for households (in days) leaving the different types of temporary accommodation in the different council areas in 2018/19 (Table 31).

⁶⁴ A median length of stay with inter-quartile ranges would have been preferable but the data were not available from the Housing Executive.

Table 31: Average length of stay (in days) for households leaving type of temporary accommodation by council area in 2018/19

Council Area	B&B	DIME accommodation	Single Lets	Voluntary Sector Hostels	Housing Executive Hostels
Antrim & Newtownabbey	10.29	26	208.75	14.27	62.33
Ards & North Down	45.78	64.25	183.79	None	58.43
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	15.38	118.5	164.98	60.43	82
Belfast	10.35	106.88	373.59	189.55	183.61
Causeway Coast & Glens	24.38	5.6	213.73	99.97	138.43
Derry & Strabane	19.92	78.33	444.59	150.05	373.9
Fermanagh & Omagh	23.17	None	208.56	213	None
Lisburn & Castlereagh	37.37	103	362.3	76.4	10
Mid & East Antrim	7.2	89.67	208.47	68.23	122.81
Mid Ulster	10.32	11	253.88	81.86	26
Newry, Mourne & Down	8.81	45.67	376.68	None	328.22
TOTAL	17.2	100.2	323.33	134.75	187.28

Source: Housing Executive report drawn from the HMS

5.66 It is notable that the average length of stay in Dime accommodation, Single Lets and voluntary sector hostels in Belfast is high compared with all other areas except for Single Lets in Derry & Strabane and Newry Mourne & Down and DIME in Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon. The average time spent in Housing Executive hostels in Derry & Strabane and in Newry, Mourne & Down is also high compared with other areas. This may indicate that either the length of stay is indicative of a shortage of social housing lets or it could mean that in some areas, temporary accommodation and particularly Single Lets are being used as a proxy for settled accommodation rather than as purely temporary accommodation by some households.

5.67 The Provider Census made it possible to obtain and analyse more meaningful data on length of stay for placements in voluntary sector hostels and DIME accommodation.⁶⁵

- It recorded the mean length of stay of those of those in residence on a particular night. This is a fairer representation of the length of stay because focussing only departures between two points in time may understate the true mean as it will include those who move in and out quickly but not all those who stay for a long time.
- In relation to voluntary sector hostels it allows the sub-division of results by broad categories of hostel⁶⁶.
- It has allowed us to calculate the median length of stay as well as the mean – which allows us to discount the effect of outliers that can distort the mean calculation.

5.68 For voluntary sector hostels and DIME the results in terms of mean and median length of stay of those in residence who were categories as FDA is set out in Table 32.

Table 32: Average length of stay in Voluntary Sector Hostels and DIME based on Provider Census–households with FDA status only

Category of temporary accommodation provided by Voluntary Sector Hostels and DIME accommodation	Mean Length of Stay	Median Length of Stay	Interquartile range
Crisis Accommodation	128	21	85
Single Homeless Provision	249	131	237
Homeless Families Provision	224	144	226
Domestic Violence Provision	159	145	152
DIME accommodation	312	157	356
All individuals	243	135	232

Source: Provider Census

⁶⁵ The Census was not completed by the Housing Executive’s hostels but was completed by approximately 85% of other SP-funded services.

⁶⁶ The research has adopted a relatively high-level distinction between Crisis Accommodation, Single Homeless Provision, Homeless Families Provision and Domestic Violence provision.

5.69 Of particular note in this analysis is the further evidence that it gives of the long periods of time that people are spending in crisis accommodation. It is also of note that the gap between median and mean length of stay is much less for domestic violence accommodation than other categories. This suggests a far more consistent length of time in the accommodation and probably better-defined pathway out of it. For the other forms of temporary accommodation (i.e. Single Lets, Housing Executive hostels and B&Bs) the HMS recorded those in residence on the same date as the Provider Census. This made it possible to generate mean and median lengths of stay for those in residence for these other categories of temporary accommodation.

Table 33: Average length of stay for Single Lets, NIHE Hostels and B&Bs based on those households resident on night of 4 June 2019

Type of TA	Mean Length of Stay	Median Length of Stay
Single Lets	518 days	341 days
NIHE Hostels	244 days	141 days
B&Bs	50 days	29 days

Source: Census exercise undertaken by the Housing Executive

5.70 It is difficult to say what an ideal target for length of stay should be, and whether it is possible to define an ‘ideal’ in this context. It is a particularly difficult question to resolve where a household is receiving additional support as well as temporary accommodation. Settled accommodation might be available before the household is capable of sustaining a tenancy or is, as some housing professionals say, ‘tenancy ready’.⁶⁷ The Provider Census addressed this by asking accommodation providers to say whether they thought each resident was tenancy-ready or not (i.e. whether they were now ready to move out of temporary accommodation into settled accommodation).

5.71 The Provider Census showed that **70%** of residents were judged to be ‘tenancy ready’. If the ‘Unknown’ and ‘No response’ cases are excluded, **74%** of all households in supported temporary accommodation were considered by their provider to be ‘tenancy ready’.

⁶⁷ See Appendices 1 and 2: Definitions and Types of Temporary Accommodation

5.72 This suggests that a significant proportion of residents were staying in hostel accommodation longer than was strictly necessary if their need for ongoing support was the only consideration. There are two implications of this: either the non-availability of alternative settled accommodation is causing delays in resettlement rather than the household's ability to sustain a tenancy; or, the need for ongoing support outweighs the advantages of a more rapid move into settled accommodation unless floating support is available after the move.

5.73 The results by sub-sector in terms of tenancy-readiness are shown in Tables 34a and 34b.

Table 34a: Numbers of residents currently living in Supporting People funded accommodation who were judged by their provider to be tenancy ready, by type of temporary accommodation

Category of temporary accommodation provided by Voluntary Sector Hostels and DIME accommodation	Tenancy ready	Not Tenancy ready	Unknown	No response	Total
Crisis Accommodation	12	6		1	19
Single Homeless Provision	489	195	136	3	823
Homeless Families Provision	130	21	7		158
Domestic Violence Provision	48	17	5		70
DIME accommodation	54	24			78
Total	733	263	148	4	1,148

Source: Housing Executive census of providers funded by the Supporting People programme

Table 34b: Percentage of all residents currently living in supported accommodation funded from the Supporting People programme who were judged by their provider to be tenancy ready, by type of temporary accommodation

Category of temporary accommodation provided by Voluntary Sector Hostels and DIME accommodation	Tenancy ready	Not Tenancy ready	Unknown	No response	Total
Crisis Accommodation	63.16%	31.58%	0.00%	5.26%	100%
Single Homeless Provision	59.41%	23.69%	16.53%	0.36%	100%
Homeless Families Provision	82.28%	13.29%	4.43%	0.00%	100%
Domestic Violence Provision	68.57%	24.29%	7.14%	0.00%	100%
DIME accommodation	69.23%	30.77%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Total	63.85%	22.91%	12.89%	0.35%	100%

Source: Housing Executive census of providers funded by the Supporting People programme

- 5.74 Although the number of residents in Crisis and DIME accommodation is relatively small, these two categories of accommodation have the highest proportion of residents that the provider thought were not ‘tenancy ready’ at between **31%** and **32%**. As noted above, these two categories of accommodation are likely to have the highest proportions of residents who are vulnerable or least able to sustain a tenancy for other reasons.
- 5.75 The highest proportion of residents who were thought to be able to sustain a future tenancy was found in family accommodation (**82%**).
- 5.76 The same type of analysis applied only to those cases in which the Housing Executive owes a ‘full duty’ to secure accommodation (FDA cases) are set out in Tables 35a and 35b.

Table 35a: Numbers of residents living in supported temporary accommodation who are judged to be 'tenancy ready' by their provider by type of supported TA – FDA cases only

FDA for individual sectors	Tenancy ready	Not Tenancy ready	Unknown	No response	Total
Crisis Accommodation	7	6		1	14
Single Homeless Provision	336	103	70	2	511
Homeless Families Provision	106	21	5		132
Domestic Violence Provision	38	9	2		49
DIME accommodation	54	24			78
Total	541	163	77	3	784

Source: Housing Executive census of providers funded by the Supporting People programme

Table 35b: Percentage of residents living in supported temporary accommodation who are judged to be 'tenancy ready' by their provider by type of supported temporary accommodation – FDA cases only

FDA for individual sectors	Tenancy ready	Not Tenancy ready	Unknown	No response	Total
Crisis Accommodation	50.00%	42.86%	0.00%	7.14%	100%
Single Homeless Provision	65.75%	20.16%	13.70%	0.39%	100%
Homeless Families Provision	80.30%	15.91%	3.79%	0.00%	100%
Domestic Violence Provision	77.55%	18.37%	4.08%	0.00%	100%
DIME accommodation	69.23%	30.77%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
Total	69.01%	20.79%	9.82%	0.38%	100%

Source: Housing Executive census of providers funded by the Supporting People programme

5.77 If the 'Unknown' and 'No response' categories are excluded, **77%** of FDA households in supported temporary accommodation were considered by their provider to be tenancy ready. This is a slightly higher proportion than for all households regardless of FDA status.

5.78 The highest proportion of FDA households that the provider thought were not 'tenancy ready' were once again in crisis accommodation and DIME accommodation (**46%** and **31%** respectively excluding "Unknown and "No response").

- 5.79 The highest proportion of residents who were thought to be ready to sustain a future tenancy was found in Housing Executive accommodation for homeless families (**83%** excluding “Unknown and “No response”) and in provision for women and young children escaping domestic violence (**81%** excluding “Unknown and “No response”).
- 5.80 The impact of this is cumulatively potentially very significant. This can be illustrated by the following *speculative* calculation. If half of all hostel residents were able to leave at the point that they were ready to, and on average this meant that they stayed three months less in the hostel, then it would be possible to refer an additional **12.5% (0.5*0.25)** of households at risk or with support needs into supported accommodation because of the consequent increase in vacancies. The data analysed elsewhere in this report, show that a very significant percentage of FDA households identified as being vulnerable or having support needs were referred to B&B or Single Lets, not into supported hostel accommodation. If a decision to refer to hostels was more rigorously based on a risk assessment and the household’s need for support, better and more appropriate use would be made of this resource. Furthermore, if those households that could move on did so in a timelier fashion, possibly with floating support, then there would be additional scope for referring a higher proportion of those inappropriately referred to B&B or Single Lets to supported accommodation.
- 5.81 When a hostel bed space costs approximately £16,000 per annum, being able to improve productivity by making referrals more appropriately and by reducing the amount of overstay would free up considerable resources elsewhere in the system. Investing in ways to improve faster move-through would provide value for money.
- 5.82 Being ‘tenancy ready’ is not the only consideration affecting the rate of move-on. There was general agreement from stakeholders who took part in the consultation that the length of stay should be based on an individual assessment of need and that once those needs are met, then the client could move on. However, it was recognised that there were barriers to moving on, including the lack of suitable housing. Having unrealistic expectations was also given as a reason for slowing down the rate of households moving on. Some stakeholders perceived that challenges around the reasonableness of offers are “...*easy to win*”. We were told that the standards in some Single Lets can be very high and if the property is situated in a good location, the household might not want to move. One participant said that in rural areas Single Lets are often located in a new development and that applicants are “...*happy to wait and turn down offers*”, particularly for older Housing Executive properties in housing estates.

Standards in temporary accommodation

- 5.83 There are no specific standards for temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland. Nor is there a consistent approach to monitoring standards. It has therefore not been possible to undertake any objective analysis of the standards of accommodation or management that exist in the different types of temporary accommodation. However, participants in the stakeholder consultation were asked their views on standards.
- 5.84 Participants said that property standards vary across Single Lets as well as between hostels, with some providing a better standard than others. There was also a perception that housing association owned buildings are of a better standard than other types of temporary accommodation. In particular, participants felt that the standard of 'new builds' and purpose-built accommodation is good. Generally, it was felt that they are spacious and provide for privacy and client dignity.
- 5.85 Participants highlighted that there were problems with disability access in older hostels and that investment was needed in older and converted buildings some of which they felt were poor quality, difficult to maintain or refurbish and in some cases impossible to improve. Some were viewed as old fashioned and lacked modern facilities, for example had shared WC/bathrooms. Some older properties could require significant works at significant cost with Disability Discrimination Act 1998 compliance difficult.
- 5.86 Participants agreed that standards in temporary accommodation vary considerably and that consensus is needed on an agreed lettable standard.

Floating support

- 5.87 Some households placed in Single Lets and B&Bs that have additional support needs or that present additional risks may be eligible to receive 'floating support' funded by Supporting People.⁶⁸
- 5.88 Historically, floating support in Northern Ireland has not been targeted at households in temporary accommodation. In order to find out how the Supporting People funded floating support schemes were being used, a census was carried out by the Housing Executive on 15 August 2019 in which floating support providers were asked to identify the clients they were supporting at that date. They were also asked to record details

⁶⁸ Floating support is available to someone who is vulnerable and has housing support needs. It is provided in someone's own home by a peripatetic support worker and in any form of tenure.

about their clients' needs and situation. Details of **1,465** clients were returned by **21** providers delivering **26** floating support services.

- 5.89 At the time of the census **72** out of the **1,465** floating support clients were living in some form of temporary accommodation. **36** of these were in a Single Lets, **34** were in a Voluntary Sector hostel and **2** were in a Housing Executive hostel. The majority of those who were living in a hostel were not in a hostel at the beginning of their period of support, so it is quite likely that the floating support scheme was still involved at the time of the census in order to provide a degree of consistency in support through their transition from other forms of accommodation.
- 5.90 The census also shows that **8** households had left Single Lets where they were previously receiving floating support and they were now receiving support in Housing Executive or Housing Association general needs tenancies.
- 5.91 The census asked providers to record whether clients had current FDA status or not. The answers are summarised in Table 36.

Table 36: FDA status of clients in receipt of Floating support

FDA Status	Number of households	% of total
FDAs	619	42.25%
Not FDA	527	35.97%
Pending decision	27	1.84%
Unknown	243	16.59%
Blank	49	3.34%
TOTAL	1,465	100%

Source: Floating Support Provider Census 15 August 2019

- 5.92 The number of clients who were recorded as FDA by providers is significant given that only **80** service users were either living in temporary accommodation or had recently moved from temporary accommodation.

5.93 Table 37 sets out the current tenure of FDA clients currently being supported through floating support.

Table 37: Current tenure of floating support clients who had FDA status⁶⁹

Tenure	No of households	% of total
Housing Executive tenancy	213	32.97%
Private rental	77	11.92%
Housing Association – general needs	66	10.22%
Sharing (family)	56	8.67%
Other	50	7.74%
Blank	42	6.50%
Single let (temporary accommodation)	36	5.57%
Voluntary sector hostel	33	5.11%
Housing Association – sheltered	25	3.87%
Owner occupier	25	3.87%
Sharing (friends)	14	2.17%
Housing Association – supported	5	0.77%
Lodger	2	0.31%
Housing Executive hostel	1	0.15%
Rough sleeping	1	0.15%
TOTAL	646	100%

Source: Floating Support Provider Census 15 August 2019

5.94 Apart from those clients living in temporary accommodation, about whom we have already commented, there were other clients who appear to have been living in other temporary circumstances. For example, **11%** of households receiving floating support were sharing with friends or family. In these circumstances, floating support may well

⁶⁹ This table includes those households who were categorised as “pending a decision”.

have been acting as an alternative to hostel accommodation, providing support while a settled long-term tenancy is found.

- 5.95 The high proportion of households receiving floating support that were living in general needs tenancies but were still categorised as FDA (**43%**) needs further explanation. In some cases, floating support could be acting as a measure to prevent tenancies breaking down i.e. responding to the tenant being threatened with homelessness. Alternatively, it could be that these cases had previously been homeless but are now adequately housed with floating support being provided on a transitional or longer-term basis. There were **82** FDA cases where households were now in general needs tenancies but had not been at the beginning of the floating support service, so here it would certainly appear that this is the case.

Clients “at risk” receiving floating support

- 5.96 The floating support census also collected information about the needs of the households receiving floating support on a similar basis to that which was previously collected through the hostel census. This looked at support needs and the risk presented by or to the household. A similar analysis to categorise both support needs and risk factors into “high”, “medium”, “low” and “none” categories has been carried out. The basis for this categorisation was the same as explained previously in paragraph 5.50.
- 5.97 Table 38 sets out the balance of support needs across the whole floating support sample and compares this to the proportions drawn from the Provider Census.

Table 38: Floating Support clients by level of support needs

Level of support required	Number of households receiving floating support	% of total	Comparable % for households in voluntary sector accommodation
High	608	41.50%	34.32%
Medium	459	31.33%	35.45%
Low	358	24.44%	20.47%
None or none identified	40	2.73%	9.75%
TOTAL	1,465	100%	100%

Source: Floating Support Provider Census 15 August 2019

- 5.98 Table 39 sets out a similar analysis of the risk presented to or by the clients receiving floating support, again compared to the equivalent results from the hostel analysis.

Table 39: Floating support clients by level of risk presented

Level of risk presented	Number of households receiving floating support	% of total	Comparable % for households in hostel accommodation
High	199	13.58%	10.63%
Medium	324	22.12%	23.69%
Low	311	21.23%	34.76%
None or none identified	630	43.00%	30.75%
TOTAL	1,465	100%	100%

Source: Floating Support Provider Census 15 August 2019

- 5.99 The overriding conclusion from this analysis is that there is relatively little difference between the profile of service users of hostels and floating support schemes. The most significant difference is in terms of risk, where the proportion of clients who present no risk is higher in floating support, whereas in hostels this is compensated for by the proportion of clients presenting low levels of risk being much higher. There is no significant difference in terms of the proportion of clients meeting the criteria for high and medium support needs or risk. If anything, floating support clients on average have higher levels of both significant support needs and risk.⁷⁰
- 5.100 An important point to note here is that if the Housing Executive were able to house people in Single Lets and provide floating support instead of placing them in hostels, it might be significantly cheaper (as shown in the separate Finance paper) without compromising on the need to meet support needs.

Length of time support provided

- 5.101 Floating support is a service model that involves time-limited support (up to 2 years). In the census, providers were asked not only how long they had been supporting their current clients but how much longer they felt that the support was needed. A number of providers felt that this question was difficult to answer, but for a total of **997** clients an estimate was provided. On this basis it was possible to calculate the expected average

⁷⁰ These conclusions should be treated with some caution as they are based on a series of cumulative individual judgements by providers as to what constitutes a support need or a risk.

length of service for these clients. The mean was **478** days; the median was **407** days (i.e. **13-15 months**).⁷¹

Floating support continuing on change of accommodation

5.102 Floating support services are often primarily aimed at ensuring people retain their accommodation. However floating support can also work to ensure that people are able to improve their housing circumstances. This is illustrated by the Provider Census which showed that in **351** cases the accommodation that residents occupied was different to that which they had when the programme of support began. This represented **24%** of the floating support sample of 1465 cases. It is not unreasonable to assume that the floating support scheme may have helped with this outcome.

Meeting the demand for temporary accommodation

5.103 The Housing Executive undertook a Snapshot Survey on three different weeks in March, April and June 2019 of all households presenting to its Area Offices seeking temporary accommodation. One of the aims was to measure the extent to which sufficient temporary accommodation was available to meet the needs of the households presenting as homeless at that time. **757** households requesting or requiring temporary accommodation presented themselves to the Housing Executive during the three weeks.

5.104 The respective totals for each week were as follows:

- March 257 cases
- April 267 cases
- June 233 cases

5.105 These results show a high degree of consistency in the level of demand. This adds to the robustness of any conclusions that may be drawn on the basis of this small sample.

5.106 Some households returned more than once to the Area Offices during the snapshot weeks. In total there were **554** separate households (73% of cases) recorded through the Snapshot Survey.

⁷¹ Interestingly the relationship between the total length of time that providers thought the service would be needed for and the time that they had actually provided it for was very close to a 2:1 ratio, and this provides some validation to the previous approach taken to estimating the average length of time spent in temporary accommodation.

5.107 The number of applications for assistance in each council area is shown in Table 40.

Table 40: Number of households applying for assistance with temporary accommodation by Council area

Council Area	Number of households applying	% of the Total
Antrim & Newtownabbey	18	2.38%
Ards & North Down	31	4.10%
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	24	3.17%
Belfast	402	53.10%
Causeway	16	2.11%
Derry & Strabane	130	17.17%
Fermanagh & Omagh	33	4.36%
Lisburn/Castlereagh	41	5.42%
Mid & East Antrim	25	3.30%
Mid Ulster	5	0.66%
Newry & Mourne	32	4.23%
TOTAL	757	100%

Source: Snapshot Survey undertaken by the Housing Executive

5.108 Belfast City Council Area had a disproportionate number of requests for temporary accommodation over the three weeks (**53%** of all applications) compared with its share of homeless applications (**30%**) and its share of placements in temporary accommodation (**39%** of all placements). The implication is that even in Belfast, where the supply of temporary accommodation is better than in other council areas, there was insufficient temporary accommodation available to meet the demand in these three weeks.

5.109 Derry & Strabane Council also had significantly more applications for accommodation than other areas (**17%**) compared with its share of homeless applications (**11%**) but slightly fewer than its share of placements in temporary accommodation (**19%** of all placements).

5.110 It is not clear from the snapshot data whether the relatively high proportion of applications for accommodation in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry came about as a result of applications from households based in these cities or from out-of-area applications from districts with less temporary accommodation available.

5.111 The FDA status of households was recorded and is set out in Table 41.

Table 41: FDA status of households recorded in the Snapshot Survey

Did the household applying for temporary accommodation have FDA status?	Number of households	% of the total
Had FDA status	529	69.88%
Pending decision	192	25.36%
Did not have FDA status	31	4.10%
Not Known	5	0.66%
TOTAL	757	100%

Source: Snapshot Survey undertaken by the Housing Executive

- 5.112 **95%** of the households seen were either already accepted as homeless or their eligibility was still being assessed, and there was therefore a duty to offer reasonable temporary accommodation if required.
- 5.113 A number of households were already in some form of temporary accommodation at the point that they approached the Area Office. The analysis showed that this was the case in **204** cases (**27%** of the total). Of these **79** were staying in a crash bed the night before. There were **32** households who were rough sleeping the night before. The majority (**371** households, **49%** of the total) had made their own temporary arrangements and were recorded as staying with family and friends the night before.
- 5.114 The type of households applying for temporary accommodation was recorded and is shown in Table 42.

Table 42: Households approaching area offices during snapshot weeks broken down by household type

Household Type	No. of households	% of total
Single adult under 26	189	24.97%
Single adult 26+	359	47.42%
More than 1 adult – no children	15	1.98%
Single adult with child / children	145	19.15%
More than 1 adult with child / children	37	4.89%
Not Known	12	1.59%
TOTAL	757	100%

Source: Snapshot Survey undertaken by the Housing Executive

5.115 Childless households represented **76%** of the presentations for which information was available.

5.116 Housing Solutions staff recorded how many bedrooms those households presenting required in temporary accommodation (Table 43).

Table 43: Number of bedrooms required by households approaching area offices during snapshot weeks

Number of Bedrooms Required	No. of Households	% of Total
1 Bedroom	534	70.54%
2 Bedrooms	147	19.42%
3 Bedrooms	64	8.45%
4 Bedrooms	8	1.06%
5 Bedrooms	1	0.13%
Not Known	3	0.40%
TOTAL	757	100%

Source: Snapshot Survey undertaken by the Housing Executive

5.117 **71%** of applicants in this period needed one-bedroom accommodation, and **19%** required two-bedroom accommodation. Further analysis also indicated that **63** households required ground-floor accommodation (**8%** of the total).

5.118 The survey also attempted to monitor other special accommodation requirements. However, this information was recorded in a free-text field that produced little information that was capable of a meaningful summary. This has prevented any analysis of the extent to which households that were recorded by the Housing Solutions teams as requiring wheelchair accommodation or other adapted housing when they were referred to temporary accommodation. The report’s recommendations refer back to this finding.

5.119 The Snapshot Survey allowed the Campbell Tickell research team to identify the applicants’ support needs. This involved the Housing Advisors classifying applicants against a total of seventeen different ‘support needs’ using the same method and indices as were adopted for analysis of the Provider Census reported above. The results are reported in Table 44.

Table 44: Number of support needs identified for households approaching area offices during snapshot weeks

Number of additional support needs	No of households	% of total	Comparison with % in Provider Census
None	162	21.40%	9.76%
1	310	40.95%	20.47%
2	125	16.51%	22.13%
3	67	8.85%	17.16%
4	46	6.08%	13.76%
5	28	3.70%	7.75%
6	16	2.11%	4.79%
7	2	0.26%	4.18%
7+	1	0.13%	9.76%
TOTAL	757	100%	100%

Source: Snapshot Survey undertaken by the Housing Executive compared with Provider Census

5.120 The profile of needs shown by households in the Snapshot Survey is different from that found in the Provider Census. In particular:

- A higher proportion of households identified in the Snapshot Survey had either no support needs or only one support need;

- A lower proportion of households in the Snapshot Survey had three or more need (**21%** in the snapshot compared with **48%** in the Provider Census).

5.121 To examine the levels of ‘complex needs’ further, the same method was adopted as in the analysis of the Provider Census. Complex need was defined as either four or more separate identified support needs or three support needs from within the following:

- Alcohol dependency
- Drug dependency
- Domestic abuse
- History of mental health problems
- Offending behaviour
- Physical Health Problems / Disability

5.122 There were **136** households in the Snapshot Survey with complex needs (**18%** of the total). This compares with **30%** in the Provider Census.

5.123 To examine the risk to the household or the risk that they present to others, the same approach was once again adopted as in analysing the Provider Census. Table 45 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 45: Assessment of risk identified for households approaching area offices during snapshot weeks

Assessment of risk	No of households	% of total	Comparison with % in Provider Census
Risk of harm to others	88	11.62%	10.63%
Risk of harm from others	46	6.08%	23.69%
Risk of harm to and from others	35	4.62%	34.76%
No significant risk	572	75.56%	30.75%
Blank	16	2.11%	0.17%
TOTAL	757	100%	100%

Source: Snapshot Survey and Provider Census undertaken by the Housing Executive

5.124 The Snapshot Survey data suggests that, the majority (**76%**) pose no risk. The comparison with Provider Census data is interesting. Providers thought that significantly more residents in their schemes posed a risk of harm to others, and a combination of harm to others and from others. Significantly fewer (**31%**) were thought to pose no risk.

The results are from different populations and broadly in line with what might have been anticipated, but there are three possible factors that may help explain these differences:

- The Snapshot Survey is reporting data on all applicants to the Housing Executive, many of whom may be homeless but have few support needs and pose no risk to themselves or to others; whereas the Provider Census reported data on people who had been housed in temporary accommodation funded by Supporting People, who by definition require support and are therefore more likely to have greater needs and a higher likelihood of risk;
- The judgements on needs and risk were taken by two different sets of people – Housing Advisors in the Housing Executive’s Area Offices were assessing needs and risks in the Snapshot Survey, whereas staff in supported temporary accommodation schemes were making these assessments in the Provider Census. It is possible that their judgements of need and risk differ.
- It is also possible that by the time someone is placed in accommodation their needs might have become clearer over time, particularly if they have developed a relationship of trust with the accommodation provider.

Matching need with supply – how appropriate are placements in temporary accommodation?

- 5.125 As part of the Snapshot Survey carried out by the Housing Executive over three weeks Housing Advisors were asked to complete a survey questionnaire which gave them an opportunity to record information about each homeless applicant. Based on these free-text case notes, it has been possible to classify the outcome of each applicant’s approach to the Housing Executive. Breaking this down into a limited number of analytical categories inevitably involved a simplification of complex real-life situations. It was also, as the name of the exercise implies, a snapshot in time and many of the circumstances described are fluid.
- 5.126 The Housing Executive has a duty to offer a reasonable form of temporary accommodation if it is required by a homeless household. However, the applicant may turn this down and decide to make their own arrangements. Then the situation may change the following day or the following week. Sometimes this will be known in advance or anticipated, but that is not always the case so it may be difficult to say what is the outcome of the household’s request for temporary accommodation, or the outcome might change as circumstances and the availability of accommodation change. Nevertheless, the results of the Snapshot Survey do provide an overview of the way the application process works and the capacity of the Housing Executive to respond to the

applicants' needs and wishes through the provision of appropriate temporary accommodation and appropriate support.

5.127 Using this information, Campbell Tickell has constructed a basic typology of possible outcomes from the homelessness interview as a basis for analysis. These are:

- Stayed in existing temporary accommodation;
- Placed in new temporary accommodation;
- Placed in Crash Bed;
- Placed in B&B;
- Placed in a Voluntary Sector Hostel;
- Placed in a Housing Executive Hostel;
- Placed in DIME accommodation;
- Made own temporary arrangements;
- No placement accepted.⁷²

Placement outcomes

5.128 The outcome for 208 households who were already staying in temporary accommodation where they had been placed previously by the Housing Executive and who were requesting alternative accommodation are shown in Table 46 below.

⁷² This is where it is unclear as to what happened as a result of the application – and would normally indicate that the applicant had disengaged in some way from the process

Table 46: Outcomes for households requesting alternative temporary accommodation during the Snapshot Survey

Outcome	No of households	% of total
Stayed in existing temporary accommodation	47	22.6%
Placed in new temporary accommodation	61	29.33%
Placed in crash bed	66	31.73%
Made own temporary arrangements	12	5.778%
No placement accepted	22	10.58%
TOTAL	208	100%

Source: Snapshot Survey undertaken by the Housing Executive

5.129 **108** households (**52%** of those looking for alternative accommodation) either stayed where they were previously living or moved to new temporary accommodation.

5.130 Perhaps of greatest concern is the fact that, within this total, there were **66** households (**32%** of those looking for temporary accommodation) who were, at the point of presentation, placed in crash bed accommodation. Of these, **55** (**27%**) were still in the crash bed facility the following night, and the balance either left with no definite outcome or made their own alternative arrangements with friends or family. No placement was accepted for **22** households (**11%**). In a number of cases the person had been barred from any available accommodation.

5.131 For households who were not in temporary accommodation, the balance of outcomes is set out in Table 47.

Table 47: Outcomes for households requesting temporary accommodation during the Snapshot Survey when not already in temporary accommodation

Outcome from approach	No of households	% of total
Placed in new temporary accommodation	155	28.23%
Placed in crash bed	35	6.38%
Made own temporary arrangements	277	50.46%
No placement accepted	82	14.94%
TOTAL	549	100%

Source: Snapshot Survey undertaken by the Housing Executive

- 5.132 **190** households (**35%** of those looking for temporary accommodation) were provided with a placement straight away in either temporary accommodation or a crash bed. **277** households, (**50%** of the households who were not already in temporary accommodation) effectively made their own arrangements as an alternative to being able to secure a placement through the Housing Executive, with a further **82** households (**15%**) where the outcome was unclear as the offer of placement was not accepted..
- 5.133 It was not possible to be certain how suitable and sustainable the placement was for the 50% of cases where the household made their own temporary arrangements. However, the case notes suggest that in many cases it was not a sustainable solution.
- 5.134 These results, taken together with the findings contained in section 4 of this report suggest that the demand for temporary accommodation is greater than the Housing Executive's capacity to respond in a way that reflected the households needs or wishes. The reasons for this are complex and are explored in more detail below.
- 5.135 Another way of estimating the level of unmet need is to consider the Housing Adviser's response to the question:
- "Is there an anticipated need for alternative temporary accommodation in the future?"*
- 5.136 Examination of notes at case by case level makes it difficult on occasions to follow the rationale behind the answer but at a global level this is a useful indicator based on the officers' professional judgement. The results are set out in Tables 48a and 48b.

Table 48a: Anticipated need for alternative temporary accommodation from all applicants identified in the Snapshot Survey (number of households)

Outcome from Approach	No Anticipated Further Need	Anticipated Further Need	No Information	Total
Stayed in Existing Temp Accommodation	28	17	2	47
Placed in Crash Bed	62	33	6	101
Placed in B&B	16	46	3	65
Placed in Voluntary Sector Hostel	65	20	1	86
Placed in HE Hostel	23	6	1	30
Placed in DIME	5			5
Placed in Single Lets	19	7	4	30
Made own temporary arrangements	143	138	8	289
No Placement accepted	55	35	14	104
TOTAL	416	302	39	757

Source: Snapshot Survey undertaken by the Housing Executive

Table 48b: Anticipated need for alternative temporary accommodation from all applicants identified in the Snapshot Survey (percentage of households)

Outcome from Approach	No Anticipated Further Need	Anticipated Further Need	No Information	Total
Stayed in existing temporary accommodation	59.57%	36.17%	4.26%	100%
Placed in crash bed	61.39%	32.67%	5.94%	100%
Placed in B&B	24.62%	70.77%	4.62%	100%
Placed in voluntary sector hostel	75.58%	23.26%	1.16%	100%
Placed in NIHE hostel	76.67%	20.00%	3.33%	100%
Placed in DIME accommodation	100%	0.00%	0.00%	
Placed in Single Lets	63.33%	23.33%	13.33%	100%
Made own temporary arrangements	49.48%	47.75%	2.77%	100%
No placement accepted	52.88%	33.65%	13.46%	100%
TOTAL	54.95%	39.89%	5.15%	100%

Source: Snapshot Survey undertaken by the Housing Executive

5.137 **40%** of all households included in the Snapshot Survey required further temporary accommodation in the future according to the judgement of the Housing Advisor. This result was largely driven by the **251** households (**83%** of all households that required alternative temporary accommodation) that were placed in crash beds, B&B accommodation, made their own arrangements or where no placement was made..

5.138 Partly in an attempt to obtain further clarification about the process involved in obtaining temporary accommodation from a housing advisor’s perspective, three additional questions were asked in the second and third Snapshot Survey that took place in April and June 2019. These were:

“Has a specific offer of accommodation been made to the applicant?”

“Has the applicant had been turned down by any provider?”

“Has the applicant refused any offer of accommodation?”

5.139 Table 49 reports the results.

Table 49: Responses to specific questions about reasons for non-access to temporary accommodation asked in the Snapshot Survey

Question	Numbers saying Yes	% of Total
Was a specific offer of accommodation made?	295	100%
<i>Of these:</i>		
Did any accommodation provider turn down the applicant?	75	25.42%
Did the applicant turn down the offer made?	123	41.69%

Source: Snapshot Survey undertaken by the Housing Executive

5.140 If these results are typical, they suggest that a major reason for the lack of placements after an offer had been made was the applicant rejecting the offers available – in **42%** of cases. In 25% of cases, the accommodation provider turned down the applicant. It is possible that in some of these cases the applicant may have rejected an offer but also have been rejected themselves by another provider.

5.141 The data showed that it was largely hostel accommodation that was rejected by applicants, but location as well as the nature of the accommodation were also considerations for the applicant i.e. they frequently referred to the fact that they did not want a “hostel”. The lack of temporary accommodation in smaller towns and rural areas means that homeless households may need to relocate if they require temporary accommodation and are unable to return to their own homes or stay with family or friends in their home area. Stakeholders involved in the consultation said this was a significant factor in offers of accommodation being turned down.

5.142 However, it is not clear what happens to FDA households when it is not possible to offer temporary accommodation that they find acceptable. This issue requires further research and explanation.

Counting FDA households for whom no temporary accommodation is available

5.143 The data analysed in section 4 of the report showed that more than **18,000** households presented themselves to the Housing Executive as homeless in 2018/2019. When households presenting on more than one occasion during the year are eliminated from the count, there were around **17,500** discrete households presenting as homeless. Around **12,500** households were awarded FDA status.

- 5.144 The total stock of temporary accommodation at the end of March 2019 was around **2,700** units.⁷³ Some households had been in occupation of their temporary accommodation for more than one year, and it is generally accepted that most temporary accommodation is likely to be occupied at any moment in time.
- 5.145 Given these statistics on supply and demand, it is clear that there is a mismatch between the number of households that present themselves to the Housing Executive as homeless and that are awarded FDA status, and the available supply of temporary accommodation at any moment in time. The result is an increased use of B&B/hotels, and more households making their own arrangements. That is what the Housing Executive's year-on-year data reported in section 4 of the report show. It is unclear how much of a problem this causes for the households concerned, but the fact that so many households approached the Housing Executive Area Offices for assistance in finding temporary accommodation in the three snapshot weeks suggests that having to make their own temporary housing arrangements is not felt to be satisfactory in many cases.

