

Homelessness and Housing Support Evidence Paper for the Development of the Local Housing Strategy 2021- 2026

Date: March 2021
Revisions made: November 2021
Author: Business Strategy Team
Enterprise and Communities

Contents

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. National & Legislative Context
4. Local Context
5. Homeless Applications in North Lanarkshire
6. Locality Breakdown
7. Age Range
8. Gender, Household Composition and Applicant Circumstances
9. LGBTQ+
10. Married / Cohabiting
11. Pregnancy
12. Ethnicity
13. Ineligible for Assistance
14. Reasons for Homelessness
15. Discharged from an Institution
16. Care Experienced Young People
17. Armed Forces Personnel
18. Violent Disputes Within Households
19. Prior Housing Circumstances
20. Long Term Roofless and Sofa Surfing
21. Rough Sleeping
22. Reason for Failing to Maintain Accommodation Prior to Application
23. Homeless Assessments
24. Repeat Homelessness
25. Sustaining A Home and Homeless Prevention
26. Outcomes of Closed Homeless Cases
27. Homeless Outcomes by Intentionality Decision
28. Allocation of Properties to Homeless Households
29. Backlog of Homeless Applicants
30. Time to Case Closure and ARC Performance
31. An Overview of Temporary Accommodation
32. Legislative Context of Housing Support Provision
33. Context of Local Delivery of Housing Support Services
34. Multiple and Complex Needs of Homeless Households
35. Development of Housing First Approach
36. Health Needs of Children Experiencing Homelessness
37. Partnership Strategic Direction and Progress
38. Impact of Covid-19 on Homeless People and Services

1. Executive Summary

This evidence paper sets out the evidence around homelessness and housing support in North Lanarkshire and highlights the key areas of consideration for improvement to service provision over the period of the next Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026.

This paper finds the following key issues or concerns in relation to homeless people and their support needs:

- North Lanarkshire has developed its Rapid rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) which focuses on improving services for homeless people through partnership working. The RRTP contains 28 actions for delivery across the partners, with a specific focus on support services for people with multiple and complex needs, and links with all issues raised and future proposed actions within this LHS evidence paper. The RRTP actions are underpinned by four key partnership objectives:
 1. Proactively prevent homelessness by extending housing options model across all partners who are supporting those facing housing crisis.
 2. Enable homeless people with no/low support needs to access settled housing quickly.
 3. Develop interim housing options which enable housing sustainment and independent living.
 4. Extend Housing First model enabling the most complex and disadvantaged homeless people to quickly access and sustain settled accommodation.
- Homeless applications fell by 10% in 2019/20 and fell a further 21% in 2020/21 to 1,684 applications. This most recent decrease is due mainly to Covid-19 and associated lockdown regulations which had a significant impact on homelessness presentations. However, this followed a 25% rise in applications in the previous two years.
- Covid-19 will continue to impact on people's housing needs in the medium to longer term with likely increasing levels of homelessness in the course of this LHS arising as furlough ends causing redundancies, and as the protections in place to halt evictions are lifted and businesses try to resume following the pandemic.
- The main reasons for homelessness remain the same; asked to leave and disputes within households which includes relationship breakdowns. The earlier increased levels of presentations may be attributed to the lack of affordable housing for low-income households and the impacts of welfare reforms as well as the wider socio-economic difficulties facing local people in their communities. Evidence illustrates that income levels are lower in North Lanarkshire than other places in Scotland and may be a contributory factor. There is therefore a need to enable homeless people, and particularly, those with no or low support needs to access settled housing quickly to resolve homelessness.
- Around 33% of all homeless applicants are young people aged 16-25 years, however this age group make up only 11% of the NL population and are therefore disproportionately affected by homelessness. Homeless presentations from this group have fallen 9% since 2015/16 and suggests that previous LHS actions are beginning to have a positive impact. Increasing prevention activity to support young people to remain in the family home may reduce homelessness for some. However additional support to help young people understand the life skills they will need to sustain a home and live a successful life are also required.

- Affordable housing choices are a significant challenge for younger people under the age of 35 years not in work due to the shared room rate of housing benefit / universal credit that can be paid. This is further compounded by the impacts of Covid-19 specifically around social isolation and poor mental health. The previous LHS did consider some form of 'shared tenancy' scheme, however there is no culture of sharing in North Lanarkshire and successful shared tenancy schemes require a small team of staff to match applicants, manage risk, resolve disputes and support tenants and landlords and this funding was not available to support its development. Future capacity for a shared tenancy scheme may be considered.
- Homelessness because of domestic abuse has been around 13% - 14% of applications received in the last few years. 78% of these applicants are female. It is understood that domestic abuse has increased over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic and it is considered that homelessness presentations does not provide a full picture of scale and extent of domestic abuse during this time. The North Lanarkshire partnership is committed to addressing domestic abuse and has implemented a range of measures and services to assist those affected and improve their outcomes.
- The recorded gender of homeless applicants in North Lanarkshire highlighted an increasing level of females each year hitting a peak of 49% in 2018/19, but this fell back to 44% in 2019/20. This compares with 45% across Scotland's female homeless population. The male population of North Lanarkshire is 56% (1,198) which is very slightly above the Scottish average of 55% and illustrates that men continue to be disproportionately affected by homelessness and has been a feature in homelessness statistics across Scotland for many years.
- Data highlights increasing levels of multiple and complex support needs for homeless households specifically those affected by poor mental health and substance use. There has been a rise in the number of females affected by these issues and is now at its highest level. However, support services are limited during the evenings and weekends and this is when a crisis is more likely to occur. There is therefore a need for collaboration and effective partnership working from all partners to progress the RRTP, develop initiatives, improve referral pathways, joint planning, and case management to meet the needs of all homeless households and improve outcomes for people with multiple and complex needs.
- As part of the RRTP, the partnership developed a Housing First model to enable the most complex and disadvantaged homeless people to quickly access and sustain settled accommodation with wrap around support for however long it is needed. There is also a requirement to develop interim housing options which enable housing sustainment and independent living and is a transitional move towards Homes First for those with the most complex needs.
- A recent report on the health needs of homeless children and their families highlighted a gap in service provision. The report found children within homeless families experienced multiple disadvantage and that their attainment and general health and wellbeing was adversely affected by the trauma of homelessness. The RRTP has identified actions to reduce the impact of homelessness on children, including the development of referral pathways into other services, however additional support is required for single parent families in particular.
- There appears to be a lack of consistent planning for those leaving an institution, particularly custody and a more intensive approach to homeless prevention is required. The partnership is currently scoping out requirements and delivery of wrap-around services as well as considering the practical processes and procedures to enable the SHORE standards to be fully implemented. There is also a focus on delivering 'The Promise' to improve the lives of care experienced young people and includes a strengthened approach to the pathway planning process.

- The LGBTQ+ community are more likely to be socially isolated due to widespread discrimination and a lack of support and perceived lack of appropriate services. They are also more likely to be affected by domestic abuse with refugees and asylum seekers facing multiple disadvantage. Improving our understanding of the needs of communities of interest including the LGBTQ+ community in relation to homelessness and housing overall is a priority and will be facilitated through engagement and consultation. It is expected that there will be a need to consider practical assistance that could make the difference to this group.
- An analysis of reasons homeless people failed to maintain their previous accommodation showed that 55% were struggling to cope with a range of issues, but in particular poor mental health, which led them to losing their accommodation. There is therefore a requirement to improve early intervention and access to prevention services targeting mental health and other areas of concern.
- Anecdotal evidence from front line staff suggests that homeless applicants may present at time of crisis where homeless prevention and housing options work may be limited. There is therefore a need for even more emphasis on early intervention and prevention activity through the Section 11 process. This would be combined with tailored housing options advice and this links into the delivery of the Housing Options Training Toolkit and the future workforce development of operational housing staff.
- There is a high level of refusal by homeless households for offers of permanent social rented stock in some areas and was recorded as 46% in 2019/20. Local Authorities are required to make only one offer of permanent housing under homeless legislation; however, it is viewed as good practice to make two offers and assists households to find a housing solution that is right for them and is a practice which North Lanarkshire adheres to. It is unclear why applicants refuse offers but is likely to be associated with their housing need as well as aspirations and there is a view that some applicants may automatically refuse their first offer in the hope that the second offer is better. For instance, most households would prefer to be housed in a property with a garden and do not wish to live in a tower flat, however in North Lanarkshire, flatted type properties including towers make up a fairly large percentage of the social stock. Unfortunately, flatted type properties have a higher turnover rate and are therefore more likely to be the type of offer made to applicants.
- There is a lack of one-bedroom properties available across the social sector in North Lanarkshire and single unemployed homeless applicants are more likely to refuse two-bedroom properties due to the ongoing bedroom tax charges, increases the length of stay in temporary accommodation and the time taken for homeless people to be settled into a permanent housing outcome. The Housing Service are considering ways to address this imbalance to provide an increased level of one-bedroom properties e.g. through new supply, the open market and empty homes purchase schemes or through the introduction of a flat sharing scheme in the PRS to assist single people in sourcing suitable and affordable housing.
- A recent short-life project on rough sleeping highlighted that there is a concerning level of sofa-surfing and in some cases, for considerable periods of time from a few months to several years. Discussions with individuals suggested that they were unaware of homelessness and temporary accommodation services and illustrates the need to improve public awareness of housing options and homelessness services to prevent sofa-surfing and ensure people have access to appropriate support, information and accommodation.
- Taking the time to celebrate success is limited. All partners are only too aware of where practice could be improved, and this is where the focus should rightly be. The partners have given a commitment through the RRTP to review and share good practice to consider what elements made them successful. Success should be celebrated, not least for the individuals

themselves but also for staff and agencies in recognition of their achievements and to assist in improving future service delivery.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Scottish Government believe that everyone is entitled to a “good quality home that they can afford and that meets their needs.”¹ They also want to ensure that homelessness is eradicated and “everyone has a safe, warm place that they can call home.” The view is that preventing and alleviating homelessness has a positive impact on health and wellbeing and tackling the inequality of homelessness and rough sleeping is a key area of scrutiny and priority action.
- 2.2 Responsibility for homelessness lies with Local Authorities across the country and is underpinned by various legislative requirements. The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Homelessness Etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Housing Support Regulations 2013 provide the statutory framework for addressing homelessness, the provision of temporary accommodation and the delivery of housing support.
- 2.3 This paper aims to quantify the extent of homelessness in North Lanarkshire using local data sources. It will explain the profile of homeless applicants and set out the causes and influencing factors, from a local and national perspective, that contribute to people becoming homeless in the first place as well as provide information on prevention activity through the delivery of comprehensive housing options.
- 2.4 It will consider how homelessness affects the health and wellbeing of these individuals, and the way in which it impacts on their everyday lives and the various support interventions provided and how these could be improved.
- 2.5 This paper will draw on the national priorities and funding initiatives available to tackle homelessness and will identify recommendations and actions for the development of the Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026.

3. National and Legislative Context

- 3.1 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 trauma experienced by applicants plays a significant role in their ability to sustain accommodation and the support they may need to settle into a new home.
- 3.2 Homelessness policy is continuously evolving with amendments to legislation and guidance to support key improvements in the way homelessness services are delivered. The abolition of priority need was implemented fully by December 2012 and more recent changes to amend the duty to investigate intentionality replaced by a discretionary power to do so from November 2019. A further change to remove the requirements of local connection are also under consideration.

¹ Scottish Government LHS Guidance – Sept 2019 (P.2 and P.35). <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-housing-strategy-guidance/>

- 3.3 In 2009 the Scottish Government published statutory guidance focussing on preventing and alleviating homelessness² and has been a key driver in changing practice across Scotland. This was further supported by the introduction of Housing Options Guidance in 2016³.
- 3.4 Housing Options is defined as *“looking at an individual’s options and choices in the widest sense and may involve exploring all possible tenure options. It can also cover other aspects of an individual’s circumstance that may not be housing related but could impinge upon that individual’s options in terms of access to housing which meets their needs.”*
- 3.5 Housing Options is also about a focus on preventing homelessness, intervening early and working closely with all relevant services which will assist individuals in their housing situation. It is a service which should be available to all who require it. Delivered effectively, Housing Options can help to avoid crisis and prevent homelessness. Housing Options activity is supported by locality HUBS across the country and continuously reviewed National Housing Options Guidance. A Housing Options Training Toolkit is currently in development and will provide learning opportunities with a focus on skills and behaviours and practical assistance to housing advice staff at a local level. The aim will be to ensure that everyone who approaches a local authority (or even a housing association) with a housing problem, is assisted to look at the widest range of housing options and solutions available to the individual/household and consider the best and most sustainable option for them.
- 3.6 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was established by the Scottish Government in October 2017 to produce short and long-term solutions to eradicate homelessness and rough sleeping for good and transform temporary accommodation⁴. This led to the publication of *‘The Ending Homelessness Together High Level Action Plan’*⁵ in November 2018 and sought to address the 70 recommendations from the HARSAG. This is about a radical shift in homeless policy direction to deliver the rapid delivery of settled permanent accommodation for people experiencing homelessness, avoiding a lengthy stay in temporary accommodation and the expansion of Housing First provision by providing a permanent home and the wrap around support required for those with complex needs.
- 3.7 Beyond these two key actions, the HARSAG made a range of other recommendations including but not limited to:
- The provision of temporary accommodation and its furnishings should be of a good standard that promotes the well-being, safety, and security of homeless households through a psychologically informed approach.
 - Preventing migrant homelessness through a range of approaches.
 - A homeless prevention duty and mandatory collaboration across Health and Social Care Partnerships, Local Authorities, Housing Associations, and the Voluntary Sector to prevent and tackle homelessness, with a specific focus on those at highest risk of rough sleeping.

² Scottish Government Prevention Guidance – 2009. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/prevention-homelessness-guidance/>

³ Scottish Government Housing Options Guidance – Mar 2016 - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-options-guidance/>

⁴ Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) – June 2018
<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/factsheet/2018/06/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group-final-report/documents/hrsag-final-report-june-2018-pdf/hrsag-final-report-june-2018-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/HRSAG%2BFinal%2BReport%2BJune%2B2018.pdf>

⁵ Scottish Government and COSLA Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan – Nov 2018.
<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2018/11/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/documents/00543359-pdf/00543359-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00543359.pdf>

- The view that the costs of homelessness and temporary accommodation should be a citizen-funded service, supported by Local Authority General Fund finance, and by Scottish Government Grant Aided Expenditure.
 - The view that homelessness is seen as a public health priority and prioritised accordingly.
 - Ensuring an adequate affordable and social housing supply to meet immediate needs.
 - Consistent application and implementation of 'Staying Put' provision for care leavers and Scottish Government Missing Persons' Framework to prevent youth homelessness.
- 3.8 Every local authority was required to develop a five-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP); submit this to the Scottish Government in December 2018 and begin implementation from April 2019. It was expected that RRTP's would be developed across the partnerships in each local authority area and fully integrated across strategic plans. This requires a concerted and co-ordinated approach by local authorities and their wider stakeholders to plan future service provision to ensure that appropriate advice, information, temporary accommodation, and appropriate support services are available to those who need it.
- 3.9 Some of the HARSAG recommendations will be implemented by LA's through the delivery of their RRTP's and others will be taken forward by the Scottish Government and partner agencies.
- 3.10 The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) was introduced from 2012 and revised in April 2017⁶. It 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
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 Radical transformation has taken place to make the Private Rented Sector (PRS) more secure and provide additional protection for tenants through the introduction of the Private Residential Tenancy, mandatory tenancy deposit schemes and the introduction of the First Tier Tribunal.
- 3.13 The integration of Health and Social Care has transformed the way health and social care services are delivered for some groups of the population e.g. older people and those with particular needs. Until the introduction of the RRTP and mandatory collaboration, the integrated service provision had little impact on homeless households, however this is now a high priority for the partnerships and will assist in meeting the wider health and wellbeing needs of homeless people.
- 3.14 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014⁷ was implemented in April 2015 and expanded 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

⁶ The Scottish Social Housing Charter 2017. https://www.gcha.org.uk/assets/0001/3394/New_SSHC_2017.pdf

⁷ The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/pdfs/asp_20140008_en.pdf

be considered when dealing with young care leavers and will require a multi-agency approach to supporting this vulnerable group.

3.15 Further, the Independent Care Review published its conclusions and final reports⁸ in February 2020 and outlined the vision and approach for care experienced children and young people. 'The Promise' is about enabling care experienced children and young people in Scotland to grow up feeling loved, safe, respected and supported by the people and structures around them with a specific focus on the critical role played by education in helping young people to achieve their potential. The Promise was driven by care experienced young people and highlights the fundamental shift required on how decisions are made about children and families and is built on the foundations set out below.

- **Voice:** Children must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved properly listening and responding to what children want and need. There must be a compassionate, caring, decision-making culture focussed on children and those they trust.
- **Family:** Where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.
- **Care:** Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed.
- **People:** The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, who in turn must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care.
- **Scaffolding:** Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required.

3.16 The Scottish Government published their revised Equality Evidence Framework⁹ in November 2019 and was developed to assist public bodies to 'gather and use equality evidence to help understand the issues and inequalities of concern in Scotland, to inform policy action and to measure and evaluate the impact of changes or interventions'. The challenge of improving equality evidence and addressing gaps is a significant task and this Framework is the Scottish Government's response. Supporting the Framework is an Equality Evidence Strategy¹⁰ that underpins 'effective and inclusive policy making in Scotland' setting out the equality evidence gaps identified across partner organisations and academia and details the strategic approach to strengthening Scotland's equality evidence. An Interim Progress Report¹¹ was also published listing the progress made so far and includes the development of a Gender Equality Index to measure gender across Justice and Health to name a few with the aim of showing change over time. The report also notes progress on the Gender and Ethnic Pay Gap, Income and Poverty as well as Educational Outcomes.

3.17 The Housing to 2040 consultation¹² identifies that Housing has a vital role to play in meeting Scotland's ambitions including the eradication of child poverty, fuel poverty and homelessness,

⁸ The Promise, February 2020 - <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Promise.pdf>

⁹ Equality Evidence Framework, Scottish Government, Nov 2019 - <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/EqualFramework>

¹⁰ The Equality Evidence Strategy 2017-2021, Scottish Government - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-equality-evidence-strategy-2017-2021/>

¹¹ Equality Evidence Strategy (2017-21): Interim progress Report Nov 2019, Scottish Government - <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0054/00548877.pdf>

¹² Housing to 2040 – A vision for our future Homes and Communities, Scottish Government Consultation July 2019 - <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/factsheet/2019/06/housing-to-2040/documents/housing-to-2040-full-length-discussion/housing-to-2040-full-length->

tackling the effects of climate change and promoting inclusive growth. The Consultation sets out the vision for Scotland:

- A well-functioning housing system that's fair, affordable and meets peoples' needs.
- High quality sustainable homes that are well designed, economic, and efficient to run.
- Sustainable Communities where people feel connected to their community and where a variety of housing choices is available.
- Homes that meet people's needs that are flexible and adaptable to enable people with support needs to stay in their home.

3.18 Each element of the vision is underpinned by a set of key principles to ensure that policy, interventions, and actions across Scotland are considered with the vision at the forefront of any developments.

4. Local Context

4.1 The Plan for North Lanarkshire¹³ sets out our vision for inclusive growth and prosperity to address high levels of deprivation, child poverty and inequality. It aims to improve the lives for everyone who lives, works, or visits North Lanarkshire by 'driving economic growth, increasing skills, generating jobs and training opportunities' through a partnership approach and by involving communities to share in our ambitions.

4.2 The Plan has twenty-five high level ambition statements and are aligned under five key priorities to deliver the intended outcomes:

- Improve economic opportunities and outcomes.
- Support all children and young people to realise their full potential.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.
- Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities.
- Improve North Lanarkshire's resource base.

4.3 In November 2020, North Lanarkshire Council made a commitment to keep 'The Promise' to care experienced children and young people and to work towards the 5 foundations of Voice; Family; Care; People and Scaffolding. Key actions are being developed around The Promise' which also fit into The Plan for North Lanarkshire where:

- We Aspire to support all children and young people to achieve their full potential.
- Investing in early intervention and strengthening families through empowering clusters.
- Collaborating and leading an integrated and multiagency workforce to live out the values of the Promise.
- Service Re-design around the needs of children, families, and communities.

4.4 Preventing and alleviating homelessness and the provision of housing support services straddle a number of these strategic priorities but are particularly linked to priority three to improve health and wellbeing through addressing the causes of poverty, supporting independence, improving preventative approaches and public protection, and encouraging social and leisure activities of households within communities.

[discussion/govscot%3Adocument/Housing%2Bto%2B2040%2B-%2BStakeholder%2BEngagement%2B-%2BVision%2Band%2BPrinciples%2BLeaflet%2B-%2BFull%2BLength%2BVersion%2B-%2B25%2BJune%2B2019%2B%2528002%2529.pdf](https://www.gov.scot/3Adocument/Housing%2Bto%2B2040%2B-%2BStakeholder%2BEngagement%2B-%2BVision%2Band%2BPrinciples%2BLeaflet%2B-%2BFull%2BLength%2BVersion%2B-%2B25%2BJune%2B2019%2B%2528002%2529.pdf)

¹³ The Plan for North Lanarkshire, North Lanarkshire Council, 2019 -

<https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=22960&p=0>

4.5 These strategic priorities contribute to the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework¹⁴ which sets out the Purpose, Values and National Outcomes to be achieved. It states the purpose of the Framework is to *“focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable inclusive sustainable economic growth”* and is linked to a series of values where, as a society, we treat all people with kindness, dignity, compassion, respects the rule of law and act in an open and transparent way.

4.6 The vision underpins a series of eighteen outcomes including eradication of poverty and hunger, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, quality education, good health and wellbeing and decent work and economic growth. These outcomes fit directly with the aims of the HARSAG High Level Action Plan and RRTP's to prevent homelessness where possible and to re-settle those who become homeless and provide any identified support to enable them to move on successfully.

4.7 North Lanarkshire's RRTP¹⁵ was developed in partnership with all agencies across health, social care, housing associations, police and third sector partners and sets out how the partnership will move from the current position to the future vision. The vision of the North Lanarkshire RRTP is to:

‘Work in collaboration to provide early interventions which prevent homelessness and ensure settled accommodation is made available as quickly as possible if homelessness occurs.’

4.8 The RRTP intends to make significant changes to the provision of temporary accommodation, housing supply systems and the support services to ensure that this impacts positively on homeless people and that they are provided with settled housing and the support they need to achieve successful lives.

4.9 The plan considered all aspects of the local market and supply and demand information across all tenures. It takes account of the health and social care needs of homeless people and identifies that this group are far more disadvantaged than the general population and have far more complex needs requiring a different approach to delivering health and social care services.

4.10 The RRTP sets out a range of actions for delivery by the partnership and below are some of the planned interventions to help people access and keep a home:

- a Housing First type of service for those with very complex needs with a small specialist team of staff.
- develop a Third Sector Alliance to deliver the support needs of those with complex needs and Housing First.
- specific interventions for care experienced young people.
- support services for parents and children affected by domestic abuse.
- Introduce Self Directed Support options for homeless people.
- deliver a wide range of prevention activity to ensure people are able to sustain their home and prevent them from becoming homeless.
- specific prevention activity and review of protocols and procedures for those leaving institutions and consideration of options to identify those at risk of homelessness as early as possible.
- housing homeless people faster through increasing lets to this group and flipping existing temporary accommodation into permanent tenancies where possible.
- Reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation and, over time, reduce the levels of temporary accommodation.

¹⁴ Scottish Government National Performance Framework - <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

¹⁵ North Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. - [att88989.pdf \(northlanarkshire.gov.uk\)](#)

- Working with employability services to increase skills and abilities and get people into work.
- 4.11 The Strategic Commissioning Plan¹⁶ sets out key priorities for Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire over the next three years with the aims of addressing inequalities, focussing on helping people stay healthy and recognising that additional support is needed to help those with more complex care and support needs. The plan has six ambition statements and is supported by a programme of work that spans across a range of housing and homelessness themes and includes developing models to improve health planning for children and young people, expanding self-directed support to those with complex needs and increasing the focus on addressing inequalities in developing prevention and anticipatory care approaches. The plan recognises that early intervention and a partnership approach is the key to addressing longstanding issues with a commitment to workforce development to build skills and capacity of staff and deliver preventative early intervention approaches. This links to the Housing Contribution Statement and joint working arrangements with housing and all other partners through the RRTP, where the focus is on homeless prevention and seeks to influence and shape future service delivery to address inequalities.
- 4.12 The LH2 2016-2021 included key actions to provide high quality housing options advice and prevent homelessness where possible through targeted prevention activity. The delivery of quality housing support services and partnership approaches to strengthen the co-ordination of support and share good practice. During this time, the development and delivery of RRTP's became a requirement and was the driving force for improved joint working and identification of shared responsibilities and actions which were set out earlier.

5. Homeless Applications in North Lanarkshire

- 5.1 Information collected to populate the statistical return to the Scottish Government (the HL1 return) confirms there were 2,127 homeless applications in North Lanarkshire in 2019/20 which is a decrease of 10%. There had been a 25% increase in homelessness over the two-year period 2017/18 and 2018/19 and this followed a period of reasonable stability of homelessness in NL at around 1,900 applications a year.
- 5.2 This compares with a very slight rise in applications (84) across the country in 2019/20. Applications decreased in 14 other local authority areas including Aberdeen City, West Dunbartonshire and Perth and Kinross.
- 5.3 The main reasons for homelessness remain the same; asked to leave and disputes within households which includes relationship breakdowns and violent disputes.
- 5.4 Given the timescale for writing and consulting on the LHS, statistics for 2018/19 are utilised, but are updated to 2019/20 where this has been achievable and where it did not require additional analysis and investigations of the cases involved. The 2020/21 data was not available in time to meet the deadline for consulting and publishing North Lanarkshire's LHS and supporting documents.
- 5.5 Covid-19 and associated lockdown regulations has had a significant impact on homelessness across the country and contributed to lower than expected numbers of homeless presentations in North Lanarkshire. Whilst there was a steady rise in presentations in the Summer of 2020 as restrictions eased, a targeted and coordinated approach was taken to support those facing homelessness. The overall rate of homeless applications fell by 21% to 1,684 in 2020/21.

