



University of Glasgow | School of Social & Political Sciences

The Scottish Model of Social Rented Housing

El model escocès de gestió d'habitatges de lloguer social

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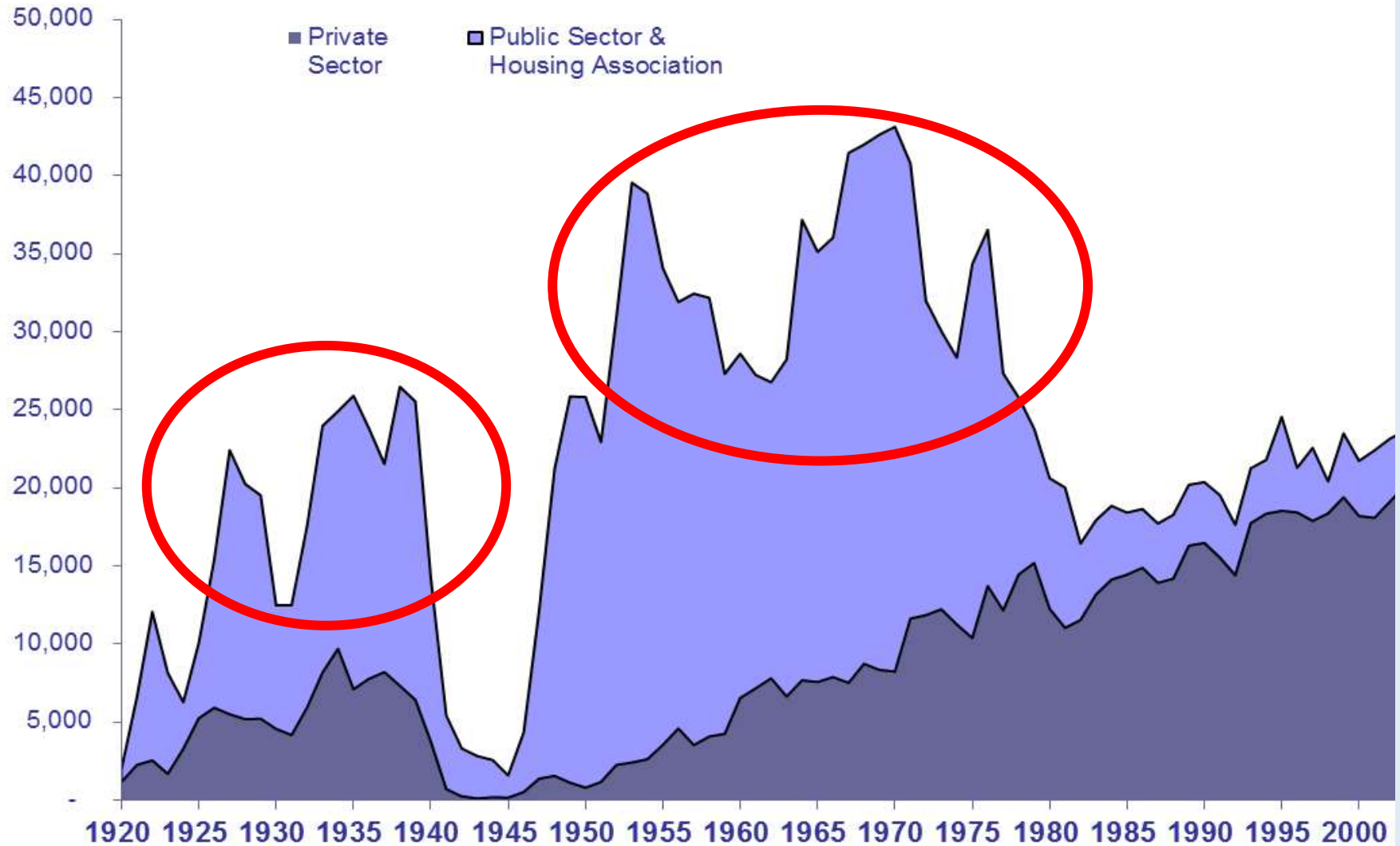
Taula d'entitats
del Tercer Sector Social
de Catalunya







Housebuilding in Scotland 1920-2000





**My parents' council house,
c. 1957-1962**

Role 1. Social housing as Welfare: 'decommodified' housing within capitalism

- UK Welfare State-
social security,
secondary education
for all, national
health service
- State built and
managed housing
development was
the answer to
'Squalor'



