

Health, housing and private renting in Scotland

Private renting in Scotland conference
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Overview

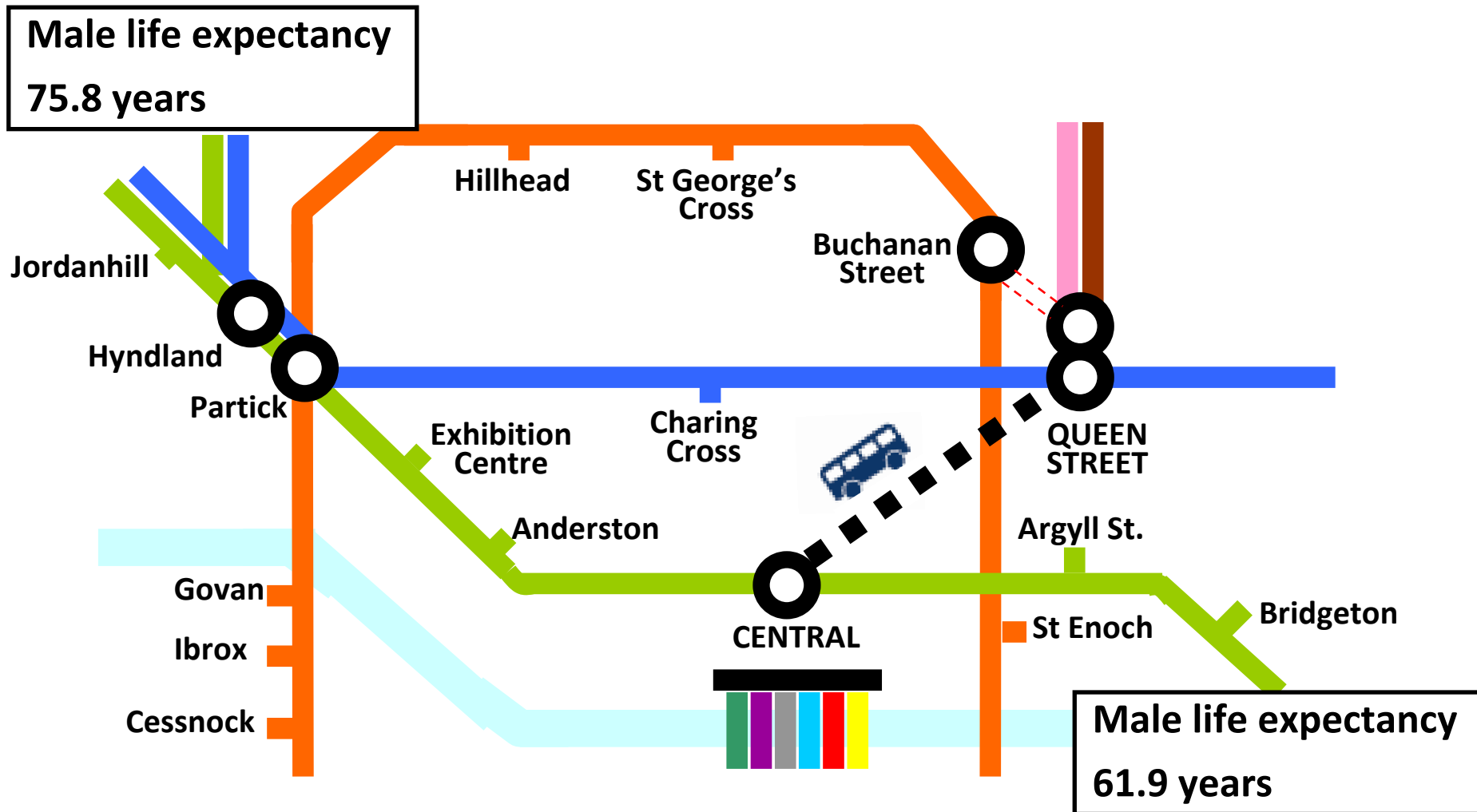
- Health, and health inequalities
- Health inequalities and the private rented sector
- Challenges

