Homelessness, Temporary Accommodation and Housing Support Evidence Paper for the Development of the Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021

Housing Development Section

April 2016

**North Lanarkshire Council
Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021
Homelessness, Temporary Accommodation and Housing Support
Evidence Paper**

1.   Introduction

1.1   Responsibility for homelessness lies with Local Authorities across the country. The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness Etc (Scotland) Act 2003 provide the statutory framework for addressing homelessness and the provision of temporary accommodation and Housing Support. Additional responsibilities were placed on local authorities in the delivery of housing support to homeless households with the introduction of the Housing Support Duty in June 2013.

1.2   In order to understand the nature of homelessness, it is important to consider who may be at risk of homelessness and the reasons why this may occur. Homelessness data confirms that the support needs of applicants play a significant role in their ability to sustain accommodation. In 2009 the Scottish Government published statutory guidance focussing on preventing and alleviating homelessness and this has been a key driver in changing practice across Scotland. Homeless prevention requires a concerted and co-ordinated approach by local authorities and their wider stakeholders to ensure that appropriate advice, information, temporary accommodation and support services are available to those who need it.

1.3   In 2011, North Lanarkshire Council Housing Service introduced a homeless prevention and sustainability framework as well as a positive outcomes focus with the intention of improving the lives of homeless households and working to prevent those at risk of homelessness from falling into crisis.

1.4   Scottish Government Local Housing Strategy Guidance (August 2014) requires local authorities to consider how they can contribute to preventing and addressing homelessness as well as ensuring that there is sufficient suitable and appropriate temporary accommodation and housing support services available.

2.   Aims

2.1   This Statement aims to quantify the extent of homelessness in North Lanarkshire and take account of national priorities and guidance to prevent and alleviate homelessness where possible. It will also set out the profile of temporary accommodation and the housing support provision across North Lanarkshire.

2.2   In order to achieve this aim, this paper will explain the profile of homeless applicants in North Lanarkshire and set out the causes and influencing factors that contribute to people becoming homeless in the first place. It will consider how homelessness affects the health and wellbeing of these individuals, the ways in which this impacts on their everyday lives and the various support interventions provided and how these could be improved.

2.3 Further, this paper will seek to identify a series of goals and priorities with key indicators to measure progress and outcomes. The key focus will be to improve housing options and homeless prevention activity and ensure appropriate temporary accommodation and housing support provision is available across the partnership to holistically meet the needs of individuals concerned.

2.4 A series of actions have been identified through evidence included in this document as well as from a series of stakeholder and service user events across North Lanarkshire and are incorporated into Action Plans at the end.

2.5 This paper will be set into three parts; homelessness, temporary accommodation and housing support; to enable the clear identification of each element and associated actions.

2.6 Lastly, this evidence paper will make reference to other Statements, Strategies and Evidence Papers where there are cross-cutting issues to support the production of the LHS.

3. National Policy and Legislative Context

3.1 Over the last few years, some Scottish Government targets around homelessness and housing support have been delivered including the abolition of priority need in December 2012 and the introduction of the Housing Support Duty in June 2013.

3.2 Activity to develop broader housing options advice services is ongoing and supported by the locality HUBS across the country. National Housing Options Guidance has recently been published and work is now ongoing to integrate this into our practices. A Training Toolkit is also in development which will provide support and practical assistance to housing advice agencies at a local level.

3.3 The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) was introduced from 1 April 2012 and aims to improve the quality and value of services provided by social landlords and support the Scottish Government's aim to create a safer and stronger Scotland. The SSHC includes a range of outcomes across key themes:

- Customer/Landlord Relationship
- Housing Quality and Maintenance
- Neighbourhood and Community
- Access to Housing

3.4 The SSHC outcomes for Access to Housing place specific responsibilities on social landlords to:

- work together to provide appropriate housing options advice enabling people to make informed decisions about their housing choices;
- provide support to those who need it to sustain their accommodation; and
- ensure that homeless people have quick and easy access to advice, suitable good quality temporary or emergency accommodation and are offered ongoing support to resettle and maintain a permanent home.

3.5   A radical change to Private Rented Sector tenancies is planned and consultation has already taken place on proposals. Other legislative requirements have been placed on the Private Rented Sector to improve standards including the introduction of Tenant Information Packs and mandatory Tenancy Deposit Schemes.

3.6   Furthermore, the integration of Health and Social Care is currently underway and will deliver major transformational change in the way health and social care services are delivered. Homelessness is not in the mandatory category to be included at this stage however discussions will be ongoing in North Lanarkshire over the next few years and will likely feature some homelessness and housing support functions being included, specifically around meeting health and wellbeing needs.

3.6   The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2015 was implemented from 1st April 2015 and expands the Corporate Parenting role to Housing Services as well as wider agencies. The act amended the definition of Care Leaver and expanded Corporate Parenting responsibilities to these young people until they are 26 years old. This means that there are additional factors to be considered when dealing with young care leavers and will require a multi-agency approach to supporting this vulnerable group.

4.   Local Policy Context

4.1   Preventing and alleviating homelessness and the provision of housing support services have been identified as key priorities within three of the Local Outcome Themes within North Lanarkshire's Corporate and Community Plan 2013 to 2018. The three Local Outcomes Themes they fall under are:

- Health and Wellbeing:
- Regeneration
- Developing the Partnership

4.2   These key priorities contribute to a number of Scottish Government National Outcomes including 'live longer, healthier lives', 'tackled significant inequalities' and 'improved life chances for those at risk'.

4.3   Welfare reforms are having a significant impact on local residents across North Lanarkshire. The Scottish Government are currently underwriting the cost of the under-occupancy charge or "bedroom tax"; however this may not be sustainable longer term. A household's inability to fully understand and engage with the DWP in terms of the 'Claimant Commitment' and understanding the various rules may result in sanctions. Impacts of the benefit cap and Universal Credit will also affect local people; however homeless households are generally more vulnerable and could therefore be disproportionately affected by welfare reforms compared with other groups of the population.

4.4   Legislative requirements of Self Directed Support (SDS) do not currently apply to homeless households, however a small research pilot has been completed with positive results and a wider project is now underway and will include a sample of homeless households in North Lanarkshire. It is too early at this stage to speculate on the potential implementation of SDS to homeless households, however further

discussions and consideration will be required in the medium term to plan and action appropriately.

4.5   The LHS 2011-2016 included a key aim to reduce homelessness through the provision of high quality housing options and support services. This was backed up by a series of actions to improve existing service provision, develop new solutions and implement targeted homeless prevention activities.

5.   Homelessness Evidence for North Lanarkshire

5.1   *Profile of Homeless Applicants*

5.1.1   There were 1,957 homeless applications in 2014/15 which is an increase of 4.5% (85) from 1,872 in 2013/14. This is the first rise in applications since 2005/06 when the figure was more than double the current number at 4,092. This compares to an overall decrease of 4% in Scotland as a whole. Applications increased in 12 other local authorities including Aberdeen, Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East and West Lothian and Stirling as well as North Lanarkshire. Early indications are that homeless applications in 2015/16 will be around 1,900 for the year and would be a reduction on 2014/15 applications.

5.1.2   The Scottish Government reported a continuing fall in applications and attributed this to the impact of housing options and homeless prevention across the country. However the reduction rate has slowed and suggests that current homeless prevention activity is unlikely to provide any further substantial reductions and may require renewed focus. The rise in homeless applications in North Lanarkshire may be affected by the lack of affordable housing for low income households and is also likely to be linked to the impacts of welfare reforms and the wider socio-economic difficulties facing local people in their communities.

Figure 1: Trend in Level of Homelessness Presentations to NLC
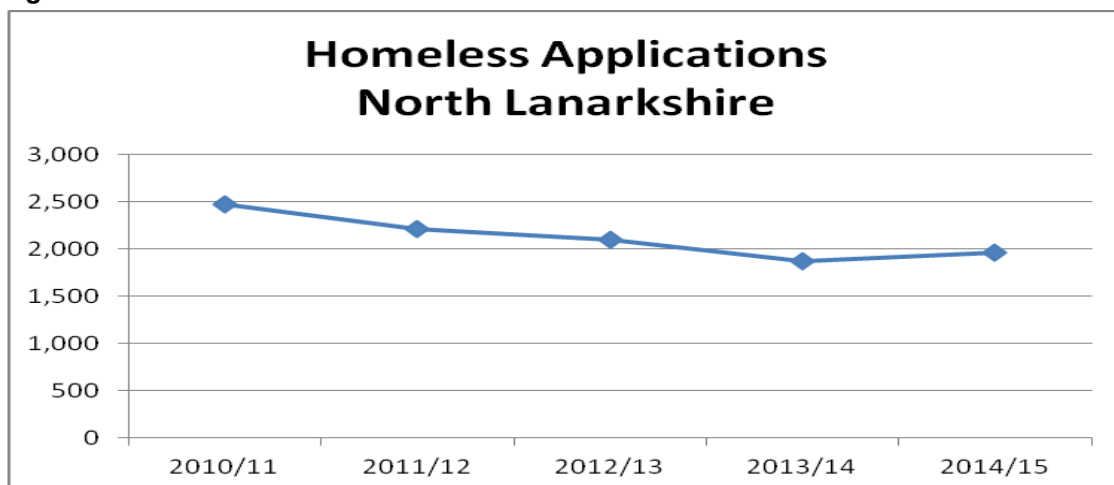
Source: NLC

5.1.3   In 2014-2015, North Lanarkshire Council housed 2,823 households in properties that became vacant in the year. The time taken to re-let homes has improved to an average of 26.9 days from 28.4 in 2013/14 as was reported in our Annual Return on

the Charter (ARC). Local authority housing options approaches vary across the country with some routing all homeless applicants through a housing options interview first and others less so. North Lanarkshire is one of six authorities where over 90% of all homeless applicants have had a housing options interview prior to making a homeless application[1].

5.1.4 Prevent1 statistics suggest that housing options and homelessness services run concurrently in a few authorities including North Lanarkshire where a homeless application is created at the same time as the housing options interview[2]. It is suggested that these applicants may present at time of crisis where homeless prevention and housing options work may be limited.

5.1.5 However, as part of the allocation process, every new tenant has a 'settling in visit' which provides an opportunity to discuss responsibilities of the council and the tenant and consider any housing support that may be required in order for the tenant to sustain their tenancy. A housing support assessment and subsequent plan is developed for those where there is an identified housing support need.

5.1.6 In May 2014, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) published its thematic inquiry into housing options in Scotland[3] and stated that housing options data was insufficient and that no conclusions can be drawn until regular data collection is implemented and evaluation of housing options approaches is completed.

5.1.7 North Lanarkshire Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of housing options activity and incorporates any amendments into existing action plans for continuous improvement. The continuous improvement process is underpinned by ongoing analysis and evaluation of housing options and homeless prevention data.

5.1.8 The national Housing Options Guidance has recently been published and work is now ongoing to incorporate this into our local practice. We await the introduction of the Training Toolkit currently in development which will support the delivery of broader housing options services at a local level.

5.1.9 As part of their housing options activity and discussions around the Private Rented Sector (PRS), locality housing teams have reported reluctance by people who approach the Housing Service to consider the PRS due to its lack of long term security, affordability and standard of property. It is clear that the perception of housing applicants plays a significant role in their considerations and choices.

5.1.10 The PRS and Affordability Evidence Papers will go into more detail than is noted here, but it is important to understand the role the Housing Service has played in the PRS over the last few years, particularly for homeless applicants. The Council has operated a Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (RDGS) since 1999. This was reviewed in 2012/13 due to a recognition that the criteria was very tight and was targeted purely at homeless households to assist the Council to discharge its homeless duty and did not fit with the housing options approach. The RDG Scheme was widened

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[1] Scottish Government – Operation of the Homeless Persons legislation in Scotland: 2014-16
[2] Scottish Government – Housing Options (PREVENT1) Statistics in Scotland : 2014/15
[3] Scottish Housing Regulator – Housing Options in Scotland; A thematic inquiry : 2014

to include almost any applicant 16 years or over who approached the Housing Service and could demonstrate a level of housing need. However the scheme appears to be used in only a handful of cases each year and seems to be linked to affordability, security of tenure and sub-standard properties from an applicant perspective. Additionally some landlords are unwilling to accept applicants on housing benefit whilst others have previously been involved in the scheme but not had all of their costs met and are therefore no longer interested. Applicants seeking housing in the PRS are supported through the Housing Options approach to search potential properties to rent and then to have a discussion and seek consent from their landlord to access the RDGS. The perceived standard, management, affordability and availability of landlords willing to accept RDGS cases is proving to be a significant barrier. It is hoped that the new Housing Options toolkit and our ongoing commitment to work more closely with private landlords will help to strengthen this area and increase uptake in the PRS in future.

