

Health and homelessness



NHS Health Scotland is a national Health Board working with and through public, private and third sector organisations to reduce health inequalities and improve health. We are committed to working with others and we provide a range of services to help our stakeholders take the action required to reduce health inequalities and improve health.

Key messages

- A secure nurturing environment is a key component of wellbeing for individuals, families and children.
- Being homeless is much more than just being out on the street. Only a small proportion of homeless people sleep rough.
- All those assessed as being unintentionally homeless in Scotland are entitled to settled accommodation and the main reasons for homelessness include relationship breakdown and being asked to leave the home.
- Around 10,000 homeless households are in temporary accommodation in Scotland, mainly waiting for appropriate settled accommodation. Others may stay on friends' floors or with family, sometimes in precarious arrangements.
- Homelessness can happen to anyone at any stage in their life and often appears very late, following contact with non-housing services such as mental health, substance misuse and criminal justice.
- While many people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have significant complex needs, it is important to recognise that many don't. When people first become homeless, providing the right help, or access to the right resources (work, housing, income or access to specialist support), would allow them to quickly exit homelessness and continue with their lives.
- Every opportunity must be taken for its prevention by better understanding the routes and key transition points into and out of homelessness.