



FEANTSA

## United Kingdom ([England](#), [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#))

FEANTSA Country Fiche 2014<sup>1</sup>

### England

#### Key Statistics

Local authorities throughout the UK have a duty to collect data on information on local housing authorities' activities under homelessness legislation, which varies between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In England, data is collected on applications for assistance and the number of households accepted as owed a main homelessness duty (referred to as 'acceptances') according to the legislation.<sup>2</sup> Local authorities must also report on the number of homeless households to whom they owe a main homelessness duty and to whom they have provided temporary accommodation. The Department for Communities and Local Government publishes this data on a quarterly basis for England. See [here](#) for further information.

Local authorities in England now also report on the number of homelessness cases that take place outside of the statutory homelessness framework. These are referred to as "homeless prevention and relief statistics" which report on how local authorities have assisted people to avoid homelessness or obtain alternative accommodation who have not had a main homelessness duty owed. See [here](#) for further information.

Local authorities in England also submit counts and estimates of rough sleeping. This is published on an annual basis by The Department for Communities and Local Government. See [here](#) for further information.

In London, the CHAIN database offers extensive data on the rough sleeping population. See [here](#) for further information.

#### Increase/Decrease in Number of Homeless People

Statistics from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) show that the Autumn 2013 total of rough sleeping counts and estimates in England was 2,414. This is up by 105 (5%) from the Autumn 2012 total of 2,309.

There had been a sustained reduction in "statutory homelessness" levels from the early 2000s until 2009. This trend has now been reversed. DCLG statistics show that the financial year 2010/11 saw an increase in homelessness acceptances by local authorities of 10%, representing the first increase since the year 2003/04. During the 2012/13 financial year, there were 53,540 acceptances. This is a further increase of 6% from 50,290 in 2011/12.

In line with a target to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010, a downward trend began in 2004. However, the number of households in temporary accommodation has begun to rise again. On 31st December 2013, it was 56,930: 7% higher than the same date the previous year. This was the twelfth consecutive quarterly increase.

<sup>1</sup> Last updated Spring 2014

<sup>2</sup> Key criteria in establishing whether a main homelessness duty is owed include non-intentionality and various forms of "priority need". See the 'National Strategy' entry below for more info.

	<p>Outside of the statutory homelessness framework, there has been an increase in the number of households who were “prevention” or “relief” cases since the data was collected in 2009/10. Between 2009/10 and 2012/13 there has been a 23% increase in households who were either assisted to obtain accommodation or remain in their own home. Out of those who were helped to obtain alternative accommodation, 50% were assisted by means of private rented sector accommodation (71% with a landlord incentive scheme and 29% without).</p>
<p><b>Change in Profile of Homeless People</b></p>	<p>The gender profile of the statutory homelessness population remains fairly stable. The priority need categories affect the gender profile of acceptances strongly. Of the 12,890 acceptances between 1 October and 31 December 2013, 52% were lone parents (7% male, 93% female), and 20% were couples with dependent children. One-person households accounted for 24% acceptances, of which 56% were male.</p> <p>More recently there has been growing interest in the levels of youth homelessness. Whilst the number of acceptances of homeless households that were headed by young people fell by 10% between 2011/12 and 2012/13, many fall out of the statutory definition of homelessness and there is evidence that the number of young people rough sleeping has risen. London’s CHAIN database showed that 719 people aged 18-25 were seen rough sleeping in London in the year to March 2013, compared with 624 in the previous year. Results from the 2013 Homeless Link Youth Homelessness survey found that nearly half of homelessness agencies reported seeing more young people than last year, with only 9% reporting a decrease.</p> <p>There has also been growing concern about rising homelessness amongst immigrants. This has particularly focused on rough sleeping amongst EU citizens from Central and Eastern Europe in major cities. 2010-11 figures from London’s CHAIN database show that from a total of 6,437 rough sleepers in London, 2,923 (47%) were recorded as having United Kingdom as their nationality and 28% were from Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004 or 2007 (53% of those recorded the nationality was not available).</p> <p>There has been a steady increase in the proportion of acceptances where the main reason for homelessness was the ending of an assured short-hold tenancy. This has risen from 19% on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 to 24% on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. Loss of accommodation due to relationship breakdown remained at 17% in the same period.</p>
<p><b>National Strategy</b></p>	<p>Throughout the UK, homeless policies are underpinned by a strong legislative basis. In England, the main legal provisions are contained in the 1996 Housing Act, the Homelessness Act 2002, and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002. This legislation lays out the statutory duties of local authorities, which include an obligation to provide housing in cases of homelessness where eligibility, priority need and non-intentionality are established. Priority need covers various groups including households with dependent children; households with a pregnant woman; and people who are vulnerable in some way (for example through mental illness or physical disability). In addition, the Homelessness Act (2002) places a duty on housing authorities to carry out local reviews of homelessness and formulate, publish and regularly review local homelessness strategies in consultation with stakeholders. The initial date by which authorities had to comply with the duty to produce a homelessness strategy was 31 July 2003. Strategies have to be reviewed and renewed within five years. The English homelessness legislation was amended under the 2011 Localism Act and accompanying supplementary guidance was issued - (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012. These changes allow councils to discharge their duty to homeless households into the private rented sector.</p> <p>The development of homelessness strategies at local level has been framed by a series of national strategic frameworks addressing different aspects of homelessness:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In March 2002, the government published “More than a Roof: A report into tackling homelessness”. This report, underpinned by the Homelessness Act 2002, formed the basis of the then government’s approach to tackling homelessness. The central objectives were to enhance homelessness assistance, develop a more strategic and innovative response, reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families with children, cut rough sleeping by two thirds and ensure the opportunity to have a decent home for all.</li> <li>• In March 2005, this strategy was updated with “Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives: a strategy for tackling homelessness”. This aimed to halve the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 2010. These successive strategies were well-resourced with central government increasing funding to local authorities to deliver and led to falls in homelessness.</li> <li>• The current government has introduced new national strategies focused on rough sleeping: “<i>Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out nationwide</i>” <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vision-to-end-rough-sleeping--2">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vision-to-end-rough-sleeping--2</a> and on prevention, “<i>Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness</i>” <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-every-contact-count-a-joint-approach-to-preventing-homelessness">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-every-contact-count-a-joint-approach-to-preventing-homelessness</a></li> </ul>
<b>Targeted Prevention</b>	<p>Government has made prevention a central element of a number of cross-government strategies which recognise the importance of stable accommodation. Some elements include: the new Mental Health Strategy which focuses on promoting good mental health and early intervention; the Drugs Strategy which sets out an ambition for anyone dependent on drugs or alcohol to achieve recovery; the offender sentencing and rehabilitation green paper which focuses on more effective sentencing and rehabilitation to break the cycle of crime and re-offending; and reforms to the NHS and public health delivery which introduce a prominent role for the NHS and local authorities in tackling health inequalities.</p> <p>The latest homelessness strategy focuses on prevention of rough sleeping. This includes providing appropriate support where ‘transitions’ between different forms of accommodation put people at risk of falling back into rough sleeping. Some of the focal areas are the following: the identification of all offenders at risk of homelessness on arrival into prison; the encouragement of closer working between criminal justice agencies and homelessness organizations; the prevention of people at risk of rough sleeping being discharged from hospital without accommodation; the provision of accommodation which better meets the needs of Military Service personnel during and after Service; and the promotion of work to prevent and tackle youth homelessness and support care leavers, so that they do not become tomorrow’s rough sleepers.</p>
<b>Housing-Led Approaches</b>	<p>As far as statutory homelessness is concerned, a housing-led approach is well established in England. Local authorities must find housing for those households to whom they owe a statutory duty, defined on the basis of non-intentionality and priority need.</p> <p>For single homeless people, transitional approaches to homelessness remain very important. There is no specific focus on promoting rapid access to housing in the strategy, even though it recognises that the lack of a stable home is a key factor in rough sleeping.</p> <p>Overall changes to housing benefit and other aspects of welfare reform mean that access to long-term housing solutions is becoming more difficult for many people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The extension of the Shared Accommodation Rate for single people from 25 to under 35 years old under Local Housing Allowance has caused problems for young people trying to access accommodation. The Homelessness Monitor published by Crisis in 2013</p>