5.1.11 Further the Housing Service hosts bi-annual Landlord Forum Events and produces Landlord Newsletters with the aim of engaging with the PRS to improve the standards of management and property conditions. All private landlords registered in North Lanarkshire are invited to attend (8,761 at April 2015) with places allocated on a first come first served basis, however these tend to be attended by the same landlords with attendance fairly low at around 60. Discussions with Private Landlords at the Forum events point to a reduced number wishing to involve themselves in RDGS and some have advised that they no longer take deposits as they then need to lodge them into one of the national tenancy deposit schemes. Around 75% of landlords in NL are single property landlords and they may therefore see the national tenancy deposit schemes as unhelpful or bureaucratic.

5.1.12 The under 35 age group will likely face the steepest challenges in seeking permanent accommodation and this is due to the shared room rate of the Local Housing Allowance. This is the maximum amount of housing benefit that can be claimed for those under 35 years which is currently £59.44 per week.   This means that a younger adult under 35 years would only be able to afford a private rent of £257.57 per month if they are on housing benefit. This clearly highlights the lack of affordable housing choices for this group as most private rents are significantly over this level.

5.1.13 Recent consultation events with stakeholders and the local population point to the potential of developing 'shared tenancy' schemes in North Lanarkshire where younger people would be matched together and would share the housing costs, thus ensuring a sustainable housing solution for this group. It is recognised however that not everyone is suited to sharing and this option would need to take account of the personal choices of individuals as well as ensuring appropriate training, risk assessment, support and dispute resolution processes are available.

5.1.14 As a proportion of all households in North Lanarkshire the number of homeless applications increased by 0.3% to 0.58% in 2014/15 which is the first increase over the five year period. In comparison, the proportion of homeless applications has continued to fall across Scotland to 0.67% in 2014/15, although this figure has remained consistently higher than North Lanarkshire

Figure 2: Homeless Applications as a Percentage of all Households
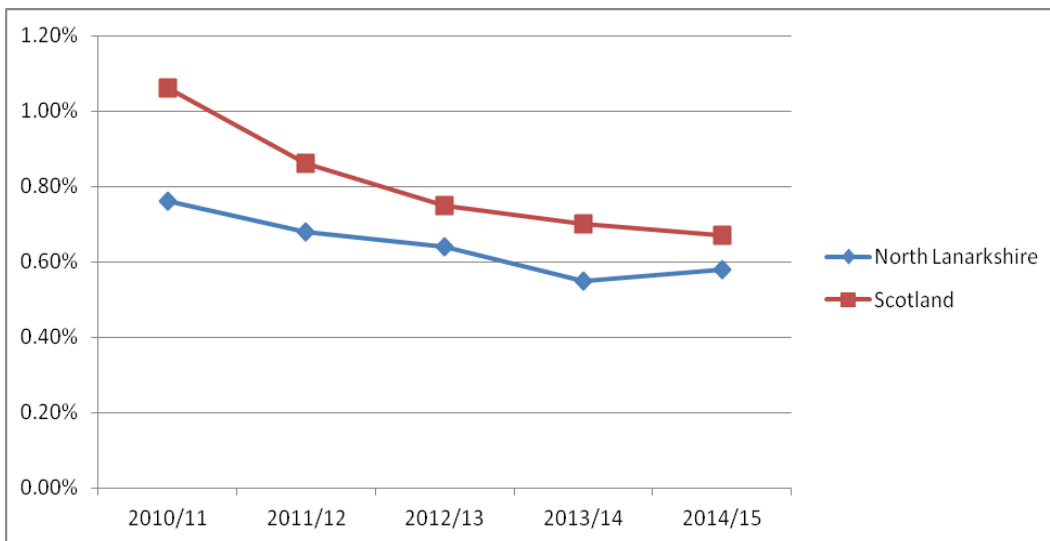
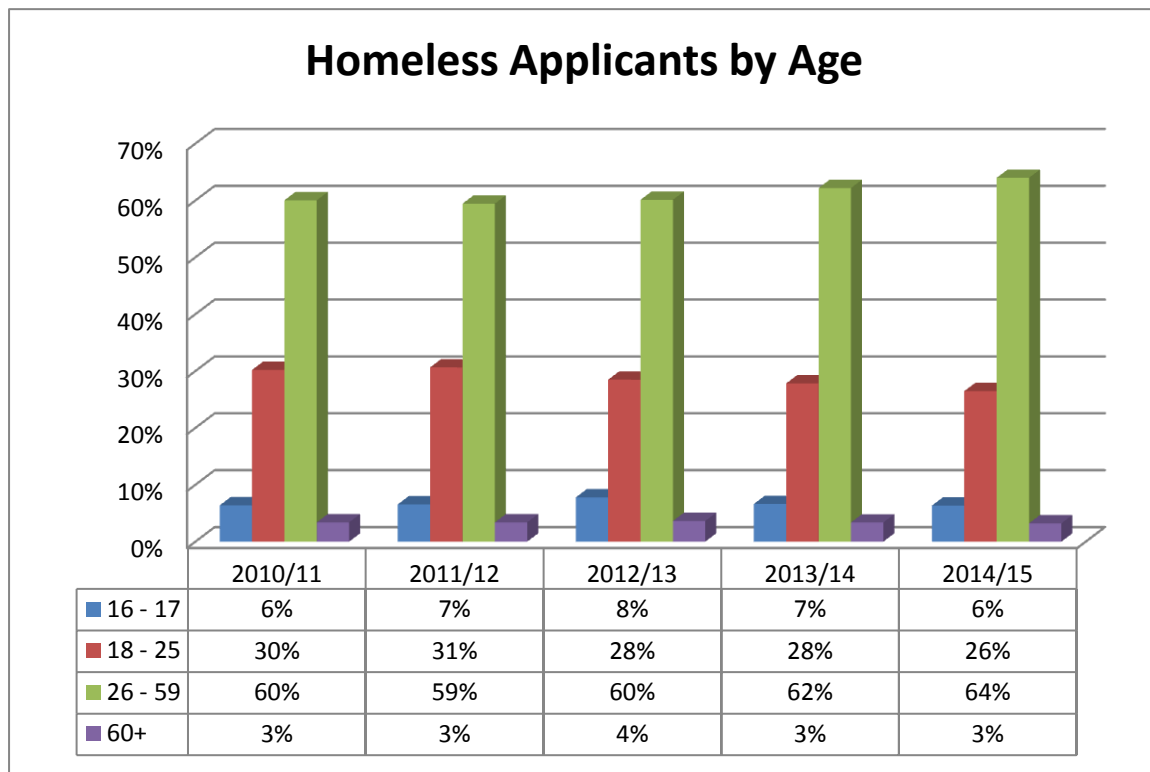Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

5.1.15   Young people 25 years and under represent 12.5% of the population in North Lanarkshire but 34.5% of all homeless applicants in 2013/14 and clearly shows that young people are disproportionately affected by homelessness. However it is recognised that homeless households do have a younger age profile and Scottish Government statistics highlight that young people aged 16 to 24 years represented 31.5% of all homeless applicants in Scotland in 2014/15. This suggests that wider prevention activities including mediation services are required to meet the needs of this vulnerable group to assist them to avoid the crisis of homelessness. Young people appear to be particularly affected by social isolation and sporadic engagement with some services that could address their needs. Over the last five years, the Housing Service has provided housing support specifically targeted to young people and have developed a Youth Housing Statement to consider the needs of young people more fully as well as the other issues and challenges faced by this particular group.

5.1.16   However, the predominant age of homeless applicants in North Lanarkshire are those in the 26 to 59 year age band who made up 64% of applicants in 2014/15. This is a rise of 4% in the last 5 years and it is likely that this rise is due to some applicants who were previously assessed as non priority and may well be coming back into services now that this part of the homeless assessment is no longer considered.

5.1.17   Figure 3 below shows that the level of young homeless people aged 16 to 17 years is 6% and has fallen by 2% since 2012/13, although was 6% in 2010/11. This suggests that very young people are being prevented from becoming homeless either through housing options or possibly prevention activities such as mediation. Those aged 18 to 25 years make up 26% of the homeless population and this figure has fallen back since the 30% recorded in 2010/11. Older people 60 years plus

represent 3% of homeless applicants, this figure has remained fairly consistent over the last five years.

Figure 3: Homeless Applicants by Age

Homeless Applicants by Age

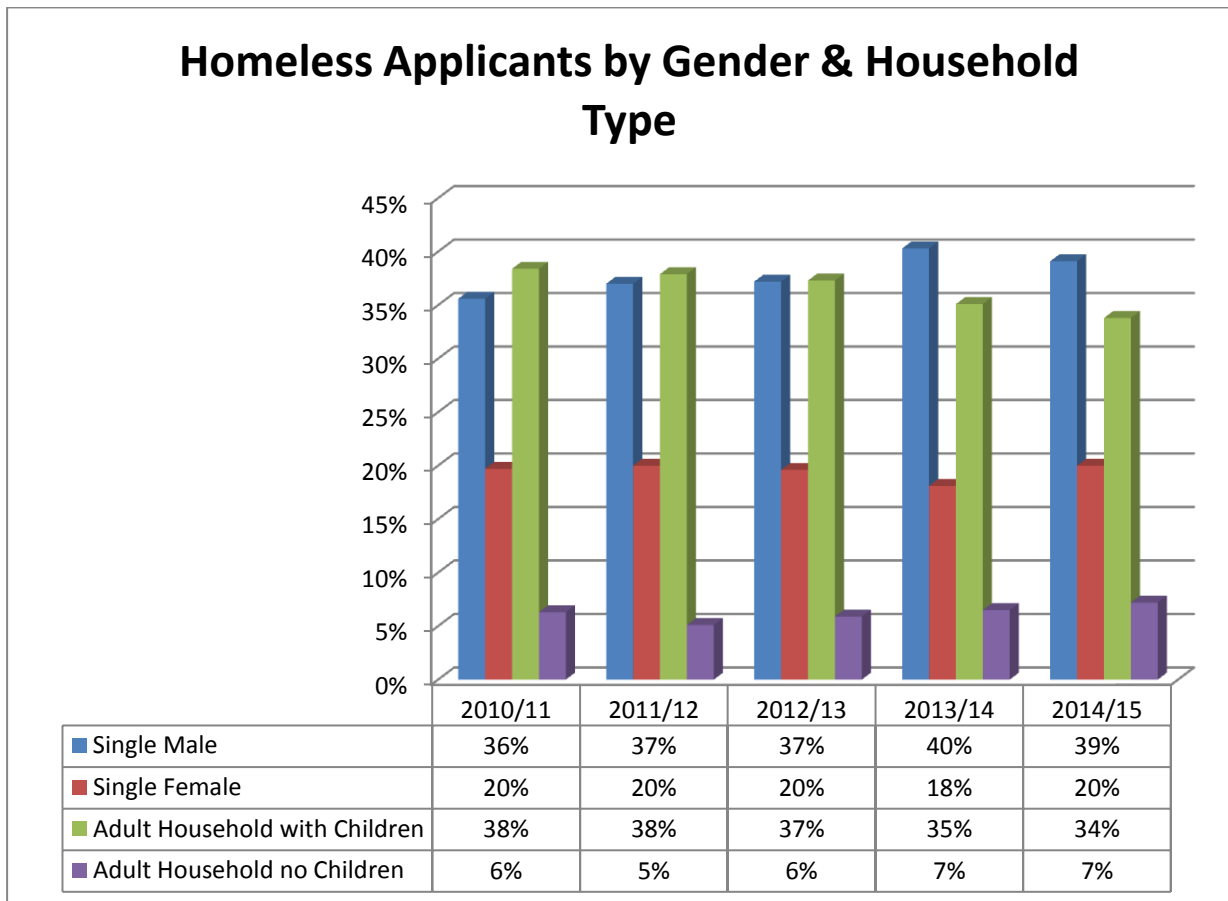|	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
■ 16 - 17	6%	7%	8%	7%	6%
■ 18 - 25	30%	31%	28%	28%	26%
■ 26 - 59	60%	59%	60%	62%	64%
■ 60+	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%

Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

5.1.18   The gender and household profile of homeless applicants in North Lanarkshire, as shown in figure 4, clearly highlights an increased level of single males at 39% in 2014/15, although this is still below the national average of 45%. All adult households appear to have slowly risen over the last three years to 7% and is 1% above the national average. Single females account for 20% of the homeless population and is similar to the national average of 21%. This figure has remained fairly consistent with the exception of a 2% fall in 2013/14. Households with children make up the second largest group of homeless applicants at 34% in 2014/15, which is 6% higher than the Scottish average although this has been slowly decreasing from 38% in 2011/12.

