



## Homelessness in Wales, 2016-17

27 July 2017  
SFR 85/2017

The release provides summary information on statutory homelessness covering households applying to local authorities for housing assistance under the Housing Act (Wales) 2014. Statutory homelessness does not include persons sleeping rough. Information on persons sleeping rough is available from an [annual national rough sleeper count](#).

**9,210 households**  
**Threatened with**  
**Homelessness**  
**(Section 66)**

During 2016-17, 9,210 households were assessed as threatened with homelessness within 56 days. For 5,718 households (62 per cent), homelessness was successfully prevented for at least 6 months.

**62%**  
**Households**  
**Successfully Prevented**

During 2016-17, 10,884 households were assessed as homeless and owed a duty to help secure accommodation. Of these, 4,500 households (41 per cent) were successfully relieved of their homelessness and helped to secure accommodation that was likely to last for 6 months.

**10,884**  
**Homeless**  
**Households**  
**(Section 73)**

**41%**  
**Households**  
**Successfully Relieved**

**2,076**  
**Unintentionally**  
**homeless and in**  
**priority need**

During 2016-17, 2,076 households were assessed to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need. Of these, 1,674 (81 per cent) households were positively discharged<sup>1</sup> through acceptance of settled suitable accommodation.

**81%**  
**Positively Discharged**

### Temporary accommodation

- At 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017, 2,013 households were in temporary accommodation across Wales.
- At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, 189 households were in bed and breakfast accommodation.

### About this release

This release provides summary information on local housing authorities' activities under [the Housing Wales Act 2014](#). This includes the prevention and relief of homelessness as well as the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation.

This release focuses primarily on activity during 2016-17. Comparisons with 2015-16 data should be treated with caution due to data quality issues in 2015-16 and changes made to the data collection for 2016-17. Homelessness prevention is a Well Being of Future Generations National Indicator.

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<sup>1</sup> The successful relief of homelessness under Section 75 is referred to as a 'positive discharge' and the local authority must secure suitable accommodation

# 1. Introduction

This is the second in a series of annual statistical releases relating to statutory homelessness under the new homelessness legislation introduced on 27th April 2015 (Part 2 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)).

The main aim of the new legislation is to reduce levels of homelessness by placing prevention at the centre of local authority duties to help everyone at risk rather than just those in priority need groups. Advice on the duties under this legislation is given in the [Homelessness Code of Guidance \(revised 2016\)](#).

## 1.1 Structure of release

We reviewed the content and structure of last year's statistical release, and have made a number of changes to the release to improve the accessibility and ease of reference to the information for end users. Changes include the replacement of a number of detailed tables with summary charts and the publication of a separate Quality information report. The complete underlying data set is published on StatsWales.

The broad structure of the release is as follows:

- **Data Limitations:** Section 2 of this release provides important summary information about the limitations of the data.
- **Assessment Outcomes:** Sections 3 and 4 cover the outcomes of assessments made by local authorities under Section 62 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 on households who apply to the authority for housing assistance because they are homeless or threatened with homelessness. It is possible for a single household to have up to three separate outcomes under this process depending on the results of the duty owed. It provides all final outcomes reached during the financial year, regardless of when the application was made.
- **Prevention and Relief:** Sections 5 to 7 cover the actions taken to prevent or relieve homeless and information on the age, gender and ethnicity of applicants.
- **Priority need and reasons for homelessness:** Sections 8 and 9 cover the types of priority need for those assessed under Section 75 of the Act as being eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need. It also covers the main reasons why households are either threatened with homelessness or become homeless.
- **Temporary Accommodation:** Section 10 of this release covers households that are in temporary accommodation at 31 March 2017.

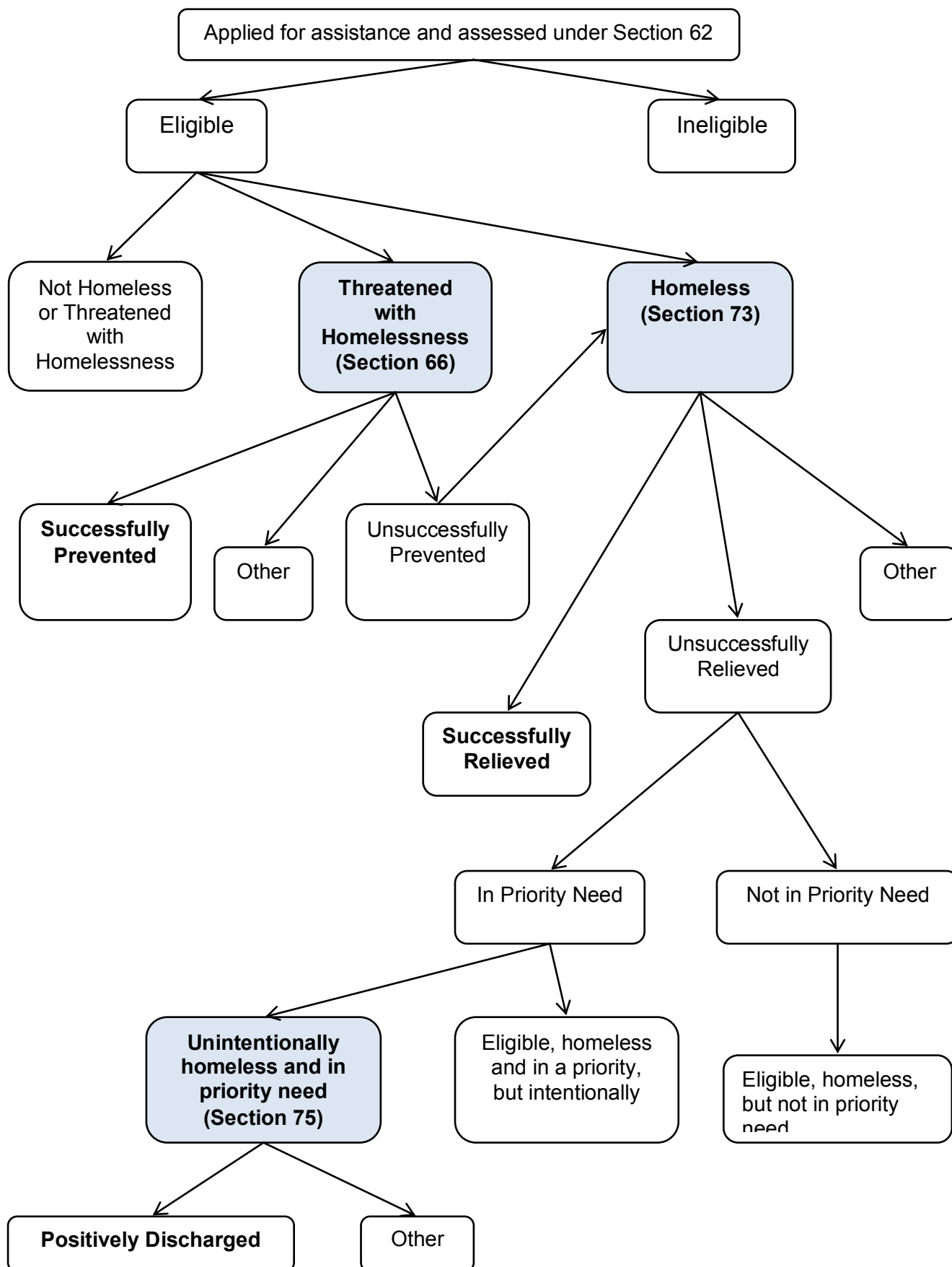
The separate Homelessness in Wales [Quality report](#) includes information on the following headings and should be read in conjunction with this statistical release.

- Policy and operational context
- Users and Uses
- Strengths and limitations of the data
- Data Processing Cycle
- Quality
- Administrative data quality assurance

We would welcome any feedback on these changes. Please provide your comments by email to [stats.housing@gov.wales](mailto:stats.housing@gov.wales).

Disclosure control has been applied to the figures in this release and to accompanying data on [StatsWales](#). All figures less than 3, and percentages based on less than 3 have been suppressed and shown as a '\*'. All other figures are rounded independently to the nearest 3. As a result, there may be a difference between the sum of the constituent items and the total. All percentages quoted in this report were calculated using the unrounded data.

This release presents information on the outcomes following assessments made about households who apply for assistance with housing and the ending of duties by local authorities under Section 62 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#). It is possible for a single household to have up to three separate outcomes under this process depending on the results of the duty owed under the Act. A brief outline of the assessment process is shown in the flowchart below.



1 - 'Other' includes assistance refused, non co-operation and other reasons

## 2. Limitations of data

It is not possible to directly compare the number of 'homeless households' collected under the current and previous legislations (please see Comparability section of [Quality report](#)).

A number of factors impacted on the quality and accuracy of the data collected and published on statutory homeless during 2015-16, including:

- timing of the legislative changes
- recording of outcomes data (with the possibility of multiple outcomes for individuals)
- delays in the change over of IT reporting systems to cover the new legislation

A more detailed outline of these issues is available in section 2 of the [2015-16 annual release](#). In light of concerns over data quality for 2015-16 a temporary de-designation of the Homelessness Statistics data for 2015-16 was agreed with the UK Statistics Authority.

We continued to work closely with both policy colleagues and local authority data providers throughout 2016-17. We are confident that the quality and accuracy issues experienced during the previous year have now been resolved. Please see [Annex A](#) for additional quality information relating to 2016-17 data together with the accompanying [Quality report](#) for detailed information on the data collection process, quality and context.

Care should be taken when comparing 2016-17 homelessness data with data for 2015-16. This is due both to the data quality issues for 2015-16 and the additions and changes to the quarterly and annual returns for 2016-17 which are outlined in detail in [Annex A](#) of this release.

