



Australian Government

Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare

Technical Paper: Alignment of the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC) and the ABS Census definitions of homelessness

Technical Paper: Alignment of the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC) and the ABS Census definitions of homelessness

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to outline the alignment and differences in the definitions of homelessness between the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's (AIHW) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) Census of Population and Housing (the Census). The paper describes key concepts and derivation code logic of both collections.

The SHSC collects information about people who seek assistance from, or are referred to Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) agencies. Data is collected about people who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness and the services provided to these people. SHS agencies receive a particular program of government funding and continuously collect information about their clients, submitting data to the AIHW monthly.

The Census is undertaken every 5 years and counts every person and household in Australia on a given night. The information collected in the Census is used to identify all people in Australia who are homeless at that time.

Homelessness definitions

The 'primary/secondary/tertiary' categorisation of homelessness referenced in the SHSC Annual Report is taken from the cultural definition proposed by Chamberlain & Mackenzie (1992). The ABS Census moved to a statistical definition with the 2011 Census to reflect a minimum community standard. While the ABS no longer refers to primary/secondary/tertiary homelessness definitions, the Census homelessness enumeration strategies still reflect the Chamberlain and Mackenzie cultural definition in its segmentation.

The Chamberlain and Mackenzie version of the cultural definition is based on the minimum standards of accommodation that people expect to achieve in contemporary Australia:

- **Primary homelessness** is experienced by people without conventional accommodation (e.g. sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings);
- **Secondary homelessness** is experienced by people who frequently move from one temporary shelter to another (e.g. emergency accommodation, youth refuges, 'couch surfing');
- **Tertiary homelessness** is experienced by people staying in accommodation that falls below minimum community standards (e.g. boarding houses and caravan parks).

The United Nations has a similarly named higher level breakdown of homelessness for an international audience (UN 2009).

- **Primary homelessness** (or rooflessness). This category includes persons living in the streets without a shelter that would fall within the scope of living quarters;
- **Secondary homelessness**. This category may include persons with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodations (including dwellings, shelters and institutions for the homeless or other living quarters). This category includes persons living in private dwellings but reporting 'no usual address' on their census form.

Some international agencies and governments have adopted different definitions of homelessness depending on language, socioeconomic conditions, cultural norms, the groups affected and the purpose for which homelessness is being defined (UN 2015).

Definition #1: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC) Annual Report

In the SHSC Annual Report, all clients of specialist homelessness services are either homeless or at risk of homelessness. Homelessness and at-risk status are determined by the specific criteria described below. Clients who did not provide sufficient information to make this assessment are recorded as not stated.

Homelessness status is derived as a combination of the client’s residency type, tenure type and, in some cases, their occupancy type (Box 1). The derivation code logic is referenced at Appendix C, D1.

Box 1: Derivation of homelessness status (SHSC Annual Report)

In the SHSC, a client’s homelessness status is reported as either at risk, homeless or not stated. Using the combination of client’s residence type, tenure and occupancy information, client’s housing situation is derived and further categorised as follows.

Clients are considered to be **homeless** if they are living in any of the following circumstances:

- No shelter or improvised dwelling: includes where dwelling type is no dwelling/street/park/in the open, motor vehicle, improvised building/dwelling, caravan, cabin, boat or tent; or tenure type is renting or living rent-free in a caravan park.
- Short-term temporary accommodation: dwelling type is boarding/rooming house, emergency accommodation, hotel/motel/bed and breakfast; or tenure type is renting or living rent-free in boarding/rooming house, renting or living rent-free in emergency accommodation or transitional housing.
- House, townhouse or flat (couch surfing or with no tenure): tenure type is no tenure; or conditions of occupancy is couch surfing.
- Other–homeless.

Clients are considered to be **at risk–not homeless** if they are living in any of the following situations:

- Public or community housing (renter or rent free): dwelling type is house/townhouse/flat and tenure type is renter or rent-free public housing, renter or rent-free-community housing.
- Private or other housing (renter, rent-free or owner): dwelling type is house/townhouse/flat and tenure type is renter-private housing, life tenure scheme, owner—shared equity or rent/buy scheme, owner-being purchased/with mortgage, owner-fully owned, rent-free-private/other housing.
- Institutional settings: dwelling type is hospital, psychiatric hospital, disability support, rehabilitation, boarding school, adult correctional facility, youth/juvenile justice detention centre, immigration detention centre or aged care facility.
- Other–at risk.

Clients are classified as **‘not stated’** if they did not provide enough information about their residence, tenure or occupancy to determine their housing situation.

(AIHW 2020)

The derivation methods used for other SHSC products such as the Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURFs), SHS Statistical Summaries and Reports on Government Services (RoGS) reporting, contain slight differences based on the specific reporting requirements for each product (see Appendix C, D3 & D4).

Definition #2: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census

The ABS defines homelessness, for the purposes of the Census, as the lack of one or more elements that represent 'home' (Box 2). The derivation code logic is referenced at Appendix C, D2.

Box 2: Derivation of homelessness status (ABS Census)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) definition of homelessness is informed by an understanding of homelessness as 'home'lessness, not rooflessness. It emphasises the core elements of 'home' in Anglo American and European interpretations of the meaning of home as identified in research evidence (Mallet 2004). These elements may include a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety and the ability to control living space. Homelessness is therefore a lack of one or more of the elements that represent 'home'.

In brief, the ABS statistical definition is that:

When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives, they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate;
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

The definition has been constructed from a conceptual framework centred around the following elements:

- Adequacy of the dwelling;
- Security of tenure in the dwelling; and
- Control of, and access to space for social relations.

(ABS 2018)

Definition comparison

Whilst this definitional comparison exercise is important for better aligning the definitions where possible, it is also necessary to recognise and accept that the two collections have and always will be different measures for different purposes.

The primary objective of the Census is to count people and housing stock for purposes of determining electoral boundaries and commonwealth funding to state / territories. Additional strategies support the identification and estimation of homelessness. Outputs are disaggregated into various characteristics to enable multiple data / policy use. There are limitations with self-enumeration instruments vs interview-based instruments for rough sleepers.

The SHS data collection is focused on service provision to homeless people or those at risk of homelessness throughout the year. The inclusion of SHS organisation in the scope of the SHS data collection is whether it has received government NHHHA funding. People are counted as homeless or at risk of homeless in the SHSC if they are provided a service at a SHS organisation. Unlike the Census, which is the count of people and households on a given night every 5 years, the SHSC counts service provision continuously.

Appendix A provides a detailed comparison between the two data collections.

There are some key fundamental barriers to alignment including:

- The ABS Census is a whole of population measure to determine national homelessness rates. The SHSC can only ever be a reflection of service delivery.
- The ABS definition includes people living in severely crowded dwellings. The SHSC does not collect data on the number of bedrooms or household characteristics. This information is an integral component for measuring overcrowding and as such, homelessness due to severely crowded dwellings cannot currently be separately identified in the SHSC.
- The ABS exclude certain groups of people from the homeless count where they appear to have accommodation alternatives or where there is a clear choice about the type of accommodation (for example, people who are travelling, people returning from overseas, patients in hospitals or rehabilitation facilities, certain owner builder or hobby farmers, and students living in halls of residence).

If people in these circumstances become clients of specialist homelessness services agencies, they are included here as either homeless or at risk of homelessness, depending on their housing situation as reported.

- Both collections have strengths and limitations in terms of what they can capture. The data timeliness of the SHSC provides an added advantage for longitudinal analysis and monthly reporting, versus the ABS Census five yearly snapshot.


Appendix A: Definition alignment summary

Where possible, the key concepts of each collection (SHSC & ABS Census) have been summarised in the tables below with details of how they compare and if there is any possibility for better alignment.

Legend

	Definition currently aligns
	Cannot be aligned/matched because of systematic limitations or other
	Can be aligned/matched with changes to the SHSC through data development
	Can be aligned/matched if the underlying SHSC derivation is changed

Table 1: Key concepts (based on SHSC Annual Report definition)¹

#	Key concepts (based on SHSC Annual Report definition) ¹	Status	Notes (SHS Annual Report v ABS Census)
1.1	Non-conventional accommodation (primary homelessness)		<p>SHS – Defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • living on the streets • sleeping in parks • squatting • staying in cars or railway carriages • living in improvised dwellings • living in the long grass. <p>Housing situation: ‘No shelter or improvised dwelling: includes where dwelling type is no dwelling/street/park/in the open, motor vehicle, improvised building/dwelling, caravan, cabin, boat or tent; or tenure type is renting or living rent-free in a caravan park’</p> <p>ABS – Defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • living on the streets including in cars • in deserted buildings • improvised dwellings • under bridges • in parks. <p>Operational group: ‘Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out’</p> <p><i>Though higher-level definitions align, derivations may vary.</i></p>



#	Key concepts (based on SHSC Annual Report definition) ¹	Status	Notes (SHS Annual Report v ABS Census)
1.2	Short-term or emergency accommodation (secondary homelessness)		<p>SHS – Defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refuges • crisis shelters • couch surfing or no tenure • living temporarily with friends and relatives • insecure accommodation on a short-term basis • emergency accommodation arranged by a specialist homelessness agency (for example, in hotels, motels and so forth). <p>Housing situation: ‘Short-term temporary accommodation: dwelling type is boarding/rooming house, emergency accommodation, hotel/motel/bed and breakfast; or tenure type is renting or living rent-free in boarding/rooming house, renting or living rent-free in emergency accommodation or transitional housing’ & ‘House, townhouse or flat (couch surfing or with no tenure): tenure type is no tenure; or conditions of occupancy are living with relatives fee free, couch surfing’</p> <p>ABS – Defined as: People moving between various forms of temporary shelter including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • friends, • emergency accommodation, • youth refuges, • hostels and boarding houses <p>Operational groups: ‘Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless’, ‘Persons staying temporarily with other households’ & ‘Persons living in boarding houses’ (short stay).</p> <p><i>Though higher-level definitions align, derivations may vary.</i></p>
1.3	Tertiary homelessness		<p>SHS – not defined or derived.</p> <p>ABS – defined as people living in single rooms in private boarding houses without their own bathroom, kitchen or security of tenure.</p> <p>Operational groups: ‘Persons in other temporary lodgings’, ‘Persons living in ‘severely’ crowded dwellings & ‘Persons living in boarding houses’ (longer stay).</p> <p><i>Will not align as household demographic information is not collected in the SHSC.</i></p>