	<p>noted that there has been a 14% reduction in the numbers of young single people in receipt of benefit in the sector since the Shared Accommodation Rate changes were introduced, indicating that young people are struggling to secure independent accommodation.</p> <p>Some small-scale Housing First projects are being implemented in specific local contexts.</p>	
<b>Quality of Homeless Services</b>	<p>Some inspections are carried out by the Care Quality Commission which enforces National Care Standards on a broad range of services, including housing support services and some homelessness services. At a local level local authorities implement their own quality assurance frameworks on homelessness services.</p>	
<b>Remarks on Research</b>	<p>There is a broad range of research carried out on homelessness with a view to informing an evidence-based approach to policy. Homeless Link carries out an Annual Review of Support for Single Homeless People which they have conducted since 2008 and tracks the sectors capacity and support services available to homeless people. The most recent report can be found at <a href="http://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-downloads/Support%20for%20Single%20Homeless%20People.pdf">http://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-downloads/Support%20for%20Single%20Homeless%20People.pdf</a></p> <p>Crisis and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation have funded a five-year study, The Homelessness Monitor, which analyses the impact on homelessness of recent economic and policy developments in the UK. The most recent report can be found at <a href="http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/HomelessnessMonitorEngland2013.pdf">http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/HomelessnessMonitorEngland2013.pdf</a></p>	
<b>Remarks on Budget Evolution</b>	<p>The government has maintained the homelessness grant (£100 million a year for each of the four years between 2011 and 2015). However, most prevention and support services are funded out of Local Authority housing-related support budgets (previously known as Supporting People budgets). Most cuts are taking place at local level in a context where ring-fencing for these budgets has been removed by central government. This has resulted in staff redundancies, reduced support and some projects closing altogether. Homeless Link's 2014 Annual Review of Support for Single Homeless People found that 58% of homeless accommodation projects said Housing-Related Support was their primary source of funding, which had decreased from 76% in the previous year. 38% of accommodation projects reported a fall in funding compared to the previous year, with an average reduction of 20%.</p> <p>There have been significant cuts in funding in related areas such as welfare, mental health services and housing. Welfare reform, including significant changes to entitlement to housing benefit, is at risk of contributing to rising homelessness. The Homelessness Monitor 2013 published by Crisis suggests that the growing impact of welfare reform is expected to drive increases in homelessness in England over the next few years, as it will weaken the safety net that provides a 'buffer' between a loss of income, or a persistently low income, and homelessness.</p>	
<b>Remarks on Key Policy Developments</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
	<p>The Government have encouraged the introduction of the 'No Second Night Out' approach, which encourages Local Authorities to offer a rapid response to new rough sleepers so they are provided an offer of accommodation that means they do not have to sleep out for a second night.</p>	<p>Welfare reform changes including changes to housing benefit in 2012-2013 mean that a growing number of people are potentially at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>There is evidence which suggests that homeless people are more at risk of having</p>