5.1.19   The household profile of homeless applicants in North Lanarkshire illustrates that there is an increased level of households with children. On further analysis, it would appear that 77% of all homeless households with children are single parent households and 67% of them are female. The household population profile for North Lanarkshire does highlight an increased level of single parent households at 10.9% compared with the Scottish average of 8.8% and is likely that single parent households are less resilient financially as a result of welfare reforms or are affected by wider social or economic issues and therefore more likely to be affected by homelessness than other groups of the population. An analysis of the reasons for homelessness amongst this group illustrate that 36% state relationship breakdown as their reason for homelessness with half of these identified as violent or abusive. An additional 13% of applicants were fleeing non domestic violence or harassment.

15% were subject to action taken by their landlord/lender to repossess the property and a further 15% were asked to leave. Households with children are a priority group for re-housing and further work will be completed to improve earlier intervention to prevent homelessness from occurring.
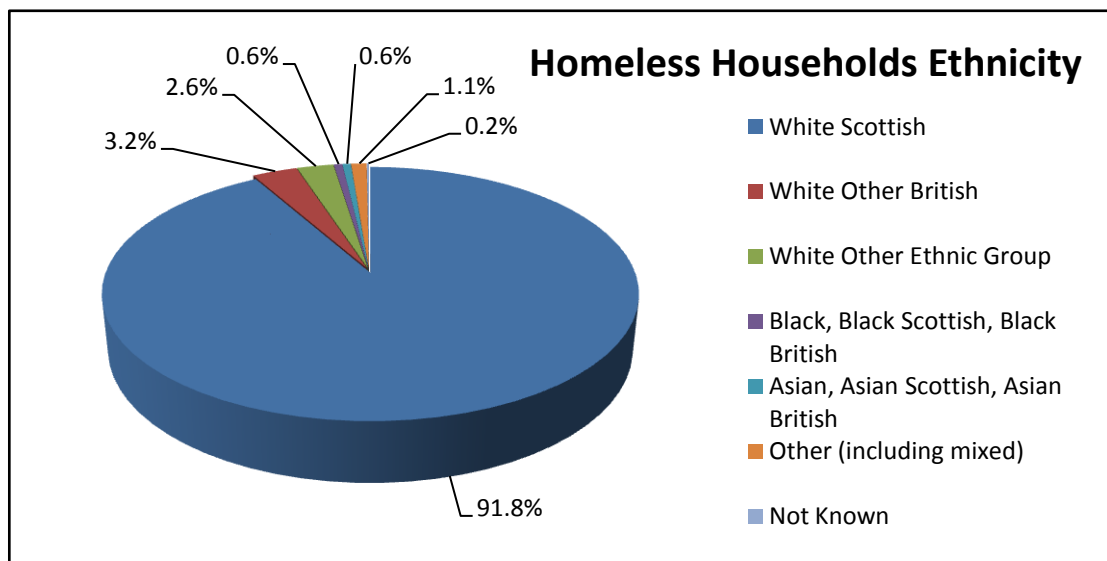
Figure 4: Homeless Applicants by Gender and Household Type

Homeless Applicants by Gender & Household Type

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Single Male	36%	37%	37%	40%	39%
Single Female	20%	20%	20%	18%	20%
Adult Household with Children	38%	38%	37%	35%	34%
Adult Household no Children	6%	5%	6%	7%	7%

Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

5.1.20 Figure 5 shows us that the ethnic origin of homeless applicants in North Lanarkshire is predominantly White Scottish who represent 91.8% of the homeless population. A further 5.8% are recorded as White with 3.2% British and 2.6% other ethnic group. A further 1% is recorded as Other and includes those of mixed race, 0.6% is Asian and 0.6% Black.

Figure 5: Homeless Applicants Ethnicity

Homeless Households Ethnicity

- 3.2%
- 2.6%
- 0.6%
- 0.6%
- 1.1%
- 0.2%
- 91.8%

Legend:
- White Scottish
- White Other British
- White Other Ethnic Group
- Black, Black Scottish, Black British
- Asian, Asian Scottish, Asian British
- Other (including mixed)
- Not Known

Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

5.1.21   When compared with the general North Lanarkshire population, it would appear that some ethnic minorities represent a higher proportion of homeless applicants. For instance, the White Other category represents 1.4% of the North Lanarkshire population but 2.6% of homeless applicants, whilst Other ethnic backgrounds (including mixed) is 0.3% of the population but 1.1% of homeless applicants. In contrast, Asian people represent 1.6% of the population but 0.6% of homeless applicants. These differences may be due to an increased level of movement from European countries such as Poland where there are less established family supports and networks in comparison to the more established Asian and Black communities and hence a lack of support from these communities to help people find a place to live.
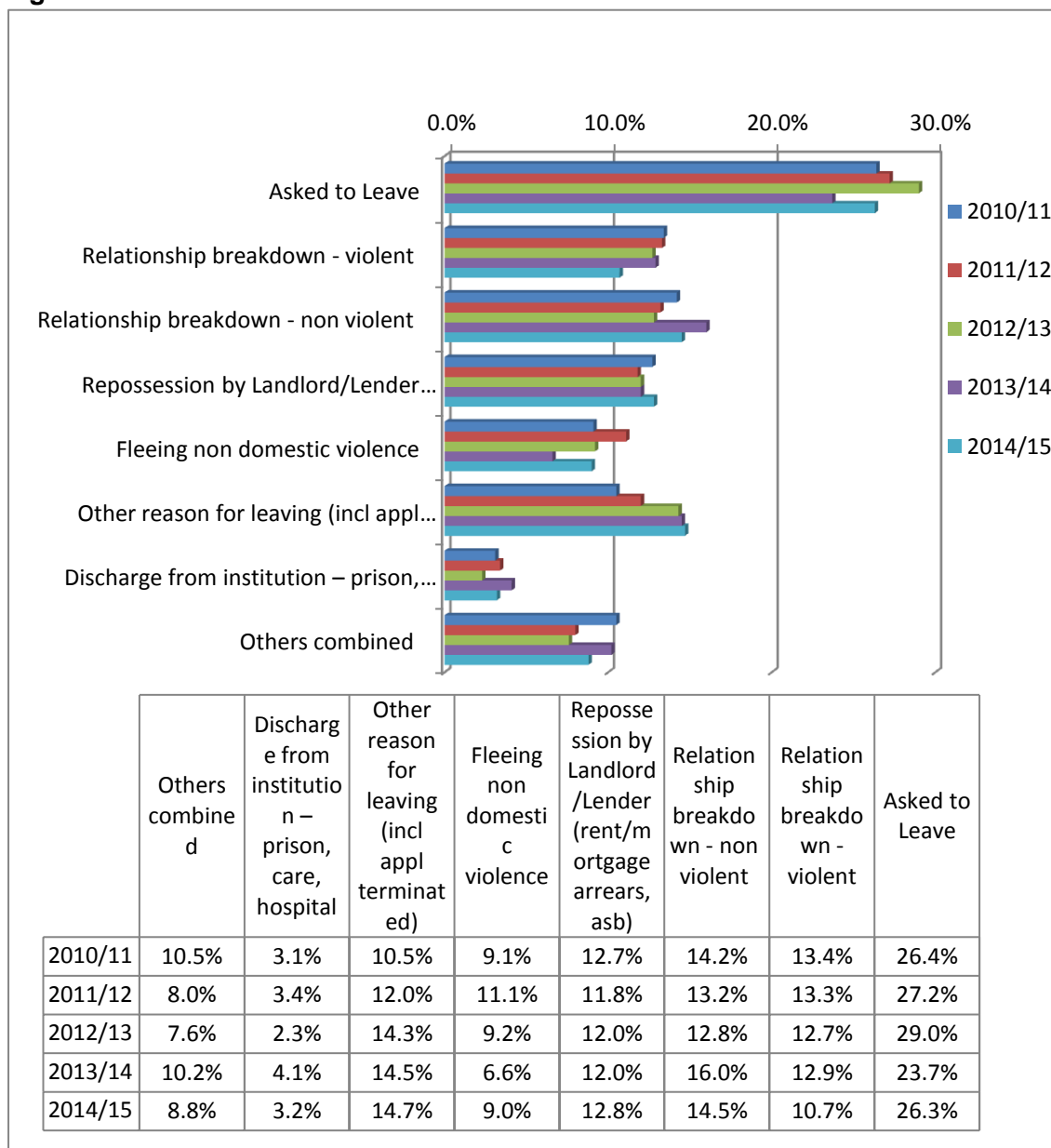
5.1.22   Whilst the ethnic profile of homeless applicants in North Lanarkshire highlights a higher proportion of minority groups, this is still lower than the national recorded figures for Scotland where 90% of homeless applicants were recorded as White, 1.5% as Black, 1.2% as Asian and 4% as Other.

5.1.23   Reasons for homelessness in North Lanarkshire have tended to be fairly consistent, although there have been some small variations year on year. Table 6 shows us a breakdown of the reasons stated by applicants:

- Asked to leave by parents, family or friends, etc and accounts for 26% of all applications or 514 applicants;
- Disputes within households or relationship breakdown also accounts for around a quarter with 11% of these defined as violent. The proportion of violent relationship breakdowns has reduced steadily over the last 5 years.
- Mortgage default and repossession action by landlords (rent arrears/anti social behaviour) is 12.8% or 251 applicants.
- Fleeing non domestic violence reduced in 2013/14 to 6.6% but returned to 9% in 2014/15.

- Other reasons for leaving accommodation or household, including applicant terminated, accounts for 14.7% or 287 applicants, a rise of 4% since 2010/11. This is likely to include a number of applicants who have terminated accommodation in the PRS due to affordability issues and has become more of a pressure for North Lanarkshire residents since the implementation of welfare reforms.

Figure 6: Reasons for Homelessness

	Others combined	Discharge from institution – prison, care, hospital	Other reason for leaving (incl appl terminated)	Fleeing non domestic violence	Repossession by Landlord/Lender (rent/mortgage arrears, asb)	Relationship breakdown - non violent	Relationship breakdown - violent	Asked to Leave
2010/11	10.5%	3.1%	10.5%	9.1%	12.7%	14.2%	13.4%	26.4%
2011/12	8.0%	3.4%	12.0%	11.1%	11.8%	13.2%	13.3%	27.2%
2012/13	7.6%	2.3%	14.3%	9.2%	12.0%	12.8%	12.7%	29.0%
2013/14	10.2%	4.1%	14.5%	6.6%	12.0%	16.0%	12.9%	23.7%
2014/15	8.8%	3.2%	14.7%	9.0%	12.8%	14.5%	10.7%	26.3%

Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

5.1.24 Disputes within households which are recorded as violent or abusive account for 11% of all homeless applications. This figure was previously recorded at 13% and had been quite static for the past four years, although the actual number of homeless applications from this group shows a decreasing trend and can be seen in Figure 7 below. This compares with the national average of 12% which has remained the same percentage as 2013/14 but the actual number of homeless applications from this group has increased very slightly.
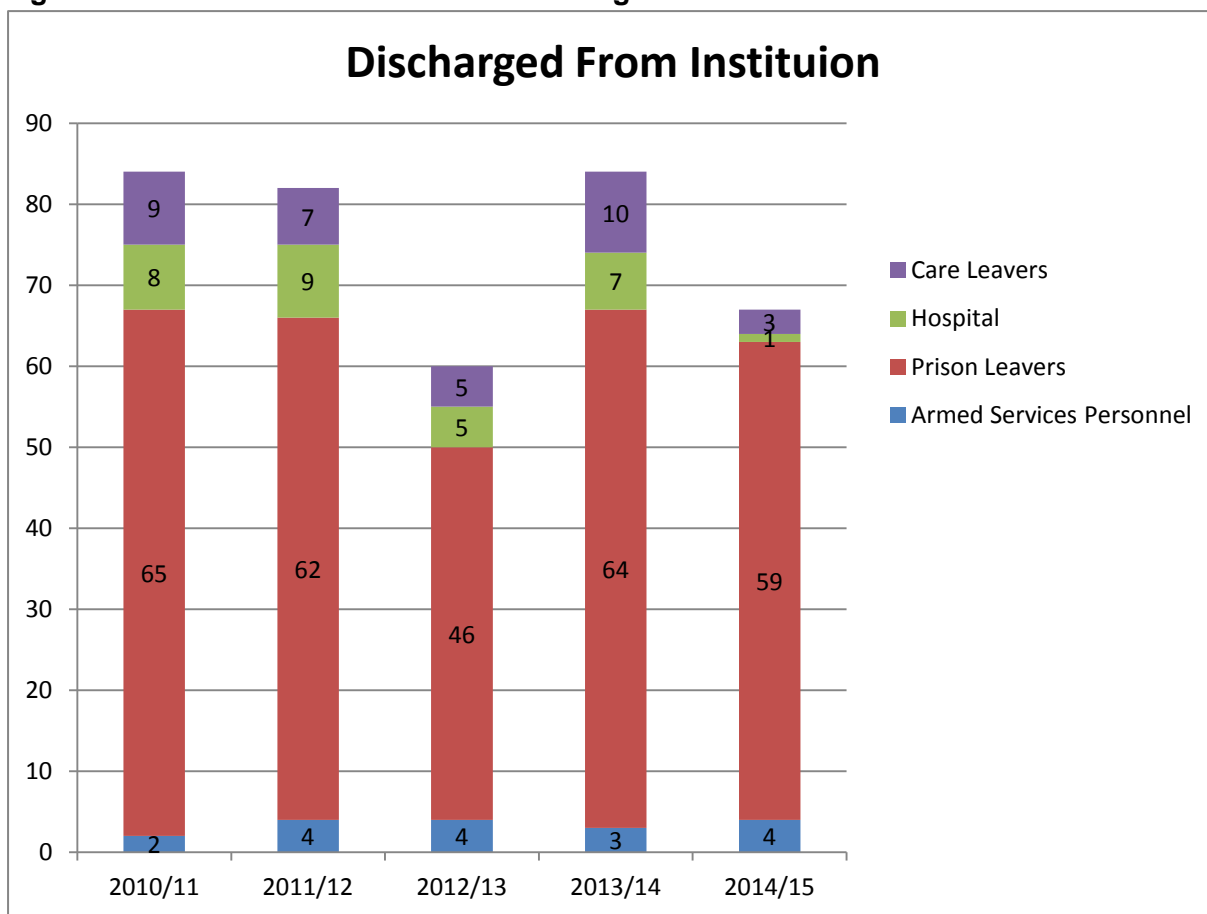
Figure 7: Reasons for Homelessness - Dispute Within Household – Violent or Abusive

Reason for Application - Dispute within Household: Violent/Abusive
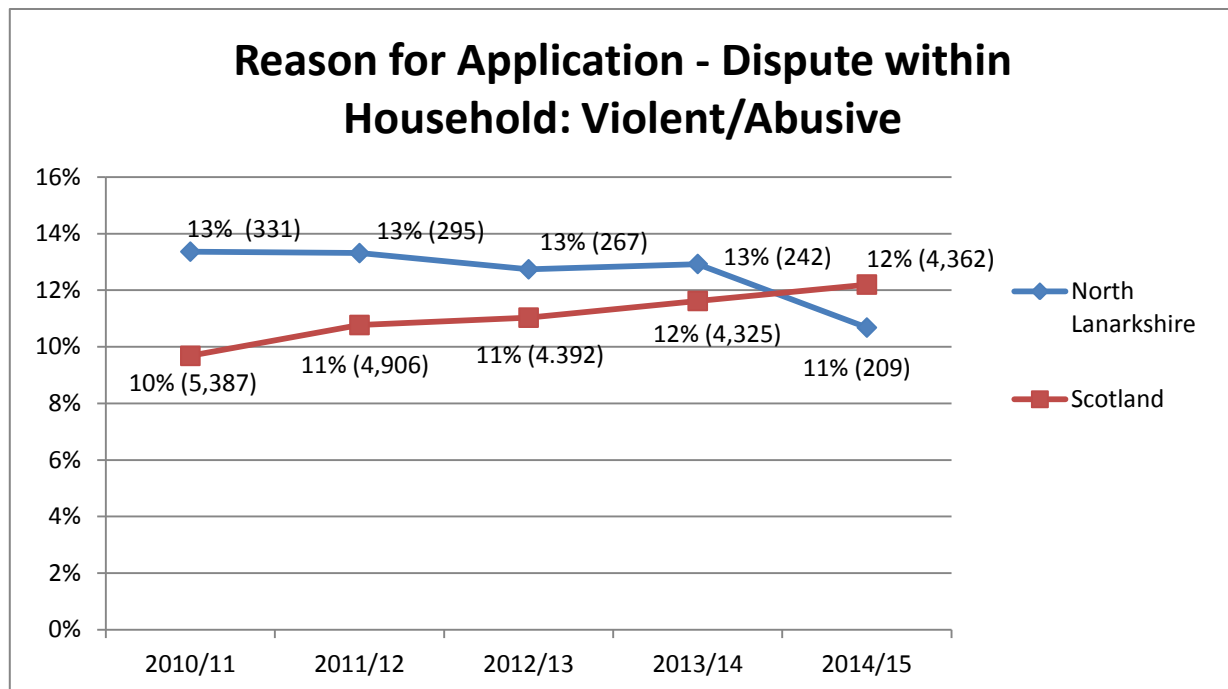
Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

5.1.25   The decrease in the number of homeless applications from this group suggests that activity to assist people experiencing domestic abuse is making a difference. There is a protocol in place which aims to provide people with a degree of priority through our mainstream allocation policy so that they can access alternative permanent accommodation prior to crisis occurring and are being prevented from becoming homeless. There are also a range of services delivered across the Council to assist this client group which includes a North Lanarkshire Violence Against Women partnership group with a fully developed Strategy and Action Plan to ensure adequate and effective service delivery to prevent gender based violence in the longer term. The Council also funds Women's Aid services who provide support and accommodation to women and their families experiencing domestic abuse.

5.1.26   The number of people having to make a homeless application after being discharged from an institution fell from 3.4% in 2011/12 to 2.3% in 2012/13. However this increased again to 4.1% in 2013/14 and is currently 3.2%. It is intended to renew focus on this area of work as part of the continuous improvement process to prevent homelessness from occurring for this group.

5.1.27   Figure 8 highlights that the largest group presenting as homeless from an institution (pre-homeless property) are those leaving Prison, this was recorded at 59 people in 2014/15 which is 3.01% of all homeless applications.

**Figure 8: Homelessness Reasons – Discharged from Institution**

Discharged From Instituion

Year	Armed Services Personnel	Prison Leavers	Hospital	Care Leavers
2010/11	2	65	8	9
2011/12	4	62	9	7
2012/13	4	46	5	5
2013/14	3	64	7	10
2014/15	4	59	1	3

Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Report

5.1.28 Looking more closely at prison leavers and homelessness trends, there was clearly a reducing number in 2011/12 and then a sharp fall in 2012/13 to 46 or 2.19% of all homeless applications. This rose in 2013/14 to 3.4% (64) and then fell back to 3.01% or 59 in 2014/15. This compares with the national figure of 5.89% (2,108) which is almost double the North Lanarkshire proportion of homeless applicants. Nationally, the number of prison leavers becoming homeless has fallen slightly by 75 applications in the last year, although the percentage has increased by 0.03%

5.1.29 Research evidence illustrates that the cycle of homelessness and offending can lead to a self-perpetuating negative cycle. An IRISS report on Prison Leavers and Homelessness[4] clearly makes the complex relationship between homelessness and offending behaviour. Time spent in prison is more likely to increase the risk of possible homelessness and a lack of permanent accommodation increases the possibility of offending or re-offending. The research highlights that the provision of adequate housing for prison leavers can "significantly reduce re-offending" and a more proactive approach to planning for people leaving prison and appropriate follow on support to assist in tenancy sustainment is of critical importance.

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[4] IRISS, Prison Leavers and Homelessness - 2015

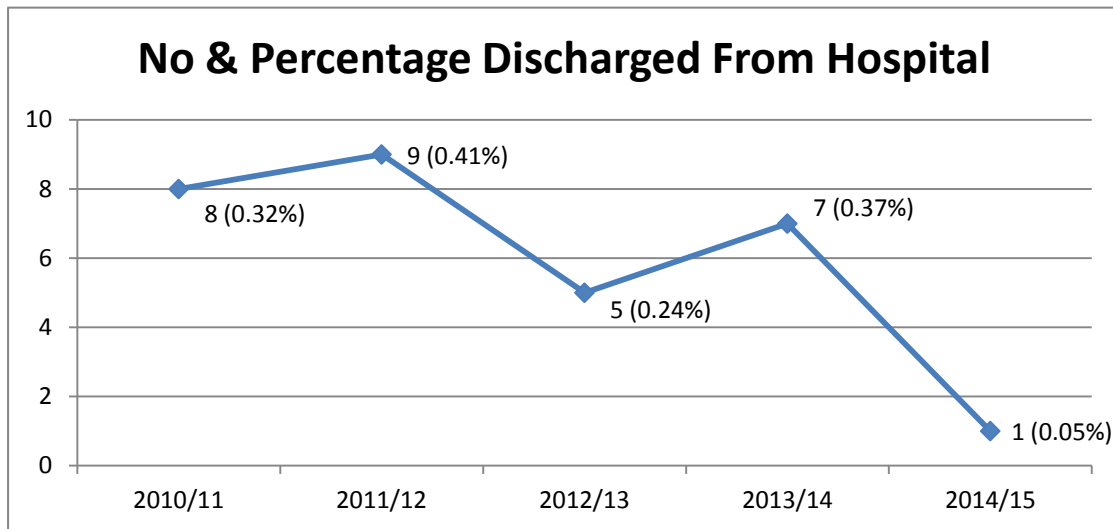**Figure 9: Prison Leavers**
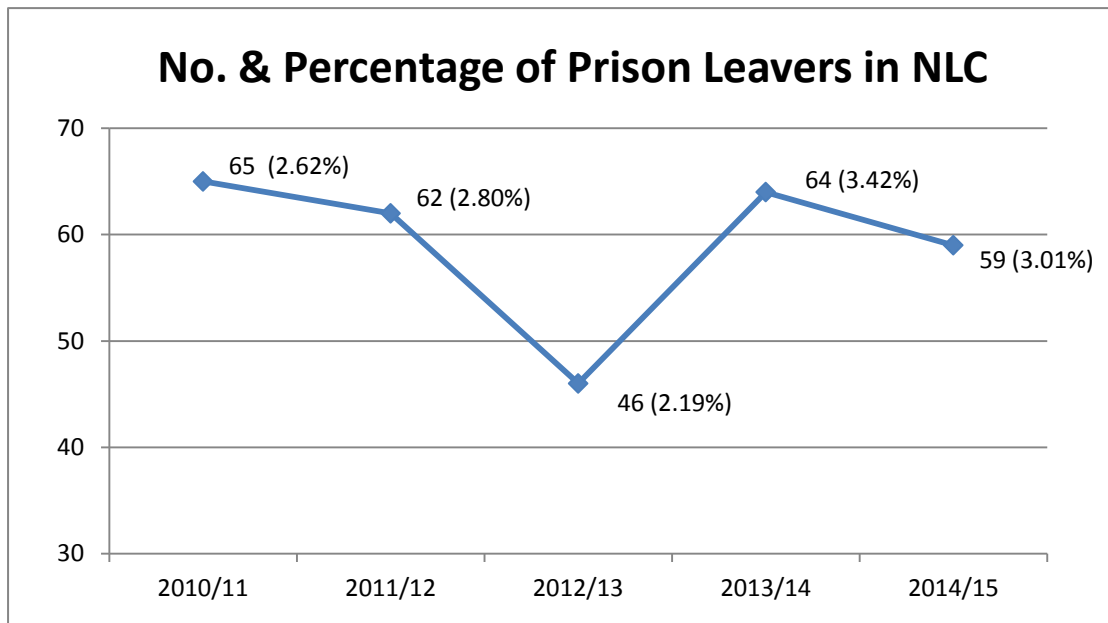
Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Report

5.1.30 It is unclear why there appeared to be a sharp fall in prison leavers entering homelessness in 2012/13 or why this rose again in 2013/14. However a range of justice services have been developed to provide a more cohesive and holistic approach to working with offenders and ex-offenders to tackle underlying issues of offending and supporting people to sustain future accommodation. Services include:

- Restorative Justice and community payback orders where skills are developed to aid future employment and break the cycle of re-offending;
- Women's Community Justice Service which is a multi-agency approach providing support and direct interventions to address underlying reasons for offending;
- Community Bridges Project which is a partnership that aims to improve the quality of life for short term prisoners and their families affected by substance misuse by enabling continuity of support and treatment from prison to the community;
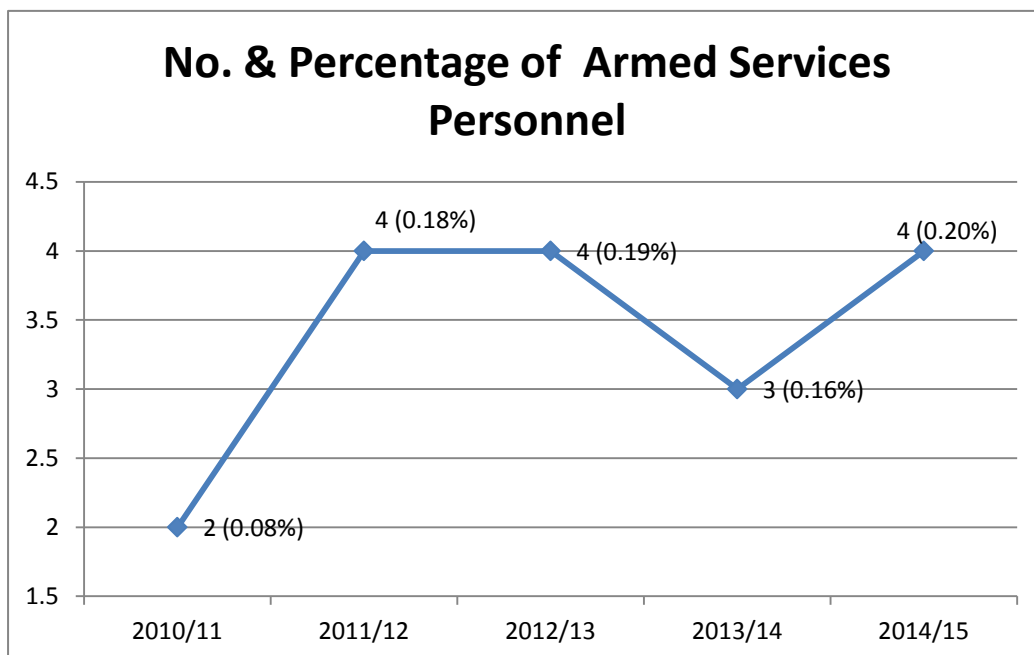
5.1.31 The number of people leaving hospital into homelessness has fallen over the last 5 years and only affected one person in 2014/15 or 0.15% of the homeless population and is supported by the Hospital Discharge Protocol to ensure an improved approach in planning and ensuring appropriate housing is available to people when leaving hospital. This is significantly below the national average which had increased from 0.76% in 2013/14 to 0.79% in 2014/15.

Figure 10 – Hospital Discharge

No & Percentage Discharged From Hospital

8 (0.32%) 9 (0.41%) 5 (0.24%) 7 (0.37%) 1 (0.05%)

2010/11 2011/12 2012/13 2013/14 2014/15

5.1.32   There were four individuals (0.20%) who were discharged from the Armed Forces in 2014/15 and this is an increase of 1 (0.04%) on 2013/14 and compares favourably with the national trend in homeless presentations from armed services personnel which is downwards from 0.31% (114) in 2013/14 to 0.22% (79) in 2014/15. The small numbers suggest that planning for future accommodation is working well, however the aim should be to prevent all homelessness for this group and a more co-ordinated approach could make the improvements needed to avoid homelessness entirely in the future.

Figure 11 – Discharge from Armed Services

No. & Percentage of Armed Services Personnel

2 (0.08%) 4 (0.18%) 4 (0.19%) 3 (0.16%) 4 (0.20%)

2010/11 2011/12 2012/13 2013/14 2014/15

5.1.33 There were a further three homeless applicants who were looked after and accommodated by the Local Authority in 2014/15 which is 0.15% of homeless applications. This is an improvement of 0.38% (7) on the previous year which peaked at 10 over the five year period. The 2014/15 figure compares favourably with the national trend of 0.16% (879). Interestingly although the national average percentage fell 0.02% from the previous year, the actual number of care leavers who became homeless increased by 202. Care leavers are another priority group which should be targeted specifically to prevent homelessness. A Care Leavers Protocol is in place to ensure the early identification of housing needs in a young person's pathway plan and is regularly reviewed as part of the ongoing improvement agenda to ensure homelessness is prevented in future.

Figure 12 – Care Leavers
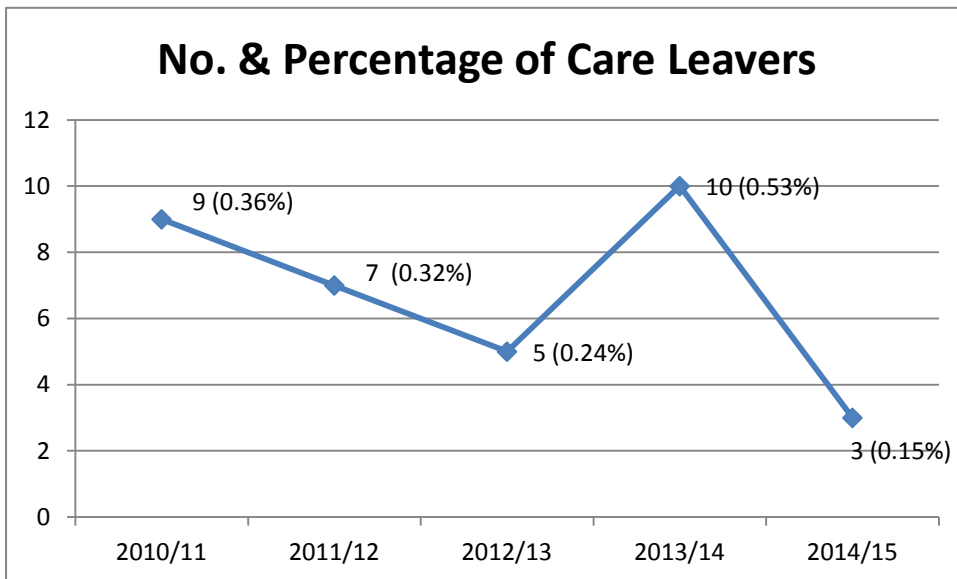
Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

5.1.34 There were 885 Section 11 notices received by North Lanarkshire in 2014/15. The majority of these notices, 86%, were from lenders which is consistent with previous years. Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) notices make up 13% and 1% are from Private Landlords. The Housing Service will continue to review the Section 11 process and liaison with RSL partners to strengthen homeless prevention activities which will be supported through the Housing Options Hubs. The national Housing Options Guidance has now been published and the training toolkit is expected later in the year with the intention to increase tenancy sustainment for these households.

5.1.35 There were a total of 10 homeless applicants who defined their pre homeless accommodation type as long term roofless or sofa surfing 2014/15. Figure 13 highlights an increase in 2012/13 and then a reduction in sofa-surfing and a levelling off of long term roofless. Although there are very low numbers falling into these categories, it is concerning that long term rooflessness and sofa-surfing continues to occur and will continue to be monitored and reviewed to reduce this further.

Figure 13: Homelessness Reasons – Discharged from Institution

Long Term Roofless and Sofa-Surfing

Legend:
- Long-term roofless
- Long-term sofa-surfing

X-axis: 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15
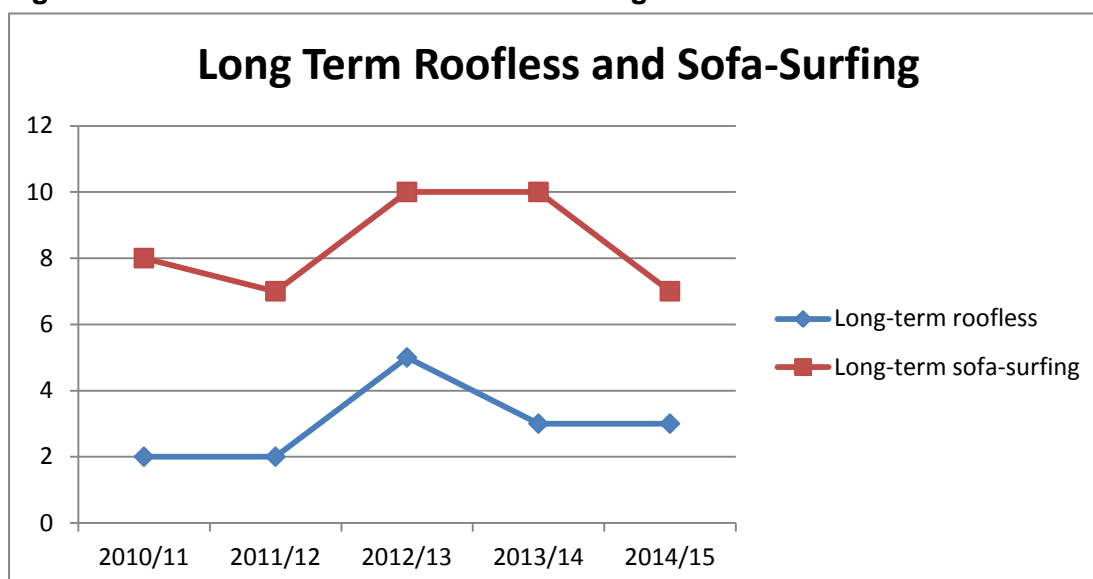
Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

5.2 *Homeless Assessments*

5.2.1 The number of applicants found to be homeless or threatened with homelessness ranged from 1,921 in 2010/11 to 1,467 in 2014/15. Although, the general trend in actual homeless applications was downwards there were variations in the percentage of applicants assessed as homeless which ranged between 76% in 2010/11 to a high of 79% in 2013/14 and fell back to 74% in 2014/15 as can be seen in Figure 14. This compares with 77% across Scotland in 2014/15.

5.2.2 Not homeless assessments rose to 9.7% in 2014/15 which is up 2% since the abolition of priority need. Shelter, the SFHA and the CIH commissioned research on 'Affordable Housing Need in Scotland'[5] and the report was published in September 2015. This report highlights that the percentage of applicants assessed as not homeless varies across the country but does show that North Lanarkshire has a higher rate of not homeless assessments in comparison with other local authorities.

5.2.3 All homeless cases are assessed in line with the current legislation and good practice. A recent review of not homeless assessments was completed and recommendations have been incorporated into the continuous improvement process.

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[5] Shelter. SFHA & CIH: Affordable Housing Need in Scotland – Sept 2015

Figure 14: Homeless Assessment Decisions

	2010/11		2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15	
Homeless or Threatened with Homelessness cases	1,921	76%	1,695	78%	1,705	79%	1,446	77%	1,467	74%
Not Homeless Assessments	182	7.17%	193	8.86%	163	7.58%	179	9.58%	192	9.71%
Non Priority Assessments (to 2012)	357	14%	325	15%	214	10%	0	0%	0	0%
Intentionally Homeless Assessments	83	3.50%	79	4%	88	4%	157	9%	133	8%
All other decisions e.g. resolved homelessness, lost contact, etc.	435	17.14%	291	13.36%	281	13.07%	244	13.06%	319	16.13%

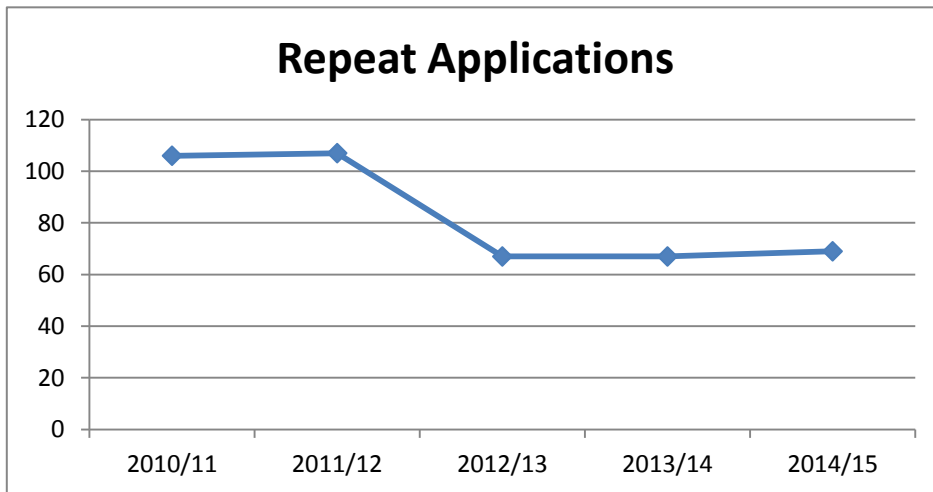Source: Scottish Government Homeless Statistics for North Lanarkshire

5.2.4   The priority need distinction was withdrawn in December 2012. The percentage of applications assessed as non-priority was around 15% in 2010/11 and fell to 10% before being abolished in 2012.