Role 2. Political settlement: social housing as the worker's reward

- Modern homes for the 'ordinary working family'
- Transformation of living conditions
- Social housing sought after with a medium status.
- Allocations based on 'respectability'
- Poorest (and non-White groups in cities) excluded



Role 3. Economic and Environmental Transformation:

Inner Cities



Glasgow, 1960s-1970s

Role 3. Economic and Environmental Transformation: Inner Cities, 1960s-1970s



Glasgow, 1960s-1970s

Role 3. Economic and Environmental Transformation:

Suburbs and New Towns, 1950s-1960s



Glasgow and East Kilbride, 1950s and 1960s



Emerging Issues within Social Housing by 1980

- 'Residualisation'- Tenants getting poorer but not yet predominately poor.
- Concentrations of disadvantage in some estates
- 'Difficult to let housing' and failed building technologies
- Failure of local government bureaucracy to manage and maintain council housing

No longer meeting aspirations of better off working people



Policy Shifts, 1980s and 1990s

1. Privatisation:

- the 'Right to Buy' introduced 1980.

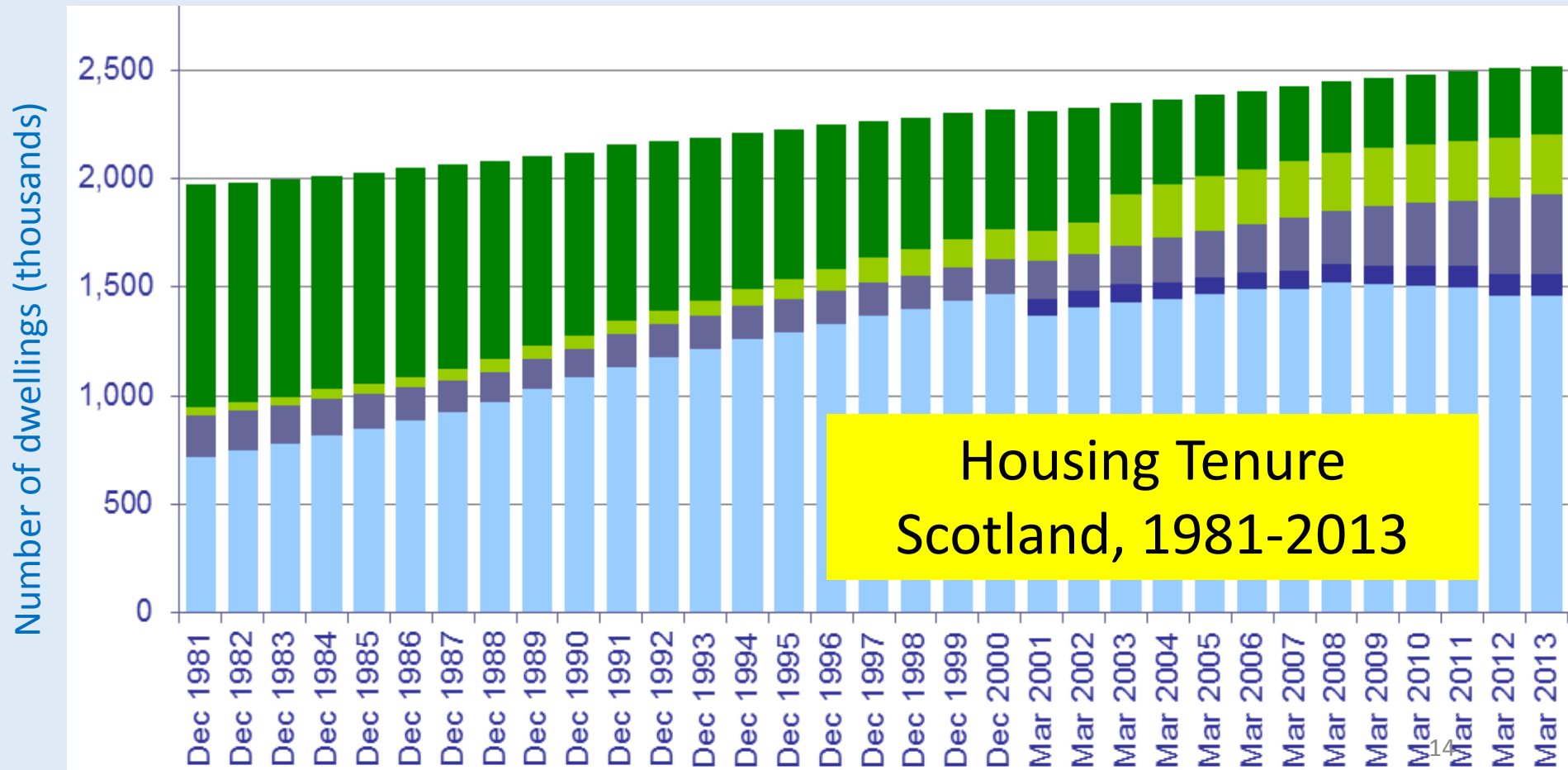
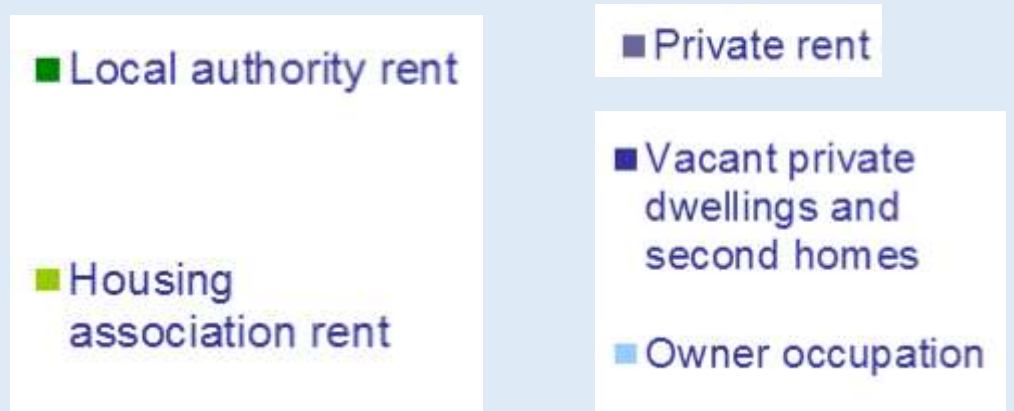
2. Commodification:

- policy emphasis on home ownership and private renting

3. From Council Housing to 'Social Housing':

- 'hollowing out' of the state and preference for 'arm's length' providers of 'social housing'

- **Declining: Council Housing**
- **Growing:**
 - **Housing Association Rent**
 - **Owner Occupation**
 - **Private Rent**



	Council Housing	Housing Associations
Number of organisations	26 out of 32 councils in Scotland own social housing	Over 200 associations
Governance	Part of the ‘Public Sector’ - overseen by elected politicians	Part of the ‘Voluntary Sector’- overseen by unpaid volunteer directors
% of national stock (2014)	13%	11%
Type of housing	Almost all purpose-built social housing in ‘housing estates’ built from 1920s-1980s	A huge variety of housing from improved C19th flats, to acquired ex-council homes, to newly built homes
Policy	Decline in policy importance since 1980- but now stabilised and some councils are building again now	Preferred as developer and manager of social housing since 1980

Common features of social housing today

- **Closely regulated by Scottish Government and a key resource used by government to meet housing needs**
- **New construction significantly dependent on public subsidy (plus private loans)**
- **New lettings available to households that can demonstrate 'housing need'.**
- **No income tests.**
- **Below market rents.**
- **Indefinite tenancies, subject to paying the rent.**

DEVOLUTION, 1999- 2014



- Scottish Parliament established
- 'Centre Left' Parties in Government and in Opposition
- Responsible for Housing, Planning, Local Government and other domestic policy and spending
- Strong focus on social housing and housing rights since day 1
- Current Scottish National Party (SNP) government

Classic Aim of Housing Policy

'A decent home for every family at a price within their means'

(Housing Green Paper, 1977)

Key elements then:

Standards and Quality: Access Affordability

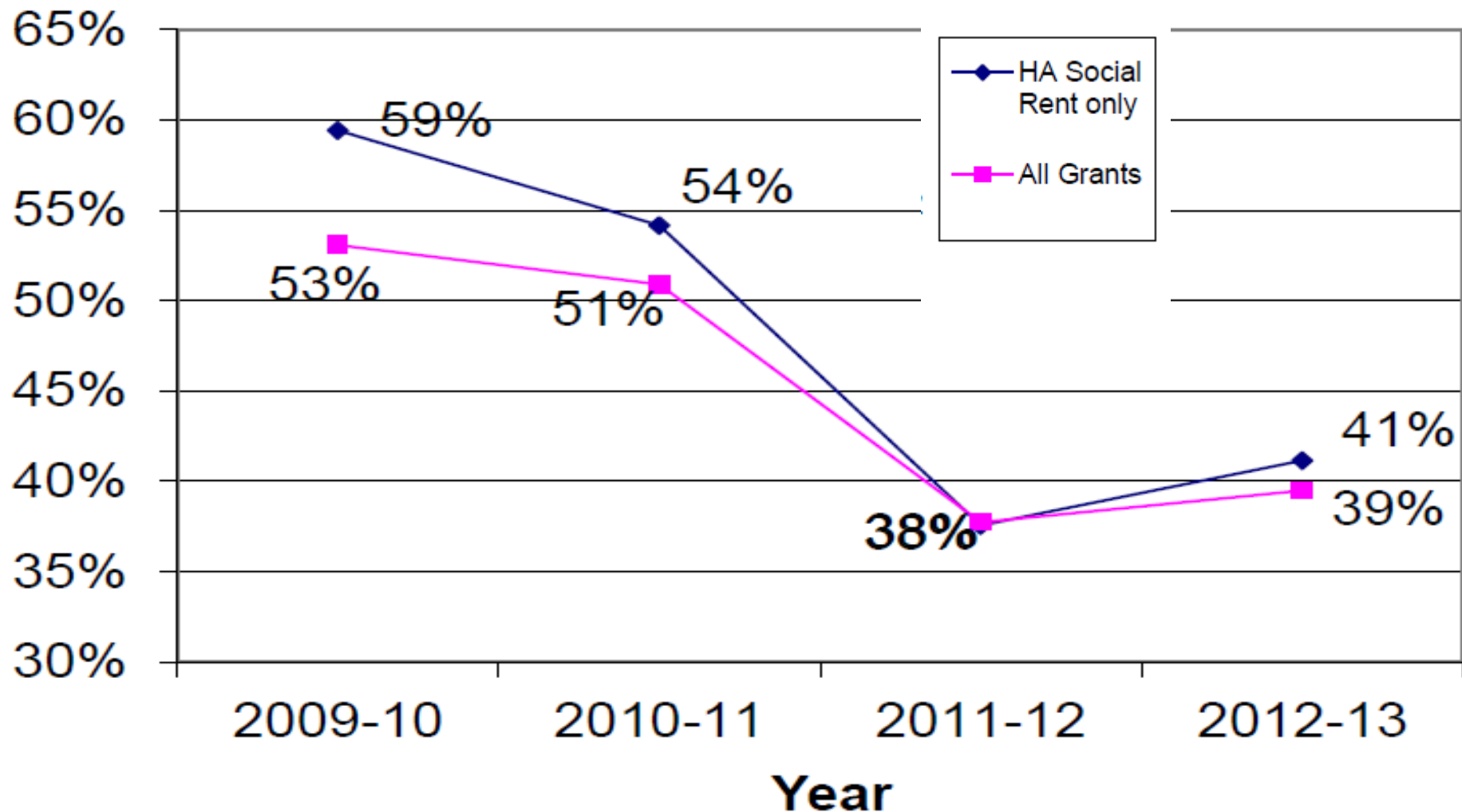
So, How Does Social Housing Policy Today Support Standards and Quality?