Matching households with 'complex needs' and vulnerabilities to supported accommodation

- 5.146 The analysis of data covering the 2018/2019 financial year from the HMS showed that:
- **37%** of those households placed in temporary accommodation in 2018/19 had 'complex needs' points awarded;
 - **55%** of households placed in temporary accommodation had specific vulnerabilities identified.
- 5.147 For comparison, the proportion of temporary accommodation placements that were made in the Supporting People funded provision providing support to residents amounted to **34%** of all placements to a Supporting People funded service. At first sight this might suggest that, at a global level, there is a degree of parity between the existence of additional support needs among applicants and the type of placements made. However, a more detailed examination of the HMS data reveals that:
- Of the **884** households awarded Complex Needs Points and placed in temporary accommodation, only **288 (33%)** were placed in Supporting People funded provision where housing-related support was available; and for comparison.

⁷³ These numbers are rounded because the number of units in each type of temporary accommodation fluctuates from time to time.

- Only **25%** of those placed in Supporting People funded accommodation had been awarded complex needs points.

5.148 Table 50 shows the types of temporary accommodation that people with specific vulnerabilities identified by the Housing Executive were placed in in 2018/2019.

Table 50: Number and percentage of households with specific vulnerabilities identified by the Housing Executive placed in each type of temporary accommodation

Type of Temporary Accommodation	Number of Placements with Specific Vulnerabilities	% of Total cases with specific vulnerabilities placed in this type of temporary accommodation
Housing Executive hostels	76	4.11%
Voluntary sector hostels	415	22.47%
DIME accommodation	203	10.99%
Single Lets	547	29.62%
B&B/Hotel	606	32.81%
Total	1,847	100%

Source: Additional reports requested from Housing Management System

5.149 **38%** of the households with specific vulnerabilities were placed in Supporting People funded accommodation; **62%** were not placed in supported accommodation; one third (**33%**) were placed in a B&B/hotel, at least initially.⁷⁴

5.150 **29%** of households with high support needs identified in the Snapshot Survey were placed in supported accommodation. **However, 71% of such households were not placed in supported accommodation or were placed in crisis accommodation (crash beds).**⁷⁵

5.151 Although this exercise identified a relatively small number of cases where households had high support needs, the results reveal a heavy reliance on crash beds and B&Bs where **69%** of people with the highest level of vulnerability were placed.

⁷⁴ In many cases an initial B&B placement may have been followed up by a subsequent placement in supported accommodation.

⁷⁵ The terms 'crash bed' and 'crisis accommodation' are used at different times by different parts of the Housing Executive. It has been assumed that the terms are interchangeable, and both of them have been used at different points in the analysis depending on which term was used in the source material.

- 5.152 Taking an overview of the data from the HMS analysis, the Snapshot Survey, and the results of a Provider Census, it is evident that between 20% and 37% of vulnerable homeless applicants are being placed in supported accommodation depending on the particular cohort that is being studied; and between 62% and 80% of vulnerable homeless applicants are being placed in unsupported accommodation, with a high proportion being placed at least initially in B&B or crash bed/crisis accommodation.
- 5.153 Participants in the provider consultation exercises told us that there were a significant number of inappropriate referrals. For example, cases where people with no support needs were placed in supported hostel accommodation and cases where placements were made that did not reflect the individual's need for additional support.
- 5.154 There was also a belief that location was also an issue, as the perception was that often clients with particular care needs who were receiving it within a Trust area were placed in temporary accommodation outside of that area.

Meeting the need for additional support – level of support

- 5.155 The Provider Census relating to residents in Supporting People funded voluntary sector hostels and DIME accommodation was partly designed to establish the level of support required by the residents living there. Two criteria were used to categorise the level of needs:
- The level of support needed based on the number of individual support needs identified;
 - The presence of certain specified support needs normally taken to indicate the presence of complex needs.
- 5.156 The results of this analysis were extensively reported in paragraphs 5.38 to 5.56. However, some of the data has been repackaged to show the levels of need that residents living in Supporting People funded accommodation experienced at the time as reported by their support provider.
- 5.157 To achieve this, all households on which providers reported in the census were classified as having high, medium, low or no support needs; and also, as high, medium, low, or none in terms of risk of harm. This analysis made it possible to construct the two dimensions of a matrix. Taking all residents in all Supporting People funded accommodation together, the results of this analysis were as follows.

Table 51a: Level of support needs / risk of harm matrix for all residents (number of households)

All hostel sectors	Level of support needs				
	High	Medium	Low	None	Total
High risk	87	23	11	1	122
Medium risk	131	99	35	7	272
Low risk	110	147	102	40	399
No risk	66	138	86	63	353
Unknown risk	0	0	1	1	2
TOTAL	394	407	235	112	1,148

Source: Provider Census

Table 51b: Level of support needs / risk of harm matrix for all residents (percentage of households)

All hostel sectors	Level of support needs				
	High	Medium	Low	None	Total
High risk	7.58%	2.00%	0.96%	0.09%	10.63%
Medium risk	11.41%	8.62%	3.05%	0.61%	23.69%
Low risk	9.58%	12.80%	8.89%	3.48%	34.76%
No risk	5.75%	12.02%	7.49%	5.49%	30.75%
Unknown risk	0.00%	0.00%	0.09%	0.09%	0.17%
TOTAL	34.32%	35.45%	20.47%	9.76%	100%

Source: Provider Census

5.158 Tables 51a and 51b identify:

- **87** households (**8%**) that were a high risk on both dimensions;
- **340** households (**30%**) that were a high or medium risk on both dimensions;
- **63** households (**5%**) that were no risk on either dimension;
- **291** households (**25%**) that were low or no risk on both dimensions.

5.159 This analysis was then repeated for only those residents living in Supporting People funded accommodation who had FDA status awarded by the Housing Executive.

Table 52a: Level of support needs / risk of harm matrix for residents in the Provider Census who had FDA status (number of households)

All hostel sectors	Level of support needs				
	High	Medium	Low	None	Total
High risk	63	11	4	1	79
Medium risk	91	68	19	7	185
Low risk	87	97	51	17	252
No risk	53	103	67	44	267
Unknown risk	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	294	279	141	70	784

Source: Provider Census

Table 52b: Level of support needs / risk of harm matrix for residents in the Provider Census who had FDA status (percentage of households)

All hostel sectors	Level of support needs				
	High	Medium	Low	None	Total
High risk	8.04%	1.40%	0.51%	0.13%	10.08%
Medium risk	11.61%	8.67%	2.42%	0.89%	23.60%
Low risk	11.10%	12.37%	6.51%	2.17%	32.14%
No risk	6.76%	13.14%	8.55%	5.61%	34.06%
Unknown risk	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.13%	0.13%
TOTAL	37.50%	35.59%	17.98%	8.93%	100%

Source: Provider Census

5.160 Tables 52a and 52b identify:

- **63** households (**8%**) that are a high risk on both dimensions;
- **233** households (**30%**) that are a high or medium risk on both dimensions;
- **44** households (**6%**) that are no risk on either dimension;
- **179** households (**23%**) that are low or no risk on both dimensions.

5.161 The numbers of high/medium risk and low/no risk households found in the all households table are higher than are found in the FDA table. However, the percentage of high-medium and low/no risk households in each set is similar. If priority is given by the Housing Executive to prioritising the placement of vulnerable people (i.e. high/medium risk) in supported temporary accommodation, the proportion of households in this group should be higher in the FDA cohort than in the all-households cohort but is it not.

- There are **8%** of high/high risk households in the all-households cohort compared with **the same proportion** in the FDA cohort; and
- There are **30%** of high/medium risk households in the all-households cohort compared with **the same proportion** also in the FDA cohort.

5.162 These results suggest that not all of the current resident population in Supporting People funded temporary accommodation may actually need this level of input. Bearing in mind that not all residents in accommodation funded by the Supporting People programme are referred by the Housing Executive, and that not all Housing Executive referrals have FDA status, the results appear to indicate that 23% of residents in these schemes at the time of the Provider Census had low or no support needs and presented low or no risk. This is a significant proportion.

5.163 Furthermore, the Snapshot Survey showed that while around 20% of people with high needs who were at risk were placed in supported temporary accommodation, 80% were not. This last finding may partly be a question of the available capacity in these schemes and their ability to take in the numbers of vulnerable people who need support; but it may also be partly a result of these hostels housing people who do not need, or no longer need, the levels of support that they offer.

5.164 This was a recurring theme throughout the consultation exercises. One strong conclusion that was drawn was that there needs to be a much stronger link between the Homelessness Strategy and the development of a strategy and planning for temporary accommodation.

The number of households moving to settled housing on leaving temporary accommodation

5.165 The key performance indicator used by the Housing Executive in determining whether its statutory duty towards a homeless household has been discharged is whether or not they have been placed in settled accommodation. In most circumstances in Northern Ireland, this means through the award of a social housing tenancy.

5.166 However, there are other ways in which people can find settled housing, including finding a PRS tenancy for themselves or being reconciled with family or partners so that they move back in with them. These could be perfectly satisfactory and stable solutions to their housing need. For the purposes of this research, therefore, a wider definition of the performance indicator has been adopted, which has been termed ‘securing settled accommodation’.

5.167 This outcome has subsequently been split into two separate categories, although without more information on the personal circumstances of individual households these may only approximate the reality:

- ‘Rehoused through a Housing Executive nomination’, where rehousing in a social housing tenancy has occurred; and
- ‘Made their own permanent arrangements’ for all other types of settled housing.

Supporting People funded temporary accommodation

5.168 The main source for this analysis was data received from the Housing Executive, showing where people moved when they left Supporting People funded accommodation designated for homeless households in 2018/19. This file included results for approximately **97%** of the Supporting People funded units.⁷⁶

5.169 The data were analysed initially into four categories:

- Supporting People funded voluntary sector hostels;
- Housing Executive hostels;
- DIME accommodation; and
- Crisis accommodation (Centenary Night Shelter, Annsgate and Damien House).

5.170 In focusing on helping homeless households into settled housing as a primary aim of temporary accommodation, the Campbell Tickell research team was aware that this discounted the other objectives that underlie the Supporting People programme, which

⁷⁶ Data for a small number of services were missing for some quarters, but an assumed annual total for these services was calculated assuming that departures continued at the same rate for these quarters as those for which data were available. The supported accommodation scheme provided by Cuan Mhuire was excluded from the analysis as this is a specialist scheme that could not be considered temporary accommodation.

form an important part of what these services are contracted to deliver. To the extent that the Housing Executive is using this accommodation to help meet its homelessness duties however, this is seen by the research team as one of the primary objectives in those Supporting People funded services that are designated for homeless households. Focusing on this outcome therefore seems appropriate in this review.

5.171 The categories used for determining the outcomes from the service were those specified by Supporting People in terms of the household’s destination on departure from supported accommodation (Figure 26).

Figure 26: Categories used for outcome monitoring by Supporting People

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying with friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved to take up a Housing Executive tenancy (General needs)⁷⁷
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying with family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returned to previous home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved to B&B accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term hospital stay
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved to supported housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unplanned/ Not known
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved to sheltered housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed suicide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved to a care home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taken into custody
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved into accommodation as owner occupier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeping rough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renting privately owned accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entered a long stay hospital or hospice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved to take up a housing association tenancy (General needs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entered an acute psychiatric hospital

Source: Housing Executive, Supporting People

⁷⁷ The terminology adopted by the Supporting People team and used in the data supplied to Campbell Tickell suggests that this list of outcomes has been adopted from another UK jurisdiction because it refers to ‘local authority tenancies’ rather than Housing Executive tenancies, and ‘RSLs’ rather than housing associations. This raises questions of interpretation. In particular, how should ‘Moved to supported housing’ be interpreted? The research team has changed the terminology used in the tables to reflect practice in Northern Ireland.

5.172 An analysis of the departure destinations of households moving out of each category of Supporting People-funded temporary accommodation was carried out. The results are set out in Table 53 below.

Table 53: Departure destination from voluntary sector Supporting People funded services (except for those defined as crisis accommodation) in 2018-19

Departure Destination	VCS Hostels		Housing Executive Hostels		DIME accommodation	
	No of Households	% of Total	No of Households	% of Total	No of Households	% of Total
Staying with friends	284	7.58%	11	9.57%	0	0.00%
Staying with family members	460	12.28%	7	6.09%	23	13.45%
Moved to B&B accom	29	0.77%	1	0.87%	0	0.00%
Moved to supported housing	429	11.46%	2	1.74%	0	0.00%
Moved to sheltered housing	102	2.72%	3	2.61%	0	0.00%
Moved to a care home	12	0.32%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Moved into accommodation as owner occupier	5	0.13%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Renting privately owned accommodation	238	6.36%	5	4.35%	5	2.92%
Moved to a housing association tenancy (General needs)	135	3.60%	14	12.17%	32	18.71%
Moved to take up a Housing Executive tenancy	518	13.83%	69	60.00%	84	49.12%
Returned to previous home	378	10.09%	3	2.61%	0	0.00%
Short term hospital stay	69	1.84%	0	0.00%	4	2.34%
Unplanned/ Not known	709	18.93%	0	0.00%	8	4.68%
Committed suicide	12	0.32%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Taken into custody	348	9.29%	0	0.00%	15	8.77%
Sleeping rough	11	0.29%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Entered a long stay hospital or hospice	10	0.27%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Entered an acute psychiatric hospital	5	0.13%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
TOTAL	3,745	100%	115	100%	171	100%

Source: Supporting People Outcomes Return

5.173 Accommodation funded from the Supporting People programme and operated by voluntary sector organisations provides for a majority of Supporting People funded temporary accommodation placements (**87%**). Table 53 shows that:

Voluntary Sector Hostels

- **653** people (**17%**) leaving voluntary sector accommodation moved to a social housing tenancy (general needs);
- **429** people (**11%**) moved to other supported housing – not necessarily temporary accommodation, and we comment further about this below;
- **1,122** people (**30%**) returned to their previous home, or went to stay with their family or friends;
- **348** people (**9%**) were taken into custody.

Housing Executive Hostels

- Most of the Housing Executive's temporary hostel accommodation is intended for families. The destinations that households moved to when leaving the hostels tend to reflect this fact.
- **83** households (**72%**) moved to a social housing tenancy (general needs);
- **21** households (**18%**) returned to their own home or moved to stay with family or friends.

DIME accommodation

- People leaving DIME accommodation went to fewer destinations than those leaving crisis accommodation or other accommodation funded by Supporting People. In most cases, these destinations marked a positive outcome for the individual. **116 (68%)** moved into a social housing tenancy
- **15** people (**9%**) were taken into custody.

*Night shelters and crisis accommodation*⁷⁸

5.174 Initially the analysis of departures from crisis accommodation included results from all three services. However, there was a total of **1,965** departures over the year 2018/19 from the Centenary Night Shelter alone, and **1,915** of these were recorded as having an unknown destination, although **16** households were allocated a Housing Executive tenancy. This result is of interest in itself, but inclusion of the night shelter distorts the results for the other services. Table 54 summarises the results for the other two crisis services — Annsgate and Damien House.

⁷⁸ Terminology varies within the Housing Executive. The Supporting People team use the term 'crisis accommodation'. The Homelessness team also uses the term 'crash'. One of the key providers of such accommodation calls it a 'night shelter'. Campbell Tickell has used the terms crisis accommodation or night shelter in this analysis.

Table 54: Departure destination for households moving from Supporting People funded crisis services in 2018-19 (excludes Centenary Night Shelter)

Departure Destination	No of Households	% of Total
Staying with friends	34	12.23%
Staying with family members	22	7.91%
Moved to B&B accommodation	2	0.72%
Moved to supported housing	81	29.14%
Moved to sheltered housing	0	0.00%
Moved to a care home	0	0.00%
Moved into accommodation as owner occupier	0	0.00%
Renting privately owned accommodation	6	2.16%
Moved to a housing association tenancy (General needs)	1	0.36%
Moved to a Housing Executive tenancy (General needs)	9	3.24%
Returned to previous home	53	19.06%
Short term hospital stay	9	3.24%
Unplanned/ Not known	45	16.19%
Committed suicide	0	0.00%
Taken into custody	6	2.16%
Sleeping rough	10	3.60%
Entered a long stay hospital or hospice	0	0.00%
Entered an acute psychiatric hospital	0	0.00%
TOTAL	278	100%

Source: Supporting People Outcomes Return

5.175 It is reasonable to suggest that crisis accommodation only exists because other forms of temporary accommodation are not available at the time they are needed. The accommodation is intended to be and should be very short stay and the total number of people leaving such accommodation is likely to be broadly equal to the number of people entering the accommodation. Based on this assumption it is therefore likely that the number of crisis placements in 2018/19 was around **2,240** (including Centenary

Night Shelter). This would have involved multiple placements of the same individuals but there is no way of directly ascertaining this from the data.

5.176 Table 54 shows that people leaving crisis accommodation moved on to a wide range of other destinations. Significantly, **81 people (29%)** moved into supported housing; **53 people (19%)** moved back to their own home; and in **45 cases (16%)** the destination was unknown.

Proportion of moves that resulted in secure, settled accommodation

5.177 Having completed the foregoing analysis of household destinations upon leaving temporary accommodation, the research considered the question of whether these moves resulted in the household finding secure, settled accommodation. The following approach was adopted. Firstly, a move to other supported housing was removed from the analysis. This was interpreted as meaning a move to other hostels. This may well be the best option for the individual or household at that time, but effectively it does not necessarily mean that the placement is secure or settled, and effectively such households are still 'within the supported housing system'. In other words, they may have left a particular address, but they are still living within supported housing.⁷⁹

5.178 The remaining results were then summarised under a limited number of higher-level headings as follows:

- Moved to other temporary arrangement (family, friends or B&B excluding other supported housing);
- Returned to previous home;

⁷⁹ Whether the move is secure and settled depends on the individual's needs, and the type of supported housing to which they move. A move to specialised accommodation for learning disabled people may be long term, whereas a move to specialised accommodation for someone who is abusing drugs or alcohol might be short, medium or long term depending on their needs. Nevertheless, the researchers were aware that in the Northern Ireland context 'supported housing' that is not specifically designated for homeless households often refers to long-term supported provision, primarily for people with mental health issues or physical/learning disabilities/dementia. It would be reasonable to describe this kind of accommodation as settled housing, but it is not always secure because license conditions limit occupation to having a need for the services the scheme provides. The numbers involved suggest to us that our assumption is likely to be correct in most cases i.e. that most of these moves are to other homelessness provision, and we have proceeded on that basis. In any case it was outside the scope of this research to analyse data on individual needs in relation to their need for supported housing in this way.

- Moved to social housing or social care (housing association, Housing Executive or care homes);
- Moved into PRS;
- Moved into health setting (short stay hospital, long stay hospital or hospice or acute psychiatric hospital);
- Entered custody; or
- Lost contact (unknown, rough sleeping, committed suicide).

5.179 For this analysis, the category of moving in with family or friends is taken to be a temporary solution, whereas returning to previous home is taken to include notions of reconciliation that may well be a long-term arrangement. This formed the basis for an analysis of data on moves from three of the four types of temporary accommodation funded by Supporting People, excluding crisis accommodation (Table 55 below).

Table 55: Departure destination using higher level categories for Supporting People funded programme (without crisis accommodation) for 2018-19

Departure Destination (Higher Level Categories)	No of Households	% of Total
Moved to temporary arrangement (excluding other supported housing)	815	22.64%
Returned to previous home	381	10.58%
Moved to social housing tenancy	970	26.94%
Moved into private rented sector	248	6.89%
Moved into health setting	84	2.33%
Entered custody	363	10.08%
Lost Contact	739	20.53%
TOTAL	3,600	100%

Source: Supporting People Outcomes Return

5.180 Using these results, it was possible to calculate the proportion of households that secured settled housing as a result of their stay in temporary housing.

- **1,218 households (34%)** moved to mainstream accommodation (including moves into the social housing and the private rented sector);
- It is also possible that a significant number of households that returned home can be counted as being in settled accommodation. However, there is no way

of knowing what proportion of households returning home are in settled or insecure accommodation. With that proviso, we include **381** households (**11%**) that returned to their own homes as also returning to settled accommodation;

- To this figure should be added the **32** households recorded as leaving Centenary Night Shelter and moving straight into mainstream housing, as well as the **53** households returning home from other crisis provision;
- On these assumptions, **1,684** households, (**44%** of all households moving out of Supporting People funded temporary accommodation in 2018/19 but excluding those moving into supported housing) could be deemed to have moved to secure accommodation, and to have had a positive outcome.

5.181 It is possible that the **84** households (**2%**) that entered a health setting also had a positive outcome that was right for them personally. However, we have no means of ascertaining that.

5.182 This analysis also shows that:

- **1,178** households (**33%**) either moved to other temporary accommodation or entered custody. In different respects neither of these is a positive outcome as such; and
- Contact was lost with **739** households (**21%**) and their destinations and therefore their outcomes are unknown, but contact being lost could reasonably be described as a 'negative outcome'.

5.183 The Provider Census data analysed earlier in this report shows that not all of these households would have been referred by the Housing Executive to providers of temporary accommodation as FDAs. If the same proportion of people in the Census who were recorded as FDA (**70%**) also applies to the households included in Table 56, this might mean that approximately **1,100** of the households moving into settled accommodation were previously FDA, although this can only be an estimate.

5.184 The Supporting People team classifies housing support services for homeless households according to a series of categories based on the type of user – Women and young children escaping domestic violence ('Domestic Violence'), Single Homeless (including People involved in Alcohol and Drug Abuse, and people with an 'Offending History') and 'Homeless Families'. When the households that secured settled housing were classified into these groupings, the results were as follows.

Table 56: Proportion of departures from Supporting People funded accommodation (excluding Housing executive hostels) securing settled housing by primary client group

Primary Client Group for Service	Number of Departures in each category	Proportion of Departures securing settled housing
Domestic Violence	465	55.80%
Single Homeless	2,444	29.40%
Homeless Families	295	77.50%
TOTAL	3,204	37.66%

Source: Supporting People Outcomes Return

5.185 The data show that services for homeless families (**78%**) and services for those who have experienced domestic violence (**56%**) have a relatively high success rate in resettling people in settled housing. Both the generic and specialist single homeless schemes have a relatively low success rate (**29%**). The overall proportion of departures moving to settled accommodation is **38%**. This is particularly noticeable when the result is compared to the DIME scheme where the percentage of departures securing settled housing according to the Supporting People Outcomes file is **71%**.

5.186 For the Housing Executive's own hostels, the results on the Supporting People Outcomes file are even higher at **83%** of households moving to settled accommodation.

5.187 The differences in the number and proportion of households disengaging from services is equally variable (Table 57).

Table 57: Proportion of departures from voluntary sector hostels effectively disengaging from services by Primary Client Group

Primary Client Group for Service	Number of Departures effectively disengaging from services	Proportion of Departures effectively disengaging from services
Domestic Violence	45	9.7%
Single Homeless	448	25.1%
Alcohol Abuse	177	38.5%
Offending History	50	24.9%
Homeless Families	9	3.3%
TOTAL: All homeless services	729	21.25%

Source: Supporting People Outcomes Return

- 5.188 Service users with a history of alcohol abuse, offending history or single homeless generally have relatively high levels of disengagement from temporary accommodation. Additional analysis of the data shows that in the schemes for offenders, a further **24%** of departures return to custody (i.e. **49%** either disengage or return to custody).
- 5.189 If Single Homeless services are viewed as a whole (those tagged as Single Homeless, Alcohol Abuse and Offending History) then the overall proportion that disengages is **28%**.
- 5.190 The data on Supporting People Outcomes indicate that the percentage disengaging from DIME accommodation is much lower at **4%**. No households left the Housing Executive hostels having disengaged from services.

Number of households securing settled accommodation as a ratio measured against number of accommodation units in each category of housing

- 5.191 There is an additional way of measuring the effectiveness of the different types of temporary accommodation in obtaining settled housing. This can be done by measuring the ratio between the number of residents achieving settled housing, and the number of units of accommodation available in each type of housing. This creates a single indicator that considers both the proportion of departures that are successful and the total number of households leaving each type of temporary accommodation.⁸⁰
- 5.192 Table 58 analyses the ratio of households resettled against the number of units of accommodation by primary client group.

⁸⁰ This is not a widely used indicator but has been used by one of the researchers in the past, for example, in developing a performance framework for the London Borough of Lewisham. It was developed because for any housing authority it is not the proportion of people leaving and securing housing that is the key measure, it is the actual number of people securing settled housing.

Table 58: The ratio of households living in voluntary sector hostels that secured settled accommodation to number of accommodation units by Primary Client Group

Primary Client Group for Service	Ratio between number of households securing settled housing and the number of units of accommodation
Domestic Violence	1.87
Single Homeless	0.84
Alcohol Abuse	0.83
Offending History	0.89
TOTAL: All Single Homeless Services	0.84
Homeless Families	1.06

Source: Supporting People Outcomes Return

5.193 Table 58 suggests that domestic violence services provided the best value in terms of resettlement to settled accommodation, and that generic and specialist single homeless services have a similar level of outcome that is only around **50%** of that achieved in Domestic Violence services.

Number of households securing settled accommodation from single lets

5.194 A 10% sample exercise was undertaken to review Housing Executive data on individual households leaving Single Let accommodation in 2018/19. The aim was to determine the outcome for the household leaving the accommodation. The sample covered 125 households. The regional split in terms of these cases was:

- Belfast Region 38 cases
- North Region 41 cases
- South Region 46 cases

5.195 The Campbell Tickell research team has classified these results into the following categories which are broadly comparable with the Supporting People team’s categories used in the previous section of the report – no exact equivalent to the Supporting People categories was possible from the data.

- Household re-housed
- Household moved to alternative temporary accommodation
- Placement ended because household no longer eligible

- Applicant took own initiative to move to settled housing elsewhere
- Lost contact with household.

5.196 The results for this sample when analysed were as follows.

Table 59: Reasons for Departure from Single Lets in 2018/19 (10% sample of all cases)

Reason for Departure	No of Households	% of Total
Household re-housed	97	77.60%
Household moved to alternative temporary accommodation	10	8.00%
Placement ended because household no longer eligible	1	0.80%
Applicant took own initiative to move to settled housing elsewhere	6	4.80%
Lost contact with household	11	8.80%
TOTAL	125	100%

Source: Sample census of households leaving single lets in 2018/2019

5.197 If this sample was representative of the **1,038** households leaving Single Lets in 2018/19, the analysis suggests that more than **800** households were re-housed successfully by the Housing Executive from Single Lets into settled accommodation. In order to ensure a comparable analysis to that carried out for the voluntary sector hostels, it would be correct to include households that took the initiative to make their own arrangements to resolve their homelessness. When these households are added, this would increase the estimate of the number of households moving in to settled accommodation to around **860** households.

5.198 Using the same methodology as applied to voluntary sector hostels this would amount to a positive outcome to unit ratio of **0.69**. This compares with an overall ratio for Supporting People funded voluntary sector hostels of **0.84**, and for Housing Executive family hostels of **1.06**.

5.199 The results indicate that Single Lets have a high percentage of positive as opposed to negative outcomes. However, the absolute number of these positive outcomes are lower because of the length of time that some residents are spending in this form of temporary provision.

Number of households securing settled accommodation from placements in B&B accommodation

5.200 The outcome following a move out of B&B accommodation was recorded for a sample of 100 departures by the Housing Executive. The results were as follows.

Table 60: Destinations on Leaving B&B accommodation in 2018/19 for a sample of 100 households

Accommodation on leaving	No of Households	% of Households
Moved to another B&B	14	14.00%
Moved to some other form of temporary accommodation	45	45.00%
Returned to sharing with family or friends	8	8.00%
Moved into private rented sector	5	5.00%
Rehoused in Housing Executive, or Housing Association accommodation	9	9.00%
Unknown / Lost Contact	19	19.00%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Sample survey of 100 households leaving B&B accommodation in 2018/2019 carried out by the Housing Executive

- 5.201 The sample showed that **9%** of households leaving B&B accommodation were re-housed directly by the Housing Executive or a housing association. If this was representative of all departures from B&Bs in 2018/19, this would indicate that around **88** households achieved settled accommodation straight from B&B.
- 5.202 The other forms of temporary accommodation that B&B residents moved on to in this sample are shown in Table 61.
- 5.203 This confirms what has previously been an assumption that in a number of cases a placement in B&B is a short-term precursor to being placed in more suitable temporary accommodation.

Table 61: Other Temporary Accommodation on Leaving B&Bs in 2018/19 for sample exercise of 100 households leaving Bed & Breakfast placements

Accommodation on leaving	No of Households	% of Households
Voluntary Sector Hostel – Single Homeless	23	51.11%
Voluntary Sector Hostel – Domestic Violence	4	8.89%
Voluntary Sector Hostel – Homeless Families	0	0.00%
Housing Executive Hostel	7	15.56%
DIME accommodation	1	2.22%
Single Lets	10	22.22%
TOTAL	45	100%

Source: Sample survey of 100 households leaving B&B accommodation in 2018/2019 carried out by the Housing Executive

The cost of moving to settled accommodation from each type of temporary accommodation

Cost per household moving out of Supporting People funded accommodation

5.204 The previous analysis has used a number of measures for evaluating the effectiveness of temporary accommodation in achieving its primary purpose, namely, to act as a temporary solution while homeless households find settled accommodation. However, the best measure of value for money when evaluating the temporary accommodation programme is the cost per household securing settled accommodation. This has been calculated on the following basis:

$$\text{Total Annual Scheme Cost (Amount of Supporting People Grant)}^{81} / \text{Total Number of Households Securing Settled accommodation.}$$

5.205 This has been expressed in terms of the value of Supporting People grant only on the basis that HB payments, which also contribute to the cost of securing settled accommodation, are re-claimable from central government and are not a cost to the Housing Executive. Table 62 shows the results of this analysis.

⁸¹ The cost of Housing Benefit has not been included on the basis that this is reclaimable.

Table 62: Cost per household resident in Supporting People funded accommodation securing settled housing by primary client group

Primary Client Group for Service	Cost per household securing settled housing
Domestic Violence	£10,432
Single Homeless	£14,484
Alcohol Abuse	£18,283
Offending History	£25,609
Homeless Families	£10,712

Source: Supporting People Strategic Risk Assessment spreadsheet and Supporting People Outcomes data

The table does not include DIME or Crisis Accommodation (see below)

5.206 The table confirms the finding from the previous analysis that domestic violence services, closely followed by services for homeless families are not only the most successful in supporting their residents to move to settled accommodation but also offer the least cost per household that moves to settled accommodation. There could be a number of reasons for this. These could include the fact that in domestic violence cases, households may secure possession of their previous home, or alternatively the allocation of appropriate social housing properties might be easier.

5.207 The results also suggest that the more specialist single homeless schemes, particularly those for offenders, do not offer such good value. However, a caveat should be entered here in respect of this finding:

- Services for people with alcohol and drug abuse issues are often dealing with residents who are vulnerable, have chaotic lifestyles and require high levels of support. This increases the cost.
- A majority of the services for those with an offending history pre-date the introduction of the Supporting People programme. While they may have been remodelled in the interim period, they retain an element of supervision over offenders which is also relatively staff intensive and which also increases costs.
- Finally, the single homeless category includes a substantial number of services that have diverse clients including people who are vulnerable in terms of learning disabilities, mental health, drug or alcohol dependency issues or offending behaviours. The figure in Table 64 is an average that disguises a wide

range of different needs and approaches to the provision of temporary accommodation.

- 5.208 For all these reasons, the average cost per household that was referred to secure accommodation in 2018/2019 is an important indicator, but it cannot be taken alone without consideration of the type of service to which it relates. It may be more reasonable to see the three types of provision labelled as Single Homeless, Alcohol Abuse and Offending History as effectively part of the same service category. If this is done the cost per household securing settled accommodation in 2018/2019 was **£16,229**.
- 5.209 If crisis accommodation is included in the analysis as another type of single homeless provision, the cost per household moving out of all single homeless provision (excluding provision for alcohol abuse and offending history) in 2018/2019 was **£15,585**.

Cost per household moving out of DIME accommodation

- 5.210 Based on the cost of Supporting People grant awarded to the service and adding additional housing management costs which are not covered by Supporting People funding but are paid in addition from the Housing Executive's homelessness budget, the cost per successful move into settled housing for residents leaving DIME accommodation is **£11,660**.
- 5.211 The fact that these costs are lower than in other types of single person accommodation in spite of the fact that DIME accommodation provides supported accommodation for people who potentially have more complex needs than in the other types of temporary accommodation could be due to a number of factors, including the hostel design, which splits the provision into separate and potentially more manageable units.

Cost per household moving out of Housing Executive Hostels

- 5.212 The cost per household in securing settled accommodation when moving from the Housing Executive's hostels was **£3,146**.⁸²

⁸² This has not included the settled housing outcomes or costs from those hostels which are staffed through floating support.

Cost per household moving out of Single Lets into settled accommodation

5.213 The total value of the top-up payments to private landlords operating DIME accommodation Single Lets was **£3,863,048** in 2018/2019.⁸³ The average cost per successful departure into settled housing was **£4,486**. This does not include any possible costs from the provision of Floating Support.

Comparison of Average Costs to Unit Costs⁸⁴

Table 63: Average unit costs and cost per settled housing outcome by type of temporary accommodation

Type of temporary accommodation	Average unit cost (annual)	Cost per settled housing outcome
Voluntary Sector Hostels ⁸⁵	£16,007	£13,646
DIME accommodation	£18,406	£11,660
Housing Executive Hostels	£3,806 ⁸⁶	£3,146
Single Lets	£3,441	£4,486

5.214 This shows that while DIME accommodation has higher unit costs than voluntary sector hostels as a whole, the cost per settled housing outcome is considerably better. At the same time the Housing Executive's own hostels are marginally more expensive than Single Lets in unit costs but are less expensive in terms of cost per settled housing outcome.

⁸³ Figure provided by the Housing Executive.

⁸⁴ Campbell Tickell used the average unit rate to calculate the average annual cost.

⁸⁵ These figures are based on a combination of voluntary sector hostels for singles and families together because the separate analysis on unit costs did not separate between these two sub-categories.

⁸⁶ The costs of accommodation we have used are not the gross costs, but the net costs of accommodation to the Housing Executive after rental and service charge income received from the tenant or through Housing Benefit are taken into account. In the case of Housing Executive managed hostels, like voluntary sector hostels, this effectively amounts to the Supporting people costs. We have not assessed levels of rent arrears or bad debts.

6. THE MANAGEMENT OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND IN OTHER UK JURISDICTIONS

This section of the report sets out an analysis of comparative data on homelessness, comparing the situation in Northern Ireland with that found elsewhere in the UK. It is divided into two parts. The first used published data from the different jurisdictions, and a Freedom of Information (FoI) exercise that was undertaken with 25 local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland. Responses were received from 22 of these authorities. The second is a qualitative analysis of policy and practice elsewhere in the UK informed by an analysis of the homelessness strategies of 14 of the same comparator authorities, and a series of semi-structured interviews to gather examples of how the demand for temporary accommodation can be managed effectively, and how other authorities have been able to or are seeking to ensure a sufficient supply.

- 6.1 Firstly, the Campbell Tickell research team has undertaken an analysis of quantitative data on homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation elsewhere in the UK. This is done to help understand more fully the extent to which Northern Ireland differs from other parts of the UK in terms of the patterns of homelessness and the statutory authorities' responses to it. It is also with a view to evaluating the extent to which the findings from analysis of Northern Ireland data are typical or different from those found elsewhere in the UK.
- 6.2 In carrying out the analysis, the team has firstly used published data from the different jurisdictions, and a Freedom of Information (FoI) exercise that was undertaken with 25 local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland. Responses were received from 22 of these authorities. The basis for the selection of the comparator authorities is explained below. The information drawn from these sources is supplemented by personal knowledge and experience of practice and performance elsewhere within the research team.
- 6.3 Secondly, the research team has undertaken a qualitative analysis of policy and practice elsewhere in the UK with a view to providing examples of how the demand for temporary accommodation can be managed effectively, and how other authorities have been able to or are seeking to ensure a sufficient supply of appropriate good quality temporary accommodation, including supported housing or access to appropriate support through other means. This has been informed by an analysis of the homelessness strategies of the same comparator authorities, and a series of semi-structured interviews with selected authorities that it was felt would have particular contributions to make. This has been further supplemented by internet searches for relevant research and policy documents such as temporary accommodation strategies.

