

***POSITION PAPER***  
**POLICY ON HOMELESSNESS**  
**IN THE UK AND REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**

**Table of contents**

<b>1. Introduction</b>	1
<b>2. Policy provision for homelessness</b>	1
Regional variations within the UK	2
The Republic of Ireland	4
<b>3. Housing roles and responsibilities across the UK</b>	5
Northern Ireland	5
England, Wales and Scotland	6
<b>4. Housing roles and responsibilities in the Republic of Ireland</b>	7
<b>5. Current levels of homelessness</b>	7
Northern Ireland	7
England, Wales and Scotland	8
Comparative analysis	8
Republic of Ireland	10
<b>6. Recommendations for future work</b>	11
Northern Ireland	11
England, Wales and Scotland	12
Republic of Ireland	13
<b>7. Areas to be addressed by the Working Group</b>	13
<b>8. Summary</b>	14
<b>9. Sources</b>	14
<b>Annex A:</b> Definitions of Priority Need across the UK	16
<b>Annex B:</b> Roles and Responsibilities of the NIHE / Local Authorities	20
<b>Annex C:</b> NIHE Recommendations with a cross-agency dimension	22
<b>Annex D:</b> Decisions taken on homelessness applications (UK)	24

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide a context and starting point for the work of the Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) Working Group on Homelessness ('the Working Group').
- 1.2 It sets out:
  - a. Current policy on homelessness in Northern Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland;
  - b. Recent statistics on homelessness;
  - c. A list of recent publications which address preventative and cross-sectoral strategies for dealing with homelessness within the UK and the Republic of Ireland;
  - d. Issues that the Working Group might wish to address.
- 1.3 The outcomes of recent reviews by both the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and the Assembly's Social Development Committee provide a basis on which to improve existing arrangements for dealing with the needs of the homeless. The recommendations of the Social Development Committee relevant to the Working Group are given in part 6. The Working Group will seek to build further upon the recommendations from these reviews.
- 1.4 The Working Group will consider how best to ensure that, firstly, the risk of homelessness is reduced, and secondly, the full range of appropriate services is available to those who do find themselves homeless, so that they can make the choices required to play a full part in society. It will consider factors which cause people to become homeless and at risk of social exclusion and develop a co-ordinated strategy through which relevant agencies will work together to tackle them.
- 1.5 It is expected that recommendations will be made within one year of the establishment of the Working Group, in the form of a draft policy and co-ordinated strategy document which will then be issued for public consultation. This document will be subject to screening from a Section 75 Equality perspective. A final report will be provided to Ministers within 2 years of the initiation of the work.
- 1.6 Detailed Terms of Reference, Action Plans and Performance Targets will be developed by the Working Group and agreed with the Equality and Social Needs Steering Group.

## 2. POLICY PROVISION FOR HOMELESSNESS

### *The UK*

- 2.1 Legislation applying to the four regions of the UK provides that a person or household is **homeless** if they have no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere; or if they have a home but it would be unreasonable for them to continue to occupy that home for a particular reason.

- 2.2 The legislation also provides for those who are **threatened with homelessness**. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, a person or household is treated as being threatened with homelessness if it is likely that they will become homeless within 28 days. In Scotland, the applicable period is two months.
- 2.3 The policy recognises that among those who may present as homeless, there will be some groups who have **priority needs** for accommodation. Priority need groups are defined differently in Northern Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland. In addition, the Scottish Executive will phase out priority need categories over the next ten years, to treat everyone who is unintentionally homeless as entitled to permanent accommodation. A brief summary of the regional differences is given at Annex A.
- 2.4 Legislation in Northern Ireland and Great Britain provides for the appropriate Department/Minister to specify further priority need groups.
- 2.5 The policy also recognises that persons can become homeless **unintentionally or intentionally**, and requires housing authorities/the NIHE to make enquiries sufficient to determine into which of those categories a homeless presenter may fall.
- 2.6 For a person to be regarded as homeless or threatened with homelessness **intentionally**,
- i. the applicant must have *deliberately* done or failed to do something in consequence of which he or she has ceased to occupy accommodation, whether in the UK or elsewhere, which was or is available, given that
  - ii. it would have been reasonable for the applicant to have continued to occupy the accommodation, and
  - iii. the applicant must have been aware of all the facts before deliberately taking, or failing to take, the actions referred to in (i).

An example of intentional homelessness is willfully failing to pay rent or a mortgage or failing to take up an offer of accommodation. However, an act or omission in good faith on the part of someone unaware of any relevant facts should not be regarded as deliberate.

- 2.7 Housing authorities are empowered to provide different services to presenters depending on their priority need status or otherwise, and whether or not a presenter is considered to be unintentionally homeless or intentionally homeless.
- 2.8 The legislation and codes of guidance for Northern Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland differ slightly in their recommendations for action, and duties and powers of housing authorities/the NIHE. A brief comparison is given at Annex B.

### ***Regional variations within the UK***

- 2.9 **Northern Ireland:** The Department for Social Development's general position on homelessness is contained in the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988, and was amended in the Housing Order 2003. The policy changes brought in as a result of the 2003 Order have been included throughout this document.

- 2.10 Where a person (a) can prove homelessness/threatened homelessness, (b) falls within the list of persons defined as having a priority need *and* (c) can show that they became homeless through no fault of their own (unintentionally), the NIHE grants them *Full Duty Applicant* (FDA) status.
- 2.11 Priority need is automatic for some categories of applicant, and discretionary for others.
- 2.12 **England:** The relevant legislation in England is the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002.
- 2.13 Priority need is automatic for some categories of applicant. For others, priority need is determined on each individual case employing a test of ‘vulnerability’ according to a definition established by case law and the code of guidance. More information is provided in Annex A.
- 2.14 The code of guidance states that housing authorities must not adopt general policies which seek to pre-define circumstances that do or do not amount to **intentional** homelessness or **threatened** homelessness. For example, intentional homelessness should not be assumed in cases where an application is made following a period in custody. In each case, housing authorities must form a view in the light of all their inquiries about that particular case.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.15 **Wales:** The relevant legislation in Wales is the Housing Act 1996, the Homeless Persons (Priority Need) Wales Order 2001 and the Homelessness Act 2002.
- 2.16 The legal definition of homelessness is the same as the definition for the rest of the UK. However, in directing local authorities to produce homelessness strategies, the Welsh Assembly has recommended the following definition of homelessness:
- Where a person lacks accommodation or their tenure is not secure.<sup>2</sup>*
- 2.17 It further specifies that this definition includes those: sleeping rough; living in insecure/temporary housing; living in short term hostels, night shelters, direct access hostels; living in bed and breakfasts; moving frequently between relatives/friends; squatting; and those who are unable to remain in, or return to, housing due to poor conditions, overcrowding, affordability problems, domestic violence, harassment, mental, physical and/or sexual abuse, unsuitability for physical needs, etc.
- 2.18 The definition also includes those threatened with losing their home and without suitable alternative accommodation for any reason, e.g. leaving hospitals, police custody, prisons, other institutions or supported housing; required to leave by family and friends due to relationship breakdown; within three months of the end of tenancy, facing possession proceedings or threat of eviction.
- 2.19 Four of Wales’s priority needs categories are identical to those in force in England, while a further five were provided in the 2001 Order. The Welsh code of guidance for

