

Social housing allocations to meet homelessness need: what can learn from the GB context?

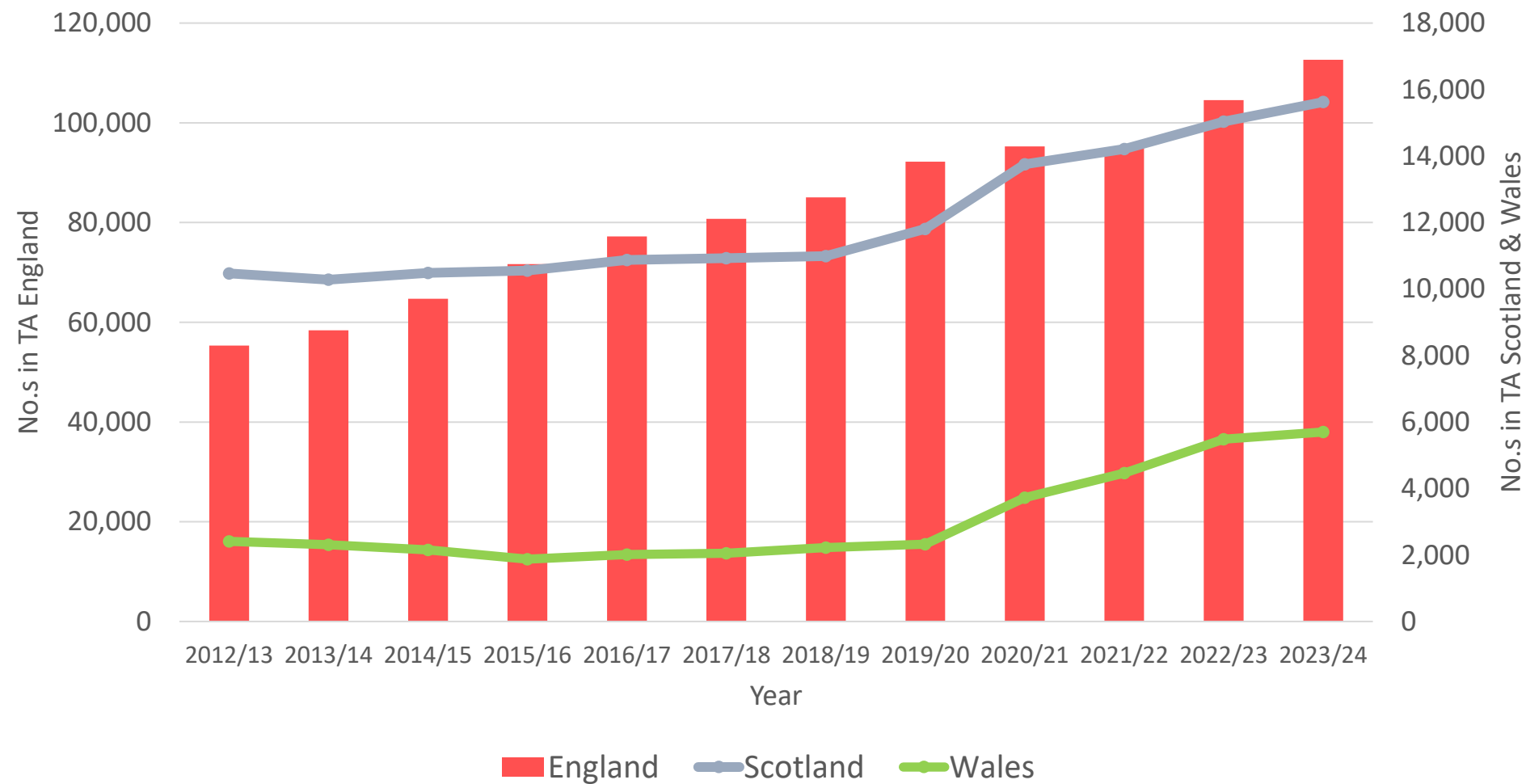
