

Cyrenians

Presentation to Settled

Journeys of people experiencing homelessness in Edinburgh and the
finances relating to these

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Executive summary

This study reports on some of the current journeys and costs incurred, from the initial point of a person/household presenting at the City of Edinburgh Council as experiencing homelessness, or at risk of becoming homeless, to moving into settled accommodation. Of course, everyone's circumstances differ and there will be cases that are very different from any included within this report. But, with the expertise of third sector and local authorities alike, combined with current research and reports, we can provide an overview of the current picture.

To provide a baseline in terms of Edinburgh versus Scotland, there is a statistical overview demonstrating some of the broad figures, as well as highlighting challenges and work taking place.

The purpose of the report:

- Look at the current cost of a person / household from the point of presenting as being homeless to the point of being in settled accommodation, breaking down the costs in terms of budgets.
- This work focuses on and outlines the current picture in Edinburgh, with a national backdrop for context.
- There are a range of different household types to represent the current range of applications and assessments taking place across Edinburgh.
- The research is quantitative, based on facts and figures specifically for Edinburgh / Scotland / UK, depending on the figures.

The objective is to understand the cost of homelessness in Edinburgh in 2024: types of costs, figures, combined with stays.

Approach and methodology

The report is based on quantitative information, looking at CEC cases, research, budgets, reports, committee minutes, and statistics. However, it was important to have discussions both with experts within the City of Edinburgh Council as well as Cyrenians, to gauge the current picture of homelessness and housing in Edinburgh as well as these to ensure a full understanding to what the quantitative information shows.

The research took place between July and September 2024, accessing the most up to date information possible. The costs used are all based upon 2024/25 costs, unless stated otherwise.

The reasons provided for each accommodation move is based upon general cases and expertise, rather than the cases used, providing anonymity. The information in each

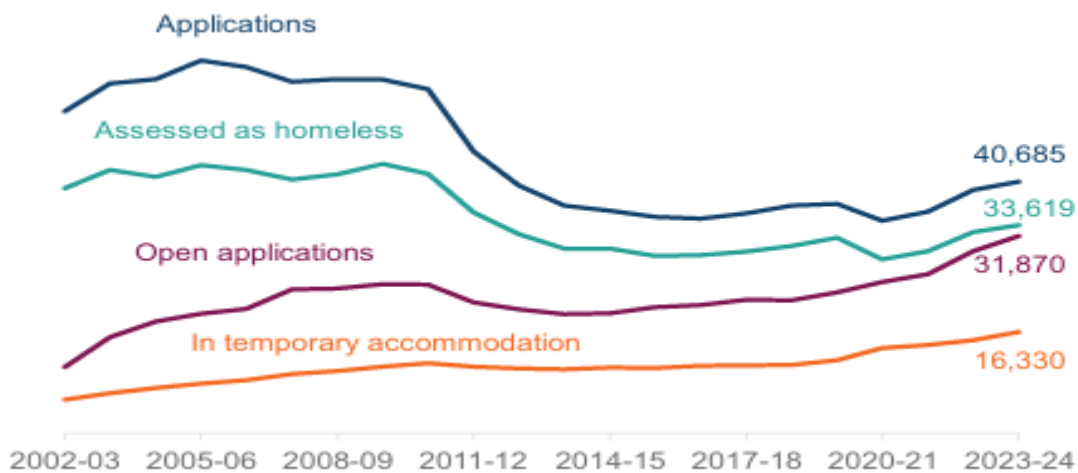
journey uses the exact length of days, postcodes, accommodation types, gender & age, household, and outcome. The figures put to each case are using the current City of Edinburgh Council figures, alongside other figures referenced. Workings for costs as well as further breakdowns can be found in the Appendix. All costs have been used using CEC information available to the public. Staffing calculations have been based upon current vacancies, details of these can be found in the Appendix.

The report has had limitations in terms of knowledge of income sources of anyone within each household, access to additional health services, and any other services out with housing. There is therefore no costing for these included. The reality is that there will be additional costs as a result of homelessness, as we know, for example, interaction with health services increases prior to homelessness, peaks around the initial homelessness assessment, and continues throughout someone experiencing homelessness¹.

Backdrop of homelessness & housing in Scotland and Edinburgh

Homelessness figures have seen a steady increase in recent years, with an increase since around 2017. Prior to that the decreases were thought to have come as a result of work on the 2012 Commitment and legislation changes that came with that, as well as the introduction to Housing Options, where the focus on people’s needs became about a broader picture than housing alone.

Fig 1. Scottish Government Homelessness Statistics



These figures also come with the backdrop of ‘The Right to Buy’ scheme in Scotland until 2015, costing almost half a million social houses² to be taken out of the affordable housing pool. Whilst this was happening, there was also a trend towards smaller households requiring more homes per head than had previously been needed³.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-homelessness-scotland/>

² <https://www.gov.scot/news/right-to-buy-ends-in-scotland/>

³ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/household-estimates/2023/house-est-23-report.pdf>

Case Study Key Findings

The figures in the first chart, looking at 7 CEC Case Studies, assume:

- that there is 1 hour per month spent by a Housing Officer whilst the case is open.
- that there is 1 hour of support per week by an external support service provider.
- that an average Community Care Grant has been accessed at the point of moving into settled accommodation.
- that additional hours from service providers and a Housing Officer or similar will be given at the point of tenancy set up and moving.
- that the standard furniture package has been arranged where needed.

	Average time in TA (days)	Average per night	Average per week	Total cost
Case 1	1290	£17.32	£121.24	£22,338
Case 2	1296	£27.47	£192.29	£35,594
Case 3	571	£39.20	£274.40	£22,380
Case 4	1272	£27.64	£193.48	£35,158
Case 5	1998	£20.25	£141.75	£40,488
Case 6	249	£21.25	£148.75	£5290
Case 7	43	£37.35	£261.45	£1606
Totals	6719	£190.48	£1333.36	£162,854
Averages	960	£27.21	£190.48	£23,265

So, when we consider accommodation costs and connecting support and move on costs, this sample of 7 cases demonstrate the average cost of presentation to settled accommodation in Edinburgh as being around **£23,265** per household.

The 3 cases where we looked at the prevention spending are collated in the chart below:

	Average case time (wks)	Average costs	Arears Returned	Total cost
Case 1	16	£2166	£5642	-£3476
Case 2	21	£4030	£N/A	£4030
Case 3	16	£2534	£3000	-£466
Averages	18	£2910	£4321	£29

Conclusion

Average spend £23,265

Accommodation cases (1 to 7)

Unsurprisingly, the findings show that the costs vary greatly in terms of the length of time a person / household spent in Temporary Accommodation. Across the seven cases, these vary from £1606 to £40,488.

However, with an average rent in Edinburgh at £1362⁴ per month (£44.78 per night), when comparing this to the average overall accommodation and support costs of **£27.21 per night**, it would suggest that resources are as minimised as they can be.

The most comparable piece of work that looks at figures for homelessness in Scotland is from 2011⁵, which analysed the costs to a Local Authority after a person / household had become homeless having not sustained a tenancy. The costs of 2011 considered accommodation, housing support and third sector support; the same elements as this report. The report of 2011 looked across a few different local authorities and found that figures varied between £15,500 and £24,800; the midpoint of these sits at £20,150. Using the Bank of England calculator, the expectation of the cost of £20,150 in comparison to today's figures would be **£28,868 per person / household**. The calculations of this report 2024 show an average of **£23,265 per person / household, over £5,500 less** than the 2011 costs.

Where the figures are at the highest, the bottleneck of Temporary Accommodation is evident, with Case 5 outlining someone living in TA for well in excess of 5 years, costing over £40k. This is before considering any additional costs to health services, and any other support and advice.

Prevention Cases (8 to 10)

In terms of the preventative spend, it was a small number of prevention cases considered. However, from these we can see that the expected costs would sit at approximately £2910 per case. Given that two of the three cases are now repaying arrears, this almost negates the costs of the support entirely, sitting at £29 per case.

At a time of so many resources being placed at the point of crisis, it does suggest that the plans ahead and the current work in place to do as much upstream as possible must remain a focus. All three of these cases resulted in positive accommodation outcomes and each one more financially sound.

