

Tackling Homelessness in a Rural Setting

The role of Employability

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Outline of Presentation

- Employability Sub Group
- Homelessness in Aberdeenshire
- Rurality
- Employability
- Analysis
 - Comparative study
 - Qualitative analysis
 - Mapping Study
- Recommendations

Aberdeenshire Homelessness Network

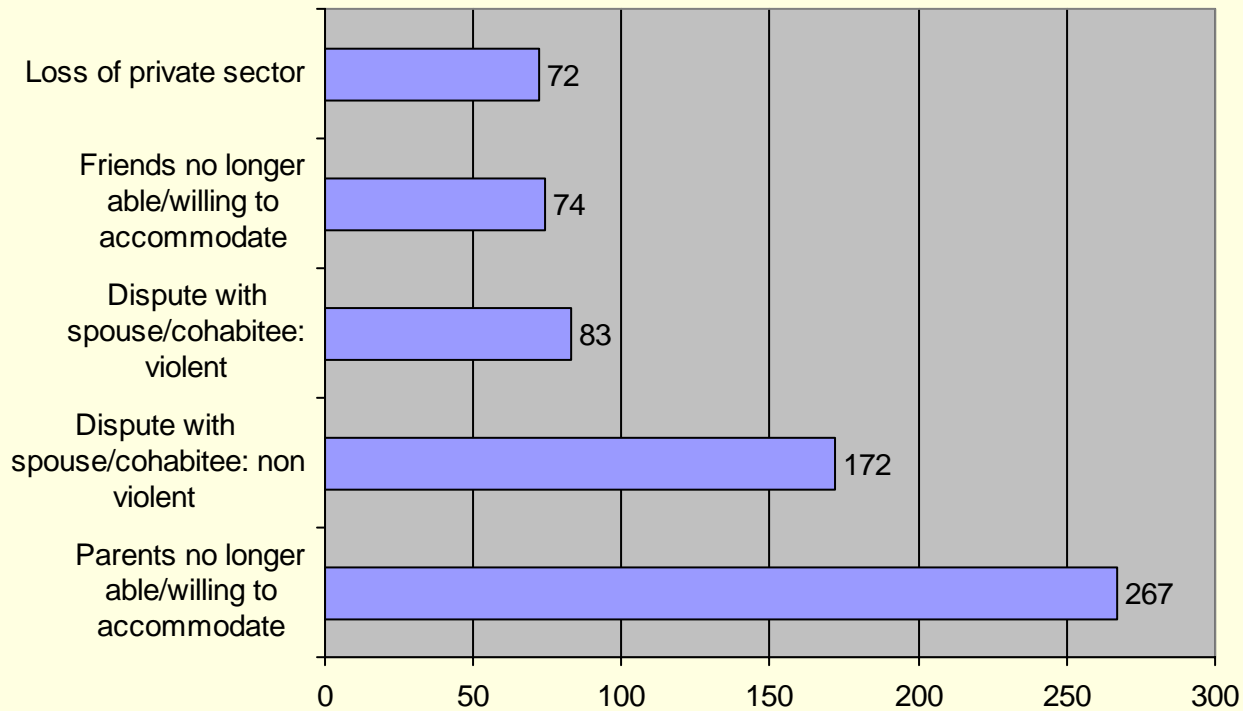
– Employability Sub Group

- Partnership Approach

- Group remit
 - Establish effective recording and assessment processes which will help quantify the employment support and training needs of those presenting as homelessness in Aberdeenshire;
 - To identify existing provision meeting these needs.
 - To identify gaps in current provision.
 - To come forward with practical solutions as to how these needs can be met.