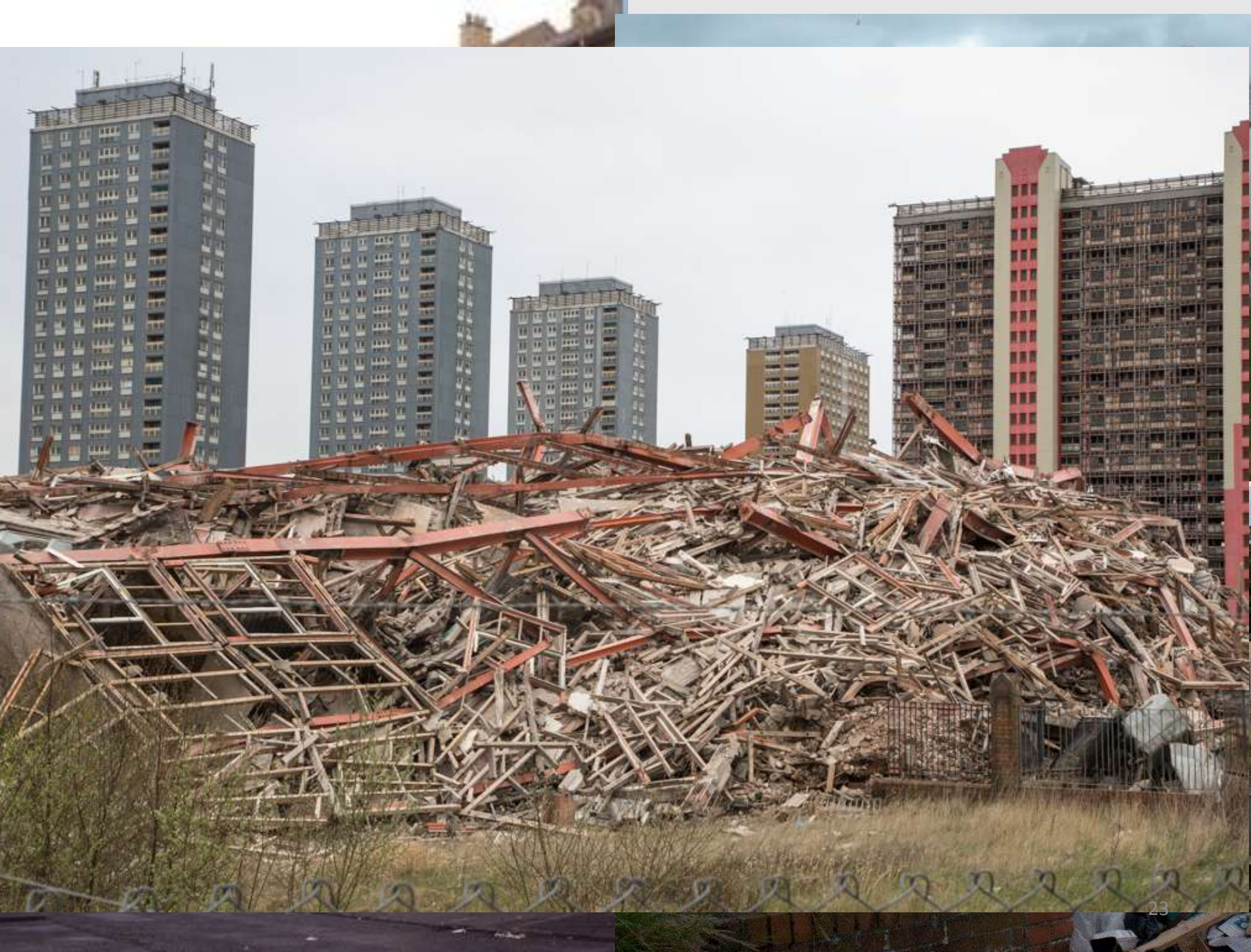
1. By building and improving homes to a (reasonably) high standard
2. By playing a major role in neighbourhood regeneration, including of failed council estates
3. By ensuring service quality through regulation.





Average Building Subsidy per New Home, 2009- 2013





Glasgow Housing Association Improvement Programme from 2003

£1 billion on improvements for tenants:

- 40,000 central heating systems
- 47,000 new secure front doors
- 26,000 new roofs





**Scottish Housing
Regulator**

"safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities"

Regulate:

- **Service standards and performance**
- **Financial health of landlords**
- **Governance**



How Does Social Housing Policy Today Support Access to Housing?

1. By prioritising households in 'housing need'
2. By acting as the key destination for homeless people seeking to be housed.

Allocation 'According to Need'

- Everyone can apply
- Legal enforcement of 'reasonable preference' for badly housed and homeless, or threatened with homelessness:
 - overcrowded, living in homes 'below the tolerable standard' (minimum legal requirement)
 - living in temporary or insecure accommodation
- In practice each landlord has their own detailed policy reflecting local conditions and priorities

