

Until there's a home for everyone

# **Working with Homeless Children and Families**

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**Shelter**

## What we will cover:

- Shelter's Children's Service
- Current context of homelessness
- The Impact of Welfare Reform
- Changing World
- Next Steps



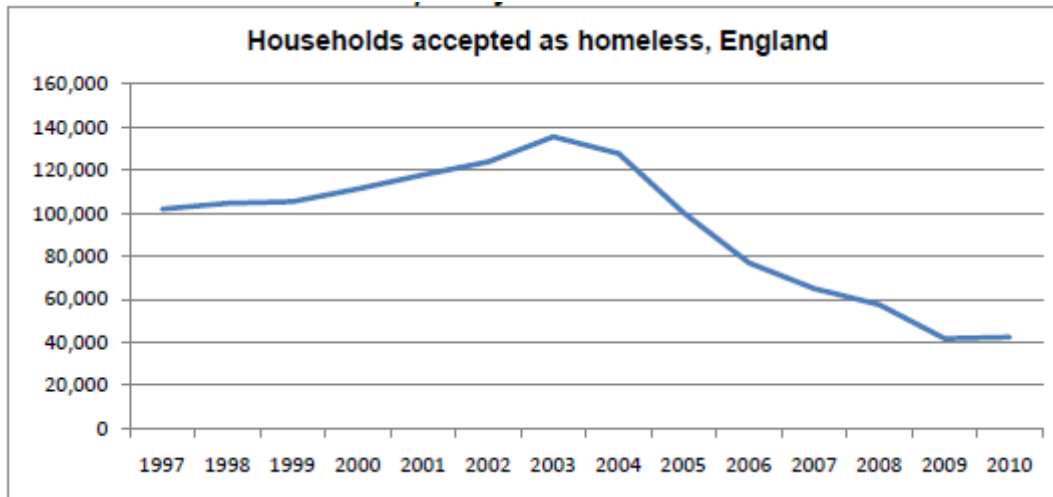
## Shelter's Children's Service

- Million Children Campaign
- Keys to the Future
- Regional Coordinators
- Children's Service Advice Line
- Children's Legal Service



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## Current Context of Homelessness