¹⁶ Health & Social Care North Lanarkshire, Strategic Commissioning Plan 2020-2023. [Strategic-Comm-Plan-20-23-FINAL.pdf \(hscnorthlan.scot\)](#)

- 5.6 The longer-term impact of COVID is still being considered and it is likely that homelessness will rise over the coming year once protections put in place are removed and continued efforts are necessary to target prevention activities appropriately and as early as possible. For example, there is likely to be a rise in S11 notifications as the furlough scheme ends and employers are unable to keep businesses running. It may therefore be prudent to consider targeting resources around prevention work for these customers to intervene and prevent a rise in homelessness.
- 5.7 Up until 2019/20 the rate of homeless applications had been rising in Scotland, though only slightly in 2019/20. It was the third annual rise in applications and highlights that there is a stark variation across local authorities in the delivery of the housing options approach and how this interacts with homelessness responsibilities
- 5.8 Anecdotal evidence from front line staff suggests that homeless applicants may present at time of crisis where homeless prevention and housing options work may be limited. However, as part of the allocation process, every new tenant is offered 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 for the tenant to sustain their tenancy. A housing support assessment is undertaken for all homeless households and subsequent plan is developed for those where there is an identified housing support need.
- 5.9 Some housing options interviews appear to be narrow in their scope to the social sector and wider discussions on the PRS or shared and low-cost home ownership is more limited. This may be because it requires a full financial assessment to understand a households' ability to afford any housing options considered and the skills of front-line staff may not be at the required level to confidently deliver it. This links into the delivery of the Housing options Training Toolkit and the future workforce development of operational housing staff.
- 5.10 The previous 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. Evidence illustrates that income levels are lower in North Lanarkshire than other places in Scotland and may be a contributory factor.
- 5.11 Welfare reforms are having a significant impact on residents across North Lanarkshire and since the implementation of full-service Universal Credit this has deepened. The Scottish Government continue to underwrite 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 has caused sanctions to be imposed, although where these have been challenged, a significant number have been overturned. The Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funding is under increasing pressure year on year and is struggling to support those individuals who have reached the maximum benefit cap levels. These welfare reforms have impacted on residents; however homeless households are generally more vulnerable and could therefore be disproportionately affected by welfare reforms compared with other groups of the population.
- 5.12 The Plan for North Lanarkshire highlights the deprivation in North Lanarkshire and is evidenced from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). This identifies that 75,000 residents live in the worst 15% data zones (2016). There are 21,500 residents living in the 5% most deprived areas of North Lanarkshire. The number of working age people claiming one or more benefit is 3.6% in North Lanarkshire compared with 2.8% across Scotland. 21% of children live in households that have both a low income and material deprivation. 24.8% of children live in poverty compared with the national average of 23% (2017).
- 5.13 Whilst there have been some significant improvements to how the PRS operates, and specifically to end Short Assured Tenancies giving PRS tenants much more security within the home they rent, locality housing teams suggest that there is still a perception that this sector is

insecure, too expensive and not well managed. It is clear that the perceptions of housing applicants play a significant role in their considerations and choices.

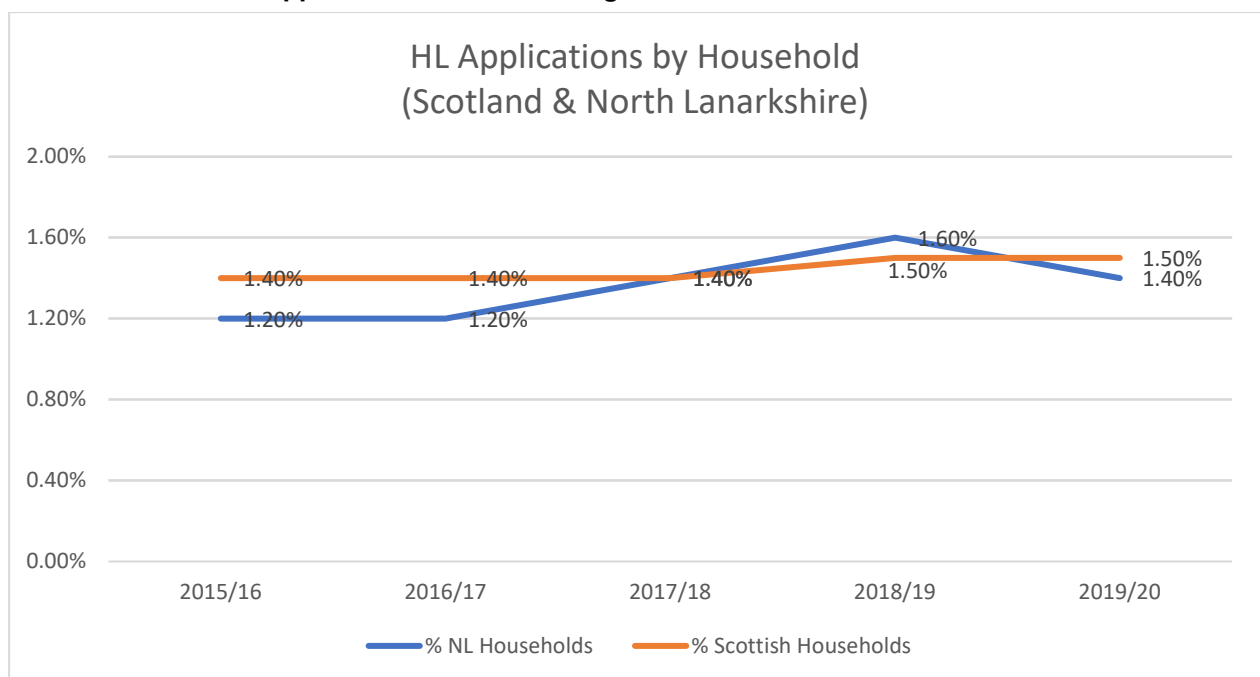
- 5.14 More detailed information on the operation of the PRS and on affordability of homes within North Lanarkshire will be covered in other evidence papers, however it is important to understand the role the Housing Service has played in the PRS over the last few years, particularly for homeless applicants. The Council has operated a Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (RDG) since 1999 and was reviewed to widen criteria in 2012/13. However, the scheme has been limited in use with only a few cases each year and appears to be linked to the view that it is too complex, the PRS is generally too expensive, and properties are sometimes viewed as sub-standard by applicants. Additionally, some landlords are unwilling to accept applicants on benefits, and this is specifically linked to the role out of Universal Credit and wider welfare reforms. Lastly there are no staff resources available to manage the scheme in North Lanarkshire and it is therefore down to individual applicants to source suitable property in the PRS and then gain consent from their landlord to approach the Housing Service to access the RDGS and this appears to be one of the more significant obstacles.
- 5.15 The Housing Service used to host bi-annual Landlord Forum Events and produced Landlord Newsletters with the aim of engaging with the PRS to improve the standards of management and property conditions. However, attendance at these events was becoming very low with only around 20 landlords attending from over 11,000 invitations and it was viewed that the intensive resources required and associated costs to deliver this would be better utilised elsewhere.
- 5.16 The under 35 age group who are out of work will face the steepest challenges in seeking permanent accommodation because of the shared room rate of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) which is currently £61.22 per week or £265.29 per month. This figure has just recently risen by 1.7% after a four-year freeze by the UK Government. The cost of an average council rent in North Lanarkshire is £64.30 and an average RSL rent is £87.63. PRS rents are generally higher than that again and this clearly highlights the lack of affordable housing choices for this group of the population. The LHA rates have since been frozen again for 2021/22 with no guidance as to whether this will be lifted for financial year 2022/23.
- 5.17 The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2019¹⁷ reports that nearly 10% of Scottish households contain concealed households who would prefer or expect to live separately and includes unrelated single adults or households with concealed families. For example, to what extent can different age groups form a separate household e.g. a younger person? Since 2010, there has been a sharp fall in the 'household representative rate' for all age groups but young people in particular and suggests an estimated 67,650 households have been prevented from forming for younger adults in the 20-34 age group.
- 5.18 The previous LHS did consider the potential to develop some form of 'shared tenancy' scheme, however there is no culture of sharing in North Lanarkshire and there appeared to be strong resistance from the local population. This is not unusual and is a view replicated across large parts of Scotland, except for cities where there are universities and shared student accommodation. Some LA's have already tried sharing in the social sector, however this proved legally challenging due to shared tenants being 'jointly and severally liable' for council tax as well as the automatic assignation of the other half of a social tenancy when one of the tenants leave. Sharing in the PRS is the only viable permanent option that can be considered as these legal issues do not exist since council tax liabilities are already split and there is never a right to the other half of the tenancy because of the tenancy agreement in use for the PRS.

¹⁷ The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2019:

https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/239984/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2019_es.pdf

- 5.19 Understanding that not everyone is suited to sharing is crucial and the personal choice of applicants is a key consideration. Successful shared tenancy schemes already operating in Scotland, have a staff complement to match applicants, manage risk, assist in resolving disputes and provide support to individuals. A small team of people to facilitate and manage a form of shared living is the best model to achieve successful results, however there are currently no resources available in North Lanarkshire to consider this option further and may be an area of future focus if funding can be made available to support it.
- 5.20 Supporting the delivery of broader housing options services at a local level should be addressed with the introduction of the Housing Options Training Toolkit currently in development through the HUBS and supported by the Scottish Government, ALACHO and COSLA. It is hoped that the training toolkit will be available by the end of 2021/22.
- 5.21 As a proportion of all households in North Lanarkshire the number of homeless households increased from 1.2% in 2016/17 to 1.4% in 2017/18 and 1.6% in 2018/19. This fell back to 1.4% in 2019/20 and, with the exception of 2018/19, has remained below the national average for Scotland. The rise in applications could have been caused by increasing pressure on families affected by changing economic and social circumstances and welfare reforms and is consistent with levels of poverty and deprivation resulting from the wider economic pressures and austerity measures.

Chart 1 – Homeless Applications as a Percentage of all Households

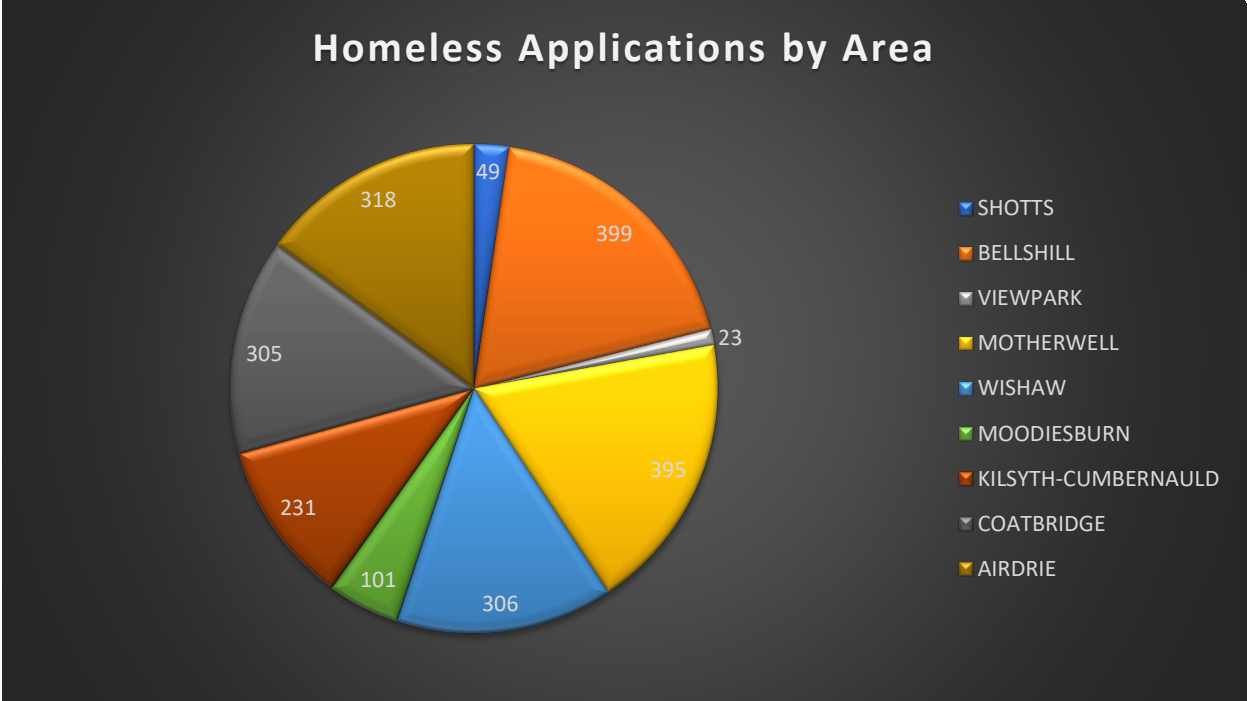


Source: Scottish Government HL1 Data and NLC Homeless Applications – as at 31 March 2020

6. Locality Breakdown

- 6.1 A review of applications by area in 2019/20 show that Bellshill and Motherwell have the highest level of applications at 399 (18.76%), and 395 (18.57%) - see chart 1. Kilsyth and Cumbernauld recorded the lowest level of cases at 231 (10.86%).

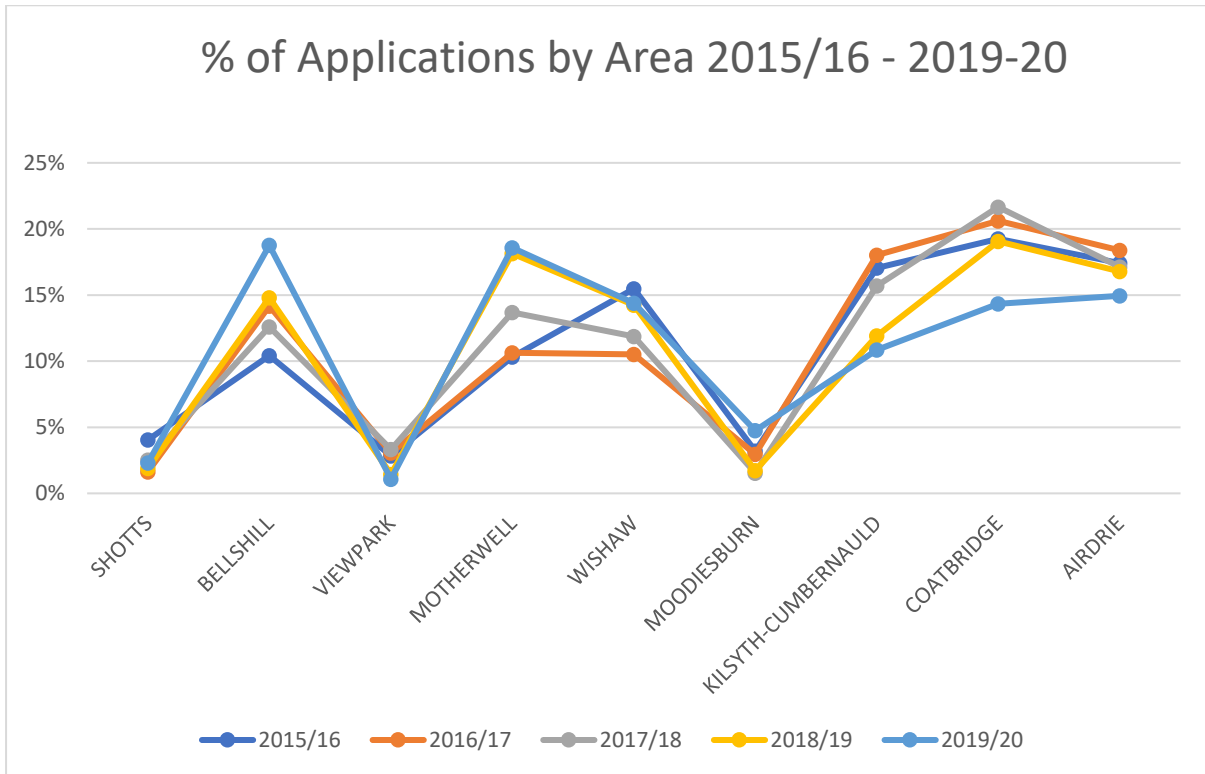
Chart 2 – Homeless Applications by Area 2019/20



Source: NLC Reports

6.2 Chart 2 illustrates the proportional trend in homeless applications across North Lanarkshire’s local housing market areas from 2015-16 to 2019/20. This shows an increasing proportion year on year within the Motherwell locality from a low of 10% in 2015/16 to 18.57% in 2019/20. However, the largest increase is in the Bellshill locality from 10% to 18.76% over the five years. Conversely there has been a reducing proportion of applications in the Coatbridge area which is 14.34% (305) in 2019/20, but was recorded as 21.7% and 20.61% in previous years. There is also a fall in applications from Kilsyth-Cumbernauld from 18% in 2016/17 to just under 11% in 2019/20 and in Airdrie from 17% in the two years previous, to just under 15% in 2019/20. The Wishaw locality has recorded variable levels across the five years from 15% down to 11% and then back up to around 14% where it seems to be settling.

Chart 3 – % of Homeless Applications by Area 2015/16 – 2019/20

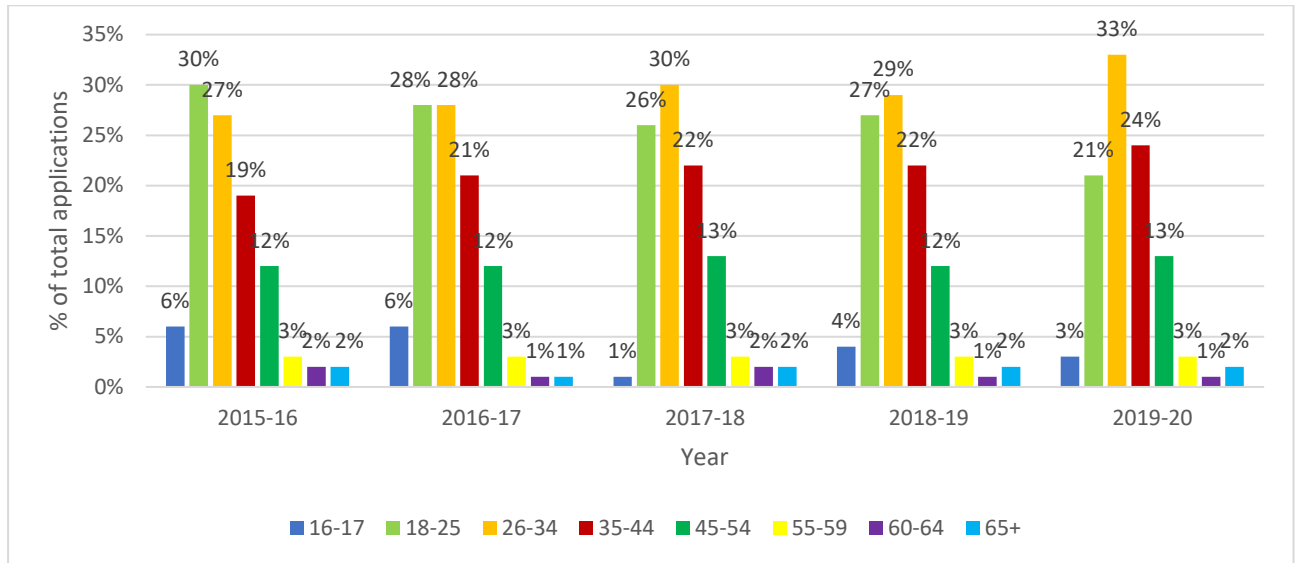


Source: NLC Reports

7. Age Range

- 7.1 Most homeless applicants in North Lanarkshire are those in the 26 to 34 age band, accounting for 33% of all applications in 2019/20 but are only 11% of the North Lanarkshire population. Young people between 16 and 25 years represent 12% of the North Lanarkshire population but 24% of all homeless applicants. Added together, these age bands represent 23% of the NL population but make up 57% of all homeless applications and are therefore disproportionality affected.
- 7.2 Homeless households in the 16-25 age band have reduced by 9% from the last LHS, however it suggests that further targeted prevention activities are required or that maybe households present in crisis where housing options and prevention activity are less viable. Additionally, people in these age bands are adversely affected by welfare reforms, in particular the Local Housing Allowance rates and the Shared Room Rate and consequently have more limited housing options.

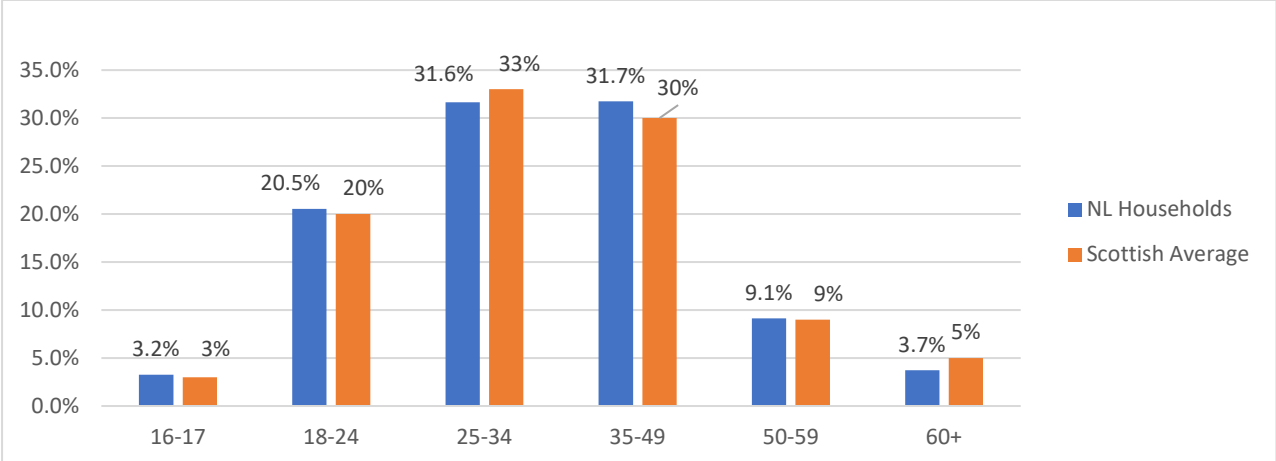
Chart 4 – Homeless Applicants by Age



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

- 7.3 Prevention activities such as mediation can help to reconcile young people with their families, however it sometimes comes too late to help them stay in the family home and there needs to be a recognition that mediation may be limited to helping re-build their familial relationships. This in-itself can be a positive step, as family members can provide support to assist them to sustain their home going forward.
- 7.4 Young people appear to be particularly affected by social isolation and sporadic engagement with some services that could address their needs and evidence suggests that their mental health has been markedly affected by COVID 19 restrictions and lockdown. Over the last ten years, we have provided housing support specifically targeted at young people and have worked in partnership with specialist agencies to develop and deliver a range of additional services to strengthen young people’s skills and resilience and improve outcomes. A trauma informed approach was implemented within these services in the last five years to help improve support delivery to meet needs. There are already opportunities for care experienced young people to access specific modular training and learn practical skills within a training flat environment and it may be that expanding this opportunity to other young people should be considered.
- 7.5 However, it appears that homeless prevention activity requires a renewed focus to support young people to remain in their accommodation where possible. More recent innovation to assist young people to leave care into settled accommodation is in a pilot phase as part of the implementation of the RRTP. The Youth Housing Statement considers wider issues affecting all young people and the challenges they face.
- 7.6 It should be noted that the North Lanarkshire analysis of homeless young people includes those aged 25 years of age and this is because of corporate parenting and continuing care requirements for looked after children and young people. The Scottish Government age data sets are from 16 to 24 and do not include those aged 25 years. To aid comparisons with the Scottish Average, the remaining age analysis has been completed on the national data sets.
- 7.7 Young people aged 16-24 years in North Lanarkshire make up 23.8% of the homeless population and is just above the Scottish average of 23%. Those aged 25-34 years and 35-49 years are 31.6% and 31.7% respectively and compares with the national average of 33% and 30%. The 25-34 age band has increased over 3% on the previous year and has been slowly rising over the last 5 years from 27%.

Chart 5 – Homeless Applicants by Age Range 2019/20 - North Lanarkshire & Scotland (Scottish Government data Sets)



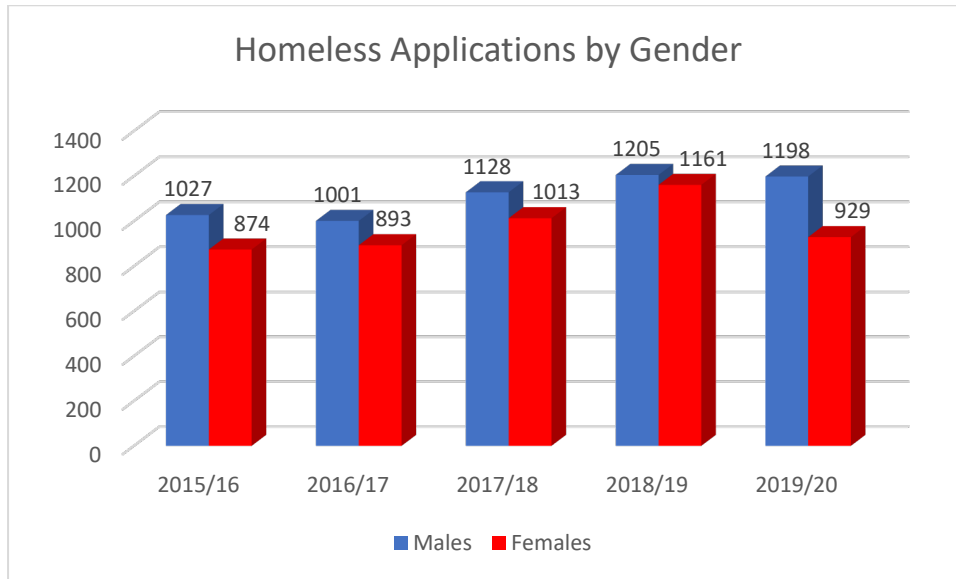
Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

7.8 Those aged 50-59 represent 9% of homeless applicants in North Lanarkshire which is the same as the national average. Those aged 60+ account for 3.7% of applicants in North Lanarkshire and is lower than the national average of 5%.