A picture of health

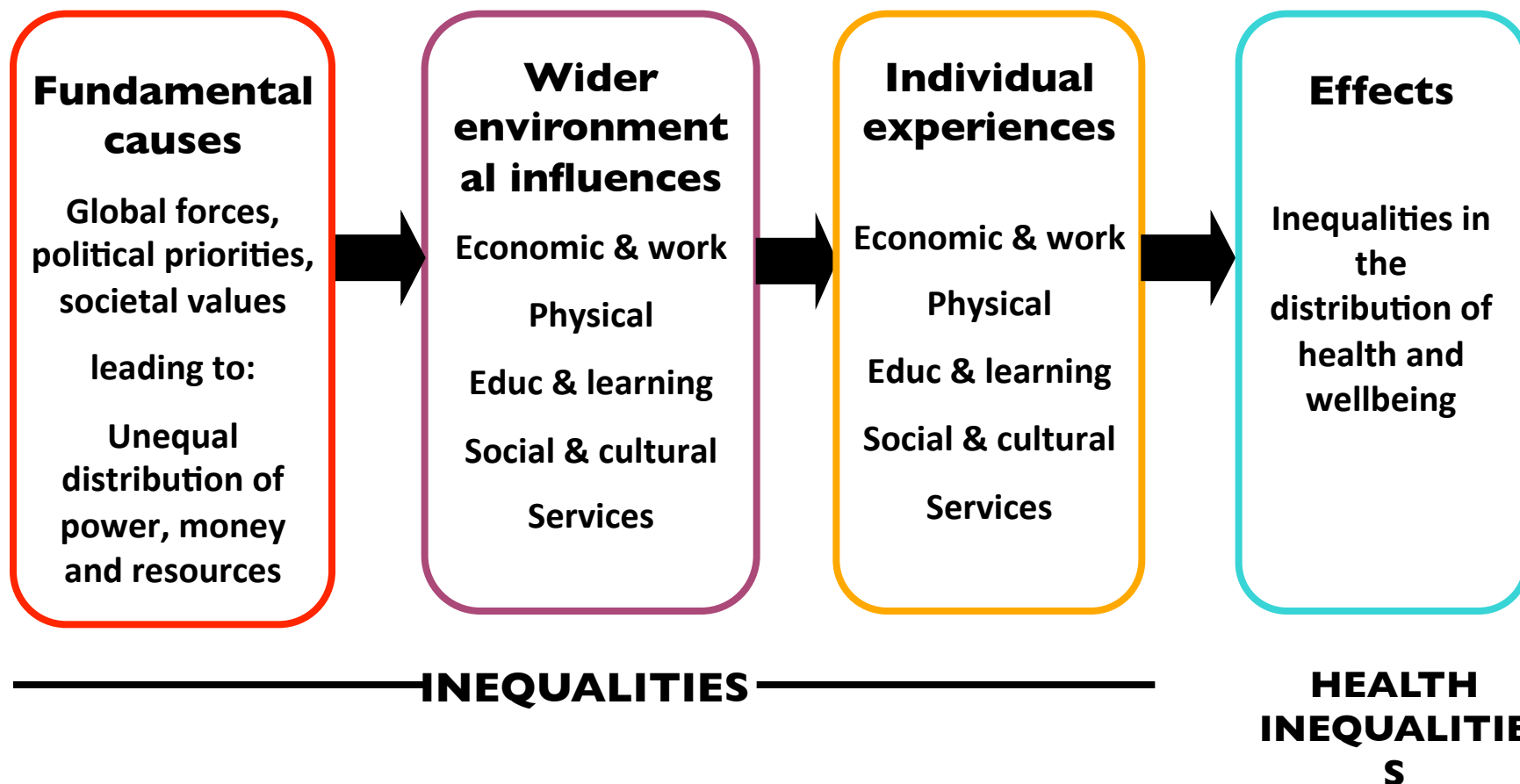
“a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”