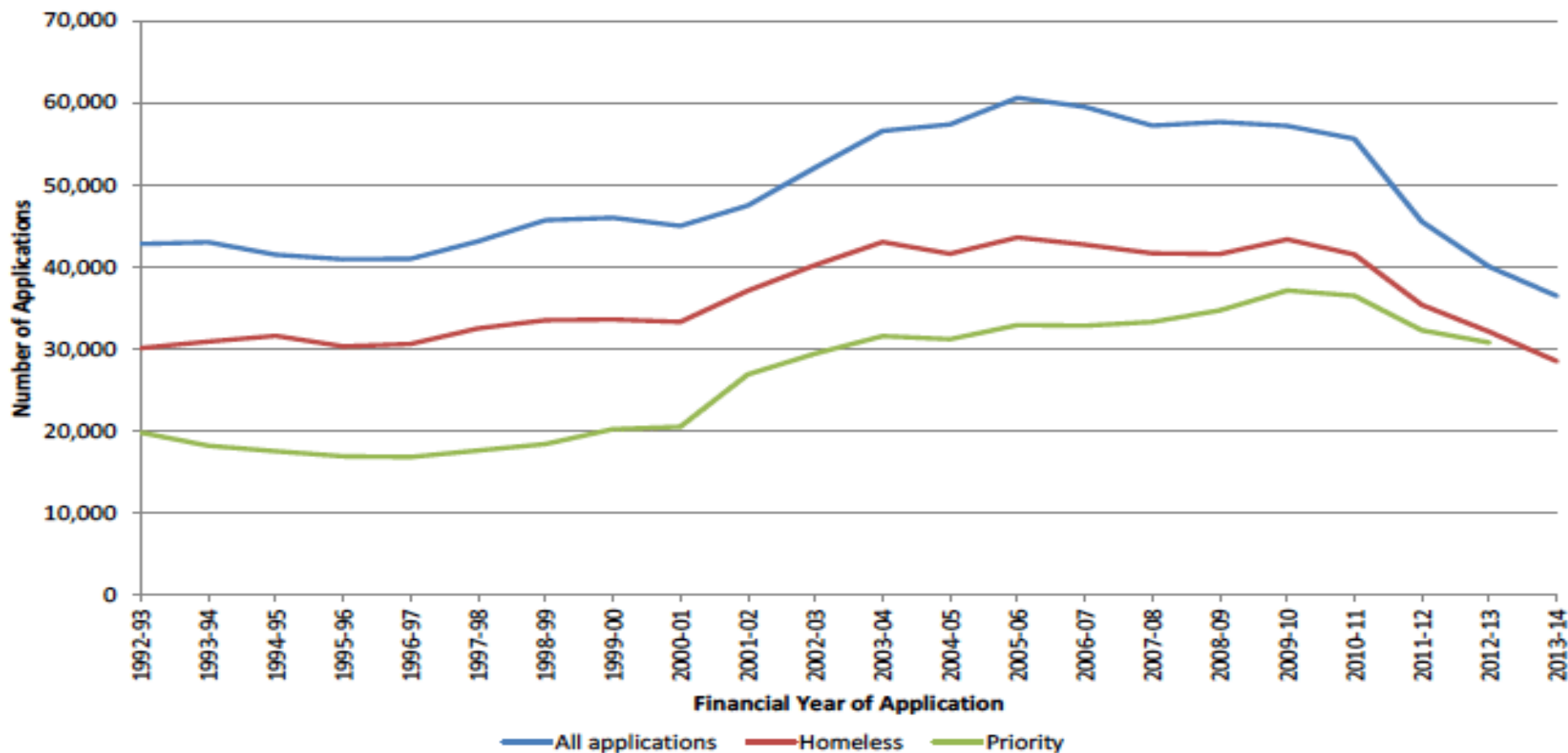


Rights for Homeless People in Scotland (in full operation since 2012)

- 'Homeless' widely defined in law (includes those with insecure accommodation and 'rooflessness')
- All people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, regardless of family status or local council, have a right to be housed by their local council as Homeless
- Temporary accommodation
- Accommodation after formal assessment as homeless