	<p>A cross-Government Ministerial Working Group on Preventing and Tackling Homelessness was established in 2011. The first report of the group, <i>Vision to End Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Nationwide</i>, published in July 2011 was focused on rough sleeping. The second report, published in August 2012, <i>Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness</i>, sets out the importance of prevention and considers how services can be managed in a way that prevents everyone from reaching the point of homelessness.</p> <p>There have been recent commitments by the Government to increase the supply of affordable housing. As part of the 2013 Budget, the Chancellor announced additional funding for the Affordable Homes Guarantee Programme which would provide up to an additional £225 million to support a further 15,000 affordable homes starting in England by 2015. An extension of the Affordable Housing Programme was also announced as part of the spending round in June 2013. £3.3 billion in capital funding (together with receipts from Right to Buy sales) is to be made available in 2015-18 to support the delivery of 165,000 new affordable homes.</p>	<p>their social security benefits sanctioned under a new increased conditionality and sanctions regime introduced in 2012. Research by Homeless Link in 2013 found that a third of homeless people on Jobseeker's Allowance had received a sanction compared to 2.7-3% of the general population.</p> <p>Regulations which came into force on 1 April 2014 have removed access to Housing Benefit for European Economic Area (EEA) jobseekers who are entitled to income-based Jobseeker's Allowance are likely to have an adverse impact on the levels of homelessness among EEA migrants.</p> <p>There is a chronic shortage of affordable accommodation which has been caused by the failure of successive Governments to build enough housing to meet long term need. Shelter estimates an overall shortfall of approximately 100,000 to 150,000 homes per year. For homeless services the pressure on the housing market and limited supply of suitable and affordable rented properties causes huge problems in sourcing and facilitating move-on accommodation for homeless people.</p> <p>The Localism Act 2011 has allowed councils to discharge their duty to homeless households to the private rented sector.</p>
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<h2>Northern Ireland</h2>	
<p><b>Key Statistics</b></p>	<p>In Northern Ireland, the Department for Social Development publishes a quarterly housing bulletin, including statistics on statutory homelessness applications and acceptances. See <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</p>
<p><b>Increase/Decrease in Number of Homeless People</b></p>	<p>Following an upward trend since 1999, the number of households presenting as homeless to the NI Housing Executive (the authority with statutory responsibility for homelessness) peaked in 2006/07 at 21,013 households, and then levelled off between 2006/07 to 2009/10. There was however a sharp increase from 18,664 in 2009/2010 to 20,158 in 2010/2011. In the following two years, the numbers of presenters decreased by 4% (2011-12, n=19737; 2012-13, n=19354).</p>
<p><b>Change in Profile of Homeless People</b></p>	<p>More than half (55%) of all homeless presentations were made by single person households. Of these, 66% were single males (36% of all presentations). Single males between the ages of 16 and 59 accounted for almost one quarter (24%) of all presentations. The Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-17 refers to the</p>

“changing nature of the homeless population which includes ex-offenders, young people, older people, those leaving care and migrant workers. Increasing numbers of homeless people are reported to “have mental health and addiction problems and other complex needs and require intensive support.”  
([www.nihe.gov.uk/homelessness\\_strategy\\_for\\_northern\\_ireland\\_2012-2017.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/homelessness_strategy_for_northern_ireland_2012-2017.pdf), page 13).

Whilst the number of young people (aged 16-25) presenting as homeless increased year on year between 2004-05 and 2010-11 (an overall increase of 530 (27%), from 1,966 to 2,496), a slight decrease has been noted in the last two years (2011-12, n=2379; 2012-13, n=2318: 7% decrease since 2010-11, but still an 18% increase since 2004-05). The Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-17 details a range of specific measures on youth homelessness.

The numbers of pensioner households accepted as homeless due to their current accommodation being unreasonable increased from 1,837 (22%) in 2004-05 to 2,644 (25%) in 2010-11. This is due principally to the ageing population and difficulties older people have in continuing to maintain often ill-adapted or unfit properties which may have been the family home for a considerable number of years. Until recently, these elderly households living in unfit properties were included in national homelessness statistics, consequently skewing homelessness data. Changes are pending which will see the priority needs of these households being recorded separately. The number of pensioner presentations over the two year periods (2011-12, 2012-13) has fallen slightly (n=1875, 10% decrease since 2010-11).

The number of households presenting as homeless due to mortgage default / difficulties with mortgage payments more than doubled from 230 in 2004-05 to 509 in 2012-13 (121% increase). In terms of households awarded Full Duty Applicant status, there was greater than threefold increase in homelessness due to mortgage problems (2004-05, n=77; 2012-13, n=252, 227% increase). This reflects the economic and financial crisis.