WHO, 1948

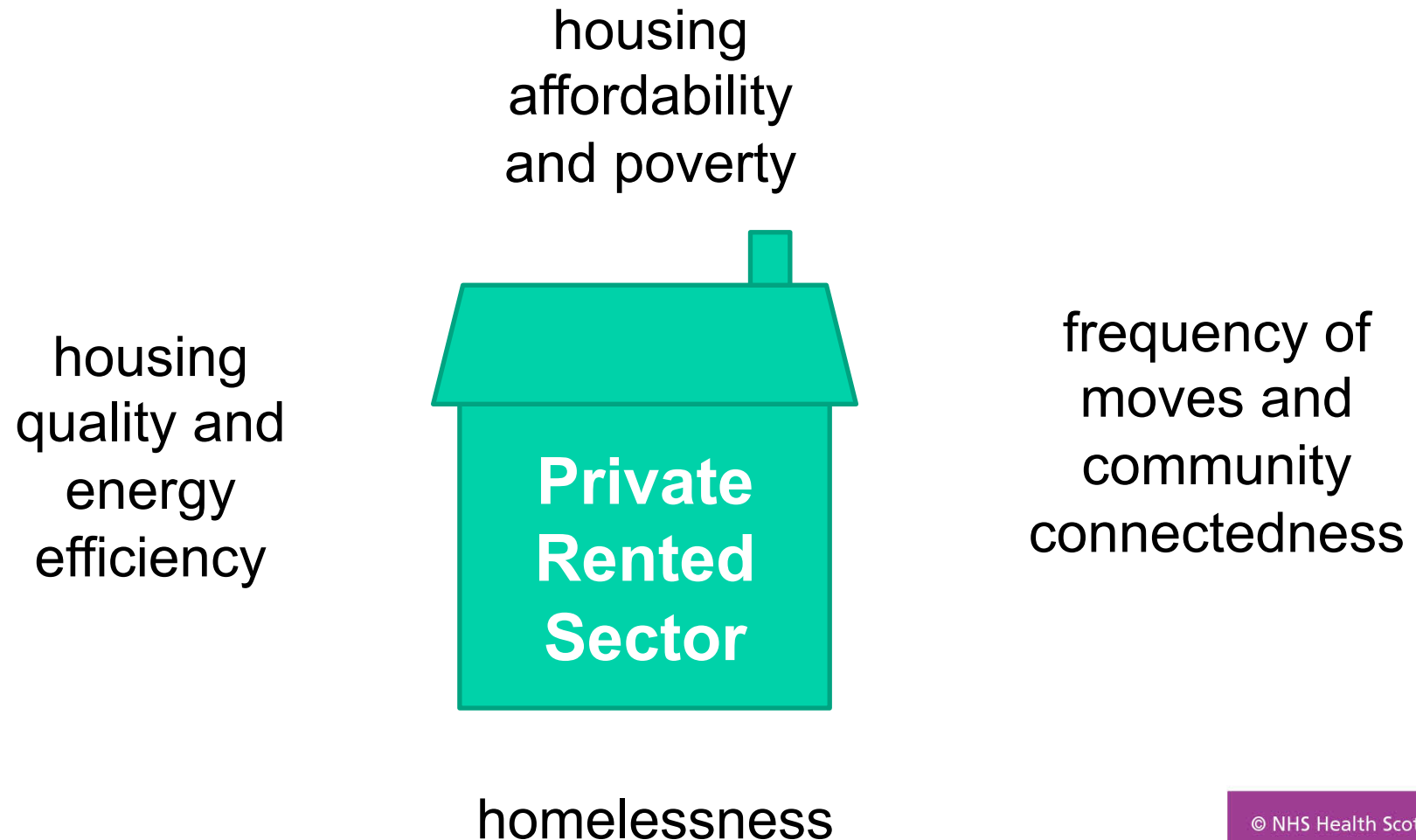
Health inequalities in Scotland



What causes health inequalities?



