



Together
we will end
homelessness



RAPID REHOUSING

TRANSITION PLANS:

A SCOTTISH OVERVIEW

With practice examples
and ideas to share

Lucie Dunn

About Crisis

Crisis is the national charity for homeless people. We help people directly out of homelessness, and campaign for the social changes needed to solve it altogether. We know that together we can end homelessness.

In Scotland, we work with the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament, local authorities and organisations across the nation to make sure that ending homelessness is high on the agenda and offer strategic and practical solutions to tackle it.

In Edinburgh, we provide education, training, coaching and housing access support for people who are homeless, empowering them to move on from homelessness through our Skylight services.

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Foreword

Scotland is one of the only nations in the world with a Government Action Plan to End Homelessness.



The Scottish Government has taken a bold position on ending homelessness. In November 2018, it published its action plan, 'Ending Homelessness Together'. As Chair of the Scottish Government's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) from October 2017 to May 2018, I was delighted to see that the action plan translated all of our recommendations into concrete steps for change. I was filled with a real sense of optimism about what can be achieved in Scotland.

The Scottish Government's action plan committed to a significant shift towards **rapid rehousing by default**. This means that when people find themselves homeless, they will be rapidly re-housed and not put through the damaging experiences of staying in unsuitable temporary accommodation, such as B&Bs.

As part of this shift, each local authority in Scotland was asked to submit a draft **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP)** to the Scottish Government in spring 2019. These plans lay out how each local authority intends to move away from the current homelessness system to one with rapid rehousing at its centre.

This inaugural set of RRTPs is a growing source of interest within Scotland and further afield. Rapid rehousing as a concept is attracting increasing attention, both nationally and internationally, and there is a keenness to understand what it looks like in practice. This is why Crisis has put together a pan-Scotland RRTP overview, laying out key patterns, trends and differences in how local authorities have understood, and intend to implement, their rapid rehousing vision.

In this report, we've picked out examples, both current and planned, to help air, share and promote the rich content of RRTPs. We've also highlighted some of the main tensions and questions we'll need to grapple with in order to ensure rapid rehousing is successfully and sustainably implemented in each local area.

We hope a detailed overview of RRTPs, taken at this particular point in time in Scotland, will be of use, interest and inspiration to the homelessness sector and beyond.

It's important to note that this report represents a **desktop review** which was completed by reading publicly available RRTPs and associated documentation. This wasn't cross-referenced with current services or good practice not mentioned in RRTPs, though we know that much exists.

Though the overview reflects the moment when a version of each RRTP was consulted, it must be highlighted that RRTPs are **dynamic**, regularly undergoing review and new iterations. We know some of the drafts of plans we reviewed have already moved on, and that they will continue to do so.

Lastly, this report is primarily **focused on the plans**. Delivery is a distinct and much larger subject. But we look forward to seeing, and where we can, supporting, the work needed to convert plans into reality.

Looking ahead, it is our intention to work with local authorities to promote the excellent work which RRTPs represent in Scotland and beyond, and to share learnings with a much wider audience.

Homelessness can be ended – and we'll have the most impact if we work together and all play our part to help make this vision a reality.

Jon Sparkes
Chief Executive, Crisis

Introduction

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs) in a nutshell

Scotland's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG), which Crisis chaired from autumn 2017 to summer 2018, put the concept of 'rapid rehousing by default' at the centre of its recommendations on ending homelessness and transforming temporary accommodation and support.

A substantial body of evidence, from academic research¹ and stakeholder engagement, including people with lived experience of homelessness,² led HARSAG to support rapid rehousing, which is a housing-led approach for people experiencing homelessness.

The HARSAG definition of rapid rehousing is

- a settled, mainstream housing outcome, as quickly as possible, with time spent in any form of temporary accommodation reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better
- when temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a community
- for people with multiple needs beyond housing

- Housing First is the first response
- highly specialist provision within small, shared, supported and trauma informed environments is available, if mainstream housing, including Housing First, is not possible or preferable

For local authorities and their partners, this means stepping up activities to prevent homelessness, maximising supply of and access to a wide range of settled housing options, reducing the time people spend as homeless, especially in temporary accommodation, and ensuring tailored support is available as and when people need it.

HARSAG recognised the work needed to bring about a transition to rapid rehousing in each area of Scotland would be significant, and much more challenging in some local authorities than in others. As such, a five-year transition period was set, and each of Scotland's 32 local authorities was asked to submit a first RRTP draft to Government by end of December 2018.

The RRTP's core purpose is to provide a five-year route map, laying out how the authority intends to move away from reliance on temporary accommodation, by improving prevention and expanding settled housing and support options for homeless households.