There has also been a substantial increase (29%) in the numbers accepted as full duty homeless applicants due to loss of rented accommodation (2004-05, n=1010; 2012-13, n=1299), and those accepted on the basis of unreasonable accommodation (36%) for the same period (2004-05, n=2252; 2012-13, n=3069).

A significant increase in the numbers of households accepted as full duty homeless applicants following release from institutions, including prisons was also noted (2004-05, n=340; 2012-13, n=415, 22% increase). This is most probably due to the introduction of the housing and homelessness advice service in prisons.

A significant reduction in homelessness due to intimidation was noted between 2004-05 and 2011-12, which may reflect the progress that has been made at a political level in Northern Ireland. Almost 447 households were accepted as statutorily homeless due to intimidation in 2004-05, a number that reduced by 32% to approximately 303 households in 2011-12. Despite this, the number accepted on the basis of intimidation rose in 2012-13 to 411 (36% increase on previous year). It is likely that the majority of incidents that account for this increase were racially motivated.

The proportion of presenters accepted as full duty applicants has increased by 5.3 percentage points from 2011-12 (45.7%) to 2012-13 (51%), reflecting the increasing difficulties around accessing and maintaining housing.

Summary data for the period 2012-2013 can be found at:  
[http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/northern\\_ireland\\_housing\\_statistics\\_2012-13.pdf](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/northern_ireland_housing_statistics_2012-13.pdf)

## National Strategy

Homeless policy in Northern Ireland is contained in the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 as amended (April 1989). The order places a statutory duty on the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to provide temporary and/or permanent accommodation for certain groups of homeless persons, depending upon the assessment of their case. Those who satisfy the tests of eligibility, homelessness, priority need and unintentional homelessness are considered to have Full Duty Application Status (FDA). For those not entitled to FDA status there is a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance.

The Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 placed a duty on the Housing Executive to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy. The Act states that an extensive range of agencies are also obliged to take into account the homelessness strategy in the exercise of their functions. The Department for Social Development (DSD) has overall responsibility to ensure that the stipulations of the Housing Act are enacted. "The Promoting Social Inclusion Homelessness Partnership" - an inter-departmental, cross-sectoral working group that was established by The Department for Social Development - will implement and monitor the new strategy. This interagency body will support the four objectives of the homelessness strategy. A list of performance indicators will be used to monitor progress in implementing the strategy. These will be detailed in an implementation plan to be developed following publication of the strategy.

The first homelessness strategy for Northern Ireland, "Making a Difference to People's Lives" was published in 2002. The strategy contained 25 recommendations aimed at improving services. Since then, significant progress has been made, including improvements in temporary accommodation, homelessness services and preventative initiatives. A key development was the introduction of the Supporting People programme in 2003. This programme funds a range of housing-related support services for vulnerable people and has had a considerable impact. A new "Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-17" was launched by the NIHE on 1st May 2012. This strategy has the following four key objectives:

1. to place homelessness prevention at the forefront of service delivery
2. to reduce the length of time households and individuals experience homelessness by improving access to affordable housing
3. to remove the need to sleep rough, and
4. to improve services to vulnerable households and individuals

With regards to recent / ongoing housing policy trends, a number of strategy changes are likely to impact on homelessness and housing.

As outlined in 'Facing the Future: Northern Ireland Housing Strategy 2012-17', the Department of Social Development (DSD), which has strategic responsibility for housing, stated its intention to put a clearer policy focus on preventing homelessness and work better in partnership with other bodies to support individuals and families with particular needs to live independently. As part of this Strategy, the DSD stated that it would:

- use public funding in innovative ways to increase the supply of social and affordable housing;
- undertake a fundamental review of social housing allocations policy;
- make better use of existing social housing stock to meet a range of needs; and
- place a stronger policy emphasis on preventing homelessness and work with partners in both the public and voluntary sectors to promote a prevention agenda.

The Homelessness Strategy will be the main vehicle for developing and embedding this prevention agenda. Part of the prevention agenda will include using funding from the

Supporting People programme to support advice and assistance services designed to 'help more vulnerable people access and sustain tenancies in the private rented sector'.

The Housing Executive has successfully tendered for a private-rented sector access scheme for Northern Ireland which will allocate private tenancies to full duty applicant (FDA) homeless people. This project will support tenants and landlords for the first six months of any tenancy, and pay rental deposits. Tenancies will only be awarded to those who will relinquish their FDA status.

The Proposed Housing (Anti-Social Behaviour) Bill (Northern Ireland): the DSD intends to introduce this Bill to tackle anti-social behaviour in social housing. It is proposed that the new legislation would: introduce a new type of social housing tenancy (the short secure tenancy), which will be specifically for those tenants who have been involved in anti-social behaviour; and amend existing legislation to provide that individuals who engage in anti-social behaviour following an assessment under homelessness legislation can be treated as ineligible at any stage before they are allocated a tenancy of social housing.

In Scotland, a secure tenancy can only be downgraded to a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) in cases where the tenant or other members of their household are currently the subject of an Anti Social Behavior Order. However, in NI the DSD is proposing giving social housing landlords the power to convert secure tenancies to SSTs where, in the previous 3 years:

- a tenant, or household member, has been convicted of an offence which involves using the property (or allowing it to be used) for immoral or illegal purposes, or a commits a criminal offence in the property, or locality; or
- certain court orders, such as ASBOs or injunctions have been made against the tenant or household members.