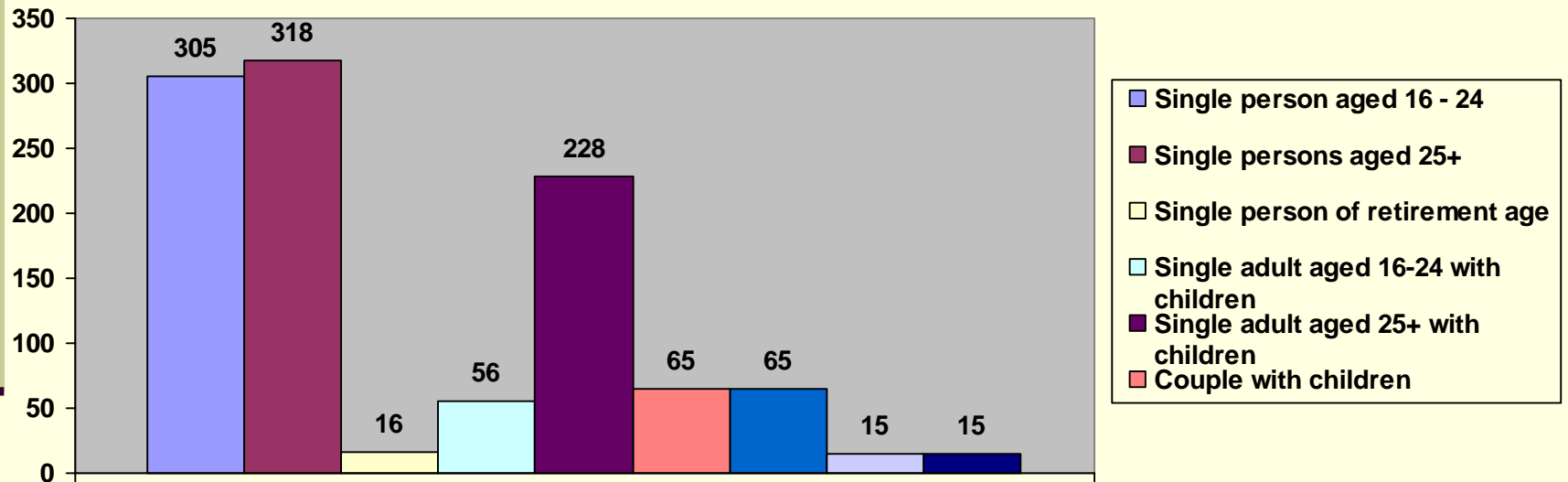
Reasons for becoming homeless

Top Five Reasons for Homelessness in Aberdeenshire 2006/07



Homelessness in Aberdeenshire

Homelessness in Aberdeenshire by Household Type (1st April 2006 - 30th November 2006)



Rurality

- Significant but underemphasised problem
 - Method used to estimate homelessness
 - Lack of awareness and/or acceptance
- Social and Cultural Isolation
 - Sexuality and Sexual Identity
 - Ethnicity
- Dual pressure on providers

Rurality cont.

- Lack of anonymity
- Health Needs
 - Temporary housing
 - Rural partnerships
- Transport
 - SIMD 2006
 - Rural v Urban

What is employability?

For the purpose of the study the same definition adopted for the purpose of the Scottish Executive Employability Framework was used:

"...the combination of factors and processes which enable people to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to move on in the workplace."

(Effective Interventions Unit in the Health Department)