Table 2: Key concepts (based on ABS definition)²







#	Key concepts (based on ABS definition) ²	Status	Notes (SHS Annual Report v ABS Census)
2.1	<p>Security of the tenure to the dwelling:</p> <p>No tenure</p> <p>Initial tenure short & not extendable</p>		<p>SHS – details currently captured through tenure/occupancy items.</p> <p>ABS - this element covers a person’s legal right to occupy a dwelling, with stability and security of tenure such as owning (with or without a mortgage) the dwelling and/or land, or renting with a formal lease or similar right that could be enforced by the tenant. This also includes a familial reflected security of tenure, for example, children living with their parents.</p> <p><i>Though higher-level definitions align, derivations may vary.</i></p>
2.2	<p>Adequacy of the dwelling:</p> <p>No basic facilities exist</p> <p>Structure of dwelling is inadequate</p>		<p>SHS – does not currently have a means by which to assess the quality of the building beyond the tenure/dwelling/occupancy provided by the client.</p> <p>ABS - this element covers whether the structure of the dwelling renders it fit for human habitation (including, for renters, that the building is used for the purpose for which it is zoned), and the dwelling has access to basic facilities (such as kitchen facilities and bathroom). For example, whether the dwelling satisfies building codes, does not have improvement or control orders on it, has basic facilities and is not improvised.</p> <p><i>Questions around the adequacy of a dwelling could be introduced to the SHSC through data development.</i></p>
2.3	<p>Control of and access to space for social relations:</p> <p>No control or access to space</p> <p>No privacy</p>		<p>SHS - does not capture household characteristics or dwelling capacity to derive social relations information.</p> <p>ABS - this element covers whether a person or household has control of and access to space so they are able to pursue social relations, have personal (or household) living space, maintain privacy and the household has exclusive access to kitchen facilities and a bathroom.</p> <p><i>Questions on household characteristics and dwelling capacity could be introduced to the SHSC through data development. Other data items could include number of bedrooms, dwelling type, structure, capacity / bedspace, and cohort type.</i></p>

Table 3: Homelessness operational groups (based on ABS derivations)³

#	Homelessness operational groups (based on ABS derivations)	Status	Notes (SHS Annual Report v ABS Census)
3.1	Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out		<p>SHS - captured through the derivation of 'No shelter or improvised/inadequate dwelling'. In the SHSC derivation, caravans/cabins are classed as improvised dwellings and the client considered homeless.</p> <p>ABS - residence/dwelling in caravans/cabins/houseboats and tenure in a caravan/residential park/camping ground considered to be marginally housed in ABS derivation, not homeless. Marginally housed group 'Persons who are marginally housed in caravan parks'</p> <p><i>For detailed ABS derivation see Appendix C, D2, Primary homelessness: Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out</i></p> <p>Could better align if those in caravan (Res2) /caravan park (Ten5, Ten13)/ cabins (Res4)/ boat (Res5) are moved to at-risk of homelessness in the SHSC derivation⁴.</p> <p>Note: Unless living in a tent in a caravan park, those people are then considered 'rough sleepers'</p>
3.2	Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless		<p>SHS – cannot capture services provided by non-SHS agencies.</p> <p>ABS - derivation includes those accommodated through SHS support on Census night but also includes those in other 'hostels for the homeless, night shelters, refugees'.</p> <p><i>For detailed ABS derivation see Appendix C, D2, Secondary homelessness: Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless</i></p> <p>Will not align as accommodation provided by non-SHS services is not collected in the SHSC, although non-SHS accommodation is a smaller population.</p>
3.3	Persons staying temporarily with other households		<p>SHS - captured through the derivation of couch surfer (Dwelling = house, townhouse or flat, Tenure = no tenure and Occupancy = Couch surfer)</p> <p>ABS</p> <p><i>For detailed ABS derivation see Appendix C, D2, Secondary homelessness: Persons staying temporarily with other households</i></p> <p>Though higher-level definitions align, derivations may vary.</p>









#	Homelessness operational groups (based on ABS derivations)	Status	Notes (SHS Annual Report v ABS Census)
3.4	Persons living in boarding houses		<p>SHS – derivation includes clients renting or residing rent-free in short-term temporary accommodation such as a boarding/rooming house, emergency/transitional accommodation, hotel/motel/bed and breakfast.</p> <p>Institutional settings are considered at-risk, not homeless.</p> <p>ABS - definition also includes those who reported a residential status of 'patient' and 'inmate' (housed in an institutional setting).</p> <p>The ABS methodology identifies these for exclusion as residents may have misreported their residential status. Persons in correctional facilities or hospitals are excluded from the boarding house category.</p> <p><i>For detailed ABS derivation see Appendix C, D2, Secondary homelessness: Persons living in boarding houses</i></p> <p>Higher-level definition of students in boarding houses aligns for 'hotel/motel/bed and breakfast' and 'emergency accommodation' (derivations may vary).</p> <p>Could better align if those in institutional settings are moved to homeless in the SHSC derivation.</p>
3.5	Persons in other temporary lodgings		<p>SHS - tertiary homelessness not defined or derived.</p> <p>ABS - item determined by the Census supervisors/field officer's assessment of the dwelling, administration data from state/territory governments and homeless services where persons have been offered brokerage.</p> <p><i>For detailed ABS derivation see Appendix C, D2, Tertiary homelessness: Persons in other temporary lodgings</i></p> <p>Will not align as the derivation for clients residing in hotel/motel/bed and breakfast does not include an assessment of the dwelling adequacy in the SHSC.</p>
3.6	Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings		<p>SHS - household characteristic information is not collected. Unable to determine the relationship between the client and their household/housing situation.</p> <p>ABS - All persons enumerated in a private dwelling who were usual residents in dwellings which needed 4 or more extra bedrooms under the Canadian National Occupancy Standard</p> <p><i>For detailed ABS derivation see Appendix C, D2, Tertiary homelessness: Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings</i></p> <p>Questions on household characteristics and dwelling capacity could be introduced to the SHSC through data development.</p>

Table 4: Other related concepts

#	Other related concepts	Status	Notes (SHS Annual Report v ABS Census)
4.1	Capturing service use		<p>SHS – only collects data from persons that have sought/received support from government funded specialist homelessness services agencies.</p> <p>ABS – whole of population measure but does not capture use of homelessness services beyond ‘persons in supported accommodation for the homeless’ and ‘persons in other temporary lodgings’.</p> <p>Will not align as the two collections capture different levels of service use.</p>
4.2	Estimating the rate of homelessness in the population		<p>SHS – limited to those who seek support/are provided services.</p> <p>ABS – captures whole of population (denominator) and estimates those likely to be homeless (numerator) supporting rate calculation in population.</p> <p>Will not align as not all people defined as homeless in the ABS Census, seek SHS services.</p>
4.3	Providing a longitudinal dataset of homelessness		<p>SHS – the ability to follow a client’s situation over time is one of the key strengths of the SHSC.</p> <p>ABS – unable to follow those identified as homeless during inter-censal years.</p> <p>Will not align as ABS estimates are collected every 5 years vs. the monthly collection of SHSC data.</p>
4.4	Supporting the analysis of repeat homelessness		<p>SHS – analysis supported by longitudinal nature of collection.</p> <p>ABS – currently not available.</p> <p>Will not align as ABS Census cannot capture repeat homelessness.</p>
4.5	Capturing those in ‘Institutional settings’		<p>SHS - clients in institutional settings are counted as at risk, not homeless, in the SHSC. This includes clients residing in health facilities (hospital/psychiatric), disability support, rehabilitation, adult correctional facility, youth/juvenile justice correctional centre, boarding school/residential college.</p> <p>ABS - those who reported a residential status of ‘patient’ and ‘inmate’ (housed in an institutional setting) are recorded as homeless and categorised as ‘Persons living in boarding houses’.</p> <p>Note: If the address is a boarding house, then patients and inmates would be included as residents.</p> <p>Note the complexities of the derivation (see Appendix C, D2).</p> <p>Could better align if those housed in institutional settings are moved to homeless in the SHSC derivation.</p>

1. Specifically referencing the SHS Annual Report definition/derivation of homelessness (AIHW 2020).
2. Key elements at centre of conceptual framework used for ABS definition (ABS 2018). See Appendix C for more detail on how these align with the homelessness operational groups.
3. The ABS Census derivation is updated each cycle according to ongoing improvements in collection design. Derivations in Appendix C are based on 2016 Census. Adjustments for each future Census are likely to occur.
4. Res = Residential type, Ten = Housing tenure type, Occ = Conditions of occupancy.

Appendix B - SHSC Client form

(See questions 27-29) Full form: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/18b1ab7f-c48f-494c-b180-b26bcb51be8f/Client-Form-version.pdf.aspx>

<p>Questions 21 – 24 refer to the client's most recent residential address, where they were living last week</p>																																																																						
<p>21 Was the client's last permanent address also where they were residing last week?</p> <p>Yes <input type="radio"/> 1 ▶ GO TO Q25</p> <p>No <input type="radio"/> 2</p> <p>Don't know <input type="radio"/> 99</p>	<p>26 What were the living arrangements of the client?</p> <p>Cross one circle only in each column</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Week before</th> <th>When presenting</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Lone person</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>One parent with child(ren)</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Couple with child(ren)</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Couple without child(ren)</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other family</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 99</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Week before	When presenting	Lone person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	One parent with child(ren)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 2	Couple with child(ren)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3	Couple without child(ren)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 4	Other family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 5	Group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 6	Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 99																																													
	Week before	When presenting																																																																				
Lone person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1																																																																				
One parent with child(ren)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 2																																																																				
Couple with child(ren)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3																																																																				
Couple without child(ren)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 4																																																																				
Other family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 5																																																																				
Group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 6																																																																				
Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 99																																																																				
<p>22 What was the suburb/town/locality name, where the client resided last week?</p> <p> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> </p>	<p>27 In what type of residence/dwelling did the client live?</p> <p>Cross one circle only in each column</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Week before</th> <th>When presenting</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>House/townhouse/flat</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Caravan</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tent</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cabin</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Boat</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Improvised building/dwelling</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No dwelling/street/park/in the open</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Motor vehicle</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Boarding/rooming house</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Emergency accommodation</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hotel/motel/bed and breakfast</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hospital (excluding psychiatric)</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Psychiatric hospital/unit</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disability support</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rehabilitation</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Adult correctional facility</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Youth/juvenile justice correctional centre</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Boarding school/residential college</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aged care facility</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Immigration detention centre</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know</td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/> 99</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Week before	When presenting	House/townhouse/flat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	Caravan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 2	Tent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3	Cabin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 4	Boat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 5	Improvised building/dwelling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 6	No dwelling/street/park/in the open	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 7	Motor vehicle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 8	Boarding/rooming house	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 9	Emergency accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 10	Hotel/motel/bed and breakfast	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 11	Hospital (excluding psychiatric)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 12	Psychiatric hospital/unit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 13	Disability support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 14	Rehabilitation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 15	Adult correctional facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 16	Youth/juvenile justice correctional centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 17	Boarding school/residential college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 18	Aged care facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 19	Immigration detention centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 20	Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 21	Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 99
		Week before	When presenting																																																																			
House/townhouse/flat		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1																																																																			
Caravan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 2																																																																				
Tent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3																																																																				
Cabin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 4																																																																				
Boat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 5																																																																				
Improvised building/dwelling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 6																																																																				
No dwelling/street/park/in the open	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 7																																																																				
Motor vehicle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 8																																																																				
Boarding/rooming house	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 9																																																																				
Emergency accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 10																																																																				
Hotel/motel/bed and breakfast	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 11																																																																				
Hospital (excluding psychiatric)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 12																																																																				
Psychiatric hospital/unit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 13																																																																				
Disability support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 14																																																																				
Rehabilitation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 15																																																																				
Adult correctional facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 16																																																																				
Youth/juvenile justice correctional centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 17																																																																				
Boarding school/residential college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 18																																																																				
Aged care facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 19																																																																				
Immigration detention centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 20																																																																				
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 21																																																																				
Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 99																																																																				
<p>23 What was the postcode where the client resided last week?</p> <p><input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>Cross one circle only</p> <p>Not stated/inadequately described <input type="radio"/> 0099</p> <p>Unknown <input type="radio"/> 0098</p> <p>Not applicable <input type="radio"/> 0097</p>	<p>24 What was the State or Territory where the client resided last week?</p> <p>Cross one circle only</p> <p>New South Wales <input type="radio"/> 1</p> <p>Victoria <input type="radio"/> 2</p> <p>Queensland <input type="radio"/> 3</p> <p>South Australia <input type="radio"/> 4</p> <p>Western Australia <input type="radio"/> 5</p> <p>Tasmania <input type="radio"/> 6</p> <p>Northern Territory <input type="radio"/> 7</p> <p>Australian Capital Territory <input type="radio"/> 8</p> <p>Don't know <input type="radio"/> 99</p>																																																																					
<p>25 If the client is aged 18 or over, is the client a current or former Australian Defence Force member (ADF)? This does not include non-Australian defence forces, or reservists who have never served full-time in the ADF.</p> <p>Cross one circle only</p> <p>Yes <input type="radio"/> 1</p> <p>No <input type="radio"/> 2</p> <p>Don't know <input type="radio"/> 99</p> <p>Not applicable <input type="radio"/> 0</p>																																																																						