The proposed legislation provides social landlords with significant powers to downgrade a secure tenancy, or fast-track eviction without having to involve the court in this decision, and no right of appeal. The legislation extends to those accessing and staying in temporary / emergency accommodation.

More about the bill at: <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/consultations-proposals-for-antisocial-behaviour-bill>

In 2012, the DSD announced a fundamental review of social housing allocations in Northern Ireland, as set out in 'Facing the Future: Northern Ireland Housing Strategy 2012-17'. The purpose of this review was "to ensure that the current ways of accessing the social housing waiting list and allocating social housing make the most effective use of scarce public resources in identifying and meeting housing need in the context of Government's policy priorities" (<http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/executive-summary-social-housing-allocations.pdf>, page 1)

A number of recommendations are made, and if implemented in full as proposed, responsibilities for homelessness, accessing the social housing register and operating the social housing allocation system would be integrated in the following way:

- establishment of a Strategic Independent Allocations Scrutiny Panel;
- a Housing Options Service that includes the private rented sector;
- the continuation of a single housing register with universal access;
- a simple, banded system to replace the current more complex points system to prioritise applicants, using time on the list within each band to determine priority; and



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the introduction of a Choice-Based Letting scheme across Northern Ireland with detailed information on lettings accessible to applicants.</li> </ul> <p>“Tackling Sexual Violence and Abuse: A Regional Strategy, 2008 – 2013” sets out Government’s commitment to adopting a consistent and long-term approach to the prevention of domestic violence and an effective response where it occurs. It focuses on preventive measures and on the provision of better protection, justice and support services for victims and their children. The strategy highlights the need for partnership working with a focus on inter-related strategies which impact on domestic and sexual violence including the homelessness strategy. This is evidenced at a local level with the work of Domestic Violence Partnerships in each Health &amp; Social Care Trust area, and at a regional level, through the inter-agency ‘Tackling Violence at Home, Regional Strategic Partnership’, answerable to the Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence.</p>
<p><b>Targeted Prevention</b></p>	<p>The first objective of the new homelessness strategy is to place prevention at the forefront of service delivery. The preventative measures addressed by the strategy are categorised into three groups: Early Intervention, Pre Crisis Intervention and Preventing Repeat Homelessness.</p> <p>In the area of early intervention, the strategy is committed to improving data collection and specifically collecting data on all ETHOS categories, including hidden homelessness. There is also a commitment to prevent repeat homelessness through Multi Agency Intervention and producing a holistic needs assessment framework to be in place and rolled out across all areas by 2014-15.</p> <p>In the area of pre-crisis intervention, the strategy commits to providing comprehensive housing and homelessness advice services free of charge to all who require it by 2013-14. The introduction of the “advice in prisons” initiative has been one of the successes of the 2002 Homelessness Strategy. Therefore, the new Homelessness Strategy supports the further development of advice provision within prisons with a commitment that pre-release housing advice will be available to all prisoners by 2013-14. In addition, there is a commitment to enhance partnership working in relation to young people leaving the juvenile justice system. Re-housing applicants will now be more difficult as the Private Rented Access Scheme only will work with FDA and many prisoners are ineligible for this status.</p> <p>In order to prevent repeat homelessness, the Housing Executive plans to introduce a range of tenancy support and floating support measures for tenants. The Tenancy Support Assessments initiative has been piloted in the NI Housing Executive Southern Region. All tenants undertake a tenancy support assessment with their Housing Officer at sign up. Referrals are made to relevant services within the locality where a support need is identified. Following an evaluation of the pilot which is to be undertaken in 2014/15, the plan is to roll out the initiative province wide. It is proposed that a new Common Assessment form, including housing support needs, will developed and implemented in 2014-15.</p>
<p><b>Housing-Led Approaches</b></p>	<p>The second strategic objective of the new homelessness strategy is to reduce the length of time for which households experience homelessness by improving access to affordable housing. The new strategy will develop a “Pathway Models” to enable appropriate homeless households to move from temporary accommodation to longer term housing more effectively. It is also committed to a fundamental review of the current temporary accommodation portfolio with regard to its strategic relevance, to be completed by 2014-15. NIHE will examine the housing-led model to consider its</p>