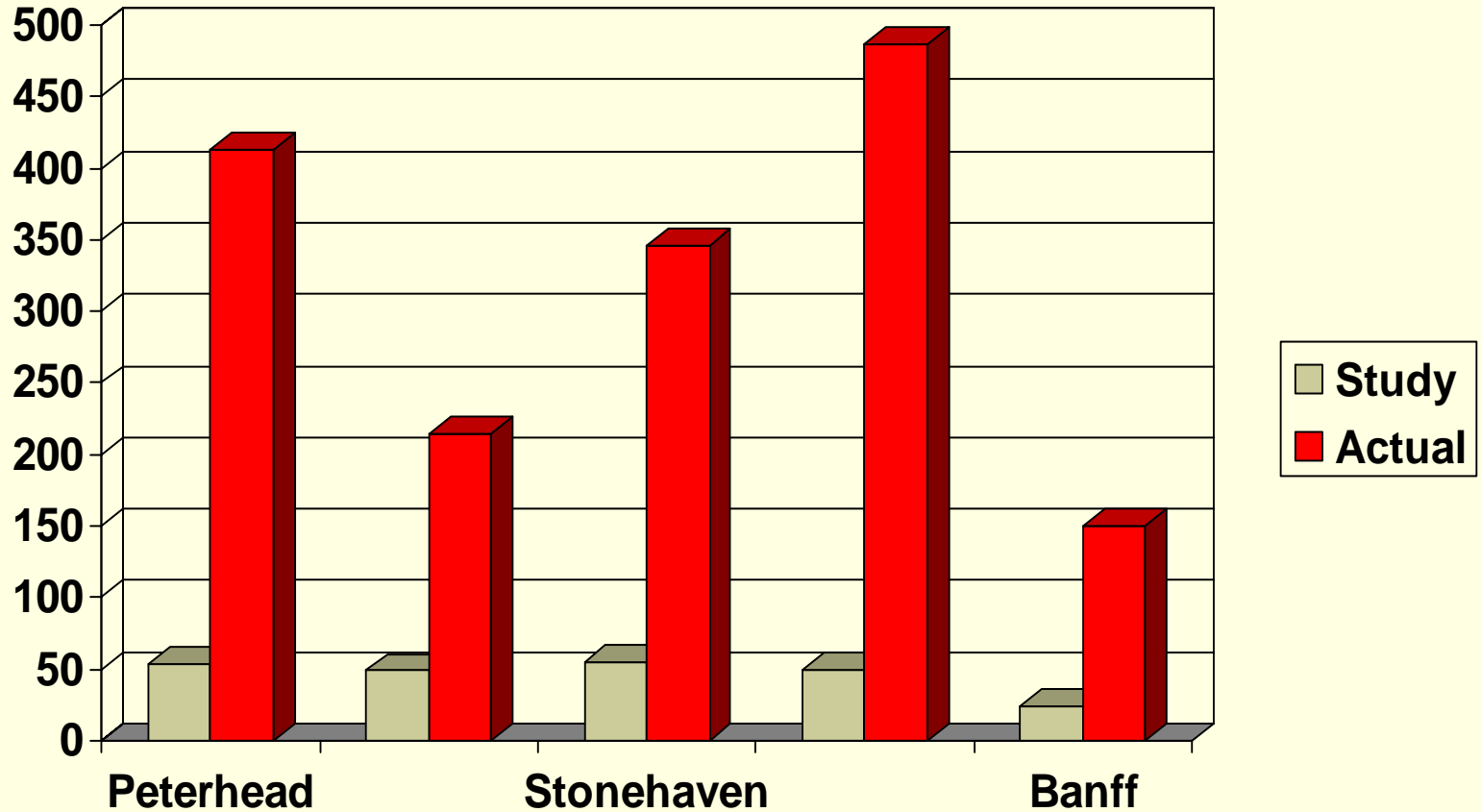
Why is employability Important

- Positive link between health and meaningful employment / vocation
- Employers need willing and able employees
- National and local economy