On behalf of HARSAG, Social Bite

commissioned Indigo House to provide a housing market analysis for each area³ and an RRTP toolkit, with practical guidance for authorities.⁴

Within RRTPs, the toolkit suggested that authorities set out

- the local housing market and homelessness context
- the baseline position of temporary accommodation supply
- an assessment of the support needs of homeless households
- the authority and partners' five-year vision for settled housing options, temporary accommodation and prevention
- the resources required to deliver the plan including any funding requests made of the Scottish Government's Ending Homelessness Together fund

RRTPs tend to follow the above order.

About this document

This document gives an overview of all 32 Scottish Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs), which we've reviewed in detail.

We look at what was expected of local authorities within the RRTP guidance/toolkit, and more generally through HARSAG recommendations made on that area.

We also consider details and information not expected of authorities through the guidance/toolkit, but which some have set out in their RRTPs.

We give a factual overview of RRTPs, highlighting trends and approaches, as well as some of the key questions

and tensions which may arise when implementing rapid rehousing across Scotland. Tensions are identified with the symbol (⚠).

We've also presented examples of current or planned services, projects or approaches which we think are worth sharing.

Main themes reviewed

The six areas reviewed in this document are:

1. Partnership approach to RRTP development

2. Settled housing: supply and access

- a. approach
- b. social housing
- c. Mid-Market Rent (MMR)
- d. Private Rented Sector (PRS)
- e. owner occupation
- f. shared housing options
- g. Housing First

3. Transforming temporary accommodation

- a. approach
- b. Bed and Breakfast (B&B)
- c. Private Sector Leasing (PSL)
- d. self-contained temporary properties
- e. supported accommodation
- f. alternative forms of temporary accommodation
- g. temporary accommodation charges

4. Preventing homelessness

5. Service and culture change

- a. local authority homelessness services
- b. pathways for particular groups

6. Resources

1 Chapter 7 of our 2018 Plan to End Homelessness pulls together the evidence on housing-led approaches, https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/239951/everybody_in_how_to_end_homelessness_in_great_britain_2018.pdf See also <https://endhomelessness.org/rapid-re-housing-works-evidence-says/>
2 <https://homelessnessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Aye-Report-August-2018.pdf>

3 <https://social-bite.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/RRTP-Analysis-and-Review-JUNE-2018-pubv1.pdf>

4 https://social-bite.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Rapid_Rehousing_Guidance1.1.pdf

Finding RRTP documentation

The process by which RRTPs were produced and approved by authorities was a matter for local decision. As such, RRTPs were made publicly available through different routes, at different times, in different drafts and with differing levels of supporting information attached (funding bids, action plans, toolkit submissions and Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)).

31 authorities submitted a first RRTP draft to Scottish Government by 31 December 2018, with the last (Orkney) submitting in mid-January 2019. These initial drafts are readily available: a minority have been published on local authority websites; the remainder can be located by searching Committee or Cabinet minutes. Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO)'s website brings together a small number of RRTPs.⁵

Following Scottish Government feedback (by end of March 2019), all authorities were invited to submit a second RRTP draft, or to respond to areas for development identified in the feedback. We have been able to find a second RRTP draft for more than a third of authorities. Where that draft was published before autumn 2019, the updated draft is the one reviewed here.

It should be noted that, regardless of whether they have published further drafts, all authorities will have modified and improved their initial plans.

Most RRTPs include the majority of statistics requested in the separate toolkit submission within the main body of the RRTP. Most convey their vision and future approach in a narrative form, as well as providing an action plan.

A smaller number of RRTPs only convey statistics and vision within the appendices, meaning this detail cannot be found where appendices have not been made publicly available. It has not been possible to locate each piece of supplementary information for every authority. Toolkit submissions and funding bids have been most challenging to find.

The context above makes this review a necessarily imperfect exercise.

For clarity and transparency, a list of links to the RRTP document reviewed for each local authority is attached at Appendix I.

Chapter 1 Partnership approach to RRTP development

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

Authorities were asked to develop RRTPs in collaboration with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), Health and Social Care Partnerships (H&SCPs) and the wider public and third sectors, seen as strategic partners, as well as potential service providers. It was also expected that in developing a collaborative plan, other organisations would pledge their contributions to implementing and resourcing it. The RRTP guidance asked local authorities to describe within their RRTP how partners had worked together to develop it.

In March 2019, the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) Convenor for Community Wellbeing wrote to chief executive officers in local authority Health Boards, Integrated Joint Boards (IJBs) and housing convenors/ chief officers to heavily encourage

a proactive role within RRTP development, such that local systems for vulnerable people were effectively "re-wired", with a particular focus on the interaction between homelessness and Health and Social Care (H&SC). The letter included examples of good practice in collaborative working from a number of RRTPs.⁶

Not mentioned in RRTP toolkit guidance, but our view ...