5.2.5   Across Scotland, 5% of applicants were assessed as intentionally homeless. In North Lanarkshire there was an increase in the number of applicants assessed as intentionally homeless from 2012/13 after the abolition of priority need. It should be noted that applicants previously assessed as non-priority were never assessed for intentionality and an increase in intentionality assessments is therefore unavoidable as more applicants are being assessed. It would be expected that a similar proportion of these applicants would have an intentionally homeless decision, however the number of intentionally homeless assessments increased to 157 (9%) in 2013/14, which is 4% higher than the national average.

5.2.6   In 2014/15, the number of intentionally homeless decisions fell to 133 or 8% from 157 (9%) in 2013/14. The Housing Service regularly reviews homelessness data as part of a focus on continuous improvement and recognises that the number of intentionally homeless decisions is higher than the average for Scotland. A recent review was completed and recommendations have been incorporated into the continuous improvement process to ensure appropriate decisions are being made.

5.2.7   Applicants who resolved their homelessness prior to assessment decision make up 10% of all homeless decisions and has increased slightly from 8.83% in 2013/14, although it was over 9% in the four years previous to this. The focus on homeless prevention and sustainability and the holistic approach taken to averting crisis is directly linked to the number of applicants who 'resolve their homelessness'. This includes a range of interventions across housing options, the Allocation Policy and ongoing reviews and the financial inclusion, mediation, independent advice services and housing support provision which are all subject to scrutiny and a continuous improvement ethos.

5.2.8   Applicants who lost contact with the service, withdrew their application or were ineligible for assistance make up the remaining 6% of homeless assessments.

5.2.9   North Lanarkshire recorded 69 repeat homeless applications in 2014/15 which equates to 3.5%. Figure 15 below highlights a sharp fall from 2011/12 into 2012/13 and this is likely connected to the number of people who were previously assessed as non priority where they may have temporarily resolved their housing issue but this may not have been sustainable longer term. Since the abolition of priority need, these individuals are more likely to have achieved a successful long term housing solution.

5.2.10 However there are still a number of repeat applications each year and a wider and more focussed approach to housing options and homeless prevention is the key to making improvements in this area.

Figure 15: Repeat Homelessness

Source: Scottish Government Homeless Statistics for North Lanarkshire

5.2.11 Ensuring that homeless households, particularly those that are the most vulnerable, are able to maintain their tenancies is an important objective of the Local Housing Strategy. In 2014/15, 83% of tenancies to homeless people had been sustained for 12 months. This is an improvement on the 81.8% from 2013/14 and 77% in 2012/13 and highlights the importance of homeless prevention and housing support approaches in improving the lives of tenants. There was a reduction in tenancy sustainment in 2012/13 and it is unclear why this happened, however emphasis on homeless prevention is clearly the key to tenancy sustainment and the introduction of the Housing Options Guidance and Toolkit will assist in supporting and improving prevention activity.

Figure 16: Tenancy Sustainment Rates


Tenancy Sustainment Rates
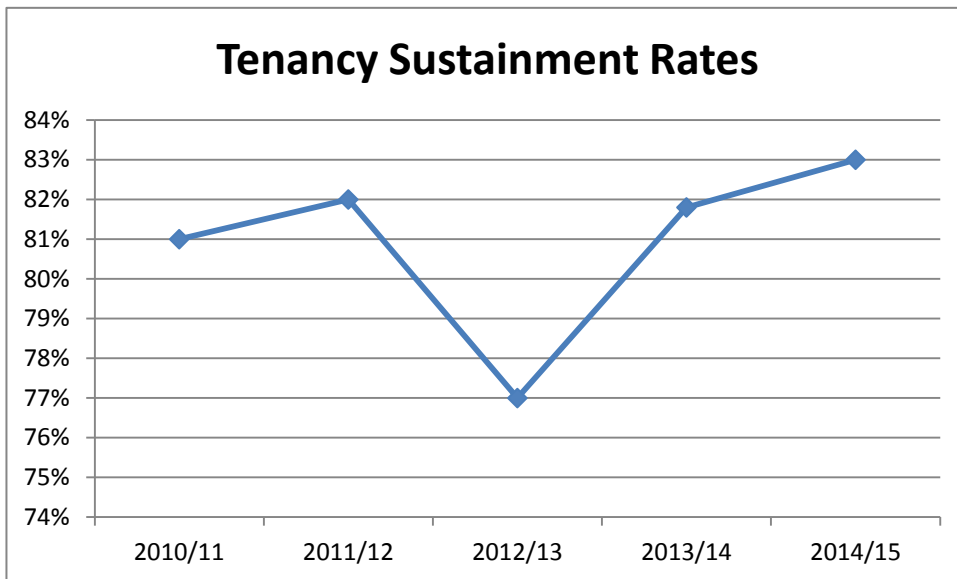
Source: NLC

5.2.12 The number of live cases as at 31 March 2015 was 1,509 as per Scottish Government statistics.

5.3 *Homeless Outcomes*

5.3.1 The number of NLC lets to homeless households increased by 4% in 2014/15 to 28% compared with 24% in 2013/14. Lets to homeless applicants vary across localities and are monitored and reviewed regularly as part of the continuous improvement process. Data for the first half of 2015/16 shows a further increase in the percentage lets to homeless applicants. RSL lets also vary from year to year and was 14% in 2014/15. There are arrangements in place with partner RSL's to regularly review lets to homeless applicants.

Figure 17: Homeless Lettings as a Proportion of all Lettings

% Lets to Homeless Households

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
NLC	30%	26%	27%	24%	28%
RSL	12%	20%	21%	13%	14%
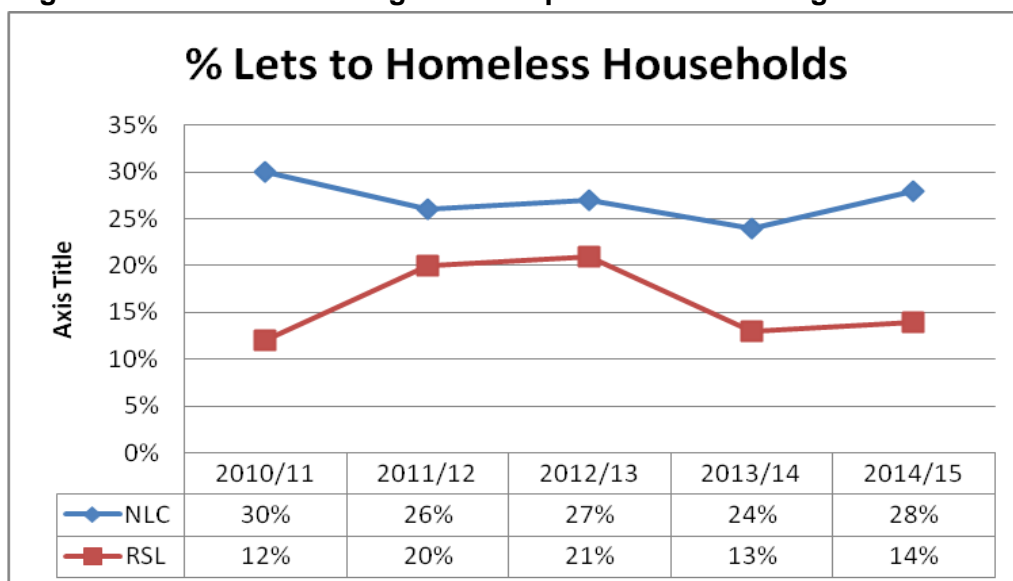
Source: NLC Allocation Reports

5.3.2   The ability to provide sufficient lets is an important aspect given the increased demand from homeless households who are awaiting settled accommodation. The removal of the priority-need distinction has resulted in an increased proportion of households becoming eligible for permanent housing and has placed additional requirements on an already pressured system.

5.3.3   The issue also needs to be considered within the context of the continually reviewed Allocation Policy and Common Housing Register within North Lanarkshire, both of which were designed to improve access to housing for people in housing need with those who have urgent and cumulative needs being placed at the top of waiting lists.

5.3.4   In recent years between 52% and 55% of all homelessness applications have resulted in the household being provided with a Scottish Secure Tenancy and this has been an increasing figure year on year. Clearly the vast majority are housed within the Council's stock given its status as the primary social landlord, with 9% finding a final outcome within an RSL tenancy. Additionally, proactive work undertaken by frontline staff to mitigate the impacts of welfare reform is helping to reduce the homeless waiting list.

5.3.5   In around 20% of cases, no duty was owed to the applicant, around 8% were recorded as returning to their previous or current accommodation and a further 8% lost contact with the service before duty was discharged.

Figure 18: Outcome of Homelessness Applications

Outcome of Homeless Applications

|	Hostel/ Refuge/ Residential Care/Supported	Private Rented Tenancy	Other (known and not known)	Contact Lost before duty discharged	Returned to previous / present	No duty owed to applicant	Scottish Secure Tenancy
2010/11	0.33%	2.26%	5.22%	6.37%	17.44%	24.19%	44.19%
2011/12	0.51%	2.56%	5.54%	6.18%	14.70%	21.75%	48.76%
2012/13	0.05%	2.58%	4.00%	7.91%	13.23%	19.51%	52.71%
2013/14	0.12%	2.79%	3.56%	10.80%	9.50%	18.81%	54.42%
2014/15	0.34%	3.27%	5.54%	8.08%	7.60%	19.93%	55.48%

Source: NLC

5.3.6   The progress of homelessness applications is monitored carefully to ensure that priorities for continuously improving performance are identified. Information collected to populate the statistical return to the Scottish Government (the HL1 return), can be usefully analysed to provide indicators of performance either improving or declining over time. Additionally, the Quality and Performance Section of NLC Housing Services has a performance review role to ensure consistency where possible in case management across the six main local areas.

5.3.7   A relatively small number of applicants lose contact with the service before an assessment is complete and a larger number after the assessment decision has been reached. Figure 19 below shows the age breakdown of applicants who lost contact with the service prior to a decision being made on their application. Overall 31 applicants lost contact, and of them the largest majority fell into the 26 to 59 year age band.

Figure 19: Homeless Assessments – Lost Contact Prior to Assessment Decision

Lost Contact Prior to Assessment Decision

- 2 — 16 - 17
- 7 — 18 - 25
- 22 — 26 - 59
- 60+
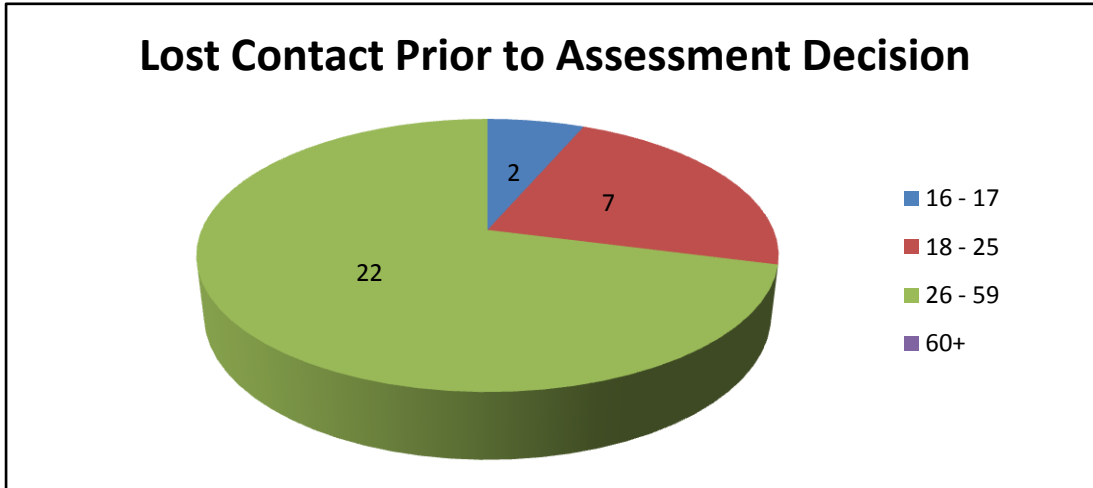
Source: Scottish Government Homeless Statistics for North Lanarkshire

5.3.8   The proportion of applicants with whom the Council have 'lost contact' with before duty is discharged varies slightly and increased from 6.18% in 2011/12 to 10.8% in 2013/14 and then decreased again to 8% in 2014/15. This is below the national average of 12%. Lost contact cases are reviewed by managers to ensure that appropriate advice and assistance has been provided before a case is closed. Ongoing resources are targeted at maintaining communication with homeless applicants where possible to avoid lost contact decisions.