- 6.4 The comparator authorities used were selected using the Office for National Statistics (ONS) system of Residential Area Based Classifications.⁸⁷ This uses a set of socio-economic and demographic data drawn from the census, with a view to identifying areas of the UK with similar characteristics. Area-based classifications are structured in a hierarchical way, and for local authorities comparable areas are defined according to three levels – described as ‘super-group’, ‘group’ and ‘sub-group’. This is such that each ‘super-group’ is divided into a number of ‘groups’, and each of these ‘groups’ is divided into a number of ‘sub-groups’.
- 6.5 The Area Based Classifications identify four area-types in Northern Ireland at local Council level. These are set out in Figure 27 with the relevant local council areas identified against the area definition.

Figure 27: Residential Area Based Classifications for Northern Ireland Council Areas

u	Group	Sub-Group	Relevant NI Council Area
Business, Education and Heritage Centres	Larger Towns and Cities	Larger Towns and Cities	Belfast
Services and Industrial Legacy	Services, Manufacturing and Mining Legacy	Mining Legacy	Derry City & Strabane
Town and Country Living.	Town living	Prosperous Towns	Ards & North Down
Town and Country Living	Northern Ireland Countryside	Northern Ireland Countryside	All other Councils in NI

Source: ONS

- 6.6 Using the guidelines on the ONS website the team selected a number of authorities in England, Wales and Scotland to act as the comparators for each of these four area classifications. Figure 28 (next page) lists these authorities.

⁸⁷ [ONS Area Classifications](#)

Figure 28: Comparator Authorities selected for each of the Identified Area Classifications

Northern Ireland Council Area	Selected Comparators
Belfast	Liverpool
	Salford
	Preston
	Plymouth
	Swansea
	Dundee
Derry City & Strabane	Knowsley
	Sunderland
	County Durham
	Bridgend
Ards & North Down	South Ribble
	Chorley
	South Gloucestershire
	Charnwood
	Solihull
All other NI Council areas	Amber Valley
	Erewash
	Braintree
	Ashford
	Swale
	Newark & Sherwood
	Wychavon
	Aberdeenshire
	East Dunbartonshire
	East Renfrewshire

6.7 The following Authorities did not respond to the FOI request, citing the fact that it was considered too expensive to collate the required information:

- Swansea;
- South Gloucestershire; and
- Salford.

Statistical analysis

6.8 The results of the comparative statistical analysis of these authorities needs to be qualified by the fact that the legislative framework in the four countries is very different.⁸⁸ This has implications for the interpretation of how homelessness is defined and what constitutes a statutory duty. It also involves operating under different monitoring systems with different terminology and with different guidelines about what is published. Every attempt has been made to ensure that where numbers are added together that they are truly compatible. Where this is not possible this will be explained, and equally where there is some degree of interpretation required to understand what the figures do and do not signify, this will also be explained.

6.9 The analysis will be of four different kinds:

- At a national level drawing on published data;
- At the level of the area-based classifications drawing on published data;
- Using responses to the Freedom of Information request – in many cases this will be partial and, in some cases, will simply involve examples; and
- Other data that the team has been able to obtain access to.

6.10 The data from the FOI request is inevitably limited. It has been necessary to be very targeted in how the research questions were framed. Good practice guidance was followed in that a limit of five questions was placed on each request. The research questions are set out in Figure 29.

⁸⁸ See Section 3 of the report.

Figure 29: Freedom of information questions asked of specified local authorities⁸⁹

- 1. In the first six months of 2018-19 how many households were placed in the following types of temporary accommodation (including outside your Local Authority Area)?**
 - Bed and breakfast hotels (including shared annexes)
 - Nightly paid, privately managed accommodation, self-contained
 - Hostels (including reception centres and emergency units and refuges)
 - Private sector accommodation leased by your authority or leased or managed by a registered provider or Local authority or Housing association (LA/HA) stock
 - Any other type of temporary accommodation (including private landlord and not known)
- 2. How much has the Authority spent on procuring the following types of temporary accommodation?**
 - Bed and breakfast hotels
 - Procuring nightly paid, privately managed accommodation, self-contained
 - Hostels (including reception centres and emergency units and refuges)
 - Private sector accommodation leased by your authority or leased or managed by a registered provider or Local authority or Housing association (LA/HA) stock
 - Any other type of temporary accommodation
- 3. Of those households placed in any temporary accommodation how many had the following accommodation outcomes when the duty ended?**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private rented sector: self-contained • Private rented sector: HMO • Private rented sector: lodging (not with family or friends) • Council tenancy • Registered Provider tenancy • Owner-occupier • Staying with family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying with friends • Social rented supported housing or hostel • Refuge • No fixed abode • Custody • Other • Not Known
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- 4. What was the average length of stay of those households leaving a bed and breakfast placement?**
- 5. What was the average length of stay of those leaving temporary accommodation (other than bed and breakfast)?**

⁸⁹ The questions asked of Scottish and Welsh local authorities were focused on the same areas but some of the terminology used was marginally different to reflect the different terminology used in their standard information collection systems.

6.11 In making comparisons at a national level and at the area classification level, the most effective way to draw conclusions from the exercise is to express the data as a rate per thousand households. The 2016 based household projections for local authorities and higher administrative areas published by ONS have been used to generate these numbers for households in 2018/19.⁹⁰ In some instances, the numbers are also expressed as a ratio of the numbers of homeless acceptances in the year.

Levels of homelessness

6.12 Table 64 sets out the number of cases accepted as subject to a statutory homeless duty by authorities in the four different jurisdictions in 2018/2019. In England and Wales this includes all those for whom a duty is accepted – including those who are assessed as being threatened with homelessness and those owed a relief duty.

Table 64: Rates of homelessness duties accepted per thousand households for each jurisdiction (2018/19)

Jurisdiction	Homeless Acceptances	Rate per '000 households
Northern Ireland	12,512	17.07
England	260,190	11.20
Scotland	28,370	11.43
Wales	25,083	18.53

Source: Published homelessness statistics in each jurisdiction. HMS Reports in Northern Ireland

6.13 Table 64 shows that the rate of homelessness acceptances is considerably higher in Northern Ireland than in England or Scotland but is lower than the equivalent rate in Wales. However, it is important to bear in mind that, as mentioned above and unlike in Northern Ireland, in England and Wales the total now includes households threatened with homelessness within 56 days, regardless of priority need, and that in Scotland the homelessness legislation is does not take priority need into account.

6.14 Table 65 sets out the comparison in terms of the Area Classification categories between the Northern Ireland Council areas and the selected comparator authorities in relation to homeless acceptances per thousand households.

⁹⁰ [ONS Population projections](#)

Table 65: Comparison of homelessness acceptances for designated Northern Ireland areas and selected comparator authorities

Northern Ireland Area Classification categories	Homeless acceptance per thousand households – NI councils	Homeless acceptance per thousand households – Comparator authorities
Belfast	26.50	12.74
Derry City & Strabane	22.67	12.75
Ards & North Down	17.51	10.33
All other areas	13.44	8.86

Source: Published homelessness statistics in each jurisdiction. HMS Reports in Northern Ireland

- 6.15 The rate of homelessness acceptances is significantly higher in all Northern Ireland council areas in comparison to the selected comparator authorities. This is particularly marked in Belfast.
- 6.16 In terms of trends, the Housing Executive’s Homelessness Strategy Annual Progress Report shows that the number of homeless acceptances in Northern Ireland increased by **30%** between 2013/14 and 2018/2019. The only other jurisdiction that can be used as a comparator for this is Scotland, because significant legislative changes over this period in England and Wales have made the comparison impossible. In Scotland homeless acceptances increased by **less than 1%** over the same period.

Profile of the homeless cohort

- 6.17 This section compares the profile of those accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness in the four jurisdictions against three key variables – reason for homelessness, household type and the presence of additional support needs.
- 6.18 In Northern Ireland the top three reasons for homelessness in 2018/19 were:
- Current accommodation is not reasonable due to physical health or disability (20% of homeless acceptances);
 - Sharing breakdown/sharing dispute (18%); and
 - Loss of rented accommodation (13%).

- 6.19 In England the top three reasons for homelessness/being threatened with homelessness in 2018/19 were:⁹¹
- Loss of rented accommodation (38% of homeless acceptances);
 - Family or friends no longer willing to accommodate (33%); and
 - Domestic abuse (11%).
- 6.20 In Scotland the top three reasons for homelessness in 2018/19 were:
- Asked to leave (25% of homeless acceptances);
 - Loss of rented accommodation (14%); and
 - Dispute within household/non-violent relationship breakdown (**13%**).
- 6.21 In Wales the top three reasons for homelessness in 2018/19 were:
- Loss of rented accommodation (33% of homeless acceptances);
 - Family no longer able to accommodate (25%); and
 - Breakdown in relationship – non-violent (**11%**).
- 6.22 Northern Ireland is therefore unusual in that the category of ‘current accommodation being unreasonable due to physical health factors’ is the most common cause of homelessness, and also because of the relatively low significance of the loss of rented accommodation in comparison to England and Wales.
- 6.23 In terms of household type the balance between childless households and households with children in the different jurisdictions is set out in Table 66.

⁹¹ This ignores the category of “other/not known”, which is 29% of acceptances.

Table 66: the proportion of homeless acceptances in 2018/19 that are childless households and households with children in the UK

Jurisdiction	% of Homeless Acceptances (NI) and Prevention & Relief Duties (E & W) that are childless households	% of Homeless Acceptances that are households with children
Northern Ireland	64%	36%
England	67%	33%
Scotland	72%	28%
Wales	65%	35%

Source: Published homelessness statistics in each jurisdiction. HMS Reports in Northern Ireland

Note: It is important to remember that this table is not comparing like with like. The equivalent of a Homeless Acceptance in Northern Ireland is a 'Prevention and Relief Duty' in England and Wales and are not restricted to those where the authority has a duty to rehouse.

- 6.24 In terms of balance of household type of homeless acceptances, there is no significant difference between the jurisdictions. On the other hand, the situation in relation to the use of temporary accommodation can be quite different. For example, in England on 31 March 2019, **65%** of households in temporary accommodation were households with children. The proportion of temporary accommodation placements in Northern Ireland that were households with children was **40%**. This comparison is not entirely appropriate however because supported housing which counts as temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland is not counted as temporary accommodation in England and Wales and therefore does not figure in the statistics.
- 6.25 Northern Ireland does not specifically monitor the presence of additional support needs of homeless acceptances in a way that allows conclusions to be drawn. The best measure that was found in the analysis of Northern Ireland data was derived from the Snapshot Survey, which showed that **79%** of the households surveyed had additional support needs. This is likely to be more than the overall percentage because these were households that were specifically looking for temporary accommodation, but it does provide some kind of estimate against which to benchmark other jurisdictions.
- 6.26 Additional support needs of homeless applicants are not routinely monitored in Wales, but this is monitored in both England and Scotland. In England **44%** of prevention or relief duty cases had additional support needs, and in Scotland the figure was **49%**. It is possible therefore that the proportion of homeless acceptances in Northern Ireland with additional support needs is higher than in England and Scotland, but this is a very

tentative conclusion to draw, because it is not clear that the thresholds being applied to define support needs are the same in each case.

Repeat homelessness

- 6.27 One of the Housing Executive's standard HMS reports showed the level of repeat homeless presenters in the year. This set out the numbers of applicants presenting as homeless within 365 days of their last presentation. In 2018/19 1,088 presenters (i.e. not necessarily unique households) met this criterion. There were **18,202** applicants in the year. Repeat applications therefore amount to **6%** of applications.
- 6.28 Repeat homelessness is monitored in Scotland, but here it is based not on applications but on repeat homeless acceptances within 365 days. The figure in 2018/19 was **5.85%**. Repeat presentations would seem more likely than repeat acceptances, so it is probably the case that these figures are broadly comparable.

Success in preventing homelessness

- 6.29 It is a strategic priority for the Housing Executive to seek to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness in Northern Ireland. It is not possible at present to draw the conclusion from Housing Executive data that this objective is being achieved.
- 6.30 The situation is different in the other jurisdictions. The legislative framework in Wales and England is particularly geared to maximising prevention, with different duties to respond to those who are threatened with homelessness and those who are actually homeless at the point that they present. This provides an opportunity for a benchmark to be developed to show what might be possible for Northern Ireland to achieve.
- 6.31 For this analysis, it has been assumed that to be successful, prevention means enabling the household to retain their existing accommodation. In practice, in both England and Wales, local authorities can meet their prevention duty by enabling the household to move to alternative accommodation as well as by helping them to stay where they are. In fact, in both countries this is a more common avenue to achieve the 'prevention' objective. Table 67 summarises the results for those threatened with homelessness in the two countries in 2018/19.

Table 67: Results for those threatened with homelessness in England and Wales in 2018/19

Country	No. of Households where duty accepted	No. of households where prevention duty accepted	No. of households where prevention duty met	No. of households helped to stay in accommodation they were in when presented
England	253,013	100,840	58,290	20,520
Wales	25,083	10,737	7,297	2,370

Source: Stats Wales- Statutory Homelessness Prevention and Relief tables & MHCLG Live Homelessness tables

- 6.32 Based on these data, it can be calculated that the total number of cases where those presenting as homeless or threatened with homelessness were assisted to stay in their current accommodation was **8%** in England and **9%** in Wales.⁹² Whilst not a direct comparator due to legislative differences, this could form the basis of a benchmark for the Housing Executive.
- 6.33 One interesting by-product of this analysis is worthy of comment. In Northern Ireland there is at the end of the year a list of households whose status is defined as FDA but who have yet to be satisfactorily re-housed. This is a long list and, as has been shown elsewhere in this report, the number is growing each year. There is no equivalent to this statistic in the other jurisdictions, but the reason for this is in partly illustrated by Table 69. The proportion of households where the prevention duties are satisfactorily discharged in such a way that homelessness is actually prevented is not actually that high – only **58%** in England and **68%** in Wales. Further analysis of the *Stats Wales / MHCLG Live Homelessness Tables* data set shows that the percentage of successful resolution of relief duty cases, in terms of accommodation being secured, is even lower at **43%** in England and **48%** in Wales. This is partly because the case is closed after 56 days if the duty has not been met rather than, as in Northern Ireland, the household staying on an ever-growing list where duty is still owed.

⁹² In Scotland there is a category within the Homelessness Statistics which is “Returned to previous / present accommodation”. This could be an equivalent measure. The number of households categorised in this way in 2018/19 was 1,274, which is equal to 4.49% of the number of homelessness acceptances

Numbers of temporary accommodation placements

6.34 The only other UK jurisdiction that monitors placements into temporary accommodation over time, rather than numbers in temporary accommodation at a fixed point in time, is Scotland. More significantly, monitoring covers unique households placed rather than placements *per se*. Table 68 compares the number of households accommodated in temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland and Scotland by expressing this as a number per thousand households and as a proportion of the number of homeless acceptances in the year.

Table 68: Numbers of households placed in temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland and Scotland 2018/19

Country	No. of households placed in temporary accommodation	Number per '000 households	Number per homeless acceptance
Northern Ireland	2,384	3.25	0.19
Scotland	21,095	8.50	0.74

Source: Housing Executive HMS Standard Reports & Scottish Homelessness Statistics – Communities Analysis Division

6.35 This table indicates that temporary accommodation is far more widely and routinely used in Scotland than in Northern Ireland.

6.36 An analysis of the number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of the year is also indicative of different levels of temporary accommodation usage and we have been able to do this for all four countries. Table 69 sets out the numbers in temporary accommodation on that date as a rate per thousand households.

Table 69: Households placed in temporary accommodation on 31/3/19 in each UK jurisdiction as a rate per thousand households

Jurisdiction	Households in temporary accommodation as at 31/3/19 per '000 households
Northern Ireland	2.87
England	3.65
Scotland	4.43
Wales	1.64

Source: Stats Wales- Statutory Homelessness Prevention and Relief tables & MHCLG Live Homelessness tables & Scottish Homelessness Statistics – Communities Analysis Division & Additional reports requested from Housing Executive HMS

- 6.37 This table appears to confirm that, taken overall, the use of temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland is relatively low compared with England and Scotland. However, the England figure is misleading because there is such a concentration of temporary accommodation in London (just over two-thirds of the England total). In the “Rest of England” excluding London, the number of temporary accommodation placements at 31 March 2019 was **28,470**. This amounts to **1.44** placements per thousand households, which is close to the finding for Wales. On this basis it is only in Scotland and London where temporary accommodation usage is higher than in Northern Ireland.
- 6.38 The number of temporary accommodation placements was one of the questions asked in the freedom of information request. All but one of the authorities who responded to the FoI request answered this question. Table 70 summarises these results against the relevant council areas in Northern Ireland.

Table 70: Numbers of temporary accommodation placements in 2018/19 for Northern Ireland area classification categories and comparator authorities

Northern Ireland Area Classification categories	Temporary accommodation placements per thousand households	Temporary accommodation placements per thousand households for comparator authorities
Belfast	9.24	7.05
Derry City & Strabane	11.03	2.44
Ards & North Down	2.50	6.36
All other areas	2.64	3.20

Source: CT Freedom of Information request & Additional Reports drawn from HMS in Northern Ireland

6.39 In the major urban areas in Northern Ireland temporary accommodation usage appears to be higher than the comparators whereas in the rural areas it is lower.⁹³ One possible explanation for this is the relative scarcity of temporary accommodation in rural areas in Northern Ireland.

Types of temporary accommodation

6.40 On a local authority by local authority basis the balance of the temporary accommodation portfolio varies significantly, and the different approaches that local authorities take is summed up in the following section of the report.

6.41 Making comparisons in terms of types of temporary accommodation used is difficult because of a lack of consistency in the use of terminology, and the differing contractual and day to day arrangements that are encompassed in what appear to be similar terms. Figure 30 below should be interpreted in this context. For the purposes of facilitating comparisons we have simplified the temporary accommodation options to the following categories:

- Social housing stock;

⁹³ For the FoI exercise English authorities were asked to provide numbers for the first half of 2018/19, which are then grossed up for the year in this analysis. Scottish and Welsh authorities were asked to provide full year figures for 2017/18. This was because of the timing of the request. In England it was felt that the figures from 2017/18 would have been misleading because this was prior to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

- Private sector stock (including Private Sector Leasing schemes);
- Hostels (including Refuge accommodation);
- B&Bs; and
- Other.

Figure 30: Interpretation of Northern Ireland temporary accommodation types for the purposes of comparison with other jurisdictions

NI Temporary Accommodation Type	Comparator Authority temporary accommodation category
B&Bs/Hotels	B&Bs
Leased Properties	Hostels
Housing Executive Hostels	Social housing stock
Voluntary Sector Hostels	Hostels
Single Lets	Private sector stock

6.42 Table 71 sets out the balance of temporary accommodation in use on 31 March 2019 across all four jurisdictions.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ This is the only basis on which a comparison across all four jurisdictions can be done.

Table 71: Households in temporary accommodation on 31/3/19 across all the countries of the UK by type of temporary accommodation

	Social housing stock	Private housing stock	Hostels	B&Bs	Other	Total
England	17,830	46,990 ⁹⁵	5,720	7,040	6,960	84,450
	21.09%	55.58%	6.77%	8.33%	8.23%	100%
Scotland	6,740	0	1,595	1,135	1,515	10,985
	61.36%	0%	14.52%	10.33%	13.79%	100%
Wales	825	492	543	294	75	2,229
	37.01%	22.07%	24.36%	13.19%	3.36%	100%
Northern Ireland	139	1446	468	49	0	2,102
	6.61%	68.79%	22.26%	2.33%	0%	100%

Source: Stats Wales- Statutory Homelessness Prevention and Relief tables & MHCLG Live Homelessness tables & Scottish Homelessness Statistics – Communities Analysis Division & Additional reports requested from Housing Executive HMS

- 6.43 As can be seen each country has its own particular pattern of temporary accommodation usage. In comparison to the other countries, Northern Ireland is marked by proportionally high usage of private sector accommodation (through Single Lets), proportionally high usage of hostel accommodation (although lower than in Wales where there is also an active Supporting People programme)⁹⁶ and proportionally very low usage of B&B accommodation.
- 6.44 The research also examined the difference between the area classifications in Northern Ireland and the selected comparator authorities. One of the differences at a local authority level is the extent to which authorities make use of social housing stock (local authority and housing associations) as opposed to private sector stock for temporary accommodation. This has a number of implications in terms of procurement methods and legal arrangements, but essentially there will be a degree of similarity in terms of

⁹⁵ This includes the use of what is referred to as “nightly-paid self-contained accommodation”, which is particularly widely used in London.

⁹⁶ This could be even more marked as one of the findings of the research is that the placements in hostel accommodation in Northern Ireland may well be understated.

the nature of the accommodation as distinct from hostel and B&Bs. For the purposes of this exercise these two categories have been grouped together under the term “mainstream stock” to see if it made the patterns of usage easier to determine. Table 72 sets out these distinctions.

Table 72: Households in temporary accommodation on 31/3/19 by type of temporary accommodation – comparison between Northern Ireland area classifications and comparator authorities

Northern Ireland Area Classifications	Proportions of temporary accommodation lettings for Northern Ireland Area Classifications by temporary accommodation type	Comparator Authorities
Belfast	Mainstream stock – 75.04% Hostels – 24.87% Bed & Breakfast – 0.09%	Mainstream stock – 52.01% Hostels – 37.84% Bed & Breakfast – 8.05% Other – 2.09%
Derry City and Strabane	Mainstream stock – 75.64% Hostels – 19.23% Bed & Breakfast – 5.13%	Mainstream stock – 38.98% Hostels – 16.25% Bed & Breakfast – 30.15% Other – 13.56%
Ards and North Down	Mainstream stock – 97.22% Hostels – 2.78% Bed & Breakfast – 0%	Mainstream stock – 94.76% Hostels – 0.76% Bed & Breakfast – 3.15% Other – 1.40%
The Rest of Northern Ireland	Mainstream stock – 71.83% Hostels – 22.54% Bed & Breakfast – 5.63%	Mainstream stock – 72.17% Hostels – 8.12% Bed & Breakfast – 7.63% Other – 12.08%

Source: Stats Wales- Statutory Homelessness Prevention and Relief tables & MHCLG Live Homelessness tables & Scottish Homelessness Statistics – Communities Analysis Division & Additional reports requested from Housing Executive HMS

6.45 The strongest pattern from this analysis is that in all areas the comparator authorities appear to make more use of B&B accommodation. In the rural areas/small towns a higher proportion of placements is in hostel accommodation in Northern Ireland, while in the urban areas (Belfast and Derry/Londonderry) a higher proportion of households are in “mainstream” accommodation. Hostel usage is high in these areas of Northern

Ireland, but it is almost as high or higher in some UK comparator areas. The analysis is slightly disrupted by relatively high figures for “other” in two of the areas.

Use of supported housing

- 6.46 It has been necessary to work on an assumption that the term ‘hostel’ as used in the temporary accommodation records implies a degree of support provided in conjunction with temporary housing. Elsewhere in the UK what is termed ‘supported housing’⁹⁷ is used by a number of local authorities to meet their duty to supply temporary accommodation for those who are homeless, albeit at a lower level than in Northern Ireland in many cases. ‘Supported housing’ is a resource that helps local authorities to fully discharge their homeless duties because it can be seen as a satisfactory way of meeting the need to prevent or relieve homelessness. For example, in England **6%** of successful preventions in 2018/19 were achieved by providing supported housing. At the same time **21%** of cases where the relief of homelessness duty was discharged successfully involved moving to supported housing. In Wales the action taken to meet each duty is not monitored separately – but in **10%** of cases where one of the duties were met, this was by the provision of supported housing. Similarly, in Scotland a total of **10%** of those found to be unintentionally homeless moved to hostel accommodation (ignoring those cases where the authority had lost contact with the household).

Length of stay in temporary accommodation

- 6.47 In Scotland, the length of time in temporary accommodation episodes is measured rather than placements. The mean figure for 2018/19 was **180** days. This compares to the figure worked out for this research Northern Ireland for the same year which had a mean of **220** days. Length of stay is not currently published in the other jurisdictions. In England the length of stay of households leaving temporary accommodation was published up until the end of March 2018 as part of the P1E dataset. This was presented in terms of time-bands rather than an average figure however, and it is impossible to make a direct comparison. **58%** of households leaving stayed less than 6 months, but **14%** had stayed more than 2 years.

⁹⁷ In Northern Ireland the term “supported housing” tends to be applied to short-term accommodation for homeless households as well as longer-term provision for people with health problems/disabilities. Elsewhere in the UK the term is used far more interchangeably with the term “hostel” and supported housing for those who have experienced homelessness or associated problems is what would be described as a hostel in Northern Ireland

- 6.48 A question was asked in the FoI request about the average length of stay of households leaving temporary accommodation overall and separately the length of stay specifically of those leaving B&B accommodation. On reflection the wording of the question did not make it clear whether it was talking about ‘placements’ or ‘episodes’, but the intention was to capture the length of time in temporary accommodation as a whole, and so it is not unreasonable to treat this as episodes. The question also did not state what average measure should be used (i.e. the mean or median), but in the absence of further explanation average is normally in this context taken to be the mean.
- 6.49 Thirteen of the local authorities were able to respond to this question. The quoted average varied from **12** days in County Durham to **176** days in Swale. All of the average lengths of stay were below that calculated for Northern Ireland, which as stated above was **220** days. The ‘average of the averages’ for the thirteen authorities was **93** days.
- 6.50 Turning to B&B accommodation, the range of average lengths of stay for those leaving B&B in the thirteen authorities ranged from **1** day in Dundee to **154** days in Ashford. The overall average was **33** days. In Northern Ireland the average length of stay of those leaving B&B was **17** days.
- 6.51 The FoI request did not collect information on the length of stay in hostels. However, a number of other recent studies do provide limited benchmark data. The HMS standard reports said that the average length of stay in voluntary sector hostels for those leaving in 2018/19 was **135** days. An extensive study of supported housing in the Liverpool City Region found that the mean length of stay of people leaving hostel/supported accommodation between 2015 and 2017 across the six authorities was **152** days.
- 6.52 A homelessness review published this year in Doncaster found that the average length of stay was **161** days. A similar homelessness review in Middlesbrough in 2018 found an average length of stay of **270** days. In the London Borough of Lewisham the average length of stay in supported accommodation within what is described as the ‘vulnerable adults’ pathway was **between 1.6 and 2.1 years** depending on the stage of the pathway that was being looked at. Overall, therefore, it would appear from the evidence that the length of stay in Northern Ireland hostels is lower than the length of stay in the English local authority areas.
- 6.53 Overall, there is some evidence that households do spend longer in temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland than is the norm elsewhere in the UK. However, this is not due to time spent in B&B or voluntary sector hostel provision but is likely to be driven more by the time spent in Single Lets.

Outcomes from temporary accommodation

6.54 Tracking the outcomes from a placement in temporary accommodation as opposed to the outcome of a homelessness application or a duty accepted is not part of the published data in any of the UK jurisdictions. A question on this was asked in the FoI request, and sixteen authorities provided information on this answer. Table 73 provides a summary of the responses from the sixteen local authorities

Table 73: Summary of responses from Campbell Tickell’s FoI request on the outcomes from time spent in temporary accommodation⁹⁸

Outcome from spell in temporary accommodation	Number of households with this outcome	% of Total
Moved to permanent housing/tenancy	1,656	70.11%
Moved to supported housing	118	5.00%
Moved to other temporary accommodation	14	0.59%
Lost contact with the household	357	15.11%
Other	217	9.19%
Total	2,362	100%

Source: CT Freedom of Information requests

6.55 It was necessary to use multiple data sources when reviewing the outcomes from temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland and so rather than a single figure for outcomes a table by temporary accommodation type is repeated in Table 74.

6.56 It is difficult to make this comparison, but if these percentages are applied to the numbers of placement departures estimated in 2018/19 it is possible to produce an estimated outcome figure for moving from all temporary accommodation to settled housing. This is set out in Table 75 with explanatory notes on how the figures have been calculated.

⁹⁸ It needs to be pointed out that for Welsh and Scottish authorities the request referred to 2017/18 data, whereas for English authorities the request referred to the first 6 months of 2018/19. At the point that it was sent the last complete year of data that would be available to the Authorities was going to be 2017/18. On the other hand, due to the significant change this year for English authorities due to the Homelessness Reduction Act, it was not thought that using 2017/18 for English authorities would provide as rich an evidence base.

Table 74: Calculation of overall percentage of departures from temporary accommodation that results in a move to settled housing in 2018/19

Temporary Accommodation type	Estimated number of departures	% that involve move to settled housing	No. of moves to settled housing
Voluntary Sector Hostels – Single Homelessness	431 ¹	29%	125
Voluntary Sector Hostels – Domestic Violence	326 ²	56%	182
Voluntary Sector Hostels – Homeless Families	338 ³	78%	264
Housing Executive Hostels (on site staff)	115 ⁴	83%	95
Housing executive Hostels (floating support staff)	48 ⁵	58%	28
DIME accommodation	258 ⁶	71%	169
Single Lets	1,068 ⁷	83%	886
TOTAL	2,563	68%	1,750

Notes

¹ This is based on a combination of data from the Supporting People outcomes file that says that the number of departures from these hostels was 718 and the Provider Census that estimated that 60% of these residents were FDA cases. This allows therefore for what is taken to be an undercount in departures from the HMS data.

² This is based on a combination of data from the Supporting People outcomes file that says that the number of departures from these hostels was 465 and the Provider Census that estimated that 70% of these residents were FDA cases. This allows therefore for what is taken to be an undercount in departures from the HMS data.

³ This is based on the data from Supporting People outcomes file that says that the number of departures is 338 – all of which are taken to be FDA cases. This allows therefore for what is taken to be an undercount in departures from the HMS data.

⁴ This is based on the data from Supporting People outcomes file. This allows for what is taken to be an overstatement in departures from HMS data because of the mis-categorisation of some of the hostels.

⁵ This is based on the data supplied separately by the Housing executive on departures from Grainne House and Laburnum Walk.

⁶ This is based on the data from Supporting People outcomes file.

Temporary Accommodation type	Estimated number of departures	% that involve move to settled housing	No. of moves to settled housing
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⁷ This is taken from the HMS system reports.

⁸ Bed and breakfast placements are ignored in this calculation because so many of them are precursors to other placements and there appears to be relatively little evidence that this happens much in the comparator authorities. To include these placements would therefore potentially distort the results of this exercise.

6.57 The total percentage of departures moving to settled housing is therefore **68%**. This is broadly comparable with the comparator authorities, or slightly below that of comparator authorities if the different treatment of a move into supported housing is taken into account.

6.58 One of the ways in which this is slightly misleading is that voluntary sector hostels are used for more than just meeting the Housing Executive’s duty to provide temporary accommodation. As a separate benchmarking exercise, we used a data set from previous research carried out by Imogen Blood Associates in the Liverpool City Region using the Mainstay data system which is used for the supported housing for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness across all six Merseyside local authorities.⁹⁹ Applying the same principles as used in this research we analysed the proportion of the **9,696**¹⁰⁰ departures between 2015 and 2017 that involved moves to settled housing. This showed that **32.30%** of departures were to settled accommodation. This is therefore not dissimilar to the results in Northern Ireland from voluntary sector hostels.

Conclusions from the statistical analysis

6.59 Homeless acceptances are significantly higher per thousand households in Northern Ireland than in England and Scotland but are lower than in Wales. The comparison with selected comparator authorities suggests that this is the case in all council areas in Northern Ireland. The rate of increase in homelessness has also been greater in Northern Ireland than in Scotland. Comparisons with the other jurisdictions are difficult because of legislative changes.

⁹⁹ Liverpool, Knowsley, Halton, St Helens, Wirral, and Sefton.

¹⁰⁰ In line with the way that the Northern Ireland data were treated this ignore moves that were between supported housing addresses.

- 6.60 There are no equivalents in the other jurisdictions to the main reason for homelessness in Northern Ireland which is 'current accommodation is not reasonable due to physical health or disability'.
- 6.61 The loss of rented accommodation is less significant as a cause of homelessness in Northern Ireland than in other jurisdictions.
- 6.62 There is no significant difference between the jurisdictions in terms of the balance of household types accepted as being owed a homeless duty. In all jurisdictions, acceptances involved approximately one third households with children and two-thirds childless households.
- 6.63 The evidence suggests that the proportion of homeless applicants in Northern Ireland that have additional support needs is slightly higher than in the other jurisdictions.
- 6.64 The level of repeat homelessness is broadly comparable in Northern Ireland and Scotland but is not monitored in England or Wales.
- 6.65 Prevention rates in England and Wales (defined as helping households stay in the accommodation they are already in) suggest that around 8-10% of households presenting as homeless/at risk of homelessness were being sustained in their current accommodation.
- 6.66 Usage of temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland is higher than in Wales or England (outside of London), but lower than in Scotland. Results from the comparator authorities suggest that there is a different pattern within urban and rural areas. The level of temporary accommodation usage in the urban areas of Northern Ireland (Belfast and Derry & Strabane) is higher than in the comparators, but in Northern Ireland's rural areas use of temporary accommodation is lower than in the comparators.
- 6.67 Northern Ireland makes the most use of private sector accommodation of all the four countries (through Single Lets).
- 6.68 Northern Ireland has the lowest level of B&B usage – even though it has been increasing in recent years. This is confirmed by the analysis of the comparator authorities. Northern Ireland makes proportionately more use of hostels as temporary accommodation than England or Scotland, but Wales uses proportionally more.
- 6.69 Supported housing is used in other jurisdictions as a resource that helps local authorities to meet their duty to homeless applicants, as well as being used as a temporary accommodation resource.
- 6.70 Overall the length of time spent in temporary accommodation appears to be higher in Northern Ireland, although this is only routinely monitored in Scotland.

- 6.71 On average, however, the comparator authorities had longer stays in B&B than were found in Northern Ireland. This is almost certainly one of the reasons why the proportion of households in B&B is lower in Northern Ireland.
- 6.72 Other studies referred to in this section would tend to suggest that the length of time spent on average in voluntary sector hostels is shorter in Northern Ireland than elsewhere. The main factor that drives the higher average amount of time in temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland is the time spent in Single Lets.
- 6.73 The outcomes from the Northern Ireland temporary accommodation portfolio as a whole would appear to be similar to the comparator authorities, with around 70% of moves being to stable housing from temporary accommodation.
- 6.74 There is evidence to suggest that the success rate in terms of moving households into settled housing is similar in Northern Ireland's voluntary sector hostels to at least one other large-scale exercise undertaken in the Liverpool City Region.

Qualitative analysis

- 6.75 The Campbell Tickell research team looked for examples of how local authorities in the UK managed their temporary accommodation requirements. Again, the findings from this exercise have to be considered within the context of different legislative frameworks that determine homelessness duties and the capacity to respond in different ways.
- 6.76 There were two elements principally to this exercise:
- a study of homelessness strategies in a selection of the identified comparator authorities;
 - a series of telephone interviews with local authority officers, some of whom were in the list of comparator authorities and some who were identified through other leads.
- 6.77 The focus for both elements was to:
- Find examples of how local authorities had reduced the need for temporary accommodation by effectively increasing the number of occasions in which they were able to prevent households from becoming homeless;
 - Identify how local authorities had gone about procuring the temporary accommodation that they needed;

- Identify how local authorities satisfied themselves that any temporary accommodation used were of sufficient quality and any standards used in this process;
- Examine how local authorities ensured that the additional support needs of households that they had a duty to assist were adequately met.

6.78 The researchers looked in detail at fourteen different homelessness strategies from local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland.¹⁰¹ As these are reviewed on a cycle which is at different stages in different authorities, some were older than others. Those that were dated as 2016 or later were selected for review. Additionally, semi-structured telephone interviews were carried out with officers from eight local authorities from different regions in England.¹⁰²

Prevention of homelessness

6.79 The overriding finding from this phase of the research is that the prevention of homelessness is a multi-agency issue. The agency with statutory responsibility for preventing homelessness can initiate system-change and provide a co-ordinating function, but they cannot prevent homelessness without the contributions of others.

6.80 This multi-agency approach is exemplified by a number of initiatives.

- Braintree District Council has a range of agencies that have signed up to a Homelessness Charter committing them to work together to prevent homelessness.
- Swale Borough Council has promoted co-location of Housing Options teams with other services that can help prevent homelessness e.g. family mediation services.
- Liverpool City Council's homelessness service is organised as part of 'one-stop shops' for people who experience the risk of homelessness.

¹⁰¹ Braintree, Chorley, Aberdeenshire, Amber Valley, Ashford, Durham, Solihull, Plymouth, Sunderland, Swale, Liverpool, Bridgend, East Dunbartonshire, and Knowsley.