8. Gender, Household Composition and Applicant Circumstances

- 8.1 The recorded gender of homeless applicants in North Lanarkshire highlighted an increasing level of females each year hitting a peak of 49% in 2018/19, but this fell back to 44% (929) in 2019/20 - see chart 5. This compares with 45% across Scotland’s female homeless population.
- 8.2 The male population of North Lanarkshire is 56% (1,198) which is very slightly above the Scottish average of 55% and illustrates that men continue to be disproportionately affected by homelessness and has been a feature in homelessness statistics across Scotland for many years.

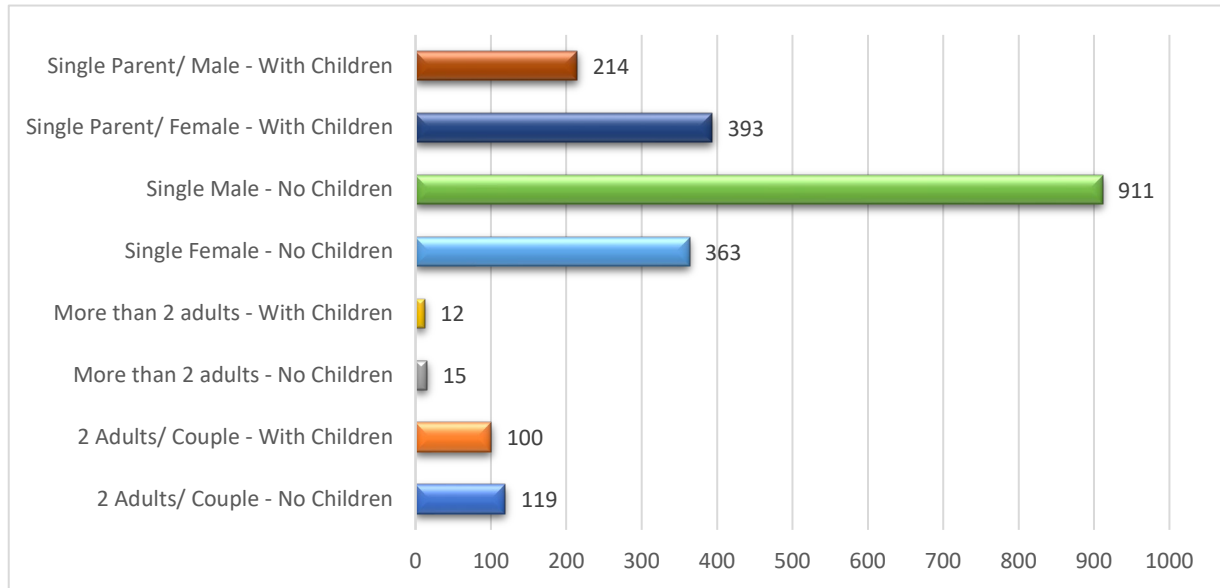
Chart 6 – Homeless Applicants by Gender



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

- 8.3 The HL1 does not yet have the capability to record homeless applicants who identify themselves as transgender or non-binary and this is something that has been highlighted to the Scottish Government as part of a wider review of HL1 data requirements and may be addressed at some point in the future.
- 8.4 In 2019/20, the household profile of homeless applicants highlights that single people account for just under 60% of all homeless households and is a 2% rise from 2018/19, however this is 6% lower than the national average of 66%. Single people account for 36% of the overall population in North Lanarkshire and clearly highlights that this cohort are significantly more likely to become homeless than other household types and is similar to the national picture.
- 8.5 Single males make up 42.8% of homeless households which is 3% lower than the national average of 46%. Overall however, males account for 71.5% of all single people in NL which is a 5% rise on the figures recorded in 2018/19 and is slightly above the national average of 69%.
- 8.6 Single females are recorded at just over 17% of the homeless population in North Lanarkshire compared with the national average of 20%. This is a reduction of 3% on 2018/19 and has fluctuated slightly since the last LHS with continual rises until 2018/19 and then a reduction in 2019/20. Chart 6 illustrates the family composition of all homeless applicants.

Chart 7 – Family Composition of Homeless Applicants



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

- 8.7 The household profile of homeless applicants in North Lanarkshire appears to be out of kilter with the national picture in that there is an increased level of households with children. A third (33.8% (719)) of households contain children and is a reduction of just under 3% from figures reported in 2018/19 bringing them back into line with the figures reported in the previous LHS. However, this is 5% higher than the national average of 28%.
- 8.8 Collectively, single parents make up 28.5% of all homeless households in North Lanarkshire and is 6.5% higher than the national average of 22%. Further, single parents account for 84% (607) of all homeless households with children which is a rise of 3% from 2018/19.
- 8.9 Females account for the largest group of single parents at almost 65%, although this has fallen in recent years with corresponding rising levels of single parent males. This is compared with just under 79% single parent females across Scotland and illustrates that whilst North Lanarkshire has a higher rate of homeless single parents, it has a lower rate of female single parents than across Scotland.
- 8.10 Of the 607 single parent families, the largest proportion (22% / 131) left an abusive relationship and of those 85% (111) were female. The largest proportion of single parent males was a non-violent relationship breakdown at 21% (66) and compares with 17% (52) of single parent females.
- 8.11 The household population profile for North Lanarkshire appears to have changed since the 2015/16 LHS as single parent households appear to have fallen from over 10% to 3% of the population in 2019/20. Comparing the single parent population profile and the single parent homeless households illustrates that this group are almost ten times more likely to be homeless than other household types in north Lanarkshire. It is likely that single parent families may be less resilient to economic shocks and more likely to face poverty and deprivation and is consistent with the lower levels of income in North Lanarkshire than other parts of Scotland and this group are therefore more prone to be affected by homelessness than other groups of the population.
- 8.12 A recent report on the health needs of all homeless children and their families highlighted a gap in service provision for their specific needs. The report found that children within homeless families experienced multiple-disadvantage and that their attainment and general health and wellbeing was adversely affected by the trauma of homelessness. The RRTP has identified

actions to address this, reducing the impact on children and improve attainment and overall outcomes. This is considered in more detail in section 37 of this report.

- 8.13 All adult households account for 6.3% of applications in 2019/20 with the majority of these (5.59%) recorded as couples and this is relatively similar to the national figure of 6%.
- 8.14 It is important to understand that one gender can be impacted more than another when considering applicants' prior circumstances. For example, 31% of males had been residing within the family / parental home compared with 25% of females and 17% of males left home where they lived with partners / friends compared with 11% of females. This indicates that males are more likely to leave the family home than females. Conversely, 23% of females had previously resided in the PRS compared with 10% of males and may highlight an inequality of affordability for females as they, in general, earn less than their male counterparts, are in lower paid or part-time work and may have caring responsibilities for children or older family members. The majority of those who left prison were male.

9. LGBTQ+

- 9.1 The World Habitat Report¹⁸ highlights that LGBTQ+ people are affected by high levels of hardship and are disproportionately affected by housing problems. Whilst LGBTQ+ people face housing issues, there are four particular areas that are identified as significant: homelessness, old age, domestic abuse and asylum seeking.
- 9.2 The report goes on to explain LGBTQ+ people are more prone to rough sleeping and sofa surfing due to, in some circumstances, feeling unwelcome at home and in their neighbourhoods and may suffer trauma from bullying and sexual exploitation. This may impact on their mental wellbeing and can lead to conflict and alienation.
- 9.3 Young LGBTQ+ people experiencing homelessness are more likely to be victims of violence and substance misuse whilst older LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be affected by social isolation because they do not believe that mainstream housing, support and care can offer safe and appropriate services and have concerns about the risk of harassment and abuse they may face.
- 9.4 Findings from the report highlight that LGBTQ+ people are also more likely to be affected by domestic abuse and widespread discrimination and particularly affect men. One of the key reasons highlighted is that legislation and advocacy focus almost exclusively on violence against women and girls and therefore limits attention and funding to those agencies working with LGBTQ+ victims.
- 9.5 LGBTQ+ Refugees and Asylum Seekers face multiple disadvantages because of their status, sexual orientation or gender identify according to the report, and in many cases, they have fled from countries where their sexual orientation or gender identify is illegal and, in some cases, punishable by death. One of the key challenges across all the groups is that there is little or no equalities monitoring and as a result, homelessness services are not able to identify who might have specific needs. The World Habitat Report makes a series of recommendations including to work towards better data collection and dialogue so that the needs of LGBTQ+ people are better understood and raise awareness of LGBTQ+ housing issues to improve service provision for these groups.

¹⁸ The World Habitat Report Organisation (2018) Left out: Why many LGBTQ+ people aren't accessing their right to housing in the UK [online] Available at: <https://www.world-habitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Left-Out-Why-many-LGBTQ-people-aren-t-accessing-their-right-to-housing-in-the-UK.pdf>

- 9.6 An important aspect of future development is to improve our understanding of the needs of LGBTQ+ and this will be facilitated through engagement and consultation with local LGBTQ+ people and will consider the practical assistance that could make the difference.
- 9.7 The Council and all its partners are committed to ensuring multi-agency workforce development sessions to improve staff understanding and ensure a tailored response to the issues faced by LGBTQ+ people across all our services.

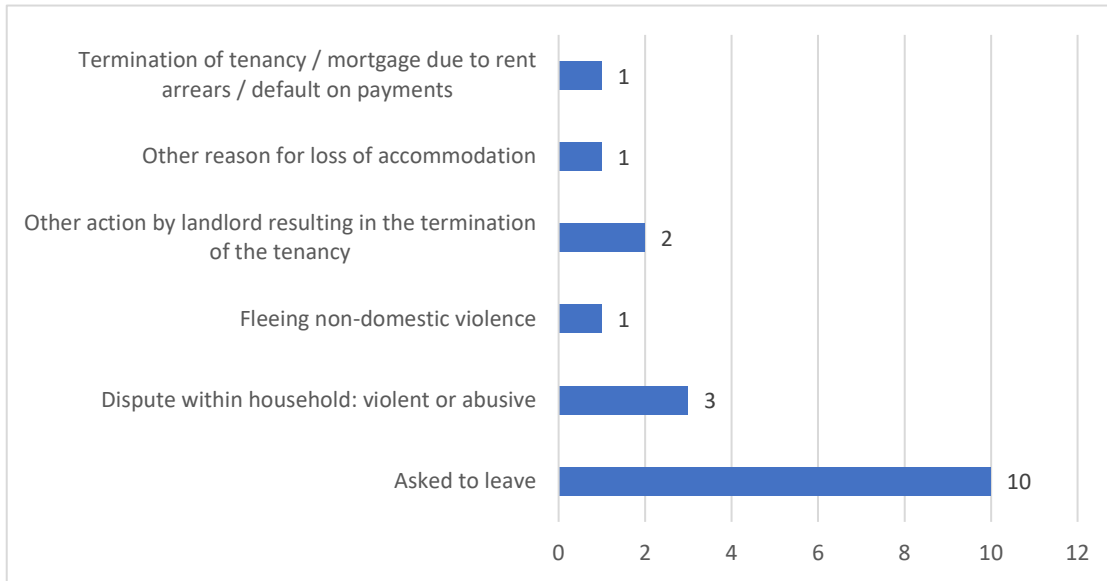
10. Married / Co-habiting

- 10.1 Only 7% (147) of all homeless applicants advised that they were married or co-habiting and suggests that this question is not viewed as important by applicants or is not recorded in all circumstances. This figure is not reported by the Scottish Government and comparisons are not therefore possible.
- 10.2 On reasons for homelessness from this group, the largest proportion of 26% stated 'being asked to leave' was the primary reason and a further 19% were fleeing non-domestic violence. 12% advised that homelessness was because of 'other action by landlord resulting in termination of the tenancy' or 'other reason for leaving accommodation/household'.

11. Pregnancy

- 11.1 Homeless data identifies that 18 women were pregnant at point of presentation and this has fallen from 23 the previous year. 34% (6) of these women were part of a couple and the remainder were single or living with other adults. None of these women had existing children. Further analysis also highlights that none of these women slept rough at any point prior to their applications, were care leavers or left the armed forces.
- 11.2 61% (11) of pregnant women were young people aged 16-25 years with the remainder aged between 26-31. All but one of these applicants reported their ethnicity to be white Scottish, with the other recorded as Irish. 72% of these women had been residing at the family / parental home or with partners / friends. 22% had their own tenancy in the social sector and a further 11% had been living in the PRS.
- 11.3 Chart 7 illustrates the reasons stated by pregnant women for their homelessness. This identifies that the majority (56%) were asked to leave and highlights a potential lack of support and practical assistance to try and keep young single women who fall pregnant at home with their families where possible. There may also be practical aspects that cannot be resolved e.g. violence from within the household (17%) or action taken by landlords to recover possession.

Chart 8 – Pregnant Women and reasons for Homelessness 2019/20

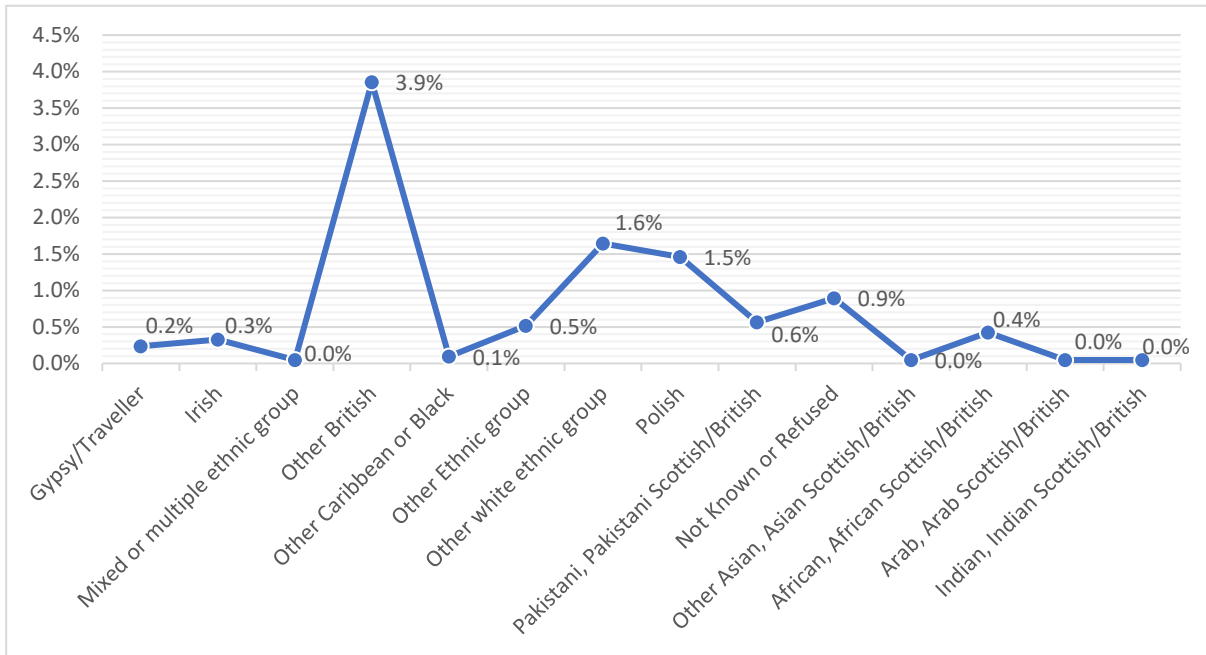


Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

12. Ethnicity

- 12.1 The ethnic origin of homeless applicants in North Lanarkshire is predominantly White Scottish and represents just under 90% of the homeless population in 2019/20 as can be seen in the chart below. This is a fall of almost 2% since the last LHS in 2015/16, however is still significantly above the Scottish average of 74%. This is likely because North Lanarkshire is less culturally diverse than other parts of Scotland and is therefore reflected in homeless applications.
- 12.2 Of the 9.1% who did record a different ethnic origin, 3.9% are recorded as Other British compared with 7% across Scotland and 1.6% were reported as Other white ethnic group compared with 2% nationally. 1.5% stated they were Polish and is slightly lower than the 2% noted across Scotland. 0.6% were Pakistani, 0.3% were Irish and 0.5% were reported as being from an Other Ethnic Group. The remainder account for all other ethnicities including African, Caribbean and Black. 0.2% or 5 applicants reported their ethnicity as Gypsy/Traveller.

Chart 9 – Ethnicity of Homeless Applicants 2019/20 (excluding White Scottish)



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

- 12.3 Scotland Census Data¹⁹ highlight that ethnic minority groups made up 5.2% of the Scottish population in the 2011 Census and is compared with just 2.1% in North Lanarkshire again illustrating that the area is less culturally diverse than across Scotland.
- 12.4 However other ethnic groups beyond 'White Scottish' make up 9% of the homeless population in North Lanarkshire and illustrates that those from different ethnic backgrounds are over-represented in the homeless population. This is also reflected in Scottish Government Homelessness reports²⁰ which show that the percentage of non-white homeless applicants is higher than the general population of Scotland.
- 12.5 This national report provides explains that 'Asian applicants are more likely to experience homelessness after a violent dispute' and that 'Other' ethnic groups are more likely to become homeless after a stay in supported accommodation and is probably inked to the number of applications from households granted refugee or leave to remain status in the UK.
- 12.6 Migrants may also lack knowledge of where assistance and support can be found to help them source settled accommodation and are also likely to face destitution as a result of Immigration control and work visa policy, along with a requirement to be self-sufficient, with no recourse to public funds.

13. Ineligible for Assistance

- 13.1 People from outside the UK who come to live and work are subject to immigration law which may stipulate that they have a legal right to free movement and work but cannot be a burden on the state. Homeless applicants who are assessed as 'Ineligible for Assistance' are defined by

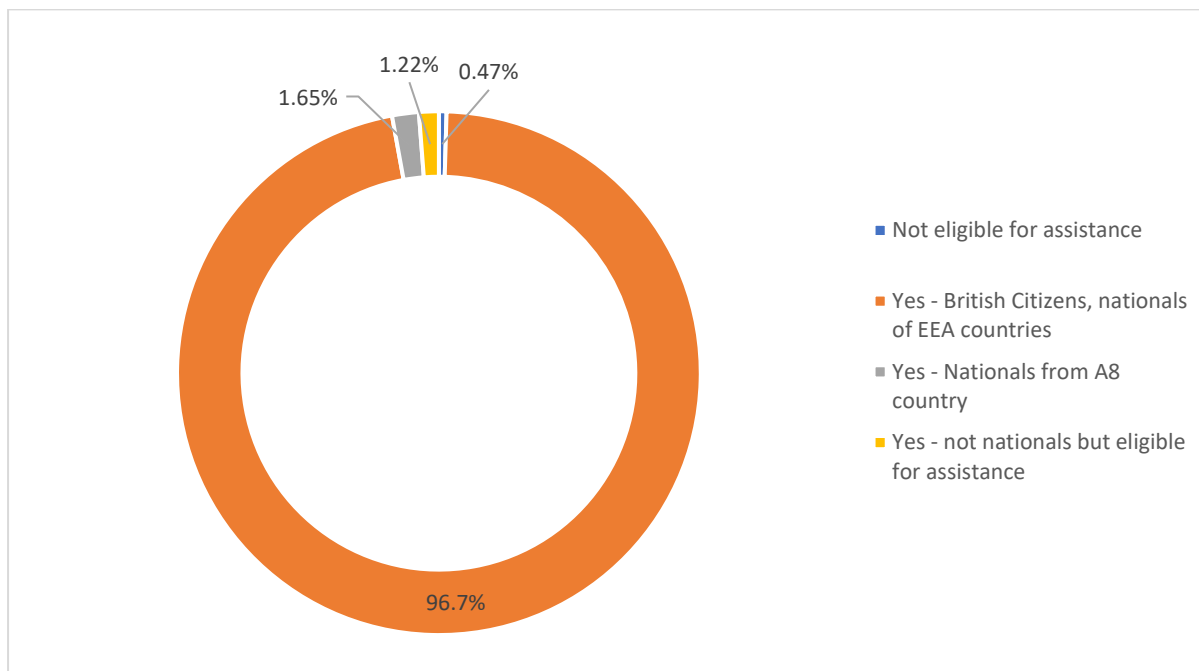
¹⁹ Scotland's Census 2011; Ethnicity: <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/area.html>

²⁰ Homelessness in Scotland 2019/20, Scottish Government: [Homelessness in Scotland: Equalities Breakdown 2019-20](https://www.gov.scot/Homelessness%20in%20Scotland%202019-20) (www.gov.scot)

the UK Government as having no rights to public funds including social housing or benefits and must be self-sufficient either through their own savings or employment.

- 13.2 The majority of homeless applicants (96.7%) are entitled to public assistance. A further 1.8% are not UK Nationals but have rights to access public assistance.
- 13.3 Ten (0.47%) applicants were recorded as being ineligible for assistance as they had no recourse to public funds. A further 1.2% (26) were lawfully in the UK but not defined as being British or from an EEA or A8 country. 1.6% (35) were from an A8 country.

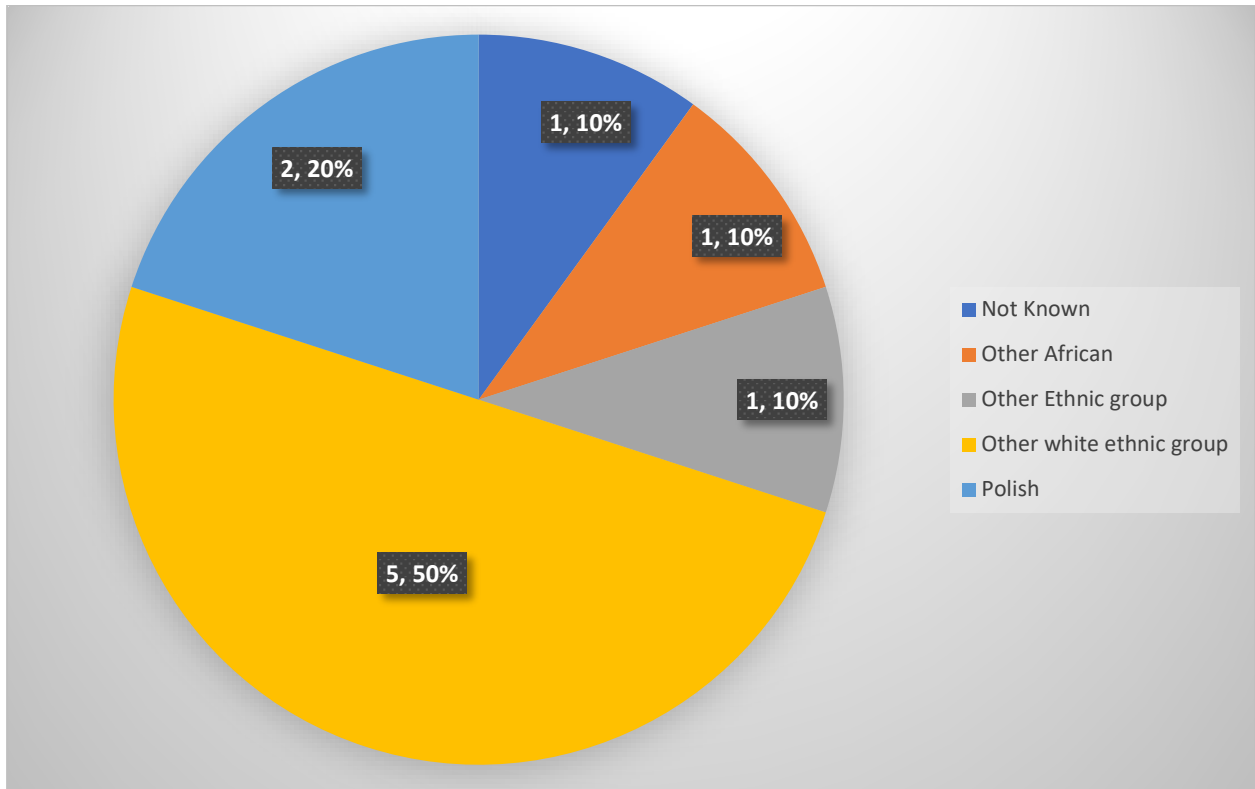
Chart 10 – Eligible/Ineligible for Assistance 2019/20



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

- 13.4 50% (5) of these households were from 'other white ethnic group' and 20% (2) were Polish. One applicant was African, and one was noted as 'other' ethnic group. One further applicant had no ethnic group recorded.
- 13.5 A deeper analysis of those who are ineligible for assistance shows that the majority are from the Eastern European countries of Poland, Latvia and Belarus. One person was from India and another from Africa.