The temporary National Statistics de-designation came to an end in July 2017 following discussion with the Office for Statistics Regulation which is the regulatory arm of the UK Statistics Authority. [Further information is available here](#).

[Further information on the designation of National Statistics is available here](#).

## 3. Homelessness prevention

In its broadest terms, '**homelessness prevention**' is where a local authority takes positive action to provide housing assistance to someone who the authority considers is threatened with homelessness within 56 days. Prevention work can also be undertaken before meeting the statutory definition, but would not then be recorded against Section 66 prevention outcomes.

Under the new legislation, the outcome of a duty is recorded at each stage following the Section 62 (application for assistance with housing) assessment.

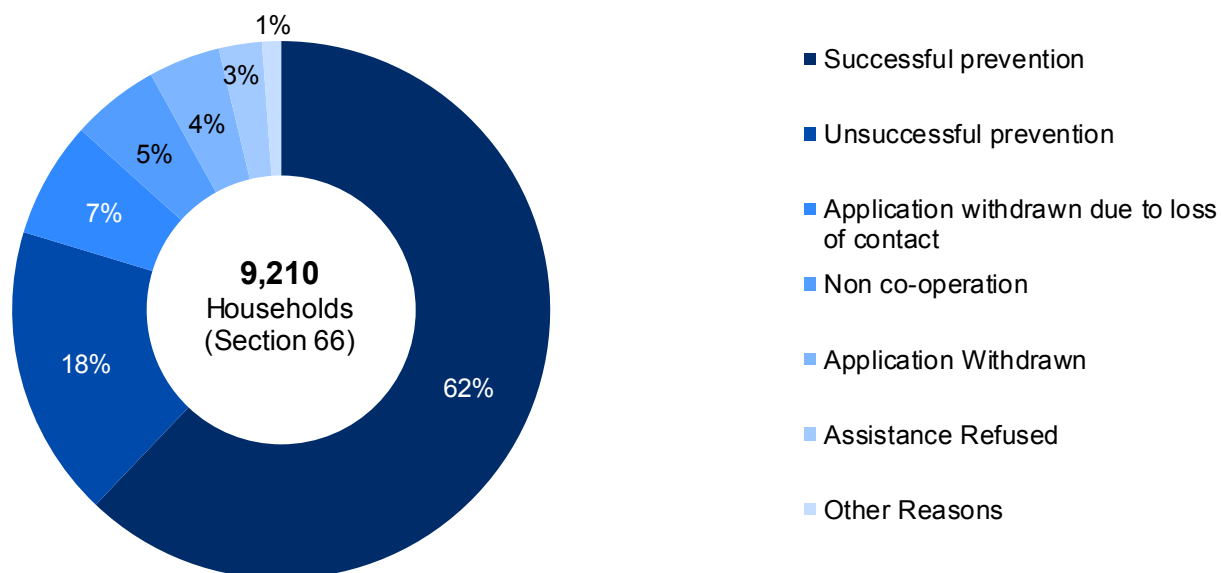
**It is possible for up to 3 different outcomes to be recorded for each individual household. This may result in a household being recorded in Charts 1, 2 and 3 below.** Further information is available in [Annex B \(Glossary\)](#) of this release.

The assessment process will not always result in a household being found to be eligible for assistance nor will it always result in a household being found to be either threatened with homelessness within 56 days or homeless.

During 2016-17 following a Section 62 assessment, 450 households were assessed as ineligible<sup>2</sup>, and in a further 4,749 cases the household was assessed as being neither homeless nor threatened with homelessness.

During 2016-17, following a Section 62 assessment, a total of 9,210 households in Wales were assessed as being threatened with homelessness within 56 days. [Chart 1](#) below shows the outcomes for those households.

**Chart 1. Percentage of households found to be eligible and threatened with homelessness (Section 66), during 2016-17**



- During 2016-17, homelessness was successfully prevented for at least 6 months for 62 per cent (5,718 households) of the 9,210 households threatened with homelessness. This compares with a successful homelessness prevention rate of 65 per cent during 2015-16.
- For a further 18 per cent (1,617 households), prevention for at least 6 months was unsuccessful. In these cases, the applying households were discharged and became statutorily homeless<sup>3</sup> and may be owed a duty under Section 73.
- For the remaining 1,872 households threatened with homelessness during 2016-17, the prevention duty was brought to an end. The main reason for this was the application being withdrawn (including through loss of contact) which accounted for 11 per cent of all households assessed. Non co-operation was the reason given for 5 per cent of cases and refusal of assistance for 3 per cent ([Chart 1](#)).

Further information on how these terms should be interpreted is available on the guidance and definitions section of the [data collection forms](#).

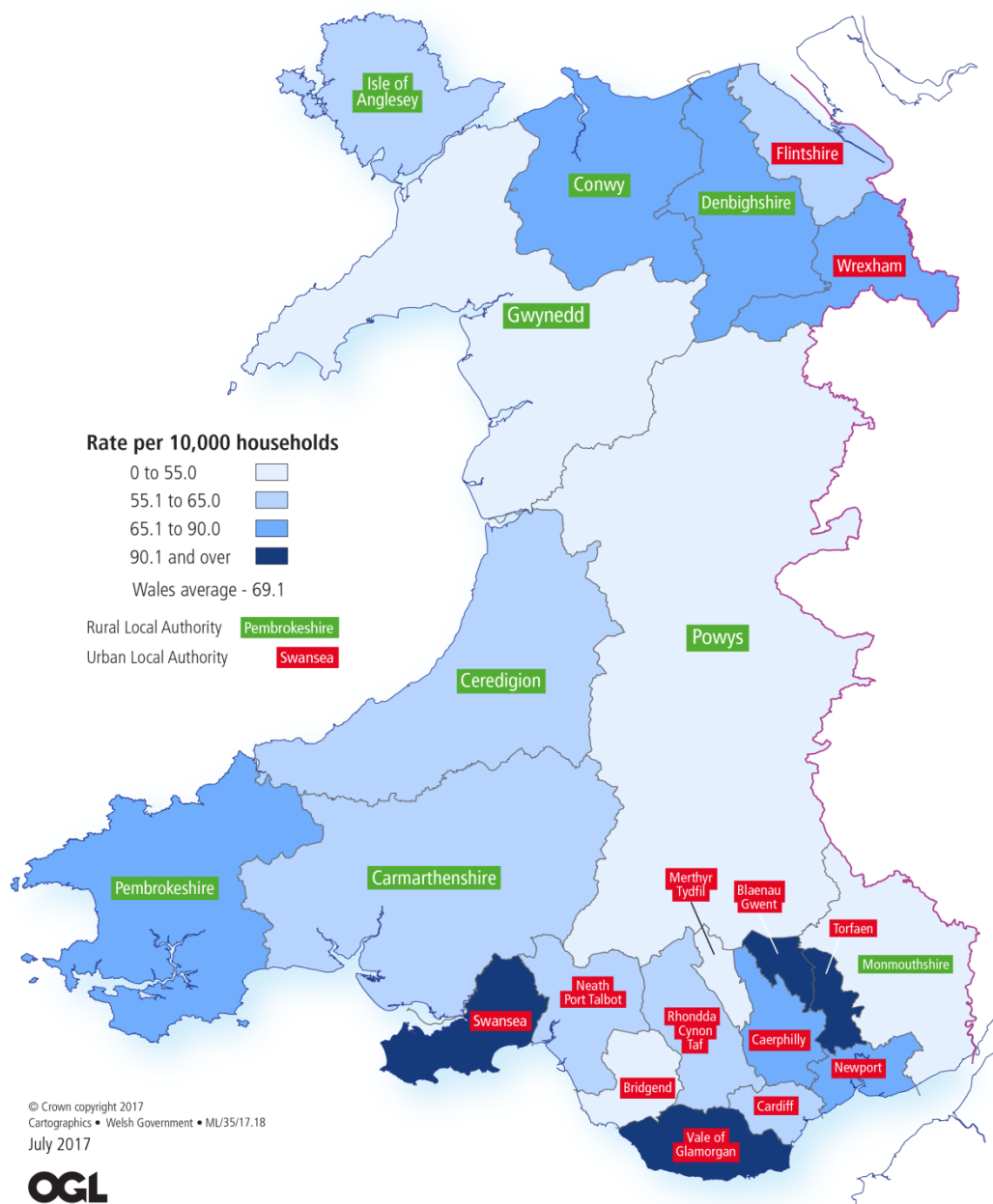
<sup>2</sup> Housing authorities need to satisfy themselves that applicants are eligible before providing housing assistance. The provisions on eligibility are complex and housing authorities need to ensure that they have procedures in place to carry out appropriate checks on housing applicants.

<sup>3</sup> Statutorily homeless as defined within Section 55 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Maps 1 and 2 below show the rate of households threatened with homelessness and the rate of those successfully prevented from homelessness at an individual local authority level.