Whilst HARSAG placed a strong emphasis on people with lived experience of homelessness having a role in informing and indeed co-producing plans and services within the transition to rapid rehousing, there was no specific expectation in the RRTP toolkit for people with current or previous experience of homelessness or temporary accommodation services to be involved in RRTP development.

⁵ <http://alacho.org/current-priorities/homelessness/rrtp/>

⁶ The letter is helpfully appended to East Renfrewshire's RRTP at: <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=24301&p=0>

RRTPs which do so, or plan to do so for future iterations, offer, **in our view**, examples of good practice.

Overview

91% of RRTPs explicitly report some level of collaboration with partners in the development of their plans, but there are substantial differences in the extent of engagement undertaken across Scotland. Whilst collaboration was limited to discussion with RSLs and/or H&SCPs in some areas, others consulted and engaged much more broadly with internal services, frontline teams, third sector agencies, service users, tenants and elected members.

A number of authorities identified that “rapid rehousing”, as a relatively new concept, was not widely understood within their areas. Falkirk held a stakeholder event to “introduce the theory and ethos of the RRTP” whilst East Dunbartonshire issued a survey to partners to gauge level of understanding and gather ideas. West Lothian and Renfrewshire provided a broad range of briefing and feedback sessions to internal and external partners, using key themes emerging to inform the next stage of consultation.

Around two thirds of authorities held rapid rehousing events, workshops or briefings. In Dundee, East Lothian and the three Ayrshires, this took the form of a one-off stakeholder consultation event, whilst Stirling, West Dunbartonshire and Angus ran a series of engagement sessions over a period of time. Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway ran workshops for frontline staff, whilst Aberdeenshire and West Dunbartonshire involved elected members in feedback and engagement sessions. South Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire consulted with Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) and various authorities, such as Orkney, included articles on rapid rehousing in tenant newsletters.

Around a third of authorities engaged with former and/or current homelessness and/or temporary accommodation service users in the development of their RRTP. Most RRTPs do not say the format this took. Dundee and Glasgow held consultation events for service users. From what is reported in plans, North Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire appear strongest in this respect. The former consulted with current and former service users through their Homelessness Service User Forum, the latter undertook questionnaires and focus groups with residents of supported accommodation and formerly homeless Council tenants. Both RRTPs show how areas of strength and areas for improvement identified by service users have shaped their plans. Other RRTPs, such as Aberdeen, Dumfries and Galloway and North Ayrshire, make good use of recent findings from consultation with service users undertaken for reviews of temporary accommodation or homelessness services. Though not undertaken for the RRTP, they show how service user views were used to inform their rapid rehousing vision.

Some authorities which have not engaged with service users during the RRTP process make clear plans to do so as the plan is implemented. South Ayrshire intends to establish a rapid rehousing service users working group to inform the delivery of new approaches, whilst Highland plans for its Tenant and Customer Engagement Team to run a full programme of engagement with homeless service users.

The strongest RRTPs on partnership working demonstrate how the authority has ensured all parties have a shared vision of rapid rehousing, a common understanding of objectives and clarity on their respective contribution to delivering change. Inverclyde, West Lothian, West Dunbartonshire and North Ayrshire clearly show how their approach

to engagement has facilitated this. A small number of RRTPs could be said to have been co-produced as opposed to simply consulted on. North and South Lanarkshire, whose RRTPs both contain Partner Contribution Statements (PCS) as well as accounts of extensive and diverse forms of engagement and joint planning, stand out in this respect.

Aberdeen, Perth and Kinross and Fife’s plans are strongly collaborative in tone and approach, but do not spell out specific engagement or consultation

work authorities undertook when developing their RRTP. Edinburgh only recorded discussion with RSLs, stating “officers are required to engage with partners to fully develop a further version of the RRTP for late 2019”. Argyll and Bute only explicitly references engagement with the H&SCP when developing its RRTP, though this appears to have engendered a particularly strong joint commitment for delivery of holistic support services which transcend current service boundaries.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

West Lothian Council started its consultation and engagement with partners on RRTP development promptly after HARSAG made its final recommendations. Noting that rapid rehousing was a relatively new concept and to ensure meaningful consultation, the Council arranged a series of briefing and feedback sessions on its principles for stakeholders, including services users, tenants and internal staff from a wide range of departments, including education and finance.

They established interim working groups to collate and analyse RRTP data and set up sessions to feed this back to agencies for further refinement and discussion, culminating in a wider event which in turn informed the plan. The Council set up individual sessions with larger RSLs to work towards agreed local lettings targets and formed an RRTP Board, which includes RSLs, to monitor implementation.