Chart 11 – Ineligible for Assistance – Ethnicity



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

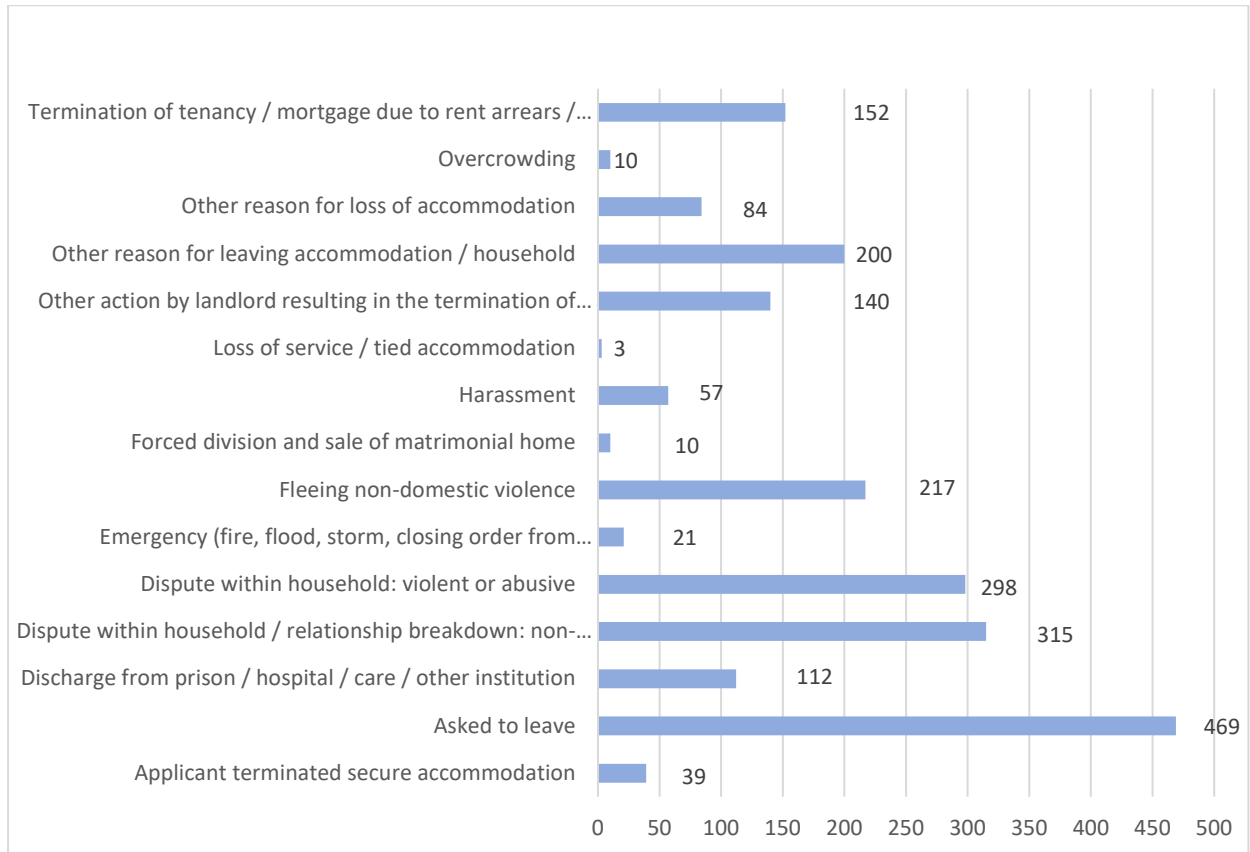
- 13.6 Six households were ineligible for assistance were single males who had previously been working and self-sufficient. Four of these individuals had then been incarcerated and released with no place to live. Two were relationship breakdowns with one noted to be violent. These reasons are the noted reasons for homelessness. Males were aged between 24 and 44 years old. Two of these males had previously lived in the PRS but had lost accommodation whilst in prison.
- 13.7 It is striking that the four women in this group were fleeing abuse from within the home, three from partners and one from their father. The women were on partner or parental visa's and financially dependent on them. The three domestic abuse cases involved children and highlights the need for continued partnership arrangements to provide the additional support and assistance these families need at a time of significant challenge. The age of females in this group was between 16 and 36 years of age.

14. Reasons for Homelessness

- 14.1 Reasons for homelessness in North Lanarkshire have remained fairly consistent over the years, although there are some small variations.
- 14.2 Being asked to leave is still the main reason stated by homeless people in 22% of all applications and is 2% lower than the Scottish average of 24%.
- 14.3 Disputes within households rose in 2019/20 and is the highest figure recorded in the last 10 years. Disputes, relationship breakdown and forced division and sale of matrimonial home accounts for 29.3% with 14% of these defined as violent or abusive. The proportion of violent relationship breakdowns has increased by 3% over the last 5 years. This compares with 32% across Scotland where 13% were recorded as violent/abusive.

- 14.4 Mortgage default and repossession action by landlords (rent or mortgage arrears) is just over 7% or 152 applicants and has increased by 1.5% in the last year. This is higher than the 5% average for Scotland. This may well be due to affordability issues and related lower income levels and has become more of a pressure for North Lanarkshire residents since the implementation of welfare reforms, and in particular the shared room rate of local housing allowance in the PRS. It could also be the beginning of early Covid impacts on peoples' lives.
- 14.5 Other action by landlord resulting in the termination of the tenancy was noted at 6.58% (140) and this compares with 9% across Scotland. A review of the number of registered landlords shows that they have fallen by over 2,000 to 8,826 as at 2019/20 and appears to suggest that a number of applicants may have lost their tenancy due to the landlord removing themselves from the PRS market.
- 14.6 Fleeing non-domestic violence has increased slightly to 10.2% and this is 6% higher than the national average of 4%. Those experiencing harassment accounts for 2.68% and this is slightly above the national figure of 2%.
- 14.7 Other reasons for leaving accommodation or household, including applicant terminated, accounts for 11% or 239 applicants and has fallen 2.5% since 2015/16 and is on track with the Scottish average. On further analysis of a sample of these cases some were living in their own LA tenancy, a couple in the PRS and others had been living in the family/parental home or with extended family/friends. A small sample check of these cases identifies a range of reasons for leaving accommodation including non-domestic violence and harassment, individuals feeling unable to stay due to their mental health, a few properties in very poor condition because tenants are unable to cope and a few cases where applicant was unable to return due to bail conditions. There were also a couple of cases where the applicants had not had a tenancy in some time and were sofa-surfing or rough sleeping.
- 14.8 Emergency circumstances such as fire and flood account for just over 1% and is the same as the national average with overcrowding less than 0.5% which is 1.5% lower than Scotland as a whole.
- 14.9 Other reasons for loss of accommodation are recorded as 3.25% in North Lanarkshire and 6% across Scotland. A sample of these cases highlight a range of issues including PRS tenancies ending due to arrears and affordability, custodial sentences previous abandonment of a tenancy and relationship breakdown resulting in the sale of the matrimonial home.

Chart 12 – Reasons for Homelessness 2019/20

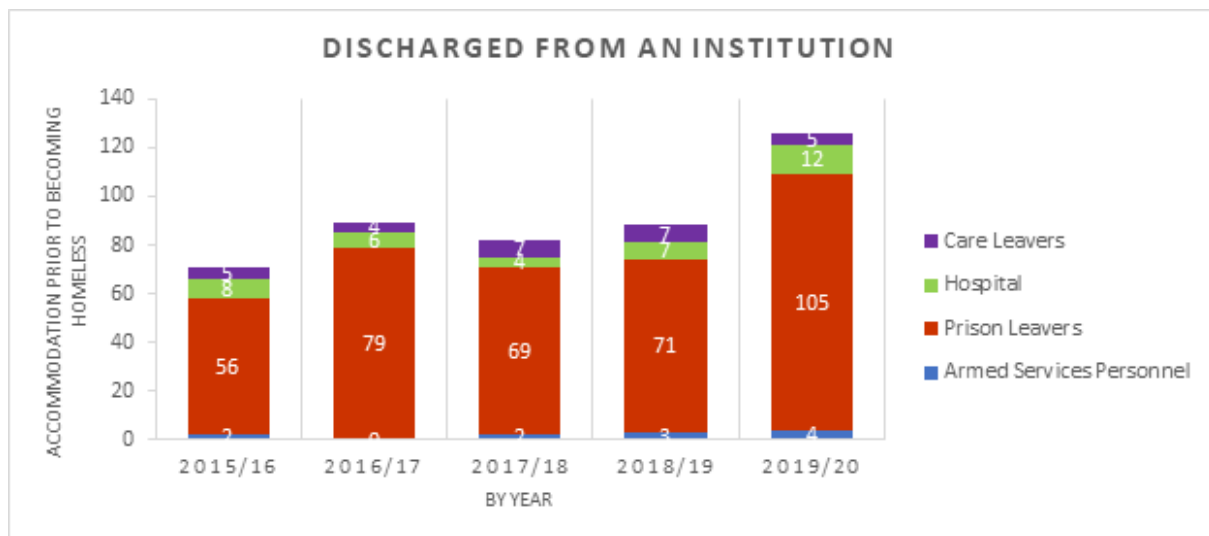


Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

15. Discharged from an Institution

15.1 The number of people having to make a homeless application after being discharged from an institution has increased by 2% to 5.27% (112) in 2019/20, although is half of the national average of 6%.

Chart 13 – Discharged from an Institution



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

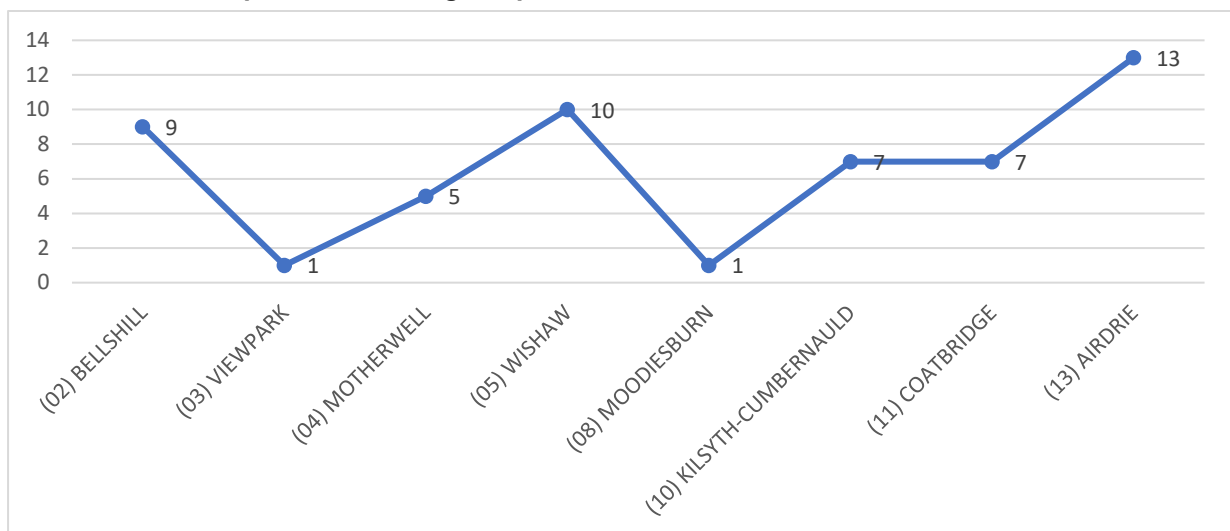
- 15.2 The majority of these (84% or 105) were from applicants discharged from prison with almost two thirds of them previously resident within the Motherwell and Wishaw areas. Research evidence illustrates that the cycle of homelessness and offending can lead to a self-perpetuating negative cycle. An IRISS report on Prison Leavers and Homelessness²¹ clearly illustrates 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.
- 15.3 A range of justice services operate to provide a more cohesive and holistic approach to working with offenders and ex-offenders to tackle underlying issues of offending and support people to sustain future accommodation. Services include:
- Justice Throughcare provide a statutory and voluntary service for individuals returning to their communities from prison, of which many are homeless upon release. Housing staff work with Justice colleagues; not only to provide suitable accommodation but to assist reintegration and the management of risk.
 - 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, 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.
- 15.4 There appears to be a lack of consistent planning for people leaving custody and a more intensive approach to homeless prevention is needed. The Health and Homelessness Steering Group for North and South Lanarkshire are currently scoping out the requirement and delivery of wrap-around services to those discharged from residential healthcare settings and custody and includes the support and roll-out for the delivery of the SHORE standards. The Housing Service has been considering the practical elements of implementing the SHORE Standards and has developed processes and procedures to assist with a smooth transition and a review of the protocol will be completed in due course.
- 15.5 A further five people were reported as being discharged from care, however on further analysis of these cases, 1 was a hospital discharge case and the other homeless from the family home after a dispute. Both had been in care previously, but not at the point of homelessness and is therefore a recording issue.
- 15.6 The number of people affected by hospital discharge has remained very low 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.
- 15.7 There were three applicants noted as coming from a property description noted as ‘other’, on further analysis, it would appear that 1 of these cases was a care experienced young person leaving foster care and the other two were prison discharges but where the applicant had stayed short term with family.
- 15.8 It is not possible to compare the NL breakdown figures with a Scottish average as there is no breakdown of the various categories available.

²¹ IRISS, Prison Leavers and Homelessness - 2015

16. Care Experienced Young People

- 16.1 Five young people were reported to have been discharged directly from care into homelessness and whilst this number is very low, there is an aspiration that no young person becomes homeless at point of leaving care. Whilst a care leavers protocol is in place to ensure early identification of housing needs in a young person's pathway plan, it will be reviewed to ensure homelessness is prevented in future.
- 16.2 Overall, 53 young people were recorded as being care experienced and is 2.24% of the homeless population. 68% (36) of all care experienced young people had been in care within the last five years and the remainder more than five years ago.
- 16.3 Chart 14 shows that almost 24.5% of all care experienced young people came from the Airdrie area. Just under 19% were from Wishaw and 17% from Bellshill. Both Kilsyth/Cumbernauld and Coatbridge recorded just over 13% each. The Motherwell area had half the number of care-experienced homeless young people than the highest areas and it would be interesting to try and understand if there are specific reasons for this or if this is really just about the profile of young people in care. After a discussion with Social Work colleagues, it is not possible to draw any hard conclusions as to why Airdrie have the highest number of care-experienced young people as there are a significant range of reasons that precipitate a child requiring to be looked after by the local authority including socio-economic and health inequalities reasons.

Chart 14 – Care Experienced Young People



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

- 16.4 To aid the transition from care and prevent homelessness, the Council is working with partners on a project providing a 'forever home' to care experienced young people at the point of leaving care and is funded through the Life Changes Trust. Young people either still in care or those leaving care also have access to life and independent living skills training through a modular programme and backed up by practical sessions within training flats where they can learn to prepare and cook a meal, clean and maintain a home and reflect on the social aspects of having their friends round but within an environment of what would be considered to be normal and acceptable activity for anyone bringing friends back to their home e.g. consideration of neighbours, noise levels, etc.
- 16.5 Housing services and Barnardo's are in the process of a workforce development programme where housing staff are seconded for a six-month period to Barnardo's as a support worker to young care experienced people with a view to improved understanding of the issues and barriers facing young people to aid future engagement and service improvement.

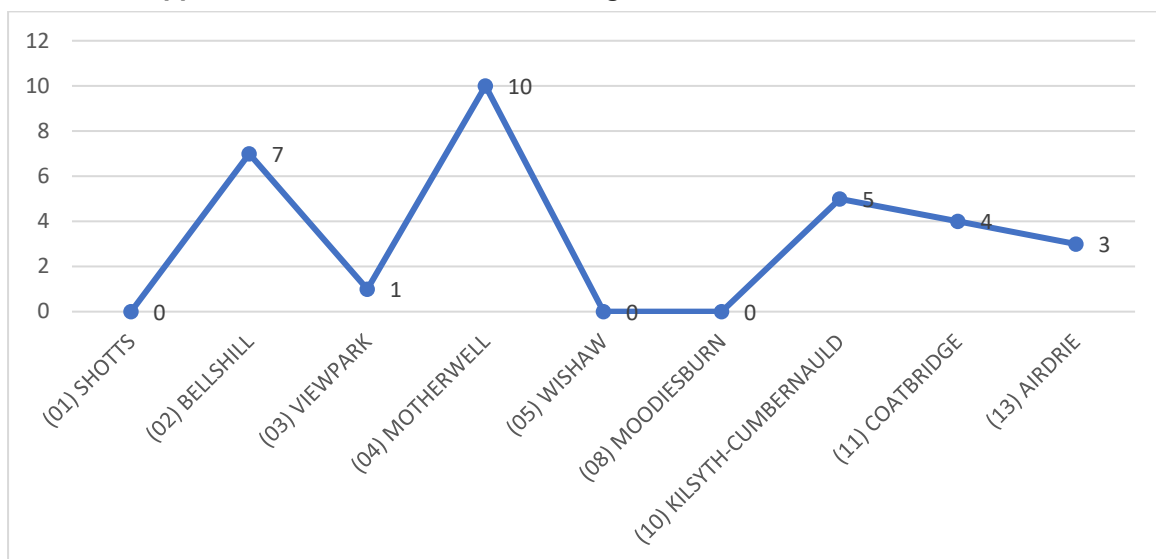
16.6 Lastly, the Housing Service is part of the strategic group led by Social Work, progressing the looked after children and young people strategy across North Lanarkshire where a range of actions and activity is currently underway through the agreed action plan. The Council has also signed up to 'The Promise' and has created champions across all services to promote inclusion and improve services for looked after young people.

17. Armed Forces Personnel

17.1 Although there were no armed forces personnel discharged directly into homelessness in 2018/19, there were 30 applicants who have a previous armed forces background and equates to 1.3% of the homeless population. Almost two thirds (19) of these cases were in the last five years and the remainder being more than five years ago. This data has not been updated to 2019/20 figures due to the additional analysis that would be required to investigate the circumstances of the cases concerned and the tight timescales available to publish the LHHS and all associated documents.

17.2 Chart 15 illustrates that a third of all applicants were from the Motherwell area and a further 23% from Bellshill. There were no armed forces applicants from Moodiesburn, Shotts or Wishaw.

Chart 15 – Applicants from Armed Forces Background



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

18. Violent Disputes within Households

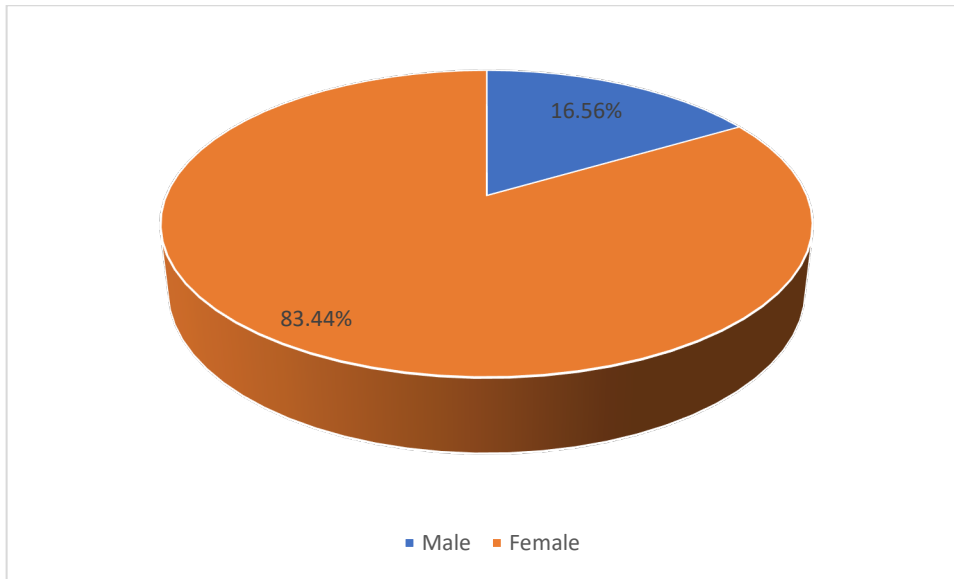
18.1 Violent disputes within households were recorded for 298 applicants or 14% of all homeless applications. This is a slight fall in the actual number of applications in this category from 2018/19 (was 320) but represented 13.5% because there was a higher level of applications in that year. This figure is slightly higher than the national average of 13%. Please note that this data has not been updated to 2019/20 figures due to the additional analysis that would be required to investigate the circumstances of the cases concerned and the tight timescales available to publish the LHS and all associated documents.

18.2 This reason records both victims of domestic abuse, alleged perpetrators, and violent disputes amongst other family members such as parents with their children and siblings. It is therefore extremely difficult to identify those specifically affected by domestic abuse. Fortunately, NL systems are still able to record the old categories for actual reason for homelessness (question

16 as opposed to question 16A). The old categories broke down disputes between spouse/co-hab's (violent and non-violent) as well as violent incidents amongst family members. Joining these two reports together and cross referencing them, highlights that 214 of the 298 violent disputes were linked specifically to domestic abuse.

- 18.3 78.5% (168) of this cohort were female and underlines that gender-based violence is an issue in North Lanarkshire, although this has fallen 4.5% from 2018/19. There is a protocol in place which aims to provide applicants affected by domestic abuse with a degree of priority so that they can access alternative permanent accommodation prior to crisis if this is their wish and aims to prevent them becoming homeless. Although there is now a view that removing the perpetrator of abuse from the family home can be a more positive way to protect those affected by domestic abuse which enables them to maintain their existing support networks, schools for children, GP's, etc.
- 18.4 This data also shows that 21.5% (46) of domestic abuse victims are male. A sample check of a few cases from 2018/19, highlighted that some were abused by women, some were in same sex relationships and abused by their male partner and a few were transgender people, and these are areas which will require further consideration.
- 18.5 From Apr – Dec 2020 these figures are 204 violent disputes and is 16% of all homeless cases over the period and illustrates that violent disputes have risen during the Covid-19 pandemic. 152 of these cases are identified as domestic abuse which is 74.5% of all violent disputes reported in the nine-month period and 12% of all homeless cases. Full data for 2020/21 is not yet available and will be scrutinised at some point in the future.
- 18.6 It is also possible to consider other specific aspects of applicant circumstances, for instance the gender and profile of households e.g. single people and single parents.
- 18.7 Data illustrates that 83% of all recorded violent disputes were female

Chart 16 – Disputes within Household - Violent



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

- 18.8 In terms of family composition, 72% of those affected by domestic abuse are either single females (29.5%) or single parent females (42.5%) and is a 2% fall from 2018/19. 51.4% of the households include children and is a rise of 2.4% on 2018/19 figures. Just under 24% are young people aged 16 to 25 years of age and is a fall of 4% on 2018/19 figures.
- 18.9 North Lanarkshire Council is committed to addressing domestic abuse against women and children in line with the Scottish Governments 'Equally Safe' Strategy²². The vision of this strategy is *"a strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it"*. Its key aim is to work across public, private and third sector partnerships to eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls and sets out four key priorities:
- to embrace equality and mutual respect across Scottish society and reject all forms of violence.
 - that women and girls thrive as equal citizens.
 - that interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising safety and wellbeing.
 - that men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls, and perpetrators receive a robust and effective response.
- 18.10 The Housing Service has reviewed domestic abuse procedures in 2019 and again in 2020 to bring them into line with the Equally Safe strategy and to enhance the focus of domestic abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a clear aim to improve the co-ordinated response to the accommodation and support needs of women experiencing domestic abuse. It outlines the legal and operational framework agreed across partner agencies to provide assessment, planning, appropriate accommodation and support, incorporates good practice and brings forward the implementation of the DASH-RIC assessment. Every person affected by domestic abuse approaching the Housing Service has a discussion with an officer regarding their wish to complete a DASH-RIC assessment and safety plan.

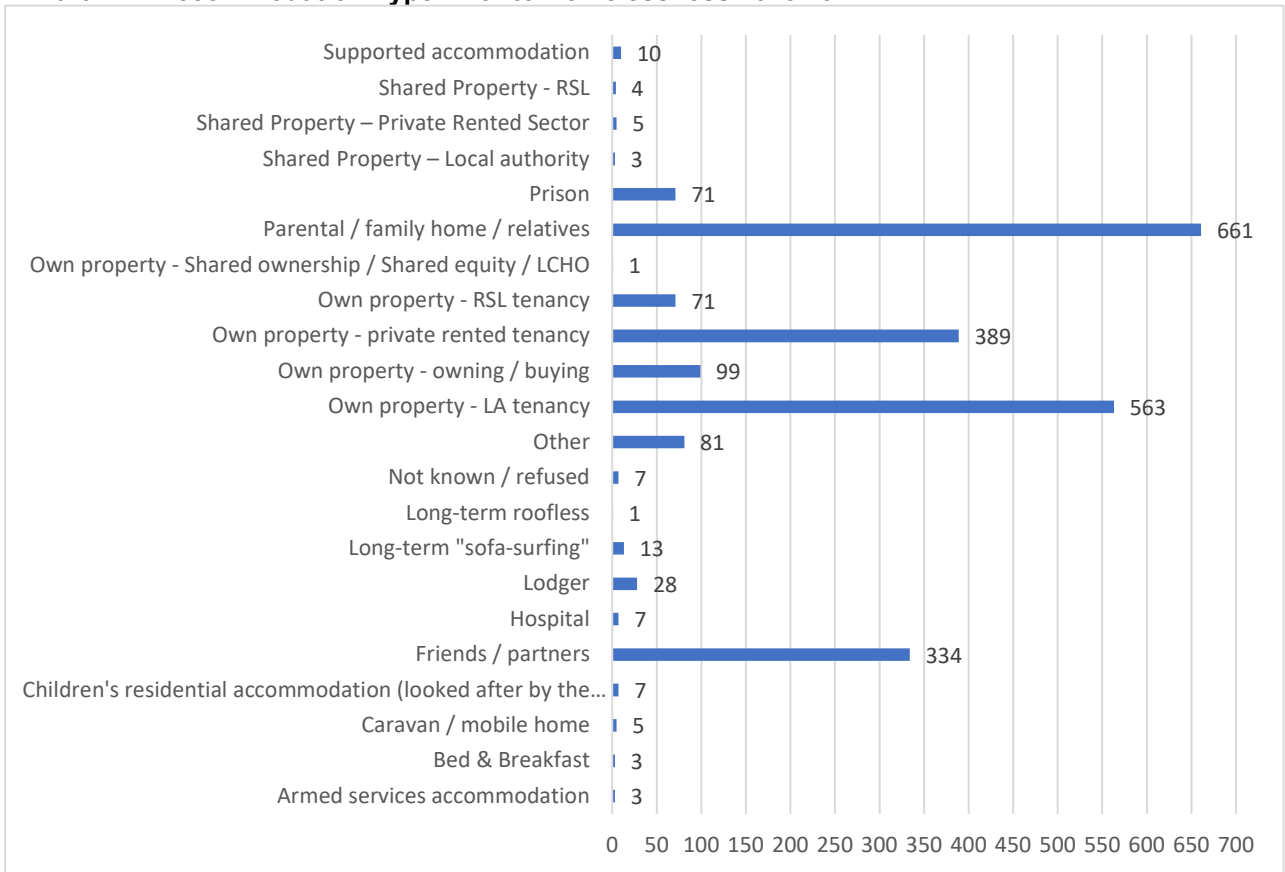
²² Equally Safe; Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls. Scottish Government & COSLA - 2018
<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2018/04/equally-safe-scotlands-strategy-prevent-eradicate-violence-against-women-girls/documents/00534791-pdf/00534791-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00534791.pdf>

- 18.11 The provision of support services for those affected by domestic abuse, and vulnerable families in particular; is critical to addressing poverty, inequality, health and attainment. The Housing Service, in collaboration with the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) secured funding to deliver a third sector project aimed at families and children affected by domestic abuse and alcohol or substance use. This project aims to enable a settled housing outcome, improve attainment for children with a specific focus on teenagers and improve resilience through recognition of strengths and resources of families and improve confidence and support networks. Outcomes for this project are showing positive signs particularly in terms of trauma for children and young people, however, was slow to take off due to the pandemic. Future funding for this project has been confirmed until March 2022 when a wider review of future funding will be considered and in recognition that providing support to families and children affected by domestic abuse is an essential requirement and is a key area of focus for the local housing strategy.
- 18.12 There are also a range of other services delivered across the Council and its wider partners to assist women and families affected by domestic abuse. This includes a North Lanarkshire Violence Against Women partnership group and fully developed Strategy and Action Plan to ensure adequate and effective service delivery to prevent gender-based violence in the longer term. A Council wide review of domestic abuse services was completed in 2020 and the contract re-tendered in line with procurement regulations. Women's Aid services also operate in the area to support women and their families affected by domestic abuse.

