

Briefing for Central Scotland

Crisis in Scotland

March 2023



Crisis is the national charity for people experiencing homelessness. Our Skylight in Edinburgh offers frontline services for people who need help in Edinburgh and the Lothians, while we also work alongside partners across the country to offer our expertise and support wherever we can.

But while our expertise stems from our experience of offering frontline support, we also campaign for the changes needed to end homelessness altogether.

Almost 1 in 12 people in Scotland have experienced homelessness. In 2021/22, just under 29,000 households were found to be homeless by Scottish local authorities, or 47,000 people, including 14,000 children. The number of households found to be homeless has been increasing gradually in recent years, after many years of decline.

- The most common triggers for homelessness are a household dispute/ relationship breakdown or being asked to leave the family home. For women, it is domestic abuse.
- 2,130 households slept rough in the three months before making an application for homelessness assistance in 2021/22. (This doesn't include anyone who did not make a formal homelessness application to their council.) At 6% of all homeless households, this proportion has fallen slightly over recent years.
- There has been a very significant increase in the numbers of homeless households with support needs in recent years. The majority of homeless households (52%) now have support needs, and three in ten (29%) have mental health difficulties requiring support.
- On average it takes over 36 weeks before a homelessness case is resolved. But in some areas and for some households, particularly those with children, the wait is much, much longer.
- Last year 1 in 8 (13%) homeless households last year had already been homeless in the past five years.

While the Scottish Government have committed £100 million to supporting rapid rehousing, research shows that overall funding for homelessness in Scotland has been reducing since 2016, particularly for housing support. A recent report from the Scottish Housing Regulator (Feb 2023) found some councils are "reaching the limits of their capacity to respond effectively to the demands from people applying for help, the range of policy and statutory requirements they must meet and impacts from the wider economic context". Some councils are finding it increasingly difficult to meet their statutory duties, particularly to provide temporary accommodation.

Local authorities are keen to do more to prevent people become homeless and reduce pressure on the system, but currently this is difficult legally. A housing bill is due to come to parliament in the autumn. As well as content regarding privately rented accommodation, we expect this bill to contain legislation on preventing homelessness which should address this, and require other public bodies to support efforts to help people in housing crisis.

Homelessness in Central Scotland

During 2021/22, across the three local authorities represented with the Central Scotland region:

- 3,950 households were found to be homeless or at risk (4,405 adults and 2,330 children)

- 130 households slept rough in the three months prior to making a homelessness application. Nearly three quarters of these were in South Lanarkshire.
- 1,558 households were in temporary accommodation as of 31 March 2022. Fewer homeless households use temporary accommodation in these council areas compared to the national average.
- The length of time people stay in temporary accommodation, and the length of time they are in the homelessness system is below average in North and South Lanarkshire and a little above average in Falkirk.
- South Lanarkshire has 115 placements in B&B, compared to 1,120 in social accommodation. Falkirk had 10 placements in B&B accommodation, and North Lanarkshire had none. B&B accommodation is not suitable for long term accommodation, and people must not stay there more than 7 days.
- The rate of homelessness per 100,000 population is above average in Falkirk and below average in North Lanarkshire.

	No. households found to be homeless / at risk	Slept rough in past 3 months	Households in temporary accommodation	Ave. no. days in TA	Ave. no days to close homeless application	Rate of homelessness per 100,000
Falkirk	935	5	328	226	338	702
North Lanarkshire	1,350	30	565	126	164	483
South Lanarkshire	1,665	95	665	180	204	623
<i>Central Scotland</i>	<i>3,950</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>1,558</i>			
SCOTLAND	28,880	2,130	13,945	207	256	606