¹⁰² Brent, Chelmsford, Epping Forest, Trafford, Solihull, Cornwall, Newark & Sherwood, and Kirklees.

- This approach is taken further in Bridgend County Borough Council where they aim to create ‘embedded services’ integrating a range of specialist teams within the Housing Options structure.

- 6.81 A number of local authorities take seriously their responsibility to enable front line staff in other agencies to identify those households who might be at risk of homelessness at an early stage, and to understand the options that might be available to make an effective response. This includes providing appropriate training to other agency staff and facilitating communication through regular attendance at each other’s staff meetings. Braintree District Council appears to have taken this furthest. The approach needs to be supported by the provision of clear and accessible information about people’s housing options – in both electronic and paper forms. A number of authorities, including Amber Valley Borough Council and Durham County Council, stressed the importance of the need to constantly map and categorise the range of relevant services available in the community, and to make this accessible to Housing Advisors.
- 6.82 Prevention strategies need to be tailored to a good understanding of the reasons why households become homeless. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council appears to have taken this furthest, with separate plans in place to respond to each principal reason why households become homeless or are threatened with homelessness. This can produce impressive results. Durham has been able to significantly reduce the loss of accommodation as a result of assured shorthold tenancies coming to an end through more effective targeted working with private and social landlords. As part of this overall approach, Amber Valley Council makes clear that it is important to monitor carefully the reasons why people approaching the Council are at risk of homelessness even before they have a duty to do so. Adopting this approach, Durham has been able to show that only 10% of those approaching the authority for housing assistance eventually become a homeless duty case.¹⁰³
- 6.83 The data on responses to homelessness in England suggest that a significant element of the prevention strategy is to find alternative accommodation for people to move to before they actually become homeless. Many local authorities work with the private sector to facilitate this. How they do this varies from providing a service to match tenants with available properties to leasing schemes where a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) or the council itself acts as landlord for privately owned properties. An RSL acting as landlord in this way is not bound by the Local Housing Allowance regulations. These

¹⁰³ This information may predate the Homelessness Reduction Act.

schemes have been tried with varying levels of success. Kirklees Council has commissioned an external provider to source units of accommodation using a payment by results model. The provider receives full payment if they are able to source an alternative property after three weeks. The same provider has other options available, including a 'managed tenancy' scheme whereby they fulfil the management responsibilities on behalf of other housing providers.

Procurement of temporary accommodation

- 6.84 Some of the authorities studied focus their attention on minimising or removing the need for temporary accommodation. In Swale, the strategy target is to be able to do without temporary accommodation, but in 2018/19 the council had the highest number of temporary accommodation placements in their comparator group. For this authority, the solution lies in changing the allocation criteria for social housing so that homeless households receive greater priority, including particularly those in expensive temporary accommodation. For other local authorities, such as Amber Valley, the priority is to actively assist households to move out of temporary accommodation as quickly as possible. Ashford Borough Council has experimented with 'incentives' to assist those under threat of homelessness to resolve their own problems in the private rented sector, rather than look to the council to provide temporary accommodation. This could prove significantly cheaper in the long run.
- 6.85 Another option that has been explored is leasing properties to be used as temporary accommodation. The lease can be quite short for these purposes and this increases the flexibility in persuading owners to part with the property. Sometimes, as in Chelmsford, the council may take on the lease, but they then contract with an RSL to manage the property. Some local authorities have found it difficult to persuade property owners to enter into these arrangements because the economic returns are not competitive, and some authorities have had to subsidise these arrangements from grant funding, mainstream homelessness budgets, or the General Fund.¹⁰⁴ However, immediate financial returns are not the only incentives for property owners. An offer that relieves owners of management responsibilities and preserves (or indeed improves) the state of the property are also incentives. Chelmsford talked about the constant pressure from property owners to keep increasing rents – they have offered one-off bonus payments for the owners as an alternative to this.

¹⁰⁴ The 'General Fund' is the general operating fund for local authorities in England into which all sources of income that are not hypothecated are paid.

- 6.86 Making greater use of the social housing stock is another option that is widely explored. These can involve exploiting short term options. For example, the London Borough of Brent and Solihull Council make constructive use of ‘short life’ properties that are currently empty awaiting redevelopment or demolition, assuming that they are going to be available for at least a year. The larger the landlord the more potential there is for this approach. Chelmsford Council retained units that were harder to let when they entered a voluntary stock transfer. The council now uses these properties as temporary accommodation. It can make economic sense in other circumstances to hold back some properties that may be less popular as long term homes but are still of a decent lettable standard. This has been done in Solihull with the less popular flats at the top of some high-rise blocks. It means that they are often able to offer good quality temporary accommodation on the same day that someone presents as homeless, and the Council does not need to make use of far more expensive options. Elsewhere more specialist accommodation that is no longer needed has been re-purposed as temporary accommodation, including care homes and sheltered housing schemes.
- 6.87 Making use of general needs stock can be an important part of the overall temporary accommodation solution even where it is a small part. Epping Forest Council uses social housing to meet temporary accommodation needs where the alternatives might be limited, for example, because the household has adaptation requirements due to disability or they are a Schedule 1 offender.
- 6.88 Kirklees Council made the point that it is necessary to exercise some discretion in the selection of social housing units to use as temporary accommodation. It is important to pay attention to how close they are to bus routes, how near they are to relevant offices, schools, and shopping centres, as well being in areas that minimise the potential disruption caused by the rapid turnover in occupancy.
- 6.89 Other local authorities have looked at stimulating new social housing units to use as temporary accommodation. Cornwall has recently set up a council owned housing company to purchase up to 250 units on the open market primarily in order to meet their prevention and relief duties. Other authorities including Chelmsford Council have investigated the option of rapidly supplying new units using modular construction methods. Cornwall has acquired units that are movable and can utilise vacant sites that are awaiting development. Epping Forest has acquired 48 units constructed out of shipping containers, and they said that these were of high quality and that they received

no complaints about them. Other local authorities were adamant however that they would not consider this option.¹⁰⁵

- 6.90 There is an acknowledged problem with providing good quality temporary accommodation because there is always the potential difficulty that households will choose to continue staying there rather than take any of the re-housing options. This has proved an issue in Northern Ireland with some types of temporary accommodation. Chelmsford Council is considering a solution to this which would allow tenants to ‘flip’ the occupancy into a longer-term tenancy and the property thus be withdrawn from the temporary accommodation portfolio. Cornwall also allows for temporary accommodation occupancy arrangements to be converted into social housing tenancies after a certain elapsed period of time.
- 6.91 In most authorities the Council takes direct responsibility for sourcing temporary accommodation, but Chorley Borough Council has contracted out the responsibility to find temporary accommodation to an external agency called Cotswold Supported Housing, and this seemingly works well.
- 6.92 For a number of authorities there was an acceptance that B&B accommodation is a necessary part of the range of temporary accommodation options. One way of keeping the cost of this down is to negotiate longer term contracts or block purchase agreements with a select list of providers. This is something that Epping Forest Council has developed. Other authorities have looked at entering into procurement exercises but lack of predictability of demand does mitigate against this. A sub-regional authority such as Cornwall is in a better position to do this, and this may be a pointer for Northern Ireland. Cornwall pointed out that as a holiday destination there was significant spare capacity in the off season, and this could facilitate negotiation of a good price for these months.

Ensuring quality of temporary accommodation

- 6.93 Where the temporary accommodation is in social housing, the normal social housing standards apply. These properties are likely to receive more attention because void inspections occur more frequently. The officer at Newark and Sherwood Council pointed out that re-decoration would need to be done more frequently in temporary

¹⁰⁵ Note that this approach has been strongly criticised by campaign organisations such as Shelter, and in a recent TV programme on council housing presented by the architect Kevin McCleod.

accommodation properties, partly because the tenants would not be allowed to do it themselves.

- 6.94 For local authorities that used private sector properties as temporary accommodation there was an emphasis on inspection by council officers, although the frequency varied. For example, the London Borough of Brent talked about 6-monthly inspections of leased properties, whereas in Chelmsford this was done on an annual basis. Other authorities talked about inspections before any new letting and involving other professionals in the process – for example, building control or asset management. Some local authorities built in regular visits to check there are no issues with the tenancy, and these could be combined with ‘informal’ property inspections. This was done quarterly in Solihull. This practice can be seen within the context of a more general strategic objective to work towards improved standards in the private rented sector as a whole. The focus on B&B standards could be more intense. For example, in Epping Forest, the council carries out two-weekly visits to placements in B&B addresses.
- 6.95 In some local authorities such as Trafford, the emphasis was less on policing standards, but more on working with and supporting landlords to become more effective and efficient Housing Managers.
- 6.96 In several cases the key methodology for ensuring standards, particularly in relation to bed and breakfast, was to use only tried and trusted providers, whose standards were known.
- 6.97 There was very little mention of the use of objective property standards. The only instance of this found in the research was the ‘Setting the Standards’ scheme used across London, although Kirklees did mention that the council was working on the introduction of letting standards.

Meeting additional support needs

- 6.98 The first priority is to ensure that there is a good understanding of what people’s additional support needs are. In order to facilitate this, Ashford Council has developed a joint assessment of housing and support needs that Housing Options officers can use. A number of authorities, including Durham, said that they used statutory Personal Housing Plans to monitor the range of support needs that clients experience, and ensure that action is taken where possible to meet these needs. For Aberdeenshire Council, monitoring and responding to support needs was seen as a key activity. To demonstrate the significance of this activity they recorded that in a year they made 1,270 referrals to support services. They also identified the level of support that households required.
- 6.99 Identifying and meeting additional support needs does not necessarily mean that applicants need a specialist support service in response. As part of their assessment

process, for example, Aberdeenshire estimated that around 46% of households with support needs only needed sympathetic housing management.

- 6.100 While making use of a range of external services Aberdeenshire and Ashford Councils emphasise the role of Housing Options officers themselves in providing low-level advice and support.
- 6.101 Several authorities emphasised the importance of the way that commissioned floating support services were used. In Ashford, the emphasis was on floating support to work with people moving out of bed and breakfast accommodation. Bridgend Council had developed an 'Early Doors Service', which among other things, encouraged landlords to make referrals if they were concerned about their tenants defaulting on their rent payments or if they had other problems. Solihull Council stresses the importance of phasing the withdrawal of floating support, in order to increase the success of tenancy sustainment.
- 6.102 There is clearly some diversity in the way in which supported housing is perceived by different councils. Some, such as East Dunbartonshire, Chorley, and Sunderland Councils see it as a variant of temporary accommodation, whereas others see it a way of meeting their duty to find appropriate accommodation (i.e. the relief duty in England). Taking the interviews into account as well, the latter view was more common. In their strategies, a number of authorities mentioned the need to review whether supported housing is meeting the needs that it is intended to, and Sunderland, for example, considers more dispersed options. In some authorities there is a strong implication that supported housing is most appropriate as an option for under 25-year olds with support needs.
- 6.103 Kirklees Council's strategy identified the inter-relationship between crisis accommodation (crash-pads) and other more dispersed forms of housing where longer-term support can be delivered as important. The council stressed the importance of the crash pads being very short-term with clear pathways into other longer-term options. Access to the crash-pad accommodation is restricted to Housing Options.
- 6.104 Establishing clear pathways for homeless people with additional support was mentioned by a number of authorities. Ashford Council's strategy stresses the importance of 'pathways' being agreed with each partner agency for different client groups that map the appropriate response to the risk of homelessness being identified. This should include the provision of both accommodation and associated support. Sunderland Council has developed such pathways specifically in relation to early-intervention services.
- 6.105 The way in which people access these pathways and the resources within them is also an important issue. Trafford Council is an example where all supported resources are

accessed through a single point of access – in their case this is located with the Housing Options team.

- 6.106 How support is delivered, in terms of the approach and theoretical underpinning, is as important as is the setting in which it is delivered. For example, Solihull Council is committed to ensuring that the support provided takes a strengths-based approach that develops the capacity and resilience of service users and helps providers to supply trauma-informed care.
- 6.107 The support needed by homeless households can be seen in a much wider context than purely in terms of tenancy sustainment. At least two local authorities, Braintree and Chorley Councils, stress the importance of actively promoting assistance with employment, training and employability for homeless households as a core part of the service.

7. THE COST OF PROVIDING TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

This section of the report provides an analysis of available data to explore the costs of different types of temporary accommodation to the Housing Executive, and the potential for savings or better value for money if different approaches were able to be taken.

- 7.1 A key consideration for the Housing Executive in fulfilling its responsibilities to tackle homelessness is to achieve value for money. Within the constraints of the available budget, the Housing Executive is seeking to achieve the most positive outcomes that it can for households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- 7.2 Broadly speaking, positive outcomes in this context include preventing homelessness by helping a household to remain in their home, preventing or relieving homelessness by assisting a household to move directly to settled accommodation, or assisting a household to achieve a move into settled accommodation via the interim provision of temporary accommodation.
- 7.3 Sometimes temporary accommodation needs to be provided in an emergency, and sometimes it is necessary to provide support as well as accommodation in order to address the issues which may have led to homelessness. This almost inevitably means that different types of temporary accommodation are needed for different types of households for different lengths of time. The different types of accommodation used have different costs, and the availability and costs of different types of accommodation also vary by location.
- 7.4 The research has used the available data to analyse the costs of different types of temporary accommodation to the Housing Executive, and to explore the potential for savings or better value for money if different approaches were able to be taken. Expenditure on temporary accommodation forms a very significant part of the total expenditure on homelessness by the Housing Executive. Although some temporary accommodation costs are met through the payment of rent by residents from either Housing Benefit or earned income, a large part of the cost comes directly from the Housing Executive budget as expenditure allocated either to homelessness or to the Supporting People budget. This expenditure in turn is part of the Department for Communities housing budget.

Types of cost in temporary accommodation placements

- 7.5 The costs of temporary accommodation can be split into a number of different categories which may include:
- **Rental costs payable from Housing Benefit** - generally speaking rents and Housing Benefit eligible service charges up to the Local Housing Allowance

(LHA) for the area where the property is located will fall into this category. Different rates have been agreed for some of the hostels to reflect higher housing management costs;

- **Rental and/or additional housing management costs** which are above the levels which Housing Benefit will cover, and which are a direct cost to the Housing Executive. The main examples of this are the top-up payments made by the Housing Executive to private landlords for Single Lets, and the additional housing management costs for the DIME scheme. The rental costs of the voluntary sector hostels are set at levels that Housing Benefit will fully cover;
- **Contributions direct from residents** i.e. Housing Benefit ineligible service charges and deductions from Housing Benefit due to employment or non-dependent adults living in the household;
- **Support costs funded by Supporting People** which are associated with supported accommodation;
- **Support costs funded by Supporting People** in relation to floating support provided to some temporary accommodation residents;
- **Additional costs of providers** associated with provision of temporary accommodation, which are not funded by Supporting People, the Housing Executive or Housing Benefit, but may be, for example, from charitable funding sources;
- **Additional capital costs to the Housing Executive** for the Housing Executive hostels which are not fully covered by Housing Benefit or Supporting People e.g. for hostel repairs and maintenance or capital improvements;
- The costs of **voids and bad debts**.

7.6 Looking at these separate cost categories, the elements of greatest interest for the purposes of this analysis are rent and housing management costs not funded from Housing Benefit and Supporting People costs. These are the main regular costs to the Housing Executive budget.

7.7 Housing Benefit costs are costs to the public purse more generally, but not to the Housing Executive.

7.8 The contributions from residents are important in terms of affordability and the welfare of homeless households, but Campbell Tickell does not have detailed information on them, and they are not a direct cost to the Housing Executive budget unless they lead to bad debts.

- 7.9 Any external funding from providers is likely to be marginal in most cases, difficult to analyse and is not a direct cost to the Housing Executive unless it is derived from Housing Executive homelessness or other grants.
- 7.10 Any additional Housing Executive capital costs may be significant but are likely to be highly variable. These have not been examined.
- 7.11 The cost of voids and bad debts has not been included in the analysis. In terms of voids, these are clearly important to the Housing Executive where a block Supporting People grant is being paid for voluntary sector hostels or for DIME accommodation, and the accommodation is not fully occupied. An average occupancy figures has been shown in the Finance Paper analysis as an indication of this, but undue weight has not been attached to occupancy on the basis that the research team does not have full information on whether the occupancy levels for the year covered by the Housing Executive Strategic Contract Management Risk Assessment SCRMA, where this is recorded, are typical or whether there may have been particular circumstances involved e.g. a period of refurbishment or damage repair which affected the void figures for a specific period, but which are not indicative of a general pattern. This information should, however, be available to the Housing Executive Supporting People team.
- 7.12 In terms of bad debts, these have most relevance in the Housing Executive hostels, where they represent an additional cost to the Housing Executive, rather than the provider,¹⁰⁶ but the necessary information to quantify this is not available. It is however worth noting, when comparing the Housing Executive hostels with other accommodation types, that the Housing Executive hostels may have additional bad debt costs which have not been included. It is also worth noting that the Housing Executive incurs rent collection and administrative costs in the Housing Executive hostels but not in other types of provision.
- 7.13 It is important to note that the Housing Executive does not cover void and bad debt costs for Single Lets. These are borne by the landlord or managing agent. This is a different position to the situation if the Housing Executive was leasing properties itself, in which case these would be additional costs.

¹⁰⁶ Providers with a significantly loss-making scheme can in some instances and in some years apply for 'top-up' funding from the Supporting People budget. If voids and/or bad debts are an element in the scheme loss then indirectly there may be an impact on the Housing Executive funding.

- 7.14 Table 79 (following page) lists the main types of costs which may occur to the Housing Executive from different types of temporary accommodation, and states whether they have been included in this analysis.

Supporting People costs for accommodation-based support

- 7.15 The area of expenditure on temporary accommodation where the most data are available is on the Supporting People costs of Voluntary Sector hostels, the Housing Executive hostels and DIME accommodation. This funding comes from the Supporting People budget and not the wider Housing Executive homelessness budget.
- 7.16 It is also worth noting that for the Voluntary Sector hostels, temporary accommodation represents only a proportion of the occupancy of the accommodation. The Housing Executive does not record the proportion of occupancy by those designated as being in temporary accommodation by project, by provider or by scheme. Overall there are **1,280**^{107 108} voluntary sector hostel places funded by Supporting People. Between a lower estimate, based on the published temporary accommodation figures of **390** voluntary sector hostel places being used for temporary accommodation at any one time and a higher estimate of **780** residents with FDA status, this represents between **30%**¹⁰⁹ and **60%** of funded voluntary sector units occupied as temporary accommodation.
- 7.17 It is impossible to tell exactly what the support costs of those in voluntary sector temporary accommodation are, as there is no information available from the Housing Executive on which units from the total are being used as temporary accommodation.

¹⁰⁷ The Cuan Mhuire project for people with alcohol problems has been excluded from the analysis because it is not used as temporary accommodation.

¹⁰⁸ This and subsequent information is taken from the Housing Executive Strategic Contract Management Risk Assessment (SCMRA) for the year to the end of September 2018.

¹⁰⁹ In reality not all units are occupied at any one time, so the percentage of 'occupied' units used for temporary accommodation will be higher than 30%.

Table 75: Potential temporary accommodation cost type by accommodation type

Type of the Housing Executive cost	Unreclaimable Housing Benefit payments	Supporting People accommodation based support	Supporting People floating support	Voids	Bad debts
B&B/Hotel	Very little Housing Benefit income is claimed.	No	Yes in a few cases	Only if hotels block booked by the Housing Executive. Not included	Yes, in the sense that Housing Benefit is generally not claimed. We assume no rental income.
The Housing Executive Hostels	No. Housing Benefit have confirmed no Housing Benefit subsidy loss.	Yes. Included	Assumed No Floating Support costs, except 19 units in one hostel, which are included.	Yes. Not included	Yes. Not included. Rent collection admin costs also incurred.
Voluntary Sector Hostels	No. Housing Benefit have confirmed no Housing Benefit subsidy loss	Yes. Included	Assumed No	Only if block grant paid and under occupied. Not included.	No. Provider covers this.
DIME	Yes. Significant housing management costs not covered by Housing Benefit	Yes. Included	Assumed No	Only if block grant paid and under occupied. Not included.	Assumed No. Provider covers this.
Single Lets	Yes. Agreed top up paid by Housing Benefit but taken from Housing Executive Homelessness budget	No	Yes in a few cases.	No. Provider covers this.	No. Provider covers this.

- 7.18 As the accommodation is funded by Supporting People anyway, whether it is being used as designated temporary accommodation or not, the marginal cost of using it to accommodate a household who needs temporary accommodation, as opposed to accommodating residents for other reasons is effectively zero.
- 7.19 The data do indicate that for the Housing Executive budget in the round, this accommodation has both a significant support cost and a significant total cost when compared to other temporary accommodation types such as Single Lets and the Housing Executive hostels.
- 7.20 An important question is to what extent the support provided in this type of accommodation is needed by the residents and leads to more beneficial outcomes and is therefore worthwhile expenditure. If there is a significant number of residents for whom this is not the case, there may be an argument for spending some of the available Supporting People budget differently in future, or possibly redirecting some of it towards other purposes such as homelessness prevention or delivering floating support or different types of temporary accommodation if that would deliver better value for money.
- 7.21 In recent years expenditure has been increasing. This is partly because of a rise in the number of cases where a full duty is accepted. Annual FDA cases rose by **30%** from **9,649** in 2013/14 to **12,512** in 2018/19.
- 7.22 Table 76 shows the Housing Executive's recorded spend on temporary accommodation and related expenditure including the private rented access scheme but excluding supporting people expenditure and spend on Housing Executive hostels, since 2016/17.

Table 76: Housing Executive temporary accommodation and related expenditure trend 2016/17 to 2019/20

	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Block Booking (DIME)	Redacted on grounds of commercial confidentiality			
Private Sector Access Scheme	Redacted on grounds of commercial confidentiality			
Top Ups (Single Lets) ¹¹⁰	4,463	3,863	3,342	3,364
External (Hotel and B&B) ¹¹¹	1,906	912	668	
Taxis	51	45	26	19
Furniture Services	1,775	1,796	1,805	1,504
Total	9,256	7,965	7,282	6,293

Source: Northern Ireland Housing Executive

7.23 Total annual expenditure has risen from **£6.3m** in 2016/17 to **£9.3m** in 2019/20, an increase of **47%** over three years.

7.24 Most expenditure on temporary accommodation actually comes from the Supporting People budget. This is reported by the Housing Executive as £23.3m in 2016/17, £22.3m in 2017/18 and £21.0m in 2018/19. However, it is important to note that these figures cover all Supporting People expenditure on accommodation that can be used as temporary accommodation. In practice much of this accommodation is used by households that do not have FDA status, and it has not been possible to determine whether expenditure on temporary accommodation for those who are owed a homelessness duty has increased or decreased over the period.

¹¹⁰ The 2016/17 top up cost includes the external spend as Finance did not separate top ups and external costs previously.

¹¹¹ External accommodation includes £8k in 18/19 & £77k in 17/18 linked to flash flooding in the West Area.

Costs not covered by Housing Benefit or Supporting People

- 7.25 We now turn to costs not funded from the Supporting People budget, but nevertheless paid for by the Housing Executive homelessness budget.

Single Lets

- 7.26 In addition to rents set at LHA levels which are collected by Single Let landlords or managing agents, there are agreed additional 'top-up' payments for each property for the period which it is let as temporary accommodation which are made by the Housing Executive. These are paid to landlords and agents via Housing Benefit through a similar mechanism to that used for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP). These top up payments are not made during void periods so that landlords or agents bear the void risk rather than the Housing Executive. As landlords or agents collect the rent from tenants they also bear the bad debt risk, rather than the Housing Executive.
- 7.27 The top up payments made through Housing Benefit are taken from Housing Executive homelessness funding, so that in terms of homelessness expenditure, Single Let top-ups represent more of a pressure than support costs paid for from the Supporting People budget even though the costs may be significantly lower. For the purposes of this report, however, it is the total cost to the Housing Executive from all budgets that is the key measure.
- 7.28 The principal tool in analysing the top up costs of Single Lets adopted by the research team is a list provided by the Housing Executive of **1,048** current Single Let properties in July 2019, which sets out the top up payable on each one. This is not the full list of properties, but we assume it is representative. The list gives a split of properties by council area and by property size. The distribution of properties is shown in Table 77. The data show that by far the greatest number of Single Lets is in Belfast with Derry & Strabane the area with the next greatest number.

Table 77: The distribution of Single Lets by council area and property size

Council area	Number of Bedrooms							Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Antrim & Newtownabbey	2	3	3					8
Ards & North Down	10	50	32	6				98
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	1	13	36	3				53
Belfast	42	186	142	28	3	1		402
Causeway Coast & Glens	1	3		1				5
Derry & Strabane	17	45	133	11	1		1	208
Fermanagh & Omagh	11	8	11	2				32
Lisburn & Castlereagh	2	44	43	6				95
Mid & East Antrim	25	19	5	2				51
Mid Ulster		6	15		2			23
Newry, Mourne & Down	8	29	31	5				73
Total	119	406	451	64	6	1	1	1,048

Source: Housing Executive spreadsheet of properties with top up payments

7.29 Interestingly, the confidential data show that top-up rates appear to be relatively consistent across property sizes from 1-beds to 5-beds, only increasing significantly for large 6 and 7 bed properties. However, there is significant variation in prices paid across different local authorities. The table contained in the confidential finance report has not been included in this report on grounds of commercial sensitivity.

B&B and Hotels

7.30 The available information on B&B costs is more limited and slightly ambiguous. Placements in B&B/Hotels tend to cost significantly more than Housing Benefit will pay for the accommodation. This leads to a shortfall which has to be paid for by the Housing Executive. This is especially true for families who need larger rooms, and in some cases need more than one room. In practice, short stays can also make it more difficult to successfully claim Housing Benefit. Placements are paid for on a nightly basis, and unless a block booking has been made, void costs are borne by the B&B provider rather than by the Housing Executive.

- 7.31 The best information available on B&B costs is from snapshot data from June 2019 provided by the Housing Executive. This suggested **58** households in B&B on one night. This is consistent with other data to assume that **58** households in B&B accommodation is close to the average. However, it is important to state that both overall B&B numbers and the average household composition and therefore the size of accommodation needed of those staying in B&B may vary significantly though the year. The table contained in the confidential finance report has been redacted from this report on grounds of confidentiality.

DIME Accommodation

- 7.32 DIME accommodation provides **77** units of accommodation that has been leased to the Housing Executive. The provider has a management agreement on these properties.

Housing Executive and voluntary sector hostels

- 7.33 Looking at the distribution of hostels by council area, it is clear that some areas have much more provision than others. This is examined in more detail in sections 4 and 5 of the report. The table contained in the confidential finance report has been redacted from this report on grounds of confidentiality.

Floating support

- 7.34 In addition to the Supporting People costs associated with voluntary sector hostels, the Housing Executive hostels and DIME accommodation, there are also Supporting People costs for floating support to some of the households in Single Lets, and possibly to some households in B&B/Hotels. It is useful to understand these in order to be able to make a comparison between the total costs of Single Lets and the other types of accommodation.
- 7.35 The analysis of the floating support Provider Census conducted by the Housing Executive in August 2019 suggests that floating support may have been provided to as few as **36** households in Single Let placements at the time of the snapshot and to no households in B&B placements. Although these are very small numbers, it could be an option for the Housing Executive to increase the provision of floating support to households in future, and so it is worth looking at the likely costs of this.
- 7.36 In order to determine the costs of floating support for a household in temporary accommodation, it is necessary to know the weekly cost and the duration of the support. For floating support provided in B&B, it can be assumed that it would last for the entire stay, as stays are generally short, and it would seem sensible in most cases not to end floating support until the household had moved on from B&B.

- 7.37 For Single Lets, the picture may be more complicated as stays are often quite long, and floating support, if necessary at all, may only be necessary for a proportion of the time spent in the single let.
- 7.38 It would be interesting, if possible, to understand the relative effectiveness and cost effectiveness of floating support delivered in Single Lets compared with accommodation-based support and intensive housing management in the other temporary accommodation types available for clients with comparable support needs. It is possible that for at least some households, floating support in single lets or in PRS accommodation used for homelessness prevention could lead to better outcomes for less expenditure than hostel provision. However, although the data are suggestive of this possibility, it is impossible to definitively draw this conclusion at this stage.
- 7.39 Another interesting question is whether households that move out of temporary accommodation into social housing receive floating support and what the cost of that is compared to them staying in different types of temporary accommodation. If, as seems probable, the expenditure on support and housing management is significantly lower once people have moved from supported accommodation into general needs social housing, does that lead to poorer outcomes including repeat homelessness in some cases? If not, then this may suggest that the expense of at least some hostel accommodation is not justified, and it would be better to move people into general needs accommodation as soon as possible.
- 7.40 Where general needs tenancies do fail, there may be an argument that diverting some Supporting People funding from hostels towards more floating support for people in general needs accommodation and/or PRS accommodation could be more cost effective for the Housing Executive.
- 7.41 The table contained in the confidential finance report has been redacted from this report on grounds of confidentiality.

Comparison with other areas

- 7.42 Information on the costs of temporary accommodation which would allow a meaningful comparison to be made between Northern Ireland and other jurisdictions is not available within the published homelessness statistics. As part of our research, we attempted to gain information on the costs of temporary accommodation directly from other councils, though freedom of information requests, direct requests and interviews.
- 7.43 Campbell Tickell obtained information on temporary accommodation from a number of comparable local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales through Freedom of

Information requests. The choice of comparator authorities was census-based geodemographic area classifications, as determined by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)¹¹².

- 7.44 We asked each authority for the net costs after housing benefit and other rental income of different types of temporary accommodation i.e. the cost to the local authority themselves, but not including costs of staff in the local authority.
- 7.45 We also asked for the number of placements and the average length of each placement.
- 7.46 We also asked for information on the housing related support costs of temporary accommodation, but in this case received very few meaningful responses. This is for a number of reasons. In many cases housing related support is not provided for temporary accommodation and is controlled by the upper tier authority in two tier authority areas whereas homelessness responsibilities are with lower tier authorities. In other cases, similar to the position in Northern Ireland, the housing related support costs of temporary accommodation are not separated out from other housing related support costs.
- 7.47 Nevertheless, we were able to get responses on costs from 12 councils in England and Scotland which were meaningful enough to provide at least an indicative comparison. These are set out in the confidential financial report and give an estimated cost per placement by dividing the number of placements made in the selected period by the costs of temporary accommodation over the same period.
- 7.48 It is very difficult to make a robust comparison of costs based on this information, but it would appear that the Northern Ireland placement costs are in general high, and in particular high compared with English authorities.
- 7.49 There are, however, a few councils in Scotland which appear to have high costs comparable to or exceeding those in Northern Ireland.
- 7.50 Unfortunately, though, overall, the comparison through Freedom of Information requests needs to be approached with considerable caution.

¹¹² [ONS 2011 residential-based area classifications](#)

8. STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

This section of the report considers the factors that need to be considered when developing a temporary accommodation strategy, and explores the key factors of, demand, supply, cost, geography, and outcomes. The section also explores the requirements of a needs and demand statistical model and sets out some innovative practice, particularly regarding for rural areas where provision is most difficult.

Factors that should be considered in developing a temporary accommodation strategy

- 8.1 Campbell Tickell has carried out a review of temporary accommodation strategies that have been developed by a number of housing authorities in Britain. There is no set format for these strategies, and any successful strategy is likely to be highly context dependent if it is to be successful in addressing local needs.
- 8.2 Related to this, it is clear that a temporary accommodation strategy cannot exist in isolation, because the need for temporary accommodation is highly dependent on a range of factors including, for example:
- Current and future levels of homelessness;
 - The amount of and approach to homelessness prevention;
 - The state of the housing market in terms of both the availability and affordability of accommodation for low income households;
 - The availability of social housing and the allocations policy for social housing;
 - Current and future policy on welfare benefits;
 - The requirements of homelessness legislation, and the way it is interpreted and implemented including which households are considered eligible for temporary accommodation;
 - Future economic trends and the operation of the economic cycle.
- 8.3 These and other factors in combination determine both current and future demand for accommodation, which in turn means that changes in policy and practice in these areas will affect the demand for temporary accommodation in the future.

- 8.4 For this reason, it is important that any temporary accommodation strategy is flexible enough to accommodate variations in demand based on modelling and forecasts and is reviewed regularly. It also makes sense where possible to consider the impact on the demand for temporary accommodation when developing policy in related areas such as those listed above.

Key elements of a temporary accommodation strategy

- 8.5 With the above caveat, there are a number of key factors to be considered in the development of a temporary accommodation strategy. These have been grouped into the five categories of Demand, Supply, Cost, Geography, and Outcomes which are now considered in turn.

Demand

- 8.6 Assessing the demand for temporary accommodation accurately requires reliable data on the current situation.
- 8.7 This includes knowing as much as is reasonably practical about:
- How many households are becoming homeless each year and what proportion of them will require temporary accommodation that meets different needs;
 - How many people are currently living in temporary accommodation of different types;
 - The rate at which different types of household move into different types of temporary accommodation;
 - The rate at which different types of household leave temporary accommodation;
 - The average length of stay of different types of household in each type of temporary accommodation; and
 - The trends over the previous two-to-three years.
- 8.8 This gives an idea of how many people are living in temporary accommodation at the present time but does not necessarily give an accurate figure of true current demand because there may be unmet demand in the system. For example, there may be some people who need temporary accommodation who do not get it for a number of reasons that are set out elsewhere in this report. This would indicate the need for an increase in the overall supply of accommodation. It may also be true that there is a shortage of some types of temporary accommodation, so that for example, in the Northern Ireland

context, if there is not enough single let type accommodation, this may lead to increased use of B&B.

- 8.9 In order to understand this better, it may be helpful to model the ideal pathway or pathways through temporary accommodation for different types of household in terms of both the suitability and cost of different types of temporary accommodation for households exhibiting different characteristics. Having arrived at such a model, this can be compared with the actual pathways at present.
- 8.10 Such an analysis may suggest that more of some types of temporary accommodation would be desirable, and less of other types. This should produce a breakdown of current demand.
- 8.11 The temporary accommodation strategy will also need to make predictions of possible or likely future demand.
- 8.12 Predictions in homelessness beyond the short term are notoriously difficult to get right. For an example of an attempt to forecast future homelessness, it is interesting to look at the Alma Economics feasibility study for the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government in England (March 2019).¹¹³ This concludes that *“homelessness is a complex phenomenon that emerges as a result of intricate interactions between a broad set of policy, economic and personal factors”*, and that the development of complex simulation models is a long-term process that requires high levels of expertise and substantial investment in resources.
- 8.13 The MHCLG feasibility study therefore recommends that:

“The optimal solution for predicting levels of homelessness and rough sleeping in the short-term is the development of time series models that are empirically shown to generate accurate predictions in the near future. The models are simple in that they arrive at short-term forecasts based on historical trends and are not dependent on factors that are shown to predict or cause homelessness and rough sleeping. While there are versions of time series models that include a set of predictive factors and can be used to evaluate the impact of policy changes, they are not an optimal method for policy appraisal as they won’t correctly identify the relationships from predicting factors to homelessness.”

¹¹³ [Causes of homelessness and rough sleeping feasibility study](#)

- 8.14 In other words, the most reliable, although clearly imperfect, method of predicting homelessness demand in the short term is to extrapolate from the trend in the recent past. In the longer term, for practical purposes, there is no reliable method of predicting future homelessness levels.
- 8.15 Nevertheless, it is sometimes possible to model the potential impact of different policies. For example, if homelessness demand were to remain constant, but homelessness prevention were to be more successful, this produces a relatively clear impact on the future demand for temporary accommodation. What is more difficult of course is to predict accurately in advance how successful a future policy to increase homeless prevention will be.
- 8.16 Similarly a change in the allocations policy might lead to fewer or more FDA applicants being accommodated in social housing. If a policy change means less move on from temporary accommodation, then this may imply a greater demand for temporary accommodation in the future.
- 8.17 On the other hand, if it were the case that an important driver of homelessness presentations is the desire on the part of households to obtain social housing, and this route is made more difficult by a change in allocations policy, the longer-term impact could be to reduce homelessness presentations and reduce the demand for temporary accommodation in a way that is very difficult to predict in advance.
- 8.18 For these reasons, whilst it may well be valid to make an attempt to predict future demand for temporary accommodation, any predictions of changes in demand are likely to be unreliable beyond the very short term. A generalised approach to modelling in the Northern Ireland context is set out at the end of this section.
- 8.19 Nevertheless, it may make sense for the strategy to focus on delivering a better approach to meeting current demand rather than being primarily about meeting assessed future demand. This also underlines the need to build in flexibility to the strategy in case future demand rises or falls in a way that was not predicted or indeed was not predictable.