19. Prior Housing Circumstances

- 19.1 Chart 17 illustrates the range of accommodation that applicants became homeless from and it highlights that more applicants (28%) previously resided at the family/parental home. 24% had their own LA tenancy, 16% lived in the PRS and 14% lived with partners/friends. Please note that this data has not been updated to 2019/20 figures as per reasons stated earlier.

Chart 17 – Accommodation Type Prior to Homelessness 2018/19



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

- 19.2 Reasons for homelessness are, in many cases, linked to their previous accommodation type. For example, 70% of those 'asked to leave' were resident in the family/parental home prior to their homeless application and clearly shows that relationship breakdowns are one of the greatest causes of homelessness.
- 19.3 36% of non-violent disputes and relationship breakdowns previously resided with partners and friends, whilst a further 27% lived at the family/parental home.
- 19.4 30% of applicants who stated their reason for homelessness as a violent dispute became homeless from a social tenancy. Another 25% were those from partners/friends and 17% from the parental/family home.
- 19.5 52% of those who became homeless due to action by their landlord were from social housing – (NLC 44% and RSL's 8%) and a further 37% were from the PRS. This illustrates that these individuals are struggling to cope with financial pressures and that more intensive work is required with tenants who are struggling to pay their rent. Early intervention and ongoing engagement with tenants is key to preventing homelessness from occurring.
- 19.6 Across the Council, there is a focus on employability and supporting local people to access and maintain employment. There was a recognition that mainstream employability services may not be as flexible or have the skills needed to address the additional barriers faced by people who have experienced homelessness to assist them into employment. Both Housing and Employability Services within the Council worked in partnership and agreed to fund a one-year pilot project 'Access to Opportunities' to offer employability, numeracy and literacy support to homeless people, delivered by third sector agencies already engaged with these individuals. However, in order to respond to the needs of the participants, the programme was refocused

to provide more intensive, coaching style support. The programme ran until June 2019 and an evaluation identified key areas for reflection to inform future policy and practice:

- Acknowledging and recognising that progress towards employment such as building skills and confidence are significant steps forward and changes the mind-set of participants that they can achieve employment.
- Stable housing prior to employability work is critical in keeping participants engaged.
- Provision of holistic support to assist participants in moving towards employment is essential as mental health and social isolation are common barriers to employability.
- Support staff require both housing and employability expertise and enables all issues to be picked up and addressed.
- Key worker approach to build a strong relationship with one person ensures trust, leads to improved engagement and improved outcomes.
- Well-known and trusted local support services with experience and specialist knowledge in housing and homelessness is central to access participants who may not engage with other employability services. The relationship and trust built is the vehicle to access and continued engagement.
- Provision of transitional support and introduction to other programmes assists in building relationships and trust by participants and other programme key workers;
- Flexible tailored support allowing participants to disengage and re-engage is critical to ensuring that it fits with their other commitments and aids positive feelings of being respected and views taken seriously.
- Travel options to employment and affordability are important considerations.

- 19.7 At the end of the programme, it was recognised that young people in particular, needed the additional employability coaching provided and an agreement was reached with the Alcohol and Drug Partnership to fund a post within the Positive Destinations service to guide and coach young people affected by alcohol or drug misuse into employment or learning opportunities. This programme is delivered by Barnardo's Scotland who specialise in young people's services and is funded until March 2021. The project will be reviewed and evaluated, and future service provision considered at that time.
- 19.8 The housing service plans to engage with Routes to Work to consider a focus on assisting tenants in rent arrears to reflect on affordability, resolve arrears issues and find or keep employment and may be a positive step to improving sustainability.
- 19.9 75% (117) of all applicants where other action by landlord resulting in the termination of the tenancy was noted were from the PRS. This reason includes private landlords who wish to sell their property or live in it themselves and provides further evidence that private landlords are removing themselves from the market. A further 18% (28) had lived in the social sector where tenancies were likely taken back through abandonment procedures.
- 19.10 79% of applicants fleeing non-domestic violence previously lived in the social sector with 73% of them in an LA tenancy. This suggests that links to community safety strategy and actions may require to be strengthened to ensure that residents feel safe in their homes.
- 19.11 53% (164) of those who stated another reason for leaving accommodation/household or those who terminated lived in the rented sector with 30% in social rented and 23% in the PRS. A further 25% previously resided at the family/parental home. Only a small number of applicants were recorded as terminating their secure accommodation (26). A further check on these cases highlight that affordability issues affected 38% (10) with most of these being PRS rentals and appears to have become more of a pressure for North Lanarkshire residents since the implementation of welfare reforms. A further 15% cited PRS property conditions as the reason they had to terminate. Others stated the reason they terminated as relationship breakdowns, job opportunities elsewhere and moves to be closer to family.

- 19.12 86% of those with emergency circumstances such as fire and flood lived in the rented sector with 43% in the PRS. Over half of all overcrowding applications were from people who lived in the family/parental home.
- 19.13 The previous accommodation noted for the 77 applicants who advised an 'other reason for loss of accommodation' is spread across many different types, however the PRS is the highest at 26%, with the social rented sector combined and the parental/family home at 21% each. An analysis of the PRS properties highlight that 40% (8) were terminated by the applicant because they could no longer afford the rental payments. A further 35% (7) had to leave because of the condition of the property and included no heating or hot water, as well as dampness and other issues. Five of these allegations were confirmed by Housing staff or Environmental Health as well as the First Tier Tribunal and evidence that housing staff are following up PRS disrepair issues through the appropriate channels in the majority of cases.

20. Long Term Roofless and Sofa-Surfing

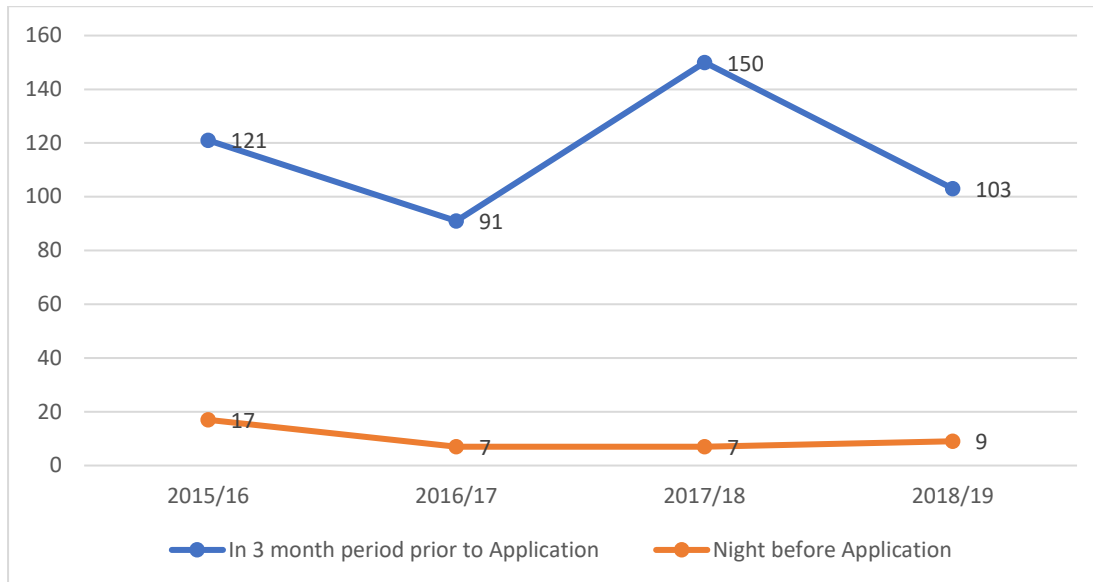
- 20.1 There were a total of 14 applicants who defined their pre-homeless accommodation type as long term roofless (1) or sofa-surfing (13) in 2018/19. On further investigation, 9 of these applications were due to relationship breakdown with applicants living temporarily with family or friends, often in overcrowded situations. One person abandoned their social tenancy due to multiple and complex needs and a further 3 had to leave the PRS with 2 due to the landlord selling the property. Please note that this data has not been updated to 2019/20 figures as per reasons stated earlier.
- 20.2 The timeframe these individuals were sofa-surfing varies considerably with one applicant stating this was 9 years. 6 applicants sofa-surfed for between one and two years and a further 2 applicants for between two to three years. The remainder stated that they sofa surfed for less than 6 months. This suggests that that some individuals are not aware of housing and homelessness services or how to access them and that public awareness requires to be improved.

21. Rough Sleeping

- 21.1 Nine homeless applicants were recorded as having slept rough the night prior to their homeless application, which is 0.38% of all homeless applicants and is much lower than the national average of 5%. North Lanarkshire had the lowest level of applicants in Scotland in 2018/19 recorded as having slept rough the night before their application. Given the higher numbers of applicants who had slept rough in the last three months, a deeper analysis was undertaken. A sample check of 20 cases of those who reported having slept rough in the last three months highlight that 11 of them should have been recorded as having rough slept the night before their application, and this was recorded within the system with most sofa-surfing and a few in their cars. It therefore appears that the process of recording applicants who rough sleep needs to be reviewed and improved. Please note that this data has not been updated to 2019/20 figures as per reasons stated earlier.
- 21.2 Rough sleeping includes those who are roofless and those on the streets as well as those who are sofa-surfing or living in unsuitable accommodation e.g. caravans with no amenities, cars and tents. In the previous two years, the figure was 7. Two thirds (6) of these individuals resided in the Coatbridge area and 1 each in Airdrie, Motherwell and Moodiesburn.

21.3 There were 103 applicants who stated that they had slept rough at some point in the last 3 months. See chart 17 for trend of rough sleeping in the last four years. The percentage of homeless applicants who slept rough in the three months prior to their application as a proportion of all homeless applications has fallen from 7% to 4.35% and compares with 8% across the country.

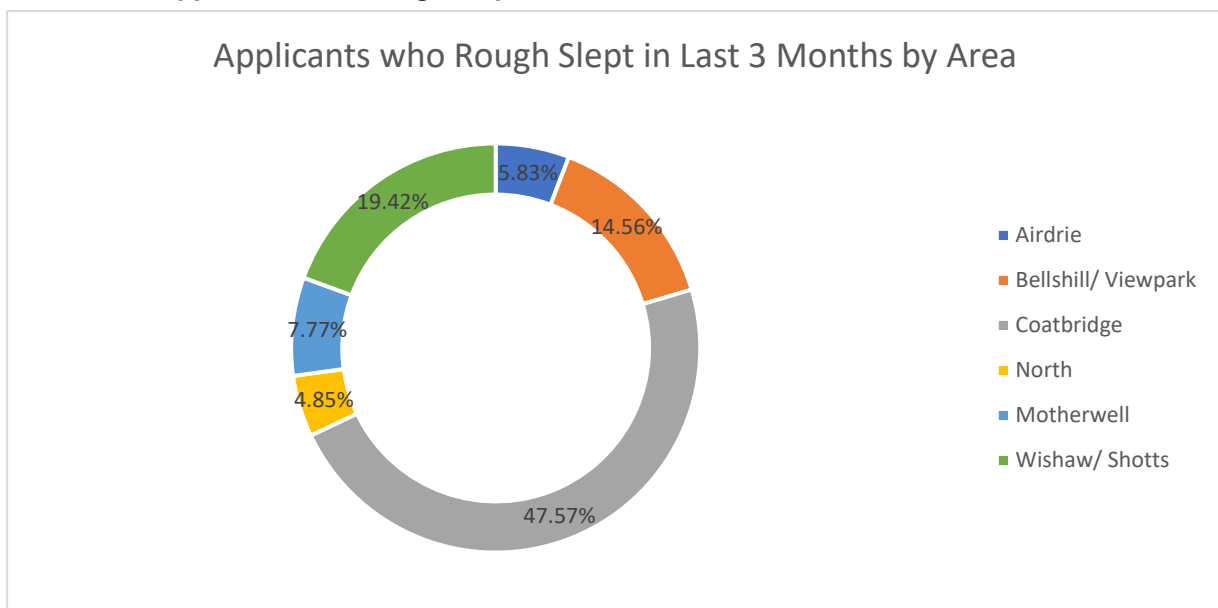
Chart 17 – Rough Sleeper Trends



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

21.4 Chart 18 highlights the areas these applicants had previously resided in and it clearly shows that 47.5% (49) came from the Coatbridge area. A further 19.5% were from Wishaw/Shotts. Additional investigation of these applications is inconclusive as the majority of applicants were either asked to leave or suffered a relationship breakdown within the partners, the parental home or wider family and friends and it is therefore not possible to ascertain if there are wider issues in the Coatbridge area that may have affected the relationships of residents.

Chart 18 – Applicants who Rough Slept in last 3 months



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

- 21.5 The gender of most rough sleepers is male at 66%, and 66% were also aged 16 to 34 years; 41% male and 25% female. This shows that younger people are more likely to rough sleep and may not be aware of services available or require additional support to access those services. A further 17% were aged 35-44 years and the remaining 17% were 45 years or older. Only 1 person was over the age of 60.
- 21.6 Previous housing circumstances of rough sleepers illustrate that 58% had been residing in the family / partners / parental home. 14% came from the PRS and 13% from an LA tenancy.
- 21.7 On looking at the reason for homelessness of rough sleepers, 31% were asked to leave. A further 25% had a dispute within the household (10% violent) and 16% advised other reason for leaving household / accommodation.
- 21.8 Rough-sleepers information gathered by the local authority suggests that most are not visible on the streets and that they are more likely to be sofa-surfing, however there was a lack of overall evidence to support this view. The Scottish Government were supporting local research into rough sleeping and provided a small amount of funding to Simon Community Scotland to complete a project which would scope out the extent and nature of rough sleeping in North Lanarkshire.
- 21.9 The project consisted of 2 Simon Community staff on e-bikes undertaking 16 scouting sessions running from October 2019 to January 2020. Each session focussed on gathering intelligence to consider where people may have been rough-sleeping and supporting anyone who was in this situation to access all appropriate and relevant services. The workers engaged with a range of people within the community including housing staff, local elected members, soup kitchens, food banks, shop owners and the general public.
- 21.10 The project found no signs of homeless people on the streets of North Lanarkshire and this included looking at specific areas where intelligence suggested they might be, however there was no traceable evidence of this occurring at these locations. It therefore suggests that most rough sleepers in the NL area are sofa-surfing and fits with the view expressed earlier. However, it may be that some rough sleepers in NL may have gravitated towards the nearest city, and in our case to Glasgow, and this is supported by The Homelessness Monitor: Scotland 2019²³ report where cities are seen to be places of greater resources and therefore potential assistance.
- 21.11 The project workers reported that their most fruitful discussions were within the soup kitchens and food banks where they came across people who feared losing their tenancies and required support with applications and correspondence and appeared unaware of available support services. Overall, the project engaged with 31 individuals across all areas of North Lanarkshire.
- 21.12 Equalities data gathered from the project appears reasonably consistent with the homelessness data collection in that the majority of those the project workers engaged with were male (91.7%) and 57% were under the age of 35 years. A further 37.5% were aged 36 to 45 years. The workers did engage with some females (8%), however they did not wish to discuss their situation or seek advice or support and it is unclear why this might be the case, although there may have been current or previous experiences of trauma or abuse which would be exacerbated if discussed.
- 21.13 The majority of reasons given for rough sleeping to the project workers were linked to relationship breakdowns, including domestic abuse, addiction and mental health issues. 68% of

²³ The Homeless Monitor 2019 -

https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240002/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2019.pdf

all the people the project engaged with were linked in with the Council to source accommodation and 27% linked to other services. 9% were linked in with police.

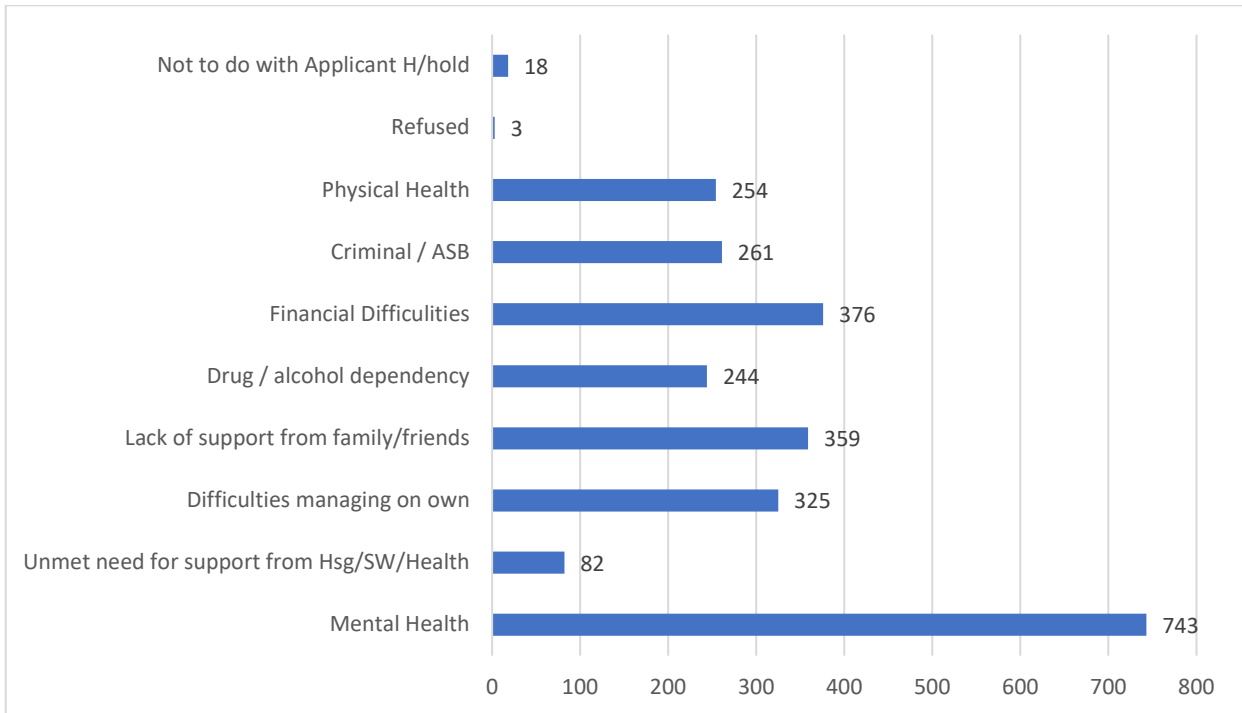
21.14 The experiences these individuals shared illustrate a range of underlying issues such as bereavement, drug addiction and a lack of knowledge of available local services. It also illustrates that there is a mix of sofa-surfing and street sleeping and in some cases for considerable periods of time from a few months to several years. Discussions with individuals suggested that they were unaware of homelessness and temporary accommodation services and illustrates the need to improve public awareness of housing options and homelessness services. Improving availability and access to publications and services that can help including housing options, housing support, welfare benefits (FIT), Money Advice, CAB, Routes to Work, etc.

22. Reasons for Failing to Maintain Accommodation Prior to Application

22.1 Homeless applicants are asked about any difficulties they had in sustaining the accommodation they had prior to becoming homeless and this is an important aspect to be considered as it provides an understanding of support needs that may be needed to sustain any future home. Please note that this data has not been updated to 2019/20 figures as per reasons stated earlier.

22.2 A review of this information for 2018/19 highlights that poor mental health affected 28% of the homeless population and is unsurprising given the impact of being homeless on individuals. An additional 14% had experienced financial difficulties including debt and unemployment which led to them being unable to maintain their accommodation and 13% stating a lack of support from family and friends. 12% of applicants stated that they had difficulties managing on their own and 10% recorded a physical health problem or criminal/ASB. A further 9% reported a drug or alcohol dependency. Discussions with applicants and wider reports on homelessness suggest that people who have experienced homelessness are less resilient and more vulnerable than other groups of the population and therefore struggle to cope with managing a home. Any problems or issues are compounded by other factors such as poor mental health or financial difficulties.

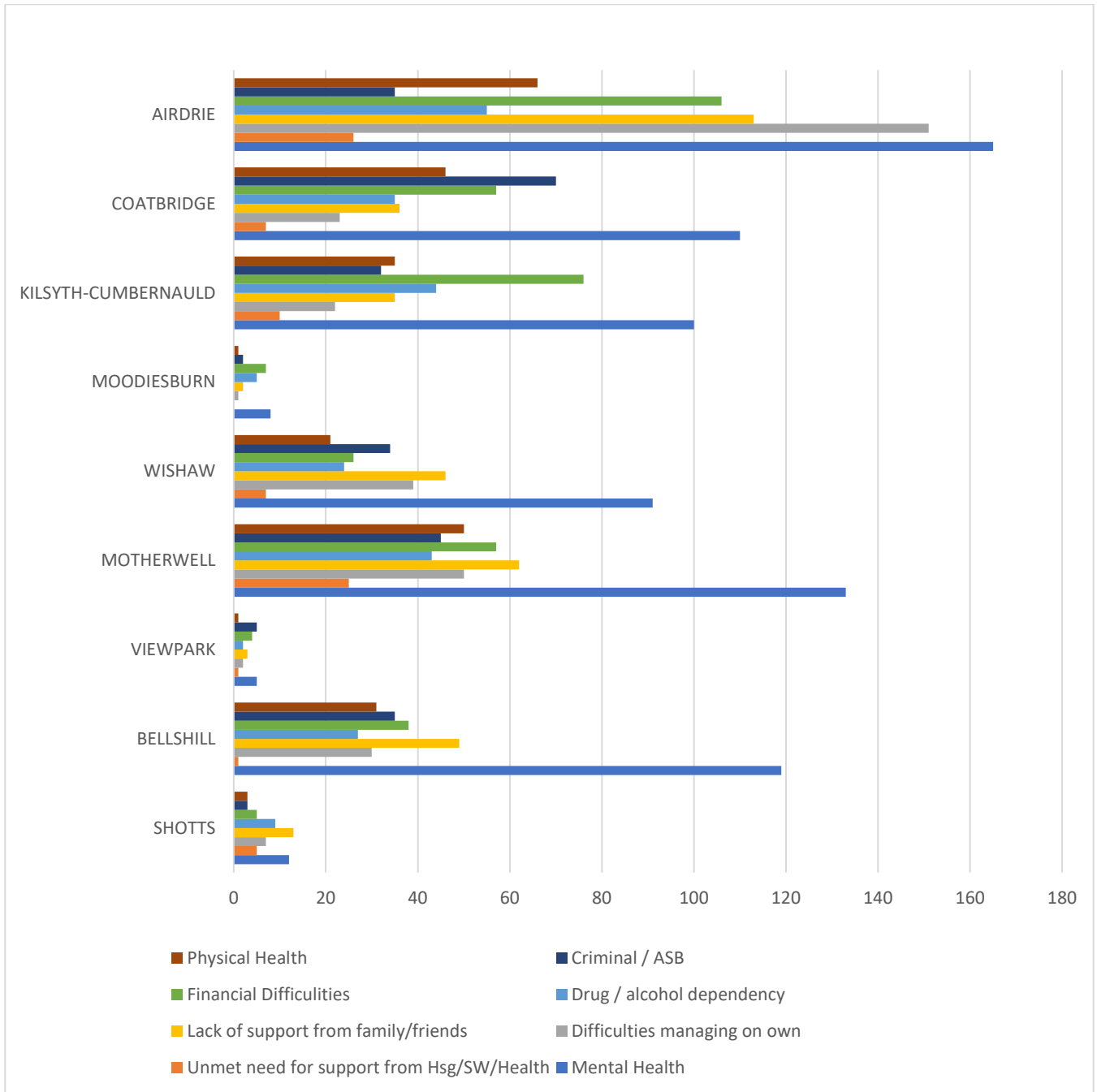
Chart 19 - Reasons for Failing to Maintain Accommodation 2018/19



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

- 22.3 Some applicants will have identified more than one issue that led to them becoming homeless and further analysis of this information highlights that 55% (1,307) were struggling to cope with a range of issues which led them to losing their accommodation. This suggests that there is a lack of early intervention and support services available across North Lanarkshire, specifically to tackle mental health as well as a range of other issues.
- 22.4 The Airdrie area recorded the highest level of homeless applicants with seven out of eight issues and is concerning – see chart 20.