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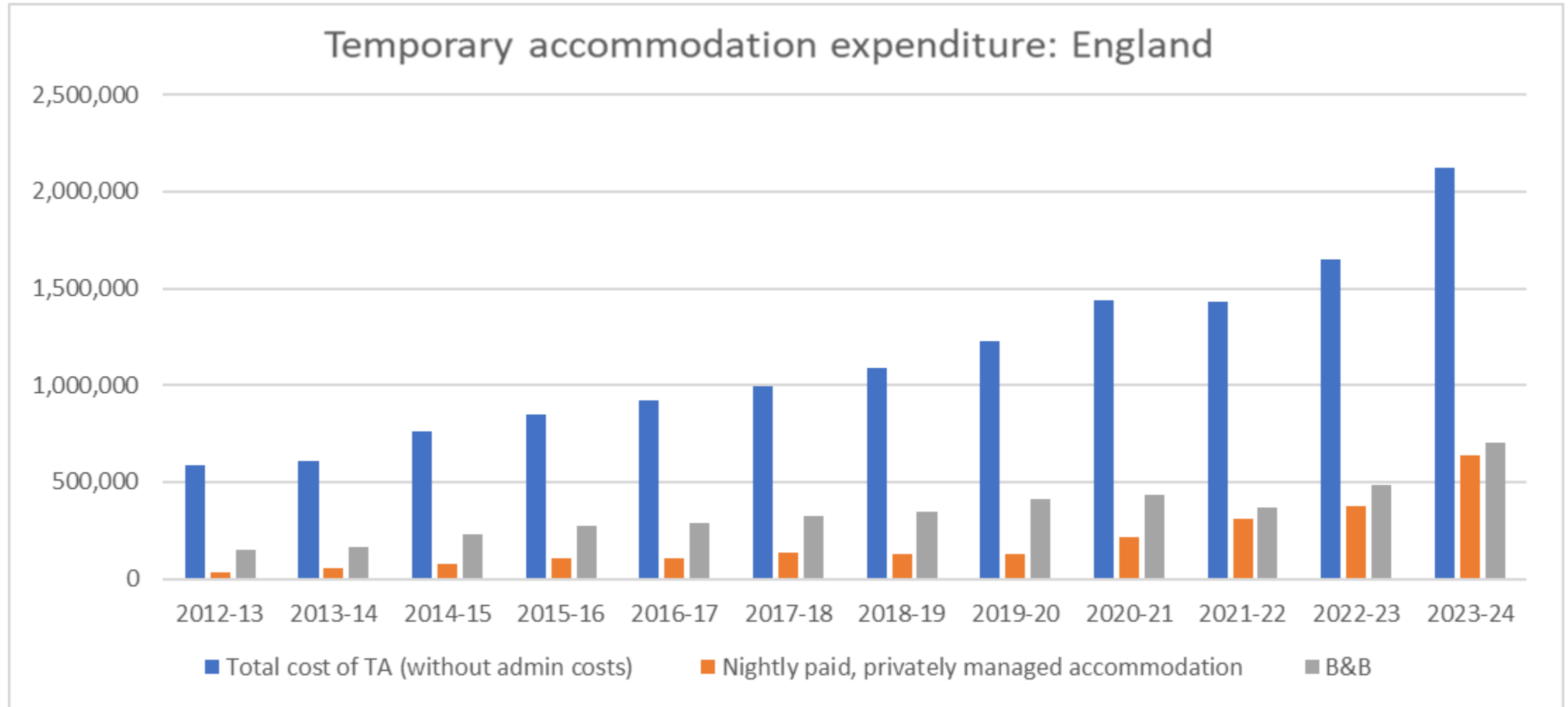