28 Which of the following best describes the client's tenure?

Cross one circle only in each column

	Week before	When presenting
Renter – private housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1
Renter – public housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 2
Renter – community housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3
Renter – transitional housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 4
Renter – caravan park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 5
Renter – boarding/rooming house	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 6
Renter – emergency accommodation/night shelter/women's refuge/youth shelter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 7
Other renter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 8
Rent free – private housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 9
Rent free – public housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 10
Rent free – community housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 11
Rent free – transitional housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 12
Rent free – caravan park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 13
Rent free – boarding/rooming house	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 14
Rent free – emergency accommodation/night shelter/women's refuge/youth shelter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 15
Other rent free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 16
Life tenure scheme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 17
Owner – shared equity or rent/buy scheme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 18
Owner – being purchased/with mortgage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 19
Owner – fully owned	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 20
Other tenure not elsewhere specified	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 21
No tenure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 22
Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 99

29 What were the conditions of occupancy for the client's dwelling?

Cross one circle only in each column

	Week before	When presenting
Leased tenure – nominated on lease	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1
Lease in place – not nominated on lease	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 2
Couch Surfer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3
Boarder	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 4
Living with relative fee free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 6
Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 99
Not applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 0

30 If the client is aged 15 or over, what was their labour force status?

Cross one circle only in each column

	Week before	When presenting
Employed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1
Unemployed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 2
Not in the labour force (e.g. retirees, full time students and those in institutions)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3
Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 99
Not Applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 0

31 If the client is aged 15 or over, what was their employment (full/part time) status?

Cross one circle only in each column

	Week before	When presenting
Full time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1
Part time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 2
Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 99
Not Applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 0

32 Which of the following best describes the client's main source of income?

Cross one circle only in each column

	Week before	When presenting
Government pensions and allowances		
Newstart allowance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1
Parenting payment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 2
Disability support pension (Centrelink)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3
Youth allowance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 4
Age pension	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 5
Austudy/ABSTUDY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 6
DVA pension or payment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 18
Sickness allowance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 10
Carer allowance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 11
Carer payment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 12
Other government pensions and allowances (not elsewhere classified)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 13
Other sources of income		
Employee income	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 14
Unincorporated business income	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 15
Other income (not elsewhere classified)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 16
Nil income	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 17
Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 99

Appendix C - Derivation code logic

Box 1: Derivation of homelessness status (SHSC Annual Report)

In the SHSC, a client's homelessness status is reported as either at risk, homeless or not stated. Using the combination of client's residence type, tenure and occupancy information, client's housing situation is derived and further categorised as follows.

Clients are considered to be **homeless** if they are living in any of the following circumstances:

- No shelter or improvised dwelling: includes where dwelling type is no dwelling/street/park/in the open, motor vehicle, improvised building/dwelling, caravan, cabin, boat or tent; or tenure type is renting or living rent-free in a caravan park.
- Short-term temporary accommodation: dwelling type is boarding/rooming house, emergency accommodation, hotel/motel/bed and breakfast; or tenure type is renting or living rent-free in boarding/rooming house, renting or living rent-free in emergency accommodation or transitional housing.
- House, townhouse or flat (couch surfing or with no tenure): tenure type is no tenure; or conditions of occupancy is couch surfing.
- other-homeless.

Clients are considered to be **at risk-not homeless** if they are living in any of the following situations:

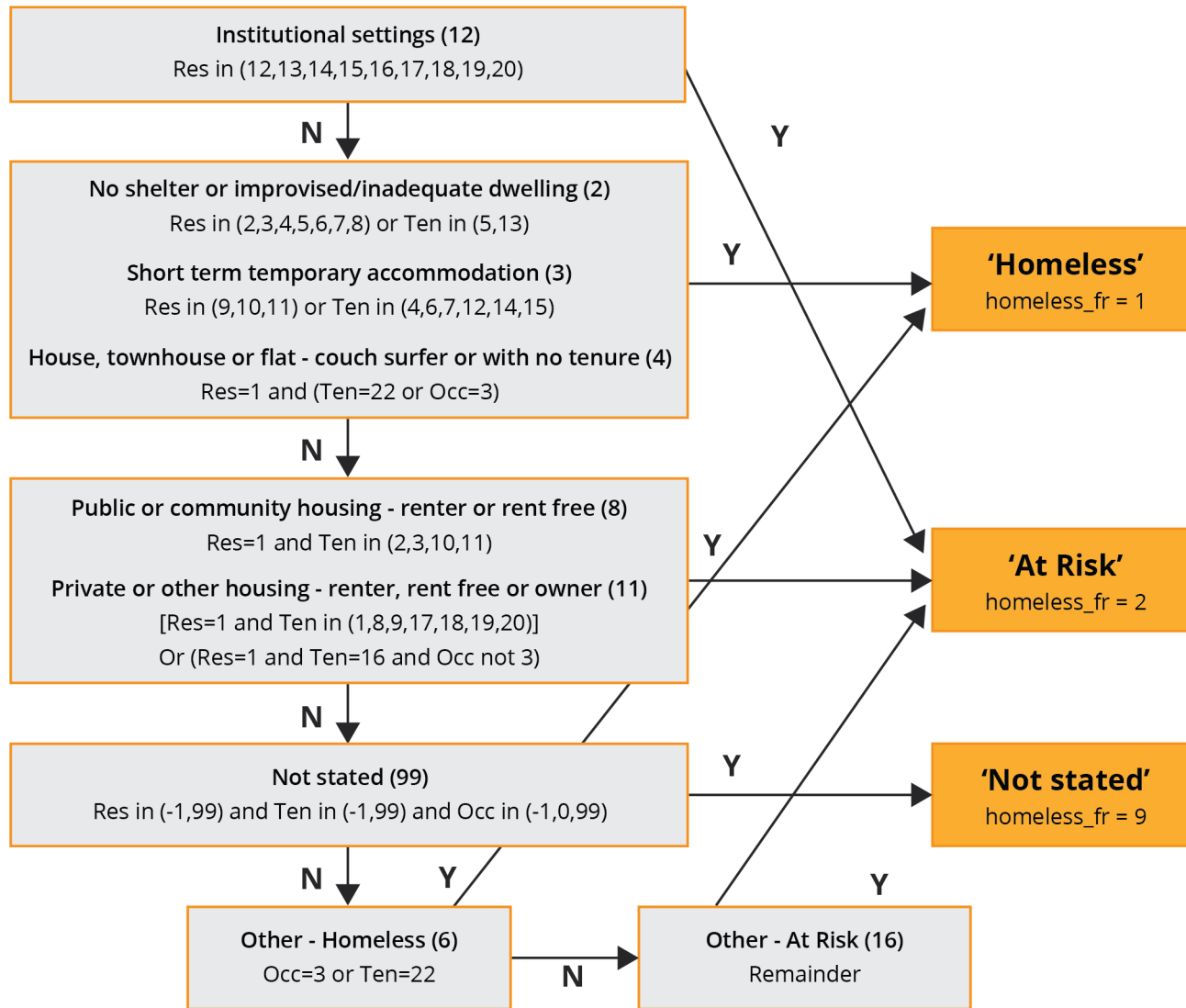
- Public or community housing (renter or rent free): dwelling type is house/townhouse/flat and tenure type is renter or rent-free public housing, renter or rent-free-community housing.
- Private or other housing (renter, rent-free or owner): dwelling type is house/townhouse/flat and tenure type is renter-private housing, life tenure scheme, owner—shared equity or rent/buy scheme, owner-being purchased/with mortgage, owner-fully owned, rent-free-private/other housing.
- Institutional settings: dwelling type is hospital, psychiatric hospital, disability support, rehabilitation, boarding school, adult correctional facility, youth/juvenile justice detention centre, immigration detention centre or aged care facility.
- other-at risk.

Clients are classified as '**not stated**' if they did not provide enough information about their residence, tenure or occupancy to determine their housing situation.