## Homelessness

**MAP 1:** Households assessed as threatened with homelessness (Section 66) during 2016-17 - Rate per 10,000 households



- During 2016-17, Swansea reported the highest number of households assessed as threatened with homelessness within 56 days at 1,143 households. However, taking into account the number of households in each area, the highest rate was seen in Torfaen at 109.8 per 10,000 households<sup>4</sup>.
- Methyr Tydfil reported the lowest number of households assessed as threatened with homelessness at 102 households but the lowest rate was in Powys at 29.3 per 10,000 households. In Wales as a

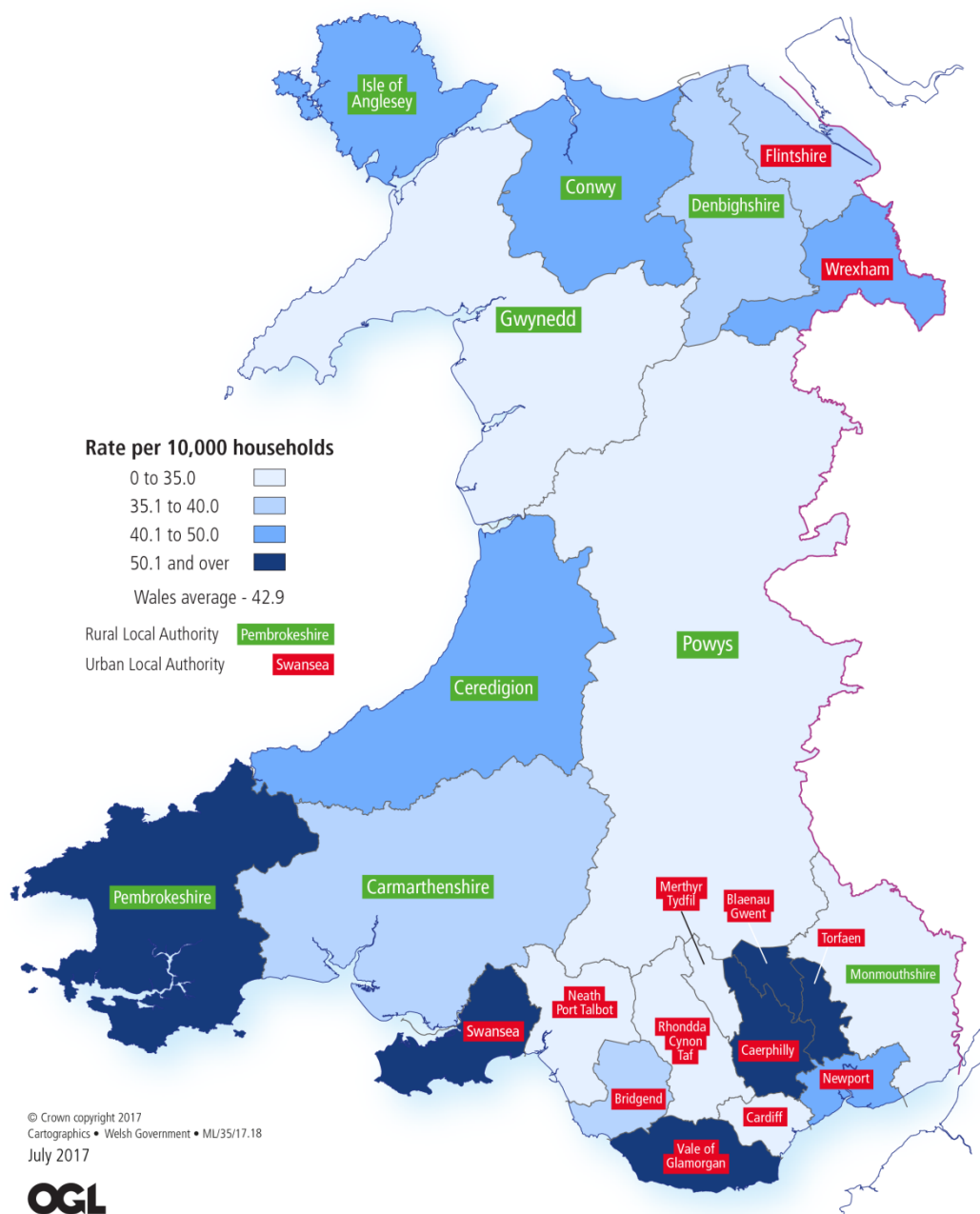
<sup>4</sup> The household estimates used in this release are the Welsh Government mid-2015 household estimates available from the [StatsWales website](http://stats.wales.gov.uk/).



whole, 69.1 per 10,000 households were assessed as being threatened with homelessness in 2016-17. This compares with a rate of 53.7 a year earlier.

# Homelessness

**MAP 2:** Households successfully prevented from homelessness during 2016-17 - Rate per 10,000 households



The number of households for whom homelessness was successfully prevented for at least 6 months, as a rate per 10,000 households<sup>5</sup> is a [Well Being of Future Generations National Indicator](#). During 2016-17 the rate for Wales was 42.9 per 10,000 households compared with 34.7 during 2015-16 . The higher rate during 2016-17 reflects the increased number of households assessed as being threatened with homelessness (see Map 1).

<sup>5</sup> The rate will vary at an individual local authority level depending on the number of households that are assessed as threatened with homelessness within 56 days. Information is also shown at a Wales level in Chart 1 on the number of households successfully prevented from homelessness for at least 6 months, expressed as a percentage of the numbers assessed as threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

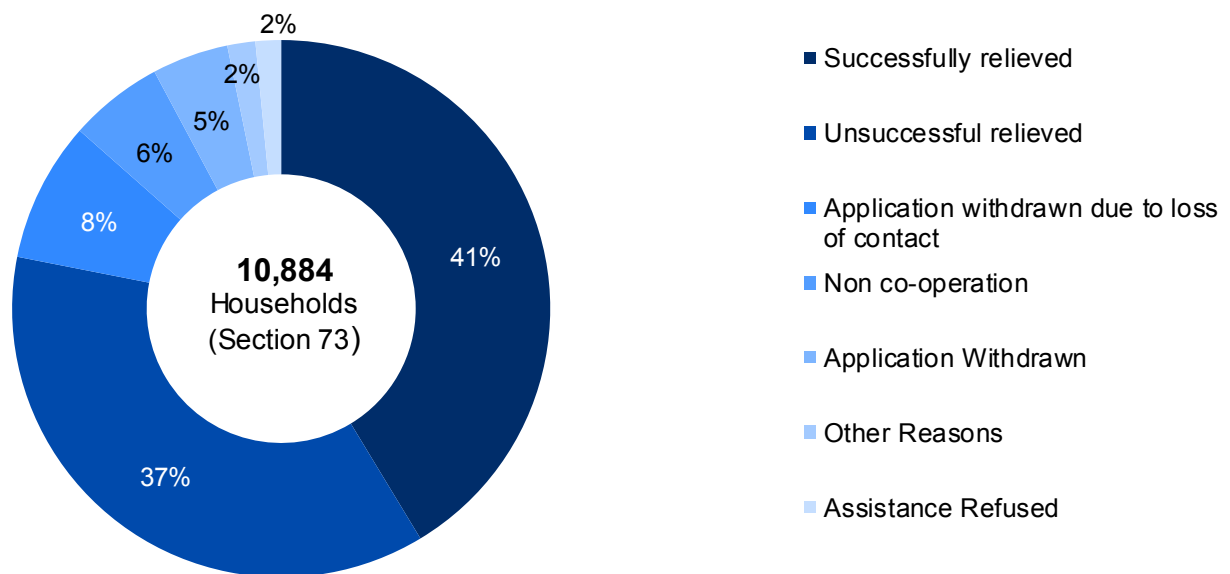


- During 2016-17, Swansea recorded the highest number of households for whom homelessness was successfully prevented for at least 6 months at 831 households, and, taking into account the number of households in each area, Swansea also had the highest rate of successful prevention at 78.1 per 10,000 households.
- Merthyr Tydfil reported the lowest number of successful prevention outcomes (63) whilst Powys reported the lowest rate (17.9 per 10,000 households).
- During 2016-17, 9 of the 22 local authorities had rates above the Wales average of 42.9 per 10,000 households.

#### 4. Relief of homelessness under duty to help secure accommodation (Section 73)

[The Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) introduced a new duty for all local authorities in Wales to provide help to any homeless person to help them secure a home. Following notification that an applicant is homeless, the local authority will be under a duty (Section 73) to take reasonable steps to help to secure accommodation. Further information is available in the [Homelessness Code of Guidance \(revised 2016\)](#).

**Chart 2. Percentage of households assessed as homeless under duty to help secure accommodation (Section 73) during 2016-17 (a)**



Source: Statutory Homelessness data collection from local authorities

(a) Figures do not equal 100 due to rounding

- During 2016-17, a total of 10,884 households were assessed as being homeless and owed a duty to help to secure accommodation (under Section 73 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)).
- 41 per cent (4,500 households) of those households assessed as homeless during 2016-17 were relieved of their homelessness following intervention by the local authority and helped to secure accommodation that was likely to last for 6 months. This was down on the 45 per cent of cases of successful relief during 2015-16.

- In a further 3,999 cases (37 per cent), homelessness was not relieved and the duty was ended<sup>6</sup>. In these cases the assessments were reviewed to establish whether the household was eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need.
- For the remaining 2,385 households assessed as homeless during 2016-17, the Section 73 duty was brought to an end. The main reason reported for the Section 73 duty ending was withdrawal of the application (including withdrawn due to loss of contact) which accounted for 13 per cent of all households assessed as homelessness.
- Non co-operation was the reason given for 6 per cent of cases and refusal of assistance and 'other' reasons both accounted for 2 per cent of all cases where Section 73 duty ended ([Chart 2](#)).