South Lanarkshire Council reports a strongly collaborative approach to RRTP development, describing its plan as “co-produced through intense engagement with key partners”. This engagement took the form of awareness-raising briefings, workshop sessions with elected members, RTOs and senior managers from the H&SCP, and a large stakeholder planning event comprising over 20 organisations. This generated five high level RRTP objectives which were shaped together.

The Council also sought PCS, in which partners set out their specific contributions to prevention, support, supply and rehousing. These statements not only formalise commitments but also point to key concerns/barriers in implementing rapid rehousing from the perspective of other parts of the sector. This shines a light on what each respective organisation needs to implement the shared vision in practice, and starts to get behind generic statements of support.

Renfrewshire Council refers to a long record of partnership working on homelessness in its area. The Council started RRTP briefings with a wide range of partners from July 2018, including non-housing services, such as the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) and Community Justice Steering Group, frontline staff, RTOs and all Council tenants. Internal analysis of homelessness statistics and performance lead to key themes emerging, which were explored further in early discussions with partners. The Council sent an RRTP consultation paper to over 40 partners in October 2018 seeking feedback on the “emerging priorities list”. Responses informed and are reflected in the final draft.

The Council also wanted to hear representative views from current or former service users and used a range of methods to capture different opinions, including a questionnaire for residents in staffed accommodation and focus groups for users of supported accommodation and current tenants who had been homeless within the last year, some of whom had used housing support services. This allowed the Council to detect common themes and priorities, which clearly informed the development of their RRTP actions.

North Ayrshire Council set up a multi-agency Homelessness Taskforce in 2018 comprising senior representatives from the H&SCP, Mental Health Services, Police Scotland and third sector to develop an integrated approach to preventing and alleviating homelessness. This is especially key in North Ayrshire, which has higher levels of severe and multiple disadvantage and higher proportion of homeless people with complex support needs than Scotland as a whole.

The Homelessness Taskforce led RRTP development, which included consulting RSLs, a range of third sector organisations and homeless service users. The Council and H&SCP hosted a multi-agency, pan-Ayrshire consultation and planning event in December 2018, focused on the transition to rapid rehousing. This approach ensured a shared set of objectives and joint commitment to service redesign and resource planning. The RRTP is presented as a “whole system” approach for public services in North Ayrshire.

Dumfries and Galloway Council was clear that implementing rapid rehousing requires culture change, and a deep sense of buy-in from all partners, especially in a stock transfer authority. The Council set up a Homelessness Forum with key partners to ensure ongoing commitment, visited service providers, met with service users, ran staff engagement sessions and held larger engagement events with Scottish Housing Network (SHN). The Council also provided rapid rehousing seminars with the IJB, local Poverty Group and elected members.

North Lanarkshire Council’s RRTP is a good example of a co-produced plan. The Council set up a multi-agency RRTP working group to develop its plan, with representation from H&SCP, local RSLs, third sector and Fire and Rescue Service, as well as Council homelessness services. The group met four times during RRTP development, focusing on scoping, vision and objectives and culminating in a Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis. Alongside, the Council undertook broader engagement with stakeholders and homeless service users.

The RRTP working group has strong links to the authority’s existing Health and Homelessness Steering Group, a positive foundation on which to build a strong H&SC input to rapid rehousing. The contribution from the H&SCP outlined in the plan contains a range of specific actions to which H&SC have committed. For example, appointment of dedicated Health and Homelessness leads in each locality, to develop a care management model to support Housing First tenants, an increase in health improvement capacity to lead on delivery of preventative health and homelessness actions, and enhancement to Community Prescribing Services.

Argyll and Bute Council developed proposals on the delivery of holistic support to households in partnership with the H&SCP. These proposals aim to transform the working relationship between support commissioners and contractors across the Council and H&SCP. The proposals focus on closer integration of support for housing, mental health and addictions, in which one agency takes the lead responsibility, seeking to co-ordinate and minimise the number of professionals working with each individual. The lead agency for complex cases will be the H&SCP.

Chapter 2 Settled housing: supply and access

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

The toolkit suggested local authorities analyse annual homelessness (HL1) and Social Housing Charter data⁷ to determine total housing supply requirements in the next five years for homeless households. This means the total number of settled tenancies required to meet annual demand.

Annual demand is worked out in the toolkit by the authority taking an average of the total annual duty to rehouse cases over the past three years, subtracting households who lose contact or refuse offers, and adding the “backlog” of open cases to whom a statutory homeless duty applies. RRTPs aim to address this “backlog” over five years, so the number is divided by five to give an annual figure.