	<p>applicability to Northern Ireland by 2015-16. The strategy furthermore aims to reduce the average length of time in temporary accommodation from 46 weeks to 40 weeks over the life span of the strategy.</p> <p>The strategy also makes a number of commitments in relation to the development and re-letting of social housing. It commits to further activating the private rental sector as a source of permanent housing for homeless households in particular by introducing a NI-wide Private Rented Sector Access Scheme, to be in place by 2014-15. This scheme, intended to be operational from April 2014, will provide 1200 private rented tenancies, with necessary housing support, for full duty applicants. Rents will be set at as close to local housing allowance rates as possible to enable affordability, and all applicants will be assessed to ensure they can meet the rent.</p> <p>There are concerns that changes to benefits, including housing benefit, will limit the potential of the private rental sector to provide sustained exits from homelessness and put more people at risk of homelessness.</p>
<p><b>Quality of Homeless Services</b></p>	<p>Over the lifetime of the previous Strategy, a range of high quality services have been developed. These include the Community Housing Advice project which is an on-line service for community advice agencies; a prison liaison service, which uses peer housing advice workers inside prisons to ensure no-one should leave prison without having secured at least temporary accommodation; a number of on-line advice and bed vacancy services; a range of services for victims of domestic violence; a specialist floating-support service; and a multi-disciplinary social work support team providing detailed assessment for those with substance misuse or mental ill health, including a nursing and psychiatric social work service.</p> <p>The new strategy commits to a number of steps to improve the quality of services for rough sleepers. This includes an evaluation of existing services and information sharing arrangements in relation to the needs of those with alcohol addictions; service changes to ensure effective interventions; consideration of “housing-led” alternatives to the existing continuum of care; and a new Belfast Rough Sleepers Strategy, to be available by 2014-15.</p> <p>The new strategy’s fourth objective details a range of measures that seek to improve services for vulnerable groups. This includes a focus on domestic violence services, rural homeless services, services for sexual and violent offenders, services for women offenders, services for migrant workers/people from abroad, and services for homeless youth.</p> <p>In recent years there has been an emphasis on addressing youth homelessness. A protocol is now in place between the Health Trusts and the Housing Executive to ensure that there is joint cooperation between the two organisations so that young people at risk of homelessness are provided with secure and safe accommodation. Services for young homeless people are jointly commissioned by Health &amp; Social Services Trusts and the NI Housing Executive. This model has proven successful in tailoring appropriate accommodation services for 16 and 17 year olds in particular.</p>
<p><b>Remarks on Research</b></p>	<p>The new strategy makes a number of commitments to develop evidence in order to inform policy. This includes research into the impact of Floating Support services on repeat homelessness and analysis of ETHOS in Northern Irish context.</p>
<p><b>Remarks on Budget</b></p>	<p>Given the diverse funding streams for homeless policy and service provision, it is difficult</p>

<b>Evolution</b>	<p>to assess whether overall funding has increased or decreased. Secondly, funding information is not easily sourced or accessed. As a result, limited data were available at the time of creating this report.</p> <p>According Housing Related Support Strategy 2012-2015 (Supporting People), homeless households receive 21.4% of the Supporting People budget (total budget £71m).</p> <p>For the period 2013/14:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top-up vouchers in relation to private sector temporary accommodation – circa £2,600,600</li> <li>• Voluntary sector funding to organisations concerned with homelessness that assist the Housing Executive in (1) meeting its statutory duties and (2) the delivery of its homelessness strategy – circa £2,900,000 (this includes funding in relation to homelessness advice services)</li> <li>• Funding for Specialist Private Temporary Accommodation – £955,000</li> </ul> <p>Health &amp; Social Services Trusts provide additional funding.</p>	
<b>Remarks on Key Policy Developments</b>	<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>Homelessness is mentioned in the Housing Strategy for NI, Anti-Poverty Strategy, and in Transforming Your Care.</p> <p>We do have inter-departmental commitment to take cognizance of homelessness in the relevant discharge of duties across Government.</p>	<p><b>Negative</b></p> <p>The move to discharge homelessness duty into a fundamentally unregulated and insecure private rented sector.</p> <p>Reduction in opportunities for individuals to obtain full duty applicant status on grounds of extended anti-social behaviour sanctions.</p> <p>There are fundamental changes proposed to the allocation of social housing with less attention paid to individual need factors, to a quota system, and a possible reduction in security of tenure through introduction of Short Secure Tenancies.</p>

<h2>Scotland</h2>	
<b>Key Statistics</b>	<p>Homelessness data are collected by all local authorities and published by the Scottish Government on quarterly and annual bases. See <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</p>
<b>Increase/Decrease in Number of Homeless People</b>	<p>Homelessness is decreasing in Scotland. The data for the quarter July-September 2013 shows a 13% reduction in statutory homelessness presentations and a 12% reduction in those assessed as homeless compared to the equivalent period in the previous year.</p>
<b>Change in Profile</b>	<p>The profile of homeless people has been steady over the last nine years, with the exception of</p>