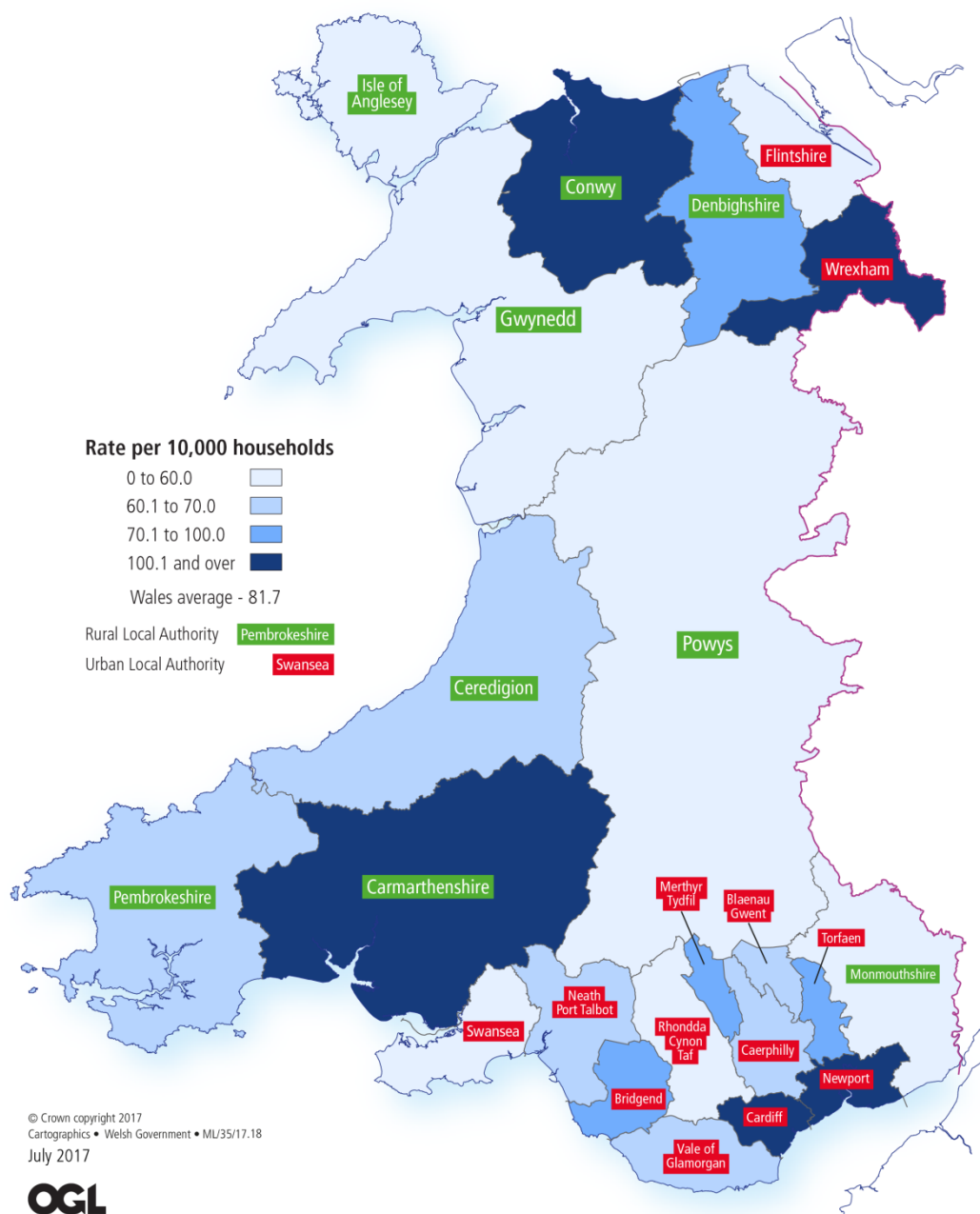
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<sup>6</sup> Under Section 74.2 or 74.3 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Map 3 below shows the rate of households assessed as homeless during 2016-17 at an individual local authority level.

## Homelessness

**MAP 3:** Households assessed as homeless (Section 73)  
during 2016-17 - Rate per 10,000 households



- Cardiff reported the highest number of households assessed as homeless under Section 73 of the new legislation, at 2,163 households. Taking into account the size and number of households within each local authority, the highest rate of homeless households was in Newport at 177 per 10,000 households. This was followed by Cardiff at 145.2 per 10,000 households.
- The Isle of Anglesey reported both the lowest number of households assessed as homeless (111) households and the lowest rate (36.2 per 10,000 households).

- For Wales as a whole, 81.7 per 10,000 households were assessed as homeless in 2016-17, compared with a rate of 51.9 during 2015-16. This reflects a general increase in the number of outcomes recorded in 2016-17 which may be partially due to improvements in the data quality (see [Annex A](#) and [Quality report](#)).

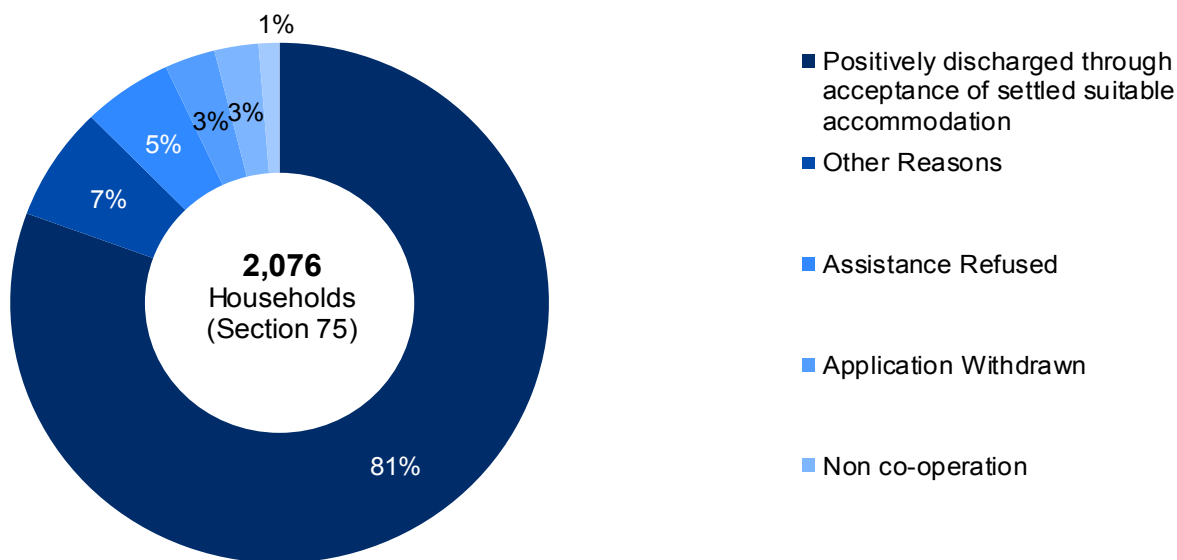
#### 4.2 Relief of homelessness under final duty (Section 75)

Under Section 75 of the new legislation, where households were owed a duty under Section 73 because they were homeless and this duty has ended, the assessment is reviewed.

If the household is homeless, has a priority need and is unintentionally homeless, the local authority will be under a duty to secure suitable accommodation. The successful relief of homelessness under Section 75 is referred to as a 'positive discharge', and the local authority must secure suitable accommodation.

The categories of priority need are as outlined in [Annex B \(Glossary\)](#) of this release and further information is available in the [Homelessness Code of Guidance \(revised 2016\)](#).

**Chart 3. Percentage of homeless households owed a under final duty (Section 75), during 2016-17**



Source: Statutory Homelessness data collection from local authorities

- During 2016-17, a total of 2,076 households were accepted as being eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need and were owed a duty for accommodation to be secured (under Section 75 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)).
- 1,674 households (81 per cent) were positively discharged/relieved through accepting an offer of suitable accommodation. This compares with 1,245 households (80 per cent) during 2015-16.
- For the remaining 402 households assessed as homelessness during 2016-17, the final duty was brought to an end. Whilst 'Other' reasons were given in 7 per cent of all cases, another main reason for the Section 75 duty ending was the refusal of assistance which accounted for 5 per of all households owed a final duty under Section 75. "Application withdrawn" (including due to loss of contact) was the reason given in a further 4 per cent of cases ([Chart 3](#)).

### 4.3 Other outcomes

Whilst assistance is provided for all homeless households as part of the assessment process, this does not always result in accommodation being found. In 1,233 cases, the household was found to be homeless but not in priority need, whilst in a further 126 cases the homeless household was assessed as being eligible and in priority need but intentionally<sup>7</sup> so. The data are available on the [StatsWales website](#).

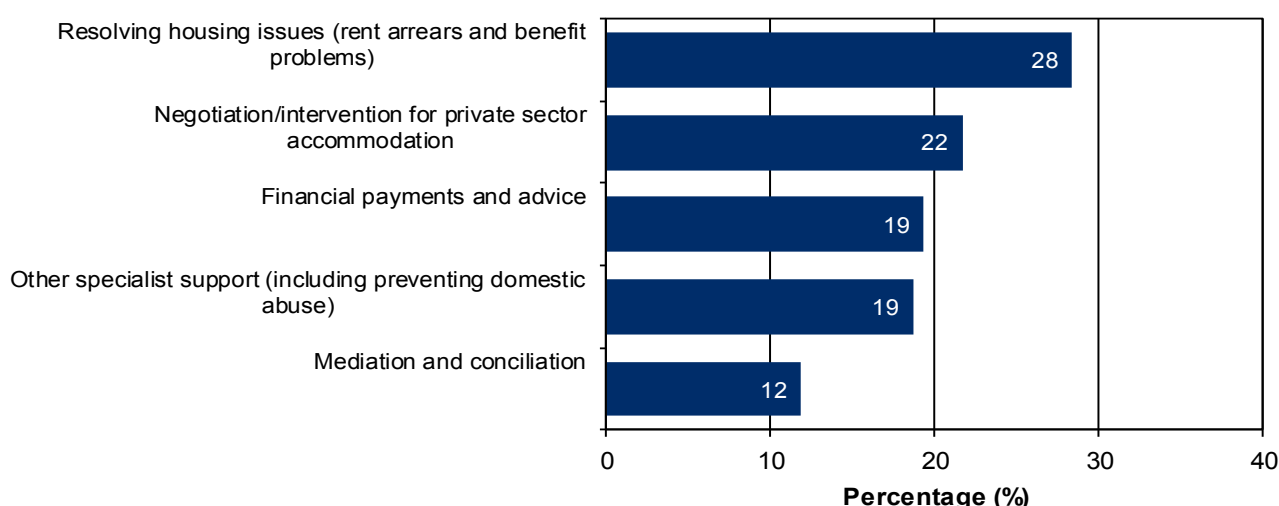
## 5. Actions taken to prevent and relieve homelessness

Local authorities were asked to provide information on the types of positive action taken during 2016-17 to both prevent homelessness for those assessed as threatened with homelessness within 56 days and to relieve homelessness for those assessed as homeless under Section 73. Prevention could result in the household either remaining within their existing home or moving to alternative accommodation.

