

New developments in the measurement of homelessness prevention

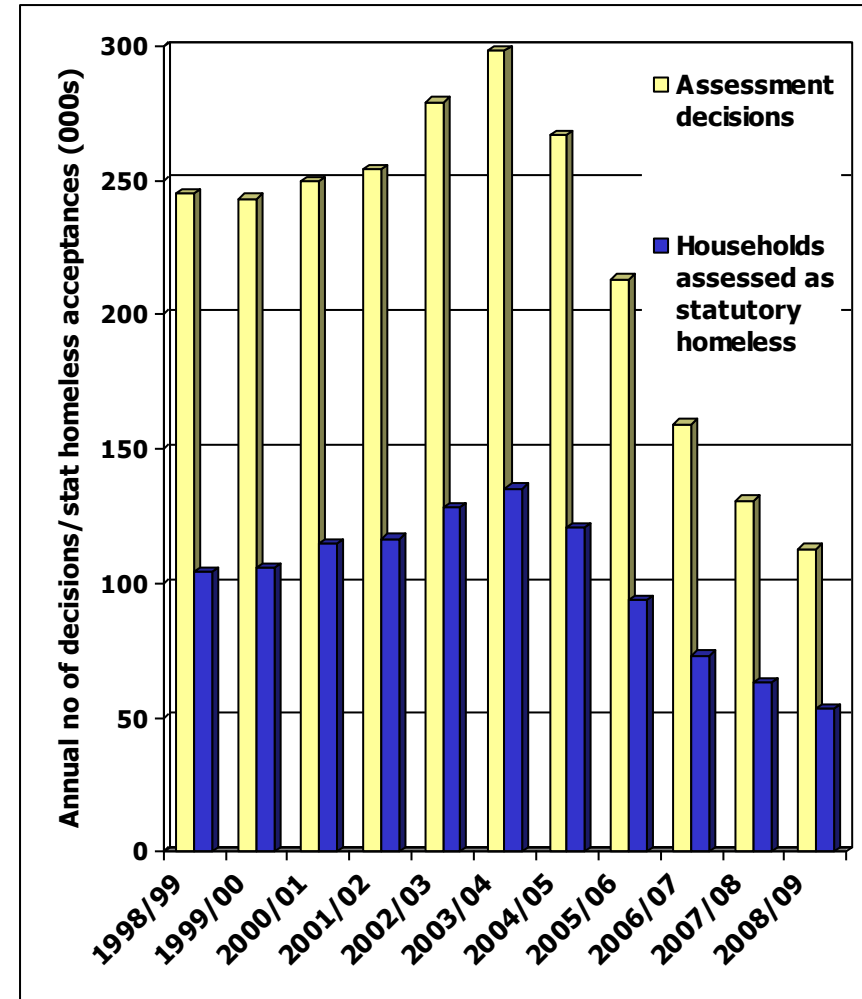
**Presentation to Housing Statistics
Network, 26 February 2010**

Hal Pawson, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

- Prevention-focused agenda stimulated by Homelessness Act 2002
- 2005 target to halve, by 2010, homelessness temp accom placements
- Approx £500 million grant funding for LA prevention activities 2003-08
- Official guidance on prevention techniques published 2006
- Individually tailored advice provided to LAs
- Requirement to record/report on prevention activity recognised as signal to LAs to focus on 'positive assistance' rather than simple 'gatekeeping'