---

<sup>1</sup> Submissions to the Social Development Committee by NIACRO suggested that in Northern Ireland, homeless presenters released from custody are usually classed as intentionally homeless.

<sup>2</sup> Welsh Assembly, *Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness* (draft), page 40.

local authorities also stipulates circumstances under which tests of vulnerability apply.

- 2.20 Welsh guidance carries a similar warning to English guidance, to the effect that decisions about intentional homelessness, or threatened homelessness, in any particular case must be based on the investigations carried out in that case. It states that housing authorities must not adopt general policies which seek to pre-define circumstances that do or do not amount to intentional homelessness or threatened homelessness (the same example is given as in the English guidance, viz., cases where an application is made following a period in custody).
- 2.21 **Scotland:** The relevant legislation is the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2002.
- 2.22 The legal definition of homelessness is the same as the rest of the UK, but the Scottish Executive has outlined different priority needs categories and extended the period in which threatened homelessness may occur from 28 days to two months.
- 2.23 The 2002 Act provides for the expansion and eventual abolition of the priority need categories, with a view to ensuring that everyone assessed as unintentionally homeless is entitled to permanent accommodation by 2012.

### ***The Republic of Ireland***

- 2.24 According to the 1988 Housing Act, a person shall be regarded by a housing authority as being homeless if:
- a. There is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the authority, he, together with any other person who normally resides with him or who would reasonably be expected to reside with him, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, or
  - b. He is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution, and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a), and he is, in the opinion of the authority, unable to provide accommodation from his own resources
- 2.25 The definition includes: persons living in temporary non-secure accommodation; persons living in emergency bed and breakfast accommodation and hostels/health board accommodation because they have nowhere else available to them; rough sleepers; and victims of family violence.
- 2.26 The Department of the Environment and Local Government's report *Homelessness: An integrated strategy* (2000) recommended the following definition of homelessness (though the statutory definition given at paragraph 2.24 remains):

***Those who are sleeping on the street or in other places not intended for night-time accommodation or not providing safe protection from the elements or those whose usual night-time residence is a public or private shelter, emergency lodging, bed and breakfast or such, providing protection from the elements but lacking the other characteristics of a home and/or intended only for a short stay.***

### 3. HOUSING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACROSS THE UK

- 3.1 A breakdown of housing authorities' duties to the homeless according to whether they are found to be in priority need and/or intentionally homeless is given in Annex B, using the NIHE as a baseline from which to analyse the various policies.
- 3.2 This section outlines the wider responsibilities of housing authorities in each region of the UK.

#### *Northern Ireland*

- 3.3 The NIHE has an absolute duty to re-house homeless applicants who meet the statutory criteria (i.e. unintentionally homeless and in priority need, otherwise known as *Full Duty Applicants* or *FDAs*). The NIHE's Housing Selection Scheme makes additional provision for prioritising homeless applicants who are not FDAs for re-housing via the waiting list.
- 3.4 The NIHE operates its own 'Code of Practice and Co-operation' to ensure consistency of approach across the organisation when dealing with those presenting as homeless. The NIHE's Homeless Advice Centre deals with assessments of all applicants who come to Belfast from outside Northern Ireland. The appropriate District Office considers other applicants.
- 3.5 Where a homeless person has a need for specialised accommodation designed to meet the needs of persons receiving care in the community, such persons are normally referred to appropriate accommodation via the relevant health authorities, rather than the NIHE.
- 3.6 The Housing Support Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 outlines arrangements that will help sustain and improve the existing support services provided to the homeless. The new arrangements will combine the many disparate sources of funding into a single budget that helps create a situation where the needs of the individual will be the most important factor.
- 3.7 Homelessness policy allows the NIHE to provide financial and other forms of assistance to voluntary organisations concerned with the homeless, for example those which operate hostels in areas where the NIHE has no such facilities of its own, and which help people whom the NIHE has no statutory duty to provide accommodation (for example, young single people).
- 3.8 **Housing Selection Scheme:** The NIHE and registered housing associations operate a Housing Selection Scheme for the allocation of all NIHE and housing association properties. Under this Scheme, applicants who are homeless as a result of intimidation, fire, flood or other emergency receive the highest priority for re-housing. Other applicants, while they may meet the criteria prescribed in the homelessness legislation, are awarded points on the basis of their actual housing need.
- 3.9 While there is no statutory requirement for the NIHE to produce homelessness strategies, it has produced a *Homelessness Strategy* (2002) and a *Strategy and Services Review* (2001). The cross-departmental and cross-sector recommendations of the *Homelessness Strategy* are given at Annex C.