Where more than one action contributed to preventing a household becoming homeless local authorities were asked to only record the most significant action taken.

[Chart 4](#) below shows the most significant action taken during 2016-17 to prevent homelessness occurring and allow households to remain within their existing home.

**Chart 4: Most significant action taken to successfully prevent homelessness and household remained in existing home, 2016-17 (a) (b)**



Source: Statutory Homelessness data collection from local authorities

(a) Under Section 66 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

(b) Successfully prevented refers to the number of households for whom homelessness was successfully prevented for at least 6 months as a percentage of all households assessed as being threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

- During 2016-17, in 1,338 cases the household was successfully prevented from becoming homeless, and was able to remain in their existing home. This represents almost a quarter (23 per cent) of the total 5,718 cases of successful prevention during the year which is similar to the percentage seen during 2015-16.
- Of those successfully prevented from becoming homeless, and able to remain in their existing home, over a quarter (28 per cent) were able to remain home following resolution of housing issues

<sup>7</sup> Intentionality is described in Section 77 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Each individual local authority has to nominate which specific priority need groups they apply intentionality to for the purpose of this assessment under Section 78 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

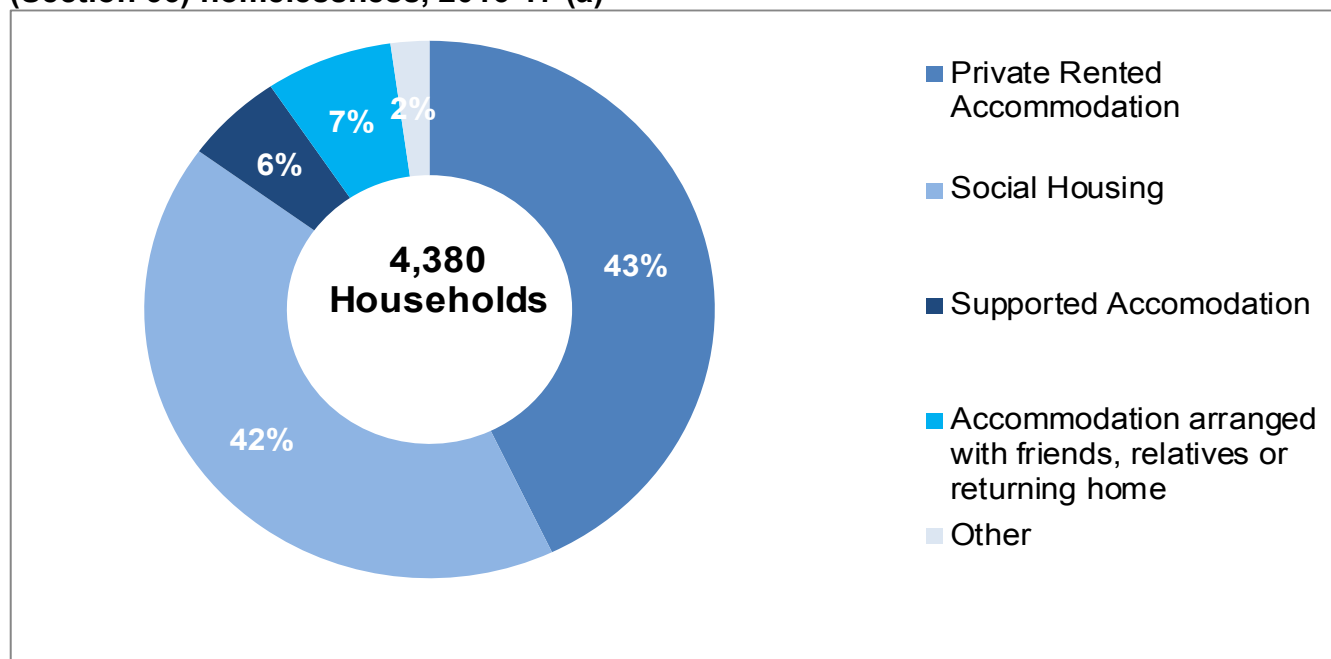
(including rent arrears and benefit problems) and a further 22 per cent following negotiation or legal advocacy such as mortgage arrears intervention or mortgage rescue.

- The use of financial payments and advice assisted 19 per cent of the 1,338 households to stay home and other specialist support (including the prevention of domestic abuse) helped a further 19 per cent ([Chart 4](#)).

[Chart 5](#) below shows the main types of alternative accommodation secured to prevent homelessness where households were unable to remain in their existing home. [Chart 6](#) shows the main types of alternative accommodation secured to relieve homelessness for those assessed as homeless (under Section 73 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)).

- During 2016-17, the two main types of alternative accommodation obtained to both prevent and relieve homelessness were 'Private rented accommodation' and 'Social Housing'. Whilst private rented accommodation was the main type used in prevention cases (43 per cent), the main type used to relieve homelessness was social housing (33 per cent) ([Charts 5](#) and [6](#)).

**Chart 5: Percentage breakdown of alternative accommodation secured to prevent (Section 66) homelessness, 2016-17 (a)**



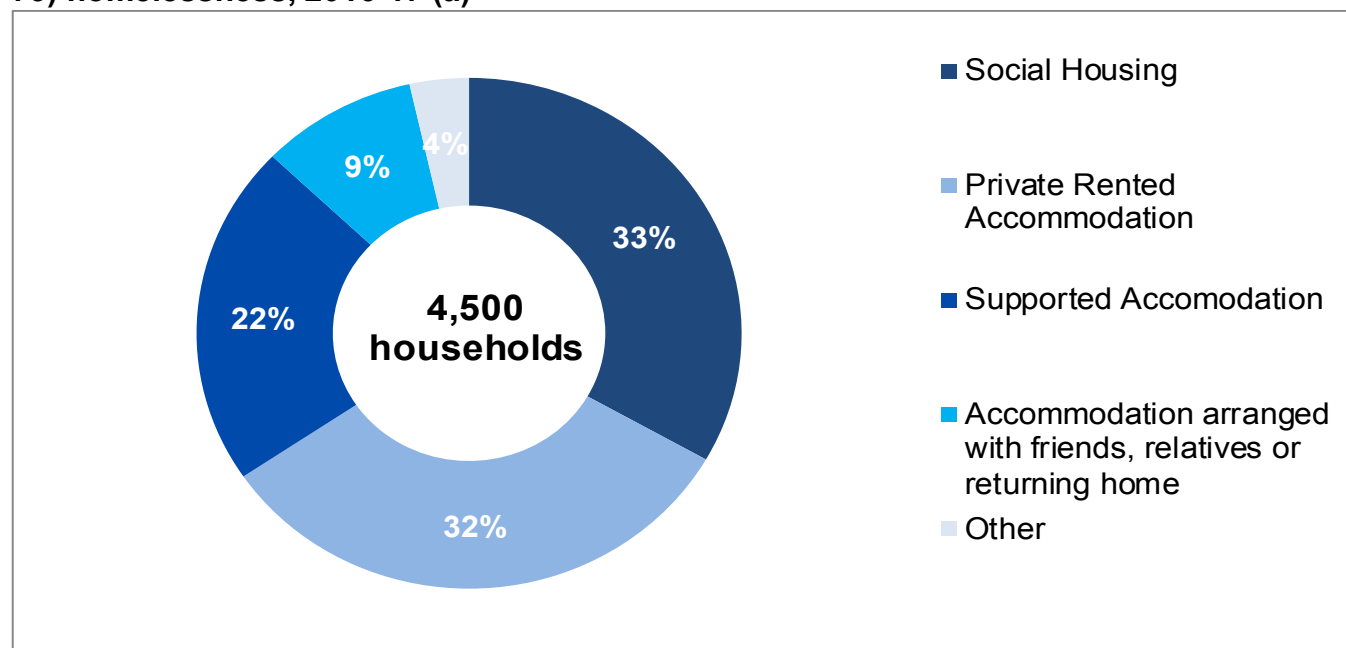
Source: Statutory Homelessness data collection from local authorities

(a) Successfully prevented refers to the number of households for whom homelessness was successfully prevented for at least 6 months as a percentage of all households assessed as being threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

- During 2016-17, in 4,380 cases the household was successfully prevented from becoming homeless due to local authority assistance in securing alternative accommodation. This represents 77 per cent of the total 5,718 cases of successful prevention during the year.

- During 2016-17, in 4,500 cases the homeless household was successfully relieved of their homelessness (under Section 73) due to local authority assistance in securing alternative accommodation. This represents 41 per cent of the total 10,882 households assessed as homeless during the year.

**Chart 6: Percentage breakdown of alternative accommodation secured to relieve (Section 73) homelessness, 2016-17 (a)**



Source: Statutory Homelessness data collection from local authorities

- (a) Successfully relieved refers to the number of households assessed as being homeless under Section 73 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 who were helped to secure accommodation that was likely to last for 6 months.