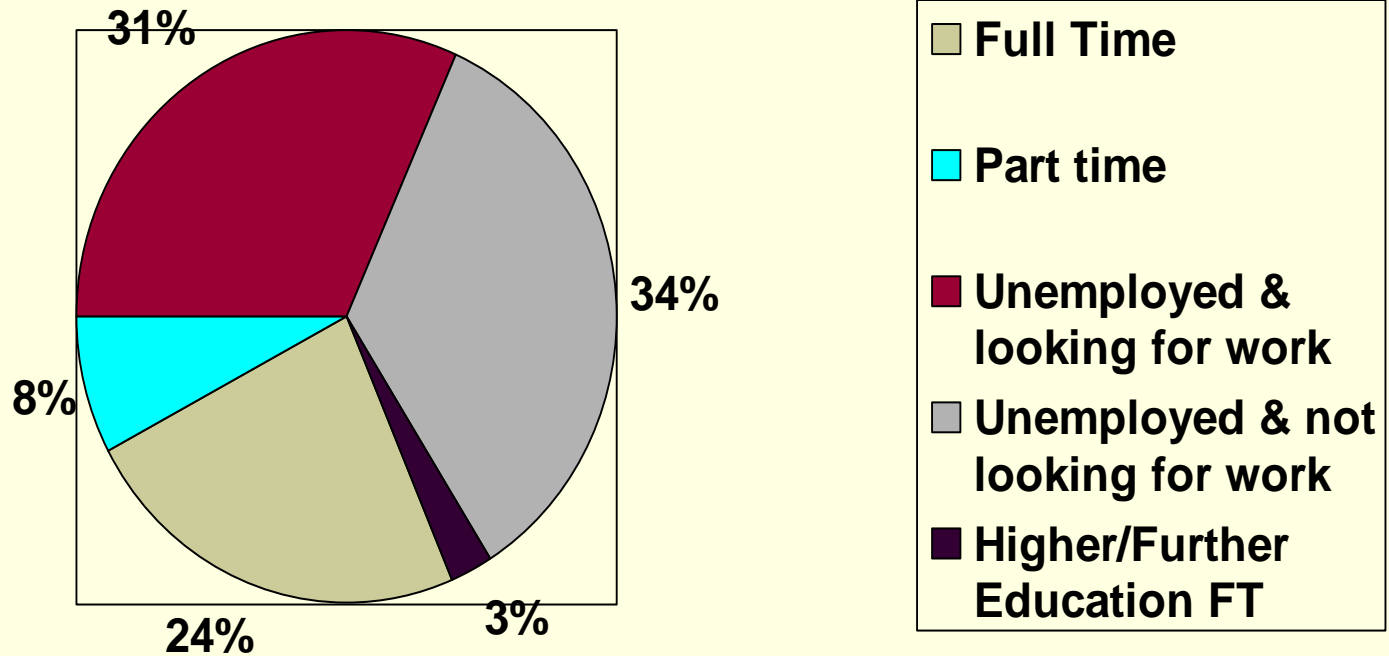
Comparative Analysis

- 232 individuals identifying themselves as homeless to Aberdeenshire Council housing Options Officers completed an employability questionnaire.
- Findings include age profile of applicants, employment status/economic activity, employment history and qualifications.