1. Housing and homelessness context

All forms of homelessness are going up across GB but there have been significant rises in temporary accommodation



In England expenditure on TA has soared



We aren't building enough homes at social rent

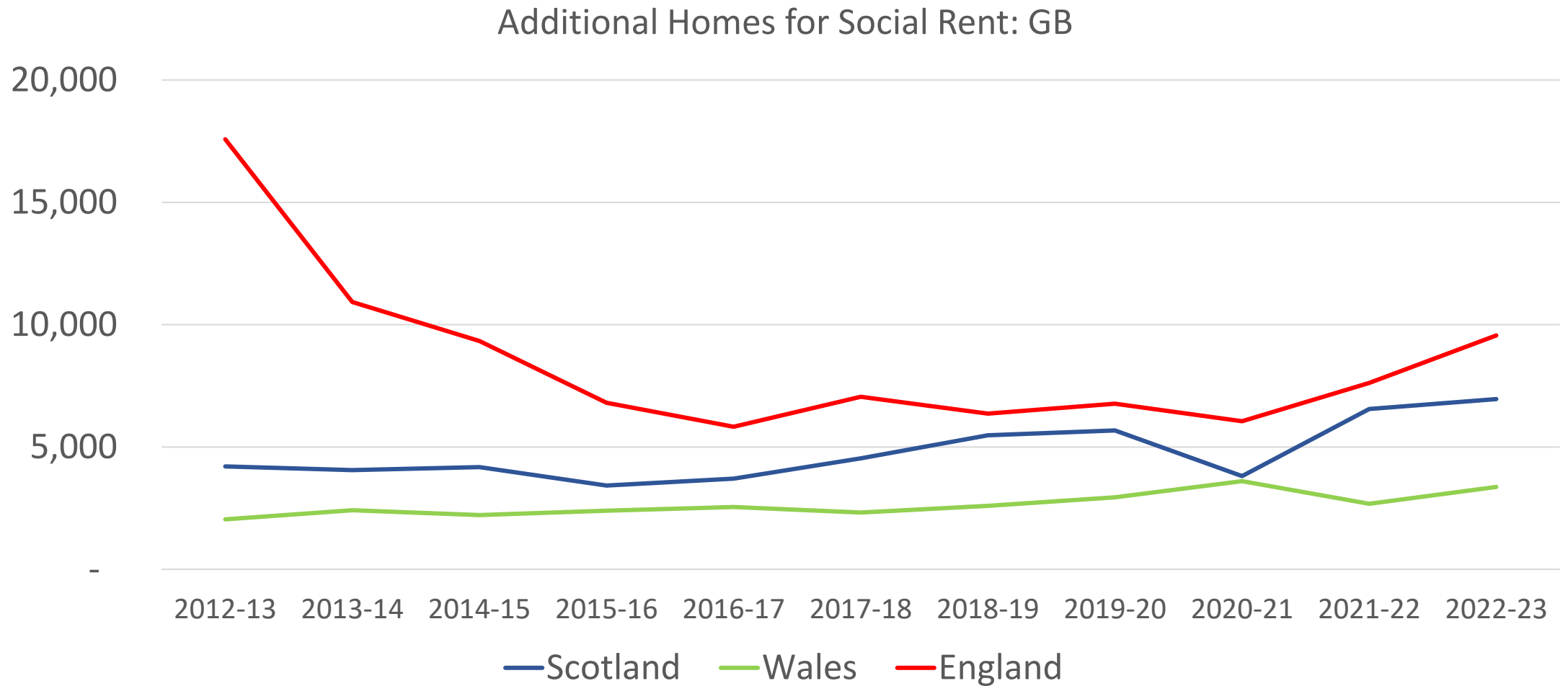
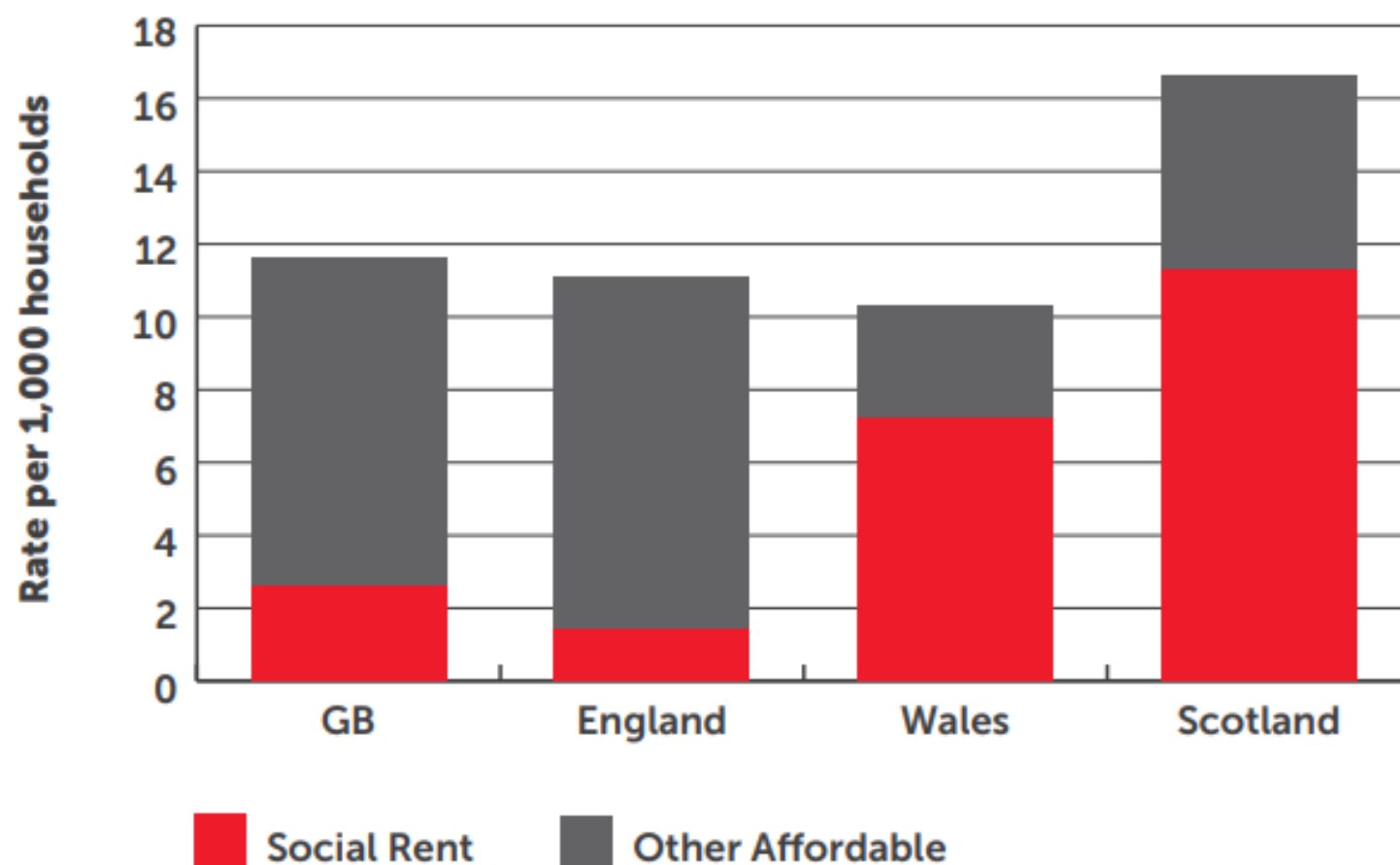
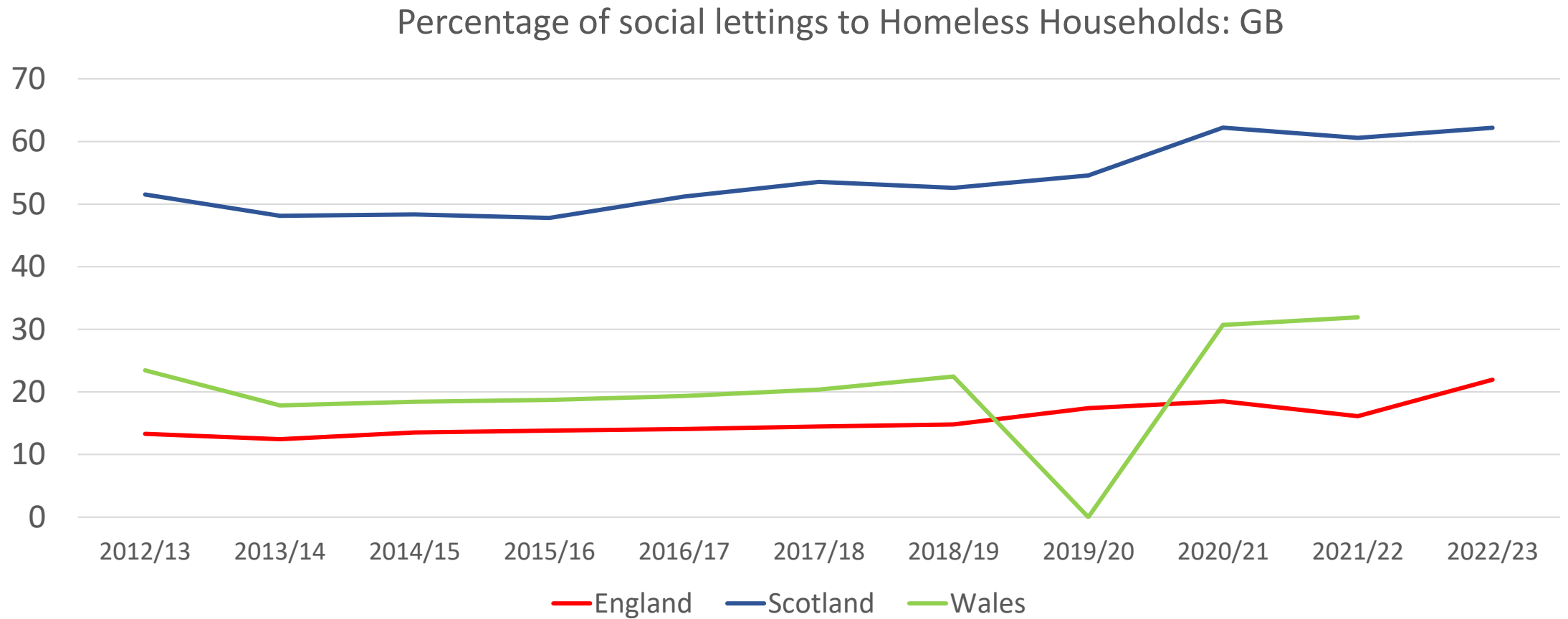