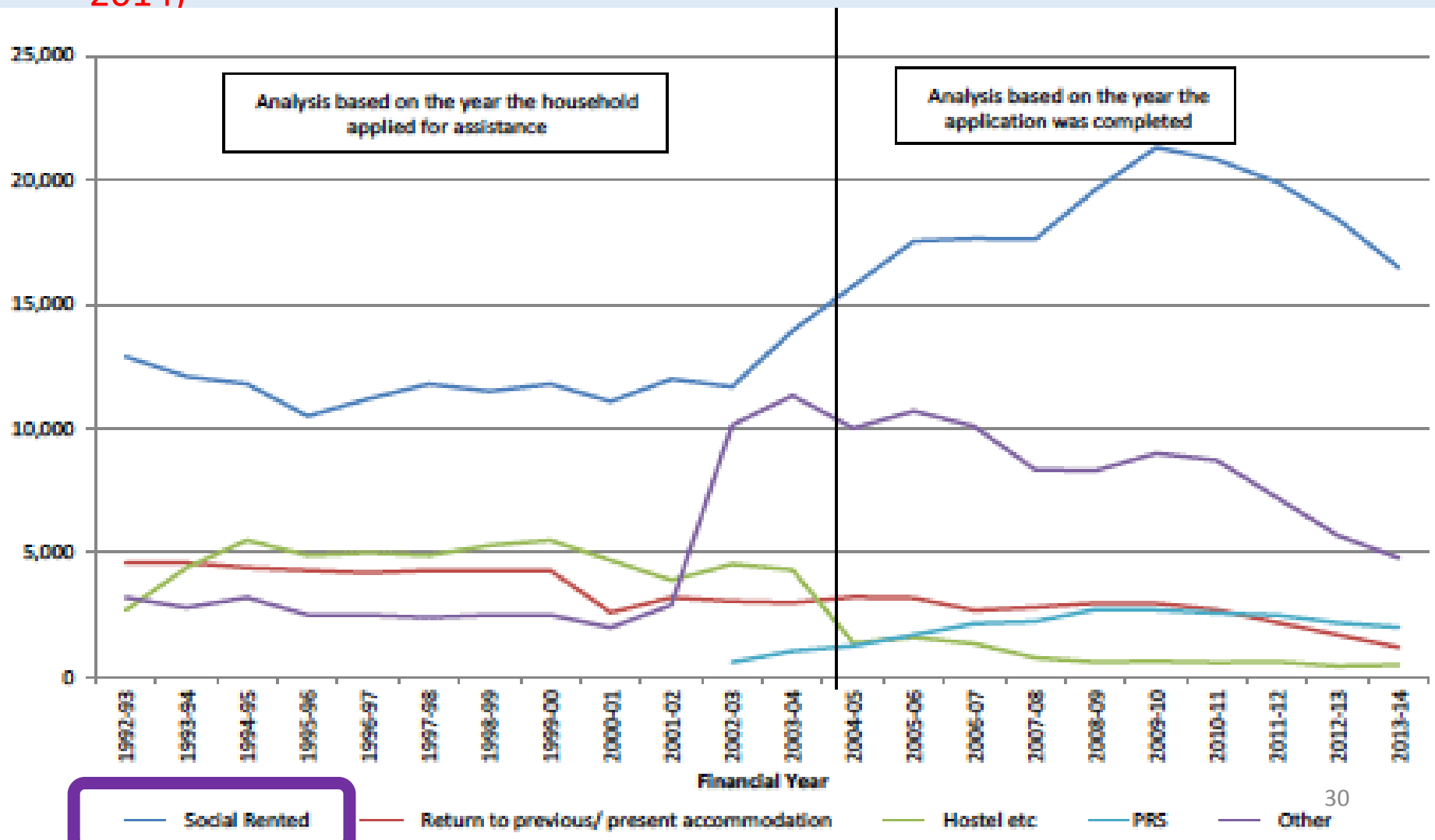
**Scottish Government Winner of
COHRE
Housing Rights Protector Award**

Homeless Applications and Assessments (Scottish Government, 2014)