⁴ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/housingpriceslocal/S12000036/>

⁵ Coote, D, Scottish Council for Single Homeless, The Cost of Tenancy Failure, 2011

Presenting to Settled

The Report

Homelessness in Scotland & Edinburgh

Introduction and overview

This study reports on some of the current journeys and costs incurred, from the initial point of a person/household presenting at the City of Edinburgh Council as experiencing homelessness, or at risk of becoming homeless, to moving into settled accommodation. Of course, everyone's circumstances differ and there will be cases that are very different from any included within this report. But, with the expertise of the third sector and local authorities alike, combined with current research and reports, we can provide an overview of the current picture.

To provide a baseline in terms of Edinburgh and Scotland, there is a statistical overview demonstrating some of the broad figures, as well as some of the relevant legislation and reports that will impact practice in Scotland at present.

The purpose of the report:

- Look at the current cost of a person / household from the point of presenting as being homeless to the point of being in settled accommodation, breaking down the costs in terms of budgets.
- This work focuses on and outlines the current picture in Edinburgh, with a national backdrop for context.
- There are a range of different household types to represent the current range of applications and assessments taking place across Edinburgh.
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Report Approach and Methodology

The report is based on quantitative information, looking at CEC cases, research, budgets, reports, committee minutes, and statistics. However, it was important to have discussions both with experts within the City of Edinburgh Council as well as Cyrenians, to gauge the current picture of homelessness and housing in Edinburgh as well as these to ensure a full understanding to what the quantitative information shows.

The research took place between July and September 2024, accessing the most up to date information possible. Unless specifically relevant, reports researched are from the most recent available. In terms of the cases looked at for this report, the first seven have all resulted in settled accommodation being provided within the past year, with the remaining three based on prevention work, where settled accommodation has been retained. The timeframe is especially important, given the fast pace of change in terms of figures and presentations to Local Authorities just now. The costs used are all based upon 2024/25 costs, unless stated otherwise.

The reasons provided for each accommodation move is based upon general cases and expertise, rather than the cases used, further providing anonymity. The information in each journey uses the exact length of days, postcodes, accommodation types, gender & age, household, and outcome. The figures put to each case are using the current City of Edinburgh Council figures, alongside other figures referenced. Workings for costs as well as further breakdowns can be found in the Appendix. All costs have been calculated using CEC information available to the public. Staffing calculations have been based upon current vacancies, details of these can be found in the Appendix.

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⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-homelessness-scotland/>

Homelessness in Scotland & Edinburgh

A Brief Overview of Homelessness and Housing Need in Scotland

Scotland has world renowned legislation in terms of people at risk of homelessness⁷. The Housing Acts of 2001 and 2003 gave people experiencing homelessness in Scotland the right to accommodation and support; at the point of developing this, other countries sat back and watched, wondering if chaos would ensue and/or exorbitant costs would follow.

At the same time, there was a 10-year commitment underway “the 2012 Commitment”⁸. Much more than an aspirational target or media headline, this included a specific legislative commitment to remove any need for someone / a household to prove they had priority for housing over others: over people who have dependent children, a specific vulnerability or a serious health need. Those deemed “non-priority” had normally been single people, with no right to settled housing. Planning for this took to 31st December 2012, the goal was, that the commitment would prevent homelessness in Scotland.

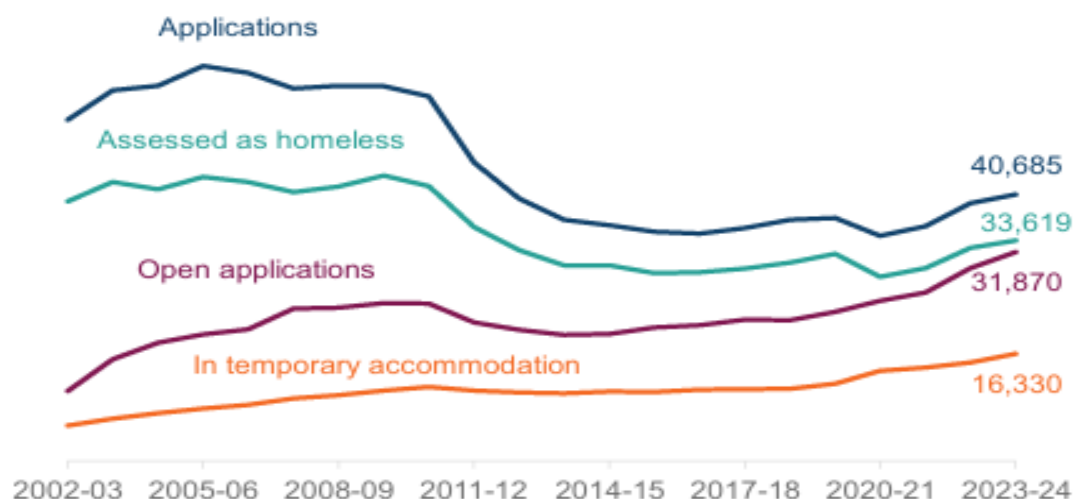


Fig 1. Scottish Government Homelessness Statistics

Evident today, and seen in the Scottish Government statistics above⁹, homelessness was not prevented. However, it did reduce year on year for around 9 years from 2006, a testament to the possibilities good legislation and practice offers. Of course, this is not the entire story. The increase prior to that was projected, as part of the commitment work.

Unfortunately, these figures also come with the backdrop of ‘The Right to Buy’ scheme in Scotland until 2015, costing almost half a million social houses¹⁰ to be taken out of the affordable housing pool. Whilst this was happening, there was also a trend towards smaller households, requiring more homes per head than had previously been needed¹¹.

⁷ https://www.feantsa.org/download/feantsa_handbook_en_final-2-15169925525089897430.pdf

⁸ https://assets.ctfassets.net/6sqqr111sfj/24hYiMEd8SBZIUyhakCdve/45278faa758722f5a1c0cb36fc014963/2012_Commitment_Briefing_FINAL.pdf

⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-2022-23/documents/>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/news/right-to-buy-ends-in-scotland/>

¹¹ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/household-estimates/2023/house-est-23-report.pdf>

A Few of the Other Factors that Impact the Figures

Housing Need & Use

Of course, it is not solely down to the homelessness sector for differences to take place. In terms of population and need, the average year on year need for housing stock was increasing (2002 to 2008) at 20,500 households per year¹². Each of these changes having significant impact on numbers. This was for several factors, including, as mentioned, trends in terms of households' shape and numbers also changing.

Alongside changes to homelessness legislation and good practice over that period, there was a spotlight on housing stock and how stock was being used. 2013 saw the annual housing need increase reduce to 14,600 (0.6 per cent); this was not due to growth in the number of dwellings, but a drop in the number of second homes and empty properties as councils re-classified properties - changing the council tax bands of these.

Health

We are also aware of the impact of health both in terms of people becoming homeless because of poor health, as well as when people are experiencing homelessness how the lack of a home impacts health. More than half of homeless deaths in Scotland are drug related, whilst children who are experiencing homelessness have higher rates of health problems than those who don't, and their development can be negatively affected.¹³ Both Cyrenians¹⁴ and Public Health Scotland¹⁵ have recently stated that homelessness is a public health emergency, and that it needs a public health approach to help tackle it.

Data is part of the problem and the solution

Currently our homelessness figures appear worse than many other countries across the globe (though for many, true data is yet to be collected), and they do for several reasons – they *are* getting worse and there's no getting round that. But also, we have a very inclusive definition which is very progressive, considering the prevention of homelessness as a part of it. This, however, makes comparisons harder to do on a global basis, even at a UK level.

We also have dated statistical headings; currently being updated by the Scottish Government. Until they change, they don't, for example, give a true picture of gender across homelessness presentations, giving only options of male or female. Without the correct headings and statistics, the trends and therefore the action from those is limited.

And as a final point, we also tend to focus on who *is* within the data, rather than isn't, who doesn't go to a council to access help. This places a skewed understanding of the overall picture and need, never capturing hidden homelessness; something difficult to do.

