# BRANCHING OUT

## A National Framework to start-up and scale-up Housing First in Scotland

2021-2031

sfha Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
We are housing Scotland

Wheatley Group

COSLA

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HOUSING FIRST SCOTLAND

Homeless Network Scotland
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# Welcome

**Housing First is normal, it's fairer, it works — and we all benefit.**

This Framework draws on the experience and expertise of partners across Scotland and should act as a useful toolkit and reference for all those planning, commissioning and delivering Housing First.

# Supporting Statements

SFHA is delighted to support the Housing First National Framework, which has been informed by consultation with our members as well as our strategic partnership with Homeless Network Scotland. I am particularly pleased to see recognition of the progress made so far, as well as clarity about the work still to do – and what we will be able to achieve by working in partnership across the housing sector in Scotland. Housing First has quite rightly been recognised as a key mechanism for delivering many of the ambitions set out in the Scottish Government's Ending Homelessness Together and Housing to 2040 strategies and I know this National Framework will be a key resource for Scotland's housing associations and co-operatives as they look to ensure everyone in Scotland has a safe, warm, affordable home.

**Sally Thomas**

***Chief Executive, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations***

We are proud to be one of the founding partners of Scotland's Housing First approach and to have now provided almost half of all HF tenancies across Scotland for this ground-breaking approach to tackling homelessness. There is no doubt that Housing First is effective and we are delighted to see it becoming an integral part of social policy in Scotland. We will go on playing our part - with partners, such as Scottish Government and local authorities - and hope this new national framework will encourage others to do so too.

**Martin Armstrong**

***Chief Executive, Wheatley Group***

Housing First is a national challenge to redress the unfairness encountered by people whose homelessness is made much harder by experiences with trauma, addictions and mental health. This National Framework draws from the learning of what's gone before and underpins the task that lies ahead. It combines a practical framework for local partnerships, with a strategic oversight of progress toward achieving the best conditions and resources for Housing First to flourish.

**Maggie Brünjes**

***Chief Executive, Homeless Network Scotland***

Chartered Institute of Housing

Housing First has a critical role in tackling deep rooted homelessness in Scotland. CIH Scotland, as the professional body for housing practitioners, commend this framework and its contribution to improving and understanding Housing First. This framework will provide a foundation and guidance to all housing professionals about how they and their organisation can support the successful application of Housing First.

**Callum Chomczuk**

***National Director, CIH Scotland***

ALACHO
ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHIEF HOUSING OFFICERS

On behalf of ALACHO and the RRTP sub-group, I welcome the Housing First National Framework to guide the scaling up of the provision of Housing First tenancies in Scotland. Housing First is now confirmed as a core element of all Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans to assist homeless and potentially homeless people access secure tenancies with wrap-around support to sustain their tenancies. Housing First is an effective prevention of homelessness approach which offers dignity and privacy for tenants who so often have been left behind. It is important that we continue to strive together to make the offer of a Housing First tenancy a real housing option for as many people in Scotland who need it. The commitment of Local Authorities and their Partners to make this a reality is truly worthy of all of our support

**John Mills**

***Chair of ALACHO and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans sub-group of the Scottish Government Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group***

Housing First Europe Hub

This national framework is a remarkable achievement and clearly puts Scotland on track for achieving its ambitious goals to reduce and prevent homelessness. I've had the honour and privilege to watch from afar, and occasionally join some of the important and essential discussions over the past few years. This framework is a credit to everyone who has worked so hard to understand how Housing First can actually help change a whole system. Your commitment and progress are inspiring to your colleagues across Europe and beyond. We'll be watching and learning as you tackle this new, exciting stage.

**Samara Jones**

***Programme Co-ordinator at Housing First Europe Hub***

# Section 1

## About this Framework

**Scotland has been on a mission to ensure that people with the hardest experiences of homelessness get housing first and fast. Scaling up Housing First in line with local need is now a national policy objective and an important part of local plans to end homelessness.**

## a. How to use this Framework

This Framework is for all organisations and sectors starting or scaling up Housing First in Scotland. It sets out the context in which Housing First can be successfully delivered, and should act as a guide to planning, commissioning and implementing the approach.

- **Section 2**
  provides an overview of the strong evidence and rationale for scaling up Housing First. This is useful to understand why and how Housing First works.

- **Section 3**
  sets out the relevant policy areas and establishes the overlapping nature of Housing First as an approach that requires partnership across a range of sectors.

- **Section 4**
  summarises the learning to date and provides a route-map for local partnerships to get started, to sustain tenancies and to help local systems change.

- **Section 5**
  sets out additional considerations for ensuring Housing First is sensitive to the different forms of inequality protected by legislation.

- **Section 6**
  establishes what is needed to ensure Housing First in your area is effective, following proven principles and supporting new tenants in the best way.

- **Section 7**
  is a live section that is updated regularly to monitor what is in place, what is still in development - and what each partner can do to help scale up Housing First.

## b. What Causes Homelessness?

At least 8% of the Scottish population has experienced homelessness at some point in their lives, which makes it a constant and relatively common event. But we are not all at equal risk. Poverty is the main driver of homelessness, while childhood poverty is a key predictor of homelessness in later life. Homelessness and poverty affects people and places. This means that some groups of people are more at risk of homelessness and some communities in Scotland are too (see Section 5).

### What increases that risk more?

#### The health of local housing systems

The extent to which housing demand matches supply in the places people want to live and whether people are enabled to afford and access that housing rapidly.

#### The health of local labour markets

The extent to which potential employers of people in any occupational sector matches with the numbers and skills of people who are available for work.

#### The strength of the welfare safety-net

The extent to which the benefits system adequately compensates people during periods of not being able to work for personal or health reasons, or as a consequence of local labour markets.

### And what can reduce that risk?

There are a range of protecting factors that can help prevent homelessness:

- Access to adequate income and/or savings
- Having positive relationships, social networks and support
- A sense of belonging, being involved in meaningful activity with a valued role
- Useful advice, advocacy and information

## c. What is Housing First?

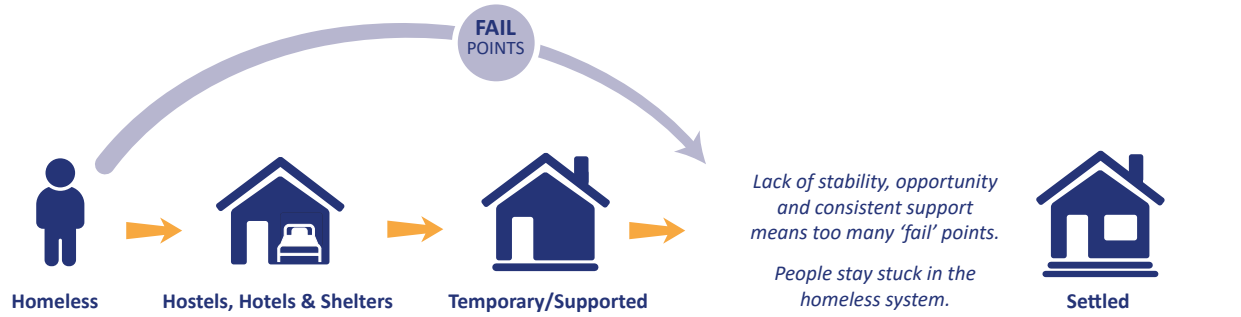
Housing First should be the **first** response for people whose homelessness is made harder by experiences with trauma, addictions and mental health.

Housing First provides ordinary housing in an ordinary community because this, for most of us, is the best base to build and live our lives the way we want to. Housing First combines settled housing with person-centred, strengths-based and flexible support – as much and for as long as someone wants it.

Housing First actively rejects the idea that many people are not 'ready' for housing and aims to prevent rough sleeping and divert people away from temporary homeless accommodation.

## Housing First by default

### Housing Readiness




### Housing First

**Fig.1 Housing Readiness v Housing First Model**

## Housing First is one part of Rapid Rehousing

Everyone who is homeless needs a home fast, some of us just need more support than others. Housing First sits within Scotland's transition toward a 'Rapid Rehousing' response to homelessness which has been underway since 2019-20:

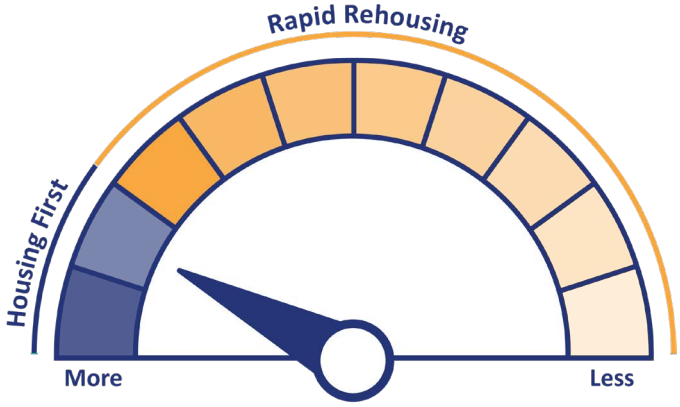



**Fig.2 Housing Support**

## d. Why Housing First?

Housing First is for people whose housing need is made profoundly harder by experiences with trauma, addictions and mental health. These experiences often prolong the time that people stay in homelessness and the further damage this causes. Housing First eases access to a safe, secure home with the support people want to build and live their lives as part of a community.

## Housing First is normal, it's fairer, it works — and we all benefit

### Housing First is normal

having a home is normal, everyone needs and has a right to one. But over time a different response was normalised, often segregating people from their community in B&Bs, shelters and hostels and with long periods in temporary accommodation. It became common to assess whether people were 'ready' for a house at all, which still remains a small but stubborn practice. Housing First marks a return to home and community, the best base to build and live our lives.

### Housing First is fairer

homelessness is driven by poverty and inequality, which means some of us are much more likely to experience it. Scotland's universal right to housing is internationally respected, but not everyone is able to fully exercise this right confidently. Housing First rapidly redresses what is often a lifetime of disadvantage and adverse experiences.

### Housing First works

there is now an overwhelming body of international evidence showing that, with close fidelity to the Housing First principles, most people are likely to stay housed and feel benefit in many other ways too. The approach delivers between 80% and 90% housing retention rates after two years, improving health outcomes, decreasing involvement in community justice and improved cost-effectiveness of service delivery.

### Housing First benefits all of us

most people want settled, ordinary homes. For housing providers, it provides additional reassurance and support. Housing First also often delivers the type of health outcomes that health professionals want, as well as offering cost savings for the public purse. And for cities, town centres and communities Housing First offers a perception of safer and more equal places.

# Section 2

## The Evidence

**There is overwhelming evidence, much of which is considered 'gold standard' in research terms, that indicates Housing First is better for people and more cost effective too.**

## There is overwhelming evidence, much of which is considered 'gold standard' in research terms, that indicates Housing First is:

**More effective** at resolving homelessness than traditional interventions for this group.

**More cost effective** than traditional approaches and responses to homelessness for this group.

**A more effective housing system** as a result of more detailed scrutiny of local systems.

**Better for people** with better housing and health outcomes.

In Scotland, an independent evaluation of the Housing First Pathfinder was commissioned. This is ongoing with an interim report already published in 2021 (see link below) and the final report due to be published later 2022. This Framework will be updated with the learning from the evaluation.

## a. International Gold Standard

Extensive implementation of Housing First across the United States, Canada and Europe has brought strong evidence that makes it (a) the most evaluated intervention to end homelessness and (b) the intervention with the strongest evidence of success in ending homelessness. This evidence shows us that:

- High housing sustainment rates of 80-90% can be achieved and maintained over long periods of time.
- People experience positive impacts on their capabilities and wellbeing, including their quality of life and recovery.
- Involvement in the criminal justice system is routinely reduced.
- People experience improvements in relation to their health and reductions in substance use.

The evaluation (pdf) of the Threshold Housing First project for women offenders also shows that the Housing First model can be very effective for women experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage. Beyond positive housing retention outcomes, women reported increased self-esteem, improvements in health and wellbeing, and growing ambition.

An interim report by I-SPHERE at Heriot Watt University was published in September 2021, highlighting the findings and lessons learned from the first two years of Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder. The report is part of a broad evaluation of the Pathfinder and draws from a combination of data analysis and first-hand testimony from tenants, support providers, local authorities and national stakeholders.

The report confirms and illustrates that Housing First is being successfully scaled up in Scotland, collating learning from all Pathfinder areas and at each step of Housing First design and delivery. The headline finding is that the Pathfinder has been highly effective at supporting people with the sharpest experiences of homelessness to stay in their homes. At the end of August 2021, by which time 545 people had been housed, the Pathfinder had achieved an overall 12-month 'tenancy sustainment rate' of 84% and 24-month rate of 82%.

And specific evidence from across Scotland and the rest of the UK supports the delivery of Housing First for specific groups of people. For example, the Rock Trust and Almond Housing Association have tested Housing First for young people leaving care in West Lothian and their evaluation (pdf) shows that:

- All but one young person has continued to sustain their tenancy.
- All young people described ways in which their relationship with their Housing First worker had led to positive changes in their life.
- Some young people reported improvements in mental health and satisfaction with life, healthy eating and exercise, and some reported fewer problems as a result of substance misuse.

Why does it work? Researchers at Heriot-Watt University identified four components that underpin the success of Housing First:

- The longevity of the housing and support provides a stable platform for people to address wider issues in their lives. Assuring people that the housing is theirs for as long as they need it and not limiting the time period for support takes away people's concerns and anxieties.
- The flexibility of support, both the amount and type of support offered, allows for a person-centred approach which respects individual choice and gives people greater control over their own life. This flexibility also underpins long-lasting positive relationships between staff and tenants, overcoming previous experience of being 'let down' by services.
- The stickability of Housing First fosters trust and overcomes previous experiences of exclusion from services. By staying with people through tough times (e.g. relapse) and separating out their support from their housing security, it is easier to have the connections needed to ensure people get the help and support they want.
- The normality of mainstream homes in local communities – as compared to living in congregate homelessness services and other forms of temporary accommodation – offers what many experience as a way out of the destructive cycle they have experienced and mitigates stigma and supports integration.

## b. More Cost Effective

The evidence base for Housing First also looks at its cost effectiveness and points towards savings.

A study of the delivery of Housing First in England calculates the average total costs for Housing First at £9,000 - £10,000 per person, per year. This is approximately 40% lower than annual costs for hostels, and approximately 60% lower than annual costs for high intensity fixed-site supported accommodation, all the while achieving positive outcomes and ending a person's homelessness.

Research from Heriot-Watt University on Temporary Accommodation in Scotland illustrated weekly temporary accommodation costs ranging from £40 to £1,300 depending on the type, location, provision of support and source of funding. It concluded that a significant amount of money in the homelessness system is taken up by providing temporary solutions rather than permanent ones.

The range of international evidence also points at cost offsets for other sectors including emergency health services through reduced A&E visits, and justice services because of reduced offending.

Perth & Kinross Council was delivering a rapid rehousing approach for several years before the 2018 national policy objective and have demonstrated cost effectiveness and better outcomes for people. Called 'Home First', the Council saved £676k in 2016-17 by significantly reducing the portfolio of temporary accommodation, while the number of households in temporary accommodation has reduced by 85% since 2012. In 2019-20, Perth and Kinross had the lowest prevalence of temporary accommodation usage in Scotland at 0.5 households per 100,000 population and the lowest length of stay at 76 days.

## c. More Effective Housing System

The Hard Edges Scotland research studied the extent and nature of severe and multiple disadvantage in Scotland. The research reported that homelessness services are often 'carrying the can' when earlier opportunities to support people have been missed. Local authority homelessness services are the most likely agency to lead, but with a lack of integration of addiction and mental health resources councils do not have the necessary authority to coordinate timely multi-sector interventions. This leads to rehousing outcomes being systematically worse for people and not improving over time.

By placing greater scrutiny on local systems and processes, the evidence from Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder shows the following outcomes that are contributing to more effective housing and homelessness systems:

- High levels of tenancy sustainment can continue to be achieved as the number of tenancies significantly increase, with **84% of 540** tenancies being sustained and **202** people having been in their own home for more than one year.
- Challenges have been met by housing officers, local authority staff and Housing First support teams ensuring **no evictions** to date.
- Analysis of the reasons for Housing First tenancies ending showed that the majority of ended tenancies were not for housing related reasons, with the death of the tenant being the biggest reason.

Learning from Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder has shown that delivery is more effective when:

- Relationships are formed with as many local landlords as possible (local authority, housing association and private rented sector) and take the time to embed Housing First within different local lettings arrangements such as choice-based letting or common housing registers.
- Old mistakes that have led to the exclusion of those who benefit most from Housing First are understood and not repeated, e.g. reducing complexity and rigidity within referral and assessment processes to ensure time is taken to build trust with people who have often lost faith in the system.
- Staff are fully trained and supported in delivering the Housing First principles, and small caseloads are protected.
- Strong partnerships across relevant sectors are in place early, with planning for change and problem-solving at the heart.

## d. Better For People

Housing First is for people whose homelessness is made harder by experiences with trauma, mental health, addictions, rough sleeping and the criminal justice system. These issues are often connected and lead to some people getting 'stuck' in the cycle and system of homelessness.

Studies around Adverse Childhood Experiences show that experiences in childhood such as abuse, neglect, community violence, homelessness, or growing up in a household where adults are experiencing mental health issues or harmful alcohol and drug use, can have a long-lasting effect on people's lives. And it is this effect that can be so often evident in the lives of the adults who will benefit most from Housing First.

Aye We Can, the most extensive national conversation with people with lived experience of homelessness across Scotland in recent years, prioritised housing first and fast. People were clear that they don't want to live in temporary or shared accommodation other than in an emergency and called for our focus to be on ensuring that people have a home of their own. People also wanted a joined-up approach to providing support and greater awareness of the realities of people's lives.

Evidence points us towards the scale of severe and multiple disadvantage in Scotland and the overall demand for Housing First. Statistical research into Health and Homelessness in Scotland shows that 6% of people experiencing homelessness also have evidence of mental health, drug-related and alcohol-related conditions (all three), rising to 11.4% for those experiencing repeat homelessness.

And the Hard Edges Scotland research shows that experiences of severe and multiple disadvantage exist in all local authority areas across the country and points us toward best estimates for scaling up Housing First in Scotland (see section 7).