Annual supply, worked out by subtracting the average number of annual social and private rented tenancies secured for homeless

households from the annual demand figure above, gives the authority a sense of its annual “gap”.

Authorities were then asked to provide a locally agreed annual rehousing target for their areas, made up of additional settled housing supply from social, private and other sectors. This includes plans to introduce or expand Housing First provision.

The guidance suggested the housing options available for homeless households should be equal to those available to any other households seeking housing in the area, implying social housing should not necessarily be the default pathway for all, a point also clearly made by the HARSAG.

Authorities were also encouraged to consider service redesign aspects, such as tailored assistance for people navigating the homelessness system.

⁷ As RRTPs were prepared for December 2018, annual HL1 statistics authorities used were for 2017-2018. This document also refers to statistics from that year only. Social Housing Charter data is referred to as Annual Return on the Charter (ARC).

Not mentioned in RRTP toolkit guidance, but our view ...

Whilst the toolkit asked authorities to state average length of case for cases closed during the financial year and average length of stay in temporary accommodation in their RRTP, they were not asked to provide average case length for cases closed *with a settled rehousing outcome*. This can skew the picture of how long it actually takes applicants to get housed, as cases closed for other reasons (such as loss of contact), or in and out of temporary accommodation, are part of these statistical averages.

Whilst authorities could subtract cases closed due to lost contact or refusal of offers from their annual demand figure in the toolkit, they were not asked to set actions for reducing the proportion of lost contacts or refusals in future. HL1 statistics record loss of contact as ranging from 0% to 27%⁸ of cases with a statutory duty nationally, a level of divergence worthy of further analysis.

RRTP guidance did not ask authorities to quantify, reflect on or plan for households who are homeless but not owed a full rehousing duty, such as intentionally homeless or ineligible households, entitled households that lose contact with the homelessness service before rehousing, or those for whom duties are discharged (due to refusing offers), and who may remain homeless.

Despite not being asked to comment on the above areas in the toolkit, some RRTPs do so. **In our view** such RRTPs bring us closer to a complete, inclusive future vision for rapid rehousing.

⁸ <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables/homelessness1819tablescharts>

⁹ We were able to find this statistic in 90% of RRTPs

Overview

“Flow” through the system

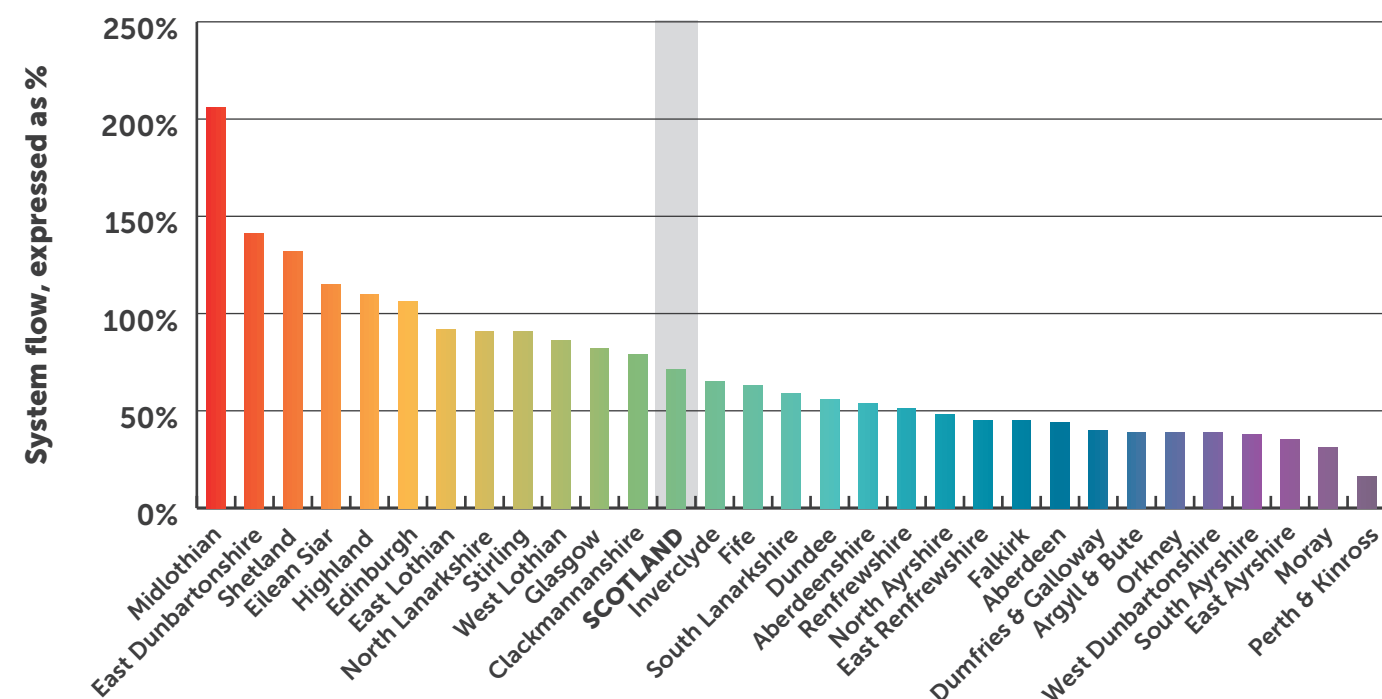
Though not asked to provide an average rehousing timescale for statutory homeless households, 81% of authorities do provide a figure. This is especially useful for gaining a true picture of “flow” through the statutory homelessness system at local authority level. Average rehousing timescales range from 105 weeks in Midlothian to 11 weeks in Perth and Kinross.