Supply

- 8.20 Having assessed the demand for temporary accommodation and whether it is being met effectively in terms of access for those who need it, suitability and cost, this is likely to point to at least some changes in the supply of accommodation being desirable.
- 8.21 This may involve obtaining new types of supply, or of increasing or decreasing the supply of the different types of accommodation already available. It may also be possible to make better use of the accommodation already available.
- 8.22 The strategy should consider the options to deliver such changes in supply, and how feasible it is to implement those options over the period covered by the strategy.
- 8.23 This may involve grouping particular changes by the level of urgency, the cost and the cultural or political barriers which may need to be overcome in order to make them. For example, if it were decided to use fewer hostels for temporary accommodation and more Single Lets, the questions that would need to be considered might include:
- Is there an available supply of Single Lets for the types of household who would no longer be accommodated in hostels?
 - If not, what could be done to create that supply – for example, should the Housing Executive make higher top up payments, provide more floating support, change the model so that the Housing Executive itself leases properties rather than relying exclusively on external agents?
 - If that is not enough to solve the problem, because of the size of the private rental market being inadequate in some areas for example, or because it is considered too expensive in the long term, is it feasible to work with partners to purchase properties, or to build properties to be used in this way?
 - If more properties are leased or acquired for single let type temporary accommodation, who loses because of no longer having access to the accommodation?
 - Would such a policy reduce the incentives for landlords to provide accommodation for homelessness prevention?
 - If fewer hostels are used for temporary accommodation, does that mean some hostels will close, or will they be used for other client groups who do not gain FDA status?

- If hostels close, what are the political implications, what are the implications for providers, and what is the impact on loss of accommodation for non-FDA clients?
- If hostels do not close, does the policy save any money?

8.24 As another example, if it were decided to accommodate some types of clients using Housing First rather than hostels, considerations might include:

- A cost benefit analysis of the change;
- An estimate of the number of clients affected in each year of the strategy;
- A profile of the housing and support costs in both the current situation and after the move to Housing First. Note that it would be important to build in the longer-term support likely to be associated with Housing First for both Housing Executive-funded programmes such as Supporting People and the services provided by other agencies including Health and Social Care Trusts, and to undertake joint planning and budgeting with government departments and executive agencies.
- A plan identifying where the Housing First accommodation will be sourced from;
- If the Housing First programme is to be fully or partly funded by savings from less use of supported housing, how will those savings be realised in practice and over what timescale?

8.25 Having considered the potential changes to supply in some detail it is then helpful to set out those changes as it is anticipated they will take place over the life of the strategy, and to model the anticipated budgetary changes in terms of expenditure and savings in each year.

Cost

8.26 An important driver in making changes to supply through the temporary accommodation strategy is likely to be cost. The costs associated with different types of temporary accommodation accrue from a variety of sources and a variety of budgets. For Northern Ireland, the confidential finance paper analyses cost data derived from Housing Executive sources.

8.27 Broadly speaking some types of accommodation are more expensive than others, and the cost of the accommodation does not necessarily correlate well with the outcomes produced by a stay in that accommodation.

- 8.28 Other things being equal it is likely that a temporary accommodation strategy will seek to replace expensive accommodation with poorer outcomes with less expensive accommodation or with accommodation that produces better outcomes, or if possible, with accommodation which meets both objectives.
- 8.29 It is important in analysing costs to look at the full range of costs from different budgets of providing different types of accommodation (see section 7 for an example of how this might be done), and if possible, to look at how this may change in the future. For example, it does not necessarily follow that increasing the supply of a particular type of accommodation will be feasible at the same price as current accommodation of that type, especially if the supply is constrained some way, or if new supply would require capital expenditure on purchase or development.
- 8.30 It is possible that some improvements in the cost effectiveness of temporary accommodation can be achieved without the need for changes in supply by having a better system for allocating clients to the accommodation which is available so that, for example, the support needs of the clients referred to accommodation where support is provided is better matched to the type and level of support available in that accommodation. A method for testing whether the allocation of tenants that have additional support needs to appropriate accommodation is appropriate is appended to this section.

Geography

- 8.31 As well as looking at the overall demand and supply of temporary accommodation it is important to look at the supply and demand in each geographical area.
- 8.32 In principle the analysis should be similar to the overall analysis, but there are likely to be different issues and different solutions required in different places, depending on whether the area is urban or rural, the level of demand, the current provision of temporary accommodation in each area, the availability of social housing, and the availability and affordability of private rented sector accommodation in each area.
- 8.33 A view may need to be taken on the extent to which households having to move between different areas is acceptable in order to address disparities in the supply of different types of accommodation, and the extent to which and whether it is possible for each area needs to be self-sufficient in terms of the provision of suitable temporary accommodation needed to meet local demand.
- 8.34 If the latter is preferred, this is likely to have an additional cost, through the commissioning of new accommodation in areas where there are gaps in provision; or

alternatively, in terms of paying a premium for accessing private rented accommodation in more expensive areas where the difference between Local Housing Allowance and market rents is greater.

- 8.35 The temporary accommodation strategy could attempt to analyse the numbers of households who currently have to access temporary accommodation out of area or who do not gain access to temporary accommodation at all because of gaps in local provision or the decisions of providers. It could then set out the measures which would be needed to rectify this and where applicable the estimated cost of those measures.

Outcomes

- 8.36 An important part of the assessment of both the policy and cost-effectiveness of current temporary accommodation provision is to be able to monitor what the outcomes are for each accommodation type and in some cases for different individual schemes.
- 8.37 Assessing and weighting outcomes depends on the priorities underpinning the strategy. For example is accommodation which is very expensive, accepts very difficult clients, and achieves a successful move on to settled accommodation for 50% of them value for money if the same client group achieve a 35% success move on rate from another scheme which is much cheaper?
- 8.38 Such questions can be difficult to answer, but it is important to understand as well as possible what outcomes are achieved by different accommodation types for different client groups if the temporary accommodation strategy is to properly consider the impact of temporary accommodation provision, and to properly plan to meet unmet need.
- 8.39 This assessment includes which types of household different accommodation schemes are willing to accommodate as well as the outcomes achieved for those whom they do accommodate.

Examples of temporary accommodation strategies

- 8.40 A range of factors which might be considered in developing a temporary accommodation strategy have been set out above. However, not all temporary accommodation strategies are as comprehensive as this, and the Housing Executive will need to take a balanced view of what is feasible or achievable.
- 8.41 Some examples of temporary accommodation strategies are annexed to this report. These are:

- London Borough of Brent Temporary Accommodation Reform Plan
- South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council Temporary Accommodation Strategy
- London Borough of Hackney Temporary Accommodation Strategy
- Cornwall Housing Temporary Accommodation Strategy

Modelling ‘need’ and ‘demand’ – Homeless households and their needs

8.42 Campbell Tickell has considered the feasibility of developing a statistical model which would match the current and projected future demand for temporary accommodation with the supply of temporary accommodation as a basis for developing a temporary accommodation strategy, for planning and investment purposes and for monitoring its effectiveness.

8.43 Such a model would be formed from three main components:

- **A ‘needs assessment’ model** (of the kind developed by the Housing Executive working with North Harbour Consulting in 2016/2018)¹¹⁴;
- **A ‘stocks and flows’ model** of temporary accommodation provision using data from the Housing Executive’s HMS and other record systems, some of which might require further development; and
- **A ‘gap analysis’** that would match the numbers of homeless households in need of temporary accommodation with the available supply over a historic period (say, the previous five years) as a basis for scenario development and projecting future demand and supply for a period three to five years ahead.

¹¹⁴ Palmer J, Paris CT, Ahmed A with Goldup M (2016), *The Supporting People Programme in Northern Ireland: A Methodology and Structures for Strategic Needs Assessment*, North Harbour Consulting for the Housing Executive, with subsequent advice and support on the development of a model for matching need with supply

Needs Assessment

- 8.44 The starting point would be the component of the 2018 needs assessment model that focussed on homelessness. The model was made up of two main elements:
- Number of households in Northern Ireland by household type (based on NISRA household projections, 2016 edition);
 - Number of households with 'housing and associated needs' applying to the Housing Executive as homeless annually (based on NIHE *Housing Management System* (HMS) data), differentiating between:
 - All homeless applicants by household type, by need for specialised/non-specialised housing, by need for support;
 - The number of applicants by household type, by need for specialised/non-specialised housing, by need for support whose cases are under review and who require temporary accommodation in the interim;
 - The number of applicants awarded FDA status by household type, by need for specialised/non-specialised housing, by need for support who require temporary accommodation;
 - The number of households not awarded FDA status by household type, by need for specialised/non-specialised housing, by need for support;
 - The prevalence of homelessness per 1,000 Northern Ireland, sub-regional or council area population in the base year;
 - A five-year trend analysis of homelessness per 1,000 population in subsequent years up to most recent year;
 - A three- to five-year projection of recent trends as an indicative forecast going forward, (possibly subject to assessment of major changes affecting the future rate of homelessness via the construction of alternative scenarios).
- 8.45 The existing version of the Needs Assessment Model contains a forecast to 2021/22 based on trends up to 2017/2018. This model would need to be updated, and possibly extended to provide information on sub-areas within Northern Ireland, incorporating more recent NISRA household projections and HMS data.

Stocks and flows of temporary accommodation

- 8.46 In outline, a model of stocks and flows might comprise, for Northern Ireland as a whole, or for sub-regions or council areas:

- A count of the stock of each type of temporary accommodation at the base year by Housing Executive region or council area;
 - Housing Executive-funded temporary accommodation by type at the base year by number of bedrooms/bed spaces;
 - An estimate of the stock of private Single Lets available as a result of prior arrangements with landlords in the base year by number of bedrooms/bed spaces;
 - An estimate of the number of B&B places available as a result of prior arrangements with owners available in the base year by number of bedrooms/bed spaces;
- A count of the likely or potential stock in the following three to five years¹¹⁵
 - Planned additions or reductions in the stock of Housing Executive-funded temporary accommodation in each future year (Housing Executive accommodation, voluntary sector accommodation and leased properties (DIME));
 - Assumptions about the possible rate of change in the provision of private single lets and B&B accommodation;
- A model of the actual flow of households (numbers of households, by type and by need) referred to each of the different categories of temporary accommodation at the base year and in the previous three to five years as either ‘waiting for assessment’ or ‘FDA requiring temporary accommodation’ (subject to data availability and data consistency);
- A model of the actual flow of households (numbers of households, by type and by need) and of the housing destinations of those FDA households requiring temporary accommodation at the base year and in the previous three to five

¹¹⁵ In the first iteration of the model the projections would be based on base year data and current assumptions about supply. In subsequent iterations the assumptions could be changed so that, for example, the effects of a change in the mix of types of temporary accommodation could be accommodated, possibly a shift away from hostels towards social housing or private single lets with floating support.

years who were not referred to temporary accommodation, by reason for non-take-up (subject to data availability and data consistency);¹¹⁶

Gap analysis

- 8.47 The gap analysis would be modelled for Northern Ireland as a whole and/or by Housing Executive region or council area¹¹⁷ by matching:
- number of homeless households by type and by need projected for future years from the needs assessment model;
 - the potentially available temporary accommodation by type from the supply model; and
 - the possible housing destinations of those households requiring temporary accommodation for whom no accommodation is likely to be available.

A model for testing the appropriateness of referral of households with support needs to appropriate accommodation

- 8.48 Section 5 of the report (paragraphs 5.157 to 5.166) analyses data showing the extent to which households that had additional support needs were appropriately referred to supported accommodation or were inappropriately referred to other forms of unsupported accommodation, especially B&B accommodation. The format the analysis took opens the possibility of developing a new model to show:
- what proportion of the current and future hostel populations might be best suited to the different types of temporary accommodation or support service that are available (subject to supply matching demand);
 - whether, after households have been allocated to temporary accommodation, they have been referred to the most appropriate form of accommodation.

¹¹⁶ The current research has found that a significant number of homeless households with support needs are not referred into temporary accommodation and the available data do not record whether they needed temporary accommodation, or not; and if they did need temporary accommodation whether an alternative solution was provided. Similarly, the data on households that are not referred to supported temporary accommodation do not distinguish between those that do not need support; and those for whom no supported accommodation is available.

¹¹⁷ Data required for needs assessment modelling may be unreliable at Council area, in which case Housing Executive regions are probably the smallest viable modelling unit.

- 8.49 Furthermore, the model might be extended for use as an indicator of the best type of permanent accommodation.
- 8.50 The key requirement, to facilitate this, is for the Housing Executive to record in a routine way as part of their standard assessment for households making homelessness applications, the additional support needs that the household has and the risk that they present to others or are vulnerable to form others. England and Scotland provide a model for how this can be done in relation to support needs.
- 8.51 Collecting information in this kind routinely would enable a model to be populated which informed the need for particular services. An example of what such a framework might look like is set out in Figure 31. Note that this is only intended as an example of what might be possible if this information is collected.

Figure 31: A model for determining potential placements for FDA and non-FDA cases into the available categories of temporary accommodation

All hostel sectors		Level of support needs			
		High	Medium	Low	None
Risk of harm to/from others	High risk				
	Medium risk			●	
	Low risk				
	No risk		●		
Key:					
		Households suitable for intensive Supported Housing or Housing First			
		Households suitable for less intensive Supported Housing			
		Households suitable for Private Single Lets with Floating Support			
		Households suitable for Private Single Lets without Floating Support			

Identification of innovative models of temporary accommodation, particularly in rural areas where provision is most difficult

- 8.52 This section of the report reviews alternatives and possible additions to the provision of temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland. Some of these approaches are well established elsewhere in the UK, others are more innovative. In each case, the solution is described, reasons why it might be worth exploring are suggested, and potential barriers or problems are identified.
- 8.53 Examples of local authorities using all the approaches covered in this section of the report can be found along with documentation and contact details in the 2017 English Local Government Association report '[Housing Our Homeless Households](#)'¹¹⁸ and its associated resource library.

Reducing the use of temporary accommodation by preventing or relieving homelessness through a move into the private rented sector

- 8.54 Many local authorities in other UK jurisdictions have been able to reduce their use of temporary accommodation by facilitating a move into the private rented sector. In England in 2009/10, the number of households whose homelessness was prevented or relieved through a move into the private rented sector was 50,730 compared to 40,020 FDA equivalent homelessness acceptances.¹¹⁹
- 8.55 However, the number of cases where homelessness was prevented in this way has reduced significantly since then, and the number of homelessness acceptances has increased, largely as a result of the decreasing affordability of private rented accommodation for people on low incomes as a result of UK government welfare reforms. Nevertheless, the affordability of private rented accommodation in Northern Ireland is still relatively good compared to many other areas of the UK, and there may be scope to do more.

Advantages

- 8.56 Although PRS access schemes have a cost in terms of deposit guarantees or landlord incentive payments, support for landlords and tenants, advertising and procurement,

¹¹⁸ [Local Government Association: Housing our homeless households](#)

¹¹⁹ [UK Live tables on homelessness](#)

these are likely to be significantly less than the cost of any form of temporary accommodation that the Housing Executive is currently using.

- 8.57 Adopting this approach would mean fewer social housing allocations would need to go to homeless households, giving more flexibility to allocate properties to others in need.
- 8.58 Evidence from English local authorities that have tried this approach suggests that there is a reduction in the appeal of the 'homelessness route' as a way of securing social housing, and also a reduction in the number of homelessness presentations by households who may be able to make alternative arrangements with assistance.

Barriers

- 8.59 It is unclear at this stage how many landlords will be willing to let properties at LHA rents on this basis.
- 8.60 The Housing Executive's continued use of single lets may offer landlords a better deal than letting properties to prevent homelessness.
- 8.61 There are issues with the quality of some private sector accommodation in terms of both physical standards and housing management, which may make private rented accommodation unsuitable for some households.
- 8.62 It may be difficult to persuade some households to take PRS accommodation if there is a realistic alternative of obtaining social housing. This in turn may produce unfair inequalities of outcome between households willing to take private rented and those who hold out for social housing.
- 8.63 Increased access and usage of the private rental sector could also have an impact on floating support provision if households with support needs were placed there. It would be important to carry out needs and suitability assessments for households being considered for a private rental property to help ensure tenancy sustainment.
- 8.64 A change of policy direction of this kind would require Ministerial approval and most likely new legislation. A decision to allow the Housing Executive to discharge a homelessness duty in the PRS to reduce levels of homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation could however be controversial.
- 8.65 Given a legislative or policy change of this kind, the Housing Executive would need to ensure that all properties used are inspected to make sure they meet minimum quality standards. It could also 'vet' potential landlords and agents and possibly establish a landlord accreditation scheme or equivalent to drive up management standards.

- 8.66 An important factor in attracting private sector landlords and in ensuring tenancies are sustained is for the housing authority to provide a professional and responsive landlord support service and be willing to help when tenancies run into problems. This could be done directly or by outsourcing to suitable organisations.
- 8.67 Any temporary accommodation strategy would need to be clear about when to take on private rental properties as Single Lets, and when to refer households to privately rented accommodation in order to prevent or relieve homelessness.

Leasing properties direct from landlords and agents for use as temporary accommodation

- 8.68 The Housing Executive currently operates a successful Single Let scheme securing good quality leased properties from external suppliers. It may be possible to expand this to areas where there is a shortage of single let properties, but there may also be limiting factors due to the increasing cost of single lets obtained in this manner and the potential lack of willingness of partner organisations to work with single people with support needs or to operate shared accommodation schemes. One possible solution would be for the Housing Executive or a partner organisation working on the Housing Executive's behalf to lease properties direct from landlords or from agents supplying properties in a bid to increase supply and if possible drive down the price. Many local authorities elsewhere in the UK do this directly or through partner organisation as a source of temporary accommodation.

Advantages

- 8.69 Leasing could give more control of supply and could reduce costs
- 8.70 It might be possible to gain access to properties in areas where single lets are currently in short supply
- 8.71 It may be easier if properties are managed by the Housing Executive or a housing association to better co-ordinate the provision of temporary accommodation with support where needed for certain households.
- 8.72 There could be economies of scale, particularly if current Housing Executive or housing association management and maintenance operations for social housing were expanded to cover this type of accommodation.

Barriers

- 8.73 Void and bad debt risk would shift to the Housing Executive.

- 8.74 Rent collection, management and in some cases maintenance costs would shift to the Housing Executive
- 8.75 The Housing Executive would effectively need to set up a new business unit or contract out management and maintenance functions to third parties.
- 8.76 The Housing Executive may be no more successful at sourcing accommodation than its current single let suppliers.
- 8.77 Reputational risk could shift to the Housing Executive in case of any anti-social behaviour problems in local communities where properties were leased.
- 8.78 The approach could be piloted in areas where there are current gaps in single let provision to establish how well it works.
- 8.79 Limited market testing could be carried out with landlords and agents to establish if there is an appetite to work with the Housing Executive in this way.

Purchasing properties for use as temporary accommodation or private rented accommodation

- 8.80 An increasing number of local authorities in England have set up property acquisition schemes in order to increase the supply of good quality accommodation for use as temporary accommodation or long term private rented accommodation to prevent homelessness or end a homelessness duty. This has usually been driven by increasing costs and difficulties in obtaining other forms of supply due to the reduction in social housing lets and the decreasing affordability of the PRS.
- 8.81 In order to make this work it is necessary to find a source of capital to invest in purchasing the properties and to purchase properties where the costs of capital can be adequately serviced from rental income at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rents, after covering management and maintenance costs.
- 8.82 In some cases local authorities doing this have used their own reserves or borrowing to purchase properties directly. In other cases, local authority-owned local housing companies have been set up; and in still other cases, properties have been purchased by housing associations or other third-party organisations and let to council nominees in return for guarantees of long-term nominations and rental income.

Advantages

- 8.83 Such an approach can acquire single street properties or blocks, or properties suitable for conversion to hostels, in areas where other sources of accommodation may not be available – for example in rural areas.

- 8.84 Rather than having to make long term top-up payments to private sector landlords who also benefit from growth in the value of properties, it may be possible for the organisation leasing property and other investors to make a capital gain and to hedge against future inflation in market rents through ownership of properties.
- 8.85 Security of tenure for tenants in such properties is greater than in private rented sector alternatives, and the quality of management may also be better.
- 8.86 Rental income is greater than would be obtainable from social housing, and it may be possible to purchase units from a mixed development in order to make building social housing more viable, whilst also meeting housing need through the purchased properties let as temporary or private rented accommodation at LHA rents.
- 8.87 If purchasing low cost accommodation requiring maintenance to bring it up to a good lettable standard, there can be positive regeneration impacts in deprived areas.

Barriers

- 8.88 It is necessary to gain access to substantial capital investment in order to purchase properties, which may not be legally permissible or economically feasible for the Housing Executive or the Department for Communities.
- 8.89 If it is not feasible, then finance would have to be sourced by one or more partner agencies, including housing associations or a bespoke company, from investors who will require a return on that investment, and who may require a guaranteed rate of return to ensure their investment is viable.
- 8.90 If the Housing Executive or the Department for Communities is the guarantor of long-term income, and if they have the power to act as guarantors, this may bring significant risk, especially if that income is inflation linked and LHA is not inflation linked.
- 8.91 If the viability of the scheme is predicated on capital gains or includes an exit strategy where properties are sold, then there is a risk if property prices do not rise as expected or if sales are required at a low point in the house price cycle.
- 8.92 In order to be viable in a particular area the ratio of LHA rents to house prices needs to be sufficiently high. Broadly speaking, this is more likely to be true in poorer areas, where there may already be a supply of low-cost rental properties, and less likely to be true in areas where temporary accommodation is in short supply.
- 8.93 Buying lower cost properties on the market has the potential to raise prices and to disadvantage other potential purchasers including first time buyers in some cases.

- 8.94 Any such schemes are likely to be limited in scope because of the large capital requirements, and so can only produce a partial solution.
- 8.95 For the Housing Executive to contemplate such an approach would require detailed analysis of the housing market, the legal position and the availability and requirements of potential investment partners to determine the likelihood of success.
- 8.96 However, there is now considerable experience in a number of local authorities elsewhere in the UK which can be drawn on and a number of risk mitigations have been developed for this type of programme.

Real Lettings Scheme

- 8.97 An alternative approach adopted by some local authorities in England is to partner with the Real Lettings Scheme or other similar programmes.
- 8.98 A social impact investment company and a homelessness charity have launched a number of property funds over the past several years in which councils and other investors invest over a specified period, for example seven years.
- 8.99 The fund acquires properties capable of delivering an acceptable yield at LHA level rents and as properties are let it pays a revenue return to investors. At the end of the funding period, properties may be sold or refinanced and capital gains after paying the scheme fees are crystallised by investors.
- 8.100 The homelessness charity provides a sensitive management service for tenants and prepares them to move on, ideally after a period of 2 to 3 years, so that the properties can be recycled for other council nominees.
- 8.101 Investing councils can nominate tenants to properties in proportion to their investment in the fund.
- 8.102 In addition to the councils' investment, the charity charges a placement fee for each new tenancy.

Advantages

- 8.103 All the work setting up the investment vehicle and purchasing properties is done externally by a third party.
- 8.104 A proportion of investment finance can come from third party investors, which increases the number of properties available for any given investment by the housing authority.
- 8.105 The management of properties and preparation for move-on is done by the charity.

8.106 The housing authority can make a return on its investment within seven years if property prices rise.

Barriers

8.107 It is not clear if such a scheme is potentially available on either legal or financial grounds in Northern Ireland

8.108 In the English examples cited, both the company and the charity take fees which reduce the potential gains for the housing authority.

8.109 Property price rises are less reliable over a 7 year period than over a longer period and there is a possibility prices will fall.

8.110 Investors can however decide to extend the investment period if this looks likely to be advantageous and/or they can reinvest in a new fund.

Demountable Modular Accommodation

8.111 Some local authorities have developed time-limited or short-life modular accommodation to be used as temporary accommodation. This ranges from quite basic accommodation based on shipping containers to high specification, highly energy efficient accommodation designed by world renowned architects.

8.112 The common feature is that the accommodation can be prefabricated off-site, delivered and assembled very quickly and, at least in principle, moved to another site when required subject to the availability of utilities. This potentially extends the life of the accommodation beyond the availability of the site where it is assembled.

Advantages

8.113 Such accommodation can be produced and assembled much more quickly than more conventional forms of development.

8.114 The accommodation can potentially be set up on car parks or garage sites and on sites which are only temporarily available, allowing sites which would otherwise be left undeveloped for significant periods to be used for good quality temporary accommodation.

8.115 Depending on the supplier, it may be possible to either purchase the accommodation or lease it according to the preference of the Housing Executive.

Barriers

- 8.116 The higher the quality of the accommodation, the higher the cost compared to LHA rental income and therefore the longer the site needs to be available for a viable scheme.
- 8.117 Although the accommodation itself can be assembled very quickly on site, there may well be significant expense and delays on some sites associated with site preparation, utilities connection and related works.
- 8.118 The number of sites that are available for a sufficiently long period (usually at least five years and often more) but not available for permanent development, may be limited.
- 8.119 Planning permission for this type of accommodation can sometimes be difficult, especially if it does not meet the space standards for permanent developments.
- 8.120 Taking the accommodation down and moving it to another site has a cost and may only be viable a limited number of times.

Change of use conversion to temporary accommodation

- 8.121 Another possible source of temporary accommodation which is coming to the fore in some areas is to convert existing properties to temporary accommodation. Examples include office blocks, GPs surgeries and care homes.
- 8.122 Conversions may be carried out to long term self-contained accommodation, hostels, or somewhere in between, and may involve anything from demolition and complete redevelopment to the installation of sinks and erection of partition walls.
- 8.123 This can be a cost effective and relatively rapid way of making better use of properties that are no longer needed or considered no longer suitable for their original purpose. It may also be a way of developing accommodation in areas where land would not normally be available.

Advantages

- 8.124 Change of use conversions can be quick and cost effective, especially if the Housing Executive already owns a building or it is available to purchase at a reduced cost.
- 8.125 Sites can sometimes be obtained in good locations.

Disadvantages

- 8.126 Capital funding of some kind is likely to be required unless the changes that need to be made are only cosmetic.
- 8.127 Some buildings are not readily convertible into the type of accommodation which is most needed for temporary accommodation in a given geographical area.

- 8.128 Some buildings available for conversion maybe in non-residential areas and present difficulties in terms of access to services such as public transport, shops, schools, GPs or in the quality of the local environment.
- 8.129 There may be other competing potential uses for the site.
- 8.130 A comprehensive site appraisal needs to be carried out in each case, including an examination of Town Planning, Building Regulation and Fire Safety issues.
- 8.131 A financial analysis and option appraisal should be completed including if necessary comparing conversion to temporary accommodation with other potential approaches.

Use of social housing stock as temporary accommodation

- 8.132 The use of a proportion of council or housing association stock as temporary accommodation is a very popular approach in Scotland but is also used by a number of councils in England and Wales.
- 8.133 One reason for this is that most council and housing association accommodation in England which is used for temporary accommodation can only be let at social rents for the purposes of Housing Benefit, whilst in Scotland this restriction does not apply. Having said this, some councils in England have added significant HB eligible service charges to accommodation within their stock let as temporary accommodation.
- 8.134 Social housing let as temporary accommodation is usually let furnished rather than unfurnished, but in other ways it can be let at the same standard and with similar management arrangements to other general needs social housing.
- 8.135 In some cases social housing let as temporary accommodation is later converted to a social housing tenancy, without the household having to move.
- 8.136 In other cases councils only use accommodation with a limited life, for example accommodation which has been decanted or left unlet as part of a regeneration programme.

Advantages

- 8.137 Using social housing as temporary accommodation can help to fill gaps in areas where other forms of temporary accommodation are unavailable or in short supply.
- 8.138 It may be possible to break-even or generate a surplus on accommodation used in this way.
- 8.139 Such accommodation may be more suitable for some households than either hostel or private rented accommodation.

8.140 It may be easier to provide support than it would be in a single let.

Disadvantages

8.141 Using social housing as temporary accommodation means that it cannot be used as social housing. This has the potential to be viewed as subverting the agreed social housing allocations policy.

8.142 The housing benefit position for social housing let as temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland needs to be explored in order to establish what rents and service charges would be allowable.

8.143 There may be legal or contractual barriers to letting social housing for this purpose.

8.144 If the accommodation is let at a high combined rent and service charge, this may be a disincentive to work for some households.

8.145 If social housing is seen as readily available as temporary accommodation, this could potentially divert attention from the need to source genuinely additional accommodation which is needed. It could also exacerbate the existing shortage of social housing.

8.146 One possibility is to develop a policy setting out as clearly as possible when judicious use can properly be made of social housing as temporary accommodation, so that this is limited to an agreed set of circumstances and does not grow beyond the desired scale.

APPENDIX 1: DATA SOURCES USED IN THE REPORT

- 1. Housing Executive Housing Management System (HMS) data.** We were supplied with the DFC Bulletin Scores for the full financial year 2018-19. We also specified a series of 11 additional cross-tabulation reports from the HMS system which the Housing Executive produced for Campbell Tickell. In this case the results were generally provided for 3 years from 2016.
- 2. Raw data from HMS.** We were supplied with raw data from the HMS system in relation to temporary accommodation placements and departures since 2013. This was used to calculate the length of time spent in discrete temporary accommodation episodes based on a series of assumptions, most notably that a separate “episode” was defined as a gap of more than 5 days from departure from one temporary accommodation placement to the start of another.
- 3. Sample exercises drawn from HMS data.** The Housing Executive carried out and provided data from two sample exercises, one, on the reasons for households leaving Single Lets (and where they moved to) – the sample was selected by the Housing Executive and totalled 125 cases in 2018/19. A second, similar exercise was carried out and data supplied by the Housing Executive for a sample of 100 bed and breakfast placements.
- 4. Strategic Contract Management Risk Assessment (Homelessness Services).** This was supplied by Supporting People and included separate spreadsheets for Accommodation Based Services and Floating Support. This information was the source of data about SP grant spent on services and staffing levels.
- 5. Summary of Outcomes data from Supporting People-funded services.** This recorded the reason for departure from accommodation-based services in 2018-19 (based on returns submitted by providers). Where gaps existed it was assumed that the spread of outcomes for the missing quarter was the same as for those quarters where a submission had been made. The results were analysed per service and according to a number of different service categories by the CT team.
- 6. Snapshot Survey Exercises.** Records were supplied by the Housing Executive of three separate week-long exercises undertaken at all Area Offices. These recorded the detail of all households presenting and asking for assistance with temporary accommodation. It recorded a profile of the applicants’ current situation and their presenting needs as well as the result of their application for assistance. The questions were agreed between the Housing Executive and CT and were varied slightly over the course of the three exercises. CT undertook analysis based on a categorisation of outcomes that were recorded as free text notes. This inevitably

involved making highly subjective judgements of different officers' summary of the outcome and the reason for this, particularly where it did not prove possible that day to make a temporary accommodation placement. The conclusions should take this into account. Equally the judgement about presenting needs was based on individual officer subjectivity and is therefore likely to involve a degree of inconsistency.

- 7. Provider Censuses.** Voluntary sector hostels were asked to complete information about people resident on a specific night, including where they had been referred from, whether they had FDA status, what support needs they had, what risks they presented, how long they had been in residence, and whether they were judged to be tenancy-ready. Judgements on all these areas were made by the relevant provider-staff who completed the census. No attempt was made to involve the households themselves in this assessment. The Housing Executive and CT consulted over the questions asked but the choice of which providers to send the census to was the Housing Executive's. We understand the return rate was considered very high. There was some mismatch with those services included in the homelessness Strategic Contract Risk Assessment. CT undertook extensive analysis on the results of the Census. A separate census exercise was undertaken by the Housing Executive with a selection of floating support providers later in the year. This contained some of the same questions but was also focussed on finding out where people living at that point and where they had been living at the point their support package started. Again, the choice of who to send the Census to was made entirely by the Housing executive, and it is considered likely that this includes services that sit outside the homelessness sector. The return rate is unknown by CT, but the sample was significant, with over 1,400 records submitted.
- 8. Details of users of other forms of temporary accommodation at same fixed census point.** The Housing Executive also supplied details of the service users in situ on the night of the voluntary sector hostel census date in other forms of temporary accommodation. This included Single Lets, the Housing Executive's own hostels and Bed and Breakfast / Guest Houses. This was drawn from the HMS system by the Housing Executive.
- 9. Property details.** Property details were provided by the Housing Executive on hostels and single let accommodation including size and location data. This was summarised by CT.
- 10. Freedom of Information (Foi) requests.** Foi requests were submitted to 25 Authorities across England, Wales and Scotland. In order to encourage response, questions were limited to 5, focussed on the numbers of different types of temporary accommodation placements made, the amount spent on temporary accommodation, where households moved to when they left temporary accommodation, and how long they spent in temporary accommodation. The response rate was good with 22 Authorities responding, but the information was provided in a way that limited the ability to summarise the results. The different legislative

frameworks within the different jurisdictions also makes this comparison difficult, but additionally different local authorities will account for expenditure in different ways and use terminology in slightly different ways.

11. **Published Homelessness Data in other UK jurisdictions.** CT made use of the different published data sets for England, Wales and Scotland to draw comparator conclusions. The different statutory frameworks in the four jurisdictions make meaningful comparison difficult.
12. **Review of Homelessness Strategies.** A detailed review of 14 homelessness strategies drawn from within the same sample to whom the FOI request had been sent. These were selected on the basis of how current they were (i.e. later than 2016). CT summarised the results – focussing on prevention practice, the sourcing of temporary accommodation, and any innovatory practice.

APPENDIX 2: DEFINITIONS

The Campbell Tickell research team have adopted a number of technical terms in describing aspects of homelessness, responses to homelessness, and the provision of temporary accommodation. To assist readers of this report who are not familiar with these terms, a series of definitions is set out below.

Household: National Statistics defines the term for the Census, household projections and mid-year estimates as follows: one person living alone, or a group of people living at the same address with common housekeeping - that is, sharing either a living room or at least one meal a day. Thus, a household may comprise one or more people, for example, families, couples and single men or women.

Statutory duty: The Housing Executive is the statutory body responsible for responding to homelessness in Northern Ireland. It has a statutory duty to consider housing needs across Northern Ireland, including homelessness, and to develop housing and other solutions to meet these needs.

FDA: A household must meet four tests to be accepted as statutory homeless: it must be homeless; eligible for assistance; in priority need; and unintentionally homeless. A household meeting these tests will be accepted as a "Full Duty Applicant" (referred to as FDA in the report). In all such cases, the Housing Executive has a duty to find suitable settled accommodation if they have no accommodation available. FDA households are also entitled to temporary accommodation while waiting to be re-housed. In addition, some households applying to the Housing Executive for assistance that are deemed to be vulnerable may also be placed in temporary accommodation while their cases are being assessed.

Settled accommodation: This term refers to medium to long term accommodation the principle characteristic of which is that the household has security of tenure or residence in a home that is their usual accommodation in the medium to long term. Non-settled accommodation refers to accommodation arrangements that are precarious, or where the household has no or low security of tenure/residence in their usual accommodation and so may be required to leave at very short notice. Insecure accommodation is one of the main drivers of homelessness.

Temporary Accommodation: Accommodation that is not permanent, lasts only a short time and is transitional. The Housing Executive has a duty to provide temporary accommodation to households that have nowhere to live and that have passed the four homelessness tests and are waiting for an offer of settled accommodation, are being assessed under the homelessness duty who is homeless and has a priority need, or that is waiting for the Housing Executive

to review a negative decision. Temporary accommodation must be suitable for the household's needs (see also Types of Temporary Accommodation below).

Referral: Households that have applied to the Housing Executive for assistance and that require temporary accommodation are 'referred' to a provider of temporary accommodation for housing.

Placement: Households that have been referred to a provider of temporary accommodation, and who have been accepted by the provider, are said to be 'placed' in temporary accommodation, or in a 'placement'. A homeless household may sometimes move between two different temporary accommodation addresses while still waiting for permanent accommodation. Therefore, the number of 'placements' may be greater than the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation during a specified period. Thus, the difference between the number of placements in temporary accommodation and the number of households in temporary accommodation is largely because people move between placements as part of a single 'episode' of homelessness.