5.3.9   Figure 20 highlights the age breakdown of applicants who lost contact after assessment was completed. Overall 146 applicants lost contact with the largest majority (55%) aged between 26 and 59 years. A further 32% were aged 18 to 25 years and 8% were 16 or 17 years.

5.3.10 Younger applicants are more vulnerable and it is intended that support through the homelessness process will be strengthened as part of the improved approach to housing options and preventative activities as well as through joint work with partners identified in our Youth Housing Statement.

Figure 20: Homeless Assessments – Lost Contact after Assessment
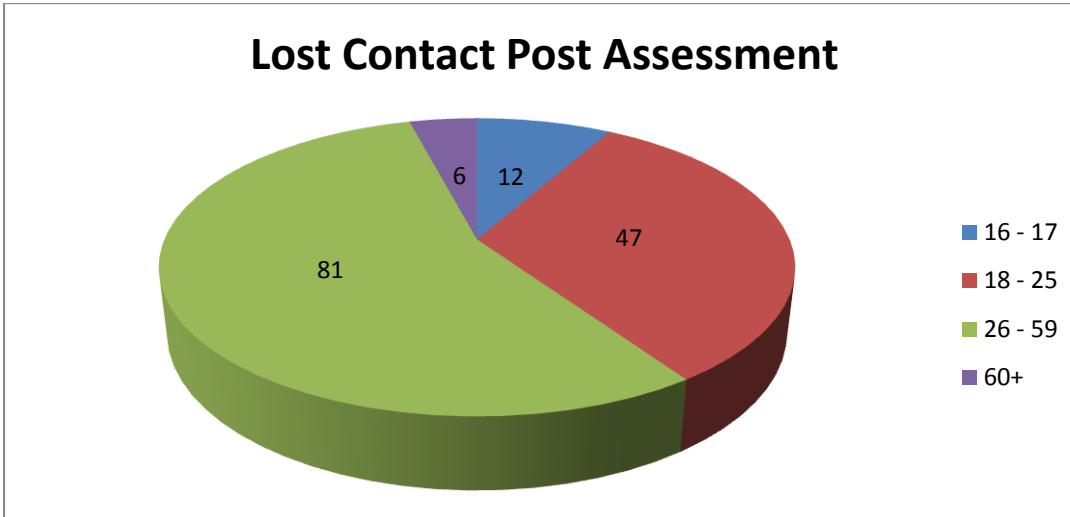
Source: Scottish Government Homeless Statistics for North Lanarkshire

5.3.11 The length of time that people are actually homeless is a critical health check on homelessness resources and processes. In recent years the average length of time that households were without permanent accommodation increased significantly and was recorded as 30 weeks in 2014/15. The number of weeks to case closure was relatively stable from 2010 to 2013 at 22 weeks, however in 2013 this rose to 29 weeks and is a direct result of the abolition of priority need with more people requiring permanent housing as well as availability of social housing stock, particularly in the more pressured areas of the North (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Moodiesburn) and Bellshill.

5.3.12 An internal review of homeless cases from 2013/14 was undertaken as part of a focus on outcomes for unintentionally homeless households. This report identified that 85% of homeless applications were closed within one year and a further 11.5% were closed within one to two years. The remaining 3.5% took two years or more to conclude. A detailed analysis of these cases confirm that 55% required intensive support and a number have quite specific needs e.g. wheelchair applicants or those with large families where lack of stock was a contributing factor. It is therefore clear that around two thirds of all homeless cases are opened and closed within the same year. Cases closed beyond this initial period are likely to reflect those waiting to be housed in areas where there is greatest pressure on social stock such as the North and Bellshill as well as households who require intensive support or specific types of accommodation to meet their needs.

5.3.13 Additionally, significant levels of permanent offers are being refused by homeless applicants and are also part of the reason for increasing the number of weeks to case closure. Local authorities are required to make only one offer of permanent housing under legislation; however the Code of Guidance on Homelessness[6] also stipulates that homeless people should be treated the same as other housing applicants on the Council's waiting list. All applicants on the waiting list, including those who are homeless are made two offers of permanent accommodation with the view of assisting people to find a housing solution that is right for them. Applicants

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[6] Scottish Government - Code of Guidance on Homelessness: 2005

may refuse offers for various reasons and is likely to be associated with their housing need as well as their aspirations. For instance, most households would prefer to be housed in a property with a garden and do not wish to live in a multi storey flat, however in North Lanarkshire Council, flatted type properties including multi-stories make up 40.7% of the stock. Additionally, flatted type properties have a higher turnover rate and are therefore the predominant type of offer made to applicants.

5.3.14 Further it should also be noted that there are only a small number of one bedroom properties available for let each year which is insufficient to meet demand and, at the introduction of the under-occupancy charge, single people were more likely to refuse larger accommodation. In order to help mitigate the impacts of the under-occupancy charge, the Council set up a Prevention and Sustainability Fund. The Scottish Government also intervened and provided additional funds to Discretional Housing Payments. Both of these interventions meant that single people could consider two bedroom properties because they are protected from the under-occupancy charge at this time. However, given the pressure on public funds and further welfare reforms planned, it is unlikely that the Scottish Government will be able to maintain this level of funding. Devolved powers to the Scottish Government are also unclear at this time and some applicants will be considering the long term sustainability of accepting larger accommodation.

5.3.15 These issues combined, have resulted in homeless cases remaining open for longer, increased stays in temporary accommodation and subsequent additional pressure on waiting lists for one bedroom properties. In reality, there is an insufficient level of one bedroom properties in the social sector to meet demand. The Housing Service may therefore wish to consider introducing a flat sharing scheme to assist single people in sourcing suitable and affordable housing

6. Temporary Accommodation

6.1 The local authority is required by law to provide all homeless households with temporary accommodation whilst their homeless application is being assessed if they require it. For those assessed as unintentionally homeless, this duty is extended until they are permanently housed.

6.2 Access to and the provision of temporary accommodation is therefore a critical aspect of services to homeless households. North Lanarkshire Council is committed to ensuring homeless households are effectively supported and to provide sufficient levels of appropriate safe and secure temporary accommodation to meet needs.

6.3 In order to achieve this, the Council has developed a Temporary and Supported Accommodation Strategy (TASAS) to ensure that statutory requirements are met in the provision of temporary accommodation to homeless households.

6.4 The Temporary and Supported Accommodation Strategy is a component part of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). The key objectives of the TASAS is to ensure:
- the provision of temporary accommodation is clearly identified and, as far as possible, meets the needs of homeless households;
- the management of temporary accommodation is fully considered and supported within the staffing structure;
- the cost implications of providing temporary accommodation in light of welfare reforms are identified and appropriate action taken to mitigate impacts as far as possible.

6.5 The TASAS considers the profile of homeless applicants, the existing profile of temporary accommodation, the turnover rates and lengths of stay as well as policy drivers and welfare reform impacts in order to assess the future requirement for the various different types of temporary and supported accommodation across North Lanarkshire.

6.6 The TASAS should therefore be read in conjunction with this evidence paper in order to fully understand the inter-relationship of homelessness, housing support and temporary accommodation.

7. Housing Support

7.1 *Legislation*

7.1.1 The provision of housing support to homeless households is a legal requirement under the Housing Support Duty[7]. The legislation which established the housing support duty (Section 32B of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 inserted by Housing (Scotland) Act 2010) states:

"There is a duty on local authorities to conduct a housing support assessment for applicants who are unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and

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[7] Scottish Government – Housing Support Duty: 2013

that they have 'reason to believe' need the housing support services prescribed in regulations."

7.1.2   'The regulations' are the Housing Support Services (Homelessness) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 which were established after public consultation. The services prescribed through this are outlined below:

   (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.

7.1.3   If an assessment of a need for support is made, local authorities must ensure that 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. Linked to this process are the issues of an individual's willingness to engage with support and the local authority's ability to discharge its duty.

7.1.4   The legislation states that 'housing support services' include any service which provides support, assistance, advice or non professional 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 varies depending on the individual's circumstances and/or those of the people in the household. The accommodation referred to may be settled accommodation.

7.1.5   Although the Housing Support Duty is only legally applied to homeless households, the ethos and intention is to aid homeless prevention and is specifically targeted at those who have complex needs and therefore difficulty in sustaining their accommodation. In order to develop good practice, Housing Support and Homeless Prevention activities are not just targeted at homeless households but at all households approaching the Housing Service. However, it should be recognised that this practice may not always be achievable due to limited and reducing resources linked to austerity measures of the UK Government.

7.1.6   The Duty also places a priority on corporate responsibilities and joint working and communication with partners including Social Work and Health as well as any other agency involved in the support of an individual.

7.2   *Housing Support and Complex Needs in North Lanarkshire*

7.2.1   As highlighted earlier, homelessness data provides part of the picture of support needs of homeless households. One question within the homelessness data captured directly identifies potential support needs; however another question also provides an indication of support needs because it identifies the reason applicants failed to maintain their previous accommodation. In some circumstances, there is no support need identified in the support question but a support need is highlighted in the reason an individual has failed to maintain their previous accommodation due to, for example, mental ill-health, offending behaviour, an addiction issue, etc.   An analysis of both questions was therefore completed and highlights that 875 applicants or 47% actually had some sort of support need in 2013/14.   Of these 22.6% had multiple support needs.

7.2.2   In 2014/15, this figure rose to 932 or 48% of all homeless applicants and of these, 22.9% had multiple needs. This clearly shows an increasing number of people who require support. However, not all support required is housing support and therefore the responsibility of the Housing Service.   Instead as identified by the Scottish Government within the Housing Support Guidance, a multi agency approach is required to meet the needs of homeless applicants who have a range of support needs, in order to assist them to sustain future accommodation.

7.2.3   Although the above information is helpful, it does not provide details on the extent of the support need. A profiling exercise was completed by operational housing staff on their support caseload in February 2014 with the intention to categorise the support needs of individuals and match them with the most appropriate temporary accommodation – see Figure 21 below. However this analysis also assisted in understanding the extent and nature of support needs of homeless applicants where the question on support has been answered and confirmed that 73% required no or minimal support in 2013/14. The remaining 27% or 617 applicants had varying levels of support needs with 42% requiring intensive support provided within a hostel or supported type of accommodation environment.

Figure 21: Identifying Housing Support Needs of Homeless Applicants and Requirements for Temporary Accommodation

	Accommodation Category	Client Group / Level of support	Household Type
1	Dispersed Self Contained (HRA/PSL & RSL)	No or low level support needs and can sustain tenancy independently	Families and Single Person Households
2	Dispersed - Adapted/other (HRA/PSL & RSL)	Hospital discharge/Disability	Disabled families or Single Person Households
3	Refuge - Manse Ave/Dispersed (HRA/PSL & RSL)	Domestic Abuse applicants (single or multiple needs)	Families or Households affected by domestic abuse
4	Hostel/ Emergency Access - Direct Access Accommodation	Very chaotic homeless applicants who are unlikely to sustain any form of tenancy, don't want a tenancy or only engage with support in crisis	Single Person Households
5	Hostel/Emergency Access- Supervision	Vulnerable homeless applicants who lack basic living skills and require on site supervision to manage accommodation	Single Person Households
6	Hostel/Emergency Access- Support	Vulnerable or high support need homeless applicants including those who lack basic living skills. Some may need self-contained space.	Single Person Households
7	Specialist Supported Accommodation	Homeless applicants who need specialist housing based supported accommodation. Multiple support needs and in a position to work through and engage with support.	Single Person Households
8	Specialist Supported or Transitional Accommodation	Young people aged 16-18 who come straight into homelessness after leaving care	Single Person Households

Source: NLC

7.2.4   This exercise also identified that 16.6% or 310 homeless applicants had multiple support needs with 4% (76) highlighted as having more than four different support requirements. This exercise therefore supports anecdotal evidence from housing staff and support agencies that the people they support have an increasing level of complex support requirements.

7.2.5   Data collected internally in 2014/15 as part of the Prevention and Sustainability (PAS) module highlight that around 1,500 people were assessed as having a high level of risk to sustainability and a further 2,227 a medium risk. 1,932 of these cases went on to make a homeless application which therefore suggests that prevention activity is having a limited impact on those seeking assistance. However, it could be that these individuals are presenting in crisis which makes it much less likely that homelessness can be prevented. PREVENT1 statistics published each quarter are being analysed in order to fully understand the reasons why some people go on to make a homeless application and what prevention activity could be completed to avoid the need for a homeless application.