**Table 1: The table below gives an overview of those most likely to benefit from a Housing First approach, compared with the second year from Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder.**

| What Hard Edges Scotland told us | Who has benefited from Housing First in Scotland so far? | |
|---|---|---|
| Hard Edges Scotland tells us that those who will benefit most from Housing First are more likely to be male. | Gender | • 66.58% Male<br>• 32.67% Female<br>• 0.74% Transgender |
| Hard Edges Scotland tells us that those who will benefit most from Housing First are more likely to be in the lower to middle age ranges, with few under 25 or over 65. | Age | • 11.25% under 25<br>• 69.93% 26-49<br>• 18.34% 50-64<br>• 0.49% 65+ |
| Hard Edges Scotland tells us that the overwhelming majority of people who will benefit most from Housing First will be White Scottish. | Ethnicity | • White/White Scottish: 97+%<br>• Small numbers White Other British, White European, Mixed Race, Egyptian and Gypsy Traveller |

# Section 3

## The Policy

**Scotland has a determined policy environment which understands what is needed to end homelessness and the role of Housing First in achieving it. Connecting right across a range of policy areas is needed for Housing First to succeed.**

## a. Overarching Policy

Scotland's National Performance Framework tracks performance towards agreed outcomes and indicators. Housing First can positively contribute to several outcomes contained within this Framework, including that people:

- live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.
- are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society.
- are healthy and active.
- respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.
- tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.

Further underpinning the delivery of the National Performance Framework is Community Engagement and Empowerment which focuses on supporting communities to do things for themselves and make their voices heard in the planning and delivery of services. Local Outcome Improvement Plans are the mechanism by which Community Planning Partnerships deliver improved outcomes for their communities. They are based on a clear understanding of local needs and reflect agreed local priorities and link to the National Performance Framework.

The National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework is also important in supporting the delivery of Housing First in Scotland through its focus on:

- people being supported to look after and improve their health.
- people living independently at home or in homely settings in the community.
- reducing health inequalities.
- keeping people safe from harm.

The Fairer Scotland Action Plan is the national overarching plan for tackling poverty in Scotland, which is a primary contributor to the experience of homelessness. The plan is based on a wide-ranging national conversation on what a Fairer Scotland would look like and has been translated into 50 key actions that aim to reduce poverty.

## b. Housing Legal Framework

The safety and security of a settled home is the cornerstone of Housing First. The role of Scotland's housing associations and cooperatives is pivotal to the success of Housing First, and developments in relation to allocations policies and wider role activities are being facilitated by many social landlords. Underpinning this is the need to ensure an adequate supply of affordable and social housing in line with independently calculated rates (SFHA/CIH Scotland/Shelter Scotland) and planning for the longer term housing requirements of Scotland's population, as outlined in Housing to 2040.

The Housing Contribution Statement is considered the 'bridge' between a Local Housing Strategy and Health and Social Care, and therefore an important lever for Housing First. The Housing Contribution Statement is intended to articulate the role of the local housing sector in the governance arrangements for the integration of health and social care and set out the shared outcomes, service priorities and strategic commissioning.

The **right to housing** in Scotland is often described as the strongest in the world and recent and forthcoming changes have particular implications for the delivery of Housing First. Some people who will benefit most from Housing First may have been assessed as **intentionally homeless**, reducing their accommodation rights and making it more difficult for their experience of homelessness to end. From November 2019, the duty placed on Scottish Local Authorities to investigate whether a person was intentionally homeless was removed, instead a Local Authority has the power to undertake this investigation if they think it is appropriate. This change removes potential barriers for some people experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage.

Changes to **local connection** provisions are planned which will suspend local connection referrals between local authorities. This change will create more opportunity for people to choose where they want to live and move more easily across local authority boundaries, as it is recognised that a person is more likely to sustain accommodation if it is an area they choose to stay. *The Ministerial Statement on Local Connection has been published and the legislation to suspend local connection is expected during 2022.*

The terms of the **Unsuitable Accommodation Order** have been extended to cover all homeless households rather than only those with dependent children and/or pregnant women. This means that homeless households cannot spend more than 7 days in accommodation defined as unsuitable without the Order being breached. Increasing Housing First can support local authorities in Scotland to meet the revised terms of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order by moving people from temporary into settled accommodation more quickly.

*Housing Supply*

Housing to 2040 sets out the Scottish Government's long term strategy to deliver the affordable housing needed to end homelessness. In line with this, a new rented sector strategy — A New Deal for Tenants — has been consulted on. The strategy seeks to improve accessibility, affordability, choices and standards across the whole rented sector in Scotland.

## c. Homelessness Policy

Following an inquiry, the **Local Government and Communities Committee** of the Scottish Parliament made a series of recommendations in their 2018 report. Key to these recommendations was a focus on the development of a Scottish approach to delivering Housing First.

Rapid Rehousing, of which Housing First is one element, was the cornerstone recommendation of the **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group**, which met and reported throughout 2017 and 2018. Housing First recommendations were further strengthened when HARSAG was reconvened in 2020.

The commitment to implement recommendations from HARSAG and the cross-party committee is captured in the joint Scottish Government and COSLA **Ending Homelessness Together High-Level Action Plan.** This plan commits to ending homelessness by prioritising settled housing for all, including Housing First becoming the default response:

> *"Someone who has complex needs and is homeless or rough sleeping or at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping should be housed in settled, mainstream accommodation that meets their needs – with wrap-around support in line with Housing First principles – as quickly as possible."*

With duties to implement homelessness policy and strategy sitting with the 32 Local Authorities across Scotland the planning and delivery of Rapid Rehousing and Housing First is underpinned by local 5-year **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans.** These plans interface with the local statutory Housing Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA), Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and Local Housing Strategy (LHS) to ensure that any local supply shortfalls are identified and plans put in place to ensure that the local availability of affordable housing matches the 5 year rapid rehousing vision.

*Prevention Duty*

The independent Prevention Review Group (PRG) was convened by Crisis and Scottish Government to take forward work on preventing homelessness identified by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group and the subsequent Scottish Government-COSLA Ending Homelessness Together Plan. The PRG's task was to identify legal duties on local authorities and other public bodies to prevent homelessness.

The PRG was chaired by Prof Suzanne Fitzpatrick of Heriot-Watt University and included local authority bodies and representatives from the housing and homelessness sectors and from health and social care. A wide-ranging consultation process was carried out, involving around 100 organisations from different sectors.

The PRG was supported by the Prevention Commission, a group of people with lived and frontline experience of homelessness, who met regularly during the lifetime of the PRG to discuss and shape the proposals. They emphasised the importance of keeping it simple, of choice and control for people facing homelessness, and of services working in partnership with them to find out what assistance they need to address their situation.

The underpinning principles of PRG were that:

- There should be a collective responsibility across public services to prevent homelessness.
- Intervention to prevent homelessness should start as early as possible.
- People facing homelessness should have an appropriate degree of choice in where they live and access to the same accommodation options as other members of the public, with protections in place to prevent them from becoming homeless again.

The recommendations of the Group intend to achieve the following:

1) Clarify, strengthen and extend a duty to prevent homelessness, and integrate it within the main statutory framework, so that local authorities assist anyone threatened with homelessness in the next six months.

2) Prescribe a range of reasonable steps to be used to prevent or alleviate homelessness, based on the existing Housing Options framework. These steps are to be included in a personalised and tailored housing plan that enhances applicants' choice and control. Where applicants have housing support needs these should be assessed and met.

3) Ensure the service meets the needs of specific groups at risk of homelessness by working with other services and partners, including for those experiencing domestic abuse, and those leaving prison, care and other institutions, those facing a threat of homelessness living in the private rented sector.

4) Ensure people requiring assistance to prevent or alleviate homelessness are assisted into accommodation which is available for a minimum of 12 months and suitable to their needs, with appropriate safeguards to ensure that homelessness does not reoccur. This would allow a wide range of accommodation options, allowing people choice and control.

5) Provide clarity and accountability in the system, giving people appropriate and effective rights of reviews and challenge throughout the process. There should be a comprehensive right to request a review of decisions at all stages of the process. Where the applicant is still not content with the outcome, they should have a right to challenge decisions through the Housing and Property Tribunal.

The Scottish Government consultation on the proposed legal duties to prevent homelessness closed in April 2022, with the responses being analysed to inform the next stage of the legislative process.

### *The role of Supported Housing*

The transition to Rapid Rehousing and Housing First is the driver for the role of supported housing and shared living to be redefined as a response to homelessness in Scotland. In October 2021, a policy direction was published following a qualitative research project commissioned by Homeless Network Scotland, led by Indigo House and with a research Advisory Group chaired by Dr Beth Watts, Heriot-Watt University.

The direction of travel recommended is toward supported housing as a *settled* housing option, for a *small* number of people who want support on-site. This should be modelled around a 'core and cluster' approach that is more commonly used by HSCPs for different health and support needs. Planning and commissioning should be led locally by HSCPs, with each supported housing integrated in the community and spanning a range of overlapping personal experiences and support needs so that it avoids stigmatisation of 'homeless accommodation'.

The key attributes of core and cluster models would be:

- Self-contained, individual properties usually described as flats or bedsits/studios – homely, with residents having their own bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens. This also encompasses the need to respect private space with contact from support or other staff related to individual's care and support needs and avoiding an institutional approach.
- The 'core' would be the location of on-site care and support staff – often located in one of the flats in a block, or other nearby accommodation, 24-hours/7 days a week; this core may or may not include some common space.

The policy position and full research is available here https://homelessnetwork.scot/shared-spaces

## d. Public Health and Health & Social Care Policy

The Public Health Scotland Strategic Plan 2020-2023 has a vision of a Scotland where everybody thrives and recognises quality housing and accessible and effective health and social care services as foundations for achieving this.

And Scotland's Public Health Priorities sets out 6 priority areas. Scaling up Housing First will contribute to the delivery of:

- **Priority 1:** A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe spaces and communities.
- **Priority 2:** A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing.
- **Priority 4:** A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

Housing First also contributes to the reform principles that underpin these priorities:

- Reducing inequalities
- Prevention and early intervention
- Fairness, equity, and equality
- Collaboration and engagement
- Empowering people and communities
- Intelligence, evidence and innovation

The Health and Social Care Delivery Plan (2016-2021) aims for Scotland to have high-quality services that have a focus on prevention, early intervention and supported self-management. The delivery of Housing First can both support the delivery and benefit from a health and social care system that:

- Is integrated.
- Focuses on prevention, anticipation and supported self-management.
- Will make day-case treatment the norm, where hospital treatment is required and cannot be provided in a community setting.
- Focuses on care being provided to the highest standards of quality and safety, whatever the setting, with the person at the centre of all decisions.
- Ensures people get back into their home or community environment as soon as appropriate, with minimal risk of re-admission.

Those who benefit most from Housing First in Scotland are also likely to have significant health and social care needs in both the immediate and longer term. The success of Housing First is inextricably tied to the Health & Social Care agenda and strong partnerships with local Health & Social Care Partnerships. This should include:

- Health & Social Care staff contributing to the flexible, open-ended Housing First support that is central to ending people's homelessness and improvements in their health and wellbeing.
- Joint strategic planning to develop and upscale Housing First locally, ensuring it is embedded in all Health & Social Care plans.
- Joint approaches to commissioning Housing First to ensure adequate funding is available in the longer term to deliver high quality, flexible, open ended support.

Housing First can also make a clear contribution to a range of strategies that underpin the wider Public Health and Health & Social Care sector, including:

- Reforming Adult Social Care Support with priorities including a shared agreement on adult social care support and a focus on human rights, the delivery of social care support that is centred on the person, how they want to live their life, and what is important to them, investment in social care support and how it is paid for in the future, a valued and skilled workforce, strengthening the quality and consistency of co-production at a local and national level, and ensuring equity of experience and expectation across Scotland.

- The Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy for 2017-2027 which promotes prevention and early intervention, access to treatment and joined-up accessible services. It also provides a focus on the physical wellbeing of people with mental health problems, people's rights and the use of information

- Rights, Respect Recovery: The Alcohol and Drug Treatment Strategy which focuses on the prevention and reduction of societal harms that increase risk and tackling health inequalities. The strategy commits to taking a human rights, public health and evidence-based approach.

- A Connected Scotland: a strategy for tackling social isolation and loneliness and building stronger social connections. This prioritises the promotion of positive attitudes and tackling stigma, the creation of opportunities for people to connect, and supporting an infrastructure that fosters connection.

- The Keys to Life: Improving quality of life for people with learning disabilities (pdf) which among key priorities focuses on the importance of housing and supported living.

The Scottish Government's 2021-22 Programme for Government committed to bringing forward legislation to establish a **National Care Service.** The proposals followed the Independent Review of Adult Social Care, which recommended the establishment of a National Care Service to bring together all adult social care support delivered in Scotland.

A consultation on proposals was opened on 9 August 2021; the analysis of stakeholders' responses is available here. View the joint housing and homelessness sector response to the Scottish Government's proposals for a National Care Service.

In June 2022, Scottish Government published the National Care Service Bill which will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny over the next phase.

## e. Community Justice

**Justice in Scotland: Vision and Priorities (2017-2020)** sets out 7 priorities for a safe, just and resilient Scotland, with the delivery of Housing First for those who need it supporting the achievement of 3 key priorities:

- **Priority 1**
  we will enable our communities to be safe and supportive,
  where individuals exercise their rights and responsibilities.
- **Priority 4**
  we will work with others to improve health and wellbeing in justice settings,
  focusing on mental health or substance use.
- **Priority 7**
  we will use prison only where necessary to address offending or to protect public safety,
  focusing on recovery and reintegration.

On 13th April 2022 the Scottish Government launched its consultation on a revised version of the National Strategy for Community Justice. An updated strategy is expected to be published later 2022.

Housing First can also play an important role in meeting several key principles underpinning the National Strategy for Community Justice:

- Re-integrating those who have committed offences into the community,
  and helping them to realise their potential, will create a safer and fairer society for all.
- Every intervention should maximise opportunities for preventing and reducing offending as early as possible and before problems escalate.
- Community justice outcomes cannot be improved by one stakeholder alone.
  We must work in partnership to address these complex issues.
- High quality, person-centred and collaborative services should be available
  to address the needs of those who have committed offences, their families, and victims of crime.

The Presumption Against Short Periods of Imprisonment Order was passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2019 and currently sets a statutory presumption against sentences of less than 12 months for offences committed on or after 4 July 2019 in order to reduce the reoffending rate in Scotland. Alongside the range of non-custodial sentences available under the Order, Housing First can play an important role in offering secure housing and support to mitigate against the social factors that often contribute to criminal offences being committed.

Quality Standards from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) which set out that the ability to access and sustain suitable accommodation is key. Quality indicators within the Standards include:

- The prison encourages government agencies, private and third sector organisations who offer services relevant to the community integration needs of each prisoner to jointly agree an appropriate plan.
- As prisoners near release all reasonable steps are taken to ensure appointments and interviews are in place with relevant agencies.
- As prisoners near release all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that accommodation will be available.

The Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone Standards, commonly known as SHORE Standards, were developed collaboratively to deliver on the principle of maximising opportunities to provide stable, settled housing at point of liberation, with the aim of avoiding emergency accommodation.

## f. Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is the primary cause of women's homelessness and so affects significant numbers of children and their long-term outcomes. Domestic abuse: a good practice guide for social landlords is guidance for social housing professionals who are involved in developing policy in housing and homelessness services and in providing housing management and housing support services. The guidance is intended to support social landlords to develop an informed response that prevents women's and children's homelessness, supports victims of domestic abuse effectively and holds perpetrators to account.

Subsequently, Improving housing outcomes for women and children experiencing domestic abuse is the report of a Scottish Government working group in December 2020 highlighting six areas which, acted on together, could significantly reduce domestic abuse related homelessness.

The Domestic Abuse (Protection) Scotland Bill was passed in the Scottish Parliament on 17 March 2021, giving victims and survivors more choice and protection. This gives police and courts power to remove abusers from the home, and will give social landlords greater control to transfer tenancies to a victim/survivor.

## g. Employment

The No-One Left Behind: Next Steps for Employability Support can play an important role in supporting the success of Housing First across Scotland, building an approach to employability support that recognises the experiences of people experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage, with the strategy prioritising:

- Employability and Health (including substance use)
- Employability and Justice
- Employability and Housing

## h. The Independent Care Review

The Promise (pdf) sets out the ambition for Scotland to be the best place for children to grow up, requiring a fundamental shift in how decisions are made about children and families. Many people who will benefit from Housing First will be living with the legacy of a care system that did not always meet their needs and scaling up Housing First in Scotland will benefit from the full implementation of The Promise to protect children and families as early as possible, reducing the future experience of severe and multiple disadvantage.

# Section 4

## A Route-map for Local Delivery

**From pilots to pathfinder and now branching out across Scotland. This means getting started in some areas and scaling up in others. This section is intended to help put knowledge into action.**

**Learning from the early pilots to the current Pathfinder provide *key learning take-aways* that can help local areas to start-up or scale-up Housing First across all parts of Scotland.**

## Early adopters

The evaluation of the 2010 Glasgow pilot demonstrated significant success, and this led to Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire and East Dunbartonshire councils establishing local projects with a partnership also formed in Aberdeenshire in a rural setting. Housing First approaches for young people were developed in West Lothian and a concept-test project to understand outcomes in the Private Rented Sector in Glasgow were also initiated across this period. The local projects while successful were relatively small, with less than 100 tenancies started across this period.

## Pathfinder

Scotland's 3-year Housing First Pathfinder (2019-22; appendix 2) across 6 local authority areas was designed to be a blueprint for how Housing First could scale up across Scotland. It was catalysed and part-funded by Social Bite (to March 2021) with Corra Foundation and Homeless Network Scotland appointed fund and project managers. Scottish Government connected the emerging Housing First national policy objective with the Pathfinder already being mobilised and became the primary funder of it. In the final year of the Pathfinder (2021-22), the full cost of support services will be met by Scottish Government and local authorities.

## Beyond the Pathfinder

The in-depth analysis carried out as part of the Hard Edges Scotland research provides strong pointers on the scale of Housing First needed in Scotland. Bespoke analysis undertaken by Heriot-Watt university for Housing First Scotland estimates that around **3,560 Housing First tenancies** per year, over a 10-year programme, would meet the demand of people already in the homelessness system, and those forecast to be best-fit for Housing First over the next 10-years.