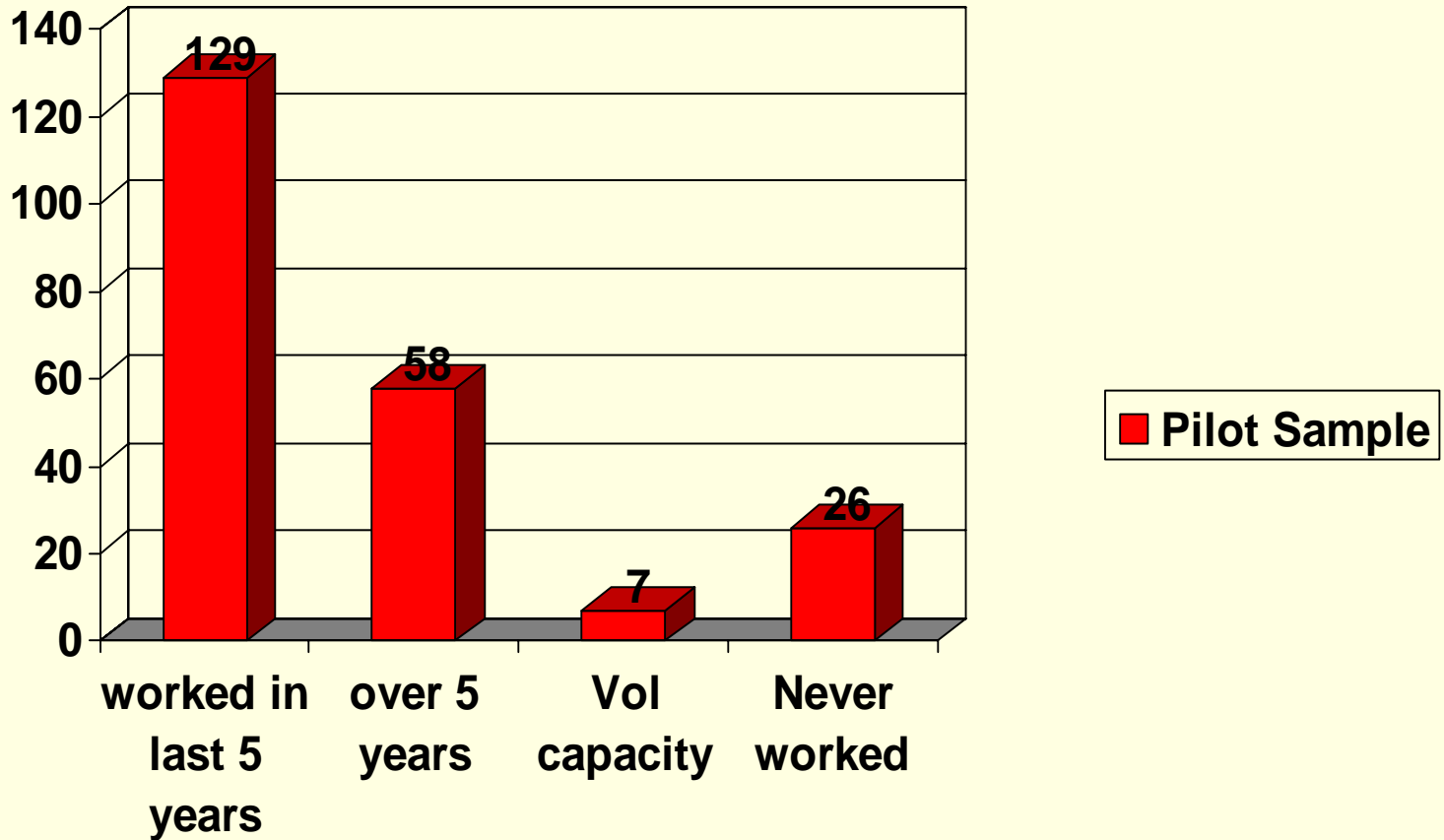
Homeless Applications



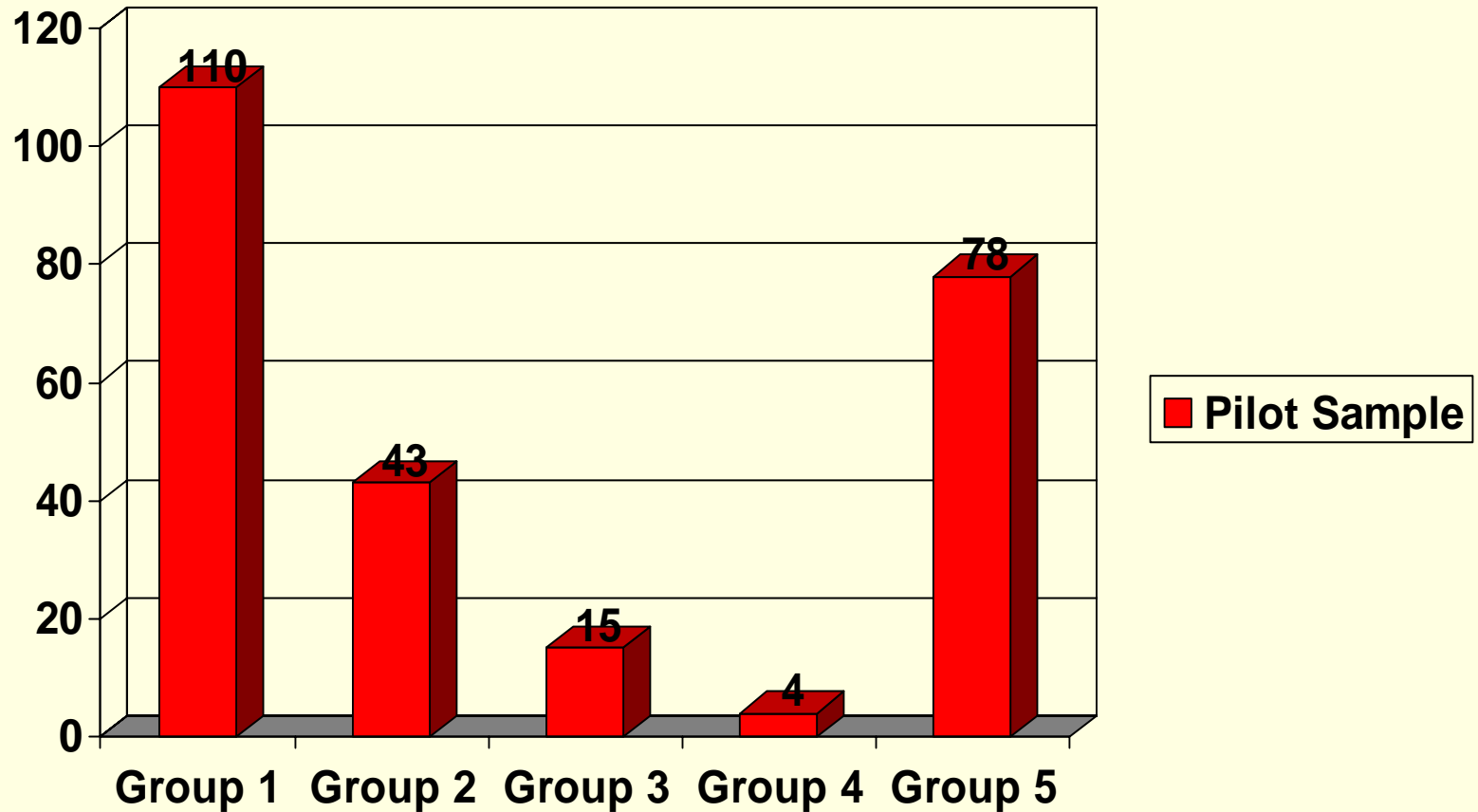
Economic Status / Activity levels