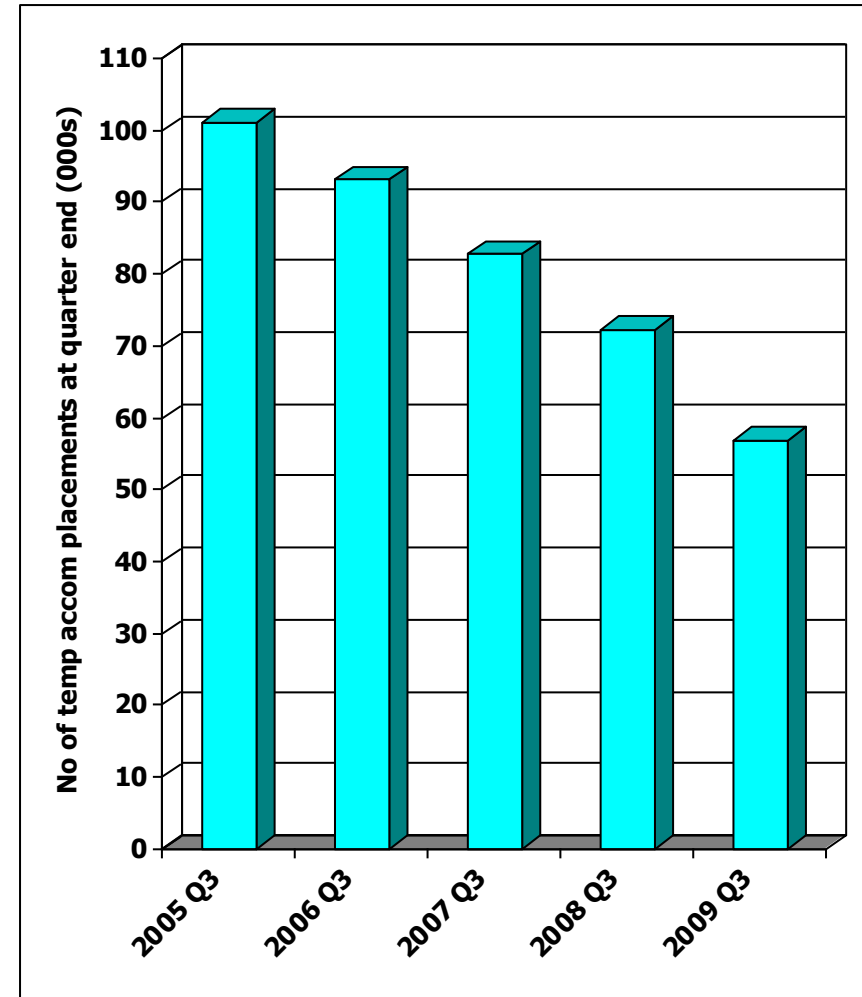
Statutory homelessness incidence

- As measured by both assessment decisions and acceptances, homelessness down by >60% in 5 yrs to 2008/09
- Acceptances lower than in any year since 1980
- Questions raised on how achieved



Progress towards 2010 temp accom reduction target

- LAs on track to meet temp accom reduction target
- % of LA lets to homeless households cut from 34% in 04/05 to 28% in 07/08

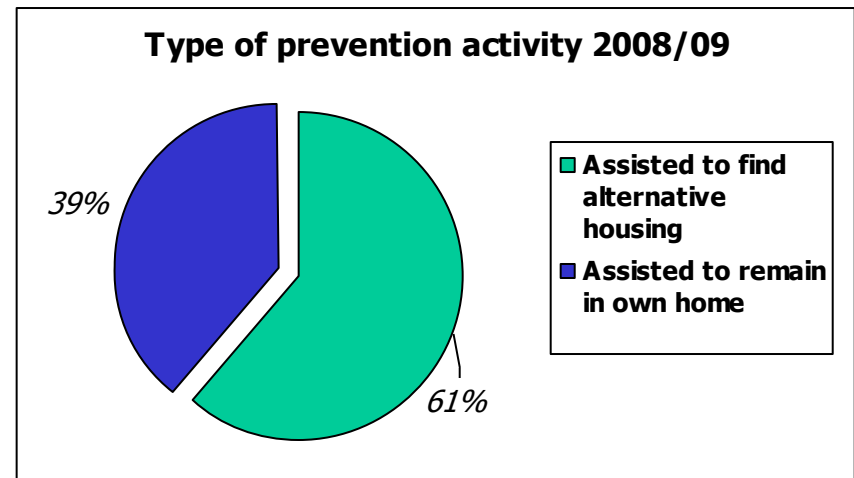
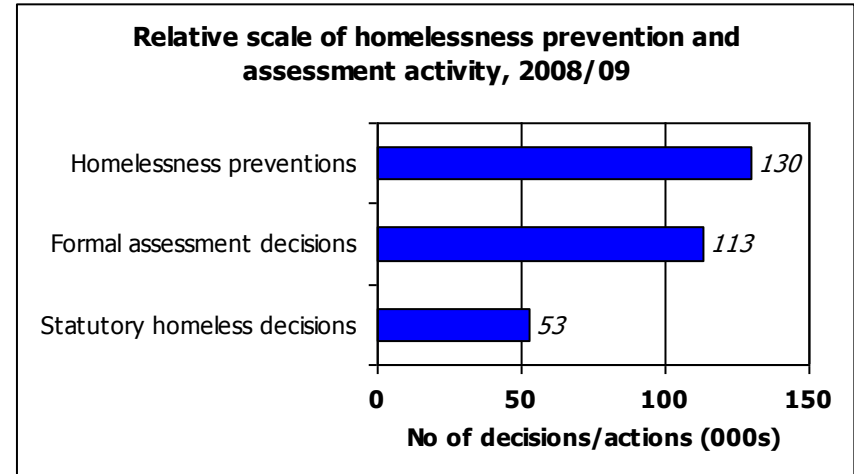