This data analysis is a robust and important marker on **scale**. However, local areas will need to set ambitious markers on **pace** – considering the local factors that will influence how fast Housing First can scale up across the local authority area. This will include considerations and improvements in relation to housing supply and access, capacity of support providers to scale up, and the efficiency of local systems and processes that underpin Housing First.

The data analysis shows that, while highest levels of severe and multiple disadvantage are found in **urban** areas experiencing poverty and deprivation, a national approach tailored to local and **rural** needs across all local authorities is needed:

| Housing First Demand Estimates | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aberdeen City | **221** | Edinburgh | **357** | Orkney | **6** |
| Aberdeenshire | **103** | Eilean Siar | **8** | Perth & Kinross | **73** |
| Angus | **60** | Falkirk | **103** | Renfrewshire | **124** |
| Argyll & Bute | **40** | Fife | **273** | Scottish Borders | **55** |
| Clackmannanshire | **49** | Glasgow City | **538** | Shetland | **7** |
| Dumfries & Galloway | **109** | Highland | **91** | South Ayrshire | **58** |
| Dundee City | **181** | Inverclyde | **44** | South Lanarkshire | **158** |
| East Ayrshire | **79** | Midlothian | **33** | Stirling | **62** |
| East Dunbartonshire | **20** | Moray | **39** | West Dunbartonshire | **136** |
| East Lothian | **47** | North Ayrshire | **132** | West Lothian | **150** |
| East Renfrewshire | **17** | North Lanarkshire | **185** | **Scotland** | **3,560** |

Table 2: Housing First Demand Estimates 2021-2031 (per year)

## How does this compare?

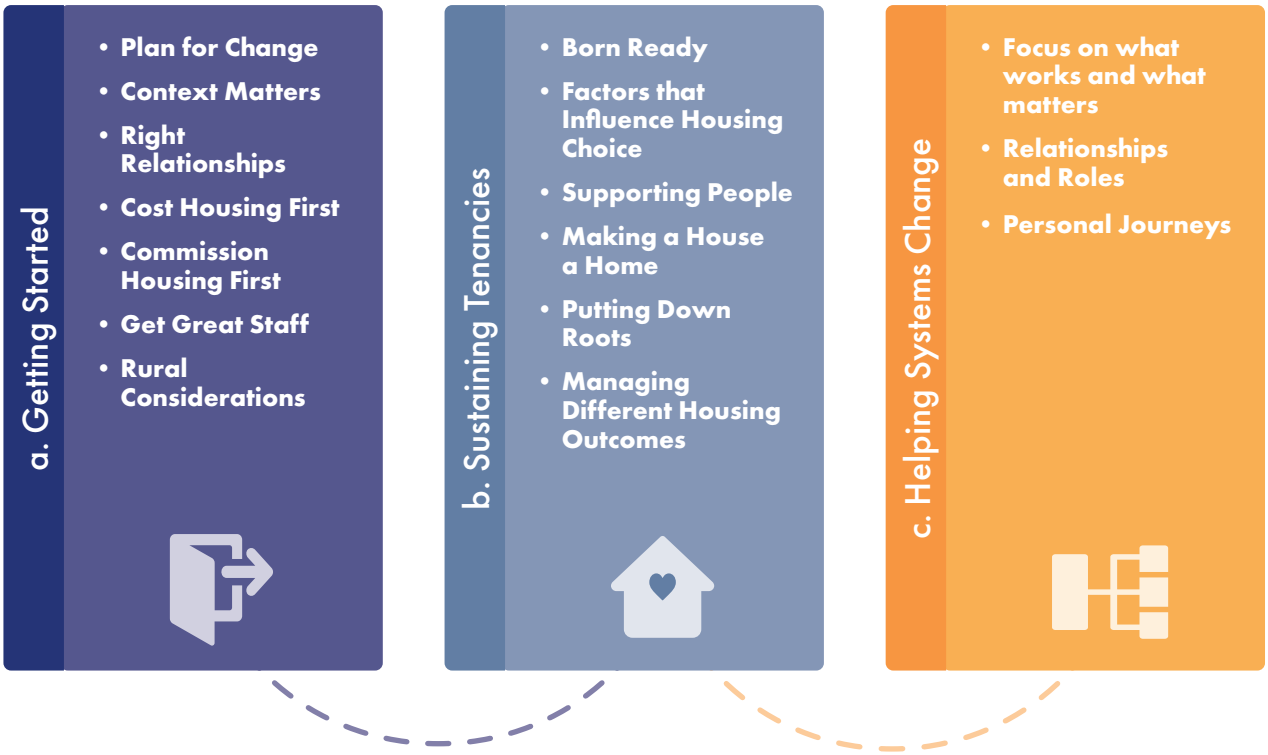
Local assessments and forecasts on best-fit for Housing First in Scotland are generally lower than this analysis. While it is understood that complex needs are underreported in official homelessness monitoring returns (the HL1), this might only go some way to explaining the difference.

To understand the difference, the viability of a national Housing Support Needs Analysis will be scoped to understand if a common and shared definition and measure of housing support is possible across housing, health and social care.

## Start-up and scale-up

Turning knowledge into action, whether starting out or scaling up. Here are some key considerations and learning take-aways for:

- Getting started
- Sustaining tenancies
- Helping local systems change



# a. Getting Started

**LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS**

## 1. Plan For Change

Determine strategic priorities that correspond with the range of local strategies and policies outlined in section 3.

Determine the **pace and scale** conditions for Housing First relevant to your area and:

- Establish how many people will access your Housing First programme in year 1. And your plan beyond that.
- Ensure you have a clear, consistent and shared criteria for people to access Housing First in your area.
- Identify the number of homes (both social and private rented sector homes) that can be accessed across your area. Determine how housing allocation policies will be used.
- Quantify the expected levels of support and the resources required to deliver this. Consider:
    - The remit and overlap of service managers and coordinators, in relation to direct Housing First support staff.
    - Rural, dispersed areas that may not be able to maintain the same staff:tenant ratios as populous cities.
    - How open-ended support can be provided, enabling support to increase and decrease to ramp up if there are crisis points.
- Determine approach to information sharing and GDPR. While there will be clear and reasonable boundaries when it comes to sharing at-times sensitive information, partners can work together to find ways of working that prevent it being a significant issue. One example relates to early assessment, where local authorities have different statutory obligations and constraints than partners in the third sector. This has been overcome with a shared assessment process with both sectors working in tandem.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Join up policy and plans across housing, health, social care and more.

Establish local scale and determine viable pace for Housing First in your area.

**LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS**

## 2. Context Matters

Every area starting-up or scaling-up Housing First will encounter its own challenges and be required to make changes and developments within its own context – social, geographical, political.

Choice and control, including over the location, tenure and type of home someone wants to live in, is central to Housing First, as is people moving into their own home as quickly as possible.

But it is important that this choice is placed in the 'real-world' context of local housing markets and availability which are different in each area. The broader work to improve these contexts is also vital and outlined at section 7.

Some challenges are common, and these are summarised below.

- **Housing stock: area and availability**. A Housing First approach needs housing to be available as quickly as possible, and in areas that people want to live. Demand for Housing First greater than housing supply is a key frustration, but progress can be made when sourcing and allocating housing is actively prioritised.
- **Housing stock: access and readiness**. The importance of a home being made available that is of a good standard, ready to furnish so that rent arrears for any period prior to move-in are avoided. Communication is key among housing and support providers and with tenants to pin-point where and when the home will be available, when move-in can reasonably be expected, and what is required to ensure it is at a comfortable standard.
- **Housing Systems.** Housing First has operated within choice based letting systems, common housing registers and in stock transfer areas. This means that Housing First allocations are being delivered in very different contexts and how to achieve the most rapid and effective approach across these different housing contexts is still being developed.
- **Multi-agency working.** Many of the challenges outlined in Hard Edges Scotland have their roots in the isolated and siloed ways of working that makes our systems more difficult for people to navigate. The reality on the ground is that it takes huge effort, patience, and willingness to achieve progress in this area – but that the results are significant. Creating multi-disciplinary teams should be a key first step when starting Housing First.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Every area has a different context so Housing First delivery will look different.

More important is ensuring that the 7 principles that underpin Housing First are met.

| LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS | KEY TAKEAWAY |
|---|---|

## 3. Right Relationships

- **Identify local partners** across the homelessness, housing, addictions, health and justice sectors (among others) as well as organisations with specific practical skills, for example furniture provision or home decoration.
- **Housing associations** are integral and in most cases want to be involved in the planning and delivery of Housing First, not just in providing houses. The relationship between the Housing First support worker and the landlord is pivotal.
- Most areas have created **Governance and Delivery** (or Operations) Groups. What partnerships and forums are already in place that will add value to Housing First? What the key issues and priorities are for your area will help determine who should be involved in governance and operational delivery structures:
  - Delivery Groups comprise key partners involved in the day-to-day activities of the Housing First service: support providers, housing providers, local authorities and health and social care partnerships.
  - Governance Groups take a more strategic view with partners including Police Scotland, DWP, Integrated Joint Boards, Councillors, Health, Housing Providers, Transport, Prison Service, Scottish Government and more. This multi-agency cross-sector approach to governance and delivery can help Housing First connect into broader policies and processes.
- **Engage Elected Members** and leaders, utilising the community and financial benefits of Housing First. Keep them involved through regular progress reports.
- There are a number of ways that people with **lived experience** can impact and improve Housing First; valuing and agreeing the importance of doing so is key. The benefit of empathy through similar experience is well understood, and 'peer support workers' is an option that has been successfully developed and deployed as part of a team of support workers. Meaningful involvement in governance and delivery structures can be a good way to reality-check the way services are being developed; training and support should be made available to enable people to do this in a way that is comfortable and appropriate.

Create a platform for lived experience.

Involve lots of landlords from the start.

Get support from Elected members.

Establish structures at strategy and operational level.

**LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS**

## 4. Costing Housing First

While it is important that 'best-value' continues to be fine-tuned, modelled, tested and scaled, we can use what has been learned to begin developing a national cost-model for Housing First in Scotland.

All 32 Scottish local authority's 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans included projections and timescales to deliver Housing First, with a variety of estimated costs. Some degree of variance is to be expected as operating contexts differ, so the direct costs for scaling up Housing First can expect to be within the following range:

**Expected Range of Direct Costs for Housing First in Scotland**

- **£6,500 - £9,500 per person, per year**
  from year 1 in tenancy
- **£5,000 - £8,000 per person, per year**
  from year 2 in tenancy onwards

This expected range draws learning from the Pathfinder cost model, and so includes the costs associated with support staff, management costs and furnishing a tenancy when the tenant moves in. This is a per-person cost not a per-tenancy cost; should a tenancy not be sustained the support for the person should continue.

Other **direct costs** were not accounted for within the Pathfinder but identified as a result of it. All are in relation to additional staff capacity: for local authorities to enable rapid engagement, referral and assessment processes. And for housing associations, the additional time needed to engage with local governance and delivery arrangements and to allocate housing within a new structure.

There are additional **indirect costs**, but not directly attributed to Housing First as they would need met within any mainstream tenancy. These universal costs includes housing costs, energy costs, void turnovers, repairs and maintenance. And the cost of access to mainstream health and social care services.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Maximum caseload is 7 people for every support worker.

Per-person, per year cost range is £6,500 - £9,500 with the higher range more relevant to rural and remote locations.

This cost reduces from the second year in tenancy, as the furniture cost is not needed.

**LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS**

## 5. Commissioning Housing First

A robust and inclusive commissioning approach can ensure two things:

- That the delivery of Housing First is commissioned against, and therefore tied to, the principles of Housing First. Section 6 discusses in more depth the need for services to maintain fidelity to the principles across every context and embedding this into the commissioning approach is key.
- That current and local context can be considered while also commissioning for the future. This requires local partners to take account of current factors – including people and demography, systems and processes, housing stock and supply – and commissioning against plans for the future, including the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans.

Commissioning will be different depending on the area of delivery but there are some key factors that could be considered regardless of context. These are outlined below:

- **Furniture costs.** The capacity to make people's house a home in the way they want helps tenancy sustainment. Some of the options available include furniture packages facilitated by housing providers, bulk purchasing, local channels and personal budgets/credit cards for tenants. A budget of approx. £1,500 factored in per person for the first year in tenancy.
- **Local knowledge and experience.** Scaling up Housing First within complex systems and processes, and effecting appropriate changes along the way, is a key challenge. Commissioning processes should account for a high level of local knowledge and experience with providers close to the communities in which they operate.
- **Lived experience.** People with lived experience of homelessness can provide advice and insights on the development and delivery of services. Building this into your commissioning approach ensures that investment is directed to what works and what matters.
- **Timescale and longevity.** A necessary tension between delivering and commissioning Housing First is the indefinite nature of the support that goes hand-in-hand with the tenancy. A strong focus on community integration within support contracts can help people settle and connect with local services and opportunities more quickly, and over time reduce the intensive Housing First support appropriately.
- **Integrating Housing First.** Housing First is one part of a larger rapid rehousing transition. Consider when commissioning how it fits in relation to, for example, outreach support and housing support to help avoid duplication and increase joined-up services across local homelessness services.
- **Commissioning evaluation and learning** is always useful, but a careful framing will ensure this built-in component is useful and does not start from scratch. For example, there is little need to commission evaluation on research questions such as 'does Housing First work?' and other questions where the evidence is already robust.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Housing First is more cost-effective than status quo.

A commissioning focus on community integration can help maximise use of local services and activities.

Value local and lived experience when commissioning Housing First.

**LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS**

## 6. Get Great Staff

Finding the right people to deliver Housing First support is not easy, as the role demands a significant level of expertise, local knowledge, confidence, energy and patience.

Some considerations for staff recruitment

- Recruit in a way that gives your organisation/area the best opportunity to appraise who a person is and what they can bring to the role. Exercises that provide an insight into the applicant's values and approach have been more successful than traditional interview setups.
- Housing First staff work in roles and circumstances that can be stressful, intense and exhausting. Those working on the frontline are required day to day to support people often at points of crisis. The staff who make Housing First work have a wide set of skills and the capacity to work within challenging situations.
- In developing and building teams to deliver Housing First, partners should expect and plan for risks such as staff burnout and vicarious trauma. Reflective practice, appropriate job packages, extensive and ongoing training should be built into recruitment processes, as should time and resource to ensure staff wellbeing.
- Guidance for frontline delivery salaries of between £25-£30k per annum has been largely met by local authority support teams, but a range of £18-£25k across third sector services has been more universally adopted. There is also large variance within local areas delivering Housing First, which has impacted on recruitment.
- While salary is only one factor in recruitment and retention, a geographical area where wide salary differences appear will, in the long-term, lead to inconsistencies in delivery and potentially issues around consistent levels of support and credibility.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Get great staff by using a salary scale that recognises the competencies of a great Housing First support worker.

**LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS**

## 7. Rural Considerations

There are a number of rural authorities already well underway in their transition towards a system of rapid rehousing and Housing First. While the scale is smaller and there are less challenges of long-term rough sleeping, it is recognised that moving people into temporary accommodation - in a location where they have no connection or networks - along with multiple moves between different temporary accommodation placements leads to poor outcomes.

Aberdeenshire became one of six areas delivering Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder tasked with identifying and sharing the challenges, solutions and learning to successfully scale up Housing First in a rural setting. This has proved fruitful to date and Aberdeenshire's progress before and during the Pathfinder has shown very positive outcomes, including tenancy sustainment rates over 90%.

- How do services in a rural context, where populations and services are spread widely, work with the principles of Housing First whilst delivering an effective and efficient service?
- What reasonable adaptations to the Housing First model could increase effectiveness in a rural context?
- What are the challenges presented in a rural setting that are less immediate in an urban setting e.g. accessibility, transport, isolation?
- What aspects of Housing First support can reasonably be delivered remotely? This has come into focus in all settings during the pandemic restrictions
- What is the housing availability context, and how can services be creative? Can temporary accommodation be flipped regularly and quickly?
- What implications does a rural context have on how people are supported within a community?

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Rural delivery of Housing First tends to be less siloed with more established multi-disciplinary working.

# b. Sustaining Tenancies

**LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS**

## 1. Born Ready

The concept, and in some cases assessment, of whether someone is 'housing-ready' runs against evidence and good practice. The starting presumption should be that most of us, with the right support, can manage our own home. And that ordinary housing in an ordinary community, for most of us, is the best base to build and live our lives in the way we want to.

Housing First should be the **first** response for people whose homelessness is made harder by experiences with trauma, addictions, mental health and to redress disadvantage.

## 2. Factors that Influence Housing Choice

Choice is central to Housing First and it is important that workers do not make assumptions about people's housing choices. It is equally important to recognise and help redress low expectations that often accompany people experiencing multiple disadvantages.

The Prevention Commission (people with lived and frontline experience of homelessness) designed a simple framework that describes the 8 factors that we all weigh up when deciding our best housing option. What's most important is different for different people, and at different times in their lives:

- **Location.** Being near to family, work, childcare, schools, social networks.
- **Size and type.** Such as number of bedrooms, multi-storey, garden, veranda, concierge.
- **Accessibility.** For wheelchair or other access issues and any other medical factors.
- **Cost.** Rent, council tax, Housing Benefit/LHA, utility costs and in relation to current or future employment.
- **Security of Tenure.** Different tenancies available in the social or private rented sector or occupancy agreements.
- **Safety/security.** Considering issues such as domestic abuse or external abuse or threats affecting wellbeing.
- **Time.** Taking account of how long you can wait to move in and the availability of different housing options.
- **Other factors.** For example, pets, housemates and anything else that someone might identify as important.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Housing First is normal, it's fairer and it works. Try it first.

What matters most is different for all of us, and at different times in our lives.

The professional's role here is to help redress low expectations and to provide current information on the local housing context.

| LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS | KEY TAKEAWAY |
|---|---|

## 3. Supporting People

Housing First support is different from other types of housing support because it is built on a series of 7 principles to meet, rather than a list of tasks to deliver (see section 6 for practical examples of meeting these principles).

For many people who have felt excluded from services, the importance of the first and ongoing connection with their Housing First support worker is key. One of the central principles of Housing First is that flexible support is provided for as long as is needed. That the support offered is not time-bound and is flexible enough to work with people at different levels of intensity based on their individual situations and experiences.

