





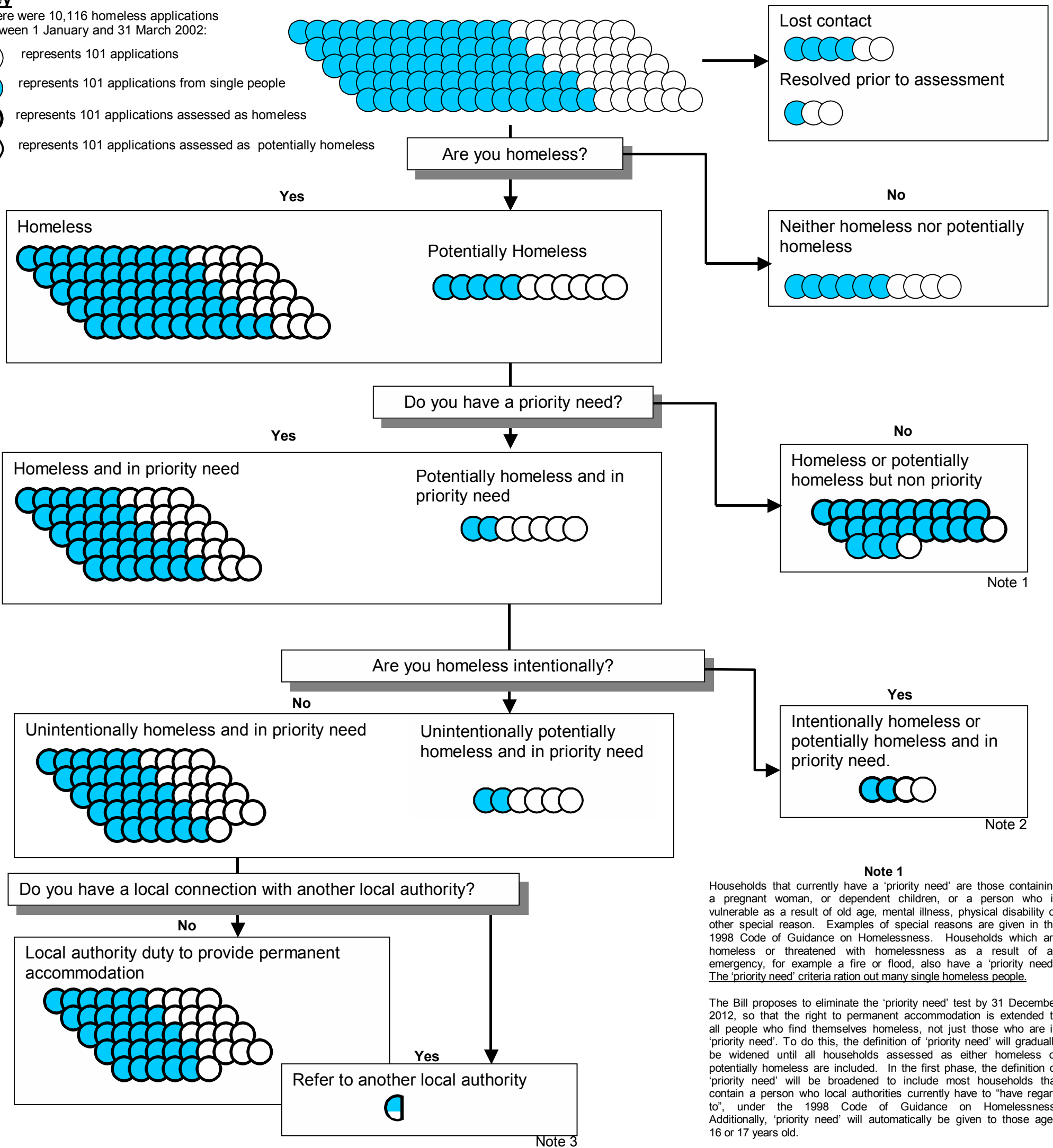
How homeless applicants are assessed in Scotland

Based on applications assessed between 1 January and 31 March 2002 in Scotland, published in *Operation Of The Homeless Persons Legislation In Scotland: Quarters Ending 31 December 2001 And 31 March 2002*, Scottish Executive. 24 September 2002.

Key

There were 10,116 homeless applications between 1 January and 31 March 2002:

-  represents 101 applications
-  represents 101 applications from single people
-  represents 101 applications assessed as homeless
-  represents 101 applications assessed as potentially homeless



Note 2
Under the 1987 Act, every household assessed as either homeless or potentially homeless and deemed to have a 'priority need' must also be further assessed to see whether they have made themselves homeless intentionally. For example, between 1 January and 31 March 2002, there were 5,837 homeless and potentially homeless households who were deemed to have a 'priority need'. However, only 401 of these were assessed as having made themselves intentionally homeless and therefore 93% of investigations were unnecessary, resulting in the applicant being found unintentionally homeless. The new Bill replaces the *duty* on local authorities to investigate intentionality with a *power* to do so. This will give local authorities more flexibility in dealing with cases of intentionality.

Note 3
Between 1 January and 31 March 2002, local authorities used their power to apply local connection in only 59 cases. Therefore, in 95% of cases local authorities decided that those who were unintentionally homeless, or potentially homeless, and in 'priority need' either had a local connection with the area, or they chose not to exercise the local connection power. This is concurrent with the view of the Homelessness Task Force that "most homeless people apply to their local council and those who apply to another council usually have a very good reason for doing so." Suspending the local connection provision would eliminate a further bureaucratic hurdle.

Note 1
Households that currently have a 'priority need' are those containing a pregnant woman, or dependent children, or a person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness, physical disability or other special reason. Examples of special reasons are given in the 1998 Code of Guidance on Homelessness. Households which are homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency, for example a fire or flood, also have a 'priority need'. The 'priority need' criteria ration out many single homeless people.

The Bill proposes to eliminate the 'priority need' test by 31 December 2012, so that the right to permanent accommodation is extended to all people who find themselves homeless, not just those who are in 'priority need'. To do this, the definition of 'priority need' will gradually be widened until all households assessed as either homeless or potentially homeless are included. In the first phase, the definition of 'priority need' will be broadened to include most households that contain a person who local authorities currently have to "have regard to", under the 1998 Code of Guidance on Homelessness. Additionally, 'priority need' will automatically be given to those aged 16 or 17 years old.

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