## 6. Homelessness by age, gender and ethnicity

- Of those households which were successfully prevented from becoming homeless during 2016-17, 76 per cent of the applicants were aged 25 and over. For those households successfully relieved of homelessness (under Section 73) the applicant was aged 25 and over in 72 per cent of cases. The equivalent proportion for those households positively discharged under Section 75 was 71 per cent.
- During 2016-17, the applicant was aged 18 to 25 in over a fifth (21 per cent) of households for whom homelessness was successfully prevented and in a quarter of both households successfully relieved of homelessness (under Section 73) and households positively discharged (under Section 75).
- The applicant was aged 16 to 17 in only 2 per cent of successful prevention cases, 3 per cent of cases of successful relief (under Section 73) and 4 per cent of cases of positive discharge (under Section 75).
- In over half (61 per cent) of households assessed as threatened with homelessness within 56 days (under Section 66) the applicant was female. The situation was reversed however for those households assessed as homeless (under Section 73) where in 56 per cent of cases the applicant was male.
- For homeless households positively discharged under Section 75, the applicant was female in two thirds (66 per cent) of the households. This is partly due to the fact that the most commonly stated priority need category during 2016-17 was the presence of dependent children or a pregnant woman (which accounted for 47 per cent of all Section 75 assessments during 2016-17).



- During 2016-17, in 6 per cent of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless and in 5 per cent of households successfully relieved of homelessness (under Section 73) the applicant was from a black or minority ethnic background. In comparison, the 2011 Census estimated that around 4 per cent of Wales' population were from a black or minority ethnic background.

## 7. Households accepted as homeless and in priority need (Section 75)

This section of the release covers the priority needs recorded for those households who were assessed as being eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need and for whom the local authority owed a duty to provide suitable accommodation under Section 75 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The priority need categories are defined in Section 70 of the Act. The categories of priority need are as outlined in [Annex B \(Glossary\)](#) of this release and further information is available in the [Homelessness Code of Guidance \(revised 2016\)](#).

**Table 1: Households eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need (Section 75) by priority need and household type, 2016-17. (a) (b)**

Outcomes	Number of households	Percentage (%)
Households with dependent child(ren)	864	41.7
Households where a member is pregnant and there are no other dependent children	102	4.9
Households where a member is vulnerable due to:	645	31.1
i) Old age	36	1.7
ii) Physical disability	210	10.1
iii) Mental illness / learning disability / learning difficulties	372	17.9
iv) Other special reasons	30	1.4
A care leaver or person at particular risk of sexual or financial exploitation, 18 years or over but under the age of 21	69	3.3
A 16 or 17 year old	63	3.0
A person fleeing domestic abuse or threatened abuse	237	11.4
A person leaving the armed forces	*	0.1
A former prisoner who is vulnerable as a result of having served a custodial sentence	84	4.1
Households homeless in emergency	6	0.3
<b>Total households</b>	<b>2,076</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Statutory Homelessness data collection from local authorities

(a) Under Section 75 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014

(b) All the figures are rounded independently to the nearest 3 to protect the identity of individuals. As a result, there may be a difference between the sum of the constituent items and the total.

\* The data item is disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication

- During 2016-17, a total of 2,076 households were accepted as being eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need and owed a duty to provide accommodation (under Section 75 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)). This was a third more than the previous year.
- As was the case in 2015-16, the presence of dependent children or a pregnant woman in the household was the most commonly stated priority need category, accounting for 47 per cent (966 cases) of all Section 75 assessments during 2016-17 as a whole.

- This was followed by cases where a member of the households was vulnerable due mental illness, a learning disability or learning difficulties, which accounted for 18 per cent (372 cases) of all Section 75 assessments made.
- Cases where the applicant was fleeing domestic abuse or threatened abuse accounted for a further 11 per cent (237 cases) during 2016-17 and those vulnerable due to a physical disability for 10 per cent (210 cases) ([Table 1](#)).

## **8. Main reason for household being threatened with homelessness or being homeless.**

This section of the release looks at the different reasons why households are either threatened with homelessness within 56 days or have become homeless. More detailed information including a breakdown by individual local authority is available on [StatsWales](#).

### **Threatened with homelessness**

- As was the case last year, during 2016-17, the “Loss of rented or tied accommodation” was given as the main reason in over a third of all cases where households were assessed as threatened with homelessness within 56 days.
- In almost a quarter (24 per cent) of cases, the main reason given for the household being assessed as threatened with homelessness was because “a parent, or other relative or friends were no longer willing to accommodate”. This was similar percentage to that seen in 2015-16.
- For a further 12 per cent the main reason given for the threatened homelessness was the “breakdown of a relationship with a partner”.

### **Homeless (Section 73)**

- During both 2015-16 and 2016-17, the reason given for the homelessness in over a quarter of all cases (29 per cent) was because “a parent, or other relative or friends were no longer willing to accommodate”.
- The “breakdown of a relationship with a partner” was given as the main reason for loss of home in over a fifth (21 per cent) of all Section 73 cases. Again this was a similar percentage to 2015-16.
- The “Loss of rented or tied accommodation”, was given as the main reason for homelessness in 18 per cent of Section 73 cases compared to over a third of cases where households were threatened with homelessness. For a further 12 per cent of cases, the main reason recorded was homelessness after leaving prison.

## Homeless (Section 75)

- As with Section 73 cases, the most commonly recorded reason for the homelessness was 'Parents or other relatives or friends no longer willing to accommodate' accounting for 27 per cent of all cases. The 'Loss of rented or tied accommodation' was given as the reason in a similar percentage of cases (26 per cent).
- In 22 per cent of cases, the main reasons given for homelessness under Section 75 was "Breakdown of relationship with partner".

## 9. Homeless households in temporary accommodation

This section of the release covers all homeless households who were in **temporary accommodation at the end of March 2017<sup>8</sup>**. **These figures do not cover all households placed in temporary accommodation throughout the year. They only include those households who were in temporary accommodation at the end of the period – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.**

It should be noted that, the data collected from April 2015 onwards on homeless households in temporary accommodation under [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) are not directly comparable with the information collected under the previous legislation. Further information is available in section 2 of the [2015-16 statistical release](#).

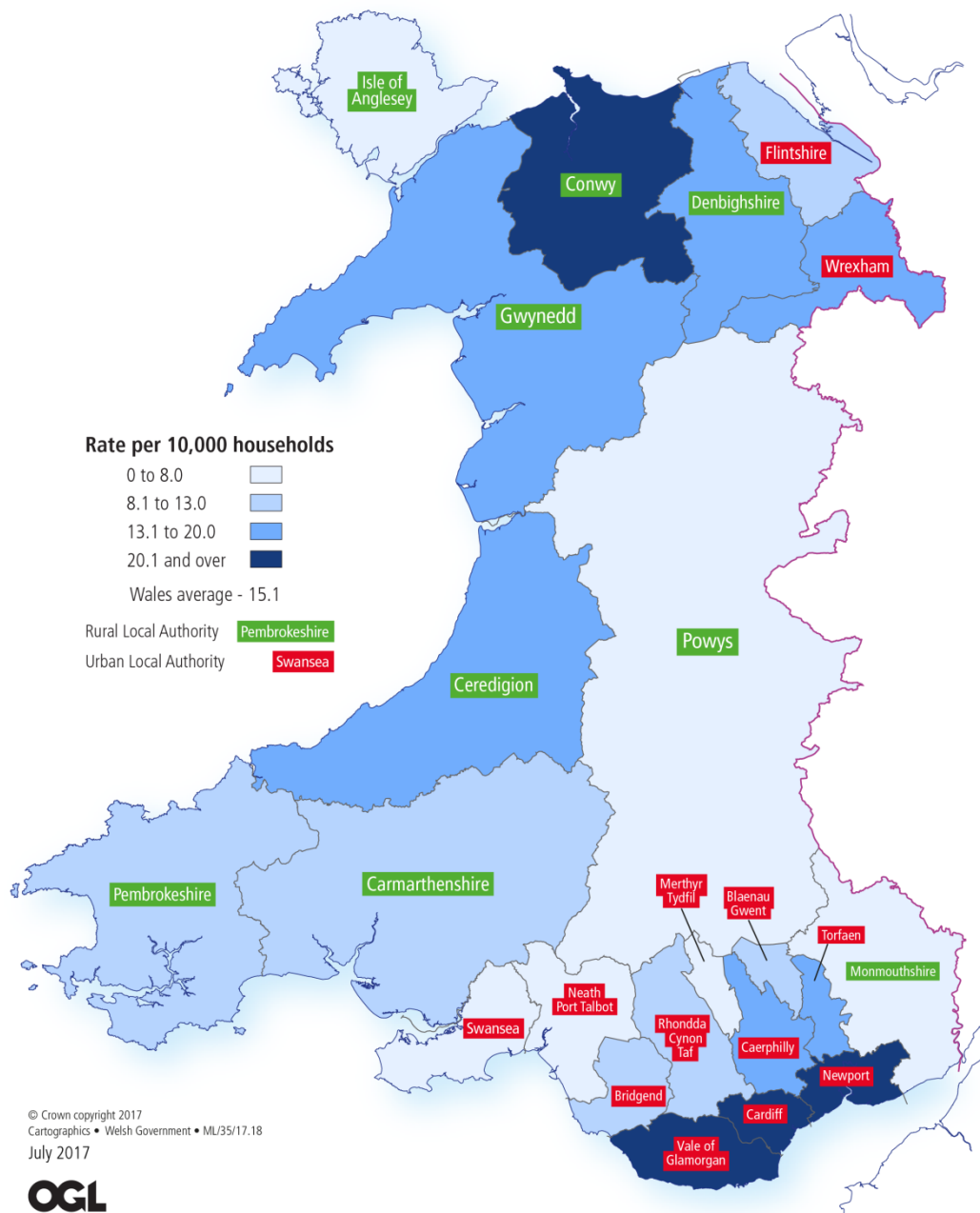
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<sup>8</sup> Households contained within this section would include those provided accommodation under the Interim Duty to provide accommodation (Section 68) either during the assessment period or following acceptance of Section 73 (Duty to help to Secure) This section will also include households accommodated under Section 75 (Duty to Secure Accommodation) and those who are found to be intentionally homeless and in priority need following the ending of Section 73.