This includes people choosing not to accept support or deciding they no longer need support as their situation has improved. Or more intensive support prior to housing and during periods of transition. Decisions to end support are always led by the tenant and may include 'support holidays' for periods when support is not wanted but may be called on later.

Landlord and support functions are delivered separately, and choices people make about support do not affect their housing security. The offer of support stays with the person if they decide to move to a new area or their tenancy ends.

Housing First support is bespoke and recognises that one size does not fit all.

The connection and rapport between the tenant and support worker is at the heart of Housing First.

## 4. Making a House a Home

The capacity to make people's house a home in the way they want helps with tenancy sustainment.

- Some furniture and appliance options include furniture packages facilitated by housing providers, bulk purchasing, using local channels and providing personal budgets/credit cards for tenants. In each case, a consistent budget should prioritise choice and quality. For example, a £1,500 contribution to the costs of furnishing the new tenancy in year one was standard during the Pathfinder.
- Fast-tracking Scottish Welfare Fund payments to support full furnishing of new tenancies was enabled as part of a pilot approach in Glasgow. This could be scoped and developed in other areas.
- Wheatley Group makes available additional wrap around supports for Housing First tenants, for example money and fuel advice to maximise income, food services, fire safety visits, alarms and other safety features such as fire-retardant bedding.

Helping to create a positive physical environment at home helps to sustain the tenancy.

Secure additional wrap-around supports for tenants via housing associations and local services.

**LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS**

## 5. Putting Down Roots

While Housing First can provide the solid foundation for people to build and live their lives, there is still a risk of social isolation.

As people move into their new homes, sometimes into new communities or even alone for the first time, it is important to prepare ahead to prevent the risk of isolation as early as possible.

Here's some considerations:

- The relationship between **housing officers and support staff** is key to work with the tenant to identify preferences, challenge assumptions, and highlight the reality and potential of a new community. A welcome pack with local information and opportunities can help navigate the initial days and weeks.
- Actively **build in community engagement** to support plans and regular contact, for example identifying local groups and forums and supporting tenants to engage and join can help to build early connections in a new area. Speak with tenants who have been in tenancies for longer to find out what helps and what doesn't, and what they wished they'd known earlier.
- Access to **employment and education** should be built into overall service planning. How this looks in reality for each individual will depend on strengths and goals and a clear understanding of the impact, for example on benefits, so this can be weighed up against positive benefit to be gained.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Building connections to the local area will help people settle in and start building their lives as part of the community.

Earning and learning provides a mechanism for making local connections.

**LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS**

## 6. Managing Different Housing Outcomes

There may be times when a tenancy needs managed or maintained on behalf of the tenant, for example:

- When a prison sentence is started due to a conviction before or since the tenancy was allocated.
- When the tenant wants to enter residential rehabilitation to recover from addiction.
- When the tenant is sectioned under the mental health act for a period of time.

During the Pathfinder, these scenarios have affected less than 5% of tenants. In all cases, the local authority, housing and support workers should collaborate closely to ensure the tenancy is safe and maintained, that housing benefit is secured where possible or an alternative arrangement agreed. Communication with appropriate agencies (community justice, health and social care) can lead to solutions being found, even if in the short term at first.

There are other occasions when a different housing outcome needs arranged as an interim or settled option, and might include:

- A planned move to another tenancy in another area.
- A planned move to supported or shared accommodation as a settled housing option.
- A 'time out' temporary housing alternative.
- The tenant needs to upsize or downsize property due to a change in personal circumstances.
- An unplanned move – tenant abandons the property, either cutting ties with support or staying connected.
- The tenant makes their own housing arrangements and ends Housing First support, for example buys a house or moves in with a partner.

The offer of support will continue to be made available unless it has been ended by the tenant. And the local authority, housing and support workers should collaborate closely to protect the options of housing and support for as long as needed.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Sometimes a tenancy may need managed or maintained on behalf of the tenant for a period of time.

Sometimes a different housing outcome needs arranged as an interim or settled option.

# c. Helping Systems Change

**LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS**

## 1. Focus on what works

Scaling up Housing First as part of the transition to a Rapid Rehousing approach is a significant change programme for people working on homelessness at a national and local level in Scotland.

Where Housing First has scaled up successfully in cities and countries internationally, it is recognised as playing a pivotal role in improving local housing systems. It does that through:

- The granular and multi-agency focus on local processes and procedures that leads to improvements.
- Reducing repeat and visible homelessness among people experiencing multiple disadvantages.
- The evidenced concepts and values transferring to and influencing other parts of the homelessness system.
- Lending weight to evidence and calls for more social and affordable housing by measuring housing demand in terms of 'homes' and not 'beds' for this cohort.

Developing Housing First can require significant changes to the way systems in your area currently work and overlap. Allocating resource and time to fully understand the landscape and systems in your area can lead to significantly quicker progress and better outcomes for people.

Each area will have a different makeup with many unique and different parts working together in ways that might not be known at first. The variance and flexibility of the service and the most effective structures will be continuously in motion, but it is nonetheless critical to take adequate time to map out the current local picture and to draw up a collectively agreed route map for Housing First in the coming months and years.

Helping systems change will enable progress toward meeting a timeframe of 6-8 weeks between referral and move-in, consistent with international best practice. While the Pathfinder ran behind that, it also demonstrated over time that improvements in pace are possible.

Focus on what works and what matters, and doing more of it, will help to:

- Accelerate the time taken to accommodate people and reduce the time people spend homeless.
- Increase choice and control, including over the location, tenure and type of home someone wants to live in.
- Reduce the need to compromise to fit the 'real-world' context of local housing markets and availability which are different across all parts of the country.
- Enable Housing First to operate effectively across different housing systems and lettings arrangements.
- Help to create less siloed health and social care responses as reported in Hard Edges Scotland.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Scaling up Housing First helps to create more effective local housing systems.

We want to progress toward a timeframe of 6-8 weeks between referral and moving-in date.

Scaling up Housing First helps to create less siloed health and social care responses.

**LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS**

## 2. Relationships and Roles

After the relationship between the tenant and Housing First worker, the one that has proved to have significant impact on the development and success of Housing First is the relationship between housing and support staff.

While the principles of Housing First ensure that housing and support are independent of one another, this only means that, for a tenant, one does not depend on the other. It is important that housing and support staff take care and time to build good relationships with tenants, but also crucially with each other.

When helping systems to change, it is important to understand and communicate change and each of our roles within it – and hold those relationships carefully.

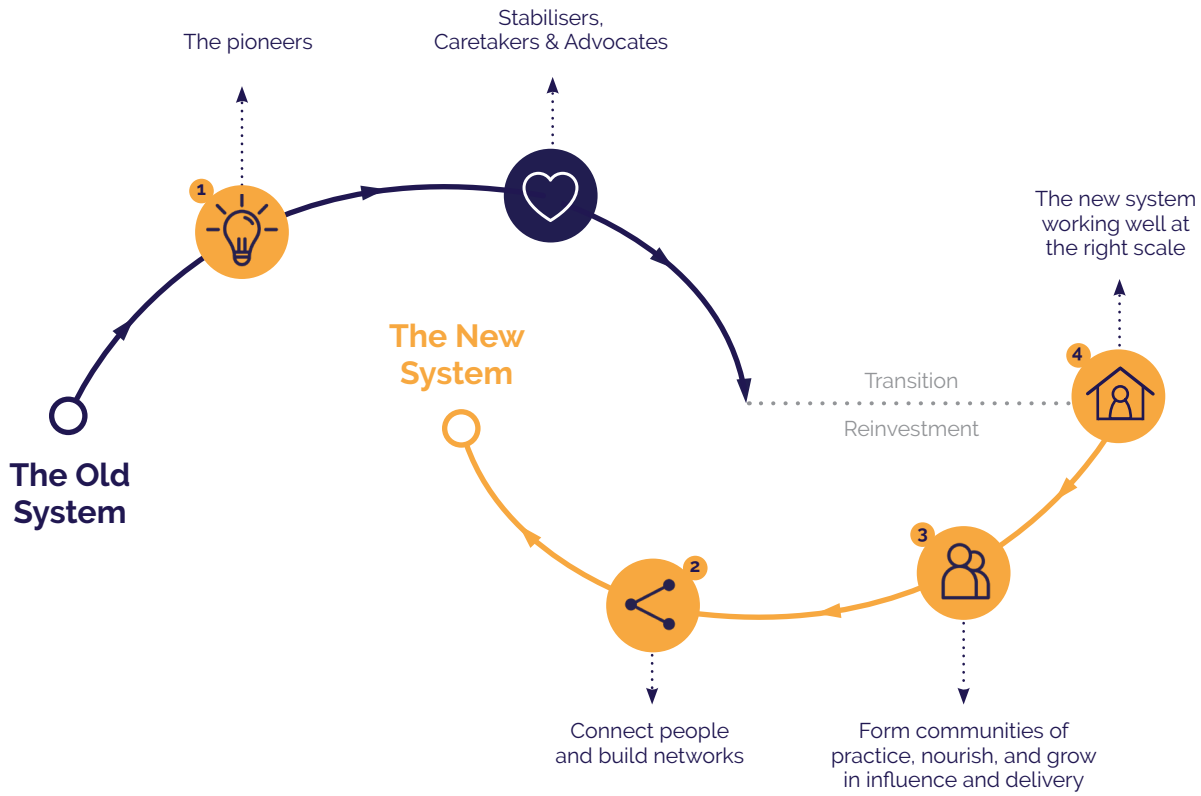
In Scotland, this means knowing that a new system of earlier prevention, rapid rehousing and Housing First is emerging. To ensure a safe transition, the old system needs experienced 'caretakers' to support services and approaches – and most importantly, the people using them - until services are aligned. The new system needs people across different sectors and services to drive change and ensure it is embedded and maintained.

At a national and local level, this transition needs people to monitor and scrutinise it until the new system of responding to homelessness is of the right scale and working effectively.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Systems don't change until people do.

It is important to understand and communicate change and each of our roles within it.



**LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS**

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

## 3. Personal Journeys

End-to-end process:

**engage > support > assess > allocate housing > move in > settle in**

Many people lack trust in services and all routes into Housing First should prioritise the building of trust. Housing First creates an opportunity to build fit-for-purpose assessment and referral processes that don't replicate old ways that didn't work for people.

Here's some considerations:

- People have often repeatedly attempted to complete the process to settled housing without success; experiencing assessment and referral processes that are not flexible or sensitive enough and ultimately further exclude. Replicating more traditional assessment and referral processes will too often create additional barriers, making it even more difficult to get to the right people.
- Setting out an end-to-end process from the point somebody is referred to Housing First all the way to the point that person is housed sounds straightforward. In reality it is a process built on a series of moving parts where responsibility for each lies with partners in different sectors, operating under a different set of constraints.
- Think carefully about assessment and referral procedures to ensure they are very easy to access, have multiple routes in, don't work to restrictive timescales and don't see referrals closed due to not all information being provided or missed appointments.
- Invite an external and independent party to review the end-to-end process periodically. Ensure this includes people with experience of the process. This can help all partners identify operational improvements that will serve to ensure that people get a faster and more sustainable housing outcome.

Review your end-to-end process and shorten it. Can you shorten it again?

# Section 5

## Equalities Considerations

**We are not all at equal risk of homelessness and it does not affect everyone in the same way. Housing inequality is linked to poverty and to the protected characteristics named in the Equality Act.**

**This section offers a set of considerations to assist local partners undertaking an EQIA when starting up or scaling up Housing First in their area.**

## Evidence

Poverty is the primary driver of homelessness, in all its forms. Poverty is experienced differently by people of different ages, ethnicities, family roles and sex. The risks, causes and paths into homelessness are different for different groups and we need to understand these differences to respond to homelessness effectively. This includes, but is not limited to, people with one or more of the protected characteristics.

- Over the recent decades the proportion of homelessness applications from people of White Scottish ethnicity has reduced from 85% in 2002/03 to 75% in 2019/20.
- Most homelessness applicants are between 25 and 49 years old. Around a quarter of applications are received from people under 25, which are more likely to be from female applicants.
- LGBT young people are disproportionately represented in the young homeless population. As many as 24% of young homeless people are LGBT, and 77% state that their LGBT identity was a causal factor in becoming homeless, with 69% of homeless LGBT young people having experienced violence, abuse or rejection from the family home.
- Males account for a slightly higher proportion than female applicants, except in younger age groups 16-17 years and 18-24 years.
- More males than females slept rough before making homelessness application.
- The biggest difference between men's and women's homelessness is domestic abuse, with this being the main reason for women applying as homeless.

Equality evidence to support the Ending Homelessness Together Plan is available here.

## Equality Duty and Policy

All Scottish public authorities have statutory obligations to meet in this area. The public sector equality duty (or general duty) in the Equality Act 2010 came into force in 2011 and means Scottish public authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations.

In 2012 Scottish Ministers made regulations that placed specific duties on Scottish public bodies to help them meet the general duty. These are also known as the Scottish Specific Duties.

## Policy Recommendations

In addition, HARSAG recommendations in 2020 invited local authorities to:

- gather and analyse evidence of COVID-19 impact on homelessness risk and the housing and support needs of **equalities groups,** including those accommodated during the pandemic, and use to inform services.
- offer bespoke prevention, support and housing pathways for young people, households experiencing domestic abuse, migrant homeless households, people leaving state institutions, LGBTQ+ households and gypsy/travellers.
- ensure at risk groups are included within the next revision of RRTPs.

With specific Housing First recommendations to:

> ***R46.*** *Upscale Housing First to extend support to those with* ***complex needs*** *who are a) housed, but at risk of repeat homelessness b) currently in public institutions including Local Authority care.*
>
> ***R47.*** *Establish a Housing First pathway for* ***women with complex needs****.*

## Considerations

| | Considerations | Role of Housing First |
|---|---|---|
| Income Inequality | Homelessness risk is not distributed equally, and poverty is the greatest driver of homelessness in all its forms. Housing First has the opportunity to have a positive impact on those with a low socio-economic status. | Housing First redresses disadvantage by providing Housing First and fast. It connects people with community and with opportunities to learn and earn.<br>Provision of furniture packages to furnish property, or access to a supervised budget to furnish property, as well as maximising benefits, applying for Community Care Grants and all other available funding sources. |
| Age | • Young people are over-represented in homelessness statistics overall.<br>• Rock Trust are the first UK charity to pilot Housing First for Youth and have built up further evidence of the success of the Housing First model in a youth context, with a particular focus on the benefits to young people leaving care.<br>• A Way Home Scotland is a coalition of individuals, organisations and authorities dedicated to ending youth homelessness in Scotland.<br>• Consideration of people under 35 being subject to Shared Accommodation Rate of housing payments, limiting their choice in properties.<br>• Older people are more likely to experience loneliness and social isolation, before and after a Housing First tenancy. | • Young people should always have access to youth specific services. Local Housing First planning and delivery should account for this and an over representation of young people.<br>• Having longer assessment periods can help the young person make informed decisions by enabling a more flexible process.<br>• The Rock Trust pilot in partnership with Almond Housing Association was independently and positively evaluated and you can read the final report here.<br>• If affordable properties are not available in areas desired, apply for DHP to widen the choice for those under 35, and explore benefit maximisation that would allow someone to “top up” their rent payments.<br>• Strong focus on making connections in local areas to increase tenancy sustainment and reduce risk of repeat homelessness. |

| | Considerations | Role of Housing First |
|---|---|---|
| Sex/ Gender | • Men are more likely to be rough sleeping, in unsuitable temporary accommodation and now make up the largest population in hotel accommodation in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Men are at increased risk of suicide ideation or attempts.<br>• Women benefit equally from a Housing First approach, but with often different pathways to support. Here you'll find an excellent online resource of evaluations and guidance relating to Housing First for women.<br>• Domestic abuse is the key reason for homelessness among women without access to routes to support and safety.<br>• Additional considerations around Housing Benefit shortfalls if pregnant women are housed in 2-bedroom properties. | The Scottish Government working group report 'Improving housing outcomes for women and children experiencing domestic abuse' (Dec 2020) recommended that:<br>A Housing First pathway should be developed within RRTPs for women experiencing domestic abuse. This should be in collaboration with VAWG partnerships and specialist support services such as Women's Aid and Rape Crisis. It should integrate the principles of Equally Safe and the Safe & Together Model.<br>HARSAG 2020 recommendations include to:<br>***R46.*** *Upscale Housing First to extend support to those with complex needs who are a) housed, but at risk of repeat homelessness b) currently in public institutions including Local Authority care.*<br>***R47.*** *Establish a Housing First pathway for women with complex needs.*<br>Ensure pregnant women housed through Housing First receive DHP if shortfall in Housing Benefit arises due to spare bedroom (i.e. child's future bedroom) |
| LGBTQ | • 1 in 4 LGBT people experience domestic abuse.<br>• LGBT young people are over-represented in the young homeless population. 24% of young homeless people are LGBT; 77% state that their LGBT identity was a causal factor in becoming homeless. | HARSAG 2020 recommendations include to:<br>***R46.*** *Upscale Housing First to extend support to those with complex needs who are a) housed, but at risk of repeat homelessness b) currently in public institutions including Local Authority care.*<br>***R47****. Establish a Housing First pathway for women with complex needs.* |

| | Considerations | Role of Housing First |
|---|---|---|
| **Race** | Over the recent decades the proportion of homelessness applications from people of White Scottish ethnicity has reduced from 85% in 2002/03 to 75% in 2019/20.<br><br>There is a higher prevalence of poverty in some minority ethnic groups and higher rates of underlying illness.<br><br>For some people, communication barriers in housing, health and social care settings because of language, stigma, prejudice or other cultural differences can prevent or delay positive outcomes.<br><br>Awareness of subliminal racism from services, or from local communities where people are resettled should be constantly developed.<br><br>The Gypsy and Traveller community may not find the provision of Housing First in line with cultural values and beliefs. | Staff involved in the delivery of Housing First Scotland should be supported, trained and encouraged to highlight issues and provide culturally sensitive responses. |

| | Considerations | Role of Housing First |
|---|---|---|
| Disability | Increased vulnerability due to ill-health, physical or learning disability or due to a mental health problem.<br><br>**Mental Health**<br><br>Poor mental health is both a cause and consequence of homelessness. There is a higher rate of mental health problems amongst the homeless population than the general population. This is often exacerbated by the stressors of housing vulnerability, the requirement to share accommodation and navigate complex systems.<br><br>**Physical Disability**<br><br>Local issues of availability of accessible properties and length of time to have properties adapted.<br><br>**Learning Disability**<br>Requires support staff to have clear understanding of learning disability.<br><br>• Difficulty communicating aspirations to support provider.<br><br>**Neurodiversity and communication problems:**<br><br>• Frustration, confusion, anxiety. | Housing First can offer more independence, autonomy and peace of mind.<br><br>Enhanced staff training for practitioners to ensure understanding of impact of disability on pathways to Housing First and successful tenancy sustainment. |