Introducing direct measurement of prevention activity

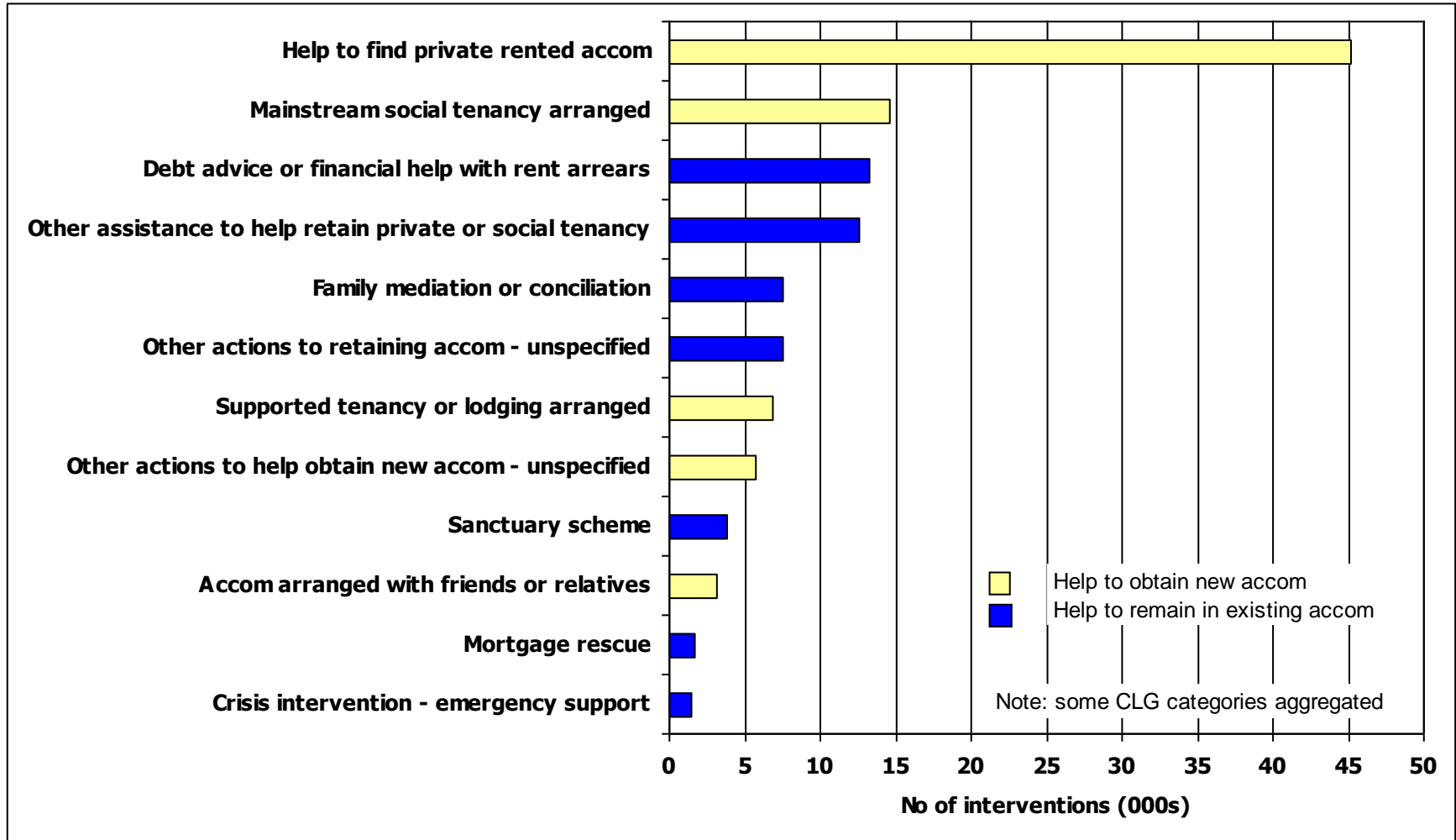
- From 2008/09 prevention recording integrated within quarterly P1E returns
- Authorities required to enumerate:
cases where positive action was successful in preventing or relieving homelessness
- Distinction between
 - actions to help a household retain existing accom and
 - actions to assist a household to access alternative accom
- Resulting statistics officially presented as 'homelessness prevention and relief'
- Legally, such actions regarded as taking place 'outside the statutory framework' or 'informally'
- Stats should include activity of 'partner organisations' (funded by LA to contribute or otherwise receiving LA referrals)
- New regime builds on prevention stats collected via BVPIs since 2005/06
 - Stats published by Audit Commission for 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08
 - Expressed as 'no of preventions per thousand population'
 - Prevention activity not broken down according to form of intervention