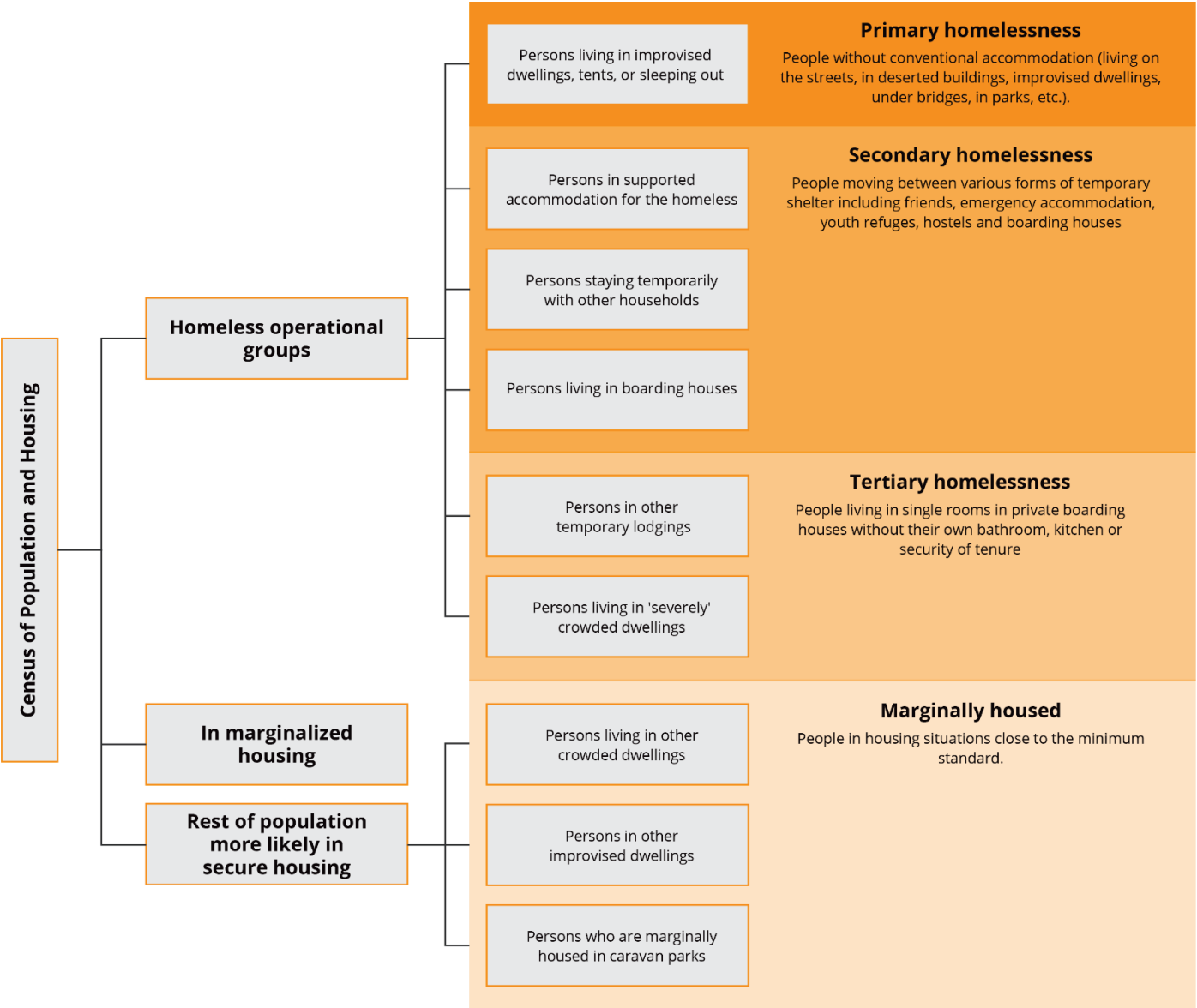
Legend

Res = Residential type, Ten = Housing tenure type, Occ = Conditions of occupancy. The accompanying number(s) represent the derived code for that element in the SHSC.

D1 - SHSC Annual Report



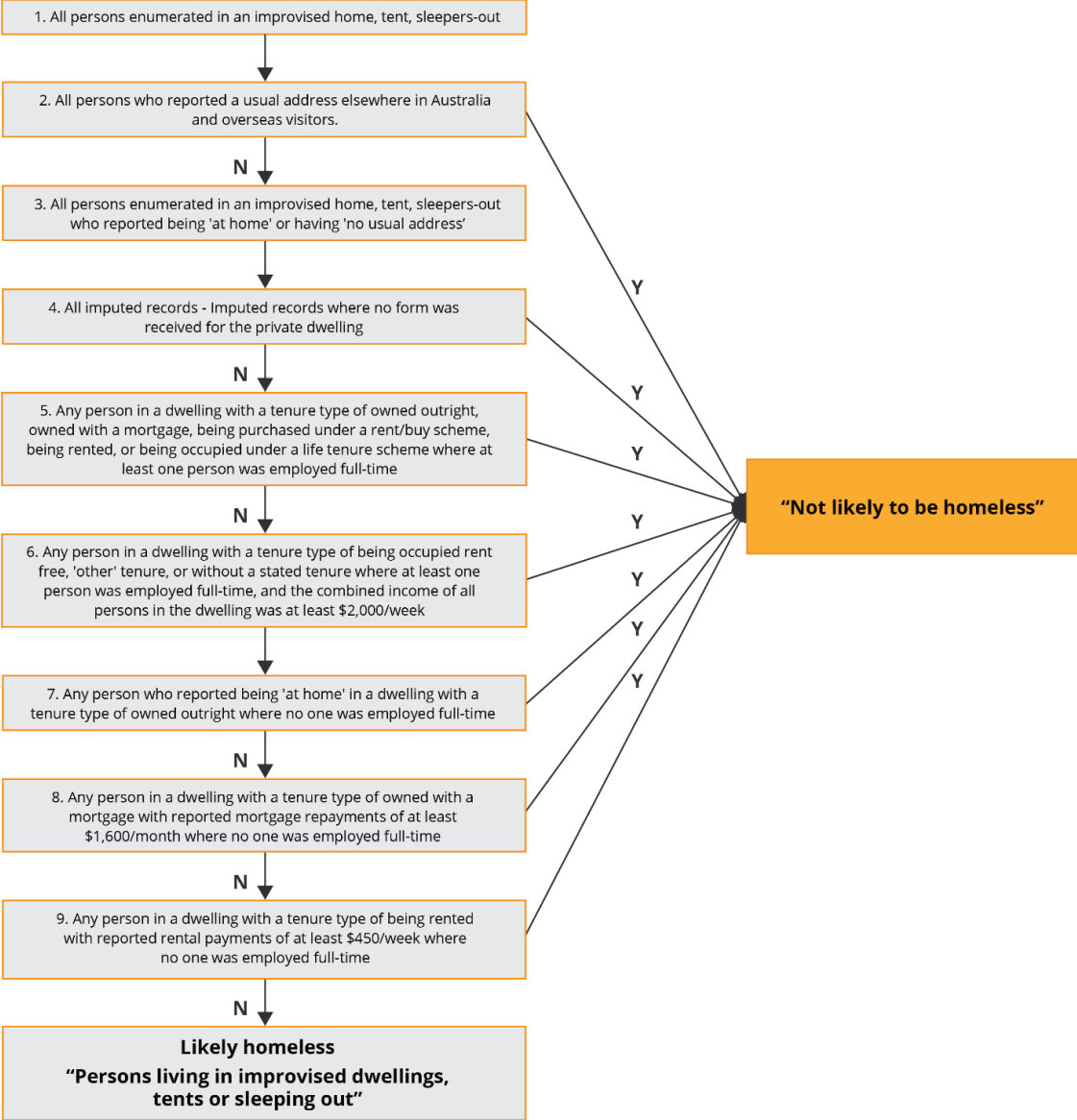
D2 - Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census



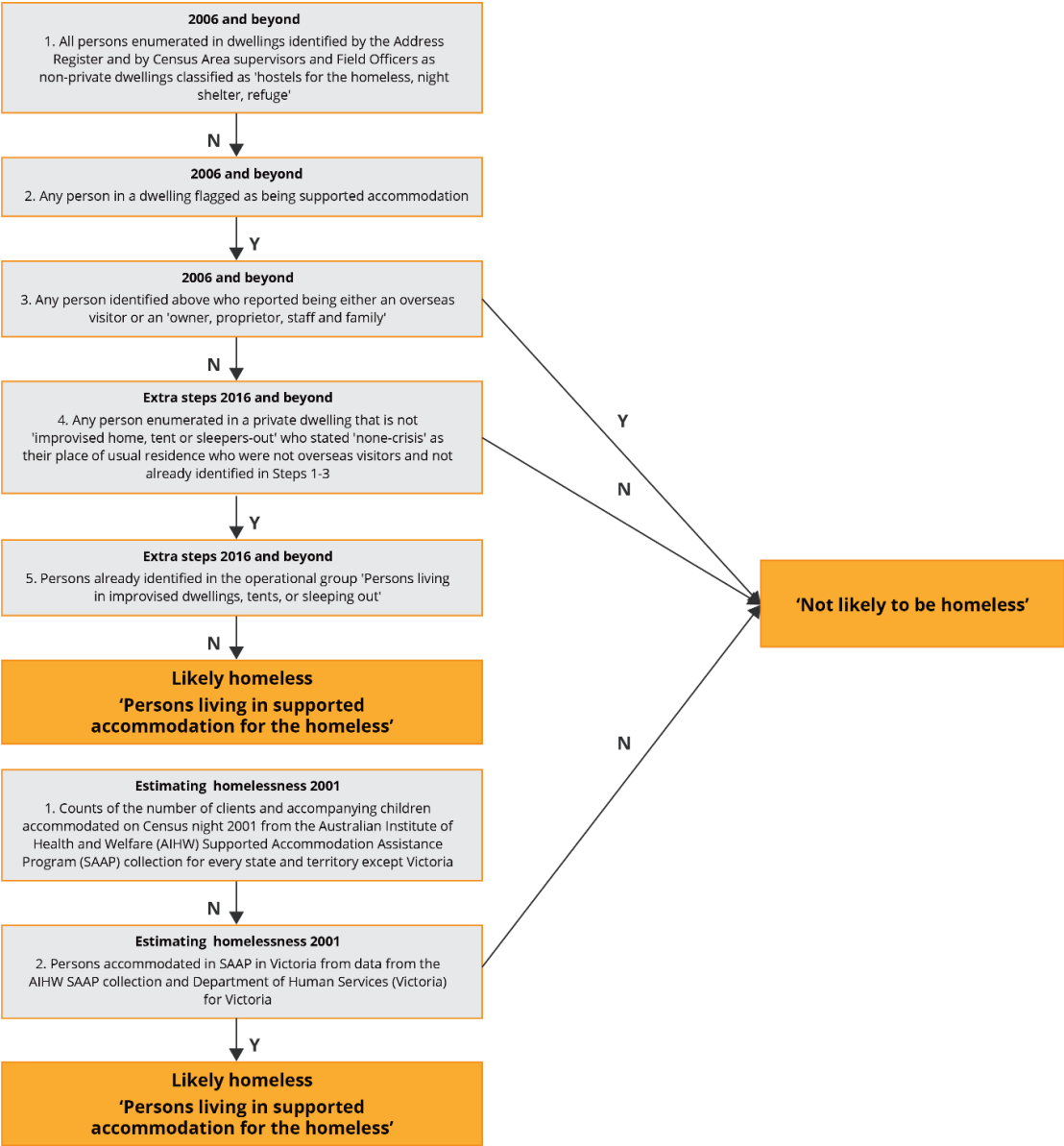
Note:

1. Homelessness category based on Mackenzie & Chamberlain (1992 & 2008) cultural definition of homelessness
2. Only three marginally housed groups can be derived from the Census. Additional groups that cannot be measured include persons with living in housing with major structural problems or persons living under threat of domestic violence.
3. The ABS Census derivation is updated each cycle according to ongoing improvements in collection design. Derivations in Appendix C are based on the 2016 Census. Adjustments for each future Census are likely to occur.
4. All tables in the ABS Census estimation methodology includes the reasoning for various steps which are absent from the derivation diagrams below.