# Section 6

## Fidelity, Evaluation & Quality

## a. Fidelity to Housing First Principles

Housing First is built around a set of principles to meet, rather than a series of specific tasks or activities to deliver. And the international evidence is clear that the higher the fidelity to these principles, the higher the level of success in terms of tenancy sustainment and wider outcomes. The 7 Housing First principles with examples of how they can be met are below:

| Housing First Principle | Examples of Meeting this Principle |
|---|---|
| **1. People have a right to a home**<br><br>People are offered a home of their own as quickly as possible, with no requirement to be 'housing ready.'<br><br>Their tenancy agreement will be the same as any other tenant and they will not be asked to meet any additional rules or criteria. | **Progress towards achieving this includes:**<br><br>• All Housing First tenants have either a Scottish Secure Tenancy or a Private Residential Tenancy.<br><br>• No tenants are required to spend time in supported accommodation, rehab etc. before being offered their own tenancy.<br><br>• All tenants have choice over where they want to live, and report that their choice was respected.<br><br>• All tenants move into their home within 6-8 weeks, or as close as possible.<br><br>• The average time for tenants to move into their homes reduces year on year. |
| **2. Flexible support is provided for as long as is needed**<br><br>Support offered is not time-bound and is flexible enough to work with people at different levels of intensity based on their individual situations and experiences.<br><br>This includes people choosing not to accept support or deciding they no longer need support as their situation has improved. | **Progress towards achieving this includes:**<br><br>• There are no requirements in place for people to accept Housing First support, and tenants report being advised that they can opt out of support without it impacting upon their tenancy rights.<br><br>• There are no time limits placed on the provision of support, no minimum or maximum number of hours or duration of time.<br><br>• Decisions to end support are led by the Housing First tenant. |

| Housing First Principle | Examples of Meeting this Principle |
|---|---|
| **3. Housing and support are separate**<br><br>Landlord and support functions are delivered separately, and choices people make about support do not affect their housing security<br><br>The offer of support stays with the person – if they decide to move to a new area or their tenancy fails, they are supported to avoid homelessness crisis by finding and maintaining a new home. | **Progress towards achieving this includes**:<br><br>• Decisions to end support are led by the Housing First tenant.<br><br>• Proactive joint work to prevent evictions for rent arrears or anti-social behaviour.<br><br>• Tenancies remain open for tenants to return to following a short-term prison sentence or stay in rehab.<br><br>• Ended tenancies do not result in repeat homelessness, with people supported by the landlord and support provider to move into another secure tenancy.<br><br>• Support staff continue to offer support through time spent in prison, rehab and house moves. |
| **4. Individuals have choice and control**<br><br>People are involved in choosing their own home, in a location that best suits their circumstances.<br><br>Through person-centred planning they are also in control of the support they receive choosing where, when and how support is provided. | **Progress towards achieving this includes:**<br><br>• Support packages are co-produced, and tenants report being part of decisions about the nature of their support including choice over content, timing, frequency and staff.<br><br>• Support packages are regularly reviewed, and changes requested by tenants are implemented.<br><br>• Tenants report being actively involved in choosing the location, tenure and type of housing based on their own priorities. |
| **5. An active engagement approach is used**<br><br>Support staff have small caseloads, allowing them to be proactive and persistent in offering support; doing 'whatever it takes' as many times as necessary to build a positive relationship with people.<br><br>Cases will remain open even when engagement is low. | **Progress towards achieving this includes:**<br><br>• Caseloads are small and support staff report being able to commit necessary time and attention to each tenant.<br><br>• Cases are not closed due to missed meetings or lack of contact.<br><br>• Housing First tenants report support staff proactively building positive relationships. |

| Housing First Principle | Examples of Meeting this Principle |
|---|---|
| **6. The service is based on people's strengths, goals and aspirations**<br><br>Support is based on the understanding that there is always the possibility of positive change and improved health & wellbeing, relationships and social and economic integration.<br><br>Support staff work alongside people to identify strengths, goals and skills, building self-esteem and confidence. | **Progress towards achieving this includes:**<br><br>• Support planning is future focused, based on positive goals in people's lives.<br><br>• Tenants report improvements in health and wellbeing.<br><br>• Tenants report improvements in self-esteem and confidence.<br><br>• Tenants report improvements in social and economic integration. |
| **7. A harm reduction approach is used**<br><br>All engagement is based on the principle of reducing harm from alcohol and drugs and supporting people to minimise self-harm<br><br>Support is based on promoting recovery in physical and mental health and wellbeing. | **Progress towards achieving this includes:**<br><br>• Caseloads are small and support staff report being able to commit necessary time and attention to each tenant.<br><br>• Cases are not closed due to missed meetings or lack of contact.<br><br>• Ensuring that residential rehabilitation can be accessed and does not impact on the Housing First tenancy. |

## b. Pathfinder Evaluation

Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder is being fully and independently evaluated by the Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research at Heriot-Watt University. The method and the findings will be of significant interest to all areas starting up or scaling up Housing First in Scotland.

The evaluation will have four core strands to answer a series of key questions:

- **Process evaluation**: qualitative interviews with delivery organisations and other stakeholders including tenants to understand what factors have facilitated or hindered Housing First development and implementation.
- **Fidelity assessment:** to understand the extent to which projects implemented and maintained fidelity to the core principles of Housing First, and in what ways, if at all, programme fidelity affected outcomes for users.
- **Economic assessment:** to understand how much Housing First costs to deliver and what, if any, wider cost benefits are achieved.
- **Outcomes evaluation:** to build a full picture of what outcomes are achieved for Housing First tenants over time (in relation to housing, health, financial wellbeing, quality of life).

A full evaluation published in 2022, provides those starting-up and scaling-up Housing First across the country with robust evidence in a Scottish context. This National Framework will be updated in accordance with the evaluation conclusions and recommendations.

An interim report by I-SPHERE at Heriot Watt University was published in September 2021, highlighting the findings and lessons learned from the first two years of Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder. The report draws from a combination of data analysis and first-hand testimony from tenants, support providers, local authorities and national stakeholders. The headline finding is that the Pathfinder has been highly effective at supporting people with the sharpest experiences of homelessness to stay in their homes. At the end of September 2021, by which time 579 people had been housed, the Pathfinder had achieved an overall 12-month 'tenancy sustainment rate' of 85% and 24-month rate of 82%.

## c. Measuring Outcomes

Building a full understanding of the broader improvements in people's lives is key to understanding the success of Housing First in Scotland. Outcomes in relation to people's health and wellbeing, changes in use of drugs and/or alcohol and the positive relationships people have are as important as housing retention outcomes – as it is these life experiences that will prevent repeat homelessness. See Appendix 3 for an outline of the outcome measures used during the Pathfinder.

## d. Housing First Check Up: assuring quality

Homeless Network Scotland and Scottish Government are facilitating an annual check up process for all local authority areas providing Housing First in Scotland. In the first year (2022), 13 local authorities are participating in the check up process based on having at least 1 year of delivery, and not being involved in the Pathfinder.

## The Approach

Housing First Check Up underpins Housing First in Scotland to support:

- Quality of Housing First support services.
- Fidelity to the principles underpinning Housing First.
- Improvement methodology around local systems.
- Clarity on when to step-down and stand-down Housing First support.

There is no set path on how to do this best. Countries that are scaling up Housing First have adopted different approaches, including structured accreditation processes.

In Scotland, a collaborative and self-reflective approach is being adopted to create a culture that recognises that Housing First planning and delivery is challenging but the outcomes rewarding. This approach recognises that local authorities and partners are naturally reflective, already committed to best-for-person and best placed to understand their own circumstances. Consistent, supported self-reflection that supports those who commission, manage, deliver and use Housing First services can serve to enhance that and share learning across different areas.

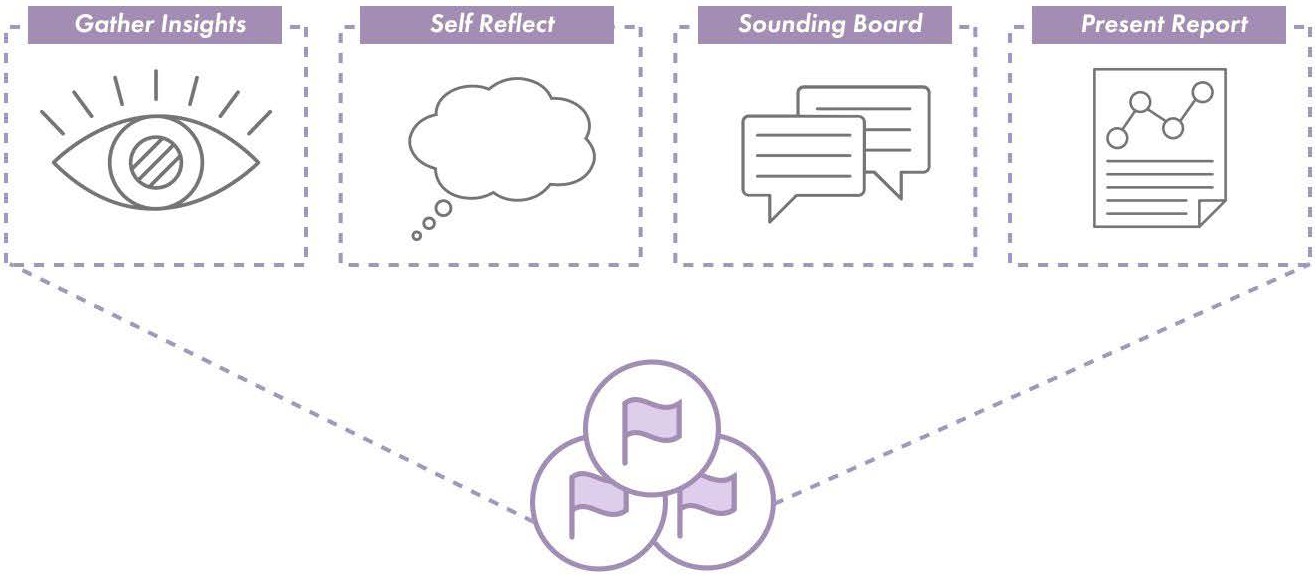
This process will not determine what is or isn't 'acceptable' Housing First, recognising that contexts and practicalities create a broad spectrum of what is feasible and desirable in each local area. Homeless Network Scotland's role is to:

- Facilitate a 360º feedback culture that recognises every perspective matters.
- Provide tools and materials to support self-reflection.
- Summarise and interpret the full range of data.
- Identify excellence and potential that can be shared within and across areas.
- Facilitate access to an expert sounding board.
- Report constructively to local authorities and partners.
- Support developments that push through on local outcomes.
- Summarise collated learning at hub and national level.

## The Method

Homeless Network Scotland is facilitating a rolling cycle with each local authority area. Annual check-ups will be coproduced over a series of workshop sessions, planned and agreed ahead. Housing Options Hubs will be briefed on plans and schedules and will be invited to include this on meeting agendas to connect learning between authorities.

The stages each year are:



| Stage 1 | Gather Insights | Level | Regional Hub |
|---|---|---|---|

Evidence and insights will be facilitated or reviewed by Homeless Network Scotland via:

- Connect Event
- Check-in with people receiving Housing First support.
- Quarterly data returns on Housing First from local authorities to Scottish Government.

| Stage 2 | Self-Reflect | Level | Local Authority |
|---|---|---|---|

Local authorities and partners will self-reflect on progress towards meeting Housing First principles:

- Small selected group of people from a range of roles (commissioners, managers, support workers, housing officers) complete a questionnaire providing their reflections on strengths, successes and areas of challenge. You can view the self-reflection tool here.
- Using a Red-Amber-Green matrix, the questionnaire will ask people to reflect on core indicators for each of the 7 Housing First principles. This is condensed into 4 broad aims.
- Homeless Network Scotland will collate the range of returns from each local authority area, combining those perspectives into a 'Messages that Matter' report. This report highlights areas of consensus, areas where there is a difference of opinion, and areas to prioritise.

| Stage 3 | Sounding Board | Level | Local Authority |
|---|---|---|---|

Homeless Network Scotland will invite the local authority lead for Housing First and a small group of their nominated partners to join a 'sounding board' to feedback on the information collated so far and areas of challenge. This panel will also offer an opportunity for local authorities to benefit from the experience and expertise of Housing First experts from across the UK and internationally.

- A panel of at least 3 members will be convened to review the evidence from stage 1 and stage 2.
- The panel will expore the key considerations from the 'Messages that Matter' report. You can view template report here.

| Stage 4 | Shared Solutions | Level | Local Authority |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Homeless Network Scotland will provide final 'shared solutions' report for the local authority, collating and presenting the evidence and information from stages 1-3:<br>• Local authorities can use this report to deliver an annual statement on how to scale up Housing First and move closer to fidelity to Housing First principles. This will be part of the annual Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan return to Scottish Government.<br>• Local partners will be offered packages of support in line with their priority areas, linking training through the Housing First Academy.<br>• Homeless Network Scotland will incorporate learning into Branching Out: the National Framework for Housing First during regular updates.<br>• At 6-months, Homeless Network Scotland will connect with the named person from the local authority to check-in and provide any support in line with the shared solutions report and annual statement. | | |

# Section 7

## **What Will it Take?** Live Status Report

**Context matters. For Housing First to scale up successfully it needs high level commitment, change management and the right investment in housing and support services. It also needs different sectors and partners working across traditional silos and systems to get the best outcomes for people.**

**Each partner brings something unique and important to this — but also has a set of expectations of what they need in place to enable them to deliver.**

**This section sets out what everyone needs, what is in place and what is in development. It will be updated regularly to provide a live status report.**

## a. What it needs

There are 5 building blocks that Housing First needs to operate effectively:

- **High Level Intent and Change Management**

  **Change management and commitment** to scale up needed from national and local government, across all sectors along with strategic buy-in from elected members.

- **Right Investment**

  **Adequate resources and investment** in tandem, including housing supply. This can be achieved by integrated strategy and policy with shared financial commitment and joint outcomes.

- **Strong and Supported Partnerships**

  A highly collaborative, trusted and cross-sector approach to **building relationships** at local level.

- **Shared Goals and Learning**

  The need to keep **questioning, learning and improving** what we do and how we do it, alongside a commitment to review and update the Housing First approach based on changing need.

- **Good Communication**

  Build momentum and support for Housing First with **strong communication and storytelling**,

## b. What it will take

**This section provides a live status-check on the 5 building blocks, summarising:**

### Firm Foundations
Developments and commitments already in place

### Drawing Board
Planning and development needed or in progress

### What You Can Do
Ideas and actions to get involved

**This is set against the contributions and expectations of key partners — what each brings and needs:**

- **Scottish Government** GO>
- **Local Government** GO>
- **Housing Providers** GO>
- **Support Providers** GO>
- **Public Health, Health & Social Care** GO>
- **Community Justice** GO>

# Scottish Government

The Scottish Government has a driving role across a number of key factors, including:

- Continuing national leadership on the ambitious policy objective to scale up Housing First across all parts of Scotland.
- Increasing the supply of social homes for rent, focused on a long-term commitment to build new social housing targeted to areas of highest demand with properties of the size people need.
- Progressing up-to-date plans for Ending Homelessness in Scotland and enabling Rapid Rehousing and Housing First to fit within broader national strategies.
- Communicating to help build a cross-sector, cross-departmental understanding of and commitment to Housing First at national and local level.

The Scottish Government has been instrumental in funding and guiding Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder 2019-21 and into the final year 2021-22 with a transition in funding arrangements at local level. The Scottish Government and COSLA Ending Homelessness Together Plan sets out a key policy commitment to Housing First. The corresponding £50m Ending Homelessness Together Fund (2019-24) has included substantial financial commitment to Housing First specifically, and to local authority's overarching Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans. This was bolstered by the First Minister's commitment to scaling up Housing First across Scotland being included in the Programme for Government statement in September 2020.

The stated intent to end homelessness in Scotland needs the ongoing effort and input from all parts of Scottish Government to provide the foundation for this.

## Do you have a role in Scottish Government?

Designed against the five core building blocks, this section should enable you to learn about and understand Housing First from your perspective – and provide some ideas for how to get involved.

Scottish Government

# High Level Intent and Change Management

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Housing First is a national policy objective, set out in the 2018 report from the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee and the 2018 HARSAG recommendations. These were accepted in principle by the Scottish Government and:
  - Positioned within more recent 2020 HARSAG recommendations made in response to COVID-19;
  - Developed in tandem with people with experience of homelessness via 'Aye We Can'
- Housing to 2040 was published in March 2021 following a national conversation and sets out a 20-year strategy and actions on housing supply, affordability, quality and green recovery. P.35 outlines the long-term commitment to Housing First.
- The Scottish Parliament passed the Domestic Abuse (Protection) Scotland Bill on 17 March 2021 giving victims and survivors more choice and protection. This grants police and courts power to remove abusers from the home, and will give social landlords greater control to transfer tenancies to a victim/survivor.
- Having accepted in principle the 2020 HARSAG recommendations; an updated Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan was published in October 2020.
- Returns from local authorities on the progress made on RRTPs to date and updated activity and spend is reviewed annually by Scottish Government and presented to the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group (HPSG). The 2020-21 report is available here.
- The housing policy circle of Scottish Government's Social Renewal Advisory Board prioritised the role of Rapid Rehousing and Housing First as central to post-Covid recovery.
- Homeless Network Scotland have been commissioned to facilitate an annual 'check-up' process with local authorities and partners on Housing First.
- Scottish Government has implemented a new quarterly data monitoring framework for all local authorities providing Housing First. You can view it here.