Episode: There is an important difference between a 'temporary accommodation placement' and an 'episode of homelessness'. A household may have more than one placement in temporary accommodation during a single episode of homelessness; but a household may also have more than one 'episode' of homelessness in a specified period of time if they have been homeless on more than one occasion. In analysing homelessness statistics, it is important to be able to distinguish between the number of placements into temporary accommodation that occur in the course of a single episode of homelessness, and the number of placements in temporary accommodation in a year that result from more than one or more episode of homelessness.

Departure: The term 'departure' has been used in this report when a household leaves temporary accommodation or 'moves on' (see below).

Destination: This term is used to describe where the household moves to on leaving a placement in temporary accommodation. To give three examples, the destination might variously be to settled accommodation (see above), to another placement in some form of temporary accommodation, or to another episode of homelessness.

Outcome: This term can be used in several ways. It is used by the Housing Executive to simply record what happens to a homeless household at the end of their period of homelessness – i.e. what is their destination. More importantly, it can also be used to assess whether at the end of an episode of homelessness, the Housing Executive or an accommodation provider working under contract to the Housing Executive has discharged or helped to discharge the Housing

Executive's statutory duty to a homeless household – i.e. is the outcome satisfactory for either the household or the Housing Executive.

Support: The term refers to assistance provided to vulnerable households in order to help them develop the skills and confidence to build their independence, resolve any difficulties that might threaten that independence or acquire the resources necessary to facilitate this. In this context it is with the principal objective of helping the household acquire and sustain settled housing.

Supported housing: This is a generic name for various forms of long-, medium- or short-term accommodation that is provided with support as a condition of occupancy and as part of a combined package.

Hostel: This refers to a variant of temporary, usually supported accommodation. It would normally have the following features: on-site staff operating out of a central office, controlled access to the property, close internal supervision of movement and frequent inspections undertaken within the property, the provision of a significant degree of on-site services such as food and communal space/facilities. It includes those managed by the voluntary sector as well as the Housing Executive. – see Types of Temporary Accommodation below.

Crisis Accommodation/Night Shelter/Crash Beds: This is accommodation provided to people experiencing a temporary or ongoing crisis such as homelessness, or domestic abuse with the aim of removing them from a harmful situation. This often refers to very short-term, often basic, accommodation which acts as an alternative to sleeping on the streets. It is intended as a stopgap measure while alternative longer-term housing is secured.

Floating support: This is a generic name for any arrangement where support is delivered on a peripatetic basis to households in their own home or separately from the provision of housing. It is funded by the Supporting People programme and usually provided on a time-limited basis.

Housing First: This term refers to an arrangement whereby settled housing with a package of support is offered as an alternative to hostel provision to households who have a history of homelessness and instability. It differs from floating support in that the offer of support is not time-limited; and it differs from supported housing in that while the housing is offered with a package of support, the household's continued occupancy is not contingent on them continuing to accept the support offered.

APPENDIX 3: TYPES OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The temporary accommodation available to the Housing Executive is made up from three types of accommodation that are directly commissioned and funded, together with two additional types of accommodation that are procured as required from the private rented sector and B&B hotels. A brief description of each type of accommodation is set out below.

Housing Executive Hostels: These hostels are owned by the Housing Executive, managed variously by the Housing Executive or voluntary sector providers. They mainly provide temporary accommodation for families, with support if needed. Referrals into the schemes are only through the Housing Executive.

Voluntary Sector Hostels: These are hostels providing shared accommodation or other forms of accommodation including self-contained flatlets operated by voluntary sector organisations, with a contract and funding to provide both accommodation and support from the Supporting People programme. This accommodation provides a valuable resource for homeless people that have additional support needs and is an important part of the temporary accommodation portfolio. However, the contract with Supporting People does not limit them to provision that meets the Housing Executive's homelessness duties, therefore not all the accommodation at any one time is used as temporary accommodation for homeless people. The schemes fulfil a wider function in helping people who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness or who have other needs (e.g. older people, or people with a learning disability or long-term mental health issues) to live settled and productive lives. Referrals into these services come through several routes and are not exclusively the preserve of the Housing Executive.

Leased Properties: These refer to the 'Dispersed Intensively Managed Properties' (DIME) scheme provided under contract to the Housing Executive's Supporting People programme. The properties are leased by the Housing Executive and the provider is employed under a contract to act as the Housing Executive's managing agent and support provider. All of the properties are currently in Belfast.

Single Lets: are rental properties provided by private landlords, some of which are managed by other agencies. The majority are in Belfast and Derry. The remainder are distributed throughout Northern Ireland. Referrals to Single Lets are only through the Housing Executive, although some homeless households who are classified by the Housing Executive as 'having made their own alternative arrangements' may have found accommodation in the private rented sector.

B&Bs/ hotels: Strictly speaking, these should not be seen as part of the temporary accommodation portfolio, but accommodation that is purchased by the Housing Executive as and when required because of a lack of available alternatives. Housing Executive policy aims to

keep this practice to a minimum on the grounds of cost, insecurity, and the suitability of the accommodation for vulnerable people. Referrals to B&B hotels are only through the Housing Executive, although some households who are classified by the Housing Executive as 'having made their own alternative arrangements' may have found their own accommodation in a hotel.

APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROVIDER AND HOUSING EXECUTIVE STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

Stakeholder Group	Organisations/Groups represented																												
Belfast Homelessness Forum 18 April 2019	Ark Housing, Barnardos, Belfast Central Mission, Depaul, East Belfast Mission, Extern, Flax Foyer, Life Charity, MACS, Salvation Army, The Welcome Organisation, Homecare, Housing Rights, Simon Community, Hosford House, Queens Quarter Housing, Life Hostel and N B Housing.																												
Causeway Homelessness Local Area Group 2 May 2019	Simon Community, Northern Trust, Women’s Aid, Triangle, Vineyard Compassion and Housing Rights.																												
Regional (Central Homeless Forum and Regional Working Group on Health & Homelessness) 13 May 2019	Belfast Trust, Chartered Institute of Housing NI, DePaul, Northern Trust, Probation Board Northern Ireland & Shelter NI																												
Housing Executive staff (Regional/Area manager) 13 May 2019	<table> <tbody> <tr> <td>Frank O’Connor</td> <td>North Region</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Comghal McQuillan</td> <td>South Region</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Des Marley</td> <td>Belfast Housing Solutions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Owen Brady</td> <td>North Down & Ards Area</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eddie Doherty</td> <td>West Area</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sam O’Neill</td> <td>Homelessness Policy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mark Alexander</td> <td>Causeway Area</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mairead Myles-Davey</td> <td>Mid & East Antrim Area</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sharon Crooks</td> <td>South Antrim Area</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oonagh McAvinney</td> <td>South West Area</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Michael Dallat</td> <td>Mid-Ulster Area</td> </tr> <tr> <td>John McCartan</td> <td>South Area</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paul McCombe</td> <td>South Belfast Area</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Loma Wilson</td> <td>South Down Area</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Frank O’Connor	North Region	Comghal McQuillan	South Region	Des Marley	Belfast Housing Solutions	Owen Brady	North Down & Ards Area	Eddie Doherty	West Area	Sam O’Neill	Homelessness Policy	Mark Alexander	Causeway Area	Mairead Myles-Davey	Mid & East Antrim Area	Sharon Crooks	South Antrim Area	Oonagh McAvinney	South West Area	Michael Dallat	Mid-Ulster Area	John McCartan	South Area	Paul McCombe	South Belfast Area	Loma Wilson	South Down Area
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Paul McCombe	South Belfast Area																												
Loma Wilson	South Down Area																												
Service User Consultation	Names were not recorded on grounds of confidentiality																												

APPENDIX 5: DETAILED REVIEW OF LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE ON HOMELESSNESS AND USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION IN THE UK AND REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

A useful comparison of homelessness duties in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland² was published in April 2018 in the House of Commons Library. As this is available, we will not attempt to reproduce it, but instead take a more detailed look at some specific differences in approach which have relevance for TA from a Northern Ireland perspective. We take each of the jurisdictions in turn below.

Northern Ireland

The main legislation governing homelessness in Northern Ireland is The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988.¹²⁰ This is a relatively short document compared to the equivalent legislation elsewhere in the UK and is divided into four parts: Part I – Introductory, Part II – Housing the Homeless, Part III – Miscellaneous Provisions, and Part IV – Supplementary.

Part II of the Order covers the following areas sequentially:

- Defines homelessness and threatened homelessness
- Explains the meaning of accommodation available for occupation
- Sets out those types of households who are deemed to have a priority need for accommodation
- Explains the circumstances in which a household may be considered to have become homeless intentionally
- Sets out the duty upon the Housing Executive to formulate a homelessness strategy
- Sets out the duty upon the Housing Executive to make free advice available on homelessness and the prevention of homelessness to any person in Northern Ireland
- Explains the duty on the Housing Executive to make enquiries into cases of possible homelessness or threatened homelessness

¹²⁰ [The Housing \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1988](#)

- Defines those persons not eligible for housing assistance
- Sets out where there is an interim duty on the Housing Executive to accommodate in cases of apparent priority need
- Sets out the requirements for notification of decisions and reasons
- Explains the duties of the Housing Executive to persons found to be homeless
- Explains the duties of the Housing Executive to persons found to be threatened with homelessness
- Sets out the rights of person to review or appeal the decision of the Housing Executive
- Explains the responsibilities of the Housing Executive in protection of property of homelessness persons and persons threatened with homelessness
- Requires certain bodies to co-operate with the Housing Executive in carrying out its responsibilities under the Order
- Gives the Housing Executive powers to provide financial and other assistance for voluntary organisations concerned with homelessness
- Sets out arrangements for transfer of hostels to the Housing Executive
- Sets out the position on persons governing false statements.

Unlike the position in other jurisdictions, there is no statutory code of guidance to aid interpretation of the legislation.

In summary, a household is owed a full homelessness duty by the Housing Executive if they pass the “four homelessness tests”, i.e. they are: unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness, eligible for assistance, and in priority need.

This is broadly similar to the position in the other UK jurisdictions. However, there are some key points in the Order with implications for the provision of temporary accommodation. These include:

(3) A person shall not be treated as having accommodation unless it is accommodation which it would be reasonable for him to continue to occupy.

“Reasonable” is not defined but the following paragraph states:

(4) Regard may be had, in determining whether it would be reasonable for a person to continue to occupy accommodation, to the general circumstances prevailing in relation to housing in Northern Ireland.

This provision accounted for 2,894 (31%) of the 9,319 homelessness acceptances in Northern Ireland from January to September 2018¹²¹.

3. (6) A person is threatened with homelessness if it is likely that he will become homeless within 28 days from the day on which he gives written notice to the Executive that he is threatened with homelessness.

In England and Wales, the period before potential homelessness which triggers a person being legally regarded as threatened with homelessness is now 56 days, rather than 28 days. In Scotland the threshold is 2 months.

5.—(1) The following have a priority need for accommodation—

(a) a pregnant woman or a person with whom a pregnant woman resides or might reasonably be expected to reside;

(b) a person with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside;

(c) a person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or other special reason, or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside;

(d) a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as a flood, fire or other disaster;

(e) a person without dependent children who satisfies the Executive that he has been subject to violence and is at risk of violent pursuit or, if he returns home, is at risk of further violence;

(f) a young person who satisfies the Executive that he is at risk of sexual or financial exploitation.

In Scotland the concept of priority need for accommodation was removed in 2012, meaning that single people without support needs are often owed a full duty under the Scottish legislation.

¹²¹ The most recent data that were available when this part of the research was carried out.

6D—(1) The Executive shall secure that advice about homelessness, and the prevention of homelessness, is available free of charge to any person in Northern Ireland.

There is a requirement on the Housing Executive to ensure that advice about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness is given, but no duty to make efforts beyond this to prevent homelessness, as is now the case in both England and Wales. This is discussed in more detail later.

(5) The Executive may decide that a person is to be treated as ineligible for assistance under this part if it is satisfied that—

(a) he, or a member of his household, has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make him unsuitable to be a tenant of the Executive; and

(b) in the circumstances at the time his application is considered, he is unsuitable to be a tenant of the Executive by reason of that behaviour.

It is made clear in subsequent paragraphs that unacceptable behaviour is defined as behaviour which would entitle the Housing Executive to a possession order if the person were their tenant.

This exclusion from assistance under the homelessness legislation because of unacceptable behaviour is unique amongst the jurisdictions, although it is possible that such behaviour leading to homelessness might lead to a decision that the person had become homeless intentionally in other parts of the UK.

It would be open to landlords in other jurisdictions to refuse to accommodate a person who had committed such unacceptable behaviour, especially if they had been a tenant of the landlord in question and been evicted for that reason. This would not, however, remove the homelessness duty (if established) and the body with the duty would be obliged to find alternative accommodation.

8.— (1) If the Executive has reason to believe that an applicant may be homeless and have a priority need, it shall secure that accommodation is made available for his occupation pending a decision as a result of its inquiries under Article 7.

This is similar to tests in other jurisdictions. “Reason to believe that an applicant may be homeless and have a priority need” is quite a low threshold for provision of interim accommodation but the wording is almost identical across the UK.

10. (2) Where the Executive is satisfied that the applicant has a priority need and is not satisfied that he became homeless intentionally, it shall secure that accommodation becomes available for his occupation.

This is clarified somewhat by Article 12. (1)

12.—(1) The Executive may perform any duty under Article 8 or 10 (duties to persons found to be homeless) to secure that accommodation becomes available for the occupation of a person—

(a) by making available suitable accommodation held by it, or

(b) by securing that he obtains suitable accommodation from some other person, or

(c) by giving him such advice and assistance as will secure that he obtains suitable accommodation from some other person, and in determining whether accommodation is suitable the Executive shall have regard to Chapter II of Part III and Part VI of the Order of 1981.

For an eligible, unintentionally homeless household in priority need, this is almost all that is said about the Housing Executive duty to accommodate and it would seem to afford a number of different interpretations. In particular, there is no distinction made between accommodation that is suitable for use as short term temporary accommodation and accommodation which is suitable to end a homelessness duty. Chapter II of Part III of the Order of 1981 concerns fitness for human habitation, rather than tenure type.

The way that the Housing Executive interpret this duty in practice, however, appears to be to provide a permanent offer of social housing, and where it is not possible to do this immediately, to provide TA until this is achieved.

We note that, notwithstanding the potential broader interpretation of the meaning of “accommodation” in para 10. (2) to include private rented sector accommodation, the Department for Communities launched a public consultation in September 2017 on a Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations.¹²² This contains a specific proposal to allow the Housing Executive to end a homelessness duty in the private rented sector, provided that the accommodation meets certain conditions.

We take this to mean that para 10. (2) is not interpreted in practice to permit ending a duty in the PRS at present, except in certain restricted cases as detailed in subsequent clauses of Article 10.

¹²² [Department for Communities: A Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations](#)

11. (2) Where the Executive is satisfied that the applicant has a priority need and is not satisfied that he became threatened with homelessness intentionally, it shall take reasonable steps to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available for his occupation.

Article 11 requires the Housing Executive to take reasonable steps to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available for occupation when a household is threatened with homelessness within 28 days.

This is a form of “prevention” duty and could be met by assisting the household to remain in their existing home or assisting them to move elsewhere. Unlike in England and Wales, there is no time limit set on this duty. Also, unlike England and Wales, the duty only applies to those in priority need who have not become homeless intentionally.

Article 14 gives the Housing Executive powers to request Health and Social Services Boards to exercise their functions and to provide information to support the Housing Executive to deal with homelessness cases, to request the Probation Boards to provide advice and information, and to request registered housing associations to assist the Housing Executive to discharge its homelessness functions.

There is a duty on those organisations to co-operate with such requests, so long as this is reasonable in the circumstances, but “reasonable” is not defined.

14. Where, the Executive—

(a) requests a health and social services board to exercise any of its functions in relation to a case with which the Executive is dealing under Article 7, 8, 10 or 11 (which relate to homelessness and threatened homelessness as such), or to provide any information or advice in relation to such a case; or

(b) requests the Probation Board for Northern Ireland to provide any information or advice in relation to such a case; or

(c) requests a registered housing association, within the meaning of Part VII of the Order of 1981, to assist it in the discharge of its functions under those Articles;

that health and social services board, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland or that association, as the case may be, shall co-operate by exercising such of its functions, providing such information or advice or rendering such assistance as is reasonable in the circumstances.

Scotland

The core legislation governing homelessness in Scotland is Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.¹²³ As in Northern Ireland this sets out statutory duties introduced to assist those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, but unlike in Northern Ireland these duties are conferred on individual Local Authorities.

Also, unlike in Northern Ireland, the legislation is supplemented by a statutory Code of Guidance.¹²⁴ This goes into some detail in interpreting the meaning of the legislation and setting out how the Scottish Government would like it to be applied.

The following updates to the Code of Guidance must also be considered by councils:

- Homelessness Prevention Guidance (2009)¹²⁵ to help them develop services and embed an early intervention approach
- Guidance on the Best Interests of Children (2011)¹²⁶

As in Northern Ireland, the legislation requires local authorities to make inquiries into the circumstances of applicants to satisfy themselves whether the applicant is homeless or potentially homeless. However, unlike in Northern Ireland or the other jurisdictions, there is no longer a priority need test, as this was abolished from 31st December 2012.

As in Northern Ireland, there is a test in the legislation on whether the applicant became homeless intentionally.

The definition of homelessness in the Act is very similar to the definition in Northern Ireland and includes the “Unreasonable to Occupy” definition expressed in the same terms as in the 1988 Northern Ireland Order. However, as in Wales and England, the proportion of homelessness acceptances for this reason in Scotland is much lower than in Northern Ireland and in fact is not even recorded in the Scottish statistics as a separate reason for homelessness. This suggests that the high proportion of homelessness acceptances due to it being unreasonable for a household to continue to occupy accommodation in Northern Ireland is a matter of *interpretation* of the law rather than a difference in the law itself.

¹²³ [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 1987: Part 2 - Homeless persons](#)

¹²⁴ [Scotland: Code of Guidance on Homelessness](#)

¹²⁵ [Scotland: Prevention of Homelessness Guidance](#)

¹²⁶ [Scotland: Meeting the best interests of children facing homelessness](#)

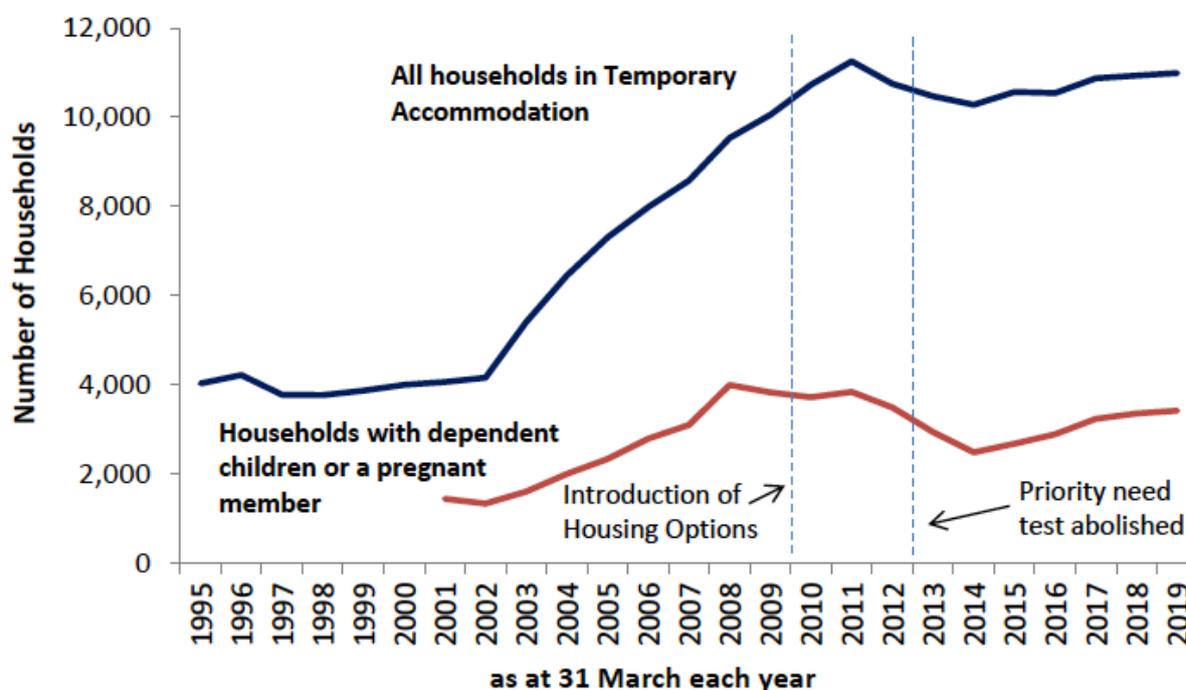
In Scotland a person is considered to be “potentially homeless” (threatened with homelessness) if it is likely that he/she will become homeless *within two months*. This differs from the position in Northern Ireland where the threat of homelessness needs to be within 28 days in order to trigger a duty.

Prior to the abolition of Priority Need in 2012, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 amended the 1987 Act and required councils to provide temporary accommodation to all applicants assessed as homeless, regardless of whether they had been assessed as being in priority need.

The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2009 built upon this and introduced a phasing out of the distinction between priority and non-priority applications, as well as enabling the suspension of the test of local connection. The ultimate aim of the Act was to ensure that everyone assessed as being unintentionally homeless was entitled to settled accommodation from 31st December 2012.

From 31st December 2012, all unintentionally homeless households are entitled to settled accommodation. The impact of these changes on the use of temporary accommodation was significant, and this can be seen in Figure A.

Figure A: Households in Temporary Accommodation in Scotland March 1997 to March 2019



According to the Scottish Government, the increase in the overall number of households in TA from 2002 is: “likely to have been initially driven by a change to the homelessness legislation,

which placed new duties on councils to provide temporary accommodation, advice and assistance for priority and non-priority homeless households. Before 2002, the majority of priority homeless households were households with children. Following this new duty there was a notable increase in the number of single people applying for homelessness assistance. These single people were also eligible for temporary accommodation.”¹²⁷

The Local Authority duty to homeless households in Scotland can be summarised as follows. If the household is **unintentionally homeless**, there is a duty on the local authority to provide temporary accommodation until permanent accommodation has been secured. Permanent accommodation is defined as:

- A Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST); or
- An Assured Tenancy (*not a Short Assured Tenancy*).

If the applicants have previously been evicted for anti-social behaviour in the last three years, or if they are subject to an anti-social behaviour order, a short Scottish Secure Tenancy can be offered. This is a difference from the Northern Ireland rules under which such households might be ineligible for any assistance, if a possession order was or could be obtained.

In some circumstances, the Local Authority can provide non-permanent accommodation. These circumstances are laid out in the *Homeless Persons (Provision of Non-permanent Accommodation) (Scotland) Regulations 2010*¹²⁸, and cover the situations where either:

(a) a housing support services assessment has concluded that the applicant or any other person residing with that applicant currently requires a level of housing support services which makes permanent accommodation inappropriate; and

(b) as a result of that housing support services assessment, the local authority is providing the applicant and any person residing with that applicant with transitional accommodation together with–

(i) all services required in terms of the housing support services assessment and a record of the services to be provided;

(ii) access to independent advice and information services in connection with the services mentioned in sub-paragraph (i);

¹²⁷ [Homelessness in Scotland: update to 30 September 2018](#)

¹²⁸ [The Homeless Persons \(Provision of Non-permanent Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2010](#)

(iii) a timetable, agreed with the applicant, for the provision of the transitional accommodation and housing support services and a record of the timetable;

(iv) a review date for the provision of services and transitional accommodation, not later than six months from the date on which the transitional accommodation was first provided;

(v) an undertaking to provide permanent accommodation when a housing support services assessment identifies that this would be appropriate; and

(vi) a mechanism to monitor the use of transitional accommodation and the long term outcomes for the applicant.

or

(a) a short assured tenancy of a minimum duration of 12 months is available to the applicant;

(b) the applicant has been placed in no more than one short assured tenancy of a duration of less than 12 months between the date of the application being made and the date of the tenancy mentioned in sub-paragraph (a) becoming available;

(c) the local authority considers that the tenancy available can be afforded by the applicant;

(d) a housing support services assessment for the applicant has concluded that any support needs of the household to which the applicant belongs can be met within the accommodation provided under the tenancy that is available;

(e) the support to meet the support needs of the household is available; and

(f) the local authority has advised the applicant of tenants' and landlords' rights and obligations under a short assured tenancy and has directed the applicant to sources of independent advice and information and the applicant then agrees in writing that the duty of the local authority under section 31(2) of the 1987 Act may be discharged by the provision of accommodation that is not permanent accommodation.

This allows, with a number of safeguards, provision of transitional accommodation for a person with support needs which would make permanent accommodation inappropriate at the time of placement. It also allows provision of a 12-month short assured tenancy in the private rented sector or elsewhere, with a number of safeguards. However, we understand that this power is rarely used in practice.

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

- If the household is **intentionally homeless**, there is a duty on the local authority to provide TA for a reasonable period of time, as well as advice and assistance.
- If the household is **potentially homeless, unintentionally so**, there is a duty on the local authority to take reasonable steps to ensure that accommodation does not cease to be available. This is very similar to the legal position in Northern Ireland.
- If the household is **potentially homeless, intentionally so**, there is a duty on the local authority to provide advice and assistance to help retain accommodation. This is also very similar to the legal position in Northern Ireland.

There is a difference here between the positions in Northern Ireland and Scotland and the positions in England and Wales, where the duties to take reasonable steps to prevent or relieve homelessness apply to households who are intentionally homeless, as well as those who are unintentionally homeless.

Also, despite the similar legislative position, unlike in Northern Ireland, Chapter 2 of the Scottish Code of Guidance¹²⁹ goes into significant detail about what is expected from local authorities in respect of their attempts to prevent homelessness. This is supplemented by detailed non-statutory guidance on the Provision of Housing Options Services¹³⁰ which was developed by the Scottish Government in partnership with a number of local authority and voluntary sector partners.

In addition, there is also a detailed quality assurance manual for information and Advice providers – the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers: a quality assurance framework 2009.¹³¹

The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014,¹³² as amended by the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2017¹³³ is intended to

¹²⁹ [Scotland: Code of Guidance on Homelessness](#)

¹³⁰ [Scotland: Housing Options guidance](#)

¹³¹ [Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers: a quality assurance framework](#)

¹³² [The Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Order 2014](#)

¹³³ [The Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2017](#)

prevent the routine use of unsuitable TA for households with family commitments. Local Authorities cannot put households with children and pregnant women into TA which is not suitable unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Unsuitable accommodation is defined in the Order as accommodation which does not meet standards relating to the physical properties of the accommodation (the physical standard), its proximity to health and education services (the proximity standard) and its suitability for use by children (the safety standard).

B&Bs with shared facilities would be considered unsuitable. The Order specifies that the local authority may provide an applicant with TA which does not meet all the requirements, but for no longer than 7 days in total in respect of that person's application. Otherwise, a "breach" of the Order is recorded. This means that, unlike in Northern Ireland, placing families or pregnant women in a B&B for more than 7 days is unlawful in Scotland. This is more demanding than the 6 weeks set out in similar provisions in England and the slightly more complicated position described below in Wales.

Any accommodation outside the local authority area is also normally considered unsuitable accommodation for households with children or pregnant women is. The Scottish Homelessness Code of Guidance states:

9.79 As a general rule a local authority should always rehouse a homeless household within its own area, particularly where temporary accommodation is being provided. However in rare cases the local authority may need to consider placing homeless people in another local authority's area, although this should only be done only with the household's consent. The local authority should retain responsibility for such outplacements. Note that the Homeless persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004 defines the use of temporary out-of-area placements as "unsuitable accommodation" for households with children or pregnant women which can only be used in the exceptional circumstances defined in this Order - see paragraphs 9.7-9.28 for more details.

9.80 Outplacements may be appropriate in cases of, for example, domestic abuse or external violence, or in the case of an ex-prisoner who would face local hostility if returned to his home area. In some cases such an outplacement may be nearer to the applicant's home area than a placement elsewhere in the local authority's area or provide suitable accommodation or access to healthcare which is not currently available in the placing local authority's area.

This is a significant legal constraint on movement of families with children, which would not apply to the Housing Executive in the same way.

The Housing Support Services (Homelessness) (Scotland) Regulations 2012¹³⁴ introduced a duty on Scottish local authorities to conduct a housing support assessment for applicants who are unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and that they have 'reason to believe' they need the housing support services prescribed in these regulations.

The regulations were established after public consultation and the services prescribed are:

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

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

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

Another interesting provision in Scotland is the duty on Registered Social Landlords to provide accommodation for homeless households if requested to do so by a local authority. This is set out in Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001¹³⁵ which states:

5.(1) Where a local authority has a duty under section 31(2) (duty to persons found to be homeless) of the 1987 Act in relation to a homeless person, it may request a registered social landlord which holds houses for housing purposes in its area to provide accommodation for the person.

¹³⁴ [The Housing Support Services \(Homelessness\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2012 - Regulation 2](#)

¹³⁵ [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001 - Section 5](#)

(2) In deciding whether to make such a request, the local authority must have regard to the availability of appropriate accommodation in its area.

(3) A registered social landlord must, within a reasonable period, comply with such a request unless it has a good reason for not doing so.

Guidance on this¹³⁶ states that six weeks is the expected reasonable period for providing accommodation and discusses what might constitute a good reason for not complying.

Wales

Although built on the same core legislation as in Northern Ireland and the other UK jurisdictions, the Welsh law on homelessness changed significantly with the introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Part 1 of the Act¹³⁷ is concerned with the regulation of Private Rented Housing, which has relevance to the considerations in this report, because of the major role the Private Rented Sector plays in tackling homelessness in Wales. In this section, however we are mainly concerned with Part 2¹³⁸ which covers homelessness.

The 2014 legislation is supported by a comprehensive Code of Guidance for local authorities on the *Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness*,¹³⁹ published in March 2016, which supports local authorities in interpreting the homelessness provisions in the new Act, as well as updating the Welsh Government's guidance on social housing allocations.

Key features of the 2014 legislation, which mostly came into force in April 2015, include:

- A new duty to help anyone threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days;
- A duty to provide help to any homeless person to help them secure a suitable home;
- A power rather than a duty to apply the intentionality test;
- New powers for Local Authorities to discharge their homelessness duties through finding accommodation in the private rented sector;

¹³⁶ [Scottish Executive: Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001: homelessness update](#)

¹³⁷ [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014: Part 1 - Regulation of Private Rented Housing](#)

¹³⁸ [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014: Part 2 - Homelessness](#)

¹³⁹ [Wales: Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of accommodation and homelessness](#)

- Stronger duties on Housing Associations to support Local Authorities in carrying out their homelessness duties.

According to the code of guidance, the intention of the legislation was to deliver:

- Fewer households experiencing the trauma of homelessness
- Better, more targeted, prevention work
- Increased help, advice and information for households who receive limited assistance under the current legislation
- More focus on the service user, helping them to address the causes of homelessness and make informed decisions on finding solutions to their housing problem
- More effective use of the private rented sector as a solution to homelessness
- A stronger emphasis on co-operation and multi-agency working, and
- Greater protection provided for children in households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness as well as additional help for children leaving care.

In many respects this is consistent with the intentions of the Housing Executive Housing Solutions and Support Service, but with a firmer statutory basis. It is interesting to consider in this context that, as in Scotland and England, the Welsh government is intending to influence multiple local authorities in the way they tackle homelessness. In contrast, in Northern Ireland the Housing Executive has responsibility for tackling homelessness across the whole jurisdiction, and so, arguably, statute is less necessary in Northern Ireland in achieving change because of the closer working relationship between the Department for Communities and the Housing Executive.

An important difference between Northern Ireland and Scotland on the one hand, and Wales on the other is that although supported housing funded through the Supporting People programme is used to accommodate (mostly single) homeless people in all the jurisdictions, in Wales this would usually be provided in order to prevent or relieve homelessness rather than following acceptance of a full duty.

Like Northern Ireland, but unlike Scotland and England where ring-fenced Supporting People funding no longer exists, Wales has retained a Supporting People programme. The Welsh

Supporting People Programme Guidance 2018¹⁴⁰ explicitly sets out as a main goal of the programme that it is “an early intervention programme which prevents people from becoming homeless or helps homeless people to find and keep accommodation”, and that the programme “continues to make a significant contribution to the implementation of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the core of which is to prevent homelessness.”

Because of this difference in approach, unlike in Northern Ireland, supported housing used to accommodate homeless households in Wales is generally not categorised as temporary accommodation, and there is therefore no continuing statutory homelessness duty to provide permanent accommodation for households living in supported housing. Having said this, if supported housing is not to silt up, then it is necessary to provide move on through non-statutory routes including “move on” quotas into social housing through local allocations policies, as well as move on into the Private Rented Sector where this makes sense.

The definitions of homelessness, and being threatened with homelessness, in Wales is very similar to that in Northern Ireland and Scotland and includes very similar wording on accommodation being unreasonable to occupy. The key difference is that a person is legally threatened with homelessness in Wales if it is likely that the person will become homeless within 56 days. This compares with 28 days in Northern Ireland and 2 months in Scotland.

Similar to the position in Northern Ireland, Local Authorities in Wales are required to ensure that accessible, quality assured advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness is available free of charge. An additional requirement in the Welsh law, however, is that this advice and information must be tailored to specific at-risk groups:

Section 60 – (4) The local housing authority must, in particular by working with other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons, ensure that the service is designed to meet the needs of groups at particular risk of homelessness, including in particular—

- (a) people leaving prison or youth detention accommodation,*
- (b) young people leaving care,*
- (c) people leaving the regular armed forces of the Crown,*

¹⁴⁰ <https://gweddill.gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/180730-supporting-people-programme-practice-guidance-2018-en.pdf>

- (d) people leaving hospital after medical treatment for mental disorder as an inpatient, and*
- (e) people receiving mental health services in the community.*

In terms of standards for such housing advice and information services, the code of guidance recommends Local Authorities have regard to the “Equal Ground” Service User Standard framework developed by Shelter Cymru,¹⁴¹ which it says will guide Local Authorities on “*the principles, which constitute good practice about providing a good quality service and will help shape the involvement of service users in development of their services*”.

The Welsh legislation also introduces a “duty to assess” on local authorities. S.62(1)(a) and (b) of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 state if it appears to an Authority that a person may be homeless or threatened with homelessness and the person has applied for accommodation or help in retaining or obtaining accommodation then a Local Authority must carry out an assessment of the person’s case.

There are detailed requirements for how this assessment should be carried out. The code of guidance explains that:

A thorough assessment of the circumstances that have caused the applicant to be homeless or threatened with homelessness and their housing needs must take place in order to determine what duty, if any, is owed to an applicant.

The assessment should be person-focused and seek to identify if any support is needed by the applicant and their family in order to retain the accommodation they are currently living in or any accommodation that may become available to them as a result of the duty owed.

The outcome that the applicant wishes to achieve must also be sought and the Authority must assess if it can help to achieve that outcome. Contact with the applicant should be conducted in such a way that allows them to participate in discussions and processes that affect them, enabling them to make informed choices and encouraging them to take ownership and responsibility for decisions that are made.

The applicant should be provided with a realistic outline of the options available and what can be provided given the local housing market, the current waiting times for appropriate social or supported housing, and the cost of private renting in the areas of their choice including whether this could be affordable and accessible to them.

¹⁴¹ [ShelterCymru: Equal Ground Standard](#)

The Local Authority is then required to decide whether any of the following duties set out in the Act are owed to the applicant. These are:

- S.66 Duty to help to prevent an applicant from becoming homeless;
- S.68 Interim duty to secure accommodation for homeless applicants, who may be homeless, may be eligible and may be in priority need;
- S.73 Duty to help secure accommodation for homeless applicants;
- S.75 Duty to secure accommodation for applicants in priority need when the duty in S.73 ends.

If a Local Authority has reason to believe that an applicant may be eligible for assistance, may be homeless and may have a priority need, the Authority will have an immediate duty under S.68 of the Act to ensure that suitable accommodation is available for the applicant (and his or her household) pending the completion of its enquiry on whether the person is owed a duty under S.73 (Duty to help to secure) under Part 2 of the 2014 Act.

As in Northern Ireland, the threshold for the S.68 duty is a lower test than being satisfied of a person's homelessness, as the Local Authority need only have a reason to believe that the applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need.