Only a third of RRTPs provide a rehousing target timescale for the end of the five-year plan, with (in descending order), Aberdeen, Stirling, Glasgow, Angus, Argyll and Bute and Midlothian ambitiously aiming to cut average timescales by between 72% and 50%. A 72% reduction in Aberdeen would see the average rehousing timescale as the shortest nationally (from areas providing a figure), at seven weeks.

“Flow” can also be considered by comparing the total number of households assessed with a full duty to current open caseload with a full duty, which all RRTPs were asked to provide.⁹ A figure of 20% for example would indicate that only a fifth of presentations received over a year were “live” cases at any one time, suggesting rapid flow through the system. A figure of 200% on the other hand would indicate a serious backlog, showing new cases coming in twice as fast as the authority can rehouse them.

Such analysis shows Midlothian’s “flow”, at 206%, is the slowest in Scotland by far, and almost double that of neighbouring Edinburgh, with the sixth slowest flow (106%). East Dunbartonshire and Shetland have the second and third slowest flows, with figures of 141% and 132% respectively.

Chart 1. Flow through homelessness system, by local authority



Other authorities with a flow over 100% are Eilean Siar (115%) and Highland (110%).

Perth and Kinross has the quickest "flow" by far (16%). Moray (31%), South Ayrshire (38%), Orkney and West Dunbartonshire (both 39%) are also notably more rapid than average. The large variations here often reflect particular geographies and markets, discussed below, and give a crude indication of the extent of the challenge in some areas.

Gap figure

Just over three quarters of authorities provide their annual "gap" figure within the RRTP.¹⁰ East Lothian triangulated the RRTP toolkit approach with other data to ensure accuracy, concluding the toolkit did produce an accurate figure. Only one authority, Perth and Kinross, produced a gap in negative figures. This reflects an equalising in demand and supply. One additional authority, Dumfries and Galloway,

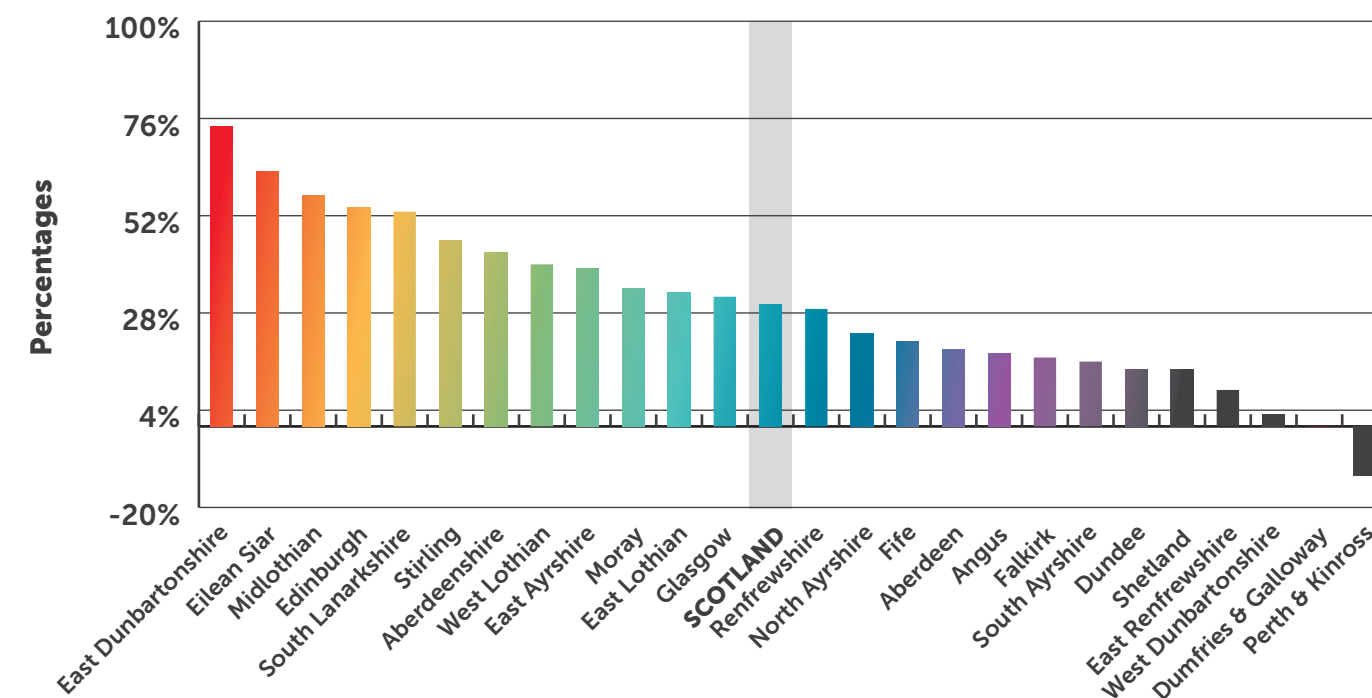
records a zero gap, suggesting lets are at the correct level (though not necessarily of the right size, type or location) to match demand. Indigo House analysis confirms a very small gap in Perth and Kinross, but suggests a greater one in Dumfries and Galloway, however years used for statistical reporting are not the same.¹¹