¹² <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/household-estimates/he-13/2013-estimates-house-dwellings-scot.pdf>

¹³ <https://publichealthscotland.scot/our-areas-of-work/equity-and-justice/homelessness/homelessness-and-health-inequalities/>

¹⁴ <https://publichealthscotland.scot/our-blog/2024/april/taking-a-public-health-approach-to-homelessness-prevention/>

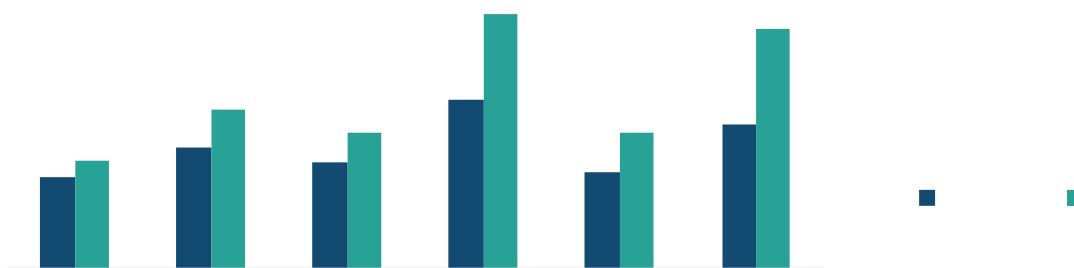
¹⁵ <https://publichealthscotland.scot/our-blog/2024/april/why-the-housing-crisis-is-also-a-public-health-emergency/>

A Brief Overview of Temporary Accommodation in Scotland

What is very apparent from the picture thus far is the frequency of change over the past 20 years. When considering this ever-changing picture, the ongoing and changing reliance on temporary accommodation (TA) becomes apparent.

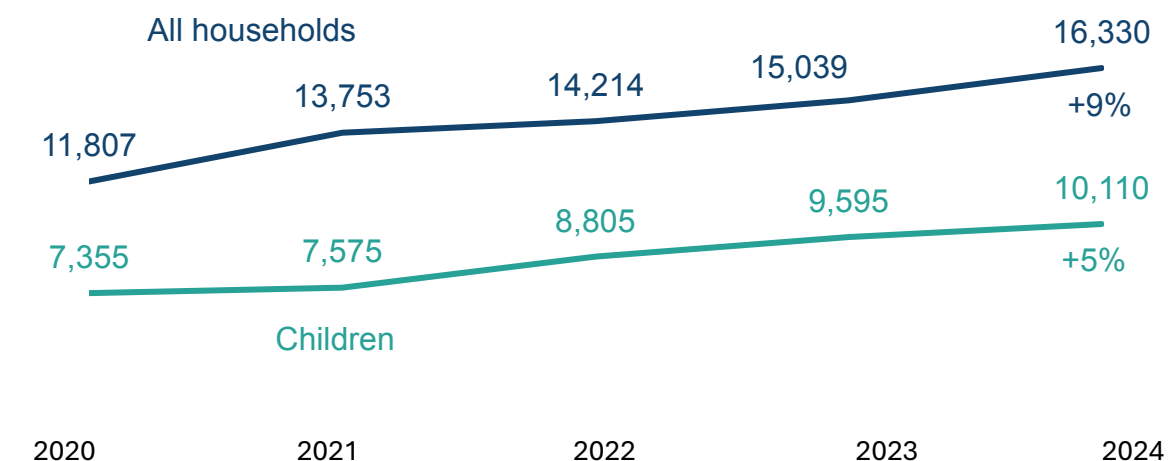
Initially TA was considered as a solution implemented to ensure people / households were not without accommodation whilst cases were being assessed (initially in terms of priority and non-priority), or to provide additional support at a time of crisis, or to use for emergency situations such as fires and floods. In all of these cases, ‘temporary’ really was expected to be temporary. However, the accommodation purpose has changed. Now it is frequently used to house people, while more permanent provisions are sought. And, as can be seen below, ‘temporary’ currently sits on average, at over 7 months, with cases currently spending 226 days in TA before moving into a settled property.

Fig. 2 Average number of days spent in Temporary Accommodation (closed cases)¹⁶



This figure increases when there are children within the household. With the average time in TA for a single parent rising to 270 (open cases sit at 355 days just now), and a couple with children a further increase of 375 (open cases at 565 days just now).

Fig. 3 The number of households, and the number of children in TA as of 31st March 2024¹⁷



¹⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-2023-24/documents/>

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-203-24/>

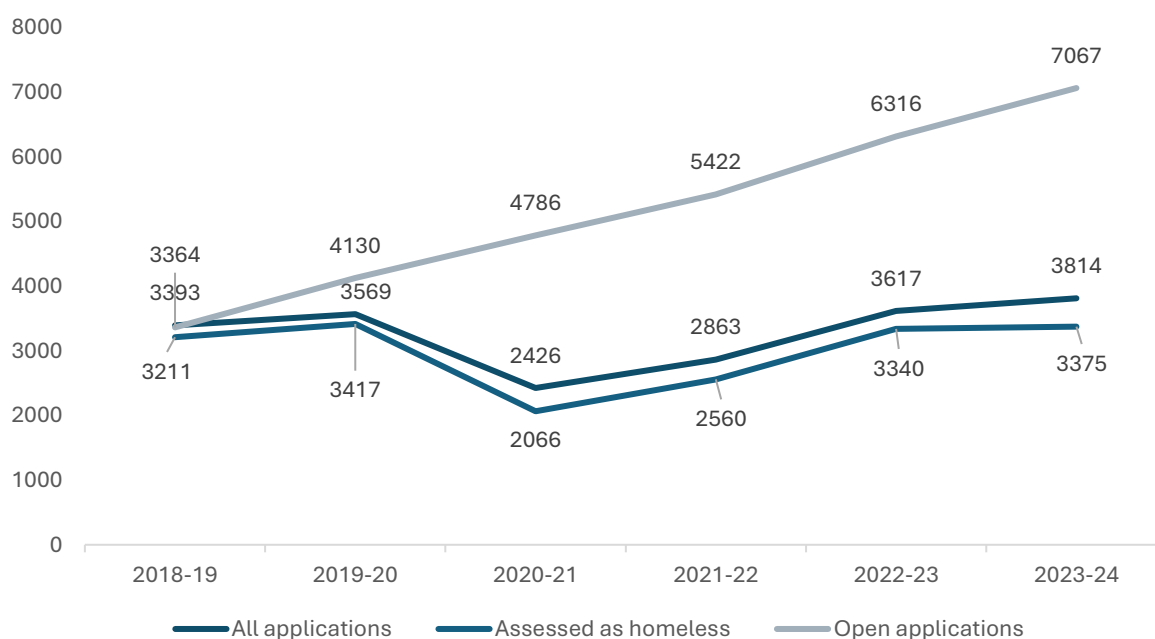
A Brief Overview of Housing & Homelessness in Edinburgh

A National Housing Emergency was declared by the Scottish Parliament, May 2024¹⁸. This was almost an entire year after Argyll & Bute council announced theirs, June 2023, with Edinburgh being second (of now 12 councils) 2nd November 2023 to declare a Housing Emergency of its own¹⁹, citing significant pressures to the city’s housing market, including homelessness rates and housing costs. The current CEC Strategic Housing Investment Plan²⁰ identifies the need for 9500 new houses to be built by 2029 to keep up with projected population increases.

Given the declaration of the emergency, it will come as no surprise that the demand for homelessness services and social housing in the Edinburgh has remained high²¹:

- Edinburgh has the highest number of open cases at 7,067, accounting for 22% of all open cases, compared to 9% of all new applications.
- As of 31 March 2023, there were 5,952 cases where the Council has a duty to secure settled housing. This is a 12% increase from 2022 when there were 5,315 cases where the Council had a duty to secure settled housing.
- There were 197 bids for every home on EdIndex and 24,500 households registered.