## *England, Wales and Scotland*

- 3.10 In England, Wales and Scotland, homeless applicants must be given ‘reasonable preference’ for re-housing via local authority waiting lists. The priority awarded to particular applicants will depend on the priorities set out in legislation as well as in the codes of guidance.
- 3.11 **England:** the Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a new *Priority Needs Order (England)* and set out new duties and powers for councils:
- a A duty to carry out homelessness reviews and develop homelessness strategies; these should address the needs of all homeless people, including those who are intentionally homeless, people who are not in priority need and rough sleepers, as well as setting out plans for preventing homelessness;
  - b A duty to provide accommodation until a settled home is found for homeless households in priority need (repealing the previous two-year time limit);
  - c A power to secure housing for households that are not in priority need; and
  - d An entitlement for single homeless people to receive advice and assistance from a local authority.
- 3.12 Local homelessness strategies should ensure the provision of housing related support services to enable people to resettle and prevent recurring homelessness. ‘Supporting People’ provides a funding mechanism and opportunity for joint commissioning of services with probation, health and social services authorities.
- 3.13 **Wales:** the Homelessness Act 2002 also applies to Wales. Local authorities are required to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy. A new strategy should be issued every five years. The duty to produce the strategy is imposed on the whole authority, not simply the housing department.
- 3.14 **Scotland:** the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires that every local authority must carry out an assessment of homelessness in its area, and prepare a strategy for preventing and alleviating homelessness in its area. It also requires that local authorities must ensure that free advice and information about homelessness is available, though they are not required to provide this themselves.
- 3.15 The 2002 Act replaces local authorities’ duty to investigate intentionality with a power to do so. Instead of placing local authorities under a duty only to provide temporary accommodation and advice and assistance to an intentionally homeless household in priority need, it provides for ‘probationary’ tenancies to such applicants. These tenancies will also provide support services to the tenant, who in turn will have to fulfil certain obligations if the tenancy is to become permanent.
- 3.16 It is expected that this change will substantially reduce the number of people found to be intentionally homeless, and reduce the burden on local authorities to carry out the investigation. However, the consequences of finding someone intentionally homeless will carry a greater burden on the authority to provide accommodation and support.

## 4. HOUSING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

- 4.1 The legislation provides local authorities with wide powers (rather than a statutory duty) to secure accommodation or contribute to the costs of accommodation for homeless people. Local authorities can claim up to 90% of their expenditure in this regard from the Department of the Environment and Local Government.
- 4.2 The 1988 Housing Act provides guidance to housing authorities on the scope of their options. The housing authority can:
- a. Make arrangements, including financial arrangements, with a body approved of by the Minister for the provision by that body of accommodation for a homeless person,
  - b. Provide a homeless person with such assistance, including financial assistance, as the authority consider appropriate, or
  - c. Rent accommodation, arrange lodgings or contribute to the cost of such accommodation or lodgings for a homeless person
- 4.3 In practice, housing authorities tend to either pay for emergency accommodation or, more usually, give financial assistance to voluntary organisations that provide hostel accommodation.
- 4.4 Local authorities are also required to: carry out an assessment of housing need every three years; decide their letting priorities based on this assessment; and carry out a separate assessment of homeless persons.

## 5. CURRENT LEVELS OF HOMELESSNESS

### *Northern Ireland*

- 5.1 **Homeless presentations:** from 1991 to 1995 homeless presentations averaged 10,000 per year. From 1995 numbers began to increase to around 11,000 per year and in recent years to 12,600 in 2000/01 and over 14,000 in 2001/02. Mid-year figures for 2002/03 suggest that numbers will remain at or above 14,000.
- 5.2 The increase may be due in part to changes to the Housing Selection Scheme, in that certain criteria within the housing application process can indicate that a homelessness assessment is necessary. In addition, paramilitary feuds have affected the numbers presenting and accepted as homeless under the legislation.
- 5.3 While most potentially homeless persons contact the NIHE for assessment and assistance, a number approach voluntary sector providers of temporary accommodation directly. Prior to the introduction of the Housing Selection Scheme, it is believed that as many as 1,000, mostly single person households, did not present as homeless to the NIHE. Underlying these reasons are issues of poverty, access to accommodation and other social pressures that impact negatively on some households' ability to secure accommodation.

- 5.4 **Use of temporary accommodation:** approximately 20% of those who present as homeless are allocated temporary accommodation. During 2001/02, 134 days was the average time spent in temporary accommodation before being permanently re-housed.
- 5.5 **Time taken to re-house:** those accepted as homeless are placed on a waiting list before being re-housed. In 2001/02, 55% were housed within 3 months, 75% within 6 months and 90% within 12 months. The time taken to re-house an applicant is influenced by the housing choices exercised by applicants (homeless applicants are entitled to a maximum of 3 reasonable offers) and the low turnover of permanent re-lets in areas of high demand, which are usually the most popular areas of choice.
- 5.6 **Housing allocations:** approximately 38% of total allocations (new builds and re-lets) are made to homeless Full Duty Applicants.

### *England, Wales and Scotland*

- 5.7 **Homeless presentations:** in England, statutory homelessness levels have increased in recent years, although they remain below the peak of the early 1990s. In Wales, after a peak in the mid-1990s the number of households presenting as homeless has levelled off. However, the proportion of those found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need is rising, while the proportion found to be 'not homeless' is in decline. The burden on housing authorities is therefore increasing, although the number of presenters has remained stable. The number of households presenting as homeless in Scotland remained stable throughout the 1990s, until 1999/2000 when it increased slightly.
- 5.8 Statistics compilers for the Scottish Executive have noted that (as is presumably the case for all UK homeless statistics) the number of presentations is counted, not the number of households. Therefore repeat applications by the same household within the relevant period mean that some households are counted more than once in the annual figures. An analysis of quarterly statistics in Scotland in 2002 indicated that between 4% and 6% of applications per quarter might be repeat applications from households who had presented as homeless within the preceding six months.
- 5.9 **Use of temporary accommodation:** in England between March 1997 and March 2002, there was a 95% increase in the number of households living in temporary accommodation. In Wales, the number of households accommodated temporarily rose by 24% between March 1998 and March 2002 (a 56% rise if the 'homeless at home' are included). In Scotland, the numbers in temporary accommodation reached a high in the mid-1990s, dropped in the late 1990s and have subsequently risen again by about 3% per year. Levels remain below the high of 1995/6.

### *Comparative analysis (UK)*

- 5.10 Northern Ireland has a higher proportion of households presenting as homeless than other UK regions: 2.1% of all households, compared to 1.9% in Scotland, 1.2% in England and 1% in Wales (2000/01 figures). Intimidation leads to a homeless presentation for approximately 0.2% of all households in Northern Ireland, suggesting that, even excluding this factor, homeless levels would still be among the highest in the UK.

5.11 Northern Ireland has experienced the highest rates of increase in households presenting as homeless and households awarded Full Duty Applicant status (i.e. unintentionally homeless and in priority need). The table below sets out the rates of increase across the UK from 1997/98 to 2001/02.<sup>3</sup>

	<b>Increase in eligible applications (%)</b>	<b>Increase in those awarded full duty status (%)</b>
<b>England</b>	7%	15%
<b>Wales</b>	8%	30%
<b>Scotland</b>	8%	16%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	21%	49%

5.12 Reasons for this increase in Northern Ireland may include the introduction of the Housing Selection Scheme in 2000, insofar as new criteria within the housing application process may lead to a homeless assessment.