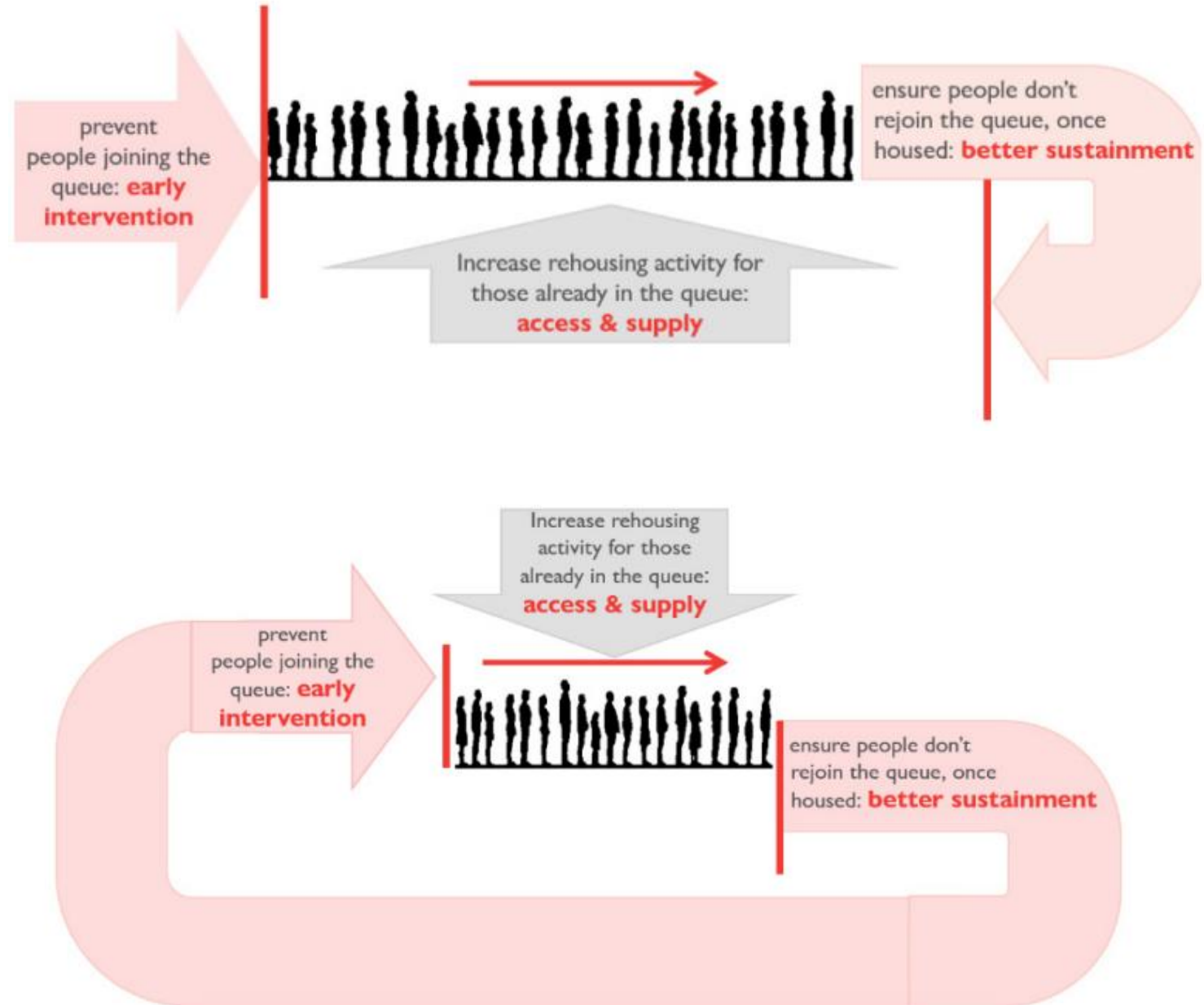
Figure 3.7: Affordable housing in England, Wales, and Scotland per 1,000 households, 2016/17 to 2020/21