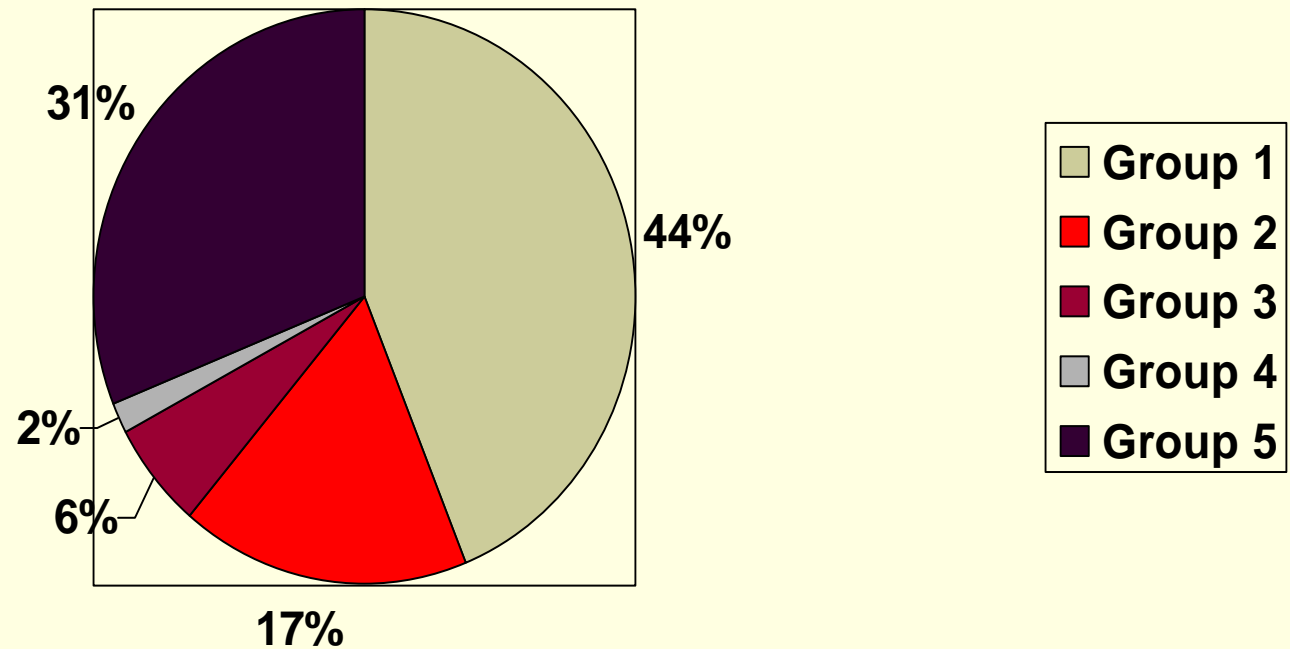
Employment History



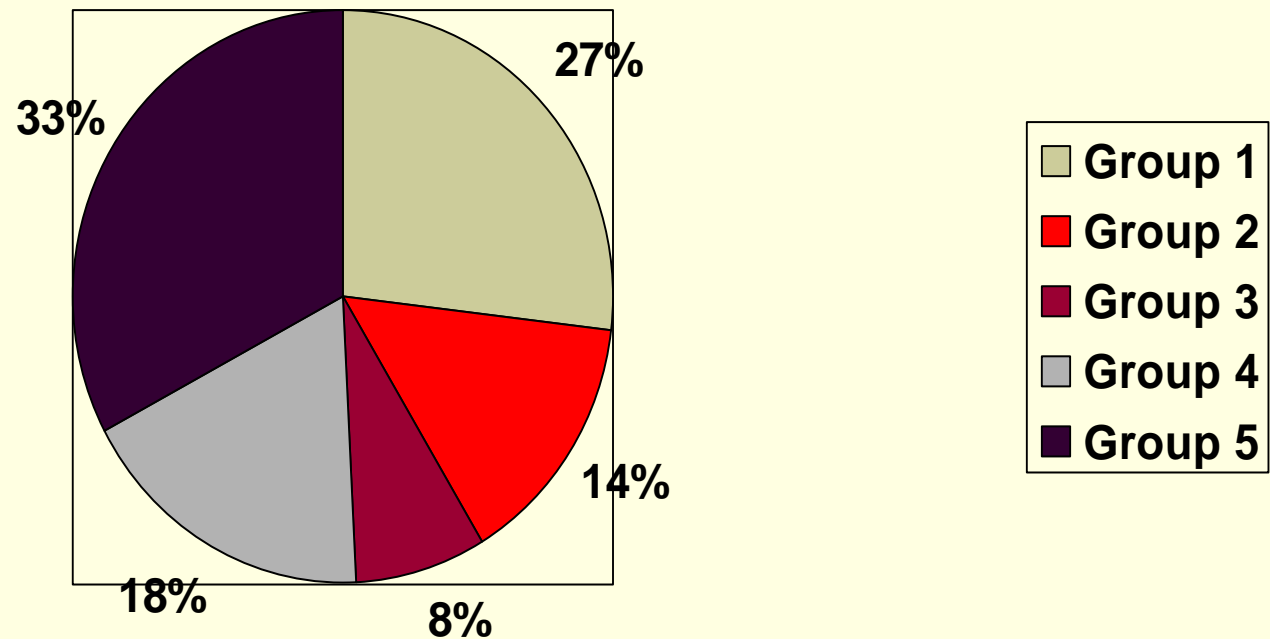
Qualifications held by homeless pilot sample