Fig. 4 Applications and assessments, City of Edinburgh, as per Scottish Government statistics²²



¹⁸ <https://spice-spotlight.scot/2024/06/27/scotlands-housing-emergency/>

¹⁹ <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/34967/housing-emergency-action-plan>

²⁰ <https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s39972/7.5%20-%20Strategic%20Housing%20Investment%20Plan%20SHIP%202022-27.pdf>

²¹ <https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s73597/Item+7.2+-+Annual+Assurance+Statement+on+Housing+Services+2023-24.pdf>

²² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-2023-2024/documents/>

In terms of population and housing need²³:

- The number of households in Edinburgh is expected to increase by 11.6% between 2018 and 2030.
- Two fifths (40.2%) of households in Edinburgh are single person households compared with 36.0% nationally.

A Brief Overview of Temporary Accommodation in Edinburgh

There are currently almost 6000 homeless households in Edinburgh, being supported in TA²⁴. These households account for in excess of 7000 individuals.

The following statistics were recently shared at the CEC Housing, Homelessness, and Fair Work Committee²⁵ and in the Housing Emergency Action Plan²⁶ :

- There was 4,784, households in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2023, a 34% rise compared to 2020 when there were 3,570 households in TA.
- On 31 March 2023, 1,230 households were in temporary accommodation that was classed as unsuitable under the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.
- During 2022/23 there were 378 occasions when the Council failed to provide TA where it had a statutory duty to do so.

Unfortunately, the current picture does not look as though it is about to ease any. It is anticipated release of long-term prisoners will place further strain on the systems, whilst ongoing challenges are met with the current housing stock in terms of the pace of void turnarounds and repair completions. Anecdotally (backed by the Scottish Women's Aid Fund to Leave evaluation), we know there are a few families in the system larger than most homes within the housing stock, making providing options often unviable.

The new figures published September 2024 show further rises almost across the board of TA reporting, with Edinburgh demonstrating a net difference of 829 more households in TA than 2022-23; people remaining in TA for long periods of time and stock not meeting the needs of those presenting as experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.

Where informal protocols were in place between CEC and third sector support providers, for hospital discharge, prison leavers, and similar, these are no longer possible. The supply and demand in Edinburgh have reached such a point that these, though imperative to prevent repeat homelessness, are currently not taking place. Cyrenians report that where services in the past placed a lot of emphasis on setting up new tenancies and tenancy sustainment, this has changed to supporting people whilst they are in TA.

²³ <https://www.edinburghhsc.scot/the-ijb/jsna/populationanddemographics/>

²⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-2023-24/documents/>

²⁵ <https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s73597/Item+7.2+-+Annual+Assurance+Statement+on+Housing+Services+2023-24.pdf>

²⁶ <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/34967/housing-emergency-action-plan>

Scotland's Housing & Homelessness in Numbers

- 693,000 households have some form of housing needⁱ
- 250,000 people in Scotland are waiting for a social homeⁱⁱ
- Over the last 20 years the number of households in Scotland increased by 304,500 (14%)ⁱⁱⁱ
- 10,110 - children in temporary accommodation 31st March 2024 - a 5% increase on the previous year^{iv}
- House prices are more than 5 times the average wage
- 31st March 2024 Edinburgh had 7067 live homelessness cases
- Edinburgh saw a 5% increase in homelessness applications in 2023-24 compared to the previous year (9% the previous year)
- Scotland saw 494,580 social housing homes sold under the Right to Buy scheme in Scotland to 2015 (when scheme closed)
- Scotland currently has 626,928 social housing stock^v March 2023
- There will be around 700 people sleeping in temporary accommodation places in Edinburgh tonight
- Edinburgh has more than doubled its budget from homelessness services over the past 5 years, from £28m to £64.5m

Current applicable legislation/ duties

Since the inception of the Scottish Parliament in 2001 there has been focus on homelessness legislation and practice and preventing people from becoming homeless across Scotland.

It was realised that the first few years of this plan would result in an increase in presentations, which was borne out over time. Then, also as predicted, there was a decrease for approximately 9 years.

However, with a significant focus on temporary accommodation, rather than settled, and increasing pressures with housing stock not matching housing needs, the planned eradication of homelessness did not happen. Instead, the balance of social houses lost through Right to Buy scheme continued throughout this time, with the housebuilding not equalling the loss, placing more people onto waiting lists and into temporary solutions, and reducing the access to social housing.

However, this does not mean that legislation, frameworks, strategies and good practice remained the same. Changes have taken place and continue to do so. The following points outline some of the main changes that tie to the figures and journeys within this report.

In October 2017 the Scottish Government set up the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) to produce short and long-term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping. One of the cornerstone recommendations from this work is a transition to a Rapid Rehousing approach of which Housing First forms a smaller component.

Rapid rehousing places Local Authorities and local knowledge to provide a housing led approach to rehouse people who have experienced homelessness, making sure they reach a settled housing option as quickly; moving away from temporary accommodation as soon as possible, or avoiding it altogether²⁷.

A transition to a rapid rehousing approach has changed the focus, placing the need for Local Authorities and their partners to plan and implement measures that puts settled accommodation and support at the heart of solutions to homelessness.

As set out in the second iteration of Edinburgh's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP), there are several legislative changes which will come into force during the lifetime of their plans. These must be considered when looking at the position of the City of Edinburgh Council and their ability to deliver rapid rehousing. The following pages outline these, alongside the other relevant work taking place that impacts the case studies outlined within this report as well as relevant future changes.

²⁷ <https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/rapid-rehousing-guidance.pdf>

a. **Under Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights²⁸ housing is recognised as a human right**

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

b. **The Right to Housing²⁹**

Everyone has the right to adequate housing was defined by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1991. This means:

- **Legal security of tenure:** everyone should be guaranteed security of tenure.
- **Availability of services:** everyone should have available facilities and infrastructure such as drinking water, energy for cooking, heating and lighting, sanitation and washing facilities, food storage, refuse disposal, site drainage and emergency services.
- **Affordable housing:** costs associated with housing should not threaten people's ability to afford other essential goods and services, including protection against unreasonable rent levels or unreasonable rent increases.
- **Habitable housing:** this includes adequate space and protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind or other threats to health or structural hazards and ensuring physical safety.
- **Accessible housing:** housing should be accessible to everyone without discrimination. Priority should be given to people who are the most marginalised, including homeless people and those who are inadequately housed. Special measures should be taken to ensure adequate housing for disabled people, older people, those living in areas vulnerable to natural disasters, and others who require them.
- **Location:** housing should be in a location which allows access to employment options, healthcare services, schools, childcare and other social facilities. It should not be located on or near polluted sites.
- **Cultural adequacy:** housing policy and practice must appropriately enable the expression of cultural identity.

International human rights law recognises that these rights might not be fulfilled all at once. However, they must all be “progressively realised”. This means governments must take steps over time to improve things. It also means they must use the maximum resources they can, and target spending on those most in need.

²⁸ <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

²⁹ <https://www.scottishhumanrights.com/our-law-and-policy-work/right-to-housing/>

c. Relevant Articles from the UNCRC³⁰:

Article 9) I have a right to live with my family if they can keep me safe

Article 20) I have the right to be looked after if I can't live with my own family

Article 27) I have the right to have a proper home, food and clothing

d. Housing to 2040³¹

Housing to 2040 is cross portfolio route map outlining how the Scottish Government intends to deliver housing in Scotland with a view to changes taking place from inception in 2021 to the goals fully fledged and reached by 2040.

Covering a diverse range of goals, it sets a new ambition to deliver 100,000 affordable homes by 2031/32, key to making 'an important contribution to tackling child poverty and our continuing work to end homelessness'.

e. The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020³² updating The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004³³

This legislation extending the Unsuitable Accommodation Order came into force to update the previous order which only applied to households with children or pregnant women. It now applies to everyone assessed as experiencing homelessness. The change means that all homeless households, staying in accommodation deemed as 'unsuitable' for more than seven days constitutes a breach of the Order. Shared houses and bed and breakfast accommodation are deemed unsuitable.

f. Homelessness Prevention Duty

An expert group were asked by Scottish Government to investigate the possibility of establishing a prevention duty in Scotland. The group published their recommendations, which were submitted to Scottish Government February 2021³⁴. These recommendations outline proposed solutions now seen in the publication of Stage 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Bill, including a responsibility on 'relevant public bodies' to 'ask and act' of people's housing situation, an extension to the time that households can be assessed as at risk of homelessness from two to six months, a focus on evictions and some requirements relating to domestic abuse. The extent to which the duty of care on relevant public bodies is currently unclear, but these areas are all being considered by organisations and services that will be impacted by the proposed changes. The stage 1 report is expected by the end of 2024.