% of social lettings to homeless households varies by country



A **prevention first**
housing-led
approach to ending
homelessness
where experiences
of homelessness are
rare, brief and
unrepeated



2. Social housing allocations

Allocation processes vary considerably

- National legislation in each of the GB countries places obligations upon local allocations systems but these obligations are not so prescriptive as to enforce standardisation in local approaches
- The systems and processes for allocating social housing at local level can vary substantially
- Many housing associations operating in multiple local authorities and are navigating different system
- But research showed strongly harmonized local allocations system were prevalent – usually common housing register and common allocation policy

Intentional policies that drive how housing is allocated to homeless households

- In England Choice Based Lettings (CBL) are used more frequently than in Scotland and Wales – pose some challenges:
 - Lack of pre-offer information on tenants
 - Lack of supply to meet demand
 - Features of CBL that disadvantage vulnerable applicants – lack of support available to navigate the system
- Nominations – broadly positive but more likely to benefit larger housing providers and there were some concerns raised of poor flow of information
- In Scotland section 5 requires housing association to provide accommodation via the homelessness duties

Key learnings

- We need greater supply of social housing overall – *‘Moving the deckchairs around’*
- Problem of distribution as much as supply
- Interactions with other parts of the system caused issues:
 - Increased support needs against a backdrop of decreases in funding
 - Welfare reform and cost of living
 - Cases of exclusions due to affordability
 - Growing financial pressures of housing providers – retrofit costs, pressure to fill voids
- Embed a consistent framework/approach which can prevent unsuitable nominations - section 5 in Scotland, Wales looking at a common allocations framework
- Relationships between Housing Associations and LAs are seen positively but there are big issues with adequacy of information about applicants – partnership working and flow of information could make a huge difference in areas of high demand and need