Chart 20 - Reasons for Failing to Maintain Accommodation by Area



Source: Scottish Government Statistics & NLC Reports

23. Homeless Assessments

23.1 It's important to understand that homeless assessments are a different dataset from applications as they include people who applied as homeless prior to the end of the previous financial year, but were awaiting assessment e.g. people who applied from March 2019. The majority of those who applied as homeless in March 2019 would be counted in 2020/21 assessments.

23.2 The homeless assessment process can be seen as having three steps or hurdles and applicants have to meet the requirements of each step or hurdle:

- First of all, is an applicant homeless or threatened with homeless?

- Secondly, are they unintentionally homeless or did they become homeless due to their own action or inaction and were they fully aware of the consequences of their action or inaction?
- Thirdly, do they have a local connection to the area they have presented as homeless to.

23.3 The number of applicants assessed ranged from 1,873 in 2015/16 to 2,170 in 2019/20 and follows the general trend of rising homeless applications until 2018/19 and then a fall in 2019/20. Scottish Government statistics confirm that assessments in North Lanarkshire accounted for 5.81% of the 37,336 homeless assessments across Scotland.

Chart 21 – Homeless Assessment Decisions

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
Homeless or Threatened with Homelessness	1,442	77%	1,523	80.58%	1,789	85.15%	2,011	84.31%	1,780	82.03%
Not Homeless Assessments	139	7.42%	99	5.24%	64	3.05%	104	4.36%	133	6.13%
Unintentionally Homeless Assessments	1,281	68.4%	1,367	72.32%	1,632	77.68%	1,859	77.94%	1,583	72.95%
Intentionally Homeless Assessments	161	8.6%	156	8.26%	157	7.47%	152	6.37%	197	9.08%
Resolved Homelessness Prior to Assessment Decision	164	8.76%	163	8.62%	177	8.42%	179	7.51%	173	7.97%
All other decisions e.g. lost contact, withdrew, ineligible for assistance, etc.	128	6.84%	105	5.56%	71	3.38%	91	3.81%	84	3.87%

Source: Scottish Government Homeless Statistics for North Lanarkshire

23.4 Those found to be homeless or threatened with homelessness ranged from 1,442 in 2015/16 to 1,780 in 2019/20. The percentage of applicants assessed as being homeless rose from 77% in 2015/16 to 85% in 2017/18. This figure has fallen to 82% in the last two years as can be seen in Chart 21. This compares with 84% across Scotland and highlights that North Lanarkshire went 2% below the national average in the last year.

23.5 Not homeless assessments have seen a falling trend from the 7.4% recorded in 2015/16 to 3.05% in 2017/18. This figure increased to 4.36% in 2018/19 and up a further 1.77% to 6.13% in 2019/20 and is double the national of 3%.

23.6 The data shows that just under 73% (1,583) were assessed as unintentionally homeless and is 7% below the national average of 80%. 9.08% (197) were assessed as intentionally homeless in 2019/20 and is three times higher than the 3% average in Scotland and, along with Clackmannanshire, is the highest intentionality rate in Scotland.

23.7 Regular audits are conducted of not homeless and intentional homeless decisions to ensure that they are correct and are supported by robust evidence. In November 2019, the Scottish Government amended the legislation surrounding the assessment of intentionality and amended the duty to investigate intentionality to a discretionary power to do so and enables local authorities to adopt a person-centred approach to making an intentionality assessment and focus on providing the support people need when they need it.

23.8 The Code of Guidance on Homelessness was updated to reflect the changes and the circumstances that local authorities must take into account:

- LA's should have regard to all applicant circumstances before considering whether to investigate for or reaching a decision on intentionality and each case should be decided on its own merits.

- Even if LA is satisfied that the homelessness was intentional, they must consider continuing duties to children and young people under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.
- The circumstances underpinning an intentionality decision are set out in Section 26 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. There are three requirements, all of which must be met:
 - **The applicant must deliberately have done, or failed to do, something in consequence of which they have ceased to occupy accommodation which was at the time available to them.** To be intentionally threatened with homelessness, an applicant must deliberately have done or failed to do something the likely result of which was that they will be compelled to leave accommodation (Section 26(2)).
 - **It must have been reasonable for the applicant to have continued to occupy the accommodation.**
 - **The applicant must have been aware of all the relevant facts before taking or failing to take the deliberate actions referred to above.** An act or omission in good faith on the part of a person unaware of any relevant fact is not to be regarded as deliberate.
- Officers must consider all the circumstances of an applicant before coming to an intentionality decision and not simply apply standard criteria.
- It is for the LA to satisfy itself that an applicant became homeless intentionally. There is no onus on the applicant to satisfy the LA that they did not become intentionally homeless.

23.9 In practice, this means that full consideration must be given to the applicants' ability to understand the implications and consequences of their action or inaction. For example,

“a person with mental health issues, or someone with learning disabilities, may well have been unlikely to have acted deliberately, and so should not be treated as intentionally homeless. Similarly, where a person has been evicted for anti-social behaviour local authorities should take account of contributory factors including the effects of any mental health issues or learning disability (see paragraphs 2.67 onwards in Chapter 2 for more guidance on anti-social behaviour and homelessness). Even if the applicant seems to be homeless only because of their financial (or other) imprudence or lack of foresight, it should not be automatically decided that the homelessness was intentional.”²⁴

23.10 The Code of Guidance also states that “it should not be assumed automatically that an applicant is intentionally homeless where they have lost their accommodation because of rent or mortgage arrears. Reasons should be fully explored and decisions made as to whether arrears resulted from deliberate acts or omissions.”

23.11 This is a transitional step and future changes recommended by HARSAG to narrow the definition of intentionality to focus on instances of 'deliberate manipulation' of the homelessness system where the applicant actually foresees that their actions would lead to them becoming homeless. The Scottish Government intend to work with their lawyers and stakeholders in 2020 to explore this further and will update the Code of Guidance in due course.

23.12 As a result of the changes to intentionality, a number of actions are being developed to ensure consistency of approach across North Lanarkshire localities and provide a robust evidence base for any future decisions on homeless applications where an applicant is assessed as intentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness.

23.13 A further 8% resolved their homelessness prior to assessment decision which is double the national average of 4% and suggests that applicants and housing staff are working together to

²⁴ Code of Guidance on Homelessness, Scottish Government, November 2019. (P.59)

try and prevent a crisis from occurring which would lead to homelessness. This may involve engaging and negotiating with landlords, mediating within families, etc., to try and keep people in their existing home where possible and safe to do so.

23.14 Those who were assessed as withdrew, ineligible for assistance or lost contact make up the remaining 3.92% and this is significantly less than half the 9% across Scotland. Nationally, the lost contact figure is recorded as 4% and is 2.3% in North Lanarkshire.

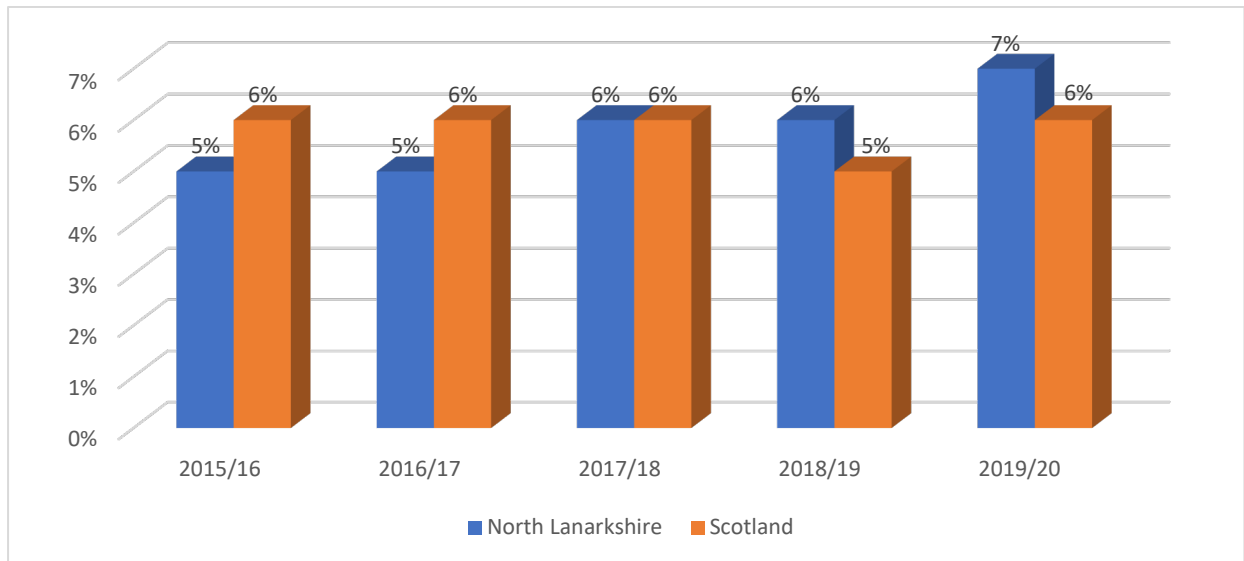
24. Repeat Homelessness

24.1 The number of repeat applications has risen by 4% in 2019/20 to 120 which is 7% of all homeless applications in 2019/20 and has been climbing each year since 2014/15 from a low of 65 to 115 in 2018/19. Chart 22 shows the percentage of repeat applications compared with Scotland and illustrates that North Lanarkshire has now increased above the national average by 1%.

24.2 This data illustrates the requirement to consider a wider and improved focus on the approach to housing options and where critical interventions around homelessness are required to enable people to sustain their current home wherever possible.

24.3 Tenancy sustainment and the delivery of homeless prevention and support activities is a key focus of the RRTP with targeted upstream early intervention being developed to improve future sustainment.

Chart 22 – Repeat Homelessness

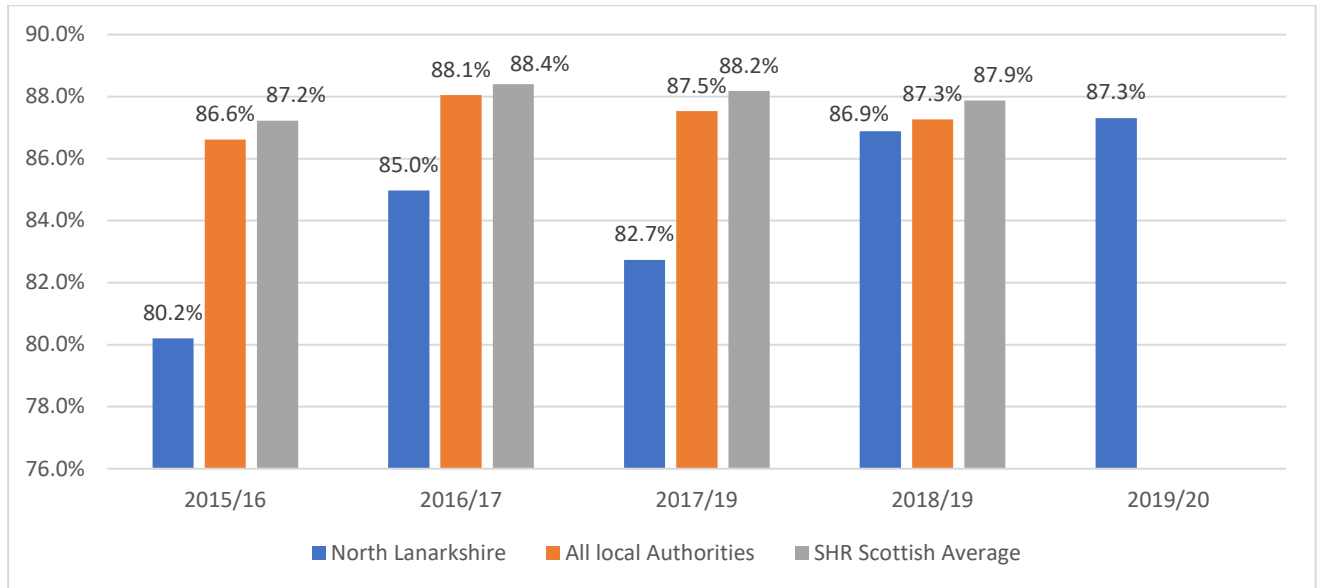


Source: Scottish Government Homeless Statistics for North Lanarkshire

25. Sustaining a Home and Homeless Prevention

- 25.1 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 201/20, 87.31% of tenancies to homeless people had been sustained for 12 months and is an improvement on the 86.9% from 2018/198. Chart 23 shows that tenancy sustainment figures over the last 5 years have been variable from a low of 80.2% to the current high of 87.31%.
- 25.2 Sustainment rates for homeless households in North Lanarkshire have been consistently lower than the average reported for all local authorities and the Scottish average (includes RSL's), although the improved figure in 2018/19 brings NL within 0.5% of the average for all local authorities. Please note that although the sustainment rate for NL has been added to the table, data for comparisons has not been included.
- 25.3 This emphasises that homeless prevention and housing support approaches are the key to tenancy sustainment and the robust implementation of the Housing Options Guidance and Training Toolkit will assist in supporting and improving prevention activity.

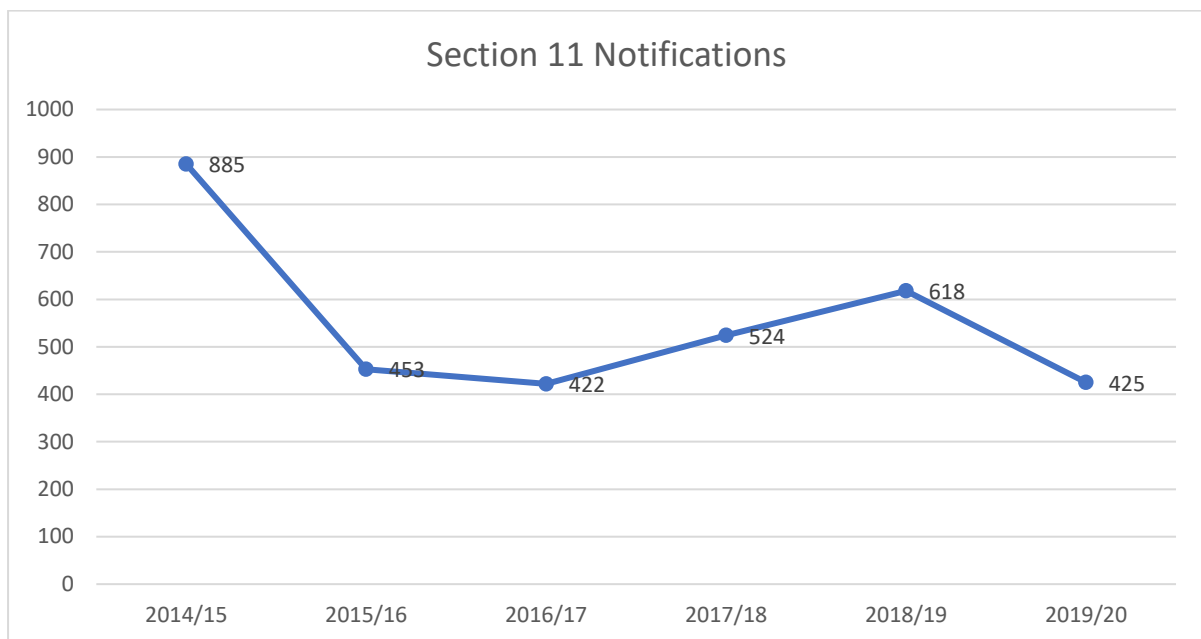
Chart 23 – Tenancy Sustainment



Source: North Lanarkshire Homeless Reports

25.4 The number of Section 11 notices received by North Lanarkshire was recorded as 885 in 2014/15 and fell by almost 50% in 2015/16 to 453. Chart 24 shows a further fall in 2016/17 and then rises over the next two years to 618 with a further drop of 31% in 2019/20.

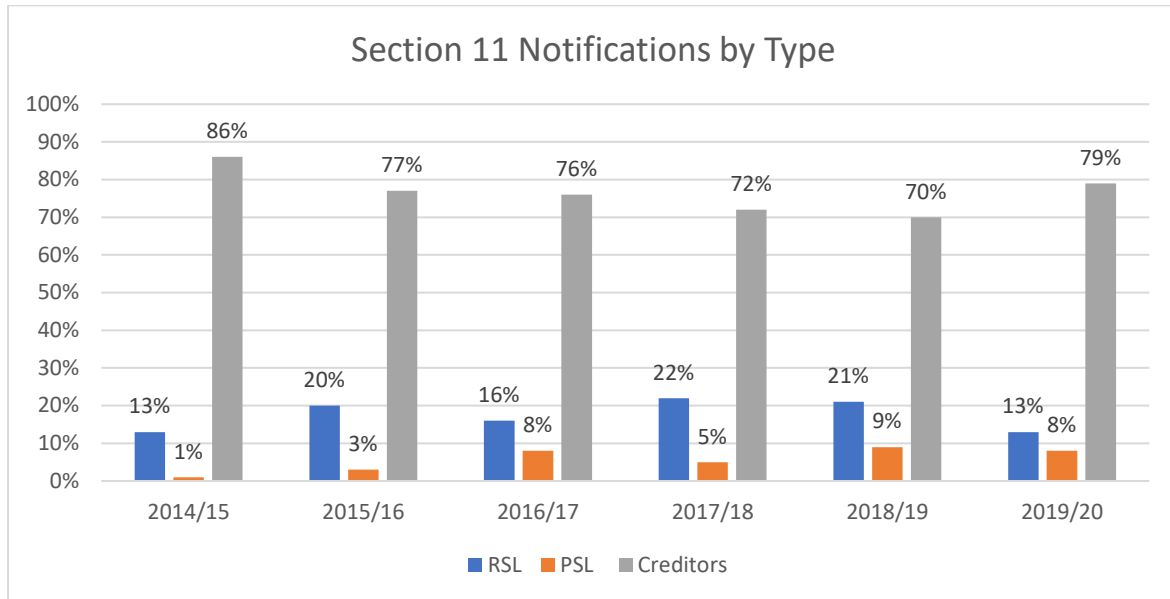
Chart 24 – Section 11 Notifications



Source: North Lanarkshire S11 Reports

25.5 The majority of S11 notifications were from lenders and ranged from a low of 70% to high of 79% in the last 5 years – see chart 25. RSL notices make up 13% of all notices in 2019/20 but is the first fall from 21% in the previous two years. Notifications from the PRS have increased from 1% in 2014/15 to 8% in 2019/20.

Chart 25 – Section 11 Notifications by Type



Source: North Lanarkshire S11 Reports

25.6 Of the 618 S11's received in 2018/19, 89% recorded an outcome of 'unable to make contact' and a further 8.4% had no outcome recorded and accounts for 97% of all outcomes; this increased to almost 99% in 2019/20. Chart 26 shows the outcomes and percentages achieved for all S11 notifications.

Chart 26 – Section 11 Outcomes

Lost contact with applicant	2	0.3%
Moved in with friends or relatives	2	0.3%
Moved to Other private rented (inc. short assured)	1	0.2%
Moved to RSL (Housing Association) tenancy	1	0.2%
Other - Known	1	0.2%
Remained in or returned to original property	6	1.0%
Section 11 - unable to make contact	549	88.8%
Section 11 contact made but failed to engage	3	0.5%
Supported Accommodation or Housing with Support	1	0.2%
No outcome recorded	52	8.4%
Totals	618	100.0%

Source: North Lanarkshire S11 Reports

25.7 These figures suggest that processes and procedures for contacting people at risk of homelessness through the S11 notifications could be improved. The implementation of the RRTP has identified actions to be pro-active and strengthen the approach to homeless prevention to ensure that appropriate advice, assistance and guidance is provided to enable those at risk to stay in their current home where possible.

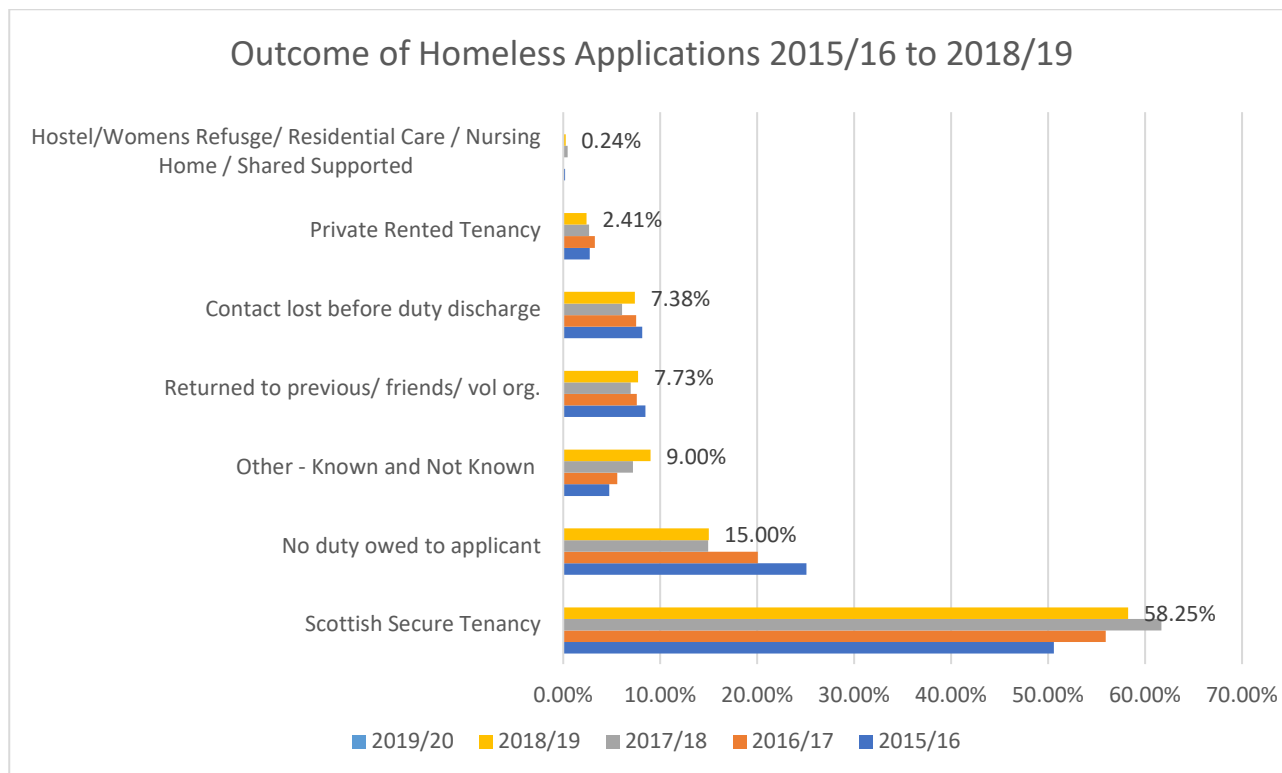
25.8 Work is also underway to collaborate with our RSL partners on their homeless prevention approach and activities. Wider work is ongoing through the Housing Options Hubs and expected guidance and training toolkit which it is hoped will increase the tenancy sustainment for these households.

- 25.9 A few years ago, the Housing Service restructured its operational staff and created a small team of Sustainability Officers whose role was to help prevent and alleviate homelessness. This team targeted people who were already homeless and undertook a range of resettlement work with them to aid future sustainment. They also had a homeless prevention role and were involved in the delivery of advice, assistance and support to those subject to a S11 notifications. However, in more recent times, this small team of people have focussed the majority of their attention on helping those affected by welfare reforms and the implementation of Universal Credit to try and address significantly rising rent arrears levels and avoid evictions. Whilst it is recognised that the wider homeless prevention work is a very important aspect, hard choices have had to be made about where their priority focus should be and is linked to limited and reducing resources due to austerity measures of the UK Government.
- 25.10 There is however, increased levels of partnership commitment to early identification of those threatened with homelessness and the joint working required to deliver it and is covered in more detail in the housing support section of this document.

26. Outcomes of Closed Homeless Cases

- 26.1 The progress of homeless cases is monitored to ensure that targets are met and any areas for improvement are identified and progressed. Statistics can be usefully analysed to provide indicators of performance either improving or declining over time. Additionally, the Business Development and Support Team has an audit role to ensure consistency across the localities of North Lanarkshire and is an area of ongoing scrutiny and development.
- 26.2 In 2018/19, North Lanarkshire closed 2,534 homeless applications which is around 7% higher than the level of applications received. It is important to note that closed cases is a different dataset from applications and assessments and instead counts all cases closed in the financial year regardless of when an application was made or assessed and this would include applicants awaiting suitable permanent accommodation from a previous year. Please note that this data has not been updated to 2019/20 figures as per reasons stated earlier.
- 26.3 Chart 27 displays the outcomes achieved for homeless applicants over the last five years and shows that 58.25% or 1,476 applications closed in 2018/19 were provided with a Scottish Secure Tenancy by the local authority, a housing association or a registered social landlord and this figure has fallen from just under 62% in 2017/18 although remains higher than previous years. An additional 2.41% (61) applicants found a permanent home in the PRS and remains similar to previous years.