³⁰ <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrc/>

³¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-2040-2/>

³² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2020/139/made>

³³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2004/489/contents/made>

³⁴ <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/scotland-prevention-review-group/>

g. Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 (Commencement No.4) Order 2019 - Removal of Local Connection³⁵

The changes to this legislation mean that people/ households can present as being homeless at any Local Authority across Scotland, no matter their circumstances; previously people would need to demonstrate a connection to the area through family, job prospects, etc. They are eligible to receive homelessness assistance, including support and accommodation. Following a delay to the commencement date, this came into effect November 2022.

h. Task & Finish Groups

The Homeless Prevention Strategy Group (HPSG) was tasked with the challenge to: Ensure Scotland can demonstrate measurable progress towards a shared goal of ending homelessness, at every point on the journey, until all preventable homelessness is gone for good, and where homelessness occurs, there are solutions available that are fast in being acted upon and result in the long-term prevention of homelessness.

The Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group created four sub-groups to identify ways to address the main barriers to ending homelessness in Scotland. These were Task & finish Groups, each producing a report with recommendations on how best to progress at a national level. These groups have each produced a report outlining the current baseline as well as recommendations – Prevention of Homelessness³⁶, Temporary Accommodation³⁷, Measuring Impact³⁸, and Supported Housing³⁹.

i. A Temporary Accommodation Standards Framework

This framework was published by Scottish Government in April 2023⁴⁰, following the publication of advisory standards for temporary accommodation in the interim Code of Guidance on Homelessness in November 2019⁴¹. The standards are currently not legally binding and do not form part of the Scottish Social Housing Charter⁴².

³⁵ https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2019/316/pdfs/ssipn_20190316_en.pdf

³⁶ https://cyrenians.scot/assets/000/001/304/June_2023_Homelessness_Prevention_Task_and_Finish_Group_Report_-_final_report_original.pdf?1693311162

³⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/temporary-accommodation-task-finish-group-final-report-recommendations/>

³⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/measuring-impact-task-finish-group-final-report-recommendations/pages/3/>

³⁹ <https://homelesnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/HPSG-Supported-Housing-Task-and-Finish-SUMMARY-REPORT-July-2024.pdf>

⁴⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/temporary-accommodation-standards-framework/>

⁴¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/code-guidance-homelessness-2/>

⁴² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-housing-charter-november-2022/>

People's Journeys and Costings

People's Journey & Costings

The cost of homelessness is not a clean-cut figure, or a one size fits all sum. Importantly, it is also not just the financial cost, but there are broad impacts on health and wellbeing, which is known and well reported to affect people for many years.

However, at a time where resources are tight, we can't steer too far from the financial costs. Without us understanding these and having a current grasp on them, there is risk of resources being removed from the sector, through a lack of understanding on the financial impacts and what it really means in terms of resources. Does the argument spend to save still make sense? Is this still the true picture?

Research outside the UK

Some of the first work on costs, completed in New York City circa 1998, tracked nearly 10,000 people who were homeless and sleeping rough, with a severe mental illness. This work demonstrated that the average cost of people experiencing homelessness and using support and health services totalled on average \$40,500 per person per year⁴³. There was follow up work to this some 7 years later that further demonstrated that the cost of paying for a bed in a hostel was \$13,000 per year, compared to the \$6000 - \$8000 per year to pay for rent. Canada and Australia did some similar pieces of research with comparable findings. But, with such different health, welfare and housing systems in place in the UK, it is difficult to use these exact figures as comparisons. However, it does show that work has taken place on this subject matter for over 20 years.

The UK findings

In terms of the UK, there are a number of pieces of research we can compare to, but most also have some focus on the rough sleeping part of homelessness. Most also relate to England and Wales, who have a different definition of homelessness, as well as different housing and homelessness legislation. The main comparisons are in terms of the welfare systems, most of which remain a reserved political matter, as well as the reasons for people becoming homeless; both areas provide useful comparisons but do not fully reflect Scotland in terms of who we would consider as experiencing homelessness or the duty of care placed upon local authorities in terms of accommodation and support.

Research by Crisis in 2015⁴⁴ found that looking at four different case studies: In the first case, preventing homelessness costed the public sector an additional £1,558, while allowing it to persist for 12 months costs £11,733. For the second, the figure for resolving homelessness quickly was £1,426, rising to £20,128 if homelessness persists for 12

⁴³https://www.researchgate.net/publication/45436351_The_Cost_of_Homelessness_A_Perspective_from_the_United_States

⁴⁴ https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/20677/crisis_at_what_cost_2015.pdf

months. For the third, the figures were £4,726 compared to £12,778, and for the fourth, £1,554 compared to £4,668.

Scotland

Though, as outlined in this report so far, in Scotland our highest numbers and area of stagnation is not in terms of people sleeping rough, but instead there are many more people and households caught in the current bottleneck of Temporary Accommodation. It is therefore important for us to look at people being assessed as experiencing being homeless and their journey from there, than to place a focus on rough sleeping. It is also interesting to see the reality and how it compares to the current headlines. Two headlines from recent months state, inferring that there is money being wasted:

'Scotland spends £720m in putting homeless in housing limbo'⁴⁵ and

'Scandal': Glasgow spends £305m on temporary homes for homeless as B&B costs soar'⁴⁶

The next chapter of this report takes individual case studies from the City of Edinburgh Council and places current 2024/25 costs against them to look at what the actual costs are. Cases 1, 2 and 3, provide a step-by-step picture of cases, with exact lengths of times and places as the cases. The reasons for moves within the journey have been added in from sample cases to provide anonymity. The outcome of each case is also accurate.

Cases four to seven inclusive have a shorter breakdown, but also use real cases, timings and figures to provide a comparison of costs and placements.

Cases eight to ten inclusive show 3 examples where the Homelessness Prevention Team have worked with people to prevent homelessness.

What's included in the figures

The figures assume:

- that there is 1 hour per month spent by a Housing Officer whilst the case is open.
- that there is 1 hour of support per week by an external support service provider whilst the case is open.
- that an average Community Care Grant has been accessed at the point of moving into settled accommodation.
- that additional hours from service providers and a Housing Officer or similar will be given at the point of tenancy set up and moving.
- that the standard furniture package has been put in place for any accommodation that would otherwise be unfurnished (as best practice, CEC do not put anyone into a property without furniture).

Accommodation costs are from (publicly available) City of Edinburgh Council figures⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ <https://www.heraldsotland.com/news/24436199.scotland-spends-720m-putting-homeless-housing-limbo/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.heraldsotland.com/news/24360838.glasgow-spends-305m-temporary-homes-homeless-b-b-costs-soar/>

⁴⁷ City of Edinburgh Council, Fees and Charges 2024_2025_full list for website

Homelessness Case 1



April
2021

Single male, 35 presents as being homeless. CEC complete assessment and provide a B&B the following day.

477 days in B&B, EH1



July
2022

Place at the B&B is no longer available. Single man is moved to an alternative B&B immediately. He's advised to widen his range of areas he's bidding for.

265 days in B&B, EH1



April
2023

He needs a break from living in B&Bs. He decides to stay with a friend for a few nights whilst looking at his options.

6 days with friends



April
2023

Single male returns to CEC. Explains how difficult he's finding it with no laundry and cooking facilities. He's offered a TA shared house.

518 days in TA shared house, EH6



Aug
2024

He is offered a Housing Association tenancy. After so long in TA there's a few things needing to sort. He continues to stay in shared house with a two house DHP payment.