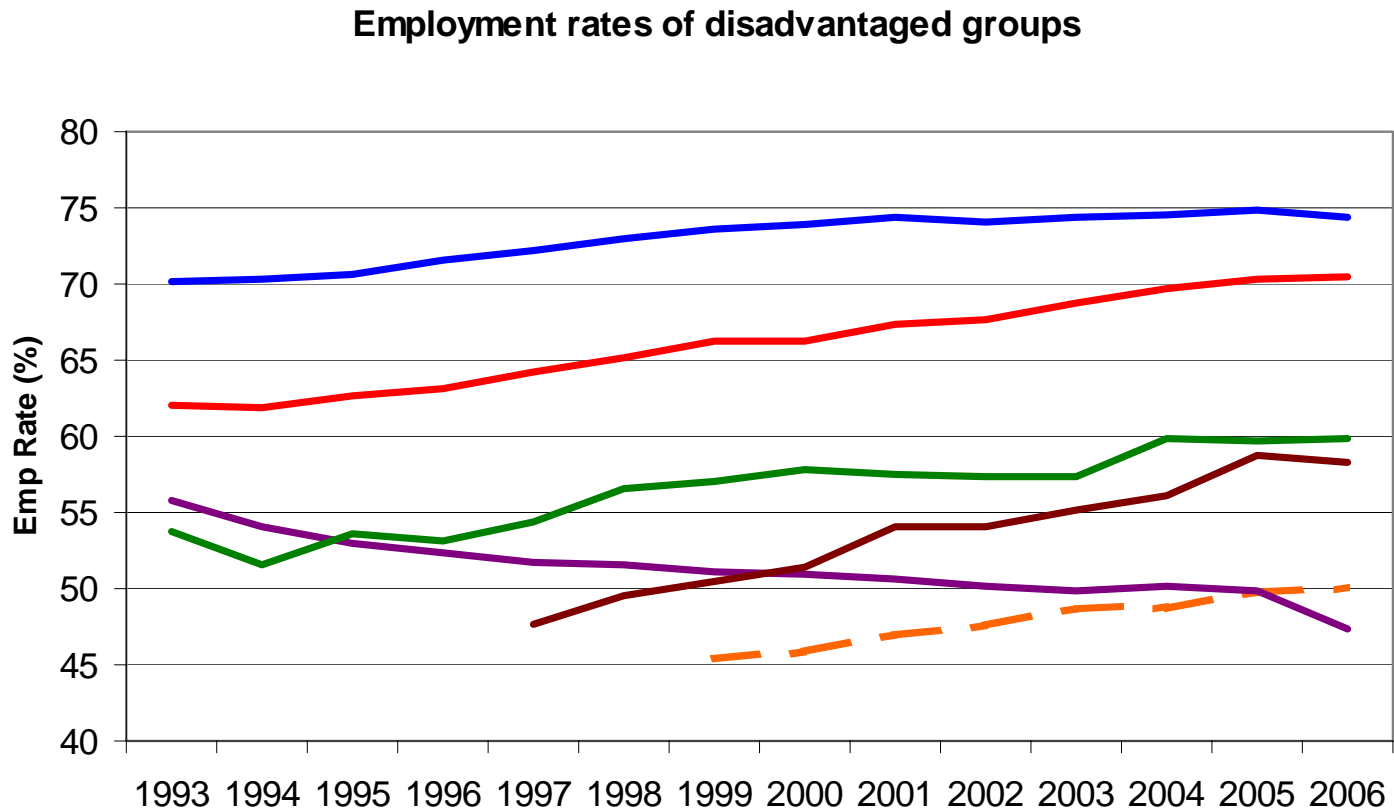
Qualifications held by homeless pilot sample Cont.