Map 4 below shows the number of homeless households who were in temporary accommodation at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 as a rate per 10,000 households at an individual local authority level.

## Homelessness

**MAP 4:** Homeless households in temporary accommodation at 31 March 2017 - Rate per 10,000 households

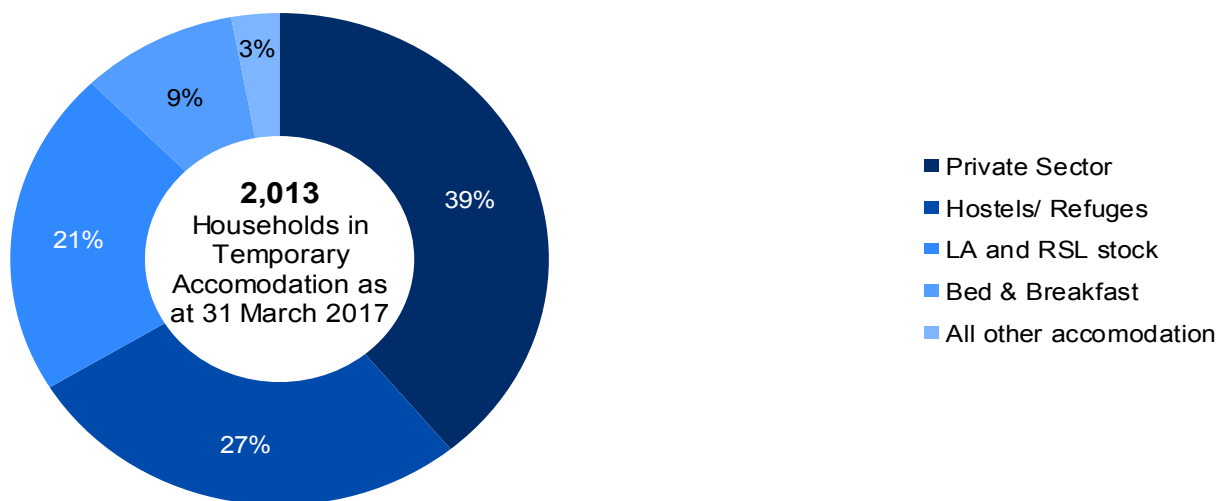


- At the end of March 2017, there were 2,013 households placed in temporary accommodation across Wales. This is an increase on the 1,875 households in temporary accommodation at the end of March 2016.

- Cardiff had both the highest number of households in temporary accommodation (582 households) and the highest rate at 39.1 per 10,000 households. Newport had the second highest number (189 households) and the second highest rate at 30.4 per 10,000 households, compared with a Wales average of 15.1 per 10,000 households.
- Merthyr Tydfil had the lowest number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of March 2017 at just 12 households while the Isle of Anglesey had the lowest rate at 3.9 per 10,000 households.

## 9.1 Types of temporary accommodation

**Chart 7: Percentage of households in temporary accommodation at 31 March 2017, by type (a) (b) (c) (d)**



Source: Statutory Homelessness data collection from local authorities

- (a) Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014  
 (b) 'Other' accommodation type includes homeless at home.  
 (c) Includes households placed directly with a private sector landlord, private sector accommodation leased by local authorities and private sector accommodation leased by registered social landlords.  
 (d) Includes local authority stock and registered social landlord stock

- Private sector accommodation was the main form of temporary accommodation used with 39 per cent of all households in temporary accommodation placed in private sector housing at the end of March 2017.
- At the end of March 2017, there were 189 households in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation, accounting for 9 per cent of all households in temporary accommodation. Of these, 9 households (5 per cent) were families with children.
- In recent years, a growing number of homeless households have been placed in hostels and refuges. At the end of March 2017, there were 549 homeless households placed in hostels or refuges, which is over a quarter (27 per cent) of all the households in temporary accommodation. Families with children accounted for over a quarter (26 per cent) of all households placed in hostels or refuges during 2016-17.

## **9.2 Temporary accommodation by household type**

- Over half (54 per cent) of the 2,013 households in temporary accommodation at the end of March 2017 were single person households.
- A further 41 per cent (816 households) were families with children; most of these households were accommodated temporarily in private sector accommodation or within local authority or Registered social landlord (RSL) stock.

## **9.3 Length of time spent in temporary accommodation**

- Over two thirds (67 per cent) of the 2,013 households in temporary accommodation at the end of March 2017 had spent less than six months in that accommodation.
- At the end of March 2017, 11 per cent (222 households) had been in temporary accommodation for more than a year. Almost half of these (102 households) were families with children. However, most of these families had been accommodated in public or private sector accommodation rather than in hostels, refuges or bed and breakfast accommodation.

## **9.4 Households leaving temporary accommodation - Discharge of duty under section 75**

- During 2016-17, over two thirds of the 2,076 households who left temporary accommodation during the year accepted an offer of accommodation through the allocation scheme (part VI 1996 Housing Act)<sup>9</sup>.
- A further 10 per cent (201 households) accepted a private sector offer and 7 per cent (156 households) voluntarily ceased to occupy accommodation made available under Section 75.

## **10. Total placements of 16 to 17 and 18 to 21 year olds in Bed and Breakfast accommodation**

Since April 2016, information has been collected centrally covering the placement of 16 to 17 year olds and 18 to 21 year old care leavers in temporary bed and breakfast accommodation under either Homelessness or Social Services legislation. This information differs to the statistics shown above as they cover every placement in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation during the year and not only those households who were in temporary bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

The information is collected in order to establish the number of placements made by Local Authorities into Bed and Breakfast accommodation to meet the immediate housing needs of all young people aged 16/17, and also 18-20 year olds (up to 21st birthday) who have previously been in care.

Care should be taken in interpreting these figures as not all local authorities were able to provide a complete set of data for the whole year. The figures are therefore likely to be an undercount<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Part VI of the 1996 Housing Act refers to the allocation of social housing and was not replaced under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Torfaen and Monmouthshire were unable to provide data for those 16 to 17 year olds placed in temporary bed and breakfast accommodation under children's social services legislation during the April to June and July to September quarters and Flintshire for the July to September, October to December and January to March quarters.

- During 2016-17 across Wales, 16 to 17 year olds were placed in temporary bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation under the current Homelessness legislation on 72 occasions and on a further 150 occasions under children's social services legislation.
- During 2016-17, care leavers aged 18 to 21 years old were placed in temporary bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation under the current Homelessness legislation on 72 occasions.

## 11. Further details

The document is available at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/homelessness/?lang=en>

## Next update

July 2018 (provisional)

## Feedback

We welcome feedback on any aspect of these statistics. We would welcome your views on the content and format of this release and accompanying StatsWales table. We would also welcome broader information on how you use these statistics. This can be provided by email to [stats.housing@gov.wales](mailto:stats.housing@gov.wales).

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## **Annex A: Data quality**

Information on the background, data collection and validation processes, general quality information and guidance on coherence and comparability are available in the accompanying Homelessness in Wales [Quality report](#). This annex provides detailed quality information – primarily in relation to the 2016-17 data however a summary of the factors impacting on quality for 2015-16 are also provided for context..

### **2015-16 Data**

A number of factors impacted on the quality and accuracy of the data collected and published on statutory homeless during 2015-16, including:

- timing of the legislative changes
- recording of outcomes data (with the possibility of multiple outcomes for individuals)
- delays in the change over of IT reporting systems to cover the new legislation.

A more detailed outline of these issues is available in section 2 of the [2015-16 annual release](#).

Following the introduction of new homelessness legislation and new data collection returns in April 2015, we worked closely with local authorities throughout 2015-16 to try to resolve issues with the data recording processes and to improve the quality of the data. However, there was a limit to the improvements that could be made retrospectively to the 2015-16 data and at the time of the release in August 2016 some concerns over the quality and accuracy of the data remained. In the light of these concerns over data quality a temporary de-designation of the Homelessness Statistics data for 2015-16 as National Statistics was agreed with the UK Statistics Authority. [Further information is available here](#).

### **2016-17 Data**

We have continued to work closely with policy colleagues and local authority data providers and have carried out a number of measures aimed at resolving issues with their data reporting processes and improving the quality and accuracy of the data provided. This included the provision of improved and extended guidance, changes to the format and content of the data collection returns, training events and visits to individual local authorities to resolve specific issues. We are confident that the quality and accuracy issues experienced during the 2015-16 data collection year have now been resolved.

Going forward we plan to continue working with the local authority data providers to improve and enhance their processes for ensuring that the information provided and published on statutory homelessness is accurate and of good quality. This will include providing extended guidance and instructions in relation to the reporting of Section 62 assessments and visiting local authority data suppliers to resolve any specific issues with their data recording processes.

Following discussions with the Office for Statistics Regulation, which is the regulatory arm of the UK Statistics Authority, the temporary National Statistics de-designation came to an end in July 2017.