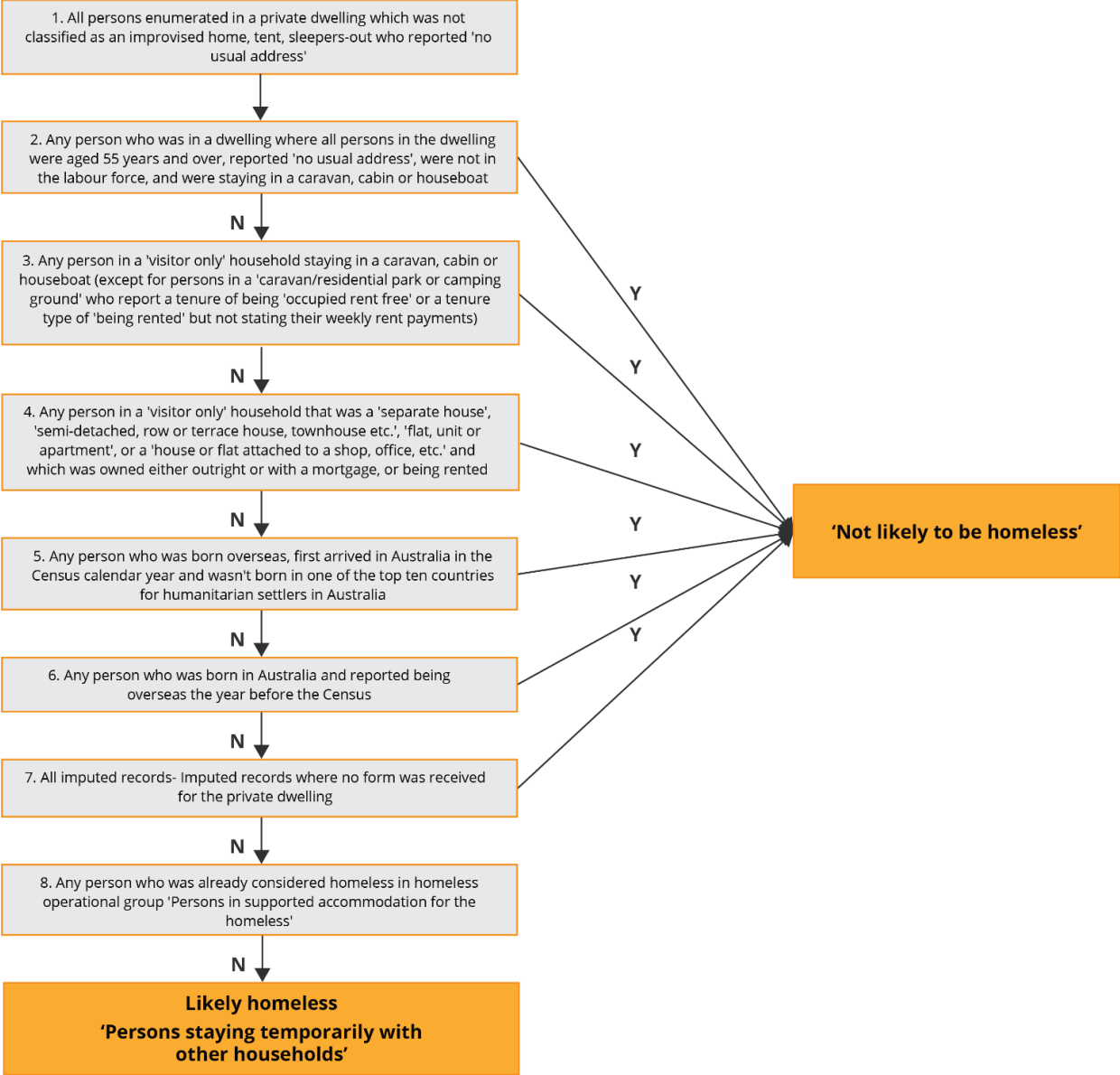
Primary homelessness: Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out



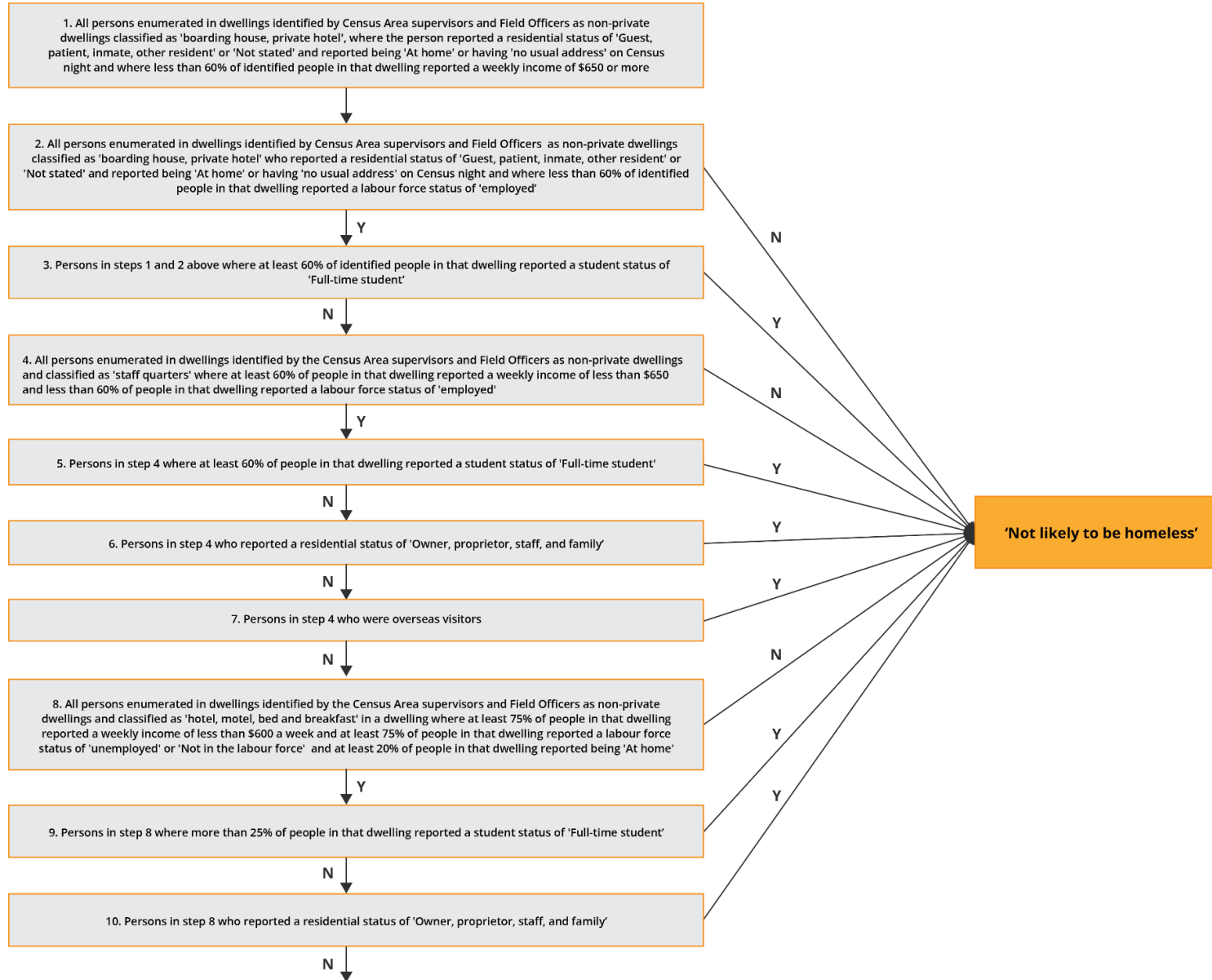
Secondary homelessness: Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless

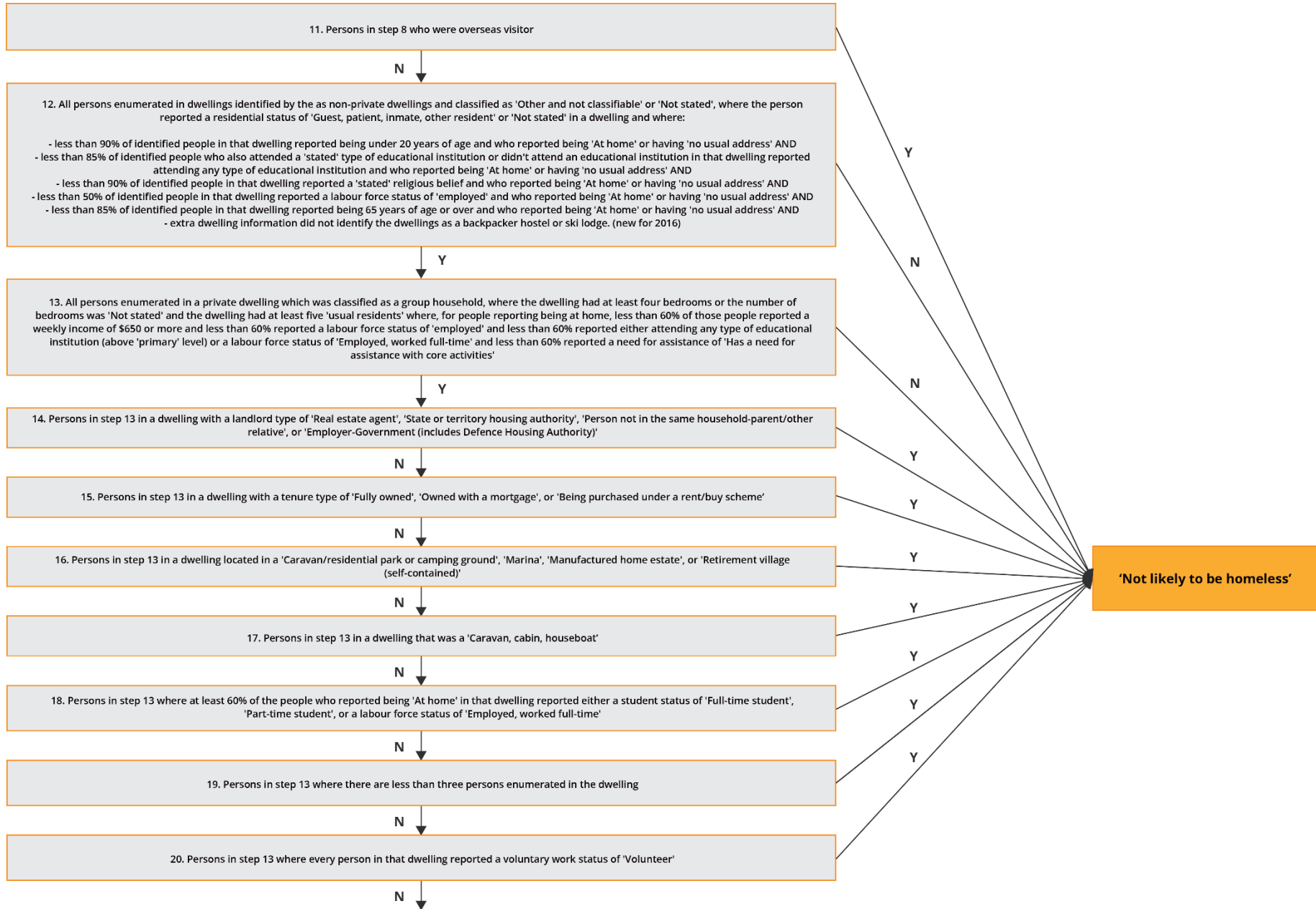


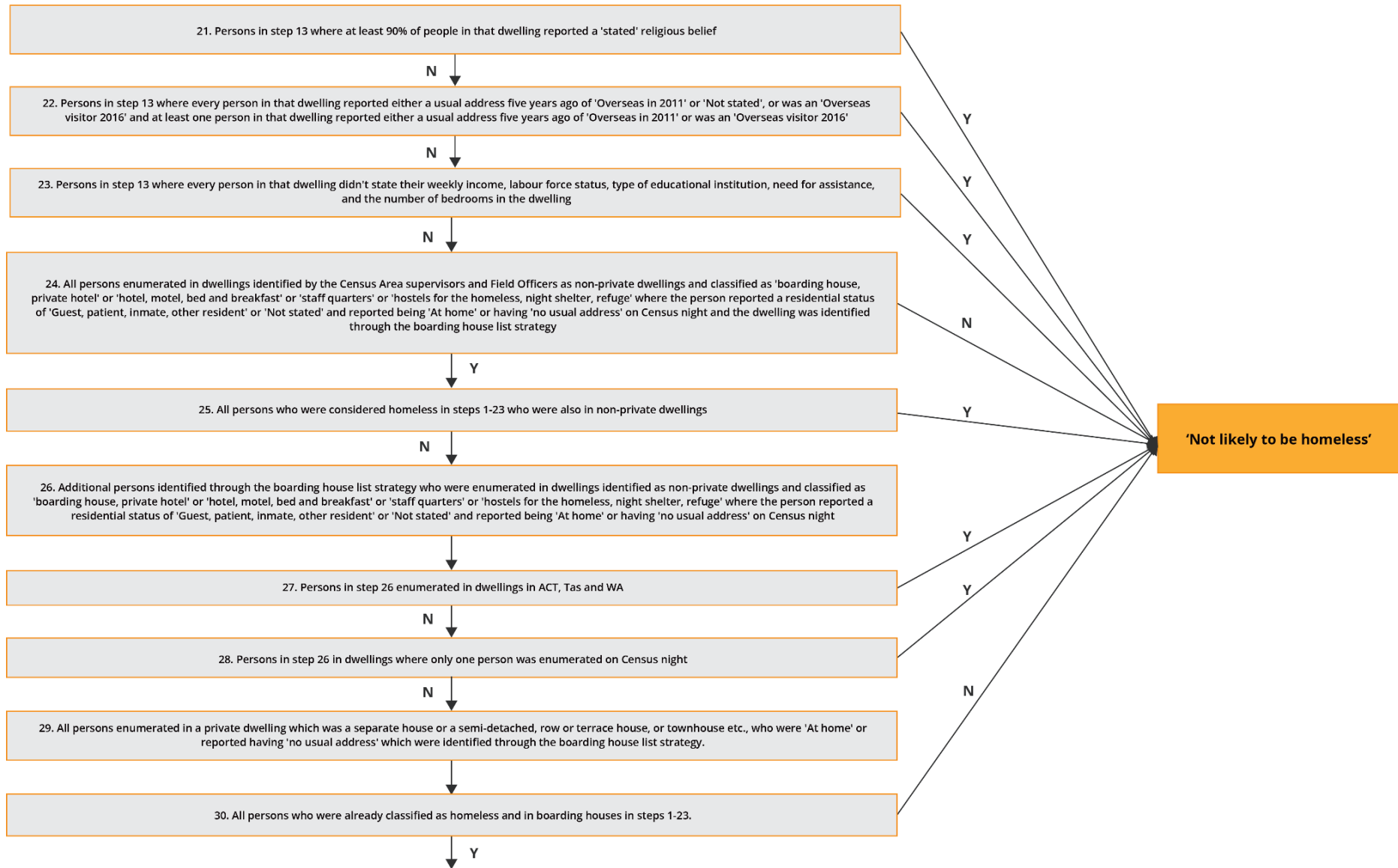
Secondary homelessness: Persons staying temporarily with other households