Health inequalities and the private rented sector

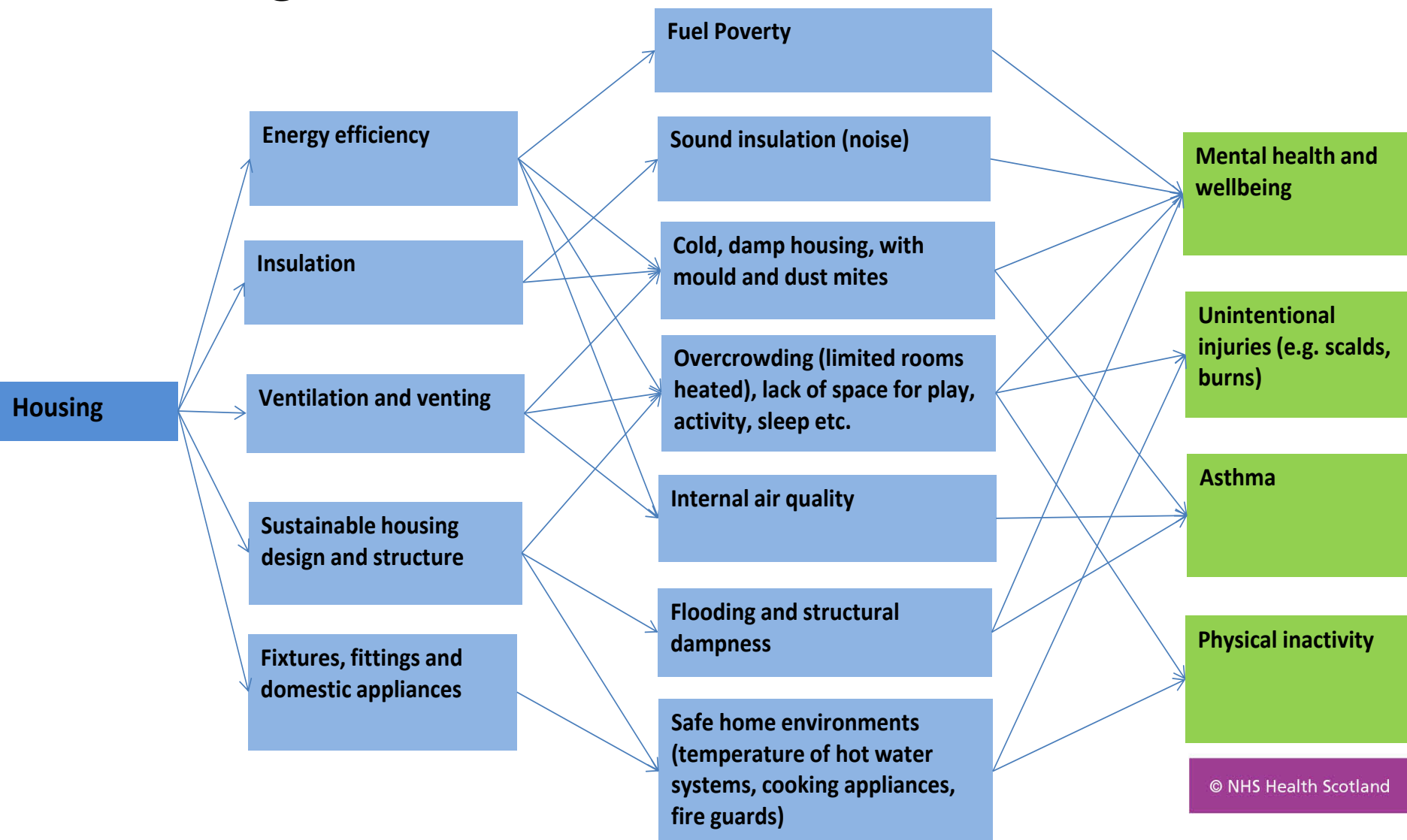


Housing quality and energy efficiency

- Housing quality in the private rented sector compares unfavourably with other tenures in some respects, particularly energy efficiency
 - 26% PRS in an extensive state of disrepair in 2012 (compared with 16% owner occupied, 23% Local Authority, and 12% Housing Association)
 - In 2012, 63% of private rented sector dwellings failed the Scottish Housing Quality Standard
 - Dissatisfaction levels highest in the private rented sector & satisfaction is lower in families with children
- There is a particular concern that fear of eviction deters tenants in the PRS from raising repair issues and using consumer powers to hold landlords to account.

Housing quality and (children's) health

– findings from Good Places Better Health



Health & Housing: recommendations from Good Places Better Health

Good Places Better Health for Scotland's Children

Prepared by the Evaluation Group
of Good Places Better Health



“We wish to see a
Scotland where a
everyone lives in warm,
dry and appropriately
ventilated homes, and
fuel poverty is
eliminated”

Stability, frequency of moves and community connectedness

- Stability is important to families with young children, and to children's outcomes
- 'Housing difficulties' in infancy increase the risk that children will experience behavioural problems
- Housing insecurity can affect parental mental health and wellbeing
- For children, frequent household moves can be associated with behavioural problems and poor attainment. Moving school presents particular challenges

The Place Standard for Scotland

A photograph of a park with many bare trees and a large building in the background. The sky is blue with some light clouds. The trees are mostly without leaves, suggesting a cooler season. In the foreground, there is a large, leafless tree on the left. In the middle ground, there is a large, multi-story building with many windows. The ground is green grass, and there are some people walking in the distance.

“The purpose of the Place Standard is to ensure that all places in Scotland nurture the wellbeing of the people within them”

→ Key to this are the related concepts of social capital, social support, community connectedness, trust, neighbourliness and sense of belonging....all of which can be undermined by moves between communities