Qualifications held by homeless pilot sample - comparison



Closing the gaps



Working age population over 50s Disabled
Lowest qualified Lone parents Ethnic Minorities

Qualitative Analysis

- Data based on 35 respondents from across Aberdeenshire.
- The respondents cover a wide age range and are representative of each of the Council's administrative areas.
- Topics covered include: barriers to employment, employment status by area, employment history of respondents and assets and skills.

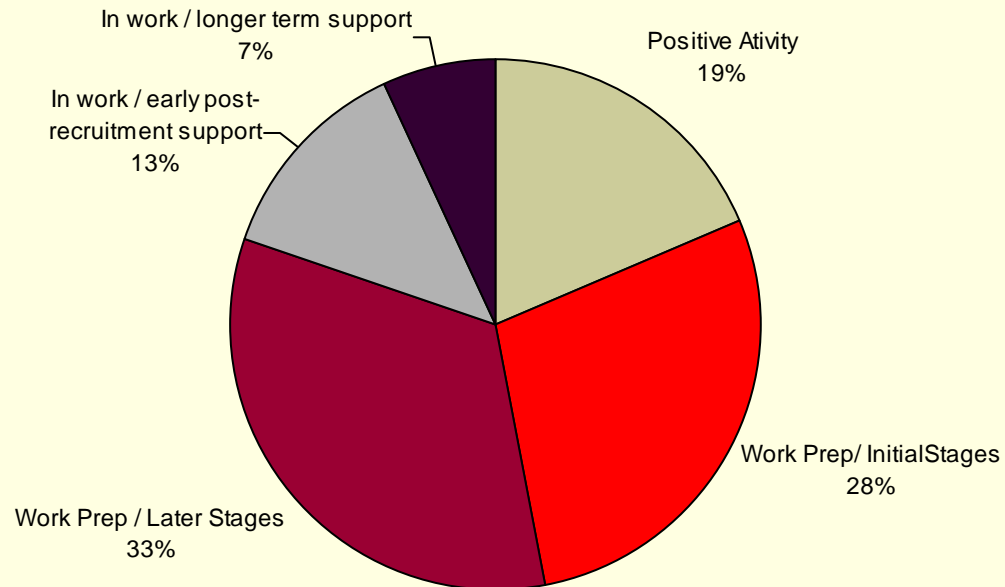
Brief summary

- 19 of the respondents who have worked within the last five years had four or more jobs during that period
- The majority of work undertaken by research cohort can be characterised as unskilled and relatively low paid.
- Twelve respondents stated that lack of confidence was a barrier to accessing employment, education and training.

Mapping

- Contact between agencies
- Meeting the needs of homeless clients
- Identifying the need for additional support services

Employability Spectrum



Key Message

- That the (comparative analysis) questions contained in the pilot be integrated into the main interview/assessment tool currently used by the Housing Options Officers.
- The creation of interim or bridging support service/interventions to take people to a stage where they can realistically benefit from mainstream services.
- That current service provider's work together to develop a shared assessment/preliminary interview tool to 'screen' and assess clients in terms of basic life skills and 'readiness to work'. Such a tool could also be used as a means to develop an action plan for homeless clients (and other client groups), allowing measurement of progress towards employment
- Develop and implement a shared referral criteria and protocol between existing service providers.
- Production of an easy to read booklet for people who are homeless about what is available to them in Aberdeenshire with details of service provision and support to access employment and learning services
- Joint training of practitioners in different disciplines should be encouraged and facilitated to break down barriers and help ensure that homelessness is recognised as a corporate duty.
- Local practice exchange networks should be established to enable organisations to facilitate a partnership approach at the local level.

■ Further Recommendations

- We do not have a good enough understanding across Aberdeenshire of how effective we are at **engaging** with and **supporting** those most distant from the labour market. There is a need to review the effectiveness of the services delivered as part of this process.
- The evidence of this study suggests that there are gaps in provision of employability services for homeless clients.
- The high incidence of multiple barriers raises a number of key issues about the **coordination** between Aberdeenshire's service commissioners and providers. There is a need to establish a common framework for this to ensure the effectiveness of services, service integration and coordination.
- Service commissioners need to consider whether there should be an early **focus** on particular subsets of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- A parallel exercise needs to be carried out on what kind of **interventions** service providers can provide for those who are some distance from the labour market, given the current operating environment and tight resources available.
- Service commissioners should explore how employability services might be better 'joined up' and consider **align resources** and develop a common framework for services to support jobless clients and examine ways in which their funding mechanisms support more integrated service delivery.