- Over 28,000 households with dependent children



## Quick Quiz – True or False ?

If you have children the Council have to give you a house if you become homeless

A private landlord can evict you even if you have done nothing wrong

You are only homeless if you have to sleep on the streets

If you get a notice seeking possession you have to leave immediately

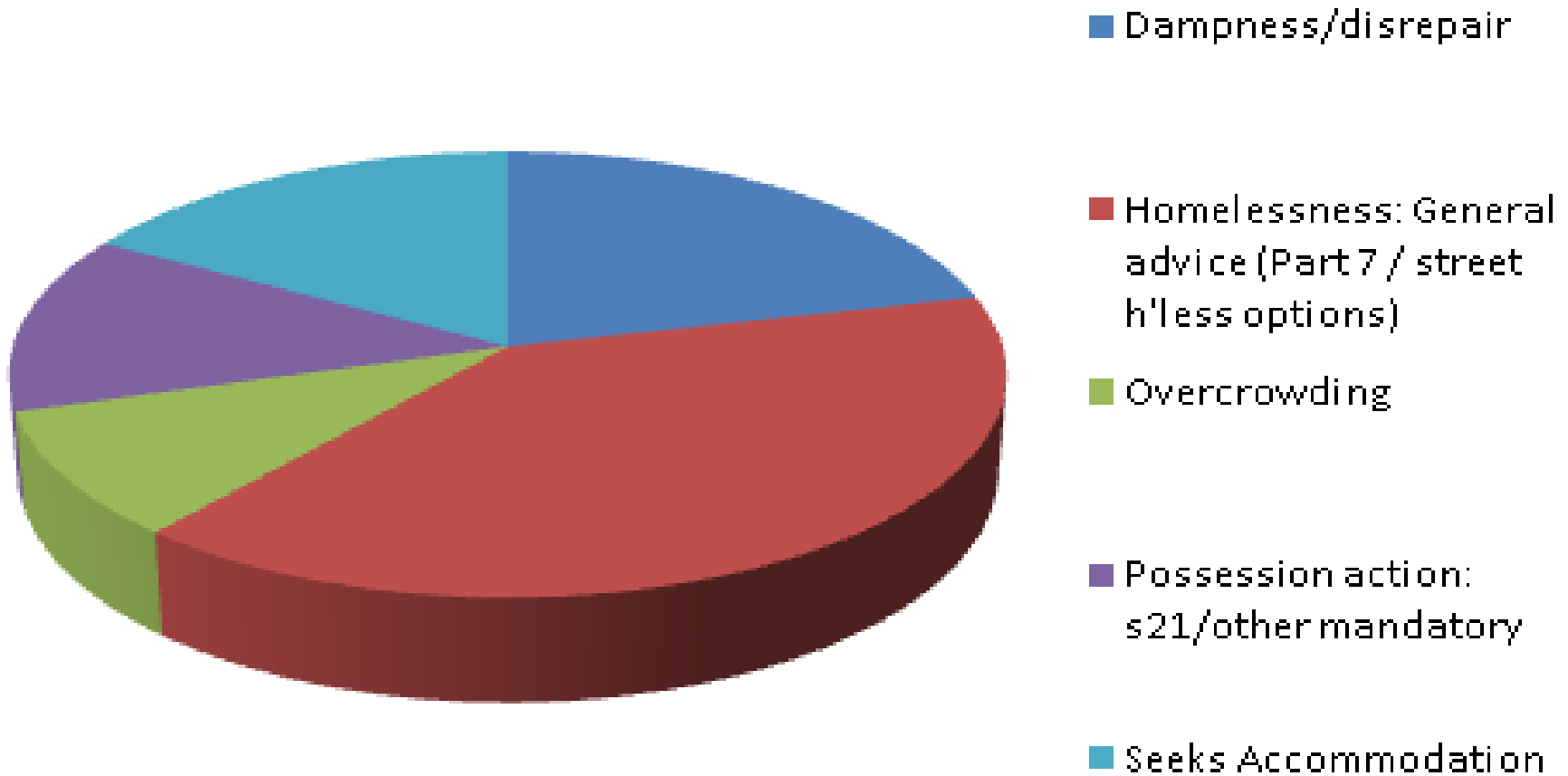
The Council can't evict you if you have children



## Every Child Matters

- ❖ Being healthy
- ❖ Enjoying and achieving
- ❖ Making a positive contribution
- ❖ Economic wellbeing
- ❖ Staying safe

## Children's Service Advice Line



## Regional Context Midlands and the East of England

Top 3 issues:

- 1) Possession action: rent arrears
- 2) Homelessness
- 3) Rent arrears

2010 households with  
dependent children accepted as  
homeless & priority need:  
East Midlands – 2,594  
West Midlands – 5,662  
East of England – 2,871



## Welfare Reform

- Local Housing Allowance set to 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of local market rents
  - Likely to affect 774,790 households
  - Estimated £12 per week average drop in income
- £15 excess payments scrapped (April 2011)
- LHA capped at 4 bedroom rate
- Increase in non dependent deductions
- Cap on maximum benefit entitlements (2013)

## Case Study

- Jane is a 36 year old single parent of 6 children ranging from 4 to 15 years of age.
- The family have complex and multiple needs

Government legislation that will soon come into force will negatively impact upon the family's income:

- 1) Jane is required to seek work when her youngest child reaches 7 years of age
- 2) Housing Benefit Cap

## Localism Bill

- Local Authorities discharging homelessness duty via the Private Rented Sector.
  - Cost
  - Quality
  - Lack of security
- Higher rent levels for new social housing tenants (80% of market rents).
- Abolition of social housing 'tenancy for life'.

## **Changing World of Children's Services.**

- Frank Field / Graham Allen Reviews

*Foundation Years*

*Broader remit of Health Visitor Role*

*Early Intervention*

## Next Steps

*Is there scope to...*

- *Provide specialist housing advice within Children's Centres*
- *Set up arrangements with housing to share information about new vulnerable families moving into your area*
- *Work intensively with families placed in temporary accommodation*
- *Allocate a Housing Specialist role to a FSW to coordinate work with Housing Options Teams*



## ***You can.....***

- *Develop links with your Housing Officers*
- *Hold reciprocal awareness sessions with housing staff and accommodation providers*
- *Use the Children's Service Advice Line*
- *Use good practice guidance and briefings*



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**Round Up And Questions**

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