When a person is found to be homeless because it is not reasonable to continue to occupy accommodation, then the code of guidance states that this accommodation should not be regarded as suitable to discharge the S.68 duty of the 2014 Act. This implies that in most cases such a household would need to be provided with alternative accommodation, which is likely to be TA. However, the code does say that: *"there can be an agreement reached between the Local Authority and the homeless person if the homeless person wants to opt to remain in the accommodation currently available to them (e.g. family member / friend / or accommodation considered unreasonable by the Housing Authority that triggers homelessness) until more suitable accommodation can be found, provided that the applicant is well informed and freely consents to the arrangement."*

It then goes on to say that: *"The Welsh Government recommends that the applicant's wishes are taken into account, but Local Authorities should be cautious around cases where collusion may be taking place."*

So, although there is no absolute bar on those claiming to be homeless because their accommodation is unreasonable to occupy remaining in that accommodation, there is a clear presumption that this would not normally be the case.

When a Local Authority, following an assessment under S.62, deems an applicant to be threatened with homelessness within 56 days, it is obliged to help an eligible applicant to prevent them becoming homeless, by either directly meeting their housing need or by assisting them in one or more of the following ways:

- To remain in their current accommodation;
- To delay a need to move out of current accommodation in order to allow a planned move into alternative accommodation;
- To find alternative accommodation; and/or
- To sustain independent living.

It is important that this S66 duty to help prevent an applicant becoming homeless applies to any eligible applicant threatened with homelessness within 56 days, regardless of priority need or intentionality.

S65 clarifies that the S66 duty is to help to secure (rather than “to secure”) that suitable accommodation is available, or does not cease to be available, for occupation by an applicant. The Local Authority:

(a) is required to take reasonable steps to help, having regard (among other things) to the need to make the best use of the authority’s resources;

(b) is not required to secure an offer of accommodation under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (allocation of housing);

(c) is not required to otherwise provide accommodation.

What are the reasonable steps required? Section 64 of the Act states:

The following are examples of the ways in which a local housing authority may secure or help to secure that suitable accommodation is available, or does not cease to be available for occupation by an applicant –

(a) by arranging for a person other than the authority to provide something; (b) by itself providing something;

(c) by providing something, or arranging for something to be provided, to a person other than the applicant.

(2) The following are examples of what may be provided or arranged to secure or help to secure that suitable accommodation is available, or does not cease to be available, for occupation by an applicant –

- (a) mediation;*
- (b) payments by way of grant or loan;*
- (c) guarantees that payments will be made;*
- (d) support in managing debt, mortgage arrears or rent arrears;*
- (e) security measures for applicants at risk of abuse;*
- (f) advocacy or other representation;*
- (g) accommodation;*
- (h) information and advice;*
- (i) other services, goods or facilities*

These examples are fleshed out in more detail in the code of guidance but are likely to be very similar to the actions intended to be taken by the Housing Executive Housing Solutions and Support Service.

The code states that it is *“vital that the applicant cooperates fully in developing and undertaking a housing solution”*. Further to this it recommends the development of a Personal Housing Plan (PHP) setting out the steps to be taken to prevent homelessness and provides a template for such a plan. However, unlike in England, the development of a PHP is not a legal requirement under the Welsh legislation.

The S73 duty to help to secure accommodation for homeless applicants is intended to help people where the duty to prevent homelessness has been unsuccessful or the applicants are already homeless when they approach the Local Authority. Like the S66 prevention duty, the S73 duty applies to all eligible applicants regardless of priority need or intentionality. Once again, this does not mean that the Local Authority has a duty to secure accommodation. In helping to secure accommodation, the Local Authority will need to work in partnership with the applicant to identify appropriate reasonable steps to be taken. The reasonable steps suggested are similar to those suggested for the S66 duty in relation to securing accommodation.

The types of accommodation suggested in the code of guidance which might fulfil a S73 duty include:

- Supported Housing – excluding night shelters, crisis short-stay accommodation or interim accommodation;
- Shared housing and/or houses of multiple occupation – especially for those subject to the single rent occupancy rate for Housing Benefit;

- Accommodation arranged with friends and family – that is suitable and sustainable for a minimum of 6 months and not just, for example, a temporary arrangement on a sofa;
- Supported Lodgings – particularly for young people aged up to 25, that will continue to be available to them until they are ready to move to fully independent living;
- Social housing; and
- Private rented accommodation

S.75 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on Local Authorities to secure accommodation for applicants in priority need where the duty in S.73 (help to secure accommodation) has ended. This duty can **only** follow the S.73 duty, and in appropriate cases, the S.66 duty to help prevent will also have been owed first. According to the code of guidance, *“the reasonable steps taken under S.66 and S.73 will mean that for many applicants considerable work will have been completed and a successful solution found. Thus the S.75 duty to secure accommodation should only be required for a limited number of applicants.”*

The S.75 duty can be discharged in a number of ways. These include an acceptance of an offer of social housing or an offer of an assured tenancy whether through a RSL (housing association) or in the private rented sector. This could include an assured shorthold tenancy. The duty can also be discharged through a refusal of an offer of social housing, a ‘private rented sector’ offer or an offer of suitable interim/temporary accommodation under section 75. This is considerably different than the position in Northern Ireland. A private rented sector offer to end an S66, S73 or S75 duty need only be available for a minimum of 6 months under the Welsh legislation.

A local authority can also bring a duty to an end if it is satisfied that an applicant is unreasonably failing to co-operate. The local authority must be satisfied that the applicant is not failing to co-operate because they are vulnerable, have an unmet support need or have difficulty communicating. According to the code of guidance, circumstances where this might apply include a situation where:

- having agreed to the reasonable steps the applicant then fails to co-operate in their implementation, as an example the applicant and their family may have agreed to mediation which the applicant, with no good reason, then fails to engage with.
- Despite every effort on behalf of the Local Authority the applicant unreasonably fails to co-operate in the identification of reasonable steps to take, for example, by providing necessary information on their circumstances.
- The Local Authority is satisfied that it has identified reasonable steps to prevent or help secure accommodation, but the applicant unreasonably fails to agree to those steps, such as approaching an agency which might help them.

There is no obligation for the Local Authority to provide further help under these circumstances, though if this were to mean that children in the household were to become homeless, then they would be owed protection under the appropriate child protection legislation.

Although it is not applicable to an S66 or S73 duty, priority need does still apply in Wales, although at the time of writing this is under review by the Welsh Government. The priority need categories are wider than those in Northern Ireland. The additional categories in Wales which are not included in the Northern Ireland legislation (or in some cases included in more general terms) are set out as follows in the Act:

(e) a person—

(i) who is homeless as a result of being subject to domestic abuse, or

(ii) with whom a person who falls within sub-paragraph (i) resides (other than the abuser) or might reasonably be expected to reside;

(f) a person—

(i) who is aged 16 or 17 when the person applies to a local housing authority for accommodation or help in obtaining or retaining accommodation, or

(ii) with whom a person who falls within sub-paragraph (i) resides or might reasonably be expected to reside;

(g) a person—

(i) who has attained the age of 18, when the person applies to a local housing authority for accommodation or help in obtaining or retaining accommodation, but not the age of 21, who is at particular risk of sexual or financial exploitation, or

(ii) with whom a person who falls within sub-paragraph (i) resides (other than an exploiter or potential exploiter) or might reasonably be expected to reside;

(h) a person—

(i) who has attained the age of 18, when the person applies to a local housing authority for accommodation or help in obtaining or retaining accommodation, but not the age of 21, who was looked after, accommodated or fostered at any time while under the age of 18, or

(ii) with whom a person who falls within sub-paragraph (i) resides or might reasonably be expected to reside;

(i) a person—

(i) who has served in the regular armed forces of the Crown who has been homeless since leaving those forces, or

(ii) with whom a person who falls within sub-paragraph (i) resides or might reasonably be expected to reside;

(j) a person who has a local connection with the area of the local housing authority and who is vulnerable as a result of one of the following reasons—

(i) having served a custodial sentence within the meaning of section 76 of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000,

(ii) having been remanded in or committed to custody by an order of a court, or

(iii) having been remanded to youth detention accommodation under section 91(4) of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012,

The code of guidance contains detailed information explaining how the Welsh government would expect each of the priority need categories to be interpreted by local authorities.

Intentional homelessness continues to exist under the Welsh legislation and is defined in similar terms to Northern Ireland. However, in Wales, local authorities have a power rather than a duty to consider intentionality and must notify the Welsh government in advance of the categories of applicants where they wish to do this. In addition, as stated above, intentionality does not apply under the S66 and S73 duties and can therefore only be applied in cases where there is a priority need. The code of guidance is clear that a formal decision on intentionality should not be made until the local authority is making its decision on whether the duty is owed under S.75 or is making a referral to another local authority. In practice, it is understood that the majority of Welsh authorities have continued to exercise their power to consider intentionality in most cases where this is permissible under the legislation.

A more detailed discussion on standards of temporary accommodation and of PRS accommodation is given in Appendix 6. It is noted here though that the *Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2015*¹⁴² was approved by the National Assembly for Wales in April 2015, with the intention of reducing the use of B&B accommodation for

¹⁴² [The Homelessness \(Suitability of Accommodation\) \(Wales\) Order 2015](#)

homeless people and to ensure that the form and quality of temporary accommodation meets the needs of the homeless household.

The stipulations in the 2015 Order on the use of B&B are more complex than those in Scotland or England. B&B establishments are divided into two size categories: 'larger' establishments with more than 6 bedrooms, and 'smaller' establishments with 6 bedrooms or fewer. There are also two standards: a 'basic' standard and a 'higher' standard.

In the case of larger establishments, the use of B&Bs is restricted to 6 weeks for families with children, pregnant women and 16-17 year olds. A two-week restriction will apply where establishments do not reach the higher standard.

In the case of small establishments, the use of B&B for families with children, pregnant women and 16-17 year olds may exceed the six week period; however, two choice tests must be applied at two and six weeks if the Authority wishes to allow the household to remain in the accommodation.

The Welsh legislation also now requires co-operation between different parts of the same local authority on homelessness and between local authorities and other specified organisations. Section 95 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 states:

(1) A council of a county or county borough in Wales must make arrangements to promote co-operation between the officers of the authority who exercise its social services functions and those who exercise its functions as the local housing authority with a view to achieving the following objectives in its area—

(a) the prevention of homelessness;

(b) that suitable accommodation is or will be available for people who are or may become homeless;

(c) that satisfactory support is available for people who are or may become homeless;

and

(d) the effective discharge of its functions under this Part.

and

(2) If a local housing authority requests the co-operation of a person mentioned in subsection (5) in the exercise of its functions under this Part, the person must comply with the request unless the person considers that doing so would—

(a) be incompatible with the person's own duties, or

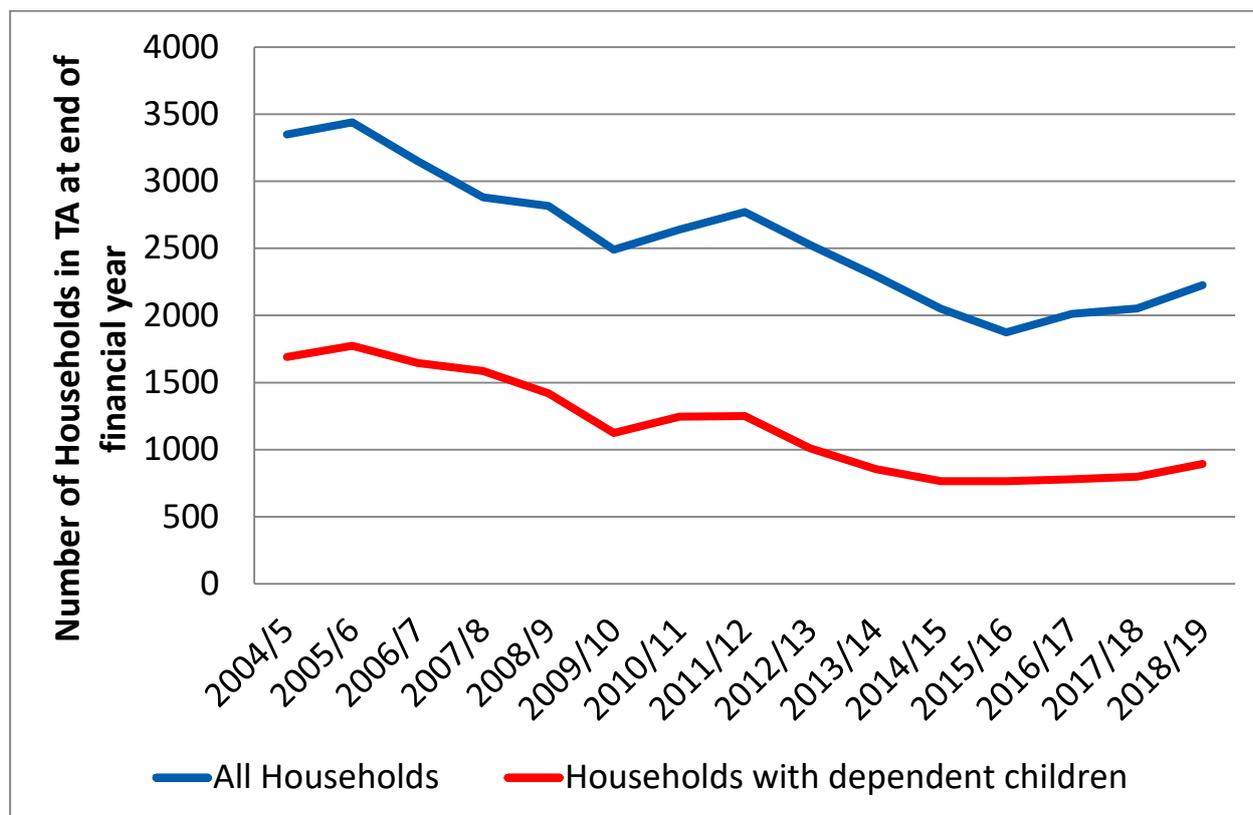
(b) otherwise have an adverse effect on the exercise of the person's functions.

The persons in subsection (5) who must comply are:

- (a) a local housing authority;*
- (b) a social services authority;*
- (c) a registered social landlord;*
- (d) a new town corporation;*
- (e) a private registered provider of social housing;*
- (f) a housing action trust.*

Looking at the trends in TA numbers in Wales between March 2005 and March 2019, shown in Figure B, the effect of the implementation of this new legislation on TA numbers from implementation in April 2015 seem much less marked than the effect of giving access to TA to single households in Scotland, shown in Figure A. However, it must be borne in mind that in Wales, increased help to single households is more likely to be through prevention and relief of homelessness into PRS accommodation or supported housing rather than recorded as increased numbers of temporary accommodation places as would be more likely in Scotland.

Figure B: Households in Temporary Accommodation in Wales March 2005 to March 2019



England

In England, the primary homelessness legislation is Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996,¹⁴³ as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002,¹⁴⁴ and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002.¹⁴⁵ This provides the statutory underpinning for action to prevent homelessness and provide assistance to people threatened with homelessness or who are homeless and is similar to the underpinning legislation in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

¹⁴³ [UK Housing Act 1996: Part 7 - Homelessness \(England\)](#)

¹⁴⁴ [UK Homelessness Act 2002](#)

¹⁴⁵ [The Homelessness \(Priority Need for Accommodation\) \(England\) Order 2002](#)

However, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017¹⁴⁶ significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'. The new measures include:

- an enhanced prevention duty extending the period a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days, meaning that housing authorities are required to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage; and
- a new duty for those who are already homeless so that housing authorities will support households for 56 days to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation.

These reforms are similar in many ways to the reforms in the Welsh legislation described above, although there are some important differences. As in Wales, the placement of households in supported accommodation is much more likely to be recorded as homelessness prevention than as temporary accommodation.

Local authorities in England have relied very significantly on a Housing Options approach since this was promoted by the government over a period beginning in around 2002, and in particular have been focused on homelessness prevention and use of the private rented sector as a means of reducing statutory homelessness. This approach was accompanied by a significantly stricter interpretation of the homelessness legislation than had previously been applied in many local areas. The intention of this was to reduce the attractiveness of the so called "homelessness route", through which households wishing to access social housing were given the unintended incentive to present to local authorities as homeless as being the easiest and quickest way to do so. It is worth considering if the current position in Northern Ireland, where around 80% of social housing goes to homeless households, might be providing a similar unintended incentive.

Two further important changes in England affecting the use of temporary accommodation were:

¹⁴⁶ [UK Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#)

- The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003¹⁴⁷ made the use of Bed & Breakfast Accommodation unlawful for homeless families with children or households including a pregnant woman, except where there is no other accommodation available, and even then, for no longer than six weeks.
- A concurrent reform to the Housing Benefit regulations made it much more financially advantageous to local authorities to use Private Sector Leased (PSL) accommodation. It also made it much less financially advantageous to use B&Bs for families.

This is still the case, as only the one-bed LHA rate is now payable regardless of the size of the family or the number of rooms they occupy.

These changes were later followed by the adoption of a government target to halve the use of temporary accommodation between 2004 and 2010.

The combined result of these measures was to reduce the use of B&Bs dramatically from 13,950 households in December 2002 to 1,880 households in March 2010, and to achieve the target of halving the total number of placements in temporary accommodation from 101,300 households in September 2002 to 48,010 households in December 2010.¹⁴⁸ However, this was also accompanied by accusations of “gatekeeping” by some local authorities, especially those in high demand areas, in which it is alleged that homelessness numbers were being artificially reduced by making it difficult for homeless households to exercise their legal rights to assistance, through the erection of administrative hurdles or the presentation of incomplete or misleading information.

Since 2010, the number of homelessness acceptances and the number of households in temporary accommodation have risen again, although not to the levels seen before 2004. The main rise has been in evictions from PRS accommodation, which quadrupled as a cause of statutory homelessness between 2009/10 and 2017/18, whilst homelessness due to the other main causes such as eviction by family and friends have remained at historically low levels.

The obvious conclusion is that welfare reforms since 2011, and in particular the divergence of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates from market rents, have been a key driver of the increase.

¹⁴⁷ [The Homelessness \(Suitability of Accommodation\) \(England\) Order 2003](#)

¹⁴⁸ [UK Live tables on homelessness](#)

The issues and trends are explained in some detail in the 2017 Local Government Association report – *“Housing Our Homeless Households”*.¹⁴⁹

A revised *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities* incorporating the changes in the Homelessness Reduction Act was published in February 2018.¹⁵⁰

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018, the threshold for being threatened with homelessness in England has been 56 days, as in Wales. This explicitly includes anyone who has been served a valid notice to end their Assured Shorthold Tenancy, with the intention of preventing local authorities from delaying assistance to households who have been served such a notice until a Possession Order has been granted.

Under the Homeless Reduction Act, housing authorities have a duty to carry out an assessment in all cases where an eligible applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness. This will identify what has caused the homelessness or threat of homelessness, the housing needs of the applicant and any support they need in order to be able to secure and retain accommodation.

Following this assessment, the housing authority must work with the person to develop a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) which will include actions (or ‘reasonable steps’) to be taken by the authority and the applicant to try and prevent or relieve homelessness.

The sequence of duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act runs as follows:

Prevention Duty

Housing authorities have a duty to take reasonable steps to help prevent any eligible person (regardless of priority need status, intentionality and whether they have a local connection) who is threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. This means either helping them to stay in their current accommodation or helping them to find a new place to live before they become actually homeless. The prevention duty continues for 56 days unless it is brought to an end by an event such as accommodation being secured for the person, or by their becoming homeless.

Relief Duty

¹⁴⁹ [LGA: Housing our homeless households](#)

¹⁵⁰ [UK Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities](#)

If the applicant is already homeless, or becomes homeless despite activity during the prevention stage, the reasonable steps will be focused on helping the applicant to secure accommodation. This relief duty lasts for 56 days unless ended in another way. If the housing authority has reason to believe a homeless applicant may be eligible for assistance and has a priority need, they must be provided with interim accommodation.

Main Duty

If homelessness is not successfully prevented or relieved, a housing authority will owe the main housing duty to applicants who are eligible, have a priority need for accommodation and are not homeless intentionally.

As in Northern Ireland and Wales, certain categories of household, such as pregnant women, families with children, and households that are homeless due to an emergency such as a fire or flood, have priority need if homeless. Other groups may be assessed as having priority need because they are vulnerable as a result of old age, mental ill health, physical disability, having been in prison or care or as a result of becoming homeless due to domestic abuse. In addition to these three duties, as in other jurisdictions, there is an interim duty to provide accommodation for those in priority need.

Section 188(1) in the Housing Act 1996, as amended, requires housing authorities to secure that accommodation is available for an applicant (and their household) if they have reason to believe that the applicant may:

- (a) be homeless;
- (b) be eligible for assistance; and,
- (c) have a priority need.

As in Northern Ireland and the other jurisdictions, the threshold for triggering the section 188(1) duty is low as the housing authority only has to have a reason to believe (rather than be satisfied) that the applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need.

The additional or differently expressed priority need categories in England, compared to Northern Ireland, are (please note d-h below are the priority needs categories that differ from those in Northern Ireland – as itemised in the Housing Act 1996):

(d) a person aged 16 or 17 who is not a 'relevant child' or a child in need to whom a local authority owes a duty under section 20 of the Children Act 1989;

(e) a person under 21 who was (but is no longer) looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 and 18 (except a person who is a 'relevant student');

(f) a person aged 21 or more who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered (except a person who is a 'relevant student')

(g) a person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of Her Majesty's regular naval, military or air forces

(h) a person who is vulnerable as a result of:

(i) having served a custodial sentence;

(ii) having been committed for contempt of court or any other kindred offence; or, (iii) having been remanded in custody;

(iii) a person who is vulnerable as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out

Whilst there are specific additional categories in England concerning vulnerability as a result of being 16 or 17 years old, of being a care leaver, of having been in the armed forces, or of having been in custody, two of the categories in the Northern Ireland Order are expressed more broadly than in England – namely e, and f below (taken from Article 5 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988):

(e) a person without dependent children who satisfies the Executive that he has been subject to violence and is at risk of violent pursuit or, if he returns home, is at risk of further violence;

(f) a young person who satisfies the Executive that he is at risk of sexual or financial exploitation.

Under the main housing duty, housing authorities must ensure that suitable accommodation is available for the applicant and their household until the duty is brought to an end, usually through the offer of a settled home.

The duty can also be brought to an end for other reasons, such as the applicant turning down a suitable offer of temporary accommodation or because they are no longer eligible for assistance.

A suitable offer of a settled home (whether accepted or refused by the applicant) which would bring the main housing duty to an end includes an offer of a suitable secure or introductory tenancy with a local authority, an offer of accommodation through a private registered provider (also known as a housing association) or the offer of a suitable tenancy for at least 12 months from a private landlord made by arrangement with the local authority.

These provisions differ from the Welsh legislation in a number of respects:

- In England there is a legal requirement (as opposed to a recommendation in Wales) to develop a PHP with a person owed a prevention or relief duty;
- As in Wales, intentionality does not apply to a prevention of relief duty, but it does apply to a main duty, whereas in Wales local authorities can choose not to apply intentionality to a S75 duty;
- In England a suitable offer in the PRS requires a 12-month tenancy, as opposed to a six month tenancy in Wales;
- As in Wales, local authorities can, subject to serving the appropriate notice, end a relief duty when an applicant “deliberately and unreasonably refuses to co-operate”. However, unlike in Wales, there is a requirement to make a final offer of social housing or a suitable PRS offer with a tenancy of at least 6 months duration.

The code of guidance states that:

“Applicants who have priority need but are no longer owed a section 189B relief duty following service of a section 193B notice due to their deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate will not be owed the section 193 main housing duty but will be owed an accommodation duty under section 193C(4).

This section 193C(4) duty ends if the applicant accepts or refuses a final accommodation offer or a final Part 6 offer. A ‘final accommodation offer’ is an offer of an assured shorthold tenancy made by a private landlord with the approval of the housing authority, with a view to bringing the section 193C(4) duty to an end. The offer must be of a fixed term tenancy (within the meaning of Part 1 of the Housing Act 1988) of at least 6 months duration, and the accommodation must be suitable for the applicant.”

It is also interesting to note that, rather than a duty to co-operate as introduced in Wales, the Homelessness Reduction Act in England imposes a ‘Duty to Refer’ on a number of public authorities. These public authorities are required to notify a housing authority of service users they consider may be homeless or threatened with homelessness (i.e. it is likely they will become homeless within 56 days). Before making a referral, a public authority must:

- (a) have consent to the referral from the individual;
- (b) allow the individual to identify the housing authority in England to which they would like the notification to be made; and,

(c) have consent from the individual that their contact details can be supplied so the housing authority can contact them regarding the referral.

The public authorities the duty to refer applies to are:

- (a) prisons;
- (b) youth offender institutions;
- (c) secure training centres;
- (d) secure colleges;
- (e) youth offending teams;
- (f) probation services (including community rehabilitation companies);
- (g) Jobcentre Plus;
- (h) social service authorities;
- (i) emergency departments;
- (j) urgent treatment centres; and,
- (k) hospitals in their function of providing inpatient care.

The Secretary of State for Defence is also subject to the duty to refer in relation to members of the regular forces. The regular forces are the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the regular army and the Royal Air Force.

Housing Associations are not formally included in the duty to refer. They do have a duty to work with local authorities in England, but this is expressed more loosely than in Scotland and Wales. The responsibilities are set out in the Tenancy Standard,¹⁵¹ which states:

Registered providers shall co-operate with local authorities' strategic housing function, and their duties to meet identified local housing needs. This includes assistance with local authorities' homelessness duties, and through meeting obligations in nominations agreements.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/725828/Tenancy_Standard_2015.pdf

The Neighbourhood and Community Standard¹⁵² further states, under the heading of Local Area Co-operation, that:

Registered providers, having taken account of their presence and impact within the areas where they own properties, shall:

(a) identify and publish the roles they are able to play within the areas where they have properties; and

(b) co-operate with local partnership arrangements and strategic housing functions of local authorities where they are able to assist them in achieving their objectives.

The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 coincided with a reform to the government homelessness statistics. Much more detailed information is now being collected from local authorities on their homelessness activities under the new 'H-CLIC' system. However, at the time of writing, the H-CLIC data which have been published are less comprehensive than were previously available under the old 'P1E' statistics. It is therefore very difficult at this stage to say what the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act has been, or is likely to be, on the number of homelessness preventions and reliefs, the number of main duty acceptances or the number of households in temporary accommodation.

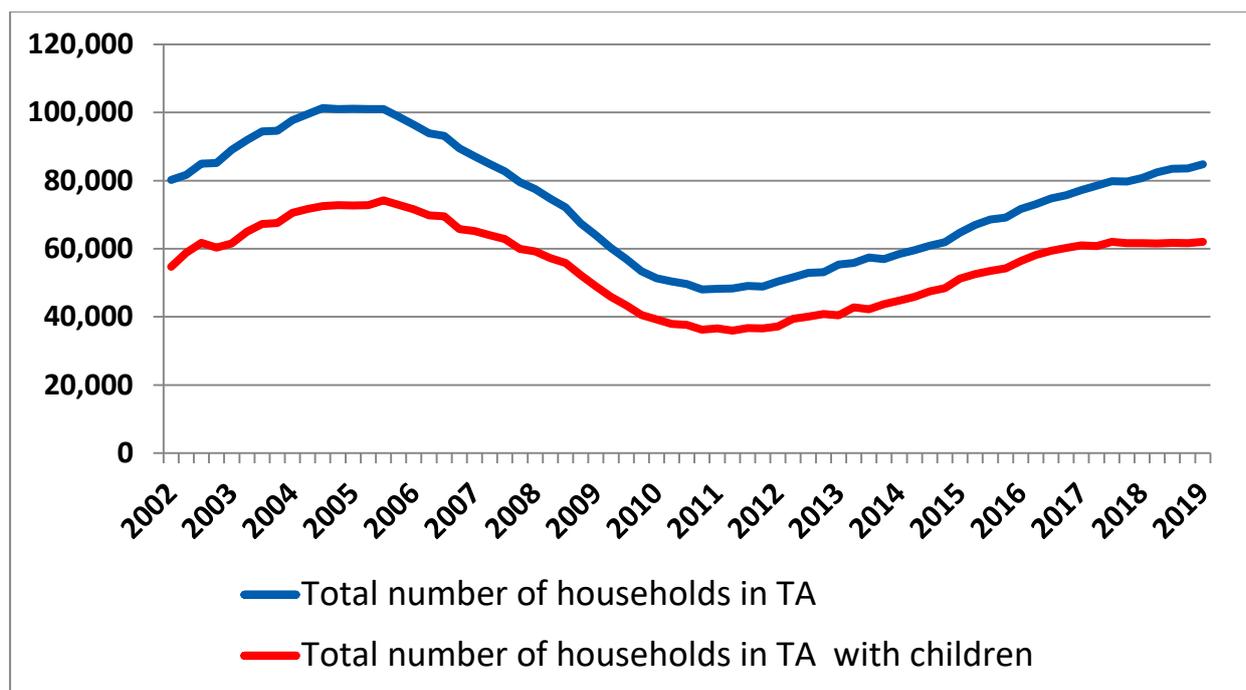
Figure C (following page) shows the number of households in temporary accommodation in England between 2002 and March 2019. The rise in use of temporary accommodation seen from 2002 was likely to have been at least partially due to the relaxation of the priority need categories at that time, and also influenced by the more generous funding arrangement for Private Sector Leasing (PSL) between 2002 and 2004. The subsequent reduction in use of temporary accommodation after 2004 was a consequence of the roll-out of the housing options approach, the introduction of the target to halve temporary accommodation by 2010, and the reduction in funding for PSL accommodation from that time.

The increase in placements in temporary accommodation since 2010 was largely a consequence of the government's welfare reforms. This also drove a substantial increase in the cost of temporary accommodation to local authorities and has led to a significant rise in the use of "nightly paid" self-contained accommodation that is discussed in Part 3 of the report.

¹⁵² [UK Neighbourhood and Community Standard 2015](#)

It is interesting to note that the proportion of households in temporary accommodation with children is much higher in England (73% in March 2019) than in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, and also that 66% of households in temporary accommodation in England were placed by London authorities, reflecting the severe shortage of affordable housing in the capital compared to other parts of the country.

Figure C: Households in Temporary Accommodation in England January 2002 to March 2019



Republic of Ireland (ROI)

In comparison with the UK jurisdictions, homelessness legislation in ROI is markedly different, and in particular statutory duties on local authorities towards homeless households are relatively limited.

The legislation dealing with homelessness in ROI includes the Health Act 1953,¹⁵³ the Housing Act 1988,¹⁵⁴ and the Child Care Act 1991.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ [Ireland: Health Act, 1953](#)

¹⁵⁴ [Ireland: Housing Act, 1988](#)

¹⁵⁵ [Ireland: Child Care Act, 1991](#)

Section 2 of the Housing Act 1988¹⁵⁶ states that a person is to be considered homeless by a housing authority if:

(a) there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the authority, he, together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, or

(b) he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution, and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph

(c), and he is, in the opinion of the authority, unable to provide accommodation from his own resources.

In general, a person may be considered homeless if they are:

- Sleeping rough;
- Staying in an emergency hostel or refuge;
- Staying in bed and breakfast or hotel accommodation on a temporary basis;
- Staying temporarily with friends or family because they have nowhere else to go; or
- Squatting (occupying a building illegally).

The term 'out-of-home' is used in Republic of Ireland to refer to people who have nowhere to live. This term recognises the fact that a person may have a home that they cannot return to (for whatever reason). The Constitutional Convention recommended in February 2014 that the constitution should be amended to include economic, social and cultural rights,¹⁵⁷ including a specific right to housing, but no decision has yet been made on this recommendation.

While local authorities in ROI do not have a statutory obligation to house people, they do have general responsibility under the Housing Act 1988 for the provision of housing for adults who cannot afford to provide it for themselves. They may help with accommodation either by providing housing directly or through arrangements with voluntary housing organisations and other voluntary bodies. They may also provide funding to voluntary bodies for emergency accommodation and for long-term housing for homeless people. In practice this means that,

¹⁵⁶ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1988/act/28/section/2/enacted/en/html#zza28y1988s2>

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.constitutionalconvention.ie/AttachmentDownload.ashx?mid=5333bbe7-a9b8-e311-a7ce-005056a32ee4>

although their legal discretion about how to assist is greater than in the UK, local authorities in ROI do provide accommodation for homeless households, and this is often in the form of temporary accommodation.

In addition to local authority responsibilities, ROI Health Service Executive (HSE)¹⁵⁸ has general responsibility for the health and in-house care needs of homeless people. In terms of funding, this means that local authorities are responsible for the costs of providing accommodation, while the HSE provides funding for the care and welfare needs of homeless people, including in-house care.

The Child and Family Agency (Tusla)¹⁵⁹ has responsibility under the Child Care Act 1991 for providing accommodation for people under the age of 18 who are homeless or in need of care. It may also provide aftercare facilities for young people aged over 18.

The 1988 Housing Act also requires that local authorities carry out periodic assessments of the number of people who are homeless in their administrative area, as part of their housing needs assessment. In the 2018 assessment,¹⁶⁰ the number of households whose basis of need was listed as 'homeless, institution, emergency accommodation or hostel' rose by **14% (686 households)** since the 2017 assessment.

In terms of government strategy, the *Way Home – A Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness 2008-2013*,¹⁶¹ which was published in 2008, set out the aim of ending homelessness by 2016. A national implementation plan was published in 2009 and the Programme for Government (2011) included a commitment to ending homelessness and the need to sleep rough by implementing a housing-led approach.

A number of other documents and reports have been produced since, including the *Action Plan to Address Homelessness*,¹⁶² published in December 2014, which lists immediate actions to address rough sleeping in Dublin, as well as further actions to tackle systemic issues, grouped under prevention, accommodation and supports.

However, it is clear that the Republic of Ireland ambition to end homelessness by 2016 has not so far been achieved.

¹⁵⁸ [Ireland: Health Service Executive](#)

¹⁵⁹ [Ireland: Tusla Child and Family Agency](#)

¹⁶⁰ [Housing Agency: Social Housing Assessments Summary 2018](#)

¹⁶¹ [The Way Home: A Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness in Ireland 2008-2013](#)

¹⁶² [Ireland: Action Plan to Address Homelessness](#)

In terms of the types of temporary accommodation used in ROI, these are broken down in government statistics into three categories:

- **PEA – Private Emergency Accommodation:** this may include hotels, B&Bs and other residential facilities that are used on an emergency basis
- **STA – Supported Temporary Accommodation:** accommodation, including hostels, with onsite professional support
- **TEA – Temporary Emergency Accommodation:** emergency accommodation with no (or minimal) support

Broadly equal numbers of households are accommodated in PEA and STA accommodation, with a much smaller number in TEA accommodation.

The Republic of Ireland homelessness statistics¹⁶³ are produced monthly but are much less sophisticated than the figures produced in the rest of the UK. What is provided is a breakdown of the number of households who accessed different types of temporary accommodation during a week towards the end of each month. These data are not directly comparable with the figures produced by the UK jurisdictions for a number of reasons including:

- The number of individuals is presented instead of the number of households;
- Rather than a snapshot figure on a given day, the number of placements over a week is given and it is explicitly stated on the Republic of Ireland stats that “clients may have accessed multiple accommodation types during the week”.

Nevertheless, some trends can be discerned:

- About two thirds of temporary accommodation usage is in Dublin;
- Homelessness as measured by the number of people accessing temporary accommodation¹⁶⁴ more than doubled between December 2014 and January 2019, from **2,858** adults accessing temporary accommodation in a week to **6,363** adults accessing temporary accommodation in a week and rose in each year over that period;

¹⁶³ [Ireland: Dept of Housing - Homelessness Data](#)

¹⁶⁴ This is not necessarily an accurate measure, if for example local authorities have become more or less generous in accepting households as being homeless and providing accommodation for them.

- Family homelessness in temporary accommodation has risen as a percentage of the total. This is quite hard to state clearly because of the way the data is presented, but if the number of adults accessing temporary accommodation who were part of families is taken as a percentage of the total number of adults accessing temporary accommodation, then this rose from **19%** in December 2014 to **35%** in January 2019.
- Looking at this another way, the number of families accessing temporary accommodation in a week rose from **407** in December 2014 to **1,614** in January 2019 – almost a quadrupling of the numbers in just over four years.

Another important difference between ROI and the UK is in the welfare benefits system. It is beyond the scope of this project to fully explore this, but there is a particular difference in the way benefits are provided to support rent payments for people on low incomes.