7.2.6   The scoring elements of the risk assessment were reviewed and reconsidered and the scoring was subsequently amended in 2015 and will provide an enhanced picture in future.

7.2.7　The Housing Service is currently working to improve IT recording mechanisms to enable analysis of a persons' journey which will be used to help inform future service provision.

7.2.8　The improved data collection and reporting will ensure future levels of sustainability and support provision are identified, reported and monitored to improve service delivery and will include additional helpful information from services delivered by voluntary sector partners that are funded through the Housing Service such as the CAB Housing Advice Service. It should be noted that homeless prevention activity is reported through the Scottish Government PREVENT1 statistics.

7.2.9　The purpose of the PAS risk assessment is to identify the likelihood of tenancy failure for individuals presenting to the Housing Service and to target resources to those most in need. People who score low on the risk assessment are provided with the appropriate advice and assistance in order to ensure they can remain in their current home or to look at alternative options before a crisis occurs. Additionally, some people may score low but require basic resettlement support after a period of homelessness. Those who score high or medium will be provided with a housing support assessment and plan to identify where the risks of tenancy failure are and to provide the appropriate support to address those needs.

7.2.10　The Housing Service has its own internal housing support service where resources are generally targeted at medium to lower level support needs. People who have a medium to high level of tenancy failure risk can be referred to commissioned third sector agencies who provide a more specialist housing support role. However, due to the volume of high needs cases, the in-house support service are also likely to provide support to people who have a high level of need as commissioned agencies may already be at full capacity.

7.2.11　Internal housing support provision varies across each locality, however there is an average of two Housing Advisors with a support remit located within each of the six locality housing teams. As noted in 7.2.7, the Housing Service is currently undertaking a review of the housing support processes, procedures and reporting mechanisms. This review will also clearly define the role of housing support staff as well specify the role of other housing staff across each locality team where all have a part to play in preventing homelessness at the earliest possible opportunity.

7.2.12　The Housing Service commissions four additional housing support services which are delivered by third sector agencies. Two of these services are floating support and the other two provide supported accommodation services as described in Figure 22.

Figure 22 – Housing Support Provision in North Lanarkshire

Support Provider	Type of Support	Client Group
Barnardo's Scotland	Floating housing support to young people aged 16 to 26 years	Homeless young people
Simon Community Scotland	Floating housing support to people aged 27 and over	Homeless adults
	24 supported accommodation places across 4 sites	Single homeless people (20 male and 4 female) (16 yrs and over)
Blue Triangle Housing Association (BTHA)	12 supported accommodation places for young people aged 16 to 35 years	Single homeless people

Source: NLC

7.2.13　The young persons' supported accommodation service provided by BTHA is a long term service and has been running in North Lanarkshire for over 20 years. BTHA own the building and manage the accommodation with the Housing Service providing a housing support contract.

7.2.14　The other two services were re-commissioned from April 2016 after an open tendering process in 2015. All contracts are for an initial period of three years with two one-year potential extensions. However, it should be noted that all of these services have been operating since 2010 after an initial tendering process and subsequent agreed contracts. Both the adult floating housing support and the 24 supported accommodation provision were merged into one service in order to provide continuity of care for people moving on from supported accommodation services. This decision was made following an analysis of customer feedback received as part of our service review.

7.2.15　In 2014/15 there were 1795 housing support cases with a live support plan across both internal and externally provided services. Of these, 23 (1.3%) were long term ongoing cases, 11 from between 2008 to 2011. These cases will likely be associated with very vulnerable individuals who have multiple, complex and enduring needs and may include care leavers. 797 cases or 44.4% were closed as complete within the year and a further 417 support plans (23.2%) were cancelled. These will mostly be for those people who were institutionalised, refused to engage with housing support services or did not believe they required housing support.

7.2.16　At present, housing support caseloads across third sector agencies are recorded through a separate contract quarterly reporting and monitoring process. However, improved data collection and recording mechanisms currently underway will enable improved performance management recording and reporting in future.

7.2.17　Caseloads across all commissioned housing support services have remained at over 500 each year. As can be noted from Figure 23, around two thirds of all cases close each year with the remaining cases being carried forward into the following year, The number of people exiting commissioned housing support services to a settled housing outcome has remained fairly consistent at between 78% and 80% each year, which is a significant success given the complexity of service user needs.

Figure 23 – Commissioned Housing Support Services Caseloads & Outcomes

	2012/13	%	2013/14	%	2014/15	%
Caseload	503		538		526	
No. of people who left services	320	64%	340	63%	354	67%
No. of people who moved on to settled accommodation	250	78%	271	80%	277	78%

7.2.18   All housing support services deliver a range of support interventions including, but not limited to:

- Personal finance, welfare benefits and debt counselling;
- Understanding and managing tenancy rights and responsibilities;
- Managing accommodation including health and safety, repairs and managing visitors;
- Independent living skills such as shopping, cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc
- Personal Hygiene
- Family and community relationships
- Resettlement activities such as utility set up, Housing Benefit claims, etc
- Referrals and encouraging engagement with other agencies and professionals to address other needs such as mental health, addictions, etc.

7.2.19   These activities are tailored to suit individual needs through the support assessment and planning process. Regular reviews are completed to ensure the support plan and associated activities meet the needs of service users.

7.2.20   All housing support services are registered with the Care Inspectorate and undergo regular inspections. Current grades awarded to services are between 4 and 6 and range from good to excellent.

7.3   *Multiple and Complex Needs*

7.3.1   It has been identified through various specific examples and stakeholder feedback that support interventions are sometimes unsuccessful. This can be because the individual does not wish to engage with support or because their needs are so complex that they are unable to engage in a productive way.

7.3.2   Research on Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in the UK[8] highlights that people experiencing homelessness face multiple disadvantages or "deep social exclusion" and that the population at the extreme ends of homelessness, substance misuse, poor mental health or criminal justice issues are extremely vulnerable and often fall through the cracks of policy and service provision. The research was able to link people in "deep exclusion" with previous experiences of troubled childhoods through school, family problems, trauma such as sexual or physical abuse and

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[8] Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in the UK, Heriot Watt University and the Economic & Social Research Council - 2012

homelessness and neglect. As they become adults, these individuals are more likely to self-harm and have suicide ideation.

7.3.3   A number of people with complex and enduring needs have difficulty sustaining any form of accommodation regardless of the housing support put in place. It is clear that this group require an alternative model of support provision as well as safe and secure accommodation. As part of stakeholder consultation, it has been proposed to consider the feasibility of developing the Housing First or similar type model. This model includes the provision of permanent housing after a period in temporary or supported accommodation and where intensive wraparound support from across all agencies is provided at all times. This model of support is expensive; however it has proven to be successful in other areas of the country.

7.3.4   Additionally, it has been proposed that consideration is given to exploring Asset Based models of support and intervention to prevent Multiple Exclusion Homelessness (MEH). This type of model encompasses a crisis response and harm reduction approach to those with addiction issues and could be considered as part of future commissioning through the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP). An asset based model takes account of the assets and resources that an individual already has, personally or within their community; and find ways to make use of these to achieve their goals. This could help reduce or avoid the effects of multiple difficulties linked to homelessness.

7.3.5   In some cases, a range of professionals and agencies are involved in an individual's support provision. However, sometimes a lack of co-ordination can mean that an individual may return to crisis and is unable to sustain accommodation and can lead to a continuing cycle of homelessness. In order to address this, the Housing Service worked with Social Work colleagues to develop a procedure so that complex cases would be raised within the Locality Planning Group (LPG) structure. The situation is complicated further when there are cross-cutting issues such as mental health and addictions. In order to strengthen the partnership approach, the Housing Service is working with partners in Social Work and Health to undertake a joint health and homelessness needs assessment to improve our shared understanding of the health inequalities that can be a cause and consequence of homelessness. Further, the Housing Service is an active participant in the Health and Social Care Integration agenda to ensure the principles of joint planning and integrated service delivery are applied to homelessness as well as other adult services.

7.3.6   In some cases, it is the lack of referral to another agency which is the barrier and improvements to referral pathways across the partnership is underway to ensure that all needs of individuals are met.

7.3.7   The complexity of need for a number of individuals can mean that some people are falling through the safety net and return to living in crisis. Stakeholder views have been sought and it has been suggested that consideration should be given to developing a lead officer role to co-ordinate support provision for those with complex needs through Health and Social Care Integration. It is intended that this would improve the communication and joint working across agencies as well as reduce the level of crisis for individuals and promote improved outcomes.

7.3.8   Further, existing partnerships could be strengthened through an improved pro-active approach to providing the required support to people with complex needs on a consistent basis and it has been suggested that utilising the MAPPA principles may assist in case managing these particular individuals.

7.3.9   There are some groups of people who will require to be supported for longer periods of time due to the complexity of need. Existing supported accommodation services are not designed with these people in mind and there is a gap in service provision for this group.   As part of the modelling work to develop alternative temporary accommodation options, it is intended to consider the opportunities to develop longer term supported accommodation services for those who may take time to develop the skills to become tenancy ready.

7.3.10   In addition; responsibilities to young people in care have been extended and will require consideration, specifically around the accommodation options for young people still being looked after by the local authority but who are no longer suited to living in a Children's House due to their age. The Housing Service developed Living Nearby where young people leaving care could be placed in accommodation near to Children's Houses; however this is limited in scale to a few properties. Consideration therefore has to be given to the feasibility of developing a form of transitional supported accommodation for young people still in care.

7.3.11   The Council has a corporate responsibility to promote health and wellbeing, however there are barriers to accessing services. In some cases, referrals are made but it can take time to put in place. However this does not alleviate the extreme distress individuals are currently experiencing and improvements could be made to alleviate this through a more focused and holistic approach to health and wellbeing.

7.3.12   Lack of engagement is a clear issue for some people with complex needs, in particular for those who have entrenched addiction or mental health issues. In some cases, current practice across the partners may not be particularly conducive to engagement and it is therefore important to improve our understanding of why people do not engage and develop innovative practical solutions to aid future engagement.

7.3.13   In order to improve the health and wellbeing and engagement of service users, the Council recognises that improvements could be made to the types of support services provided and is currently considering wider information on asset based approaches and psychologically informed services. As highlighted in 7.3.4 asset based approaches, when considered within a housing support context, take cognisance of the strengths and abilities of the homeless person and the wider community assets available. Consideration is given to how best to optimise the natural and community assets that can assist, e.g. social networks, positive family supports; and focus on these to bring about positive outcomes.

7.3.14   Psychologically Informed Services for Homeless People[9] are types of services designed to assist those who have experienced trauma and have emotional and psychological issues. Homeless households are more likely to have experienced

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[9] Psychologically Informed Services for Homeless People; Good Practice Guide 2012

trauma in their lives and their behaviours may be affected in various ways. Individuals may:

- Appear withdrawn and socially isolated;
- Be reluctant to engage with support / lack of trust;
- Have difficulty managing their emotions;
- Exhibit anti-social and aggressive behaviour;
- Self harm or have uncontrolled addiction issues;
- Participate in offending behaviour;
- Lack daily routine and structure.

Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) is a therapeutic based approach to develop clear and suitable responses to individuals who may behave in a chaotic way; but who are distressed and have learned not to trust services. The aim of adopting a psychologically informed approach is to help them gain an understanding of their behaviour and make changes in their lives to move on positively. It should be noted that psychologically aware housing support services are not a substitute for clinical services for those in need and this type of approach requires input from health colleagues, as well as other agencies, to be successful.

7.3.15 Sharing good practice and successful outcomes is another area where improvements can be made. We are only too aware of where practice could be improved and this is where our focus should rightly be. However it is recognised across the partnership that reviewing good practice and taking time to consider why interventions were successful is another important factor. Success should be celebrated, not least for the individuals themselves but also for staff and agencies to assist in improving future service delivery.

8. Consultation

8.1 The Council has carried out considerable consultation with stakeholders and partners. Homelessness, housing support and temporary accommodation are cross cutting issues, however, a specific Thematic event was held on 6 July 2015 to discuss all of the associated issues and consider what the priorities should be going forward in the Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021 and how these can be delivered.

9. Action Plan

9.1 An Action Plan demonstrating how the Local Housing Strategy can contribute to tackling homelessness, improving the provision of temporary accommodation and housing support services within North Lanarkshire has been developed to take account of the priorities identified through the consultation process and corporate commitments.