<b>of Homeless People</b>	an increase in the proportion of women under 25. The number of homeless women is reducing slightly more slowly than the number of men, possibly due to the fact that more services target mainly the latter.
<b>National Strategy</b>	<p>There is a national strategic framework for tackling homelessness in Scotland. The main outcome of the Housing (Scotland) Act, 2001 and The Homeless etc (Scotland) Act 2003 is that, since the end of 2012, all unintentionally homeless households have been entitled to settled accommodation.</p> <p>Responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this legal duty lies with local authorities. Chaired by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the responsible bodies for overseeing the implementation of the strategy are civil servants from the Scottish Government, senior representatives of local authorities (elected and officials), representatives of social landlords as well as invited experts as required to advise. An integrated strategic approach was adopted from the beginning where all relevant stakeholders (including academics, landlords, local authorities, elected members of local authorities, NGOs and all relevant government departments) ensured that problems were identified early and support offered to the relevant bodies to resolve them.</p>
<b>Targeted Prevention</b>	<p>A range of early interventions have been developed to tackle evictions. A requirement (Section 11 notice) has been introduced for social and private landlords and mortgage lenders to inform the local authority when they are taking action to repossess a property. A 'pre-action requirement' has been introduced, meaning that before an eviction is granted by the court, evidence is required that the affected household has been offered independent advice and reasonable steps have been taken to avoid eviction (Homeowner and Debtor Protection (Scotland) Act 2010). There is a Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS), which enables a household in need of financial help to get free advice and help to put together a debt payment programme without having to go through the courts.</p> <p>Some targeted measures have been developed to support people leaving institutions to avoid homelessness. Health and homelessness standards have been introduced, which should result in no one being discharged from hospital to homelessness (though this does still happen). Projects in prisons to assist prisoners with re-housing have been developed; and national guidance concerning young people who leave the care system stipulates that no one should become homeless. 2014 legislation raises the age for leaving care to 21. Those who leave care between the age of 16 and 21 have the right to return to care until they are 21. This will be implemented from 2015.</p>
<b>Housing-Led Approaches</b>	<p>The overall strategy is housing-led. The legislative framework is based around a duty on local authorities to house unintentionally homeless households in settled accommodation. In the six months period between April and September 2011, social rented tenancies were offered to 10,494 households who had been found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need, of whom 9,114 accepted the offer and approximately 1,500 homeless households were offered a private rented tenancy. There has been a significant reduction in hostel spaces in recent years.</p> <p>There is some local implementation of Housing First projects e.g. Glasgow.</p>
<b>Quality of Homeless Services</b>	Overall, services quality is high. In hostel and shelter accommodation, there is normally one person per room unless they are a couple or choosing to share. There are very few 'traditional' night shelters or dormitory-style emergency hostels.

<b>Remarks on Research</b>	Policy-making on homelessness is generally evidence-based. Around twelve different pieces of research aimed at addressing different gaps in knowledge about homelessness were commissioned by the Scottish Government during the development of the national strategy.	
<b>Remarks on Budget Evolution</b>	The Scottish Government in 2007 gave greater autonomy to local authorities over their spending and removed the 'ring fence' from certain funding streams. There has been an overall reduction in real terms (rather than cash terms) in the funding available to Scottish local authorities for the entire range of their spending. There has also been the introduction in a number of local authorities of competitive tendering for a number of social support and homelessness services with a view to getting 'more for less.' In addition, there is evidence that NGOs are using their own resources to fill any gaps in funding resulting from reductions.	
<b>Remarks on Key Policy Developments</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
	<p>The National Health Service (including physical and mental health) is free of charge for all (though not a new development). In addition charges for prescribed medicines have been abolished.</p> <p>Health and Social Care services are in the process of being integrated, which may have either positive or negative outcomes.</p> <p>Self-Directed Support and personalisation is slowly being extended, which gives greater control and influence to service users over the services they receive and how the budget allocated to them is spent.</p> <p>Since June 2013, there has been a legal duty for local authorities to provide a housing-support assessment to homeless applicants where they have reason to believe they require housing support, and a further legal duty to ensure that the support they need is provided. (Housing Scotland Act 2010.)</p>	<p>Welfare Reform taking place including benefits sanctions to people who do not actively pursue work or deny work offers; an upper 'cap' on welfare benefits; deductions in housing benefit where a household has more bedrooms than they 'require'.</p> <p>Because of the difficulties presented by the 'bedroom tax' some local authorities are considering developing small scale hostels, primarily because there are insufficient one bedroom apartments to provide accommodation for single people.</p>

<b>Wales</b>	
<b>Key Statistics</b>	Information on local housing authorities' activities under homelessness legislation is collected through the quarterly homelessness statistical return and published by the government. Data includes the number of households accepted as homeless, reasons for homelessness and the number of households in temporary accommodation. See <a href="#">here</a> for more information.

<p><b>Increase/Decrease in Number of Homeless People</b></p>	<p>The number of households accepted as homeless fell during 2012-13 and this decrease has continued into 2013/14 despite an increase in the number of applications. From October to December 2013/14, a total of 1,215 households were accepted as homeless which is 11% less than the same quarter of 2012/13. Over the same period, a total of 3,840 households made homeless applications, which is 5% more than the same quarter of 2012/13.</p> <p>In general, numbers of acceptances have been falling since 2004-05, when 44 % of applications resulted in the household being found eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need, and therefore owed the main housing duty. By 2013/14, the proportion of applicants owed the main housing duty had fallen to 32%. This is thought to be due in part to increased prevention work and also to stricter adherence to the 28-day definition of threatened homelessness, in response to higher demands on services due to welfare reform.</p> <p>The numbers of households in temporary accommodation decreased at the end of 2012/13 following increases in the previous two years and as with acceptances this decrease has continued into the first three quarters of 2013/14. At the end of December 2013 there were 2,310 households in temporary accommodation which is a decrease of 4% compared with the end of December 2012.</p> <p>The number of households in Bed &amp; Breakfast (B&amp;B) accommodation at the end of the quarter has been increasing in recent years. At the end of December 2013, there were 260 households in B&amp;B accommodation which is an increase of 23% compared with the end of December 2012.</p>
<p><b>Change in Profile of Homeless People</b></p>	<p>On 8<sup>th</sup> March 2012, the Welfare Reform Act 2012 changed the age threshold for the shared accommodation rate of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) from 25 to 35. Whilst the number of single person households accepted as homeless has generally fallen since 2004/05, the percentage of all acceptances that were single person households has been increasing. In recent years, around 50% of all acceptances were single person households. However, during 2012/13 and 2013/14 this has been increasing, with 58% of all acceptances in October to December 2013/14 being single person households.</p> <p>The impact of Welfare Reform, tighter public sector budgets and job losses, the rising costs of living and the economic outlook means that rising homelessness is likely to continue in coming years.</p>
<p><b>National Strategy</b></p>	<p>Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, which came into force in January 1997, places a statutory duty on local authorities to provide assistance to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Authorities must consider all applications from people seeking accommodation or help in getting accommodation. The local authority owes a main homelessness duty where it is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a priority need group. The priority need groups include households with dependent children; households with a pregnant woman; and people who are vulnerable in some way (for example through mental illness or physical disability). The Welsh Government introduced secondary legislation (starting from 1st March 2001) extending the priority need categories to specifically include: applicants aged 16 or 17; applicants aged 18 to 20 who were previously in care; applicants vulnerable because of domestic violence or the threat of violence; or applicants vulnerable as a result of leaving the armed forces, or leaving prison. Where a main homelessness duty is owed, then the authority must ensure that suitable accommodation is available for the applicant and his or her household until a settled home becomes available for them. Where households are found to be intentionally homeless or not in priority need, then the authority must make an assessment of their housing need.</p>