5.13 At present, homeless presenters in Northern Ireland are more likely to be found homeless than presenters in other regions of the UK, and more likely to be given full duty status. The following table presents the proportion of applicants in these categories across the UK in 2001/02.

	<b>Presenters found to be homeless or potentially homeless (%)</b>	<b>Presenters found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need (%)</b>
<b>England</b>	71%	46%
<b>Wales</b>	72%	38%
<b>Scotland<sup>4</sup></b>	74%	39%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	78%	52%

5.14 For a further regional breakdown of homelessness assessments, see Annex D.

5.15 In NI, families constitute 38% of households presenting as homeless, but 52% of those awarded priority need status. Single-person households constitute 50% of presenters but only 33% of priority need awards. A similar pattern is found in Scotland, where families make up 32% of presenters and 47% of those awarded priority need status. (Scottish figures make a further distinction between one and two-parent families, noting that one-parent families constitute 26% of presenters and 39% of those in priority need, while for two-parent families the figures are 6% and 8%

<sup>3</sup> Scottish FDA figures cover 1997/98 to 1999/00.

<sup>4</sup> Figures are for 1999/00.

respectively.) Single-person households constitute 59% of presenters and 44% of priority need awards.

- 5.16 **Given reasons for homelessness:** across all four regions, the most common reason given by homeless presenters for the loss of accommodation is that parents, other relatives or friends are unable or unwilling to accommodate them. In Northern Ireland 22% give this reason (termed here 'sharing breakdown or family dispute'), as against 29% in Wales, 31% in England and 36% in Scotland.
- 5.17 The second most common reason given is violent or non-violent relationship breakdown. In Northern Ireland this accounts for 19% of presenters, in England 23%, Scotland 24% and in Wales 26%.
- 5.18 Other common reasons given in Northern Ireland for loss of settled accommodation are: no accommodation in Northern Ireland (12%), loss of rented accommodation (11%), intimidation (10%) and neighbour dispute (9%). Corresponding figures for the rest of the UK are not available or not relevant, because: the Housing Order 2003 altered the definition of homelessness to bring it into line with the rest of the UK, therefore when the Order is commenced a person will be treated as homeless if he has 'no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere' rather than if he has 'no accommodation in NI'; British figures give different breakdowns regarding loss of rented accommodation; and figures are not collected in Britain on the basis of intimidation or neighbour disputes.
- 5.19 **Recent trends:** in NI, there has been a dramatic increase in those citing accommodation not reasonable (a 291% increase, from 230 in 1999/2000 to 901 in 2001/02) and a steady increase in presenters citing marital/relationship breakdown (a 52% increase since 1997/98). The numbers citing sharing breakdown/family dispute and domestic violence have declined slightly in absolute terms since 1997/98 (by 14% and 13% respectively).<sup>5</sup>
- 5.20 Presenters in NI are most likely to be families (38% in 2001/02) and single males aged 26-59 (21%). The number of presenters has increased across all household types since 1997/98. The largest increases are found in pensioner households (a 110% increase, from 500 per year in 1999/2000 to over 1,000 per year in 2001/02) and single males aged 26-59 (a 40% increase over the same period).

### ***Republic of Ireland***

- 5.21 **Levels of homelessness:** Statistics on homelessness are collated alongside figures on the number of households in need of local authority housing. In February 2002 there were 48,413 households in need, of whom 44% were in need due to being unable to meet the costs of their existing accommodation. The next most common causes of housing need were: existing accommodation overcrowded (18%); involuntary sharing of accommodation (9%); existing accommodation unfit (8%); medical or compassionate grounds (7%) and homelessness (5%, or 2,500 households).

---

<sup>5</sup> Figures from Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation suggest that the number of enquiries and of women and children accommodated in refuges have increased between 1997/8 and 2000/1, by 151% and 10% respectively. Police figures for 1997 to 2000 also show an increase in domestic incidents attended and those in which violence was involved.

- 5.22 While there is a category specifically relating to homelessness, for the purposes of accurate comparison the level of homelessness in the Republic of Ireland should be accepted as closer to the total number of households in housing need, i.e. 48,413. Reasons accepted as constituting housing need include, in addition to those cited above, travellers, young persons leaving institutional care, elderly persons, and disabled or handicapped persons. These reasons correspond to the range of reasons the NIHE accepts as given reasons for homelessness (for example, sharing breakdown; accommodation not reasonable; loss of rented accommodation; and mortgage default).
- 5.23 Almost one third (29%) of applicants in housing need are households consisting of one parent and one child, while another third (32%) are single person households. Two thirds (67%) of those in housing need have annual incomes of less than 10,000 euro (c. £6,700), while 85% have annual incomes of less than 15,000 euro (c. £10,100).
- 5.24 Research in 1999 found 5,234 homeless persons in the Republic of Ireland, 3,640 of whom were in Dublin. The study identified a total of 3,743 homeless households, comprising 3,992 adults (2,593 males and 1,399 females) and 1,242 dependent children. A follow-up study in 2002 found 2,920 homeless people in Dublin, but acknowledged that further investigation was needed.
- 5.25 **Length of time on waiting list:** in 2001/02, 38% of those in housing need spent less than one year on the waiting list, and 22% between one and two years. Fifteen percent of the total had spent more than four years on the waiting list.
- 5.26 **Recent trends:** the greatest increase between 1999 and 2002 was the number of households unable to meet the costs of existing accommodation (a 61% increase), followed by those in need for medical or compassionate reasons (a 45% increase). There were absolute decreases in the numbers whose existing accommodation was unfit, or in need because of an elderly person in the household.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

- 6.1 A number of reports on homelessness have been issued since the mid-1990s. A selection of these are listed in part 9, **Sources**.