2008/09 prevention data: overview

- Estimated 130,000 households helped to avoid homelessness or to find new accom in 2008/09
- No imputation for missing data (10% of LAs failed to make full returns)
- Nationally, scale of prevention activity greater than formal assessment
- Extent of overlap (e.g. helped to obtain alternative housing after 'non-priority homelessness' decision) not clear
- Preventions >twice no. of acceptances
- Most recorded preventions involved help to find alternative accom
- People informally helped to find alternative accom – approx 79,000 – far greater than accepted for rehousing thru formal process (53,000)
- Numbers helped to access private renting (approx 49,000) similar to numbers formally accepted for rehousing



Forms of homelessness prevention 2008/09



Prevention action by region – Q1 2009

Prevention measure	London	South	Midlands	North	England
	%	%	%	%	%
Help to find private tenancy	47	47	30	26	38
Mainstream social tenancy arranged	4	12	15	16	12
Helped on arrears	12	9	14	10	10
Other actions to help retain tenancy	12	7	9	12	10
Mediation/conciliation	10	4	5	6	6

- Assistance to find private tenancy much more dominant in London and the South
- Rehousing in social rented sector more common in Midlands and the North
- Mediation/conciliation more common in London

Prevention activity rates by region, Q1 2009

Region	Acceptance rate	Decision rate	Prevention rate	Prevention/ acceptance ratio
	per 1,000 households (annual)			
London	3.9	8.7	10.6	2.7
South	1.4	2.8	6.5	4.8
Midlands	1.8	4.1	7.3	4.0
North	1.8	4.9	7.0	3.8
England	1.9	4.4	7.3	3.8

- Decisions and acceptances in London double national rates
- Prevention rate highest in London but only 50% above national norm
- Prevention activity not simply proportional to statutory homelessness
- Most active prevention compared with acceptances in South

Formal and informal responses to homelessness at the local level

- Fourteen LAs – mainly smaller Southern districts – reported zero acceptances in Q1 2009
- In one case 109 ‘formal decisions’ – more commonly <10
- Same 14 LAs recorded **829** preventions, of which **408** households assisted to access PRS
- Vast majority of activity on homelessness classed as ‘informal’ – outside statutory framework
- Consistent with regional figures showing imperfect correlation between prevention and acceptances (previous slide)

- To what extent would homelessness, in fact, have occurred in the absence of interventions?
- How sustainable are 'prevention solutions' of different kinds?
- To what extent is there an overlap between households formally assessed (enumerated as 'decisions') and those assisted via prevention?
- What is split of preventions between (potentially) priority and non-priority cases?
- What is the nature of the 'prevention caseload' – e.g. in terms of household type?

LAs recording zero acceptances in Q1 2009

Authority	Status	Region	Post-stock transfer?
Basingstoke and Deane	District	SE	Y
Blaby	District	EM	Y
Broxbourne	District	EE	Y
Fylde	District	NW	Y
Hart	District	SE	Y
Hertsmere	District	EE	Y
South Holland	District	EE	N
Spelthorne	District	SE	Y
Teesdale	District	NE	Y
Torridge	District	SW	Y
Waverley	District	SE	N
West Berkshire	District	SE	Y
Epsom and Ewell	District	SE	Y
Wyre	District	NW	Y