As expected, the largest annual gaps by number are Edinburgh (1625 lets short annually) and Glasgow (1329 lets short). Taken as a proportion of annual duty to house cases however, East Dunbartonshire is the authority with the most gaping gap in supply (the gap figure represents 74% of new demand), followed by Eilean Siar (63%), Midlothian (57%) and Edinburgh (54%). At the other end of the spectrum, West Dunbartonshire (3%), East Renfrewshire (9%) and Dundee (14%) are much closer to being able to close the gap.

¹⁰ All authorities will have supplied this in their toolkit return, but for reasons explained above, these documents were not always accessible

¹¹ <https://social-bite.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/RRTP-Analysis-and-Review-JUNE-2018-pubv1.pdf>

Chart 2. Supply "gap" figure, as proportion of annual demand, by local authority



Additional supply target

Only a third of RRTPs provide a clear target figure for additional annual supply of lets. The remainder make more general statements around increasing local authority allocations, agreeing increases with RSLs, and, less frequently, increasing offers in the private sector, without providing set figures. The four Lothian authorities are strong in aiming to pin down figures, showing which sectors additional supply will come from, and in what number. East Lothian is especially detailed in this regard.

Three of the Lothian authorities used modelling to test various scenarios, offering useful additional analysis on what would impact most on rapid rehousing. Edinburgh and partner RSLs modelled 11 different supply and demand scenarios, concluding that the most significant impact on the authority's ability to deliver rapid rehousing is an assertive prevention strategy, without which additional new supply and new build stock still won't allow rapid rehousing to be achieved in ten years.

South Lanarkshire and East Ayrshire set specific supply targets by Housing Market Area (HMA) rather than pan-authority, having high and low housing pressure points locally. Three of the authorities using modelling by consultants (Glasgow, Stirling and South Ayrshire) also produce clear targets for additional supply, those in the cities focusing strongly on social housing. This modelling, also used in North Lanarkshire, North Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire's RRTPs, calculated what it would take (in terms of lets) to halve average rehousing timescales in each area.

"Maximal" housing options

Some authorities setting an additional supply target only include social housing in their figures. In some cases, that reflects a lack of attention on alternative housing options to achieve rapid rehousing. Many RRTPs which do consider other options still don't add private, mid-market or shared tenancies to their additional supply target, possibly implying a lack in confidence in the potential for accessing additional supply from other

tenures. RRTPs which do include lets in other tenures within their supply target are East Lothian and South Ayrshire. These authorities also clearly break down additional lets by tenure.

An approach towards “maximal” housing options is evident within the RRTPs of around 60% of authorities. Others, such as Glasgow, Inverclyde, Moray, Clackmannanshire and West Lothian, make little reference to settled housing coming from anywhere other than social rented stock, with the latter heavily reliant on achieving rapid rehousing through an enhanced proportion of social lets and new builds from the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP).


82% of authorities set out plans to convert a proportion of temporary self-contained accommodation to permanent Scottish Secure Tenancies (SSTs), where this suits the needs of the household.