### *Northern Ireland*

- 6.2 The **Social Development Committee's report** made 23 recommendations. A number of these fell specifically within the remit of the NIHE and were taken forward in its *Homelessness Strategy*. Those outside or only partially within the remit of the NIHE are given below.
- a. The Committee strongly recommends that the Minister for Social Development should adopt a revised definition of homelessness for inclusion in proposed housing legislation. (Recommendation 1)

- b. The Committee recommends that homelessness should be regarded as ‘the absence of a safe and accessible place to stay’. (Recommendation 2)
  - c. The Committee recommends that, whilst the rights of individuals must be respected, this must not be at the expense of contributing to the breakdown of the family as a stable and caring unit. (Recommendation 4)
  - d. The Committee recommends that an integrated inter-Departmental and inter-agency approach to homelessness is developed, led and managed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and that work on this should begin immediately. (Recommendation 9)
  - e. The Committee recommends that the development of a new approach to addressing homelessness should be regarded, by the Northern Ireland Assembly, as an absolute necessity and an urgent priority, especially in light of initiatives such as Promoting Social Inclusion and New Targeting Social Need. (Recommendation 12)
  - f. The Committee strongly recommends that the strategy and action plan should contain measures and targets to progressively reduce the levels of homelessness. (Recommendation 18)
  - g. The Committee recommends that adequate financial resources should be provided to support its recommendations and that transfers of responsibility should be matched by a transfer of resources. (Recommendation 23)
- 6.3 **Current research:** the NIHE has made plans to have research completed by the end of March 2003 on two aspects of homelessness: (i) the position with regard to rural homelessness, making recommendations on how best to provide the accommodation necessary to address this; and (ii) a comprehensive assessment of the care and support needs of all long term homeless people resident in hostels throughout Northern Ireland.

### ***England, Wales and Scotland***

- 6.4 **England:** In March 2002 the Homelessness Directorate was established, bringing together the Rough Sleepers Unit, the Bed and Breakfast Unit, and a new team responsible for tackling homelessness, which also advises local authorities on the development of homelessness strategies.
- 6.5 **Wales:** The Welsh Assembly established the Homelessness Commission in January 2001, charging it with the task of advising the Assembly on the measures that should be introduced to reduce homelessness. Its findings, together with 91 recommendations, were reported to the Welsh Assembly in November 2001. The Assembly responded by preparing a draft *National Homelessness Strategy* and a revised statutory *Code of Guidance on Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness*.
- 6.6 **Scotland:** The Scottish Executive established a Homelessness Task Force in June 1999. The Task Force produced an initial report in April 2000, which proposed amendments to the homelessness legislation. These proposals were accepted by the Executive and included in the Housing Act (Scotland) 2001. The Task Force has since

produced an *Action Plan*, which included a number of further recommendations. Some of these were incorporated into the Homelessness (Scotland) Bill 2002.

### ***Republic of Ireland***

- 6.7 A *Homelessness Strategy* was launched in 2000 and a *Preventative Strategy* in 2002. The former is based on the Report of the Cross-Department Team on Homelessness whose remit included health, education and employment as well as accommodation. The Team was established in 1998 to examine the problem of homelessness and to formulate a comprehensive strategy to tackle it.
- 6.8 The *Homelessness Strategy* noted that local authorities and health boards are regarded as jointly responsible for catering to the range of needs of the homeless. The *Preventative Strategy* addressed the needs of adult offenders, young offenders, people leaving mental health residential facilities, people leaving acute hospitals, and young people leaving care. It also outlined the role of schools in preventing homelessness.

## **7. AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE WORKING GROUP**

- 7.1 The Working Group is invited to consider priority areas to be addressed as part of the Promoting Social Inclusion review. Given the PSI element, it may be appropriate to focus on those aspects of homelessness that are most likely to cause or exacerbate social exclusion.
- 7.2 Priority areas for the Working Group may therefore include the following:
- a. **Definition:** the definition of homelessness to be used by the Working Group; and whether it is advisable to consider whether the statutory definition of homelessness should be revisited, particularly regarding the protection it affords to vulnerable people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness;
  - b. **Prevention:** measures required to prevent primary and repeat homelessness in Northern Ireland, and to prevent social exclusion where homelessness is combined with other factors, such as financial exclusion or long-term unemployment. (The Working Group may also have regard to the Social Development Committee's recommendation that measures and targets to progressively reduce the levels of homelessness be introduced);
  - c. **Action to deliver effective responses to homelessness:** there may be a need to focus on the specific needs of certain groups, or the effectiveness of certain types of response. For example:
    - i. People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and who have **special needs** (such as young people, those based in rural areas, ex-offenders), and the measures required to deliver an effective response and ensure access to the full range of services available;
    - ii. The improvement of access to **health and social services** for all people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness;

iii. The impact of wider government policies on levels of homelessness, and the support and housing services required to address homelessness where it is affected or caused by **anti-social behaviour, community safety policies, or the release of individuals from institutions.**

- 7.3 Although the Group aims to look beyond bricks and mortar issues, it may wish to consider ways in which homelessness could be addressed more effectively by housing providers.
- 7.4 The Group may wish to consider examining policy and practice in other jurisdictions to assess whether there are examples of good practice that could be applied in Northern Ireland.
- 7.5 The Group might also consider whether it needs to undertake consultation with users of services, or to invite submissions from interested parties, to assist in its deliberations.

## 8. SUMMARY

- 8.1 There are small but significant policy variations within the UK, and considerable policy differences between the UK and the Republic of Ireland. In addition, incidences of homelessness vary, as do methods of collating statistics.
- 8.2 In producing recommendations for future work, preventative and cross-sector strategies to date have emphasised the importance of adopting the measures best suited for each locality, bearing in mind the need for equality monitoring, and that there will be variations within local areas.
- 8.3 The Working Group is therefore requested to consider how best to take forward approaches to prevention and cross-departmental and cross-sector work, in order to ensure that people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness are not placed at risk of social exclusion.