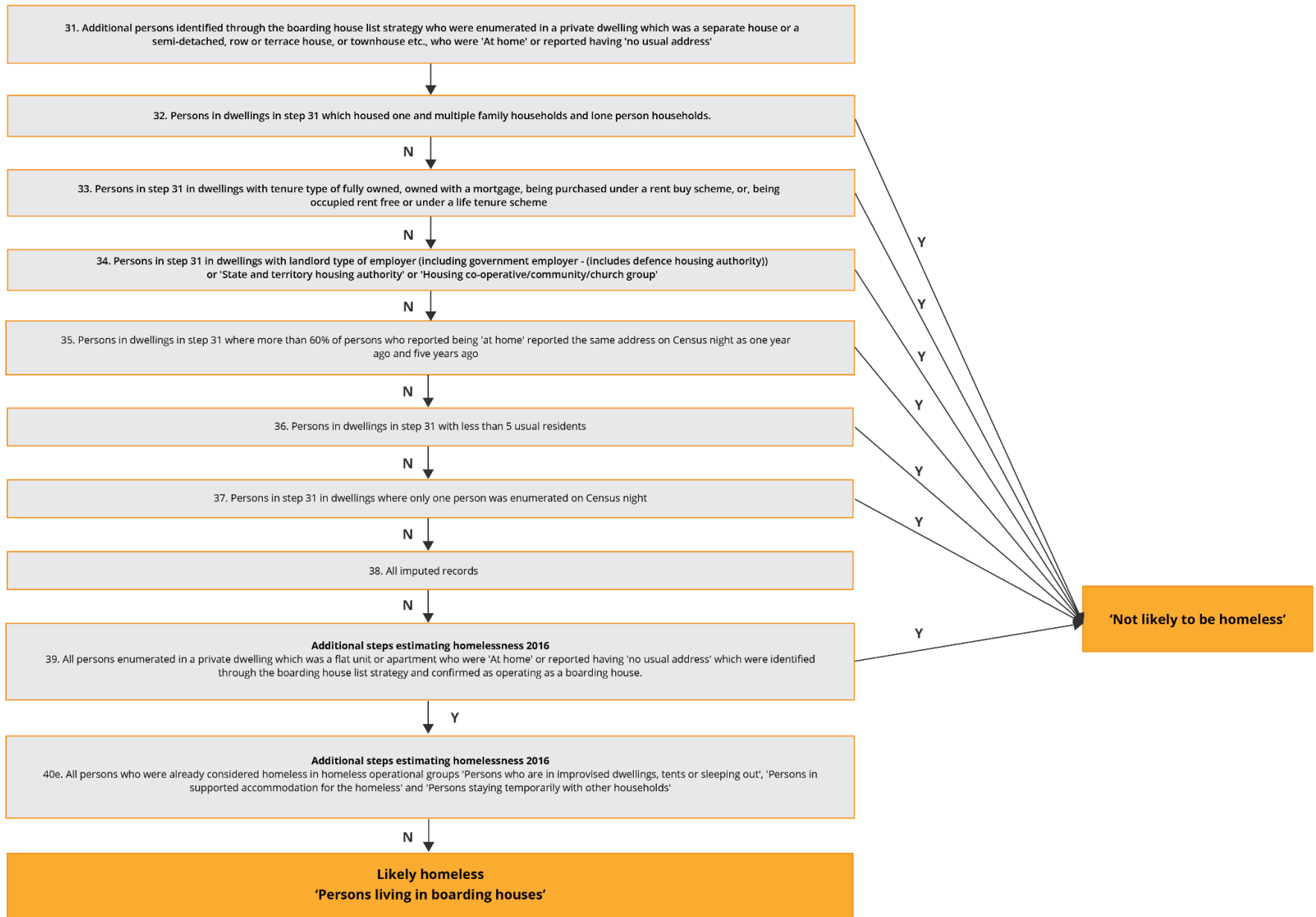


Secondary homelessness: Persons living in boarding houses

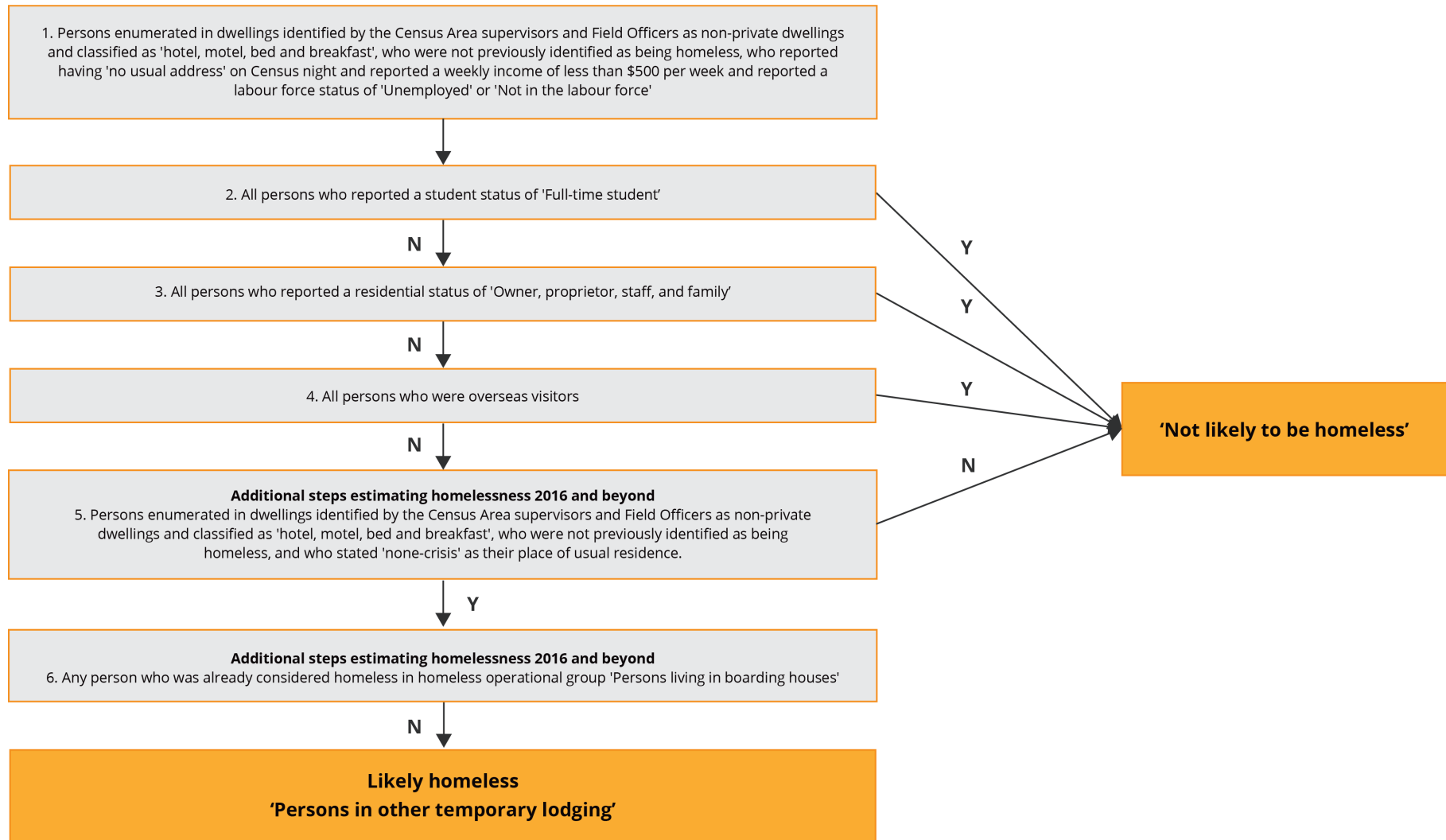




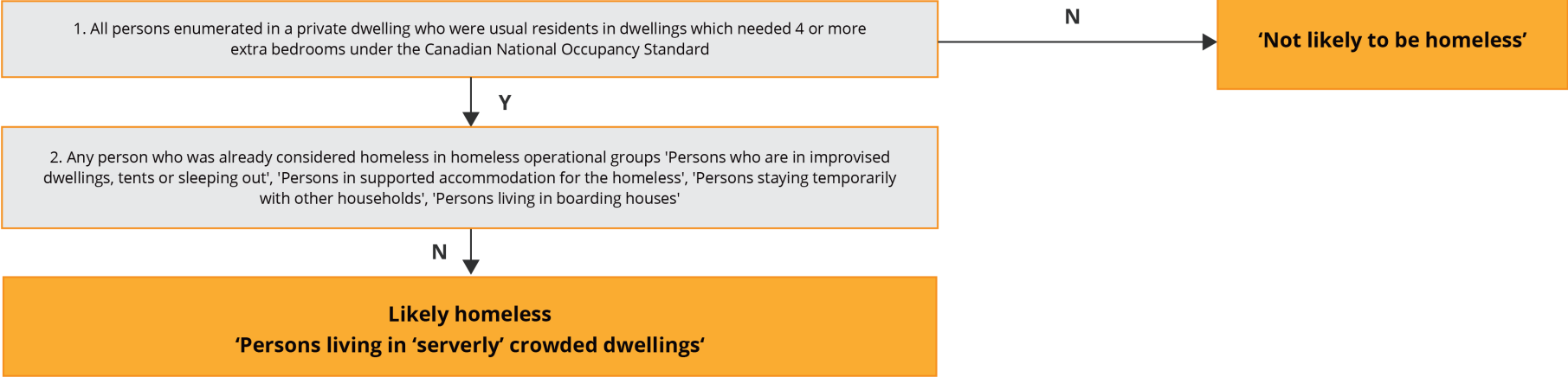




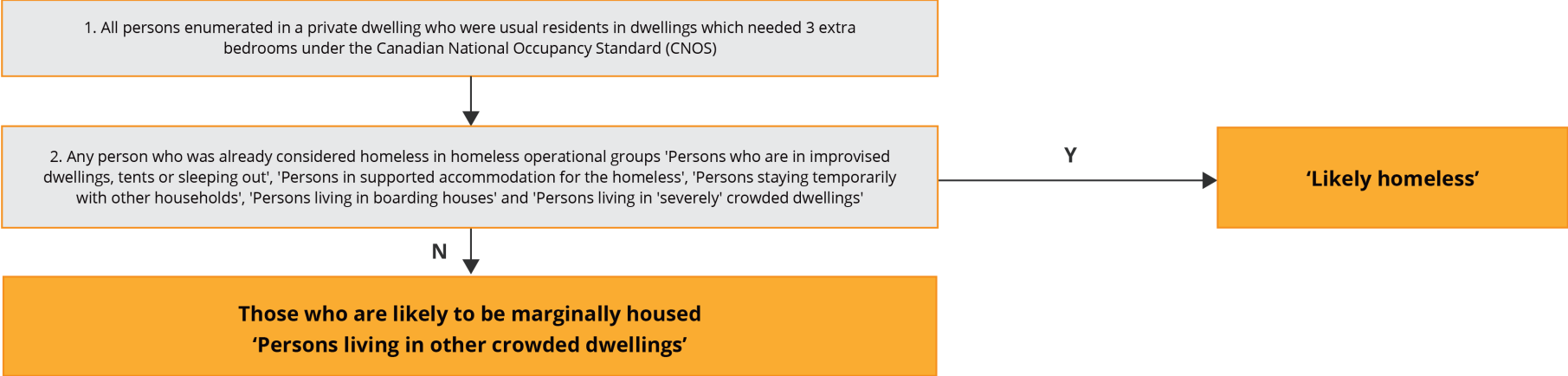
Tertiary homelessness: Persons in other temporary lodgings



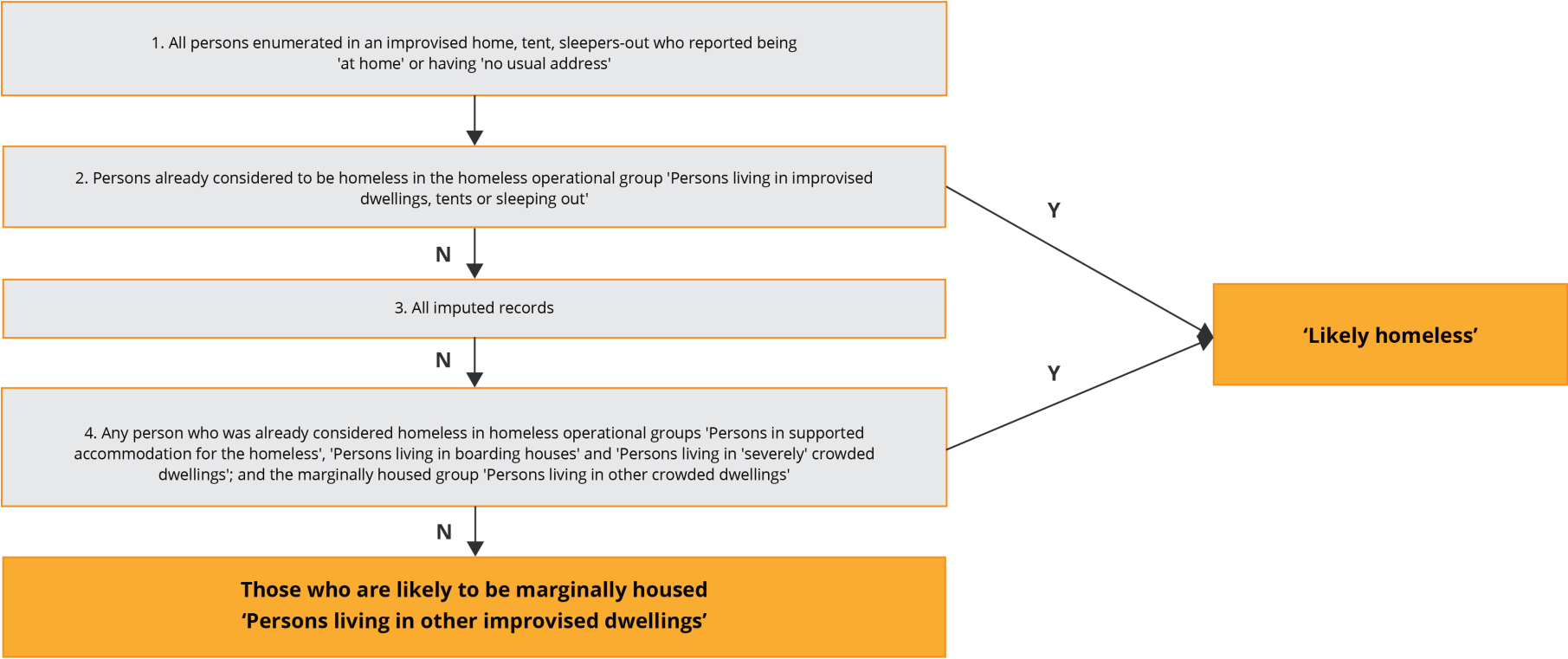
Tertiary homelessness: Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings



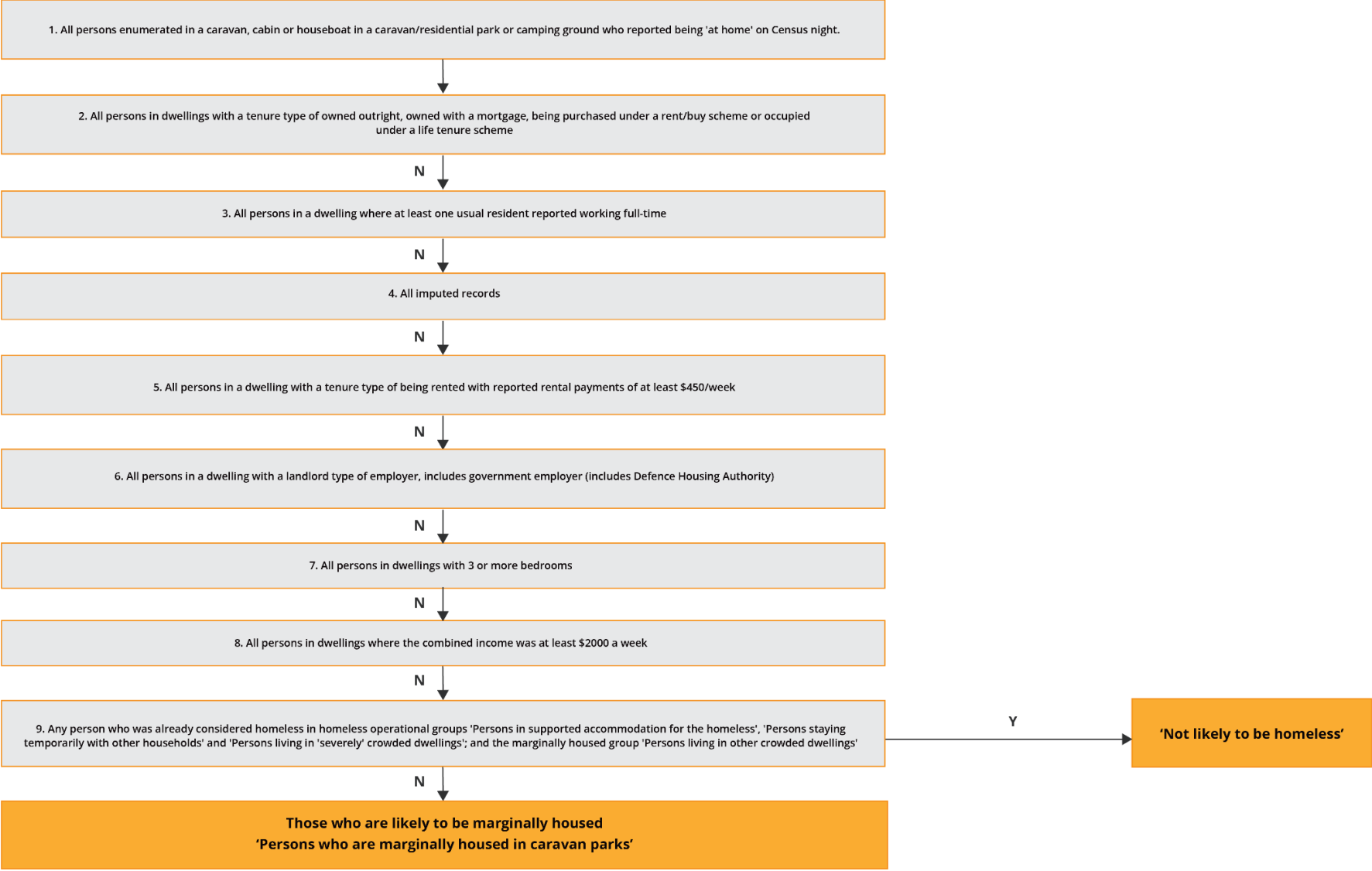
Marginally housed: Persons living in other crowded dwellings



Marginally housed: Persons living in other improvised dwellings



Marginally housed: Persons who are marginally housed in caravan parks



D3 - SHSC Statistical Summaries/Agency CURFs

The definition used for the SHSC statistical summaries and agency CURFs is based off the SHSC Annual Report definition, however, was adjusted at the request of jurisdictions to provide more detail on housing situation (Box 3).