30 days in TA shared house, EH6



Aug
2024

Single male moves into **settled housing** with a Housing

COSTS

Housing costs

B&B Accom: £5925

B&B Accom: £3292

Shared House: £6434

DHP: £373 (2 rents)

Cleaning: £357

Grounds: £110

Total: £16,491

Staff/support:

CEC staff: £1097

Support staff: £3664

Tenancy set up: £228

Total: £4989

New Tenancy:

CCG: £758

DHP move: £100

Total: £858

TOTAL £22,338

1290 nights in 3 TA places

Averages

£17.32 per day

£121.24 per week

Homelessness Case 2



June
2020

Single female parent, 23 presents as being homeless. CEC complete assessment and provide Supported Accom. the following day.

47 days in Supported Accom, EH15



July
2020

Single female parent returns to CEC to discuss options and is moved into a temporary furnished flat (after 36 days, discusses alternatives with CEC, remains in property).

129 days in Temporary Furnished Flat, EH3



Nov
2020

Single female parent returns to CEC to discuss options for somewhere closer to family support networks to help with childcare. A temporary private sector lease is provided.

103 days in Private Sector Temp Flat, EH14



Feb
2021

After some problems with neighbours putting single female parent at risk. CEC arrange a move to an alternative temp PSL.

452 days in Private Sector Temp Flat, EH7



May
2021

The PSL property is no longer available. Notice is given and the single female parent moves to a shared house.

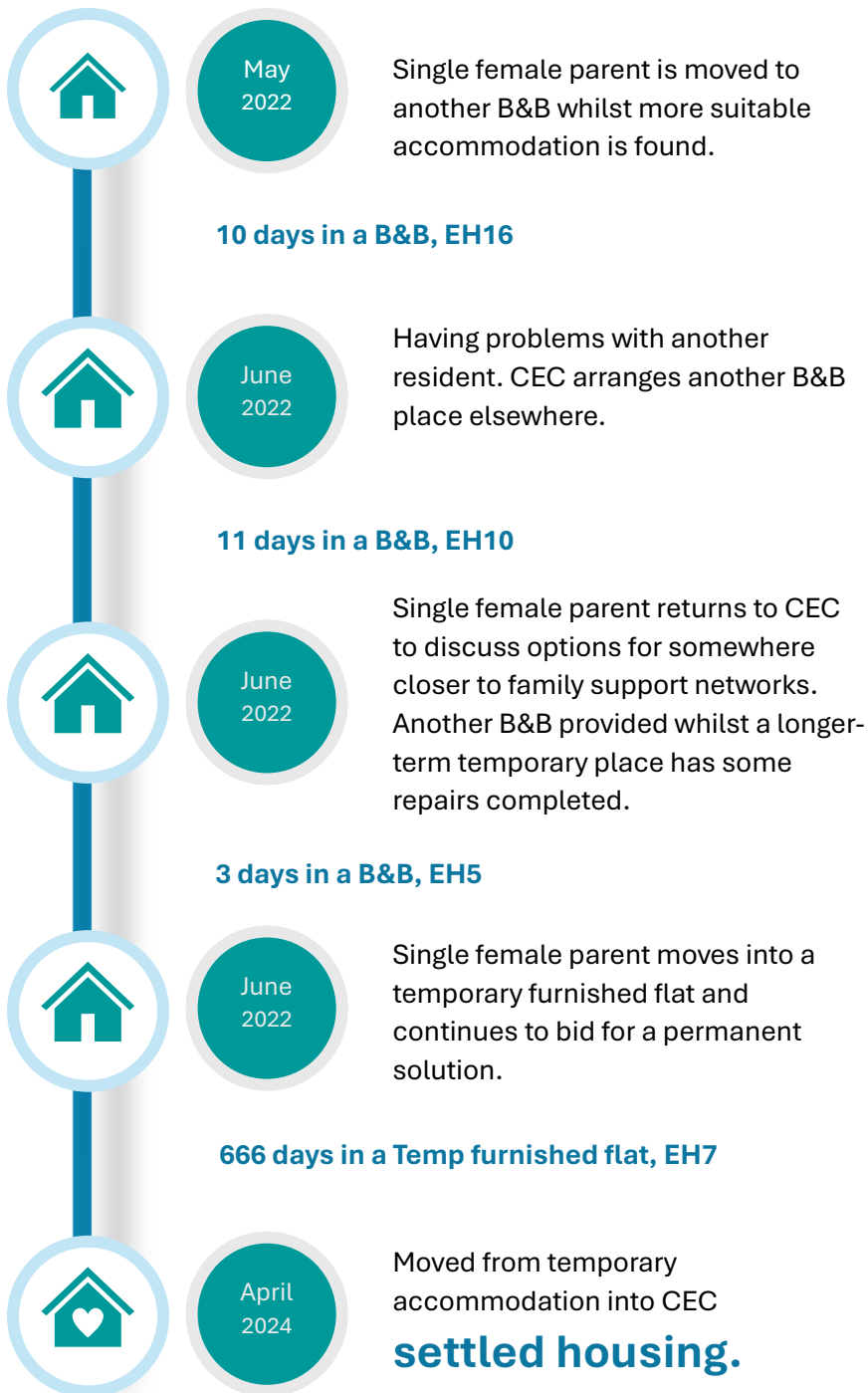
3 days in a shared house, EH6



May
2022

Shared house proves to be unsuitable with a child. CEC arrange a B&B whilst something more suitable is found. 1 night spent there.

Homelessness Case 2 continued



COSTS

Housing costs

Supp Accom: £3783

TA flat: £2145

PSL flat: £1807

PSL flat: £7829

Shared House: £325

B&B Accom: £407

TA flat: £10,838

Furniture: £1900

Cleaning: £12

Grounds: £122

Total: £29,168

Staff/support:

CEC staff: £1262

Support staff: £4078

Tenancy set up: £228

Total: £5568

New Tenancy:

CCG: £758

DHP move: £100

Total: £858

TOTAL £35,594

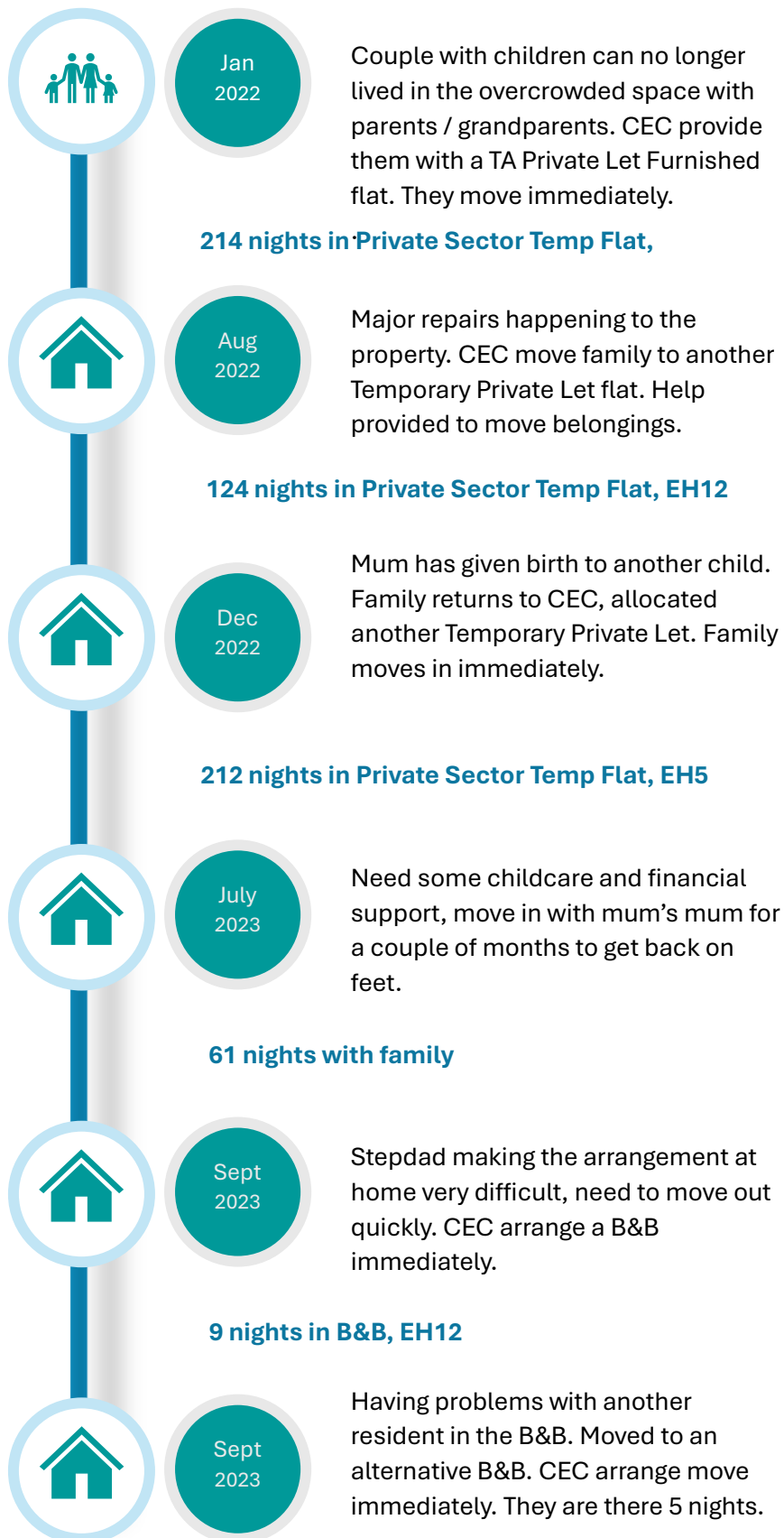
1296 days in 11 TA places

Averages

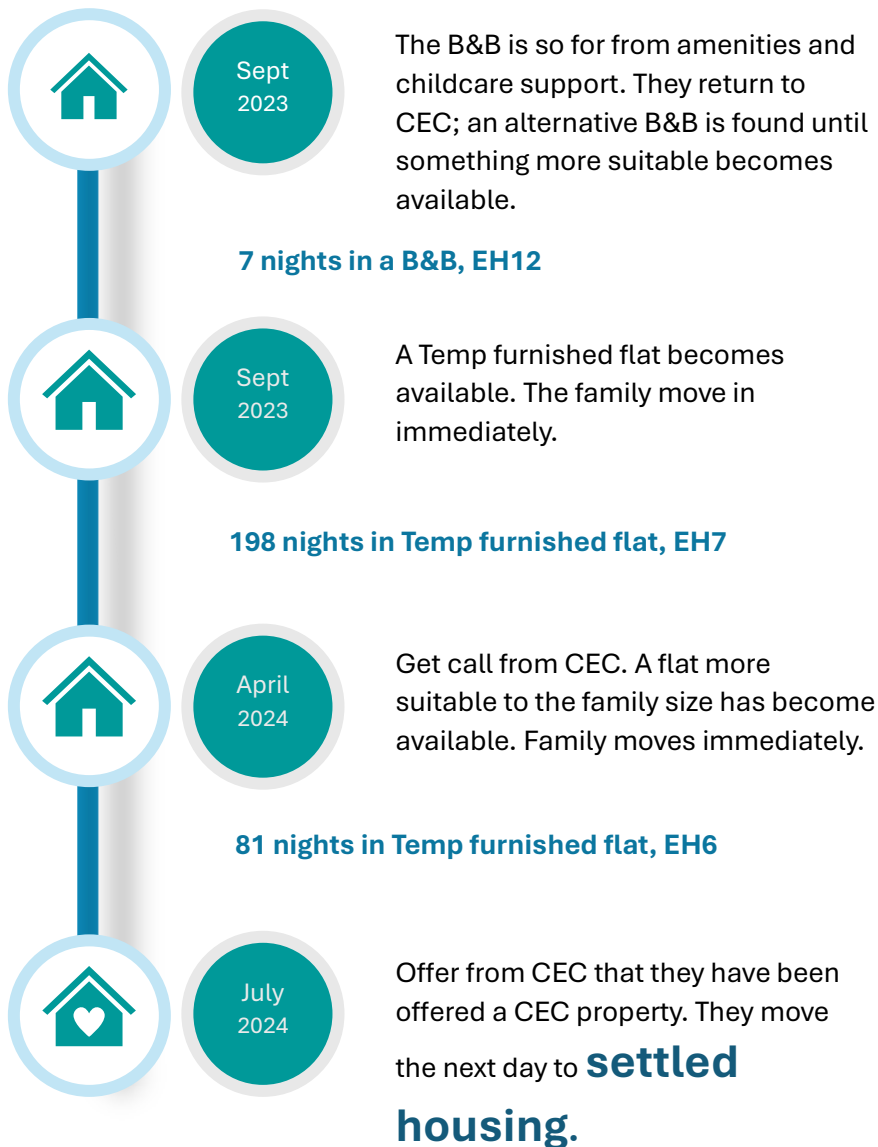
£27.47 per day

£192.29 per week

Homelessness Case 3



Homelessness Case 3 continued



COSTS

Housing costs

PSL flat: £4204

PSL flat: £2441

PSL flat: £4204

B&B Accom: £349

TA flat: £3723

TA flat: £1544

Cleaning: £8

Furniture: £1220

Grounds: £71

Total: £17,764

Staff/support:

CEC staff: £823

Support staff: £2640

Tenancy set up: £228

Total: £3691

New Tenancy:

CCG: £825

DHP move: £100

Total: £925

TOTAL £22,380

571 nights in 8 TA places

Averages

£39.20 per night

£274.40 per week

Homelessness Cases

Case 4	Temp Type	No' of days	Costs
Female, 56 single	Supported Accommodation	473 days	£13,344
	Other costs		£171
	Temp CEC furnished flat	1030 days	£14,375 £1480
	Staff / support		£4930
	Move with CCG / support		£858
	Total		£35,158

Spending a total of 1272 nights (just under 4 yrs 8 months) in 2 Temporary Accommodation places, this single woman then moved into settled accommodation – a CEC property.

Total cost divided by nights in TA = £27.64 per night, £193.48 per week

Case 5	Temp Type	No' of days	Costs
Female, 30, single parent	Shared House	21 days	£1830
	Other costs		£8
	Temp Furnished flat, EH4	1977 days	£27,488 £2820
	Staff / support		£7444
	Move with CCG/ support		£858
	Total		£40,488

Spending a total of 1998 nights (just under 5 years and 5 months) in 2 Temporary Accommodation places, this single parent then moved into settled accommodation – a CEC property.

Total cost divided by nights in TA = £20.25 per night, £141.75 per week

Case 6	Temp Type	No' of days	Costs
Male, 62 single	B&B	15 days	£261
	Shared House	115 days	£1482
	Temp CEC furnished flat	119 days	£1651 £180
	Staff / support		£1566
	Moves to Glasgow		£150
	Total		£5290

Spending a total of 249 nights (exactly 10 months) in 6 Temporary Accommodation places, this single man moved to settled accommodation in Glasgow.

Total cost divided by nights in TA = £21.25 per night, £148.75 per week

Case 7	Temp Type	No' of days	Costs
Male, 36 couple & children	B&B	43 days	£1220
	Staff / support		£173
	Casework / support		£213
	Total		£1606

Spending a total of 43 nights (1 and a half months) in 2 Temporary Accommodation places, this family was found to not be homeless and moved to Glasgow

Total cost divided by nights in TA = £37.35 per night, £261.45 per week

Homelessness (prevention) Case 8



Single male, 35 years old, living in a Housing Association property, EH7

In F/T employment of £350 per week

Presented in need of help:

- £5,642 rent arrears.
- Decree granted.
- Eviction date to be set within 1 week.
- History of non-engagement.
- History of poor mental health.
- He approached the Homeless Prevention & Housing Options Team to arrange an assessment.
- He was diverted to Early Intervention Team.

Working with the Early Intervention Team for 16 weeks:

- They negotiated a 'pause' in proceedings with the RSL.
- They referred him to EHAP for urgent legal representation where the decree was recalled & a new court date set.
- They referred him to CHAI for debt advice and income maximisation.
- A realistic repayment plan was negotiated with RSL
- Support continued
- The case sisted and eviction was avoided.

Outcomes:

- He remains in his home.
- He has a budget plan.
- He has gone through income maximisation help and is accessing all finances he is eligible for.
- He has a repayment plan in place for arrears.
- He has been able to retain employment and avoid homelessness.