In the UK, anyone who is paying a rent at or less than the designated Local Housing Allowance for the property they are renting is eligible to receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit to contribute towards the payment of that rent if their income is sufficiently low. In general, a household with no earned income will have the full costs of the rent met by HB or UC. However, if they start to earn income then benefit towards their rent is withdrawn as a proportion (taper) of their earned income above the minimum income threshold at which benefits would cover the full rent.

In the Republic of Ireland, however, benefit subsidy towards the rent is increasingly paid through the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme.¹⁶⁵ Eligibility for this programme is not automatic and is limited to those who qualify.

In Dublin, there is an enhanced version of HAP called the Homeless HAP scheme.¹⁶⁶ This is only available to homeless households and can be more generous than the standard HAP scheme because it may cover higher rents if this is necessary to secure accommodation.

Under HAP, the full rent is paid to a private sector landlord directly by the local authority. The tenant then pays a contribution to the local authority, rather than the landlord. The level of this contribution depends on the tenant's household income referred to as a "differential rent" payment which applies to rent charged in the social housing sector.

¹⁶⁵ <http://hap.ie>

¹⁶⁶ [Ireland: Housing Assistance Payment \(HAP\) Scheme](#)

Unlike in the UK, where discrimination against tenants receiving HB or UC is prevalent, landlords in ROI are not allowed to discriminate against tenants receiving HAP payments by refusing to accept them as tenants.

Interestingly, and unlike the taper system in the UK, tenants receiving HAP payments are allowed to take up full time employment without losing the HAP payment.

APPENDIX 6: HOUSING STANDARDS

Across the UK, there are variations in the existence and application of housing standards specifically for temporary accommodation. There are minimum statutory housing standards (as well as building standards) that must first be complied with, and some further standards exist for private rented or social housing.

There are statutory minimum housing fitness requirements for all housing stock across all tenures in the UK and Republic of Ireland; each of these is described below:

- Northern Ireland – Housing Fitness Standard; HMO Standard
- Scotland – Tolerable Standard
- England and Wales – Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- Republic of Ireland – Housing Act 1966 Section 66, Second Schedule; Housing (Standards for Rented Housing) Regulations 2008

For temporary accommodation standards specifically, there is voluntary guidance in Scotland and statutory guidance in England and Wales:

- Scotland – Temporary Accommodation Guidance
- Wales – Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2015
- England – Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities

In each UK jurisdiction, there are non-statutory administrative standards for all existing and new social housing:

- Northern Ireland and England – Decent Homes Standard
- Scotland – Social Housing Quality Standard
- Wales – Welsh Housing Quality Standard

Private sector housing is subject to further regulation, in particular with respect to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

All construction, maintenance and renovation work on existing or new dwellings are subject to Building Regulations. These generally exceed the standard housing fitness criteria. Each jurisdiction has the following Building Regulations:

- Northern Ireland – Technical Booklets 2012¹⁶⁷
- Scotland – Building Standards¹⁶⁸
- England and Wales – Approved Documents¹⁶⁹

There are standards which apply to care and support service providers in Northern Ireland (Regulation and Quality Improvement Agency), Scotland (Care Inspectorate), England (Care Quality Commission), Wales (Care Inspectorate Wales) and the Republic of Ireland (Health Information and Quality Authority). However, in all but Scotland these standards apply only to registered care homes and providers. In Scotland there is a direct focus on providers of housing support services, and the Health and Social Care Standards are therefore also applicable to (some but not all) hostels.

Statutory Minimum Fitness Standards: All tenures

Northern Ireland: Housing Fitness Standard

All properties in Northern Ireland must meet the minimum Housing Fitness Standard, as set out in the *Housing (NI) Order 1981* and amended in 1992. For a property to be described as fit, it must:

- Be structurally stable;
- Be free from serious disrepair;
- Be free from health-damaging dampness;
- Have adequate lighting, heating and ventilation;
- Have an adequate piped supply of ‘wholesome water’;
- Have sufficient space and amenities for cooking food, including a sink;
- Have a suitably located and private toilet;

¹⁶⁷ [Building Control NI - Regulations - Technical Booklets](#)

¹⁶⁸ [Scotland: Building standards - Building regulations](#)

¹⁶⁹ [UK Approved Documents - provide guidance on ways to meet the building regulations.](#)

- Have a bath or shower with both hot and cold water; and
- Have effective, working drains.

The physical standard set out above applies across all tenures of housing.

The Housing Executive has overarching statutory responsibility for assessing and enforcing the standard for all housing in Northern Ireland, regardless of tenure. In practice, fitness inspections are contracted to local councils. They have more limited powers that require them to inspect and take action in relation to individual private rented dwellings.¹⁷⁰ Inspections by the local council may be requested for a fee of £50; however this fee may be waived if the application is made by a tenant.

Certain properties are required to hold a Certificate of Fitness in order to be let. In the event of failure to obtain a certificate, a rent control will be set to limit the amount of rent that a tenant will need to pay to occupy the property. A Notice of Refusal to Issue a Certificate of Fitness will also include a list of works required to be carried out in order to obtain a certificate. However the landlord is under no obligation to carry these out as long as the tenancy is rent-controlled.

Prescribed dwellings do not require a Certificate of Fitness. This includes properties that have been registered as an HMO in the last 10 years.

If a property is unfit for human habitation, a Notice of Unfitness will be issued which will include a list of works the landlord is required to carry out, against which the council can take legal action.

If a property is fit for habitation but requires significant work, a Notice of Disrepair can be issued. This will occur if substantial repairs are required to bring the property up to a reasonable standard or the property condition is materially interfering with the comfort of the tenant. The Notice will include a list of works that the landlord must carry out in order to avoid legal action.

The Fitness Standard is considered very basic, and there have been suggestions that the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) used by England and Wales, and detailed below, should be adopted in Northern Ireland.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ [DSDNI: Review of the statutory minimum housing fitness standard for all tenures of dwelling - p6.;](#)
¹⁷¹ [Housing Rights: Policy Briefing on the Housing Health and Safety Rating](#)

Northern Ireland: HMO Standards

HMOs are subject to standards in relation to room size and overcrowding, fire safety and amenities. These are detailed in the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.¹⁷²

In HMOs, the floor area dictates the number of persons permitted to occupy the space, with gender and age of occupants also having an influence.¹⁷³

To ensure fire safety compliance the building must have fire alarms, fire extinguishers, fire blankets, fire doors, fire escapes and escape routes, and smoke or heat alarms. These must be maintained and subject to regular checks. Other standards for HMOs are adequate lighting in kitchens, bathrooms and toilets; windows (or a fan) in kitchens, bathrooms and toilets; a washroom and separate toilet for every five people; cooking facilities including four rings/hotplates, a grill and an oven for every five people.

Full standards of housing for HMOs are detailed in Part 4 of the legislation.¹⁷⁴ However, the exceptions to this definition include buildings managed by public sector bodies including the Housing Executive and housing associations, or establishments registered under the Health and Personal Services Order 2003. Full details of exceptions are listed in Schedule 1.¹⁷⁵ This means that the Housing Executive and housing association hostels are exempt from the basic standards applying to private sector HMOs. As stated above, in determining whether accommodation is suitable for use as temporary accommodation, the Housing Executive shall 'have regard to' Chapter II of Part III¹⁷⁶ of the Order of 1981.

Scotland: Tolerable Standard

In order to be fit for human habitation, Scottish law requires the Tolerable Standard¹⁷⁷ minimum requirements to be met. This standard is comparable to Northern Ireland's Fitness Standard, with the addition of more developed thermal insulation and enhanced electrical installation requirements.

¹⁷² [Houses in Multiple Occupation Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#)

¹⁷³ [Housing Rights: Advice for landlords in Northern Ireland](#)

¹⁷⁴ [Houses in Multiple Occupation Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016: Part 4 - Standards of Housing](#)

¹⁷⁵ [Houses in Multiple Occupation Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016: Schedule 1](#)

¹⁷⁶ [Housing \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1981: Part 3 - Chapter 2 - Article 46](#)

¹⁷⁷ [Scotland: Advice for landlords - Tolerable Standard](#)

The Tolerable Standard is, like the Fitness Standard, a pass/fail model. Where a dwelling fails to comply with all criteria, local authorities must take enforcement action to ensure it is either brought up to standard, closed or demolished.

England and Wales: Housing Health and Safety Rating

The main method of assessing and enforcing housing standards in England and Wales is the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), introduced by the Housing Act 2004. It is a risk-based assessment tool concerned with avoiding hazards rather than setting minimum standards.

HHSRS is 'tenure neutral'¹⁷⁸ in that it applies to social housing, PRS and owner-occupied housing. That being said, the majority of HHSRS work is carried out in the PRS where housing standards are generally lowest.

It was announced in October 2018 that the HHSRS will be reviewed in order to consider whether minimum standards should be established for common health and safety (H&S) problems in the rental sector. The scoping stage for this review is underway.

Homes must be free of the most serious 'category 1' hazards. There are 29 hazards which can be assessed for seriousness under the HHSRS; these come under four categories as follows:

(a) Physiological Requirements

- Damp and mould growth
- Excess cold
- Excess heat
- Asbestos (and MMF)
- Biocides
- Carbon monoxide and fuel combustion products
- Lead
- Radiation
- Uncombusted fuel gas
- Volatile Organic Compounds

¹⁷⁸ [The Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(HHSRS\)](#)

(b) Protection Against Infection

Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse
Food safety
Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage
Water supply for domestic purpose

(c) Protection Against Accidents

Falls associated with baths
Falling on level surfaces
Falling on stairs and steps
Falling between levels
Electrical hazards
Fire
Flames, hot surfaces
Collision and entrapment
Explosions
Position and operability of amenities
Structural collapse and failing elements

(d) Psychological Requirements

Crowding and space
Entry by intruders
Lighting
Noise

If any category 1 hazards are found in an inspection, the local authority is required to take action. Local authorities decide what actions to take against landlords should an inspection indicate that repairs or essential works are required. The following are the types of actions they can take:

- Hazard awareness notice – warning the landlord that the local authority is aware of the issue.
- Improvement notice – instructing the landlord to carry out works and applying a time limit for this to be done; failure may result in fines or prosecution.
- Emergency remedial action – local authorities carry out emergency work and charge this to the landlord.
- Prohibition order – restricting access to all or part of the home or limiting occupancy number.

- Demolition order – requiring that the building be demolished.

Republic of Ireland: General Powers - Fitness

Section 66 of the Housing Act 1966¹⁷⁹ gives general powers to a housing authority in relation to houses which the authority believes are unfit for habitation.

The standards required for fitness are set out in the Act's Second Schedule,¹⁸⁰ resembling Northern Ireland's physical Fitness Standard.

Rented accommodation

Minimum standards for rental accommodation are set out in the Housing (Standards for Rented Housing) Regulations 2008,¹⁸¹ and the 2009 Amendment.¹⁸² These standards specify requirements in relation to structural condition; sanitary facilities; heating; food preparation, storage and laundry; ventilation; fire safety; refuse; and electricity and gas.

¹⁷⁹ [Ireland: Housing Act, 1966](#)

¹⁸⁰ [Ireland: Housing Act, 1966](#)

¹⁸¹ [Ireland: Housing \(Standards for Rented Houses\) Regulations 2008](#)

¹⁸² [Ireland: Housing \(Standards For Rented Houses\)\(Amendment\) Regulations 2009](#)

Standards for Temporary Accommodation

Scotland: Temporary Accommodation Guidance

There are no statutory standards specifically for temporary accommodation in Scotland, however there are good practice standards and guidance, as set out by CIH Scotland and documented by Shelter in *Guidance on Standards for Temporary Accommodation*.¹⁸³ The guidance was written in consultation with temporary accommodation providers and tenants. It was designed to “cover the gaps in existing housing quality standards which some types of temporary accommodation were falling through”,¹⁸⁴ such as the Scottish Housing Quality Standards, as well as to look beyond the physical standards to the management and service provided.

The recommendation to make the guidance standards legally enforceable¹⁸⁵ has been accepted in principle by the Scottish government.¹⁸⁶ The basic points are that the Scottish government are considering extending the seven-day restriction on time spent in unsuitable temporary accommodation to all people experiencing homelessness, rather than just pregnant women and families; and they intend to produce new legally enforceable standards for all temporary accommodation, based on the currently adopted Guidance on Standards for Temporary accommodation. Stakeholders were asked to consider whether that current guidance is appropriate and whether they would make any additions.

The table in Figure D: details the standards related to housing that already exist. These are of varying relevance to temporary accommodation, depending on the type of accommodation.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ [Shelter/Scotland - Guidance on Standards for Temporary Accommodation](#)

¹⁸⁴ [Transforming the use of Temporary Accommodation in Scotland - interim report on the activity of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group](#); p14

¹⁸⁵ [Transforming the use of Temporary Accommodation in Scotland - interim report on the activity of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group](#); p15

¹⁸⁶ [Scotland: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group recommendations.](#)

¹⁸⁷ [Shelter/Scotland - Guidance on Standards for Temporary Accommodation](#)

Figure D: Existing housing standards in Scotland (Source: Shelter Scotland)

Standards	Type of standard	Accommodation included	Gaps in existing standards in legislation relevant for households in temporary accommodation (TA)
Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	Physical	Local authority and registered social landlords to meet this standard by 2015	Relevant to all TA provided by the LA or RSL. Does not include hostels, bed and breakfast hotels or private rented sector
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing	Physical and safety	Housing for 3 or more unrelated people, including bedsits, B&Bs, hostels and some supported housing Includes fit and proper person test for the landlord	Not relevant to TA for family groups or couples
National Care Standards for housing support services	Service and management	Supported accommodation such as hostel and scattered dwellings with floating support	Only relevant to TA services registered with the Scottish Commission for Regulation and Care
Unsuitable Accommodation Order	Physical and safety	Temporary accommodation for children and pregnant women if B&B accommodation is provided for more than 14 days	Only relevant to households with children or pregnant women Not relevant to refuges for women and children
Tolerable standard	Physical	All	Not particularly relevant as few homes fall below tolerable standard
Overcrowding	Physical	All	The overcrowding standard old and distant from contemporary expectations of housing. Of most relevance to larger households in TA

The guidance for physical standards of temporary accommodation include that it should be safe and secure; suitable for disability requirements; clean; heated well; with adequate access to on site cooking, bathroom and washing facilities. It should also have adequate communal living space (including for children to play or do homework) and have a suitable standard of furniture.

The suitability standards dictate that accommodation should be sufficient to cater to the specific needs of the applicant and their household; this is therefore evaluated on a per applicant rather than per property basis. Location and physical features are relevant in this context.

The service standards provide that an assessment of need should be carried out with appropriate referrals made, and periodically reviewed, such that flexible and needs-led support is provided.

The management standards include that there should be procedures for moving in and out of accommodation and protection of possessions; the opportunity for residents to discuss their stay and needs; sufficient numbers of staff to realise these standards; written occupancy agreements; and a rent statement of charges and how they are paid (in light of introduction of Universal Credit).

Wales: Homelessness Order 2015 – Suitability of Accommodation

The standards which must be met in Wales when providing temporary accommodation are set out in the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2015.¹⁸⁸

Part 1 of the Order lists the matters to be taken into account when determining suitability of accommodation for persons who are or may be in priority need. These are: specific health needs; proximity and accessibility of family support; disability; proximity and accessibility of medical facilities and other support services; distance from the authority; disruption; proximity of alleged perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse.

B&B and shared accommodation is not deemed acceptable for a person in priority need unless it meets the higher standard, or an exception applies. Exceptions include:

- Occupancy is under two weeks;
- Occupancy of higher standard B&Bs is under six weeks;

¹⁸⁸ [The Homelessness \(Suitability of Accommodation \(Wales\) Order 2015](#)

- Occupant chooses to remain in spite of offer of alternative accommodation (up until six weeks).

Further details of exceptions are found in Article 7 of Part 2.

PRS accommodation is not deemed suitable for homeless applicants in priority need where the accommodation is not in a reasonable physical condition; it does not comply with all statutory requirements relating to fire, gas, electrical, carbon monoxide and other safety; or the landlord is not considered fit and proper.

England: Homelessness Code of Guidance – Suitability of accommodation

Local authorities in England have an interim duty to accommodate homeless households under section 188(1) of the Housing Act 1996.¹⁸⁹ The accommodation provided must be 'suitable' for the applicant and his or her household. However, applicants do not have a right to request a review of the suitability of the temporary accommodation. A review of the temporary accommodation can be requested by applicants once the authority has accepted that a main homelessness duty is owed.

The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities¹⁹⁰ (Chapter 17) sets out the factors that determine the suitability of accommodation secured under the 1996 Act, which includes temporary accommodation. Factors include:

- Needs, requirements and circumstances of each household;
- Space and arrangement;
- Health and safety;
- Affordability; and
- Location.

It is noted that accommodation, which is suitable for a short period, under the interim duty to accommodate, is not necessarily suitable for a longer period, for example to discharge a duty.

Housing authorities are also required to continually review the suitability of accommodation, and to assess accommodation suitability with regard to each household individually.

¹⁸⁹ [Housing Act 1996: Section 188 - Interim duty to accommodate in case of apparent priority need.](#)

¹⁹⁰ [UK Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities](#)

Section 210(1) of the Housing Act 1996¹⁹¹ requires housing authorities, when assessing suitability of accommodation, to have regard to Parts 9 and 10 of the Housing Act 1985 (slum clearance and overcrowding), as well as Parts 1 to 4 of the Housing Act 2004 (housing conditions, licensing of HMOs, selective licensing of other accommodation, additional control provisions).

Private rented accommodation

The suitability of privately rented accommodation offered to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness is covered in Article 3 of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012.¹⁹²

A private rented property is unsuitable if any of the following apply:

- (a) it is not in a reasonable physical condition;
- (b) electrical equipment supplied with the accommodation does not meet the requirements of Schedule 1 to the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016;¹⁹³
- (c) the landlord has not taken reasonable fire safety precautions with the accommodation and any furnishings supplied with it;
- (d) the landlord has not taken reasonable precautions to prevent the possibility of carbon monoxide poisoning in the accommodation;
- (e) the landlord is not a fit and proper person to act in the capacity of landlord;
- (f) it is a house in multiple occupation subject to licensing under section 55 of the Housing Act 2004¹⁹⁴ and is not licensed;
- (g) it is subject to additional licensing under section 56 of the Housing Act 2004¹⁹⁵ and is not licensed;
- (h) it forms part of residential property which does not have a valid Energy Performance Certificate as required by the Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012;¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ [Housing Act 1996: Section 210 - Suitability of accommodation](#)

¹⁹² [The Homelessness \(Suitability of Accommodation\) \(England\) Order 2012](#)

¹⁹³ [The Electrical Equipment \(Safety\) Regulations 2016: Schedule 1 - Principal elements of the safety objectives for electrical equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits](#)

¹⁹⁴ [Housing Act 2004: Section 55 - Licensing of HMOs to which this Part applies](#)

¹⁹⁵ [Housing Act 2004: Section 56 - Designation of areas subject to additional licensing](#)

¹⁹⁶ [The Energy Performance of Buildings \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2012](#)

- (i) it is or forms part of relevant premises which do not have a current gas safety record in accordance with regulation 36 of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998;¹⁹⁷
- (j) the landlord has not provided a written tenancy agreement to the housing authority which the landlord proposes to use for the purposes of a private rented sector offer, and which the housing authority considers to be adequate. It is expected that the housing authority should review the tenancy agreement to ensure that it sets out, ideally in a clear and comprehensible way, the tenant's obligations, for example a clear statement of the rent and other charges, and the responsibilities of the landlord, but does not contain unfair or unreasonable terms, such as call-out charges for repairs or professional cleaning at the end of the tenancy.

Health and safety: fire

According to The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005,¹⁹⁸ landlords, owners or managing agents must carry out a fire risk assessment of the common/shared parts of multi occupied residential buildings and must maintain adequate fire safety measures to manage the risk of fire-related loss of life.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation

Under Part 10 of the 1985 Housing Act,¹⁹⁹ a room provided within an HMO may be defined as a 'dwelling', and the room and space standards are therefore applicable.

B&B accommodation should only be used for very short-term stays and should be avoided wherever possible (except in those cases where it is the most appropriate option for the applicant).

B&Bs are not deemed suitable accommodation for applicants with family commitments²⁰⁰ under Part 7 of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003.²⁰¹

Where B&B accommodation is used to accommodate a homeless applicant, it falls within the definition of an HMO.

¹⁹⁷ [The Gas Safety \(Installation and Use\) Regulations 1998](#)

¹⁹⁸ [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)

¹⁹⁹ [Housing Act 1985: Part X - Overcrowding](#)

²⁰⁰ Where 'family commitments' includes applicants who are pregnant women, those with whom a pregnant woman resides or might reasonably be expected to reside, and those with whom dependent children reside or might be reasonably expected to reside.

²⁰¹ [The Homelessness \(Suitability of Accommodation\) \(England\) Order 2003](#)

HMOs must be healthy and safe but also “provide acceptable, decent standards for people who may be unrelated to each other and who are sharing basic facilities.”

There is government regulation setting out the minimum ‘amenity standards’ required for a property to be granted an HMO licence.²⁰² However, housing authorities may adopt their own local classification, amenity specification or minimum standards for B&B and other shared accommodation provided as temporary accommodation.

Affordability

Under Section 210(2), the 1996 Order²⁰³ specifies that a housing authority must take into account whether the accommodation is affordable by the person, taking account of all forms of income and savings, the cost of the accommodation, payments they are required to make under a court order to a spouse or child, and other reasonable living expenses.

Location

Section 208(1) of the 1996 Act²⁰⁴ requires that authorities shall secure accommodation within their own district.

Where this is not reasonably possible, the authority must consider the distance of the accommodation from their own district. Other considerations include established links between the applicant and schools, doctors, social workers and other key services and support; the location of their workplace; education needs; health and wellbeing needs; and transport accessibility levels.

It is recommended that housing authorities who are likely to need to make out of district placements should develop policies for the procurement and allocation of temporary accommodation to help ensure suitability requirements are met.

Example: WREN Standards

Many local authorities in England set their own local standards for temporary accommodation, which suppliers must meet. As an example of this, the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Enfield and Newham are collaborating as WREN Housing Solutions on the

²⁰² [National Residential Landlords Association: Introduction to Documents, Forms & Guides](#)

²⁰³ [The Homelessness \(Suitability of Accommodation\) Order 1996 - Article 2](#)

²⁰⁴ [Housing Act 1996 - Section 208](#)

procurement of shared and self-contained accommodation, and private sector leased accommodation, on behalf of homeless households, and have agreed joint standards.

WREN has set out its own specification for the provision of nightly let accommodation and specification for the private sector leasing scheme, which both include quite detailed external and internal property standards, as well as detailed procedural requirements for managing the accommodation and a number of template agreements and other documentation. These specifications are supplied separately, attached as annexes, and cover thousands of units of temporary accommodation between the four boroughs.

Health and Social Care Standards relevant to Temporary Accommodation

Scotland: Health and Social Care Standards

Scotland is the only area of the UK or Republic of Ireland where housing support services are directly regulated. The Care Inspectorate Scotland is responsible for the regulation of care and support but includes within its remit providers of housing support services.

Care Inspectorate guidance indicates that the largest group of people accessing this form of support is older people living in sheltered housing. The full range of potential service users is broad including homeless people; refugees; women escaping domestic violence; people with a chronic illness; people with a physical impairment or learning disability; ex-offenders; people with drug and alcohol related problem; and others who need support. These categories are similar to the categories of service user that benefit from the Supporting People programme in Northern Ireland and were originally derived from SP categories when the programme was assimilated into health and social care provision in Scotland.

Homeless households may use these services when their accommodation is temporary (for example, in a crisis) or when they are being re-housed.

The focus of the regulation of these services is based on the Health and Social Care Standards, published by the Scottish Government in June 2017 and in use from April 2018.²⁰⁵ These new standards were designed to better reflect changes in national and local policies, developments in scrutiny and improvement systems, and to promote better personal outcomes.

The standards are focused on the principles of dignity and respect; compassion; be included; responsive care and support; and wellbeing.

²⁰⁵ [Scotland: Health and Social Care Standards: my support, my life](#)

The standards are set out in five headline outcomes as follows:

1. I experience high quality care and support that is right for me
2. I am fully involved in all decisions about my care and support
3. I have confidence in the people who support and care for me
4. I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support
5. I experience a high quality environment if the organisation provides the premises

Each of those outcomes has a corresponding set of descriptive statements that set out the standard of care a person can expect. The fifth outcome regarding a “high quality environment” pertains to the physical standards of the accommodation itself. It is broken down to a list of descriptive statements, as set out below.

5: I experience a high quality environment if the organisation provides the premises

Dignity and respect

- 5.1 *I can use an appropriate mix of private and communal areas, including accessible outdoor space, because the premises have been designed or adapted for high quality care and support.*
- 5.2 *I can easily access a toilet from the rooms I use and can use this when I need to.*
- 5.3 *I have an accessible, secure place to keep my belongings.*
- 5.4 *If I require intimate personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed.*

Compassion

- 5.5 *I experience a service that is the right size for me.*
- 5.6 *If I experience care and support in a group, I experience a homely environment and can use a comfortable area with soft furnishings to relax.*
- 5.7 *If I live in a care the premises are designed and organised so that I can experience small group living, including access to a kitchen, where possible.*

Be included

- 5.8 *I experience a service as near as possible to people who are important to me and my home area if I want this and if it is safe.*

- 5.9 I experience care and support free from isolation because the location and type of premises enable me to be an active member of the local community if this is appropriate.
- 5.10 If I experience 24 hour care, I am connected, including access to a telephone, radio, TV and the internet.
- 5.11 I can independently access the parts of the premises I use, and the environment has been designed to promote this.
- 5.12 If I live in a care home, I can control the lighting, ventilation, heating and security of my bedroom.
- 5.13 If I live in a care home, I can decide on the decoration, furnishing and layout of my bedroom, including bringing my own furniture and fittings where possible.
- 5.14 If I live in a care home and there are separate facilities for people who support and care for me, these are in keeping with the homely environment.
- 5.15 If I am an adult living in a care home I can choose to see visitors in private and plan for a friend, family member or my partner to sometimes stay over.

Responsive care and support

- 5.16 The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes.

Wellbeing

- 5.17 My environment is secure and safe.
- 5.18 My environment is relaxed, welcoming, peaceful and free from avoidable and intrusive noise and smells.
- 5.19 My environment has plenty of natural light and fresh air, and the lighting, ventilation and heating can be adjusted to meet my needs and wishes.
- 5.20 I have enough physical space to meet my needs and wishes.
- 5.21 I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices.
- 5.22 I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.
- 5.23 If I live in a care home, I can use a private garden.

5.24 If I live in a care home and want to keep a pet, the service will try to support this to happen.

5.25 As a child or young person living in care home, I might need or want to share my bedroom with someone else and I am involved in this decision.

5.26 As an adult living in a care home, I have my own bedroom that meets my needs but can choose to live with and share a bedroom with my partner, relative or close friend.

5.27 As an adult living in a care home, I have enough space for me to sit comfortably with a visitor in my bedroom.

5.28 As an adult living in a care home, I have ensuite facilities with a shower and can choose to use a bath if I want. If I live in a small care home that has not been purpose built, I might need to share a bathroom with other people.

The standards as listed above rely on a great deal of understanding of the person to whom they apply, as well as their needs, and largely do not contain directly quantifiable physical property standards.

Exceptions include the requirement for a secure place to keep belongings, an accessible toilet from the rooms being used, a comfortable area with soft furnishings, and independent access to the part of the premises in use. Even in these cases, there is significant room for interpretation within the standards.

That being said, when service providers register with the Inspectorate, they must show that they are capable of meeting the standards, which includes showing that the premises are fit for purpose.

APPENDIX 7: DATA GATHERED ON HOMELESSNESS AND THE USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

In England, since 2018/19, a comprehensive and dynamic monitoring system in relation to the operation of homelessness services has been in place called H-CLIC. This allows for the cross-tabulation of a number of factors at the local authority level.

In Scotland there is a standard monitoring system used by all authorities, but this appears to be more complex in that there are separate elements – a much smaller equivalent of H-CLIC and some spreadsheet-based tools that collect separate information. In Scotland less information appears to be collected in relation to the usage of temporary accommodation. On the other hand, there is more detail about the reasons for someone being homeless and of the presence of support needs. A significant difference is that in Scotland the actual take-up of support services is recorded. Another difference is that the Scottish equivalent of H-CLIC actually records the reasons behind all approaches to Housing Options services and the actions taken. In England H-CLIC only requires LAs to record information about households where an assessment is made that a homelessness duty is owed (a duty to prevent or relieve homelessness or full re-housing duty).

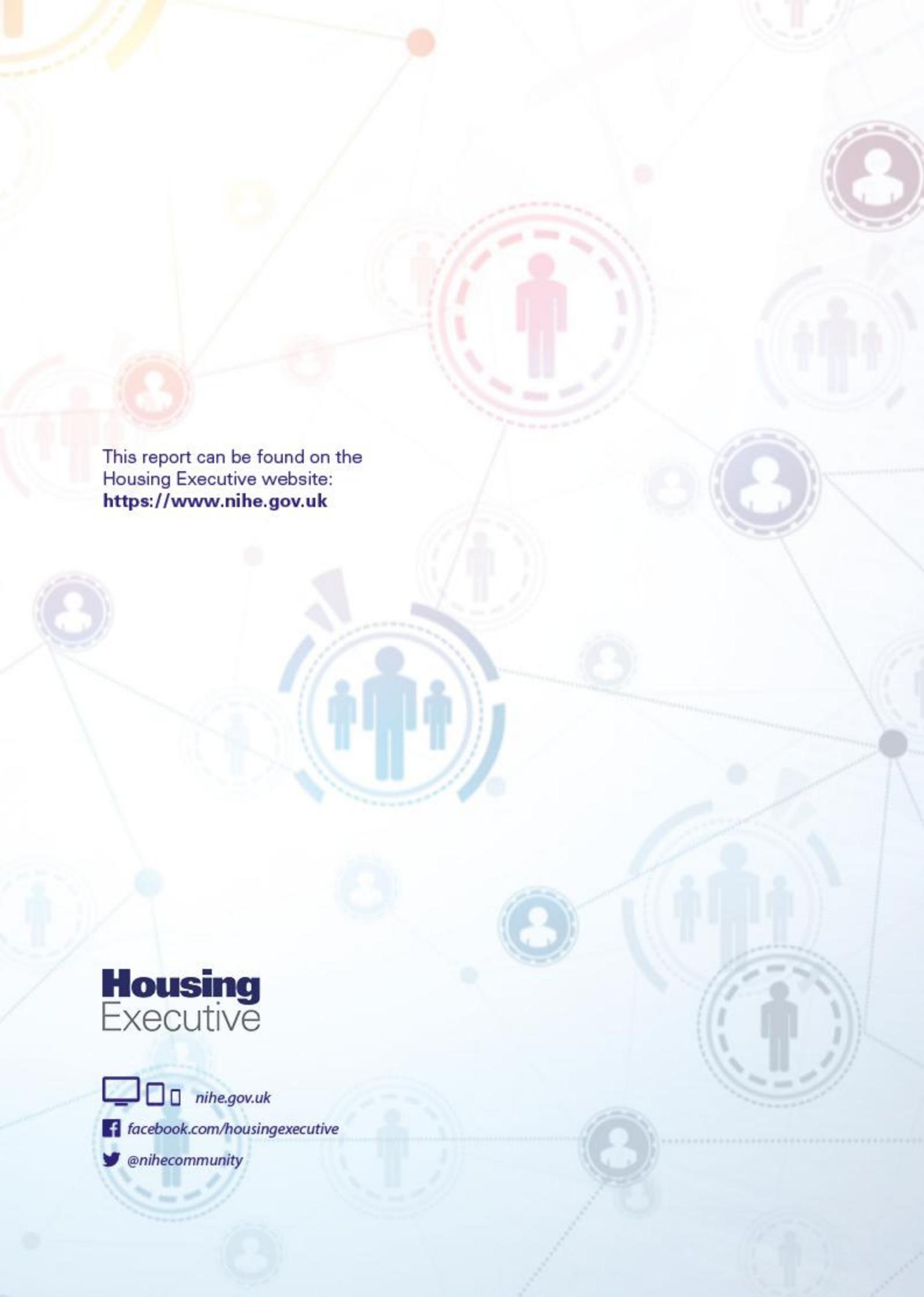
In Wales there is a set of published reports online and we have only been able to find a return that LAs have to submit to the Welsh Government which populates the nationally set tables. In other words, there is no standard system specified for collecting the information (as was the case pre-H-CLIC in England). The published reports in Wales are online and not in a downloadable spreadsheet format. They also are mostly at national as opposed to local authority level. In England and Scotland more tables are published at local authority level. Generally, information on temporary accommodation placements is at a fixed point in time rather than the total number of placements made.

Campbell Tickell has looked in detail at the information collected by local authorities in each of the UK jurisdictions and what is published by the relevant governments. These results are summarised in the following tables.

England		
Data Area	What is Collected	What is Published
Homelessness presentations by household type, principal reason and additional support needs	Homelessness presentations split by assessment result – either a prevention cases, a relief case or a full duty case. No information recorded on those for whom no duty is assessed. Household type derivable from information recorded. Detailed information on reason for homelessness recorded. Detailed information on support needs recorded.	Numbers of households where duty accepted by different reasons for homelessness and household type - down to LA level Additional support needs only down to region
Outcomes from these presentations	Reason as to why cases are closed recorded Accommodation outcome recorded Whether contact is lost is recorded Proportion provided with temporary accommodation recorded	Prevention and Relief duty ended by reason (down to LA Level) and accommodation secured (but only down to Region level), and full duty accommodation outcome (only down to Region level)
Who is using TA in terms of household type, people with support needs	Household type derivable, support needs derivable	Households in temporary accommodation by type and household type published down to LA level – but this is at a fixed point not cumulative number of placements
Type of temporary accommodation used including whether out of area	Detailed information collected including LA area of temporary accommodation placement	Type of temporary accommodation used – but only at fixed point in time (end of quarters) – not total number of placements over time – down to LA level
Outcomes from temporary accommodation placements specifically	Length of time in temporary accommodation derivable Possible to relate exit from temporary accommodation with accommodation outcome/reason for duty ending	Nothing

Scotland		
Data Area	What is Collected	What is Published
Homelessness presentations by household type, principal reason and additional support needs	<p>Reasons for homelessness recorded</p> <p>Detail of support needs recorded</p> <p>Vulnerabilities of all those approaching Housing Options recorded as well as reason for approaching</p>	<p>Detailed reasons for becoming homeless and reasons for failing to maintain accommodation (not at LA Level)</p> <p>Proportion of homeless acceptances with support needs (but not detailed) down to LA level</p>
Outcomes from these presentations	<p>Actions taken recorded</p> <p>Accommodation outcomes for cases closed, and accommodation used between assessment and case being closed</p> <p>Whether support was actually provided recorded</p>	Accommodation outcome down to LA level
Who is using temporary accommodation in terms of household type, people with support needs	Information on people provided with temporary accommodation not clear	Number of households entering temporary accommodation by household type – not down to LA level
Type of temporary accommodation used including whether out of area	Type of temporary accommodation offered and outcome of offer recorded	Numbers in temporary accommodation by type of temporary accommodation – but at fixed point not total number of placements – down to LA level
Outcomes from temporary accommodation placements specifically	Date of entry and exit recorded so length of time could be derived	None

Wales		
Data Area	What is Collected	What is Published
Information on homelessness presentations by household type, principal reason and additional support needs	Can only be sure that the information published nationally is what is available locally	Numbers for whom duty accepted down to LA level Reason for homelessness for those owed duty by household type at national level
Outcomes from these presentations	Can only be sure that the information published nationally is what is available locally	Reasons for discharge of duty at national level Outcomes at national level by household type Actions taken to prevent homelessness – at national level
Who is using temporary accommodation in terms of household type, people with support needs	Can only be sure that the information published nationally is what is available locally	Just totals
Type of temporary accommodation used including whether out of area	Can only be sure that the information published nationally is what is available locally	Placements by temporary accommodation type at fixed point Number of placements in B&B specifically – down to LA level
Outcomes from temporary accommodation placements specifically	Can only be sure that the information published nationally is what is available locally	Length of time in B&B – down to LA level

The background features a network of interconnected nodes and lines. The nodes are represented by various icons: a single person, a family of three, and a group of four. These icons are enclosed in circular frames with dashed borders. The network is primarily light blue and white, with a few nodes in shades of orange and red. The overall theme is community and social connections.

This report can be found on the
Housing Executive website:
<https://www.nihe.gov.uk>

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