DRAWING BOARD

- The Prevention Review Group published recommendations in February 2021 on new duties on all public services to prevent homelessness. The recommendations and drafted legislation have been included in the Programme for Government 2021/22.
- National support for a Housing Support Needs Analysis. This will enable local and national partners to understand the full level of housing, health, support and care needs in their area and the gap (if any) between local assessments of need and the statistician's forecast outlined in Section 4.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Connect, communicate and consult on Housing First and especially Scottish Government colleagues in directorates beyond housing and homelessness; the sustainability and impact of Housing First depends in large part on often-siloed sectors working to the same goals.

Scottish Government

# Right Investment

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The Ending Homelessness Together Fund committed £50m to end homelessness in Scotland, including £32.5 million over 5 years to 2024 for the development and implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Housing First.
- An additional £5m was allocated in 2020/21 from the £100m winter support fund to help accelerate the implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Scottish Government was the primary funder of Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder catalysed by Social Bite with Corra Foundation and Homeless Network Scotland fund and project managers. From 2021-22, Scottish Government funded 50% of the cost in the Pathfinder areas, with the local authority investing the remaining amount for that year and in full going forward.
- Housing to 2040 was published in March 2021 following a national conversation and sets out a 20-year strategy and actions on housing supply, affordability, quality and green recovery. P.35 outlines the long-term commitment to Housing First.
- In 2021, Scottish Government committed to invest an additional £50m in the Ending Homelessness Together Plan. The Scottish Government made a two year funding commitment for RRTPs during 2022/23 and 2023/24 to assist challenges experienced by local authorities, especially in relation to staff retention.

DRAWING BOARD

- Scottish Government's investment in the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) over this Parliament is £3.6bn to deliver 110,000 social and affordable homes by 2032.
- Affordable Housing Need in Scotland post-2021 reports on analysis commissioned by Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, CIH Scotland and Shelter Scotland and calls for the next Scottish Government to commit to delivering 53,000 affordable homes and a capital investment programme of £3.4 billion over the next Scottish Parliament.
- Discussions are ongoing to review proposals that explore social investment in the form of low-cost loans as a means of financing the implementation of specific aspects of RRTPs and Housing First.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Review the learning outcomes and cost guidance set out at section 4 to understand the impact of Housing First and the benefit of working in partnership across sectors and departments.
- Refer to the Hard Edges report to understand who is supported via Housing First and consider any overlap with those your work supports.

Scottish Government

# Strong Partnerships

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The Scottish Government convenes a national Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans sub-group of the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group.
- The Scottish Government facilitates a National RRTP Coordinators and Leads group, coordinating and sharing learning and challenges across local authorities. A group focused on rural considerations has also been established in October 2020.
- The Scottish Government connects with the five Housing Option Hubs led by local authorities across Ayrshire & South; Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders; North & Islands; Tayside, Fife & Central; and West.

DRAWING BOARD

- Further partnership between departments across Scottish Government is required as Housing First scales up as a national response and especially on shared messaging, funding and delivery.
- Scottish Government and stakeholders in Scotland are committed to connecting with international partners via forums such as Housing First Europe, FEANTSA, World Habitat and the Institute of Global Homelessness. This brings us the opportunity to learn and share learning internationally.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Refer to relevant bodies and networks to connect with progress on Housing First – Housing First Scotland provides regular communications, links to networks, and up-to-date reporting and information.
- If you operate in a department whose work you consider relevant to Housing First and those it supports, contact the relevant team at Scottish Government homelessness_external_mail@gov.scot or housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot to set up a discussion on how to get involved.

Scottish Government

## Shared Goals And Learning

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The Scottish Government and COSLA reported against the Ending Homelessness Together Plan one year on, including progress to date on Housing First. A second annual report was laid before the Scottish Parliament on 7 October 2021.
- The Hard Edges report commissioned by Lankelly Chase and the Robertson Trust and undertaken by Heriot-Watt University illustrates the interrelated experiences of adults in Scotland with three 'core' forms of severe and multiple disadvantage (homelessness, offending and substance dependency).
- Housing First Scotland facilitates an annual conference, training, events, a monthly tracker and newsletter, and an ongoing webinar series – sign up and access materials and reports at www.housingfirst.scot.

DRAWING BOARD

- To ensure Housing First is delivered effectively and to its core principles, the new Housing First Check-Up process has been developed and agreed in partnership with key stakeholders and is underway at 2022. As Housing First is increasingly built into local commissioning plans and procurement processes, there is a need to ensure the fidelity of the Housing First principles while considering local needs and service options. Further information can be found in Section 6.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Housing First Scotland can connect you with partners already involved in planning and delivery of Housing First to advise and share learning – please contact housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot to discuss.

## Good Communication

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Up-to-date information, reports and updates from the Scottish Government on housing and homelessness matters are published online and updated here.
- The Housing First Communications Strategy offers guidance for all partners involved in planning and delivery of Housing First, including support on key messaging and building partnerships.
- The COSLA and Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Plan has been updated to include recommendations from the reconvened HARSAG, and published in October 2020.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Sign up to relevant newsletters, including:

  Housing First Scotland
  Housing First Europe
  Scottish Housing News
  Housing Support Enabling Unit

# Local Government

All local authorities have since 2018 been developing, reviewing and refining comprehensive plans to transition the systems that respond to and prevent homelessness in their area.

Scotland's Transition to Rapid Rehousing details the context and purpose of this transition:

> *"Rapid rehousing is about taking a housing led approach for rehousing people that have experienced homelessness, making sure they reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation for too long.*
>
> *"Transition to a rapid rehousing approach means that some local authorities and partners will have to redress the balance of housing and support options that are available, and how quickly they are accessed."*

The new approach for local authorities is to ensure:

- a settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible.
- that time spent in any form of temporary accommodation is reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better.
- when temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a local community.
- that Housing First is the default option for people whose homelessness is made harder by experiences such as trauma and addiction.

It is more expensive for people to be stuck in the cycle of homelessness than to be resettled through a Housing First approach, which has a significant cost benefit for local authorities and partners. Effective implementation requires transformation and integration of local policy and delivery models across partners, and particularly homelessness, housing, health, justice, social care and support provision.

## Do you have a role in Local Government?

Designed against the five core building blocks, this section should enable you to learn about and understand Housing First from your perspective – and provide some ideas for how to get involved.

Local Government

# High Level Intent and Change Management

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Housing First is a national policy objective, set out in the 2018 report from the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee and the 2018 HARSAG recommendations accepted in principle by Scottish Government and:
  - Positioned within more recent 2020 HARSAG recommendations made in response to COVID-19;
  - Developed in tandem with people with experience of homelessness via 'Aye We Can' .
- Local authorities have committed to transition to a Rapid Rehousing approach with Housing First as a key component. These plans have been endorsed via the relevant local planning structures and council committees. Five-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans were prepared in December 2018.
- Returns from local authorities on the progress made on RRTPs to date and updated activity and spend is reviewed annually by Scottish Government and presented to the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group (HPSG). The 2020-21 report is available here.
- As of June 2022, 27 Local Authorities, including the 6 Housing First Pathfinders, had committed to implementing Housing First.

DRAWING BOARD

Local Authorities can embed high-level intent for Housing First within:

- Local Outcome Improvement Plans
- Local Housing Strategies
- Integrated Joint Board's Strategic Plan for Health & Social Care
- The Housing Contribution Statement

Local Authorities should ensure that overall scale of Housing First is aligned with a local assessment of housing support needs and consider how that compares with the local demand forecast in section 4.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Connect and communicate across Local Authority services and departments beyond housing and homelessness. The success of Housing First is dependent on integrated planning, working and communication in order to deliver joined up, barrier free services working to the same goals.

Local Government

# Right Investment

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The Ending Homelessness Together Fund committed £50m to end homelessness in Scotland, including £32.5 million over 5 years to local authorities for the development and implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Housing First.
- An additional £5m was allocated in 2020/21 from the £100m winter support fund to help accelerate the implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic
- The national Housing First Pathfinder tested how Housing First can best be scaled up across local authorities. The six Pathfinder authorities are now mainstreaming funding for Housing First delivery as an on-going commitment.
- 24 local authorities are now delivering Housing First, with 318 new tenancies starting during 2021/22.
- Innovative examples of investment in Housing First are emerging. For example, a 50/50 split between homelessness and health in Highland Council and contributions to cost from across an integrated health & social care budget in City of Glasgow council.
- Perth and Kinross Council, who embarked on a transition to Rapid Rehousing several years before it was adopted policy, can now demonstrate success in homelessness trends and local spend with directed investment that's been made.
- In 2021, Scottish Government committed to invest an additional £50m in the Ending Homelessness Together Plan. The Scottish Government made a two year funding commitment for RRTPs during 2022/23 and 2023/24 to assist challenges experienced by local authorities, especially in relation to staff retention.

DRAWING BOARD

- Sustainable investment in Housing First is still being established and coordinated at local and national government level. In order to deliver change, Housing First costs will need shared across local authority and health and social care budgets going forward.
- The economic analysis being carried out as part of the Pathfinder evaluation is designed to better understand specific cost benefits beyond the homelessness sector. The final evaluation report will be available later 2022.
- Guidance for local authority commissioners will be developed during 2022-23.
- Discussions are ongoing to review proposals that explore social investment in the form of low-cost loans as a means of financing the implementation of specific aspects of RRTPs and Housing First.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Review the learning outcomes and cost guidance set out at section 4 to understand the impact of Housing First and the benefit of working in partnership across sectors and departments.
- Refer to the Hard Edges report, and the Housing First Annual Check Up to understand who is supported via Housing First and consider any overlap with those your work supports. Review the investment and budgetary requirements against relevant commissioned services and consider if and to what extent wraparound Housing First support could meet these needs.

Local Government

# Strong Partnerships

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The co-chair of ALACHO also chairs the national Rapid Rehousing Transition sub-group of the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group.
- Local authorities participate in a national RRTP Coordinators and Leads group, coordinating and sharing learning and challenges. A group focused on rural considerations has also been established in October 2020.
- Local authorities facilitate five Housing Options Hubs across Ayrshire & South West; Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders; North & Islands; Tayside, Fife & Central; and West.

DRAWING BOARD

- Further partnership across sectors and council departments is needed as Housing First scales up locally. Building these relationships takes time and early planning enables a shared understanding of decisions and implications in order to adopt, adapt and to embed and review new ways of service delivery.
- As Housing First continues to scale up, it will be important to provide space for local authorities to share openly with one another; ideas on how to expand use of existing forums and platforms including Housing First Connect events are in development.
- Housing First 'Connect' events and feedback are being built into the Housing First Check-Up Process.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Refer to relevant bodies and networks to connect with progress on Housing First – Housing First Scotland provides regular communications, links to networks, and up-to-date reporting and information.
- If you work in a local government department not directly responsible for homelessness yet consider this framework, and the Housing First discussion, relevant – you should contact the manager within your organisation with responsibility for homelessness. Further information is available from housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot should you want to have a discussion on how to get involved.

Local Government

# Shared Goals and Learning

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- COSLA and the Scottish Government reported against the Ending Homelessness Together Plan one year on, including progress to date on Housing First. A second annual report was laid before the Scottish Parliament on 7 October 2021.
- The Hard Edges report commissioned by Lankelly Chase and the Robertson Trust and undertaken by Heriot-Watt University illustrates the interrelated experiences of adults in Scotland with three 'core' forms of severe and multiple disadvantage (homelessness, offending and substance dependency).
- Housing First Scotland facilitates an annual conference, training, events, a monthly tracker and newsletter and an ongoing webinar series – sign up and access materials and reports at www.housingfirst.scot.

DRAWING BOARD

- To ensure Housing First is delivered effectively and to its core principles, the new Housing First Check-Up process has been developed and agreed in partnership with key stakeholders. As Housing First is increasingly built into local commissioning plans and procurement processes, there is a need to ensure the fidelity of the Housing First principles while considering local needs and service options. Further information can be found in Section 6.
- The quarterly Housing First monitoring report published by the Scottish Government updates on the progress made by local authorities across the country. You can view it here.
- ISPHERE at Heriot Watt University are leading an evaluation of the Housing First Pathfinder including a section exploring how it is developed within a local authority framework, and an economic analysis exploring the model's cost impact across sectors. The final report is due later 2022.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Housing First Scotland can connect you with partners already involved in planning and delivery of Housing First to advise and share learning or to connect with available training – please contact housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot to discuss.
- Contact your local RRTP lead to discuss the goals and timescales for Housing First in your area.
- Access and refer to current relevant evidence and learning behind the Housing First model here.

Local Government

# Good Communication

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Current reports and updates from COSLA on communities, housing and homelessness matters are published online here and from Scottish Government here.
- Up-to-date news and background on Homelessness Prevention, including the Prevention Duty, Intentionality, and Housing Options Hubs is accessible here
- The Housing First Communications Strategy offers guidance for all partners involved in planning and delivery of Housing First, including support on key messaging and building partnerships.
- The COSLA and Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Plan has been updated to include recommendations from the reconvened HARSAG, and published in October 2020.

DRAWING BOARD

- Following a consultation on 'local connection' rules, a Ministerial Statement was published setting out the Scottish Government's: Circumstances for modifying local connection; General criteria for modifying local connection; plans to assess and monitor any impacts. Legislation will be introduced during this parliamentary term. Ministerial Statement: Modifying Local Connection Referrals in Scotland (www.gov.scot)

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Sign up to relevant newsletters, including:
  Housing First Scotland
  Housing First Europe
  Scottish Housing News
  Housing Support Enabling Unit

# Housing Providers

Every person's experiences prior to them becoming homeless are unique. Every person's solution out of homelessness involves housing.

The safety and security of a settled home is the cornerstone of Housing First and the base from which people can build and live their lives. Already the Housing First pilots and pathfinders in Scotland have demonstrated that most people who moved into homes provided by housing associations, local authorities and in the private rented sector are sustaining that home.

The intention of local Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans is to ensure:

- a settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible for people experiencing homelessness.
- that time spent in any form of temporary accommodation is reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better.
- when temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a local community.
- that Housing First is the default option for people whose homelessness is made harder by experiences such as trauma and addiction.

RRTPs were developed in consultation with housing providers and it is housing providers that will be fundamental to the delivery of these plans. This is especially the case for Housing First where there is urgency to reduce the time between a person's referral and move-in date, which gives the greatest chance of success.

The core learning from the development and delivery of Housing First in Scotland to date is that there is clear, significant and lasting benefit when housing providers are involved from the earliest opportunity in discussions, planning and implementation.

## Do you have a role in housing?

Designed against the five core building blocks, this section should enable you to learn about and understand Housing First from your perspective – and provide some ideas for how to get involved.

Housing Providers

## High Level Intent and Change Management

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Housing First needs homes. Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Charted Institute of Housing and Shelter Scotland commissioned a report on Affordable Housing Need post-21 detailing the levels required to ensure adequate housing in the next parliamentary term.
- National housing umbrella and membership bodies SFHA and CIH Scotland have backed the national scaling up of Housing First. Wheatley Group have been a strategic partner as well as providing the most homes to Housing First Scotland.
- Housing First is a national policy objective, set out in the 2018 report from the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee and the 2018 HARSAG recommendations. These were accepted in full by the Scottish Government and:
  - Positioned within more recent 2020 HARSAG recommendations made in response to COVID-19;
  - Developed in tandem with people with experience of homelessness via 'Aye We Can'.
- Housing providers contributed to local Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and feature considerably.
- Returns from local authorities on the progress made on RRTPs to date and updated activity and spend is reviewed annually by Scottish Government and presented to the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group (HPSG). The 2020-21 report is available here.
- Homes for Good is a social letting agency providing supported access to the private rented sector. Homes For Good have also pledged homes to help scale up Housing First.

DRAWING BOARD

- Local authority landlords, housing associations and cooperatives want clarity on allocations policies, assessment processes and local protocols in relation to Housing First. While this will be carried out locally, some common and underpinning guidance will be developed to help increase the pace of Housing First referrals and allocations.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Connect, communicate and consult on Housing First across your organisation and wider local partnerships; the sustainability and impact of Housing First depends in large part on often-siloed sectors working to the same goals.

Housing Providers

## Right Investment

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The Ending Homelessness Together Fund committed £50m to end homelessness in Scotland, including £32.5 million over 5 years to local authorities for the development and implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Housing First.
- An additional £5m was allocated in 2020/21 from the £100m winter support fund to help accelerate the implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Examples of investment (in addition to housing) made by housing providers has included practical mechanisms to address risk of fire-raising, housing adaptations and furnishing homes. Housing associations have also contributed in-kind staffing costs concerned with housing management and contributing to local planning and delivery groups.
- With 'choice and control' a core principle of Housing First, new tenants have been provided a budget to furnish and decorate their home, with examples of housing associations offering ready-to-go furniture packages. Both offer an investment in the individual and the relationships with their housing provider. The Scottish Welfare Fund is also in place to help families and people in Scotland who are on low incomes through Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants. E.g., 'Housing First is a highly personalised approach and recognises the importance of the human-animal bond, and the support a companion animal offers to an individual experiencing long term and/or repeated homelessness. Being pet-friendly should be included in the commissioning process, referrals from pet owners should be welcomed and appropriate pet-friendly housing assigned.
- In 2021, Scottish Government committed to invest an additional £50m in the Ending Homelessness Together Plan. The Scottish Government made a two year funding commitment for RRTPs during 2022/23 and 2023/24.

DRAWING BOARD

- Sustainable investment in Housing First is still being established and coordinated at local and national government level, and it is encouraged that costs are mainstreamed via a range of departments and budgets due to the preventative nature of the spend.
- An alternative scale-up model that places the commissioning levers for Housing First support to housing associations is being scoped before a small test and learn project is mobilised.
- Discussions are ongoing to review proposals that explore social investment in the form of low-cost loans as a means of financing the implementation of specific aspects of RRTPs and Housing First.
- Housing Providers and the Scottish Housing Regulator will continue to review the proportion of lets made to homeless households, including Housing First.
- The economic analysis being carried out as part of the Pathfinder evaluation is designed to better understand specific cost benefits beyond the homelessness sector. A final report will be available in 2022.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Consult with local authority leads for RRTPs on the resource implications of plans to transition from temporary to settled accommodation. Consider how this fits with your policies and plans and what proportion of lets could be made to Housing First.
- Contact relevant housing providers involved in ongoing delivery to discuss process, learning and costs – contact Housing First Scotland who can help to connect you.