## 9. SOURCES

### Northern Ireland

NI Audit Office, *Housing the Homeless* (2002)

NIHE, *Homelessness Strategy* (September 2002) at: [www.nihe.gov.uk/publications/reports/homeless02.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/publications/reports/homeless02.pdf)

NIHE, *Homelessness Strategy and Services Review* (2001) at: [www.nihe.gov.uk/publications/reports/homeless\\_final\\_version.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/publications/reports/homeless_final_version.pdf)

Social Development Committee, *Report on Homelessness* (2002) at: [www.ni-assembly.gov.uk/social/reports/report3-01r\\_main.htm](http://www.ni-assembly.gov.uk/social/reports/report3-01r_main.htm)

Simon Community, NI, *The Face of Older Homelessness: Research on Homelessness among older people in Northern Ireland* (2002)

Simon Community, NI, *Homeless families, homeless children: a study of homelessness among families in the Western Health and Social Services Board area of Northern Ireland* (2001)

## **England**

Audit Commission Report, *Homelessness: Responding to the new agenda* (January 2003)

### **Homelessness Directorate publications:**

*Code of Guidance for Local Authorities* (2002)

*Drugs services for homeless people: a good practice handbook* (2002)

*More than a roof: a report into tackling homelessness* (2002)

*Homelessness Strategies: a good practice handbook* (2002)

*Homelessness Strategies: Housing Research Summary no 158* (2002)

All of the above are available at: <http://www.homelessness.odpm.gov.uk/homelessness/pubs/index.htm>

### **Social Exclusion Unit publications:**

*Young Runaways* (November 2002)

*Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners* (July 2002)

*Preventing Social Exclusion* (March 2001)

*Rough Sleeping* (July 1988)

All of the above are available at: <http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/published.htm>

*Shelter, Local Authority Progress and Practice* (2002) at:

[www.homelessnessact.org.uk/files/downloads/438-HAI\\_report\\_q\\_1.pdf](http://www.homelessnessact.org.uk/files/downloads/438-HAI_report_q_1.pdf)

## **Wales**

Homelessness Commission, *Report to the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities* (2001)

*Draft National Homelessness Strategy* (2002)

*Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness*

The above documents are available at: <http://www.housing.wales.gov.uk/index.asp?task=content&a=j1>

## **Scotland**

Homelessness Task Force publications:

*Code of Guidance on Homelessness* (1997)

*Guidance on the Housing Act (Scotland) 2001* (2002)

*Homelessness: An action plan for prevention and effective response* (2002)

*Operation of the Homeless Persons legislation in Scotland, 1987-8 to 1997-8* (1999)

The above are available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/homelessness/publications.asp>

*Structural Trends and Homelessness: A qualitative analysis* (2000) at:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/cru/kd01/red/sthqa-00.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/cru/kd01/red/sthqa-00.asp)

## **Republic of Ireland**

Department of the Environment and Local Government publications:

*Homelessness: an integrated strategy* (2000) at: <http://www.environ.ie/housing/homeless.pdf>

*Homeless Preventative Strategy* (2002) at: <http://www.environ.ie/housing/preventstrat.pdf>

*Housing Statistics Bulletin* (September Quarter 2002) at: <http://www.environ.ie/housindex.html>

## ANNEX A: DEFINITIONS OF PRIORITY NEED ACROSS THE UK

A.1 The four regions of the UK include the following as priority need categories:

- a. a pregnant woman or a person with whom a pregnant woman resides or might reasonably be expected to reside;
- b. a person with whom dependant children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside;
- c. a person who is vulnerable due to old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or any other special reason, or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside (**vulnerability** is not uniformly defined: see below). Old age is defined as persons over 60 years;
- d. a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as a flood, fire or other disaster

### *Vulnerability*

A.2 In **England**, priority need for several categories of applicant is dependent on *vulnerability*, so each case must be examined individually. For example, old age alone is not sufficient: it must be that as a result of old age a person is vulnerable. The vulnerability test applies to the categories in (c) above, and to the following: people aged 21 or over who have been looked after by a local authority; people fleeing violence or threats of violence; people who have spent time in the armed forces; and people who have been in prison or remanded in custody.

A.2.1 To satisfy the test, evidence must be provided of vulnerability in each case. The critical test of vulnerability is whether, when homeless, the applicant would be less able to fend for him or herself than an ordinary homeless person so that he would be likely to suffer injury or detriment, in circumstances where a less vulnerable person would be able to cope without harmful effects.

A.2.2 The guidelines specify factors to take into account for each cause of vulnerability. For example, when deciding vulnerability among those who have been in prison or custody, the following factors may be taken into account: the length of time the applicant served in prison or custody; whether the applicant is receiving probation service supervision; the length of time since the applicant was released, and whether the applicant had been able to obtain accommodation during that time; and whether the applicant has any support networks, particularly by way of family or friends.

A.2.3 In **Wales**, the test of vulnerability is the same, but vulnerability applies to a smaller number of applicants, i.e. only those who are vulnerable as a result of: old age, mental illness or handicap, physical disability or other special reason. It also applies to applicants who have been subject to certain forms of violence or abuse. There is no requirement for an applicant to establish that they are vulnerable as a result of leaving the armed forces or being released from custody. However, those leaving custody will only be in priority need if they have a local connection with the local housing authority they have approached.

- A.3 A number of other priority needs categories are addressed in the legislation and/or codes of guidance for Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales, as follows.

### *Violence and intimidation*

- A.4 **Northern Ireland** and **Wales** specifically include those who are subject to violence or are threatened or at risk of violent pursuit in their priority need categories. In Wales, this provision is made in the Code of Guidance. In **Northern Ireland** priority need status is conferred by primary legislation, which refers to those people without dependent children who have been subject to violence and are at risk of violent pursuit or, if they return home, are at risk of further violence.
- A.5 The **Welsh** guidelines (stemming from the Priority Need Order 2001) specify that persons of either sex and of any age may be subject to violence or abuse, but that only victims of domestic violence will automatically be in priority need. Authorities should apply the vulnerability test to those suffering other forms of violence. Specifically included is abuse from known persons, a risk of abuse if the applicant returns to their former home, and those suffering from or at risk of harassment or violence on account of their gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or sexual orientation. Anyone vulnerable in this way will be found to have a priority need.
- A.6 **English** guidelines specify that people who are found to be vulnerable as a result of fleeing violence, threats of violence or harassment should be found as being in priority need.
- A.7 **Scottish** guidelines state that people at risk of harassment or violence on account of race, colour, illness, sexuality, or ethnic or national origins will be in priority need. Further, anyone who runs the risk of domestic abuse will be in priority need.

### *Young persons*

- A.8 **Northern Ireland** includes in the priority need category young persons (16 to 21 years) who satisfy the NIHE that they are at risk of financial or sexual exploitation. Both elements must be present, i.e. age and evidence of risk. Under the Children (NI) Order 1995, Health and Social Services Boards or Trusts have a duty to provide accommodation for any child in need who has reached the age of 16 and whose welfare is likely to be seriously prejudiced without accommodation. Trusts can refer young persons to the NIHE to assess their housing needs, though the NIHE does not automatically recognize a child in need as being in priority need, so they may not be regarded as homeless and in need of emergency accommodation.
- A.9 In **England**, all 16 and 17 year olds are deemed to be in priority need (there is no requirement to prove vulnerability or risk of exploitation).<sup>6</sup> In addition, the guidelines specify that people under 25 may qualify under the ‘other special reason’ category to be classed as vulnerable and therefore in priority need.