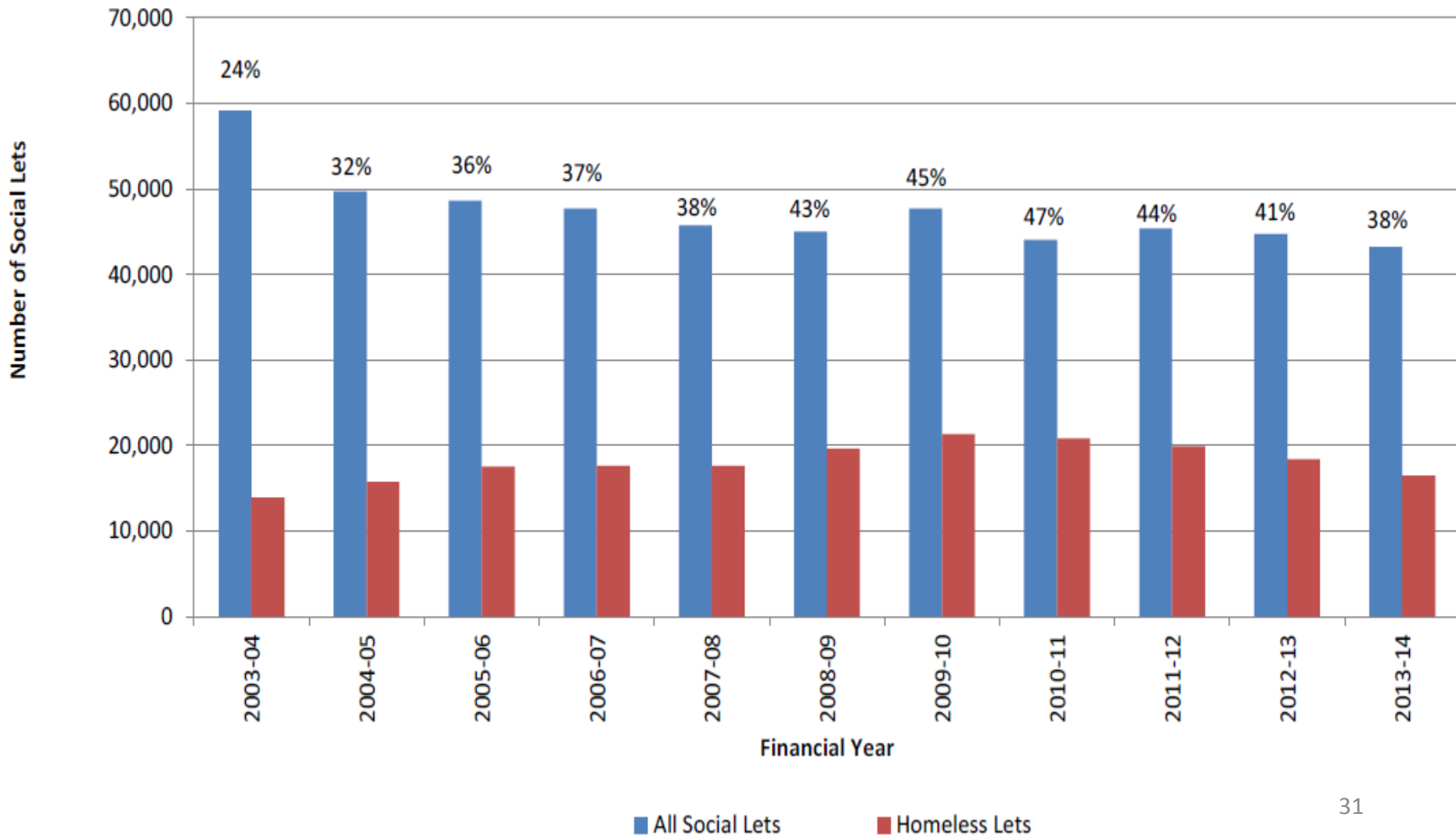


Accommodation Secured by Homeless Applicants

(Scottish Government, 2014)



Homeless Share of Social Housing Lets (not transfers), 2008- 2014



How Does Social Housing Policy Today Support Affordability?

1. Supply-side subsidy (bricks and mortar subsidy)- letting homes at below market rents.
2. Demand-side subsidy (personal subsidy)- Housing Benefit available to those without work or on low incomes.

'Bricks and mortar' subsidies in social housing



Sources of subsidy:

- Mainly capital subsidies to cost of building

Process of rent setting:

- Social landlords are supposed to set an 'affordable rent', however this is not closely defined.
- Each landlord has its own rent policy- however range of rents is relatively small between landlords

'Affordable Rents'

All social tenants pay rent at below market prices:

- Average Social Rent 2014: £68 per week (Scottish Housing Regulator, 2014)
- Social rent is 53% of average Private Rent: £126 per week (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014)



Personal Subsidies: Housing Benefit (HB)

- Available to all tenants on low incomes
- Means tested: Amount paid varies by household income and
- HB can cover up to 100% of rent
- 69% of all tenants get full or part Housing Benefit.
- 30% of HB recipients are pensioners.



The Scottish Model of Social Housing?

- A product of history and politics, not of design
- Maintains a strong focus on providing good quality housing for disadvantaged people.
- No longer for the 'Average working family' but a decent 'Safety Net' (not an 'Ambulance Service')
- Scottish Governments since 1999 strongly supported social housing- devolution has enabled stronger social model than in England.
- Major achievements in recent years in housing conditions and homeless rights.
- However, housing programme spending under pressure
- UK Welfare Reform likely to make tenants poorer.