Housing Providers

## Strong Partnerships

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Local authority housing providers are represented on the five Housing Options Hubs – Ayrshire & South; Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders; North & Islands; Tayside, Fife & Central and West. As well as some areas having direct responsibility for housing stock and allocation, strong ties with local housing associations and the private rented sector are also made.
- Housing providers and national umbrella and membership bodies are represented on the national Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans sub-group. Housing providers are also members of local delivery groups where Housing First operates.
- Housing providers were key partners in each of the 6 local authority areas participating in Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder.
- A new strategic partnership between SFHA and Homeless Network Scotland has a priority focus on Housing First and supporting housing associations and cooperatives to get involved.

DRAWING BOARD

- Collaboration between housing providers and partners involved in scaling up Housing First take time and the learning to date has shown the benefits of housing providers being an early part of conversations to start-up or scale-up Housing First.
- As Housing First continues to scale up, it will be important to provide space for housing providers to share openly with one another; ideas on how to expand use of existing forums and platforms including Housing First Connect events are in development.
- Housing First 'Connect' events and feedback have been built into the Housing First Check-Up Process.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Refer to relevant bodies and networks to connect with progress on Housing First – Housing First Scotland provides regular communications, links to networks, and up-to-date reporting and information.
- If you are a housing professional and consider this framework, and the Housing First discussion, relevant – please contact the relevant team in your area or contact the Housing First team at housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot to set up a discussion on how to get involved.

Housing Providers

# Shared Goals And Learning

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- A new strategic partnership between SFHA and Homeless Network Scotland has a priority focus on Housing First and supporting housing associations and cooperatives to get involved.
- CIH Scotland and Homeless Network Scotland published a useful guidance tool in 2019 to assist housing professionals delivering or supporting Housing First on the ground. This is available to download here.
- COSLA and the Scottish Government reported against the Ending Homelessness Together Plan one year on including progress to date on Housing First.
- The Hard Edges report commissioned by Lankelly Chase and the Robertson Trust and undertaken by Heriot-Watt University illustrates the interrelated experiences of adults in Scotland with three 'core' forms of severe and multiple disadvantage (homelessness, offending and substance dependency).
- Housing First Scotland facilitates an annual conference, training, events, a monthly tracker and newsletter and an ongoing webinar series – sign up and access materials and reports at www.housingfirst.scot.
- To ensure Housing First is delivered effectively, an annual 'check up' method using self reflection and professional peer-review is underway in 2022. Further information can be found at section 6.

DRAWING BOARD

- CIH Scotland and Homeless Network Scotland are scoping options to incorporate Housing First training within the CIH accredited training programme for housing professionals.
- The quarterly Housing First monitoring report published by the Scottish Government provides updates on progress across Scotland. You can find it here.
- ISPHERE at Heriot Watt University are leading an evaluation of the Housing First Pathfinder including the role of housing providers and an economic analysis exploring the model's cost impact across sectors. The final report is due in 2022.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Housing First Scotland can connect you with partners already involved in planning and delivery of Housing First to advise and share learning – please contact housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot to discuss.
- Have a look at the 'Housing First for Housing Professionals' guide for what Housing First means for housing professionals, along with working examples and frequently asked questions.
- Access and refer to current evidence and learning on Housing First model here and consider joining a Community of Practice – a forum for frontline staff to share experiences and learning

Housing Providers

## Good Communications

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Up-to-date details, reports and updates from the Scottish Government are published online here and here.
- The Housing First Communications Strategy offers guidance for all partners involved in planning and delivery of Housing First, including support on key messaging and building partnerships.
- The COSLA and Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Plan has been updated to include recommendations from the reconvened HARSAG, and published in October 2020.
- A new strategic partnership between SFHA and Homeless Network Scotland has a priority focus on Housing First and communication across SFHA members.

DRAWING BOARD

- Increased focus on Housing First in local and national forums and meetings for housing providers.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Sign up to relevant newsletters, including:

  CIH Scotland
  Housing First Scotland
  Housing First Europe
  Scottish Housing News
  Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
  Housing Support Enabling Unit

# Support Providers

Scaling up Housing First is a national policy and its success to date has been built largely on the significant efforts of people working day and night to provide the right support to people. Housing First support in Scotland has mostly been provided by the third sector, while some local authorities have, or intend to, create Housing First support teams as part of their homelessness response.

Housing First support workers get alongside people as they move into their own home and build and live their lives as part of a community. Support providers directly uphold the principles of Housing First and hold significant influence in the fidelity of delivery and, accordingly, the effectiveness for the people it supports.

Housing First is intended to be a cost-effective response for those it supports, however cost cannot be prioritised above quality in decision making and commissioning. Support provision accounts for the highest proportion of direct costs associated with Housing First and it is therefore essential that support providers are involved in local delivery beyond the 1:1 support role.

Day-to-day support work is a role that requires a significant level of expertise, energy, confidence, patience and discretion. It is therefore important that providers bid for, and commissioners procure against, a model that clearly values and supports frontline staff. This includes not only salary frameworks but also developing structures and processes that ensure staff wellbeing is built into services and is adequately resourced and regularly reviewed.

There are a wide range of support providers already involved in the delivery of Housing First across Scotland – operating at different scales and in different contexts. With partnership at the heart of Housing First delivery, providers are encouraged to engage in a community of practice, to share learning and inspiration and avoid burn-out.

## Do you have a role in a support providing organisation?

Designed against the five core building blocks, this section should enable you to learn about and understand Housing First from your perspective – and provide some ideas for how to get involved.

Support Providers

## High Level Intent and Change Management

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Housing First support is largely (but not solely) provided by the third sector in Scotland who have provided leadership and commitment. The third sector was also responsible for the first Housing First pilot in Scotland in 2010 (Turning Point Scotland), catalysing the Housing First Pathfinder in 2018 (Social Bite), delivering the UK's first Housing First for young people service (Rock Trust) and providing a support infrastructure for partners (Homeless Network Scotland).
- The 15 services commissioned across the 6 Pathfinder areas were also all third sector providers. Operating across 5 consortia, each have pledged their organisational commitment to continue to help scale up Housing First across Scotland.
- Housing First is a key component of Scotland's Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan; a national policy objective following the 2018 HARSAG recommendations and positioned again in the 2020 HARSAG recommendations made in response to COVID-19. There was an equal balance of third and public sector membership of HARSAG.
- The national policy objective was shaped by people with experience of homelessness via 'Aye We Can' – the largest conversation with people affected by homelessness in recent years. This programme was led by the third sector, with fieldwork focus groups and 1:1 conversations hosted by third and public sector homelessness services.
- Some local authorities have opted to create in-house Housing First teams as part of their response to homelessness, and others have indicated they intend to. This demonstrates real intent to scale and maintain Housing First locally.

DRAWING BOARD

- Scaling Housing First locally is dependent on the capacity of housing stock and allocations and the capacity of housing support scaling up in tandem. The proportion of available lets to homeless households will influence this.

  Housing First Scotland

  Housing Support Enabling Unit

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Connect, communicate and consult on Housing First across your organisation and wider local partnerships; the sustainability and impact of Housing First depends in large part on often-siloed sectors working to the same goals.

Support Providers

## Right Investment

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The Ending Homelessness Together Fund committed £50m to end homelessness in Scotland, including £32.5 million over 5 years for the implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Housing First.
- An additional £5m was allocated in 2020/21 from the £100m winter support fund to help accelerate the implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- In 2021, Scottish Government committed to invest an additional £50m in the Ending Homelessness Together Plan. The Scottish Government made a two year funding commitment for RRTPs during 2022/23 and 2023/24 to assist challenges experienced by local authorities.
- An independent salary benchmarking exercise was undertaken to assess optimal cost levels for Housing First to support future budgeting and commissioning (see section 4).

DRAWING BOARD

- Consultation during 2022-23 will help develop a commissioning and cost model for Housing First in Scotland that protects low caseloads and the capacity of support workers.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Review the cost guidance at section 4 against internal frameworks and budgets and where appropriate consider the organisational implications of delivering a Housing First approach.
- Set aside budget for training and upskilling specific to Housing First.

Support Providers

## Strong Partnerships

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Housing First support providers are represented on the national Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans sub-group. Support providers are also members of local delivery groups where Housing First operates.
- Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder hosted five support consortiums made up of providers with extensive involvement in the setup and delivery of the Housing First Scotland Pathfinder Programme. Further information and contact details can be found at www.housingfirst.scot.

DRAWING BOARD

- Local partnership models need refined to ensure staff are adequately supported and that trauma informed approaches are built into commissioning and delivery.
- As Housing First continues to scale up, it will be important to provide space for support providers to share openly with one another; ideas on how to expand use of existing forums and platforms including Housing First Connect events are in development.
- More opportunities need developed to ensure that Housing First support organisations are key partners in identifying local system and process improvements.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Identify and connect with support providers in your area to discuss current approaches to providing support and what plans can be made to start-up or scale-up Housing First locally. Contact Housing First Scotland for support to develop, facilitate or to connect with partners.
- Connect with relevant local bodies – e.g. Health and Social Care Partnership, Integrated Joint Board, Housing Options Hub – to discuss context, strategy, and how to get involved.

Support Providers

## Shared Goals And Learning

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The Hard Edges report commissioned by Lankelly Chase and the Robertson Trust and undertaken by Heriot-Watt University illustrates the interrelated experiences of adults in Scotland with three 'core' forms of severe and multiple disadvantage (homelessness, offending and substance dependency).
- CIH Scotland and Homeless Network Scotland published a useful guidance tool in 2019 to assist housing professionals delivering or supporting Housing First on the ground. This is available to download here.
- Housing First Scotland facilitates an annual conference, training, events, a monthly tracker and newsletter and an ongoing webinar series – sign up and access materials and reports at www.housingfirst.scot.
- To ensure Housing First is delivered effectively and to its core principles, the new Housing First Check-Up process has been developed and agreed in partnership with key stakeholders. As Housing First is increasingly built into local commissioning plans and procurement processes, there is a need to ensure the fidelity of the Housing First principles while considering local needs and service options. Further information can be found in Section 6.

DRAWING BOARD

- CIH Scotland and Homeless Network Scotland are scoping options to incorporate Housing First training within the CIH accredited training programme for housing professionals.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Housing First Scotland can connect you with partners already involved in the delivery of Housing First to swap notes, share learning and access training – please contact housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot to be connected.

Support Providers

## Good Communication

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Up-to-date details, reports and updates from the Scottish Government on housing and homelessness are published online here and here
- The Housing First Communications Strategy offers guidance for all partners involved in planning and delivery of Housing First, including support on key messaging and building partnerships.
- The COSLA and Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Plan has been updated to include recommendations from the reconvened HARSAG, and published in October 2020.

DRAWING BOARD

- More opportunities for providers of Housing First and the tenants they support to be at the front of telling the story about Housing First in Scotland.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Sign up to relevant newsletters, including:

  CIH Scotland
  Housing First Scotland
  Housing First Europe
  Scottish Housing News
  Housing Support Enabling Unit

# Public Health, Health & Social Care

Housing First, fundamentally, is a health intervention and a strategic priority for public health, for integrated health and social care — and for the emerging national care service too.

The evidence is clear that homelessness usually arrives late in a person's life and following a series of experiences, traumas and setbacks often going back to childhood. Poverty is the primary driver of homelessness in Scotland and child poverty the key predictor of homelessness in later life.

Scaling up Housing First in Scotland can significantly redress health disadvantages and unfairness; many people at the sharpest end of homelessness cycle in and out of the 'system' of homelessness services and support. It is likely that many come into contact with and be influenced by a number of other systems too – including, in particular, those tied to Public Health, and Health and Social Care. This includes addictions services, mental health services and emergency health services.

While this is increasingly and widely understood, and developed in-depth in the Hard Edges Scotland report, homelessness services are often left 'carrying the can' for many missed opportunities to engage and intervene and, as a result, tasked with supporting people in a range of ways beyond their need for housing.

The ambitions set out in the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan will require a concerted effort to join up the various systems and sectors; to invest and plan together to move away from an approach that delivers a disconnected, duplicated and drawn-out experience for people to one that responds quickly and collectively – no matter which 'system' a person comes in contact with first

## Do you have a role in Public Health, Health and Social Care?

Designed against the five core building blocks, this section should enable you to learn about and understand Housing First from your perspective – and provide some ideas for how to get involved.

Public Health, Health & Social Care

# High Level Intent and Change Management

- The integration of Health and Social Care is an ambitious and vital national policy legislated in 2016 that aims to bring health and social care into a single, integrated system. With a stated emphasis on joining up services and focusing on anticipatory and preventative care, there is a clear and direct link with the Housing First policy
- Housing First is a national policy objective, set out in the 2018 report from the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee and the 2018 HARSAG recommendations, accepted in principle by the Scottish Government and:
  - Positioned within more recent 2020 HARSAG recommendations made in response to COVID-19.
  - Developed in tandem with people with experience of homelessness via 'Aye We Can'
- The National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework sets out Scotland's objective for **"health and social care services to focus on the needs of the individual to promote their health and wellbeing, and in particular, to enable people to live healthier lives in their community,"** an objective reflected within the Housing First approach.
- In March 2019, a joint letter was sent from the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport encouraging greater collaboration between housing and health at a local level in the pursuit of Rapid Rehousing objectives.

- The Scotland Prevention Review Group published recommendations in February 2021 on new duties on all public services – including health and social care partnerships – to prevent homelessness. The recommendations and drafted legislation have been included in the Programme for Government 2021/22.
- HARSAG recommended that homelessness be considered a public health priority to improve the health of the population, in line with the Public Health Priorities. Housing First is a response to poor health created by inequality and the preventative nature of the approach would be helped by this stronger public health focus.
- The integration of Housing First with all aspects of Health will be key. This will include working toward setting a HEAT target, which are focused on Health Improvement, Efficiency, Access and Treatment.
- The Scottish Government's 2021-22 Programme for Government committed to bringing forward legislation to establish a National Care Service. The proposals followed the Independent Review of Adult Social Care, which recommended the establishment of a National Care Service to bring together all adult social care support delivered in Scotland.

  A consultation on proposals was opened on 9 August 2021; the analysis of stakeholders' responses is available here.

  In June 2022, Scottish Government published the National Care Service Bill which will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny over the next phase.

## Public Health, Health & Social Care

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Connect, communicate and consult on Housing First across your organisation; the sustainability and impact of Housing First depends in large part on often-siloed sectors working to the same goals.
- Review the policy overlaps outlined in section 3 and help make connections so that Housing First can become the default response for people with severe and multiple disadvantages.
- Make contact with partners who are in the planning or delivery stages of Housing First in your area. Contact Housing First Scotland on housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot for an initial discussion on what connections could be useful.
- View the joint housing and homelessness sector response to the Scottish Government's proposals for a National Care Service.

Public Health, Health & Social Care

# Right Investment

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The Ending Homelessness Together Fund committed £50m to end homelessness in Scotland, including £32.5 million over 5 years for the development and implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Housing First; a portion of this was contributed from Scottish Government Addictions funding.
- An additional £5m was allocated in 2020/21 from the £100m winter support fund to help accelerate the implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- In 2021, Scottish Government committed to invest an additional £50m in the Ending Homelessness Together Plan. The Scottish Government made a two year funding commitment for RRTPs during 2022/23 and 2023/24 to assist challenges experienced by local authorities, especially in relation to staff retention.

DRAWING BOARD

- The long-term approach to funding Housing First in Scotland is to be established with a desire to build funding into a range of funding frameworks, to join up approaches and avoid long-term duplication of services and interventions.
- In order to deliver change, Housing First costs will need shared across local authority and health and social care budgets going forward. Joint approaches to commissioning Housing First will ensure adequate funding is available in the longer term to deliver high quality, flexible, open ended support.
- The evaluation of the Pathfinder that is underway seeks to understand the economic benefit of a Housing First approach and where the cost-benefits are found across Public Health, Health and Social Care.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Refer to the Hard Edges report to understand who is supported by Housing First and consider any overlap with those your work supports.
- If you consider this framework, and the Housing First discussion, relevant – please contact the Housing First team at housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot for more information or a discussion on how to get involved.

Public Health, Health & Social Care

# Strong Partnerships

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- 31 integration authorities are in place to work with communities and providers of care to ensure care is responsive to people's needs.
- The national Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group, the Rapid Rehousing Transition sub-group and the Housing First Advisory Group all benefit from insights and expertise beyond housing and homelessness sector.
- Cross-authority planning and partnership on housing and homelessness is through 5 Housing Options Hubs – Ayrshire & South; Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders; North & Islands; Tayside, Fife & Central and West.

DRAWING BOARD

- Creating strong connections with public health and across health and social care as part of the Housing Options Hubs is a development priority in some areas and a very useful mechanism for scaling up Housing First.
- Stakeholders in Scotland are committed to connecting with international partners via forums such as Housing First Europe, FEANTSA, World Habitat and the Institute of Global Homelessness. This brings us the opportunity to learn and share learning internationally

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Health & Social Care staff contributing to the flexible, open-ended Housing First support that is central to ending people's homelessness and improvements in their health and wellbeing. Become a partner. Make connections with colleagues, trade media and join events locally and nationally.
- Refer to relevant bodies and networks to connect with progress on Housing First – Housing First Scotland provides regular communications, links to networks, and up-to-date reporting and information.

Public Health, Health & Social Care

# Shared Goals and Learning

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The Hard Edges report commissioned by Lankelly Chase and the Robertson Trust and undertaken by Heriot-Watt University illustrates the interrelated experiences of adults in Scotland with three 'core' forms of severe and multiple disadvantage (homelessness, offending and substance dependency).
- Significant research was published in 2018 exploring the relationship between homelessness and health in Scotland after linking homelessness and health datasets for the first time at a national level. It showed that at least 8% of the Scottish population had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.
- Housing First Scotland facilitates an annual conference, training, events, a monthly tracker and newsletter and an ongoing webinar series – sign up and access materials and reports at www.housingfirst.scot. Everyone is welcome.

DRAWING BOARD

- To ensure Housing First is delivered effectively and to its core principles, the new Housing First Check-Up process has been developed and agreed in partnership with key stakeholders is now underway. As Housing First is increasingly built into local commissioning plans and procurement processes, there is a need to ensure the fidelity of the Housing First principles while considering local needs and service options. Further information can be found in Section 6.
- It is important to canvas and implement the experiences and feedback of staff working on the frontline to understand the realities of working in a 'siloed' – often isolated – way. Understanding the challenges this poses staff and the barriers it creates is a development priority

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Housing First Scotland can connect you with partners already involved in planning and delivery of Housing First to advise and share learning – please contact housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot to discuss.