Chart 27 – Homeless Outcomes



Source: Scottish Government Homeless Statistics for North Lanarkshire

- 26.4 15% (380) were recorded as ‘no duty owed to applicant’ and this includes those who have been assessed as not homeless because they could reasonably return to their previous/current accommodation, those who withdrew their applications, lost contact before assessment decision or were ineligible for assistance. This category also includes those who resolved their homelessness prior to assessment decision. Decreasing numbers of homeless applicants have been recorded in this category over the last 5 years and is generally a positive step towards improved outcomes for homeless people.
- 26.5 A further 196 applicants (7.73%) returned to their previous accommodation or moved in with friends/relatives and this will include some people who were assessed as not homeless who did return home, others who were assisted to resolve their homelessness as well as those who moved in with family, partners or other friends and relatives. The graph shows that there have been some small fluctuations but generally similar across the years. On further analysis, data suggests that around half of these applicants were noted to have resolved their homelessness prior to assessment decision with support to reconcile families after a dispute. Significant numbers were also supported and assisted to liaise with landlords and mortgage lenders to enable them to keep their home.
- 26.6 7.38% had lost contact before duty was discharged and would include people who resolved their own homelessness but who may not have come back to the LA to advise that they had a suitable resolution to their homeless situation. Lost contacts fell in 2017/18 but rose again by just over 1% in 2018/19, however remained lower than previous year figures.
- 26.7 9% of closed applications were recorded as ‘other - known’ 5.41% (137) or ‘other – not known’ 3.59% (91) and has risen year on year at almost double the figure recorded in 2015/16. The ‘other – known’ category will include people who were remanded into custody or who made their own arrangements, moved away from the area, etc.

26.8 The outcomes achieved for the remaining 6 applicants include hostel provision, women’s refuge and residential care/nursing home/shared supported accommodation.

27. Homeless Outcomes by Intentionality Decisions

27.1 The Scottish Government report outcomes based on households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness by intentionality and where applicants secured settled permanent accommodation which includes lets by LA’s, RSL’s or in the PRS. It is important to note that these figures are a sub-set of all cases closed in the year and do not take account of households who were assessed as not homeless or those who withdrew, lost contact or resolved their homelessness prior to assessment decision.

27.2 The housing outcomes for unintentionally homeless households in 2019/20 illustrate that 84% (of known outcomes) secured settled permanent accommodation which is higher than the national average of 82%.

27.3 Chart 28 reports the outcomes in North Lanarkshire compared with Scotland where a stark difference can be seen between LA tenancy numbers in NL at 69% compared with Scotland at 44% 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 in the area and also the largest local authority landlord in the country with a stock of around 36,500 properties. The average for Scotland takes account of the stock transfer authorities where all social housing stock is with RSL’s and this becomes apparent when comparing the average RSL lets to unintentionally homeless households, which is 28% in Scotland compared with 6% in North Lanarkshire.

27.4 Allocation of properties to households assessed as intentionally homeless is 19% for NLC compared with 16% in Scotland with a further 3% allocated from RSL’s compared with 6% across Scotland. Together, both categories account for 22% in NL and Scotland.

Chart 28 – Homeless Outcomes by Intentionality Decision 2019/20

	Unintentionally Homeless / Threatened				Intentionally Homeless / Threatened			
	Scotland		North Lanarkshire		Scotland		North Lanarkshire	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
LA Tenancy	11,755	44%	1,235	69%	180	16%	35	19%
RSL Tenancy (Housing Association)	7,635	28%	110	6%	65	6%	5	3%
Private Rented Tenancy	1,395	5%	35	2%	120	11%	15	8%
Hostel	195	1%	0	0%	15	1%	0	0%
Returned to previous/present accom	1,260	5%	85	5%	110	10%	10	6%
Moved in with friends/relatives	1,180	4%	45	3%	195	17%	30	17%
Other (known)	1,960	7%	125	7%	140	12%	15	8%
Not known (contact maintained)	1,600	6%	155	9%	315	28%	70	39%
All outcomes	27,000	100%	1,790	100%	1,135	100%	180	100%

Source: Scottish Government Homeless Statistics for North Lanarkshire

27.5 The PRS is also viewed as settled housing and may be considered by homeless households to be more attractive in the recent past and is linked to the major changes to the tenancy regime of the PRS with the introduction of the Private Residential Tenancy which removes natural end dates from tenancies providing greater security for tenants. 5% of Scotland’s unintentionally homeless households found settled housing in the PRS as well as a further 11% of intentionally homeless households. This compares with 2% unintentionally homeless in NL and 8% of those

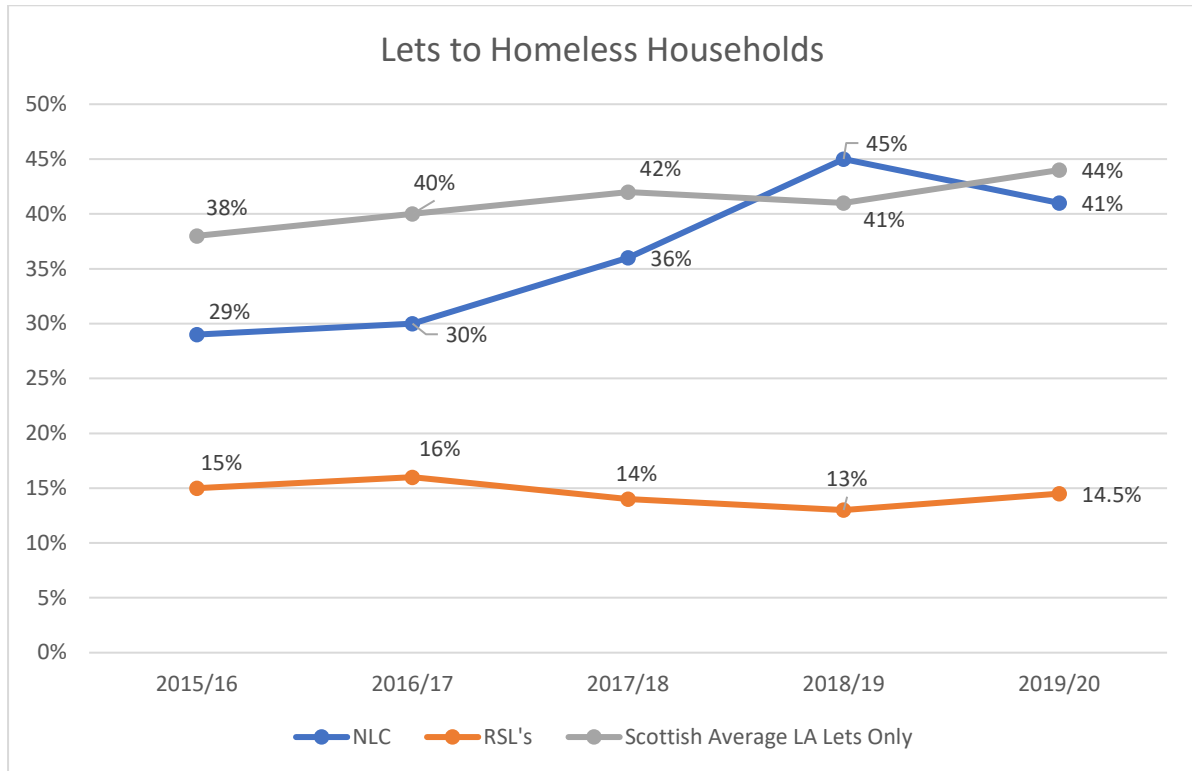
assessed as intentionally homeless. These lower numbers could be attributed to local affordability issues as well as the standard or management of PRS properties in North Lanarkshire. The estimated profile of PRS tenancies in North Lanarkshire has reduced slightly from 14,895 properties in 2014/15 to 14,448 in 2019/20 and may be a factor in homeless households' abilities to find settled housing in the PRS.

- 27.6 5% of unintentionally homeless households returned to their previous/present accommodation and suggests that they have either reconciled with family members or have contacted services early enough to enable interventions to help them stay in their current home and this is the same as the national figure.
- 27.7 Data reports that 9% of unintentionally homeless households had recorded an outcome of 'not known' and consists of those who make their own arrangements but do not come back to services to advise of outcome and this compares with 6% across Scotland.
- 27.8 39% of intentionally homeless households are also recorded as not known compared with 28% across Scotland. These individuals are either provided with advice and information to help source alternative accommodation or make their own arrangements as there is no duty on the LA to provide permanent housing.
- 27.9 7% of unintentionally homeless households are recorded as other (known) and is the same as the Scottish average. The figure for intentionally homeless households is 8% and is lower than the 12% average for Scotland.
- 27.10 There are small numbers of households who moved in with family/friends and is 3% in NL and 4% across Scotland (unintentionally homeless).

28. Allocation of Properties to Homeless Households

- 28.1 The number of allocated lets to homeless households within NLC increased year on year from 2015/16 to 2018/19 reaching a high of 45% before falling back to 41% in 2019/20 and this can be seen in chart 29. In comparison, North Lanarkshire recorded a consistently lower level of lets to homeless households than the national average until 2018/19 when it was 4% above the national figure. In 2019/20, the national figure was recorded as 44%.

Chart 29 – Homeless Lets by NLC, RSLs, and Average LA Lets in Scotland



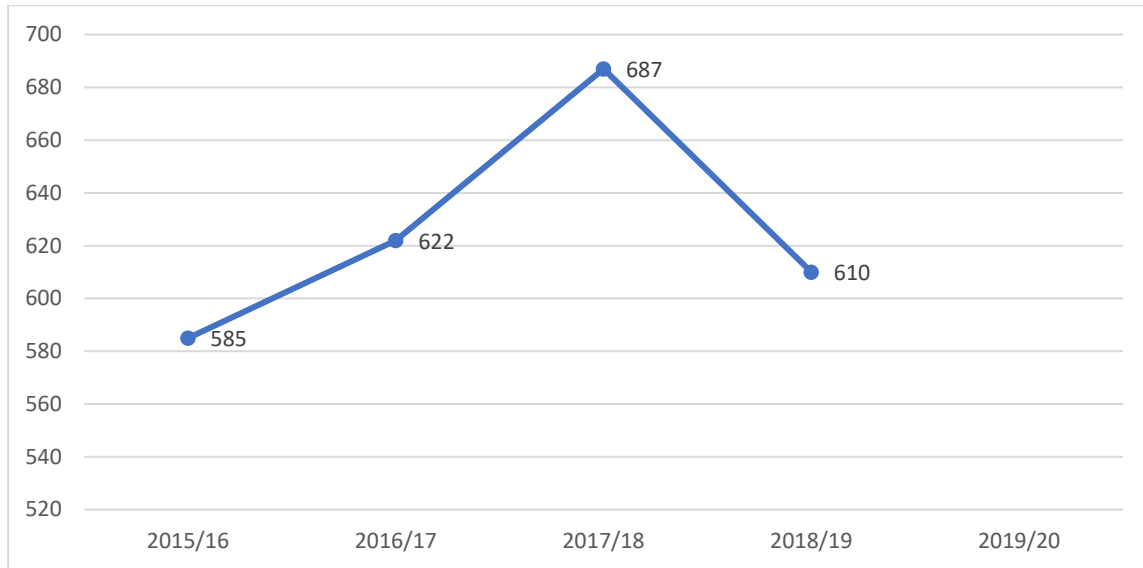
Source: North Lanarkshire Common Housing Register Reports and Scottish Government Key Trend Summaries

- 28.2 Whilst NLC lets to homeless people has increased, RSL lets reduced slightly from a high of just under 16% in 2016/17 to a low of 12.75% in 2018/19. This rose again to 14.5% in 2019/20.
- 28.3 The ability to meet agreed target lets is an important issue given the obvious demand from homeless households who are awaiting settled accommodation. Agreed target lets vary across the North Lanarkshire sub-market areas but the average is 37% for NLC stock. The target percentage lets for RSL partners varies according to the stock they have within NL with some at around 15% and others the same or near to the 37% council target. Increasing lets to homeless households across all housing providers in North Lanarkshire is a key priority and discussions are ongoing at present to agree target lets with RSL partners.

29. Backlog of Homeless Applicants

- 29.1 Information from allocation reports confirm that the homeless waiting list has reported between 585 and 687 homeless households waiting to be housed since 2015/16 (see chart 30). The backlog appeared to have spiked in 2017/18 and fell back to 610 in 2018/19 and is linked to a recognition of the rapid rehousing policy approach being introduced by the Scottish Government and a resulting increase in percentage lets to homeless households. Please note that this data has not been updated to 2019/20 figures as per reasons stated earlier.

Chart 30 – Homeless Backlog



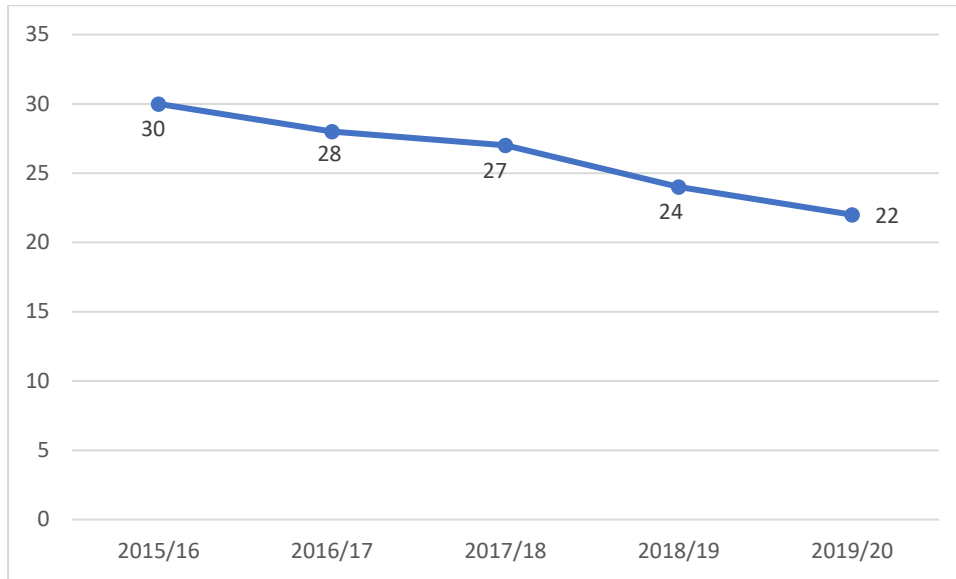
Source: North Lanarkshire Homelessness Reports

- 29.2 It should also be noted that there has been increased pressure on the homelessness system due to the removal of the priority-need distinction in December 2012 which has resulted in an increased proportion of households becoming eligible for permanent housing. Further changes to intentionality and local connection will increase pressure still further.
- 29.3 The backlog of homeless applicants also needs to be considered within the context of the continually reviewed Allocation Policy and Common Housing Register within North Lanarkshire, both of which are designed to improve access to homes for people in housing need with those who have urgent and cumulative needs accruing a higher level of points and placing them at the top of waiting lists. The allocation policy attempts to balance the needs of all applicants and lets to people on other waiting lists is also necessary and enables those who have an urgent need to move to do so, and in some cases, prevents homelessness from occurring e.g. those in unsuitable accommodation who require to move due to disabilities or health conditions and those who are overcrowded.

30. Time to Case Closure and ARC Performance

- 30.1 The length of time that people are homeless is a critical health check on homelessness resources and processes. In recent years the average length of time from assessment to case closure for those assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness has reduced from 30 weeks (212 days) in 2015/16 to 22 weeks (156 days) in 2019/20 and should continue to fall with the implementation of the rapid rehousing approach. This compares with 224 days across Scotland in 2019/20

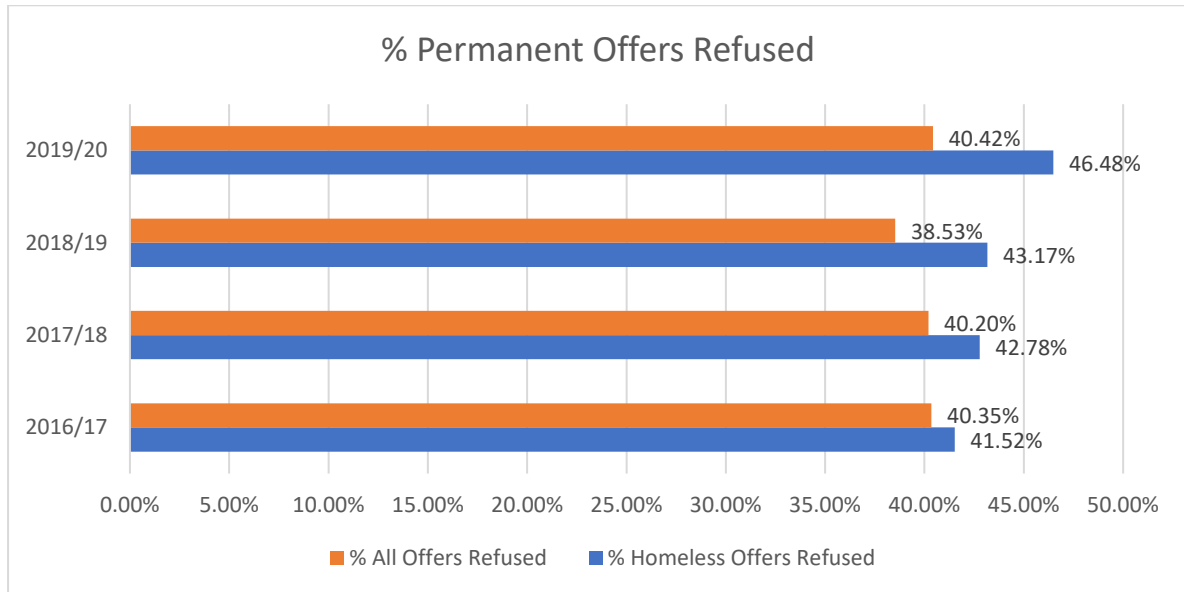
Chart 34 – Time to Case Closure (in weeks)



Source: North Lanarkshire Homelessness Reports

- 30.2 The waiting time for people to be housed is directly affected by availability and suitability of social housing properties available to match the needs of homeless applicants and this is a particular issue in areas with limited social stock and increasing pressure such as Cumbernauld and Bellshill as well as those who require specific types of accommodation to meet their needs e.g. wheelchair accessible housing.
- 30.3 91% of all homeless applications were closed within one year and is an improvement of 6% on the 85% reported in the last evidence paper. 69% of these were closed within the current average timescale of 22 weeks.
- 30.4 A further 7% were closed within one to two years and the remaining 1.8% took two years or more to conclude. A sample check of cases confirm that some required intensive support, others were public protection cases, a few required housing for very specific needs e.g. accessible and wheelchair housing and a few older cases had been re-opened because the duty had not been previously discharged e.g. those who had lost contact or had been in custody.
- 30.5 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 for some applicants. Chart 31 illustrates that 46% of all homeless offers made were refused in 2019/20 and this figure has been increasing year on year from 41.52% in 2016/17. Refused homeless offers is also higher than the refusals for all offers made, with a 6% difference in 2019/20. It is worth noting that the differential between refused homeless lets and all lets has also increased year on year.

Chart 31 – % Permanent Offers Refused



Source: North Lanarkshire CHR Reports

- 30.6 Local authorities are required to make only one offer of permanent housing under legislation; however, it is viewed as good practice to make two offers and assists households to find a housing solution that is right for them and is a practice which North Lanarkshire adheres to. It is unclear why applicants refuse offers but is likely to be associated with their housing need as well as aspirations and there is a view that some applicants may automatically refuse their first offer in the hope that the second offer is better. For instance, most households would prefer to be housed in a property with a garden and do not wish to live in a tower flat, however in North Lanarkshire, flatted type properties including towers make up a fairly large percentage of the social stock. Unfortunately, flatted type properties have a higher turnover rate and are therefore the predominant type of offer made to applicants.
- 30.7 A pilot to make two offers of accommodation to a household is underway at present to try and reduce the level of permanent offer refusals. If successful, this practice will likely be rolled out to all homeless households.
- 30.8 Further it should 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 single people are likely to refuse larger accommodation due to the reduction in their housing benefit because of the bedroom tax. This has also 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 are just not enough one-bedroom properties to meet demand. The Housing Service are considering ways to address this imbalance to provide an increased level of one-bedroom properties e.g. through new supply or the open market and empty homes purchase schemes or through the introduction of a flat sharing scheme to assist single people in sourcing suitable and affordable housing.
- 30.9 Scottish Social Housing Charter monitors our performance in terms of access to help and advice, and previously recorded the quality of temporary accommodation, and continuing support to help homeless people access and keep a home. The improvement ethos and focus on performance locally, ensures that every effort is made to provide effective and efficient services that address homelessness and improvements can clearly be illustrated in certain areas, for example:

- In 2019-2020, we housed 2,930 tenants in properties that became vacant in the year. The time taken to re-let homes has improved to an average of 21.6 days from 23.5 in 2018/19 and this compares to the Scottish average of 31.8 days
- 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 for the tenant to sustain their tenancy
- 'Settling in visits' also include an income maximisation service to ensure that all tenants are receiving the income they are entitled to and assists in mitigating the impacts of welfare reforms. In 2019-2020, we assisted tenants to receive additional benefits amounting to £13.6 million pounds
- Performance has improved over the course of the last five years in tenancy sustainment rates, with a sustainment rate of 87.31% in 2019/20, up from 80.2% in 2015/16, this highlights the importance of homeless prevention and housing support approaches in improving the lives of tenants

31. An Overview of Temporary Accommodation

- 31.1 The local authority is required by law to provide all homeless households with temporary accommodation whilst their homeless application is being assessed. For those assessed as unintentionally homeless, this duty is extended until they are permanently housed. For those assessed as intentionally homeless, the duty is to provide temporary accommodation for a reasonable period of time and provide advice, assistance and guidance on housing options to the applicant to enable them to source suitable alternative accommodation.
- 31.2 As at February 2021, there is a total of 658 temporary accommodation places within North Lanarkshire. Dispersed stock is mostly provided by North Lanarkshire Council and is supplemented through the lease of a small number of RSL properties. There were also a few leased PSL properties, however these ceased to be used during 2020. The number of properties available for temporary accommodation was decreasing prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, however this was increased again to accommodate both those who have presented as homeless and to remove sharing within specified accommodation

Chart 32: Temporary Accommodation in North Lanarkshire

NLC	Accommodation Type	Stock Profile	Description
	Dispersed	528	Self-contained furnished homes to meet needs, possibly with floating support
	Specified	94	On-site supervision with visiting floating support
	Supported	36	Managed by commissioned third sector agencies
Total		658	

Source: NLC Data as at 25th February 2021

- 31.3 As the RRTP progresses, and homeless households are housed more quickly, the overall requirement for temporary accommodation will be reduced. This is because each property will turn over more frequently each year. Whilst we intend to deliver a Housing First Model for those with complex needs, we recognise that the number of people in this category is higher than our Housing First provision will be. We therefore identified the need to retain our existing supplies of supervised and supported type accommodation to meet the needs of those with complex needs where capacity is limited for Housing First.

- 31.4 The number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation in North Lanarkshire was 497 as at the end of March 2020. This is a fall of 6% on the previous year and is the lowest number of households in temporary accommodation since 2012 and compares with a 6% rise in Scotland. 105 of these households contained children or a pregnant woman. Overall, there were 210 children living in temporary accommodation as at 31 March 2020 which is a 14% fall on the previous year and compares with a 7% rise across Scotland.
- 31.5 The average length of stay in temporary accommodation in North Lanarkshire is 128 days and has been reducing over the last 3 years and is 30% lower than the average across Scotland of 184 days. Households with children spent an average of 136 days in temporary accommodation. We recognise the detrimental impact of homelessness on the health and wellbeing of all households, but specifically children, and through our RRTP, are targeting families to be rehoused as quickly as possible. However, the length of stay for some households can be affected by other pressures within the housing system such as a lack of affordable and suitable move on accommodation.
- 31.6 484 offers of temporary accommodation were refused in 2019/20 which is 23% higher than the figure recorded the previous year although lower than the overall rise of 31% across Scotland. The data tables for the Scottish Government highlight that North Lanarkshire reported the second highest refusal rate across Scotland behind Glasgow. Perceptions of temporary accommodation affect the acceptance rate as does the location and type of property available at the time accommodation is required. Significant levels of investment to upgrade temporary accommodation has been completed and further investment works are planned over the next few years.
- 31.7 94% of homeless applicants provided with temporary accommodation in 2019/20 were satisfied with the standards. This is the same as the previous year but was an improving figure year on year before that. This indicator has been removed from the ARC and is now reported within the HL2+3.
- 31.8 Access to and the provision of temporary accommodation is 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.
- 31.9 To achieve this, the Council plans to develop a revised Temporary and Supported Accommodation Statement (TASAS) to ensure that statutory requirements are met in the provision of temporary accommodation to homeless households.

31.10 The TASAS will be a component part of the LHS with key objectives to ensure:

- the provision of temporary accommodation is clearly identified and as far as possible, meets the needs of homeless households.
- the linkages to the RRTP are clear with an intention to reduce the amount of time homeless people spend in temporary accommodation by increasing lets and reducing levels of temporary accommodation over time.
- the management of temporary accommodation is fully considered and supported within the staffing structure.
- the cost implications of providing temporary accommodation are identified and appropriate action taken to mitigate impacts as far as possible.

31.11 Once developed, the TASAS will take account of the profile of homeless applicants, the existing profile of temporary accommodation, the turnover rates and lengths of stay as well as policy drivers such as the RRTP requirements and welfare reform impacts in order to assess the future requirement for the various different types of temporary and supported accommodation across North Lanarkshire.

32. Legislative Context of Housing Support Provision

32.1 The provision of housing support to homeless households is a legal requirement under the Housing Support Duty²⁵. 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 that they have ‘reason to believe’ need the housing support services prescribed in regulations.”

32.2 ‘The regulations’ are the Housing Support Services (Homelessness) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and are outlined below and 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.

32.3 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.

32.4 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 varies depending on the individual's circumstances and/or those of the people in the household. The accommodation referred to may be settled accommodation.

²⁵ Scottish Government – Housing Support Duty: 2013

- 32.5 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.
- 32.6 Previously, we delivered housing support both to homeless households and to those approaching the housing service for assistance and this was considered a model of good practice. However, resources have reduced in recent times and housing support is now specifically targeted at homeless people as defined in legislation. To offset this, we intend to enhance our housing options services to provide the early upstream intervention and support to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place.
- 32.7 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.