---

<sup>6</sup> The legislation excludes children who either remain the responsibility of social services authorities (SSAs) (who then have a duty to provide, support and maintain accommodation until the young person reaches 18); or are owed a duty by SSAs, who in such cases must provide accommodation if they consider that the welfare of a 16 or 17 year old is likely to be seriously prejudiced if they do not provide it.

- A.10 **Wales** also treats all 16 and 17 years olds as being in priority need, and specifies that 18-20 year olds who can show that they are at risk of financial or sexual exploitation are also in priority need.
- A.11 **Scotland** treats those who are 16 and 17 (or younger) under the ‘vulnerable for any other reason’ clause, and notes that such persons are likely to be at risk of sexual or financial exploitation or involvement in drug or solvent abuse, ‘and hence vulnerable’. Its guidelines further note that young people may be otherwise at risk of sexual or financial exploitation or involvement in serious drug, alcohol, or solvent abuse (even if they are over 17) because of the circumstances in which they are living. This applies to those over 17, and no upper age limit is fixed; local authorities are required to use their own discretion.

### *Care leavers*

- A.12 In **England, Scotland** and **Wales**, guidelines specify that care leavers aged 18 to 20 should be found to be in priority need.<sup>7</sup>
- A.13 **England** makes the further provision that care leavers who are aged over 21 and are also vulnerable as a result of being looked after, accommodated or fostered by the local authority should be awarded priority need status.
- A.14 **Scotland** specifies that in addition to those care leavers who automatically qualify as being in priority need (i.e. they are aged 18 to 20 and were looked after by a local authority at school leaving age or later), there may be other care leavers for whom the fact of having left care may be an ‘other special reason’ which makes them vulnerable and therefore eligible to be found in priority need.
- A.15 **Northern Ireland** makes no special provision beyond the priority need category of young persons (16 to 21 years) who satisfy the NIHE that they are at risk of financial or sexual exploitation. Care leavers may, however, be classed as vulnerable under the ‘other special reason’ category. Under the Children (NI) Order 1995, Health and Social Services Boards or Trusts have a duty to advise, assist and befriend a young person who has been looked after by the local authority after they have reached the age of 16 until they reach the age of 21. This Order does not place any duty upon the NIHE.

### *Ex-members of the armed forces*

- A.16 **English** guidelines specify that those who are vulnerable as a result of spending time in the armed forces may qualify for priority need.
- A.17 **Wales** makes provision for this group to be classed as being in priority need without the additional requirement for vulnerability to be established.

---

<sup>7</sup> **England** includes as care leavers only those who were looked after, accommodated or fostered when aged 16 or 17, and excludes care leavers (up to the age of 24) who are in full time further or higher education. The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 requires SSAs to provide accommodation to these people if their term time accommodation is not available during a vacation. **Scotland** includes those who were looked after by a local authority at school leaving age or later.

A.18 **Scottish** guidelines specify that persons who have been discharged from the armed forces may be vulnerable and therefore in priority need.

A.19 **Northern Ireland** makes no special provision.

*Those released from prison or custody*

A.20 **English** guidelines specify that those who are vulnerable as a result of spending time in prison or custody may qualify for priority need. It is also stated that it is envisaged that only a minority will be classed as ‘vulnerable’ under this category.

A.21 **Wales** makes provision for this group to be classed as being in priority need without the additional requirement for vulnerability to be established.

A.22 **Scottish** guidelines refer to people recently discharged from institutions, i.e. not only those released from prison but also hospital leavers. Leaving institutional care may count as an ‘other special reason’ why persons might be vulnerable and therefore in priority need.

A.23 **Northern Ireland** makes no special provision.

*Other groups*

A.24 **England** and **Scotland** identify other groups who may be found to be vulnerable and therefore in priority need for some ‘other special reason’. Specified are: the chronically sick, for example people with AIDS or HIV-related illnesses; former asylum seekers who have been granted refugee status or exceptional leave to remain; and (in Scotland only) women who have recently experienced miscarriage or abortion.

## ANNEX B: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NIHE / LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- B.1 The NIHE's duties include provision of advice and assistance, and temporary and/or permanent accommodation for certain groups of homeless persons, depending on an assessment of each person's case. Below, the NIHE's duties are given, with notes where practice differs from Great Britain.
- B.2 If the NIHE has reason to believe that a person may be homeless and have a priority need they must provide temporary accommodation while continuing their inquiries relating to that person.
- B.3 **No priority need:** If the NIHE finds that a person is homeless but does *not* have a priority need, the remaining duty is to provide them with written notification of the decision and reasons for it as well as advice and assistance to help the applicant obtain accommodation for him or herself. *Scottish guidelines make similar provision. In England and Wales, where a person is found to be not in priority need but still unintentionally homeless, there is a duty to provide advice and assistance and a power to secure accommodation. Where a person is not in priority need but is intentionally homeless (or threatened with homelessness), authorities only have a duty to provide advice and assistance.*
- B.4 *Where a person is **threatened** with homelessness and not in priority need, English authorities have a duty to provide advice and assistance, and a power to take reasonable steps to ensure that accommodation does not cease to be available. Scottish guidelines state that the local authority need only provide advice and assistance.*
- B.5 **Priority need:** If the finding is that a person is homeless and has a priority need the NIHE must provide temporary accommodation for the person while assessing whether they are intentionally homeless or not. The NIHE also has a duty at this time to provide the homeless person with advice and assistance in finding accommodation.
- B.6 **Priority need + intentionally homeless:** If the finding is that the person is homeless, has a priority need and is intentionally homeless, the NIHE must provide temporary accommodation for a reasonable period to enable them to find alternative permanent accommodation, provide advice and assistance on finding accommodation, arrange to store personal possessions if required and arrange transport to temporary accommodation if necessary. *English, Scottish and Welsh authorities have a duty to provide advice and assistance and to secure accommodation for such period as will give applicant a reasonable period to secure accommodation for him or herself.*
- B.7 *Where a person is intentionally **threatened** with homelessness, English and Scottish guidelines specify that local authorities have a duty to provide advice and assistance, regardless of whether or not there is a priority need.*
- B.8 **Priority need + unintentionally homeless:** If the NIHE finds that a person is homeless, has a priority need and is not intentionally homeless it must secure suitable accommodation for that person. This may include permanent accommodation through

the Housing Selection Scheme, which governs allocations of social housing, or temporary accommodation provided on an indefinite basis. *English, Welsh and Scottish authorities have a similar duty to secure accommodation.*