Box 3: Derivation of housing situation (SHSC statistical summaries/Agency CURFs)

In the SHSC, a client's housing situation (aka homelessness status) can be either homeless, at risk–not homeless or not stated. Using the combination of client's residence type, tenure and occupancy information, client's housing situation is derived and further categorised as follows.

Clients are considered to be **homeless** if they are living in any of the following situations:

- no shelter or improvised /inadequate dwelling
- short term or temporary accommodation
- house, townhouse or flat with relatives rent free
- house, townhouse or flat–couch surfer
- house, townhouse or flat–no tenure

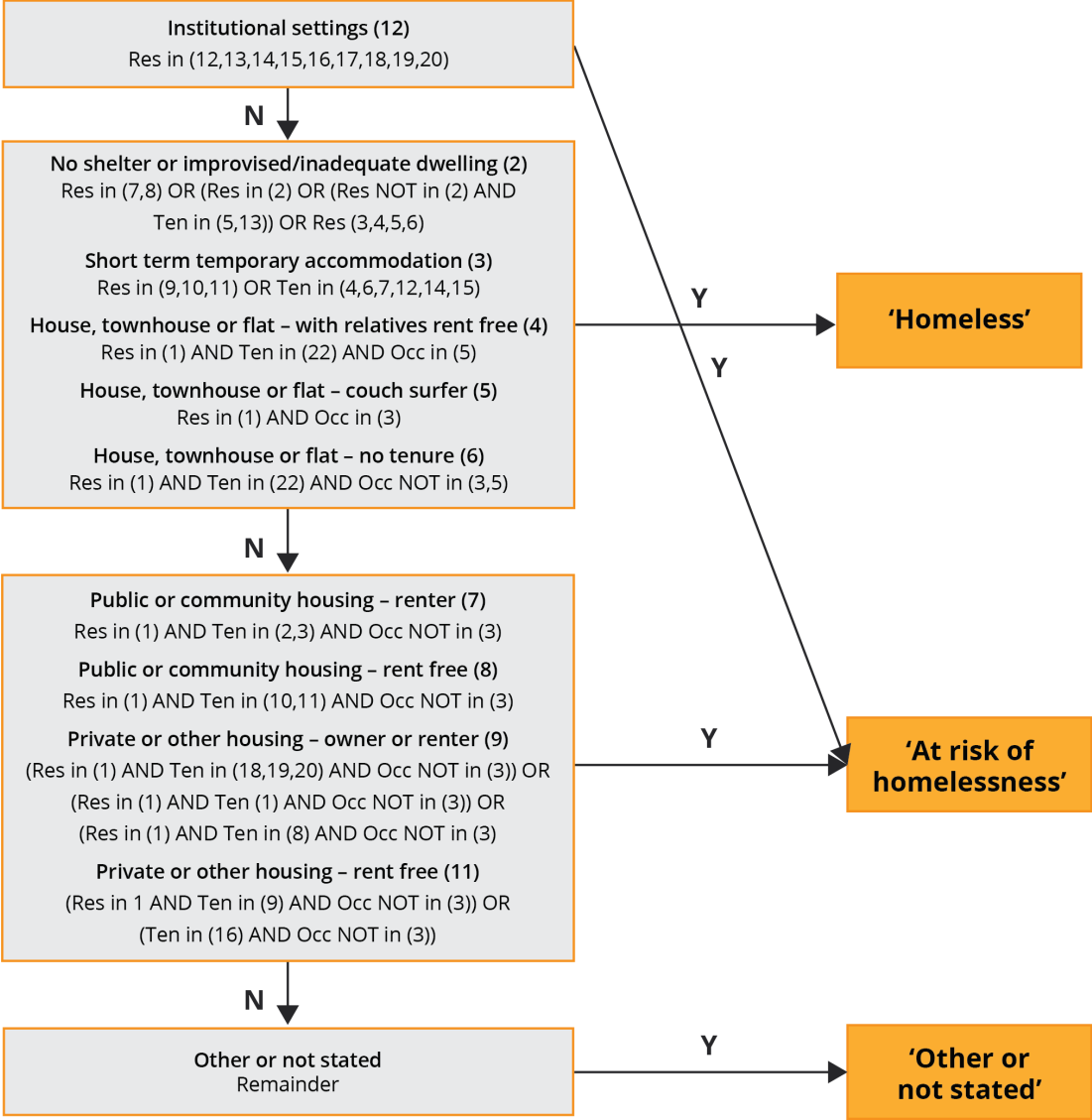
Clients are considered to be **at risk–not homeless** if they are living in any of the following situations:

- public or community housing–renter
- public or community housing–rent free
- private or other housing –owner or renter
- private or other housing –rent free
- institutional settings

Clients are classified as '**other or not stated**' if they did not provide enough information about their residence, tenure or occupancy to determine their housing situation or they are:

- other-homeless
- other-at risk

SHSC Statistical Summaries/Agency CURFs



D4 - Report on Government Services (RoGS)

The RoGS definition was developed as an indicator measure of maintaining independent housing (Box 4).

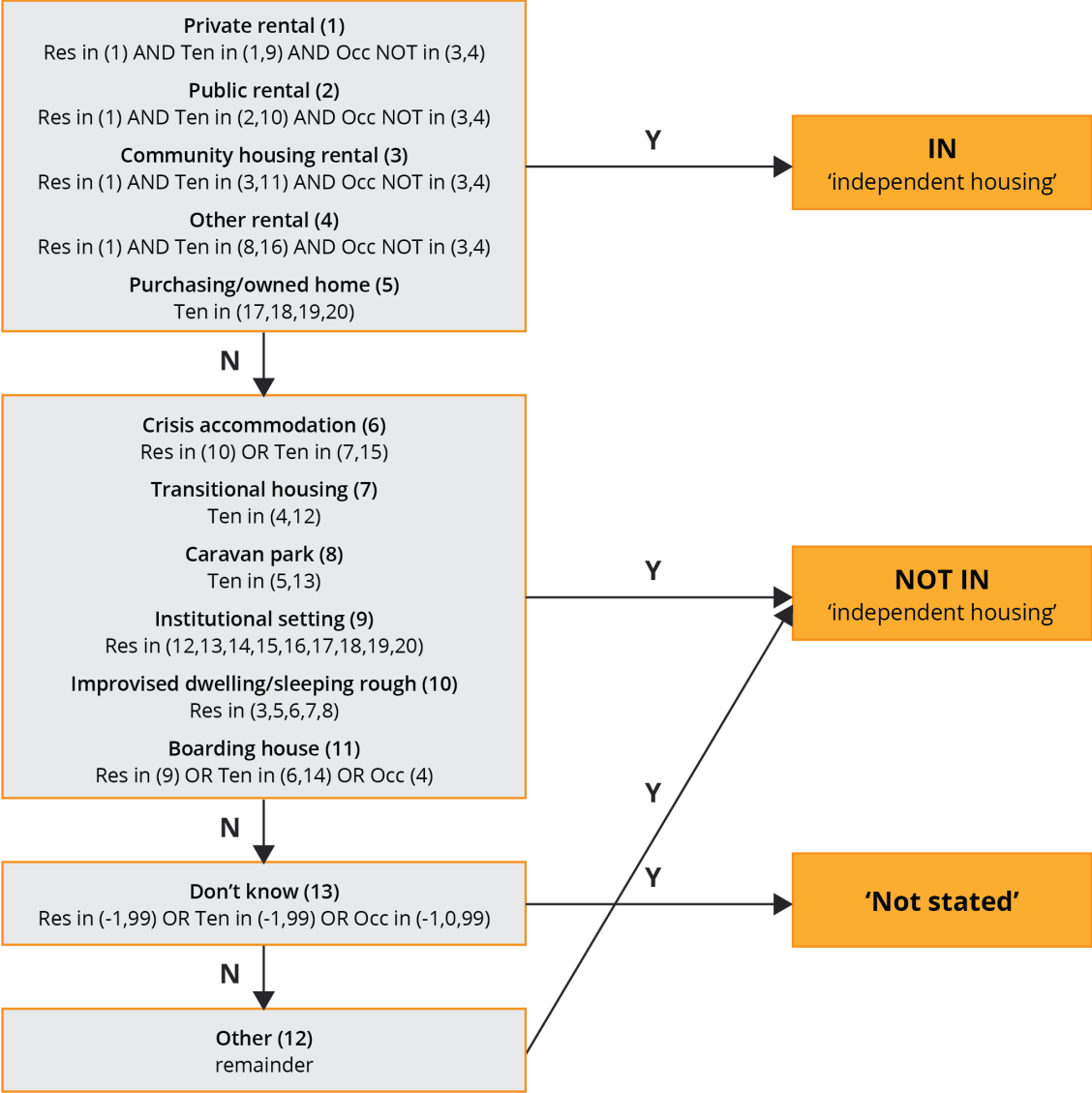
Box 4: Derivation of homelessness status (Report on Government Services (RoGS))

Achievement of sustained housing

'Achievement of sustained housing' is defined as the proportion of clients living in and sustaining independent housing following support. One of the proxy measures reported is the achievement of independent housing on exit. Achievement of independent housing on exit is measured by the change in the proportion of clients (with closed support periods) living in independent housing between the start and end of support, reported for all clients and for clients with an identified need for assistance to obtain or maintain independent housing including 'to obtain long term housing', 'sustain tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction', or 'prevent foreclosures or for mortgage arrears'

This is a proxy measure as it only captures people who are clients of specialist homelessness services, rather than all those in the population who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Report on Government Services (RoGS)



References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2012. Census of Population and Housing: estimating homelessness, 2011. ABS cat no. 2049.0. Canberra: ABS.

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2018. Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness methodology, 2016. ABS website. Viewed 20 April 2021, <https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/census-population-and-housing-estimating-homelessness-methodology/2016>.

AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2020. Specialist homelessness services annual report: Glossary. AIHW website. Viewed 20 April 2021, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report/contents/technical-information/glossary>.

Chamberlain C & MacKenzie D 1992. Understanding contemporary homelessness: Issues of definition and meaning. *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 27(4): 274-297.

Chamberlain C & MacKenzie D 2008. Counting the homeless 2006: Australia. *Parity* 21(8): 4-5.

Mallett S 2004. Understanding home: a critical review of the literature. *The sociological review* 52(1): 62-89.

UN (United Nations) 2009. Enumeration of homeless people: Counting homeless people in the 2010 census round: use of enumeration and register-based methods. Conference of European Statisticians. Geneva: UN.

UN (United Nations) 2015. Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context. Human Rights Council. Geneva: UN.



aihw.gov.au



Stronger evidence,
better decisions,
improved health and welfare