33. Context and Local Delivery of Housing Support Services

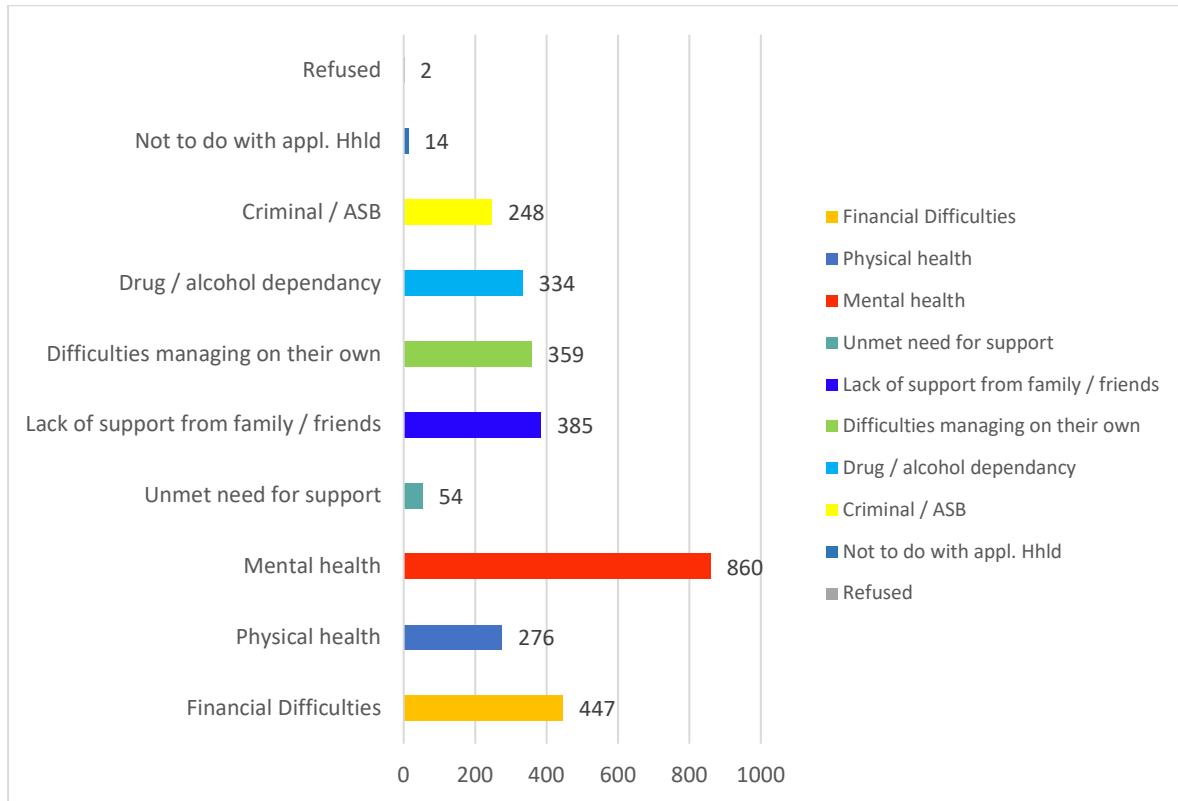
- 33.1 The Housing Service has its own internal housing support provision and staff delivering support are located within area housing teams. This ensures that they are able to communicate with colleagues across the various functions to appropriately support homeless people and to intervene to prevent homelessness at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 33.2 Resources are generally targeted at medium to lower-level support needs and those with a medium to high level of support need 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.
- 33.3 Internal housing support provision varies across each locality, however there is an average of one and a half or two Housing Advisors with a support remit located within each of the four locality housing teams. The IT system in use for support has recently been reviewed to ensure support plans and outcomes are fully reported and easy to understand. Processes and procedures have been updated to reflect this.
- 33.4 The Housing Service commissions three additional housing support services which are delivered by third sector agencies. One of these services is floating support only, another is supported accommodation only and the third is a mix of floating support and supported accommodation provision.

Chart 33 – 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
Blue Triangle (Glasgow) Housing Association (BTHA)	12 supported accommodation places for young people aged 16 to 30 years	Single homeless 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)

- 33.5 The floating support services delivered by Barnardo's and Simon Community Scotland have been in operation since 2010 and were re-tendered in 2015 through an open tendering process. As part of service reviews and the re-tendering process, 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 and this was highlighted through service user feedback. Simon Community Scotland were the successful bidders for the merged service and Barnardo's Scotland were successful in maintaining their contract for floating support for young people. Both contracts were for an initial period of three years with two potential one year extension options and began operation in April 2016.
- 33.6 The young persons' supported accommodation service provided by BTHA is a long-term service and has been running in North Lanarkshire for around 25 years. BTHA own the building and manage the accommodation with funding support from rental charges paid by residents, the majority claiming Housing Benefit to cover these costs. In the past, the Council provided grant funding for the housing support costs, however the service was tendered through the Procurement Scotland website in 2016 with BTHA being the only bidder for the contract. The contract was for an initial 18 months with two one-year extension options and brought it into line with the contract terms of the other two services.
- 33.7 Council Committee approved the two-year extension options for all contracts until March 2021. During this time, the Scottish Government set out the requirement to develop a rapid rehousing approach and associated plan to meet its vision of eradicating homelessness for good. As the RRTP was developed and agreement that a Housing First approach should be taken for those with complex needs, it became clear that there were implications on the existing support services.
- 33.8 It was recognised that a review of housing support provision would take time but would also be influenced by the delivery and outcomes achieved from the Homes First service. However, many areas of non-critical business stalled when the country went into lockdown due to Covid-19 and has delayed the implementation of the Homes First service but also the re-tendering of housing support contracts. A ten-month modification to extend the contracts from April 2021 to January 2022 was awarded through Section 72 (1) (c) of the procurement regulations to enable services to be re-tendered in the open market. This re-tendering process concluded in November 2021 and Committee approval was granted to award the two-year contracts to the existing providers from 11 February 2022 until 31 January 2024.
- 33.9 The review of housing support services is now underway, and the Homes First service has been operational since February 2021. Key findings and data from these areas of business will be analysed and fully assessed to identify potential future model options. All options will then be assessed, and revised models of service delivery will be developed. Re-tendering of any revised housing support contracts will be completed prior to existing services ending in January 2024.
- 33.10 Data recorded in the HL1 highlights that there were 1,072 households assessed as having at least one support need which is an increase of 14% on the previous year and is 50% of all homeless applicants. This compares with a 9% rise in support needs across Scotland. A deeper analysis of this data confirms significant numbers of homeless people who have multiple support needs with twice as many people affected by poor mental health than any other support need.

Chart 34: Support Needs of Applicants



Source: HL1 data for North Lanarkshire 2019/20

- 33.11 An analysis of both the support indicator and the reason a household failed to maintain their previous accommodation in 2019/20 provides a more accurate reflection of support need and highlights that 62% (1,322) of all homeless applicants were assessed as having at least one or more support need. 39% identified only one support need and 53% identified as having between two and four support needs. A further 8% (26 people) have between five and eight different support needs. A multi-agency approach is required to meet the needs of homeless applicants who have a range of support needs to assist them to sustain future accommodation and this may include intensive support and/or supervision within a specialist accommodation provision. Some individuals may be identified for the Homes First service.
- 33.12 In 2019/20, there were 1,137 housing support cases with a live support plan across both internal and externally commissioned services. Of these, 20 (1.76%) were long term ongoing cases, 18 from between 2011 to 2016. A number are likely to be very vulnerable individuals including former care leavers who have multiple and complex needs, and it is our intention, in discussions with the Homes First partners, to consider these individuals for a Homes First placement.
- 33.13 49% of all Housing Support plans were closed as complete in 2019/20 and a further 20% of cases were cancelled and are most likely to be around those people who were hospitalised, taken into custody or refused to engage with housing support services. These figures are significantly different to those recorded in the HL1 and this is because officers are not always able to complete a support assessment at the time of the homeless presentation and support assessment and provision is picked up later after the crisis situation has been resolved in terms of temporary accommodation provision.
- 33.14 The total combined caseload of all support services was around 340 cases in September 2021. 194 of these cases are in-house support and 125 through commissioned services. Unfortunately, the current IT system does not enable historical data to be retained on whether

internal, commissioned services or both delivered housing support services to an individual and it is therefore impossible to accurately reflect support cases across services. It has been recommended that IT systems are amended to enable improved performance management recording and reporting and will be taken forward as part of current work underway in this area. This includes statistical data on outcomes and the journey travelled for in-house support services.

- 33.15 Monitoring information for commissioned services illustrates that they collectively have a caseload of 550 cases per year, although this is variable and is based on the needs of those supported. The number of people exiting commissioned housing support services to a settled housing outcome has remained consistent over the years at around 80% which is a significant success given the complexity of service user needs.
- 33.16 Commissioned services use various recording and reporting methods; however, they all follow the overall basic principles of a scoring matrix and include the same topic areas of support delivery. The Council currently uses a version of Better Futures which is built into our own IT systems and has a scoring matrix. A scoring matrix considers whether a person's score is improving, remaining steady or deteriorating across several elements and therefore reflects individual support planning and delivery where the focus is on individual's achievements and where they feel they are at any given time. This enables individuals and their key workers to zone in on areas of difficulty and work more collaboratively to address any challenges across a range of outcomes including housing, health and wellbeing, safety and security, social and economic wellbeing and employment and meaningful activity.
- 33.17 In the last year, a move to the Outcomes Star has been discussed and agreed in principle, although may take some time to implement due to IT requirements within the council as new IT systems are currently being investigated. The scoring matrix of the Outcome Star is similar to existing mechanisms and it is hoped that only minimal changes will be required to enable implementation.
- 33.18 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, HB claims, etc.
 - Referrals and encouraging engagement with other agencies and professionals to address other needs such as mental health, addictions, etc.
- 33.19 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.
- 33.20 All housing support services, including in-house services are registered with the Care Inspectorate and undergo regular inspections. Current grades awarded to services are mostly between 5 and 6 and range from very good to excellent. The lowest grade awarded was 4 which is defined as good.
- 33.21 It is well-documented that support interventions are sometimes unsuccessful and can be because the individual does not wish to engage with support or because their needs are multiple and so complex that they are unable to engage. Helping people with multiple and complex needs requires a partnership approach to the delivery of services.

34. Multiple and Complex Needs of Homeless Households

- 34.1 Inequalities, and specifically the health inequalities of homeless people are significantly higher than those of the general population with higher morbidity rates. Research on Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in the UK²⁶ 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 services. 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 homelessness and neglect. As they become adults, these individuals are more likely to self-harm and have suicide ideation.
- 34.2 The RRTP partnership recognises these inequalities; and the barriers homeless people face in accessing and engaging with services. They have therefore collaborated to agree the rapid rehousing plan and all associated actions with a focus on early intervention and prevention as well as a commitment to transition services for those affected by multiple disadvantages, trauma, and complex needs.
- 34.3 The North Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership completed a Health Needs Assessment²⁷ of homeless applicants in the period April 2014 to March 2015 and involved linking the homeless dataset with the CHI number. Outputs from the research suggest that homeless people in NL use and access health services differently to the rest of the population with rates of A&E attendances three times higher than usual. Homeless people also attended A&E three or more times a year and is five times higher than the general population.
- 34.4 More extensive research²⁸ was undertaken by health and Information Services Division (ISD) into the reasons for attendance and admittance to health services by homeless people in North Lanarkshire in 2016/17. Again, outputs suggested that homeless households experienced higher rates of interaction with health services from the general population across a range of areas and found that:
- The rate for Emergency Department (ED) attendances for alcohol, drug and self-harm is at least 25 times greater in the homeless population compared to the general population of North Lanarkshire.
 - Homeless people had 8 times higher rates for counselling.
 - Emergency admissions of homeless people are 10 times greater for alcohol and 25 times greater for both drugs and self-harm when compared with North Lanarkshire population.
 - Alcohol and drug related disorders were most frequent reasons for psychiatric admissions for homeless people.
 - The top five most frequent outpatient appointment speciality for homeless people were general psychiatry, gynaecology, general surgery, trauma and orthopaedic surgery.
- 34.5 A multi-agency Health and Homelessness Steering Group operate across North and South Lanarkshire and is supported by health Improvement. They have developed a plan to take forward a range of actions to both prevent homelessness from occurring where possible and

²⁶ Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in the UK, Heriot Watt University and the Economic & Social Research Council - 2012

²⁷ Health and Homelessness in North Lanarkshire: A rapid health needs assessment, North Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership – Sept 2016

²⁸ Measuring Health and Homelessness, North Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership - 2018

mitigate the impacts of homelessness on peoples' health and wellbeing. The action plan includes some key areas of work noted below and the group have confirmed that learning from this work will inform future service models for vulnerable groups and link back into the RRTP approach:

- an assertive outreach sexual health and cancer screening service for homeless people.
- partnership approach to homeless prevention at key health assessments where a patient is asked about their housing circumstances and risk of homelessness with follow on pathways to housing for those at risk.
- scoping the requirement for wrap-around services to those discharged from institutions including residential care and custody.
- identified gaps in service provision and communication for pregnant women experiencing homelessness.

34.6 Work is also underway to set up of a multidisciplinary practice that will operate across Lanarkshire to provide Primary Care to vulnerable groups including those experiencing homelessness and to review and refresh the pathway between homelessness services and mental health services.

34.7 This partnership already actively involved in early identification of individual's financial pressures and have multiple services that engage early to support financial inclusion. In addition, this group supports a programme of link workers that are based in health centres in areas of deprivation to assist in improving outcomes for all.

34.8 At the heart of this work is a commitment to embed a psychologically informed environment (PIE) within all key health and homelessness services. This initiative is part of the RRTP actions and delivered through shared resources to deliver trauma sensitive learning approaches and utilises dedicated Health Improvement resources to support delivery and accelerate the pace of change.

35. Development of Housing First Approach

35.1 Many 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 that interlinks with other services they need and provides a safe and secure home.

35.2 As part of the Health and Homelessness Action plan a care management approach to supporting those with complex needs was being tested within Motherwell and Wishaw localities. The project aim was to reduce A&E attendances of those with the most complex needs by 10%, through better care co-ordination and support. The learning from this test has helped to inform the wrap-around care management support model required for this group of homeless people who have higher levels of support needs and who may benefit from a Housing First approach.

35.3 North Lanarkshire's RRTP highlights the need and desire to develop and deliver a 'Housing First' model of support to address the needs of those who have multiple and complex needs such as mental health and addictions. Evidence from Housing First projects show that this type of model is highly effective and resolves the revolving door of homelessness for those who have faced multiple exclusion. Our 'Homes First' project has been developed and the first set of homeless people are currently being identified.

35.4 The Homes First project is a care management model led by implementation of a small dedicated and specialist RRTP Team of professionals from housing, Social Care and the Health and Homelessness Service. These professionals will work closely across the partnership to assess

and co-ordinate care plans and provide a bridge into Health & Social Care and wider community services, offering additional support and outreach where required for more complex cases. This model requires robust multi-disciplinary locality engagement for partners to review cases on a regular basis and the potential to consider co-location of the care managers with Locality Housing teams will be explored as the model develops.

- 35.6 The RRTP proposes that these posts will be temporary for 2-3 years to lead the transformation change required to core services to improve access and support provision to people who have a history of homelessness and multiple exclusion and trauma. These roles will assist in considering service redesign and workforce development and planning required to support the transition to a model that will become a fully integrated sustainable mainstream response.
- 35.6 Housing First delivery requires personalised and flexible support options which enables the homeless person to have choice and control over the support they receive. It is therefore a key ambition of the RRTP partnership to extend the provision of Self-Directed Support (SDS) to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness starting with a few people initially but scaling up over time.

36. Health Needs of Children Experiencing Homelessness

- 36.1 NHS Lanarkshire completed pan-Lanarkshire research on the health needs of children and young people experiencing homelessness²⁹ and was compared with the outcomes noted for the general population of children and young people across Lanarkshire. Whilst this was a joint research project, outcomes are specific to each area and an in-depth analysis of data was completed for North Lanarkshire.
- 36.2 The research methodology included:
- a literature review.
 - a detailed analysis of homeless data which was shared with NHS Lanarkshire.
 - interviews with parents experiencing homelessness.
 - focus groups with a range of professionals working with homeless families and their children.
- 36.3 Data indicates that the homeless group contained a higher proportion of children under 5 years and indicates a younger age profile than would be expected.
- 36.4 The results clearly illustrate that outcomes for homeless children and young people are poorer and were specifically noted to:
- Have higher respiratory and breathing problems.
 - Have lower attendance at all types of health appointments including preventative services and those for ongoing health issues. Non-attendance rate at outpatient appointments was 2.5 times higher than that general population.
 - Have a higher rate of attendance at A&E.
 - Be less likely to register with a dentist and those aged 5-11 years were more likely to have had a tooth filled or extracted.
 - Have twice the rate of referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) but less likely to attend the appointment.
 - Have higher rates of concern raised by health visitors for young children aged 27-30 months regarding speech/language/communication and emotional/behavioural issues.
- 36.5 The following were the key themes identified from the research:

²⁹ Health Needs of Children and Young People Experiencing Homelessness, North Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership - 2018

- Childhood homelessness is a traumatic event and other Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) are more likely in this group.
 - Children and young people affected by homelessness are more likely to have behavioural and emotional issues.
 - School attendance and attainment is poorer.
 - Keeping and making friends is more challenging and bullying is perceived to be higher.
 - Parents are more likely to be affected by poor mental health, stress and anxiety.
- 36.6 The research highlighted a range of inequalities in the outcomes achieved by children and young people experiencing homelessness in comparison with their peers. Access and attendance at health services and appointments may be hampered by frequent moves and changes of address and not receiving appointments, being unable to register with services due to residing out with their normal area, as well as travel and cost to attend.
- 36.7 There is no standard assessment conducted for children experiencing homelessness and there is therefore concern that issues are not identified at an early stage to enable preventative measures to be undertaken. This illustrates a lack of support and co-ordinated approach provided to homeless children in North Lanarkshire.
- 36.8 In response to these issues, the RRTP Steering Group for North Lanarkshire recognised the gaps in service provision and have developed actions to provide additional support for children experiencing homelessness. This includes developing referral pathways to health visitor/school to advise of a homeless child to enable additional support to be provided, automatic referral to the Health and Homelessness Team so that an assessment of needs can be completed using the (SHANARRI) indicators, etc. As well as a review of partnership and joint working arrangements to ensure the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda is followed.

37. Partnership Strategic Direction and Progress

- 37.1 The LHS evidence paper in 2015/16 highlighted a lack of communication across agencies providing support to homeless people with complex needs and limited referral pathways into other services. Strengthening communication and partnerships and creating referral pathways was a key action for delivery by housing and wider partners over the life of the five-year LHS plan. In 2016, the North Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership was established following a policy direction from the Scottish Government. The integration of services, the LHS actions and the participation of housing staff, has enabled a joint focus at locality level for planning, and a drive to consider further integration across the wider partnership with an ambition to co-locate staff and community supports.
- 37.2 Addressing the wider health and wellbeing needs of those experiencing homelessness is part of significant strategic development and investment to review and redesign services to meet the needs of homeless people and other vulnerable groups.
- 37.3 This includes the production of a Lanarkshire Mental Health Strategy³⁰ with a commitment to the creation of a Transforming Mental Health in Lanarkshire programme. This follows the publication of the Scottish Government Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027³¹, and links specifically to action 15 to improve 'access to treatment and joined-up accessible services'. This is further supported

³⁰ Getting it Right for Every Person (GIRFEP); Lanarkshire Mental Health Strategy, Lanarkshire Partnerships – 2019. <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=23791&p=0>

³¹ Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027, Scottish Government. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/mental-health-strategy-2017-2027/pages/6/>

by the Programme for Government and additional investment in services to prevent and reduce problematic alcohol and drug use³².

- 37.4 There has been significant investment in mental health workers through the Transforming Mental Health in Lanarkshire programme and there is a commitment to continue this for at least the next two years both in primary care and out of hours services. There is also investment in improving pathways and triage arrangements with partners such as Police Scotland. Lanarkshire also hosts the National Programme team and is a pilot site for the implementation of Distress Brief Interventions for people in experiencing suicidal thoughts or self-harming.
- 37.5 There are also plans within Addiction Services to further develop the Community Prescribing Service Recovery Review Model offered to Opioid Substitute Treatment service users to include health reviews for physically compromised alcohol dependent service users and also to support growth of the Drug Treatment and Testing Orders and support delivery of services to people with multiple complex needs.
- 37.6 NHS Lanarkshire continue to provide a health and homelessness specialist nurse led service where the aim is to meet the immediate health needs of individuals and families affected by homelessness who are not registered with main-stream services. Following engagement, the service refers onwards to mainstream health services and offers continuity of health care across the transition period. Additional capacity for this service has been provided through the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) Additional Investment in Services to Reduce Problem Drug and Alcohol Use and other funding sources. This will allow the staff to establish seamless access to much needed GP and Psychiatry services for individuals who are more complex and challenging. Additional resources provide nurse capacity within the team to allow the inclusion of trauma and psychologically informed service delivery.
- 37.7 In addition, it is the intention to seek the development of linked mental health staff from each locality Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT) with the Health and Homelessness Service to improve mental health access for homeless people. As part of this work, there is commitment to develop the knowledge and skills of CMHTs to enable them to be more responsive to individuals with complex needs and includes development of trauma sensitive PIE approaches across the CMHTs.
- 37.8 The significant work in these development areas will positively impact on the health and wellbeing of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- 37.9 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, we very seldom take the opportunity to review good practice and consider what elements made them successful. Success should be celebrated, not least for the individuals themselves but also for staff and agencies in recognition of their achievements and to assist in improving future service delivery.

38. Impact of COVID-19 on Homeless People and Services

- 38.1 The Coronavirus impact on everyone has been significant but it has been particularly challenging for those who were already homeless or those who experienced homelessness during the pandemic. Government policies were quickly implemented to ensure that all rough sleepers had

³² Rights, respect and Recovery; Scotland's Strategy to improve health by preventing and reducing alcohol and drug use, harm and related deaths, Scottish Government – Nov 2018.

<https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0054/00543437.pdf>

a safe place to stay during the public health emergency and funding was made available to local authorities to assist with the costs of delivering this.

- 38.2 There were homeless presentations from people who had been living with elderly or immune-suppressed family members but who were key workers and were in great fear of contracting Coronavirus and infecting their loved ones and therefore felt they had to leave. There were also people who had been sofa-surfing or living in transient accommodation who had been asked to leave and forced them to seek homelessness assistance.
- 38.3 People with no recourse to public funds has been an ongoing issue and continued support and homelessness assistance has been necessary to help keep them safe.
- 38.4 Relationship breakdowns and volatile familial relationships have been strained to breaking point and has resulted in homeless presentations for some, with young people finding it particularly challenging in terms of following lockdown rules and social distancing to keep themselves and their wider families safe.
- 38.5 An increase in support needs of homeless people with basic needs issues such as food, medication and digital exclusion which became key interventions to resolve as quickly as possible. Both internal and external services accessed government funding to assist in the provision of tablets and mobile phones to assist with digital inclusion, particularly for those on Universal Credit where digital management of their claim is the only available option.
- 38.6 Social isolation and loneliness became a more significant issue as lockdown restrictions continued over many months and this seriously impacted on homeless people's mental health and wellbeing. Those with addictions were more likely to consume higher levels of alcohol or drugs to cope with the pressure. Access to mental health and addictions services was limited and where services were running these were restricted to telephone calls and virtual discussions and could not always address the severe anxiety and distress that people were facing.
- 38.7 Poverty is a key driver of homelessness in normal times but has been exacerbated by the impacts of necessary lockdown restrictions with people in low paid work paid off or furloughed and those who owned their own businesses unable to operate and therefore turning to the safety net of the benefit system. Although protections were quickly put in place to assist people to stay in their homes and preventing evictions and repossessions, these protections are now coming to an end and it is very likely that homelessness will increase for people in these circumstances in the months ahead.
- 38.8 Covid-19 has had a considerable impact on the provision of housing and homelessness services. The priority across the country, has been to ensure that homeless people were able to access safe accommodation and North Lanarkshire Council increased its level of temporary accommodation significantly with around an additional 75 dispersed properties to deliver this. Single homeless households who were flat sharing were moved to individual accommodation to protect them and others.
- 38.9 Homeless people have spent longer periods of time in temporary accommodation than the targets set out within the RRTP and is down to less movement of people because of lockdown restrictions and fewer lets becoming available. Further work on void properties could not be completed by tradesmen in short timescales to ensure social distancing by tradesmen but also due to some workers shielding or on furlough.
- 38.10 Sharing continued in supported accommodation services where staff are on site 24/7 and requires ongoing review of risk assessments and infection control procedures to ensure surfaces are cleaned regularly and social distancing is adhered to. This effectively close lounge and kitchen areas providing only limited access to residents to cook meals. There have been

challenges within these services with those who have complex needs struggling to cope with distancing themselves from others and has had a negative impact on their mental health. Some people were identified as a close contact; and a few did test positive for Covid and meant that they had to self-isolate in their bedrooms with meals being organised for them by staff. Residents found this extremely stressful, and their mental health suffered as a result. This also impacted on support staff with some of them also having to self-isolate as a result of working within the service and a couple testing positive too.

- 38.11 The new world of Covid-19 has seen a re-think around the delivery of services both within housing and in wider Health and Social Care service provision. New ways of working have been developed with virtual viewings and revised sign-up processes. Services within Health, particularly around addictions and mental health and how to deliver these services differently in future is under consideration. There is also far greater collaboration across services than ever before and a recognition and commitment that this is the way forward.
- 38.12 The impact of Covid-19 will be with us for years to come and our services will need to evolve to meet future needs. There are a range of impacts which will need to be addressed, particularly long term financial and economic consequences as well as a need for increased addiction and mental health services as we deal with the fall out. Ongoing government financial support will be a key piece of the jigsaw.