- B.9 *In cases of **threatened** homelessness for the above persons, English, Scottish and Welsh authorities have a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that accommodation does not cease to be available. Scottish guidelines state that there is no requirement that this should be a person's existing accommodation, though this will often be the obvious choice.*
- B.10 **Threatened homelessness in NI:** In all cases where a person is threatened with homelessness, the NIHE must take reasonable steps to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available for their occupation.
- B.11 **Ineligible persons:** English guidelines state that no duty is owed to applicants who are ineligible for assistance or not homeless, but homelessness advice must be available to them. Scottish guidelines note that if an applicant is assessed as neither homeless nor potentially homeless, the local authority has no duty towards him or her under the homelessness legislation (though it may have a duty under other legislation).

## ANNEX C: NIHE RECOMMENDATIONS WITH A CROSS-AGENCY DIMENSION

C.1 The NIHE has a commitment to review both its Housing Selection Scheme and its *Homelessness Strategy*. The *Homelessness Strategy* contains 62 recommendations, which are detailed further in its Implementation Plan. Below, those recommendations with a preventative or cross-agency dimension are outlined.

- a. **Legislative/Housing Policy Changes:** Finalise and publish an Equality Impact Assessment Report on homelessness policy and ensure ongoing monitoring for adverse impacts
- b. **Nature and extent of homelessness:** Carry out specific research into the nature and extent of rural homelessness (report due Sept 03), rough sleeping (due Aug 03), older homelessness (June 02) and ex-offenders (Nov 03)
- c. **Prevention:** Develop and implement a primary prevention strategy
- d. Establish a methodology to track the level of repeat homelessness
- e. **Temporary/Permanent Accommodation:** Seek the agreement of the DSD for the use of a special acquisition policy to deal with individual homeless households with special needs for whom normal supply will not meet need within a reasonable period of time
- f. **Identifying Need/Assessment:** Assess accommodation/support needs of existing long-term hostel residents (and match needs to new supply)
- g. Develop and evaluate a multi-disciplinary homeless needs assessment team (Belfast initially) which will include an assessment service for direct access hostels
- h. **Plans:** Develop Area Homeless Action Plans to assess all homeless needs and service requirements
- i. **Families/Single Parents:** Finalise and publish joint research on families with children in conjunction with the Western Health and Social Services Board
- j. Introduce a tenancy support scheme for young mothers
- k. **Domestic Violence:** Assist Women's Aid to carry out a fundamental review of the need for refuges and the service they provide
- l. Introduce a tenancy support scheme for victims of domestic violence
- m. **Young People/Single Homeless:** Formalise joint protocols with Health and Social Services Boards/Trusts in relation to young people, particularly under 18 year olds.
- n. Publish joint research with Simon Community on young people leaving care (due Sept 02)

- o. Encourage the development of wider housing options specifically for young people, including ‘supported lodging schemes’
  - p. Develop and/or expand additional and existing Rent Guarantee Schemes
  - q. Develop appropriate floating support models for young people leaving care/single homeless to help sustain tenancies
  - r. **Mental Illness/Addiction:** Evaluate the Belfast Homeless Support Team model and its relationship to the proposed multi-disciplinary homeless needs assessment team
  - s. Introduce floating support to help sustain tenancies for those with mental health/addiction issues
  - t. **Physical well-being/Physical Disability:** Promote a good practice model developed by North and West Belfast HSST
  - u. **Rough Sleepers:** Complete evaluation of ‘outreach’ services in Belfast
  - v. Implement appropriate actions arising from commissioned research on rough sleeping
  - w. **Leaving the Criminal Justice System:** Contribute to Probation Board for Northern Ireland Accommodation Strategy
  - x. Develop appropriate floating support initiative in conjunction with Probation Board for NI
  - y. **Sex Offenders:** Assist in the development of risk management strategy within suitable accommodation
  - z. **Service Delivery Issues:** Establish a multi-agency group to oversee implementation
- C.2 A multi-disciplinary team of senior representatives from Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts, the Probation Board for NI, the voluntary sector and the Housing Executive will oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the Review.
- C.3 The NIHE will continue to develop and refine its policies and procedures. Increasingly the role of strategic partners will become essential to delivery, and their capacity to become involved will be a key factor to achieving success.
- C.4 The NIHE will continue to respond to wider developments in the housing sector including government policy and any relevant research or best practice emerging. As such the Review is not a static entity, it will continue to evolve and develop.

## ANNEX D: DECISIONS TAKEN ON HOMELESSNESS APPLICATIONS (UK)<sup>8</sup>

<b>Decision taken</b>	<b>N Ireland 01/02</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>England 01/02</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Wales 01/02</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Scotland 99/00</b>	<b>%</b>
Unintentionally homeless + priority need (FDA)	7,374	<b>52</b>	118,360	<b>45</b>	5,333	<b>38</b>	18,000	<b>39</b>
<i>Intentionally homeless and in priority need</i>	3,640 <sup>9</sup>	<b>25</b>	8,510	<b>3</b>	511	<b>4</b>	2,500	<b>6</b>
<i>Homeless not in priority need</i>			59,000	<b>23</b>	3,965	<b>28</b>	13,700	<b>28</b>
Not homeless	3,376	<b>23</b>	74,990	<b>29</b>	4,140	<b>30</b>	6,600	<b>14</b>
Ineligible or lost contact	-	-	-	-	33 <sup>10</sup>	<b>0.2</b>	5,300 <sup>11</sup>	<b>12</b>
<b>Total presenting</b>	<b>14,164</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>260,860</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,982</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>46,000</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>8</sup> The 2001 figures for Wales incorporate (from June onwards) Wales' new priority need categories resulting from the Housing Order 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Intentionally homeless.

<sup>10</sup> Ineligible.

<sup>11</sup> Lost contact.