	<p>On 18 November 2013 the Welsh Government introduced the Housing Bill to the Assembly. This is the first piece of housing-related primary legislation created by the Assembly since law-making powers were extended in 2011. Part 2 of the Bill makes several significant changes to current homelessness legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A universal homelessness prevention duty, available to all households presenting as threatened with homelessness, to take 'reasonable steps' to 'help to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available'</li> <li>• Extending the statutory definition of threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days</li> <li>• Giving authorities the power to discharge the main homelessness duty into the private rented sector without the consent of the applicant</li> <li>• Removing priority need status for prison leavers who do not fall under the definition of vulnerability</li> <li>• Ending family homelessness by 2019, by phasing out intentionality for households with children</li> <li>• Requiring authorities to 'opt in' to applying intentionality, publishing reasons for doing so</li> <li>• Giving Ministers powers to revoke the priority need test without further primary legislation.</li> </ul> <p>The Bill is due to receive Royal Assent in July 2014.</p>
<p><b>Targeted Prevention</b></p>	<p>Welsh homelessness policy is strongly orientated towards prevention and this is reinforced in the proposed Housing Bill.</p> <p>The new prevention service will encompass a wide range of prevention activities including mediation services, support services, and financial support to access the private rented sector.</p> <p>Many authorities already carry out prevention work. However, this is outside the statutory regime and is not monitored in the same way as statutory activity. Anecdotal evidence suggests that priority need households are often prioritised for prevention work. The new framework proposed under the Housing Bill will create statutory rights for all eligible applicants to access prevention services.</p>
<p><b>Housing-Led Approaches</b></p>	<p>Current strategy prioritises move-on to settled housing. As the rise in households in B&amp;B accommodation demonstrates, implementing permanent housing solutions as soon as possible remains a challenge.</p> <p>The Welsh government urges Local Authorities to adopt a co-ordinated approach to move-on planning and monitoring the progress of households and individuals living in temporary accommodation so that those in need of more settled accommodation can access the range of housing options available, as quickly as possible. Social lettings agencies and other forms of improved partnership working across third-sector homelessness organisations and private sector landlords are also being supported and promoted by the government. This is accompanied by re-enforcement of the role of social housing in tackling homelessness.</p>
<p><b>Quality of Homeless Services</b></p>	<p>To complement the provisions of the Bill, the Welsh Government is spearheading a 'culture change' initiative to encourage services to adopt more person-centred approaches. Shelter Cymru, Cymorth Cymru and the Homelessness Network are developing a Service User Standard to guide authorities to implement principles of good customer service.</p> <p>The Welsh Government is developing performance measures to monitor the effectiveness of</p>

	the new prevention duties.	
<b>Remarks on Research</b>	<p>A review on homelessness legislation in Wales was conducted by Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods in 2013. This informed the forthcoming Housing Bill to help improve homelessness law in Wales.</p> <p>Shelter Cymru has secured funding for a four-year programme of research on homelessness prevention among vulnerable groups, beginning in June 2014.</p>	
<b>Remarks on Budget Evolution</b>	<p>In order to meet the additional costs of the new statutory framework, Welsh Government funding for homelessness is set to increase from £6.4 million in 2014/15 to £11.3 million in 2015/16.</p> <p>The Supporting People budget, which funds housing-related support for vulnerable people, was protected in 2014/15. However, the Welsh Government has announced a £4 million cut in 2015/16, bringing the budget to £130.2 million.</p>	
<b>Remarks on Key Policy Developments</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
	<p>High level of ambition and long-term vision for a universal rights-based service, including the long-term eradication of priority need.</p>	<p>UK government changes to housing benefit and changes for working age/work-related benefits are having an impact on homeless people and putting more people at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>Scarcity of public funds limits the extent to which the Government is able to achieve long-term aims.</p>