## Improvements

Discussion with the data providers during training events / workshops held in December 2015 and June 2016 led to improvements to the accompanying guidance as well as changes in the data items collected for the 2016-17 data collection year and to the timing and processing of returns. These changes are outlined below:

### Changes to [data collection return](#)

- The guidance notes were extended and improved to ensure clarity and consistency in the recording of outcomes data.
- Extra rows were added to Table 1 from 1 April 2016 onwards covering 'Application' withdrawn' and "Application withdrawn due to loss of contact' for homelessness prevention (Section 66), homelessness relief (Section 73) and discharge of final duty (Section 75). In 2015-16 these cases may have been inaccurately recorded under 'Non-co-operation' or under 'Other' reasons.
- Row 6 of Table 2 on the annual return which had covered cases where homelessness was not prevented or relieved due to the 'Refusal of assistance, non-co-operation or other reasons' was removed from the 2016-17 form as it was no longer required.
- New information was collected in Table 1 from 1 April 2016 onwards covering the total number of assessments made under Section 62 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) during each quarter.
- From April to June 2016 onwards, local authorities were able to provide the full level of detail requested in the annual form in the quarterly returns (this was optional). This detail was not published quarterly but was used to assist the validation process both by the local authority data providers and by Welsh Government data collection team.

### New data tables

- Following discussions with policy colleagues and data providers, a further new Table (8a and 8b) was added to the quarterly returns for April to June 2016 onwards. This covered the placement of 16 to 17 year olds and 18 to 21 year old care leavers in temporary bed and breakfast accommodation under either Homelessness or Social Services legislation.

## Revisions

This release contains the final data for the 2016-17 financial year.

As part of the annual validation and quality control process, local authorities were asked to confirm all the data provided for previous quarters of the 2016-17 data collection year and where necessary revise any information previously provided.

A number of local authorities amended some of the data provided for previous quarters of 2016-17 and these revised figures will be published accordingly on [StatsWales](#).

## **Specific 2016-17 Quality and Accuracy issues**

### **Section 62 assessments**

Since 1 April 2016, data has been collected on the overall number of assessments carried out under Section 62 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#).

Under the new legislation local authorities may provide information and advice to households prior to a Section 62 assessment being made. During the validation process it became apparent that some local authorities may have been wrongly recording the provision of information and advice (Under Section 60 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) as a Section 62 assessment. Where appropriate, the Section 62 assessment figures were reviewed, challenged and revised. However, at the time, some authorities were unable to capture this information accurately and could not provide any revised figures. The information collected in relation to Section 62 assessments specifically will not be published until we are satisfied of its quality. Going forward Welsh Government will continue to collect this information but will work closely with local authority data providers to improve its accuracy including the provision of improved guidance and training as required.

### **Imputation of data**

Due to minor discrepancies between the headline figures and the sum of detailed breakdowns for one local authority (Neath Port Talbot), the detailed breakdown figures were adjusted slightly. The detailed breakdowns were recalibrated to the headline totals to ensure consistency.

The impact was small and the authority is content with this approach. There was no need to recalibrate/adjust figures for any other local authorities.

## **Annex B: Glossary**

### **Symbols**

The following symbols may have been used in this release:

- negligible (less than half the final digit shown)
  - .
  - ..
  - ~
  - \*
  - p
  - r
- not applicable
- not available
- not yet available
- disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication
- provisional
- revised

### **Bed and breakfast**

This will include privately owned or managed hotels/guest houses with some shared facilities. It does not include hotel annexes consisting of self-contained units of accommodation where meals are not provided – these are classified as private sector accommodation.

### **Ethnic categories**

- White (including):Welsh / English / Scottish / Northern Irish / British; Irish Gypsy or Irish Traveller; any other white background
- Black or Minority Ethnic background (BME)

### **This refers to the following ethnicity categories:**

#### **Mixed:**

- White and black Caribbean
- White and black African
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background

#### **Asian or Asian British:**

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background

**Black / African / Caribbean or Black British:**

- Caribbean
- African
- Any other black background

**Other Ethnic Group:**

- Arab
- Other

**Current property unaffordable**

The category 'current property unaffordable' includes cases where a person has become homeless as a result of not being able to afford the rent or mortgage on their home and have taken action before rent or mortgage arrears are incurred and eviction or repossession notices have been issued.

**Current property unsuitable**

The category 'current property unsuitable' should include cases where the home is no longer physically suitable. This will include for example:

- Persons returning from hospital who can no longer live in the property until it has been adapted;
- Environmental issues relating to the property preventing it from being occupied until work has been carried out;
- Overcrowding, e.g. a new born baby, returning family member, etc.

**Eligibility**

Housing authorities will need to satisfy themselves that applicants are eligible before providing housing assistance. The provisions on eligibility are complex and housing authorities will need to ensure that they have procedures in place to carry out appropriate checks on housing applicants. Ineligible households will include households not eligible for assistance by virtue of Schedule 2 of the [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) and the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (Wales) Regulations 2014.

**Homelessness prevention**

In its broadest terms, 'homelessness prevention' is where a local authority takes positive action to provide housing assistance to someone who the Authority considers is threatened with homelessness within 56 days. Prevention work can be undertaken before meeting the statutory definition, but would not be recorded against Section 66 prevention outcomes.

A case is recorded as homelessness prevention where a local authority takes positive action to provide housing assistance to someone who the authority is satisfied is threatened with homelessness within 56 days and has been notified the duty under Section 66 of the Housing (Wales) Act applies to them. A case ceases to be classed as prevention if the household has become homeless. This only applies to those owed a duty under Section 66.

For positive action to be recorded as successful, the authority must be satisfied that the intervention is

likely to result in homelessness being prevented for at least 6 months and the accommodation is suitable.

## **Homelessness relief**

Positive action to prevent homelessness cannot be taken once the authority is satisfied that someone is or has become homeless (for example, the authority has notified the person of a decision and owes a duty under Section 73). Following notification that an applicant is homeless the Authority will be under a duty to take reasonable steps to help to secure accommodation. For positive action to be recorded as successful, the authority must be satisfied that the intervention is likely to result in homelessness being relieved for at least 6 months and the accommodation is suitable.

Following notification that a household is owed a duty under Section 73 of the new legislation, it is the duty of the local authority to take reasonable steps to help that household to secure accommodation.

Under Section 75 of the new legislation ([Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)) where households are no longer owed a duty under Section 73 (as a result of Section 74.2 or 74.3) but following review are found to fall within a priority need category and are unintentionally homeless, it is the duty of the local authority to secure suitable accommodation. The successful relief of homelessness under Section 75 is referred to as a 'positive discharge' and the local authority must secure suitable accommodation.

## **Homeless at home**

Refers to any arrangements whereby a household remains in, or returns to, the accommodation from which they are being made homeless for a temporary period, or in other accommodation found by the applicant. Includes any households which moved from accommodation arranged by the local authority into this type of arrangement.

## **Hostels/refuges**

Hostels include shared accommodation, owned or leased and managed by either a local authority, registered social landlord (housing association) or non-profit making organisation including reception centres and emergency units. Male refuges are included with hostels.

## **Legislation**

### [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

The figures in this statistical release are based on Welsh local authorities' actions under the homelessness provisions of the Housing Act (Wales) 2014 which became law in Wales on 17 September 2014 and included a number of changes to homelessness legislation aimed at reducing levels of homelessness, by placing its prevention at the centre of local authority duties to help people at risk. The new legislation on homelessness was introduced on 27 April 2015 and replaced the previous legislation, Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, which had come into force in January 1997. Further information on the new homelessness legislation is available on the [Welsh Government website](#).

## **Loss of rented/tied accommodation**

Where the household has lost their accommodation that was rented for example if the landlord has given them notice. Tied accommodation is occupied as part of a job; if they lose their job they will also lose the accommodation.

## **Priority need groups**

The priority need categories are listed in section 4.2 of this release (Page 17) and are defined in Section 70 of the Housing Act 1996 and set out in the Homelessness Code of Guidance. The categories of priority need are as follows:

- a pregnant woman;
- a person with whom dependent children reside;
- a person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or other special reason;
- a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster;
- a care leaver or person at particular risk of sexual or financial exploitation, 18 years or over but under the age of 21;
- a 16 or 17 year old;
- a person fleeing domestic abuse or threatened domestic abuse;
- a person homeless after leaving the armed forces; and
- a former prisoner who is vulnerable as a result of having served a custodial sentence.

Where more than one priority need category applies the one category which was most crucial in determining priority need should be recorded.

## **Protected characteristics**

The Public Sector Equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 exist to protect people from discrimination on the basis of 'protected characteristics'. The Equality Act 2010 defines people's protected characteristics for those using a service as:

- Disability;
- Sex (gender);
- Gender reassignment (gender identity or transgender);
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or belief;
- Sexual orientation;
- Age.

These 'protected characteristics' are used in the statutory homelessness data collection.

## **Self-contained accommodation**

This includes all temporary accommodation where the household has sole use of kitchen and bathroom facilities, including property held by local housing authorities, registered social landlords and private sector landlords. A distinction is made between this type of accommodation and accommodation where such facilities are shared with other households (i.e. bed and breakfast, hostels and women's refuges).



## **Temporary accommodation**

Households in temporary accommodation (excluding those for whom a duty is owed, but no accommodation has been secured) on the last day of the quarter, as arranged by a local housing authority as a discharge of their statutory homelessness functions. In most cases, the authority is discharging a main homelessness duty to secure suitable accommodation until a settled home becomes available for the applicant and his/her household. However, the numbers also include households provided with accommodation pending a decision on their homelessness application, households pending a review or appeal to the county court of the decision on their case, or possible referral to another local authority, and households found to be intentionally homeless and in priority need who were being accommodated for such period as would give them a reasonable opportunity to find accommodation for themselves.