COSTS

Support costs: £2166

Arrears of £5642 will be repaid

Total: - £3476

Homelessness (prevention) Case 9



Single pregnant female, 28 years old, living in a CEC property with her 2 small children, EH5
In receipt of Universal Credit, as well as a Disability Payment for one of her children.

Presented in need of help:

- She was a victim of domestic abuse.
- She had recently been hospitalised because of the abuse.
- She had been offered TA but refused the offer.
- She was referred onto the Early Intervention Team.

Working with the Early Intervention Team for 21 weeks:

- They liaised with Women's Aid for safety advice and to access the Fund to Leave for security measures.
- They referred to Women's Aid for support
- They liaised with the Housing Officer for security measures and repairs.
- They requested a management transfer
- Support continued.
- Child therapy / support sessions with Women's Aid.
- Management transfer approved and circulated citywide.
- Applied for urgent exceptional housing needs.
- Helped to apply for a CCG to replace items not covered through the Fund to Leave that had been broken by perpetrator.

Outcomes:

- Transferred to an alternative CEC property
- Linked in with Women's Aid for ongoing support for woman and children.
- She has left her abusive relationship.
- She has been able to move with support, minimising the risks for her and her children and avoided becoming homeless.



COSTS

Support costs: £2447

Fund to Leave: £825

CCG: £758

Total: £4030

Homelessness (prevention) Case 10



Single female, 61 years old, living in a Housing Association property, EH10

In receipt of UC, has had several insecure jobs.

Presented in need of help:

- Job insecurity had left her with a history of arrears.
- She self-referred to the Early Intervention Team when her previously sisted case was recalled to court.
- £3000 rent arrears.
- Physical health issues.
- Mental health issues.

Working with the Early Intervention Team for just under 16 weeks:

- Liaised with existing crisis support to coordinate intervention.
- They referred her to EHAP for legal representation.
- They referred her to the Advice Shop for income maximisation [ADP&DHP] and debt and budgeting advice.
- They referred her to the Encompass employability service.
- They negotiated an affordable repayment plan with the RSL
- Legal action was halted.

Outcomes:

- She remains in her home.
- She has a budget plan.
- She has gone through income maximisation help and is accessing all finances she is eligible for.
- She has support to gain employment.
- She has been able to remain in her home and avoid homelessness.



COSTS

Support costs: £2534

Arrears of £3000 will be repaid

Total: -£466

Cost findings

The following chart collates the 7 case studies to provide some average findings:

	Average time in TA (days)	Average per night	Average per week	Total cost
Case 1	1290	£17.32	£121.24	£22,338
Case 2	1296	£27.47	£192.29	£35,594
Case 3	571	£39.20	£274.40	£22,380
Case 4	1272	£27.64	£193.48	£35,158
Case 5	1998	£20.25	£141.75	£40,488
Case 6	249	£21.25	£148.75	£5290
Case 7	43	£37.35	£261.45	£1606
Totals	6719	£190.48	£1333.36	£162,854
Averages	960	£27.21	£190.48	£23,265

So, when we consider accommodation costs and connecting support and move on costs, this sample of 7 cases demonstrate the average cost of presentation to settled accommodation in Edinburgh as being around **£23,265** per household.

The 3 cases where we looked at the prevention spending are collated in the chart below:

	Average case time (wks)	Average costs	Arears Returned	Total cost
Case 1	16	£2166	£5642	-£3476
Case 2	21	£4030	£N/A	£4030
Case 3	16	£2534	£3000	-£466
Averages	18	£2910	£4321	£29

Conclusions

Average spend £23,265

Accommodation cases (1 to 7)

Unsurprisingly, the findings show that the costs vary greatly in terms of the length of time a person / household spent in Temporary Accommodation. Across the seven cases, these vary from £1606 to £40,488.

However, with an average rent in Edinburgh at £1362⁴⁸ per month (£44.78 per night), when comparing this to the average overall accommodation and support costs of **£27.21 per night**, it would suggest that resources are as minimised as they can be.

The most comparable piece of work that looks at figures for homelessness in Scotland is from 2011⁴⁹, which analysed the costs to a Local Authority after a person / household had become homeless having not sustained a tenancy. The costs of 2011 considered accommodation, housing support and third sector support; the same elements as this report. The report of 2011 looked across a few different local authorities and found that figures varied between £15,500 and £24,800; the midpoint of these sits at £20,150. Using the Bank of England calculator, the expectation of the cost of £20,150 in comparison to today's figures would be **£28,868 per person / household**. The calculations of this report 2024 show an average of **£23,265 per person / household, over £5,500 less**.

Where the figures are at the highest, the bottleneck of Temporary Accommodation is evident, with Case 5 outlining someone living in TA for well in excess of 5 years, costing over £40k. This is before considering any additional costs to health services, and any other support and advice.

Prevention Cases (8 to 10)

In terms of the preventative spend, it was a small number of prevention cases considered. However, from these we can see that the expected costs would sit at approximately £2910 per case. Given that two of the three cases are now repaying arrears, this almost negates the costs of the support entirely, sitting at £29 per case.

At a time of so many resources being placed at the point of crisis, it does suggest that the plans and current work in place to do as much upstream as possible must remain a focus. All three of these cases resulted in positive accommodation outcomes and each one more financially sound.

⁴⁸ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/housingpriceslocal/S12000036/>

⁴⁹ Coote, D, Scottish Council for Single Homeless, The Cost of Tenancy Failure, 2011

Appendix

Appendix

Support Worker costs

The following costs have been taken from live recruitment advertising around Scotland, August 2024. These are comparable posts for a Support Worker working in a housing / homelessness type role to provide an average Support Worker salary to base the report figures on:

Organisation a: £28,583 to £31,896, mid-range £30,240

Organisation b: £23,375 to £24,544, mid-range £23,960

Organisation c: £27,067

Organisation d: £23,756 to £24,938, mid-range £24,347

Organisation e: £25,290 to £28,248, mid-range £26,769

When compared to find an average

Average £26,477 With NI contributions £29,988 5% pension add £1,500

- Rounding up to an average, overall costs of £31,488 per annum.

This is only the staffing cost of a support worker.

In addition to this there is management costs, as well as training, equipment, travel, and an office base. *Taking these into account, the costs overall are likely to rise to around £38,411. Working a 37.5-hour week, this works out to £19.70 per hour.*

Housing Officer costs

Current vacancies for CEC Housing Officer posts⁵⁰ £30,751 - £36,312 per year

Average £33,532 With NI contributions £36,904 17.4% pension add £5,835

- Rounding up to an average, overall costs of £42,739 per annum.

This is only the staffing cost of a Housing Officer

In addition to this there is management costs, as well as training, equipment, travel, and an office base. *Taking these into account, the costs overall are likely to rise to around £51,350. Working a 36-hour week, this works out to £27.43 per hour.*

⁵⁰ <https://myjobscotland.gov.uk/councils/city-edinburgh-council/>

(For comparison) Prison⁵¹ and Justice⁵² Costs:

The average cost per prisoner place increased to £44,620 per year. This excludes capital charges, exceptional payments and the cost of the Court Custody and Prisoner Escort contract.

£44,620 divided by 365 = £122.25 per night

The average Community Care Grant was £758⁵³

(For comparison) Health Costs

- An ambulance call-out costs an average £244.
- Attendance in an A&E department costs on average £190.
- A hospital admission would cost an average of £569 per day.

References for Page 13

ⁱ <https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/committees/local-gov/correspondence/2024/housingto2040hfs.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.cih.org/media/blffdqy/housing-emergency-action-plan-scotland.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/household-estimates/2023/house-est-23-report.pdf>

^{iv} <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-2023-24/documents/>

^v <https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-2022-2023-key-trends-summary/pages/social-housing-stock/>

⁵¹ https://audit.scot/uploads/docs/report/2023/aar_2223_scottish_prison_service_0.pdf

⁵² <https://www.mav.scot/topic/the-economic-costs-of-violence/>

⁵³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-welfare-fund-statistics-annual-update-2023-24/documents/>



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