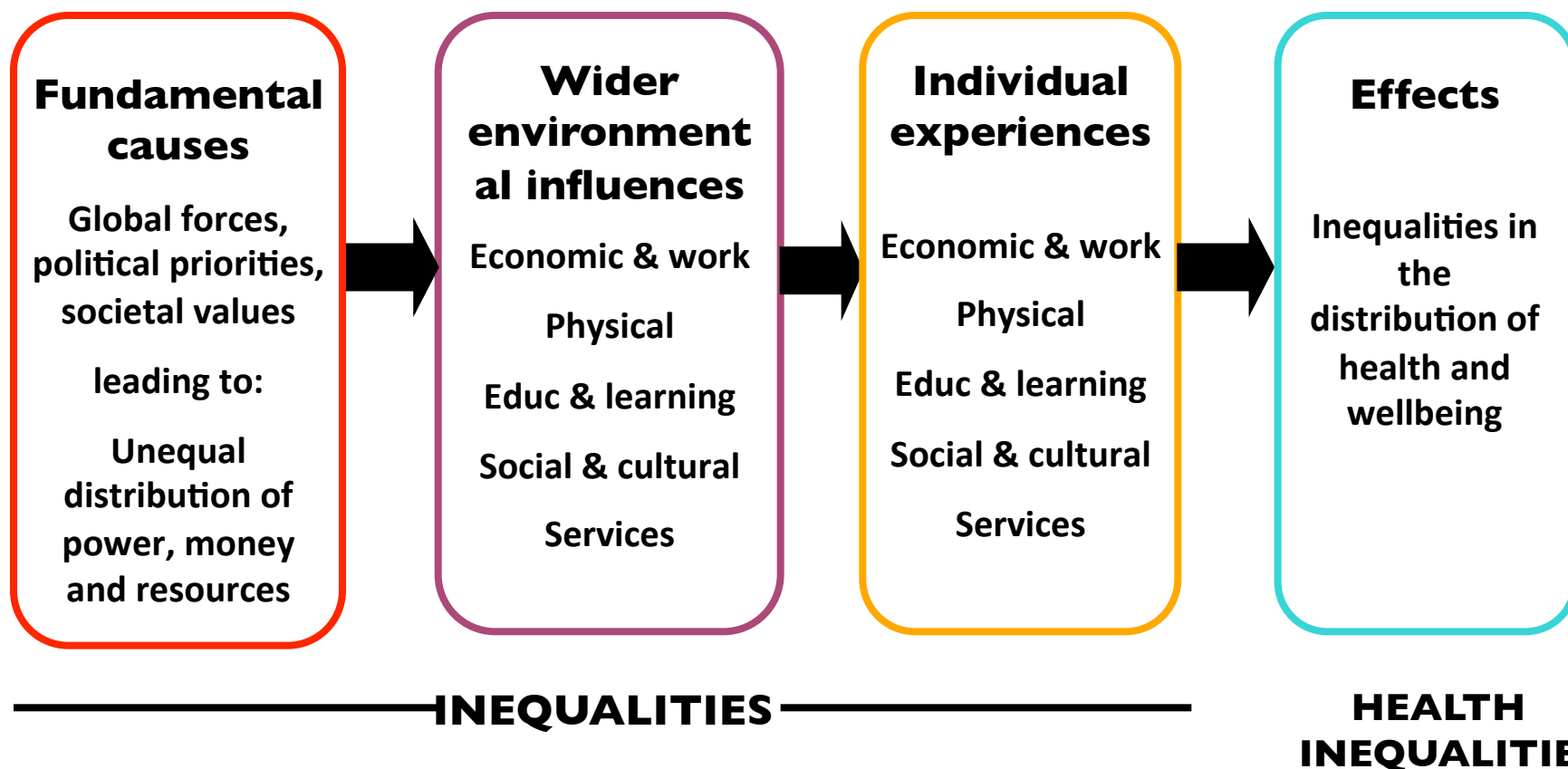
Homelessness and the PRS

- **31,058** – applicants assessed as homeless in 2012/13.
- **17%** – proportion of applicants homed in the PRS prior to application
- **44%** – proportion of families with children homed in the PRS prior to application
- **40%** – proportion of applications previously homed within the PRS that reported that homelessness was result of action taken by landlord

Poverty & housing affordability

- Poverty is bad for health. For children, it negatively affects social, emotional and mental health, cognitive development and physical health
- The PRS houses a large and increasing number of people, including children, who are living in poverty
- Housing affordability is an important component of poverty
- Housing affordability is a particular problem for many in the Private Rented Sector

What is the role of housing in creating (and tackling) health inequalities?



Conclusions

Action on Private Rented Sector housing that would support tackling health inequalities includes:

1. Improve housing quality in the PRS, e.g. through a mandatory quality standard
2. Improve security of tenure for tenants in the PRS, especially for families
3. Make housing in the PRS more affordable for lower income households
4. Address the link between (termination of) PRS tenancies and homelessness

Acknowledgements and References

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Key references:

- Good Places Better Health (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Healthy-Living/Good-Places-Better-Health>)
- Referendum Briefing: Housing and Low Income in Scotland. Joseph Rowntree Foundation; 2013 (<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/housing-income-scotland-summary.pdf>)
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