Public Health, Health & Social Care

# Good Communications

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Up-to-date details, reports and updates from the Scottish Government on housing and homelessness are published online here and here
- The Housing First Communications Strategy offers guidance for all partners involved in planning and delivery of Housing First, including support on key messaging and building partnerships.
- The COSLA and Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Plan has been updated to include recommendations from the reconvened HARSAG, and published in October 2020.

DRAWING BOARD

- Collaborate to develop broader joint statements and positions on Housing First with leaders and champions from sectors and organisations beyond the homelessness sector.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Sign up to relevant newsletters, including:
  Housing First Scotland
  Housing First Europe
  Scottish Housing News
  Housing Support Enabling Unit

# Community Justice

A key sector referenced within the Hard Edges report is Community Justice which sees substantial overlap with housing and homelessness in the people it works with and supports.

In the first two years of the Housing First Pathfinder, the second most common reason for a tenancy not being sustained was prison sentences for historic offences. As well as this, many leaving prison are often leaving to be faced immediately with uncertain and unsuitable accommodation arrangements.

Engagement with Community Justice at any point in a person's life is an opportunity to understand and support that person. SHORE Standards, as well as the national ambition for a 'no wrong door' approach, makes it important for Community Justice to work alongside Housing First developments to achieve long term, shared ambitions to support people to build and live happy lives.

Any developments and plans around Housing First should also be linked with Local Outcome Improvement Plans and Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plans, two further key focal points for local areas to monitor and report on local need and provision.

## Do you have a role in Community Justice?

Designed against the five core building blocks, this section should enable you to learn about and understand Housing First from your perspective – and provide some ideas for how to get involved.

Community Justice

# High Level Intent and Change Management

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Housing First is a national policy objective, set out in the 2018 report from the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee and the 2018 HARSAG recommendations, accepted in principle by the Scottish Government and:
- Positioned within more recent 2020 HARSAG recommendations made in response to COVID-19.
- Developed in tandem with people with experience of homelessness via 'Aye We Can'
- With Housing First now a key component of Scotland's Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan, all 32 local authority areas have a 5-year plan outlining how local partners will transition local systems toward a 'rapid rehousing' approach.
- The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 requires local Community Justice Partnerships (consisting of agencies and services with a role in community justice) to produce Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plans (CJOIPs) so that community organisations are able to meaningfully participate in the planning of services related to justice in their community.
- The SHORE Standards (Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone) offer a clear consensus and direction to "support individual's reintegration by improving how their housing needs are met. This will improve the individual's chances of reintegrating back into their community successfully, not just through meeting their housing needs, but also by improving their access to other public services and supporting their desistance from future offending."

DRAWING BOARD

- The Scotland Prevention Review Group published recommendations in February 2021 on new duties on all public services – including community justice services – to prevent homelessness. The recommendations and drafted legislation have been included in the Programme for Government 2021/22.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Connect, communicate and consult on Housing First across your organisation; the sustainability and impact of Housing First depends in large part on often-siloed sectors working to the same goals.
- Review the policy overlaps outlined in section 3 and help make connections so that Housing First can become the default response for people with severe and multiple disadvantages.
- Make contact with partners who are in the planning or delivery stages of Housing First in your area. Contact Housing First Scotland on housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot for an initial discussion on what connections could be useful.

Community Justice

# Right Investment

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The Ending Homelessness Together Fund committed £50m to end homelessness in Scotland, including £32.5 million over 5 years for the development and implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Housing First; a portion of this was contributed from Scottish Government Addictions funding.
- An additional £5m was allocated in 2020/21 from the £100m winter support fund to help accelerate the implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- In 2021, Scottish Government committed to invest an additional £50m in the Ending Homelessness Together Plan. The Scottish Government made a two year funding commitment for RRTPs during 2022/23 and 2023/24 to assist challenges experienced by local authorities.

DRAWING BOARD

- The long-term approach to funding Housing First in Scotland is to be established with a desire to build funding into a range of funding frameworks, to join up approaches and avoid long-term duplication of services and interventions.
- Joint approaches to commissioning Housing First to ensure adequate funding is available in the longer term to deliver high quality, flexible, open ended support.
- The evaluation of the Pathfinder that is underway seeks to understand the economic benefit of a Housing First approach and where the cost-benefits are found across health, addictions and justice.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Refer to the Hard Edges report to understand who is supported by Housing First and consider any overlap with those your work supports.
- If you consider this framework, and the Housing First discussion, relevant – please contact the Housing First team at housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot for more information or a discussion on how to get involved.

Community Justice

# Strong Partnerships

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The national Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group, the Rapid Rehousing Transition sub-group and the Housing First Advisory Group all benefit from insights and expertise beyond housing and homelessness sector.
- Cross-authority planning and partnership on housing and homelessness is through 5 Housing Options Hubs – Ayrshire & South; Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders; North & Islands; Tayside, Fife & Central and West. The SHORE Standards are a standing agenda item for all Housing Options Hubs

DRAWING BOARD

- Further partnership across departments of national and local government are needed as Housing First scales up as a national response, with an integrated approach to planning and commissioning the way forward.
- Stakeholders in Scotland are committed to connecting with international partners via forums such as Housing First Europe, FEANTSA, World Habitat and the Institute of Global Homelessness. This brings us the opportunity to learn and share learning internationally.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Community justice staff contributing to the flexible, open-ended Housing First support that is central to ending people's homelessness and improvements in their health and wellbeing. Become a partner. Make connections with colleagues, trade media and join events locally and nationally.
- Refer to relevant bodies and networks to connect with progress on Housing First – Housing First Scotland provides regular communications, links to networks, and up-to-date reporting and information.

Community Justice

## Strong Partnerships

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- The Hard Edges report commissioned by Lankelly Chase and the Robertson Trust and undertaken by Heriot-Watt University illustrates the interrelated experiences of adults in Scotland with three 'core' forms of severe and multiple disadvantage (homelessness, offending and substance dependency).
- Housing First Scotland facilitates an annual conference, training, events, a monthly tracker and newsletter and an ongoing webinar series – sign up and access materials and reports at www.housingfirst.scot. Everyone is welcome.

DRAWING BOARD

- To ensure Housing First is delivered effectively and to its core principles, the new Housing First Check-Up process has been developed and agreed in partnership with key stakeholders. As Housing First is increasingly built into local commissioning plans and procurement processes, there is a need to ensure the fidelity of the Housing First principles while considering local needs and service options. Further information can be found in Section 6.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

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Community Justice

# Good Communications

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

- Up-to-date details, reports and updates from the Scottish Government on housing and homelessness are published online here and here.
- The Housing First Communications Strategy offers guidance for all partners involved in planning and delivery of Housing First, including support on key messaging and building partnerships.
- The COSLA and Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Plan has been updated to include recommendations from the reconvened HARSAG, and published in October 2020.

DRAWING BOARD

- Collaborate to develop broader joint statements and positions on Housing First with leaders and champions from sectors and organisations beyond the homelessness sector.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Sign up to relevant newsletters, including:

  Housing First Scotland
  Housing First Europe
  Scottish Housing News
  Housing Support Enabling Unit

# Appendices

# Appendix 1

## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **ADP** | Alcohol and Drug Partnership |
| **AHSP** | Affordable Housing Supply Programme |
| **ALACHO** | Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers |
| **CIH** | Chartered Institute for Housing |
| **COSLA** | Convention of Scottish Local Authorities |
| **DHP** | Discretionary Housing Payment |
| **DWP** | Department for Work and Pensions |
| **EHT** | Ending Homelessness Together |
| **FEANTSA** | European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless |
| **HARSAG** | Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group |
| **HL1** | Statutory Homelessness Monitoring |
| **HNDA** | Housing Needs Demand Assessment |
| **HSCP** | Health and Social Care Partnership |
| **IJB** | Integrated Joint Board |
| **LGBTQ** | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning |
| **LHS** | Local Housing Strategy |
| **NCS** | National Care Service |
| **RRTP** | Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan |
| **RSL** | Registered Social Landlord |
| **SFHA** | Scottish Federation of Housing Associations |
| **SHIP** | Strategic Housing Investment Plan |
| **VAWG** | Violence Against Women and Girls |

# Appendix 2

## Acknowledgements

**National Framework Development:**

Homeless Network Scotland *Maggie Brünjes, Claire Frew, Martin Gavin, Doug Gibson, Michelle Major.* Design by *Lisa Sen*. Scottish Government *Marion Gibbs, Kevin Wilkie.*

**Governance and Guidance:**

Janeine Barrett *North Ayrshire Council*; Tom Baughan *Corra Foundation*; Glen Bramley *Heriot-Watt University*; Jane Bruce *(previously Social Bite)*; Mike Burns *Aberdeen Cyrenians*; Maggie Brünjes *Homeless Network Scotland*; Lorna Cameron H*orizon Housing*; Grant Campbell *Crisis Scotland*; Callum Chomczuk *CIH Scotland*; Olga Clayton *Wheatley Group*; Sir Andrew Cubie; Stacey Dingwall *SFHA*; Marion Gibbs *Scottish Government*; Jeremy Hewer (previously *SFHA*); Jackie Irvine *City of Edinburgh Council*; Prof Sarah Johnsen, Janice Blenkinsopp and Matthew Rayment, *Heriot-Watt University*; Allan Jones *Aberdeenshire Council*; Janine Kellett *Scottish Government*; Peter Kerr *Social Bite*; Eleanor Lee *Glasgow City Health & Social Care Partnership*; Josh Littlejohn *Social Bite*; Catriona MacKean *Scottish Government*; Gordon MacRae *Shelter Scotland*; Paul Martin *Merchants House Glasgow*; Patrick McKay *Turning Point Scotland*; John Mills *Fife Council* and Co-Chair *ALACHO*; Carolyn Sawers *Corra Foundation*; Nick Smith *Scottish Government*; Jill Thomson *City of Edinburgh Council*; Kevin Wilkie *Scottish Government*; Lorna Wilson *(previously SFHA)*; Sandy Young *Almond Housing Association*.

**Pathfinder Local Leadership:**

Ewan Aitken *Cyrenians*; Mike Burns Aberdeen *Cyrenians*; Nicky Brown *Edinburgh City Council*; Kay Diack *Aberdeen Council*; Allan Jones *Aberdeenshire Council*; Lynn Leitch *Stirling Council*; Jim McBride *Glasgow City Health & Social Care Partnership*; Nicky Miller *Turning Point Scotland*; Helen Murdoch *Salvation Army*; David Simpson *Dundee City Council*; Bryan Smith *Transform Community Development*; Emma Thomson *Wheatley Care*; Pat Togher *Glasgow City Health & Social Care Partnership*; Catherine *Wilkie Wheatley Group*.

**Framework Consultation Facilitators:**

Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland; Community Justice Scotland; Homeless Network Scotland; Public Health Scotland; Scottish Federation of Housing Associations.

**Framework Consultation Respondents:**

Aberdeen Foyer; A Way Home Scotland; Bethany Christian Trust; Blue Triangle Housing Association; Churches Action for the Homeless; Community Justice Scotland; Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA); Dogs Trust; Dundee City Council; Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership; Glasgow City Mission; Glen Oaks Housing Association; Healthcare Improvement Scotland; Housing Support Enabling Unit; Langstane Housing Association; Link Housing Association; NHS Grampian; North Lanarkshire Council; Queens Cross Housing Association; Rock Trust; Salvation Army; SAMH; Scottish Prison Service; Shelter Scotland; Stirling Council; Turning Point Scotland; West Dunbartonshire Council; Wheatley Group; World Habitat.

# Appendix 3

## Housing First Outcome Indicators

In order to measure the impact of Housing First and to ensure it can be regularly reviewed and refined, it is important to build evaluation from the beginning.

Below is a summary of the outcome areas that were assessed as part of the evaluation undertaken by the Housing First Pathfinder. Most of the questions asked offer a detailed list or scale so that each person completing the form can answer in a way that best represents them at that time. Many of these are validated questions that are widely used in research and evaluation.

For copies of the data collection tools and guidance used in the Pathfinder evaluation please contact housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot who will be happy to pass these on with permission of the research team and evaluation funders.

### Demographic Details

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Sexual identity

### Housing and Neighbourhood Satisfaction

- Current/recent housing status
- Duration of homelessness during lifetime

### Health and Wellbeing

- Physical health status
- Physical health problems or disabilities
- Mental health/wellbeing status
- Mental health problems
- Alcohol use and dependence
- Illegal drug or misused prescription medication use and dependence
- Use of prescription medication

### Social Support and Community Integration

- Satisfaction with friendships and relationships
- Community integration / social inclusion / social connectedness

## Economic status, financial wellbeing and activity

- Income sources
- Welfare benefits received
- How well coping financially
- Participation in education, training, paid or voluntary work
- Satisfaction with how time is spent

## Experience of crime/antisocial behaviour

- Experiences of crime as victim and/or perpetrator
- Experiences of anti-social behaviour as victim and/or perpetrator
- Interactions with criminal justice system

## Service use

- Use of health and other support services

## Goals and Achievements

- Main goals and achievements

# Appendix 4

## Housing First FAQs

**Housing First is a highly personalised approach that ends people's homelessness with housing rapidly. It also assigns a highly trained support worker to get alongside the new tenant to make settling into their new home easier.**

### Q. Who is Housing First for?

**A.** Housing First is the first response for people whose homelessness is experienced alongside other severe and multiple disadvantage. While everyone's experiences will be different the common threads include trauma, abuse, addictions, mental health problems and experience of local authority care and prison.

### Q. How are tenancies allocated for Housing First?

**A.** Tenancies used for Housing First are general needs mainstream tenancies and are allocated in line with landlord's existing allocations policies. Housing First is currently operating successfully in a range of allocations settings including Points Based Allocations systems, Choice Based Lettings and Common Housing Registers. Some landlords may decide to create a specific process or protocol within their own allocations policy for Housing First, but this will be based on local context. It is hoped that landlords will work closely with local partners to identify any changes to allocations policy that might be identified.

### Q. What kind of tenancy do Housing First tenants have?

**A.** A Housing First tenancy in the social rented sector is a Scottish Secure Tenancy with all the same protections, conditions and security as any mainstream tenancy. People will be accommodated with a Private Residential Tenancy in the private rented sector. In the normal way, tenancies will be available for as long as someone wants to live there.

### Q. How are people matched with tenancies?

**A.** Local authorities, alongside support providers, are encouraged to develop 'by-name' lists of people in their area that have needs beyond housing and whose experience of homelessness may be long-term and/or repeating. This is in line with Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group (2018) recommendations and the Scottish Government/COSLA High Level Action Plan.

As well as area 'by-name' lists, straightforward referral processes are developed to enable people to refer and self-refer into Housing First. Choice is a key principle for Housing First. Local partners work closely with individuals to realistically identify the location and characteristics of a property that they could make a home.

### Q. What about tenancy-readiness?

**A.** Housing First works in a new environment which understands that most of us, with the right support, can manage our own home. The means removing ideas of 'tenancy-readiness' and giving people a chance in their own place.

## Q. Do tenants have to accept Housing First support?

**A.** No, the tenancy is not conditional on someone engaging with Housing First support. Support providers work to the principles of active engagement and respectful persistence and cases remain open even when engagement is low. Local partners actively seek to identify what support looks like to an individual and what/ how they are willing to accept.

In reality, most tenants engage with support in a personalised way and the removal of conditionality and focus on choice and control enables people to find what is of most value to them as they settle into their new home. There is no pre-existing support plan for people to follow or set number of hours of support to fulfill. Best-practice maximum caseload of seven tenants per support worker at any one time; this is a key factor in the success of Housing First.

## Q. Does Housing First work?

**A.** There is an overwhelming body of international evidence (including now in Scotland) showing that, with close fidelity to the Housing First principles, the approach delivers:

- 80% – 90% housing retention rates after two years
- improving health outcomes
- decreasing involvement in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour
- improved cost-effectiveness of service delivery and cost savings

## Q. What if the Housing First tenancy isn't working?

**A.** Like any tenancy, there are a number of factors that contribute to its success. If the landlord and the support provider have concerns about the sustainability of the tenancy, landlords can make use of existing policies and procedures such as Management Transfers and local nomination agreements to secure a tenancy in an alternative location. The landlord retains the right to end the tenancy in line with their existing policies and procedures and legal obligations. These instances are very rare, and the principles of Housing First ensure that the person will continue to be supported and rehoused.

## Q. What effect does Housing First have on housing waiting lists?

**A.** The people housed through Housing First are not 'new' people being added to existing housing demand. They have always been there with a right to a home, but often without equal opportunity. Housing First provides a mechanism for ensuring everyone can quickly access a home and the support they need.

Many people have struggled to maintain accommodation and have repeatedly accessed different accommodation routes and services. Housing First has been proven to help people maintain tenancies and access appropriate services. This should have a positive impact and free up capacity and time for services.

## Q. What about supported housing and hostels?

**A.** Where Housing First is not the best solution, or mainstream housing isn't wanted, then the size and quality of shared, supported accommodation is key. Overarching Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans will progress toward smaller, specialist units within a psychologically informed environment. Local Health and Social Care Partnerships will also consider whether those units continue to be part of their local homelessness response, or whether the specialist nature aligns them with broader health and social care strategy and commissioning frameworks. Read more in the 2022 research and policy direction 'Shared Spaces'.

## Q. What is Housing First Scotland?

**A.** Housing First Scotland belongs to everyone who is helping Housing First become the first response for people whose homelessness is made harder by experiences with trauma, addictions and mental health. It is hosted by Homeless Network Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government.

## Q. Will Housing First end homelessness in Scotland?

**A.** Not on its own, as most people who become homeless have no or low support needs beyond their need for housing. However, any attempt to end homelessness that does not include Housing First will not work for the population in Scotland who are affected by personal, social and economic disadvantage.

Homeless
Network
Scotland
we are all in

Homeless Network Scotland is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee.
Charity registered in Scotland SCO03453. Company registered in Scotland SC112361

Registered office: Unit 16a, Adelphi Centre, 12 Commercial Road, Glasgow G5 0PQ
0141 420 7272 | www.homelessnetwork.scot| hello@homelessnetwork.scot | @homelessnetscot