Around half of RRTPs place dedicated, as opposed to fleeting, focus on reviewing and improving access to the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in their areas. 40% refer to shared housing options. Only four RRTPs consider pathways into Mid-Market Rent (MMR), and three into owner occupation, as potential settled housing destinations for homeless households. All RRTPs, as suggested within the toolkit guidance, have plans to implement or expand Housing First in their areas.

Highland is the only Council whose RRTP considers tailored assistance for households navigating homelessness and housing systems, through means of introducing Rapid Rehousing Officers and a Housing Coach role, both of whom will offer person-centred advice and support to explore and pursue a range of suitable move-on options.

Perverse incentives and the limits of choice

Regardless of a strong focus on a range of housing options in many RRTPs, social housing is and will continue to be the destination for the great majority of statutory homeless households in Scotland. As such, and as proposed within the Indigo House market analysis, most but by no means all stock-holding authorities aim to increase their lets to this group. Even more aim to agree (or have already agreed) increased lettings quotas with their RSL partners.

 In areas where the proportion of social lets allocated to statutory homeless households is already high, proposals to increase this further generates inevitable tensions. A number of RRTPs, for example South Ayrshire and West Lothian, raise concerns that this approach may generate a “perverse incentive” to present as homeless. Others, such as Moray, highlight in their Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) that this could disadvantage other valid housing need groups. Some authorities therefore plan to maintain or indeed decrease statutory homeless lets.

 A broad reading of RRTPs also reveals tensions between housing households quickly and housing households where they most wish to live. This tension is understandably most pronounced in authorities with a mix of lower demand and “hotspot” areas within their boundaries and/or which cover large and/or diverse geographical areas, such as Highland. RRTPs address this question in different ways; some set plans to increase expectations on homeless households of where they will accept housing, whilst others aim to keep things as they are so as not to undermine sustainability.

Comparisons should be made with care however, as the extent of change to the level of choice homeless households receive within allocations

is likely to reflect how flexible the current policy is, and this will differ by area.

Homeless people without a housing outcome

A handful of RRTPs shine a light on a sizeable group the toolkit doesn't enquire about, which is people who do not have (or have lost) a full rehousing duty from the local authority. Their housing options are almost always more limited than those with a full duty and they would remain homeless regardless of rapid rehousing plans. This undermines Scotland's ambition to end homelessness. Aberdeen, Orkney and Falkirk's RRTPs are strong in this respect.

The consultancy model mentioned above, and used by various authorities in developing the RRTP, also

importantly considers how to reduce the proportion of cases closed due to loss of contact, or discharged due to refusing an offer, both situations which leave people homeless. Glasgow, North and South Ayrshire, Stirling and North Lanarkshire consider this. Argyll and Bute also places a positive focus on increasing the proportion of offers of social housing accepted by homeless applicants.

Though the RRTP toolkit did not ask authorities to consider housing outcomes for groups of homeless people who aren't housed through the statutory system, **it is our view** that those which do so are suggestive of positive practice.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

Orkney Islands Council has particular pressures given its size, with reduced ability to continue a new build programme, its geographical spread, which reduces potential to ask applicants to live outwith particular communities, and its island setting, where housing approaches taken in one sector/tenure can impact detrimentally on other tenures in a way which would not be true on the mainland.

Despite these challenges, Orkney's RRTP cites a wide range of actions to improve the range of housing options available to homeless households from the perspective of both access and supply. The Council intends to expand choice for single households to opt for two bedroom homes, given the lack of one bedroom stock, and pilot choice-based lettings (CBL) in order to improve efficiency, whilst ensuring homeless households are not disadvantaged by this approach.

The Council aims to progress its empty homes work, which has brought 23 properties back into use in 18 months. It plans to explore additional supply in the PRS through enhancing its positive relationship with a partner letting agency, as well as exploring with its one RSL whether the subsidiary could take on a letting agency role for the PRS. The Council already provides an online advertising system for private landlords, and a landlord forum, work it intends to expand, and is looking into a house-share scheme for sharers.

Aberdeen City Council has set out a wide range of actions to increase housing supply and access, considering not only number of lets but improving processes, systems and the future speed and composition of new build, and how that reflects the demand demonstrated by urgent housing needs (which in many cases shows a pressure on one-bed properties). The Council wants to improve its voids and allocations processes, convert temporary self-contained properties to SSTs and agree protocols for a minimum proportion of lets through its Common Housing Register (CHR).

The Council also has an Empty Homes Officer, a buy-back scheme and plans to engage PRS landlords in a range of ways to form better relationships, thereby widening access to the sector. This includes setting up an online self-serve portal with all housing options from all providers and private landlords operating across the city and beyond. Aberdeen's RRTP also has a strong focus on meeting the housing needs of disadvantaged or at risk groups, such as people leaving institutions including care, people experiencing domestic abuse and migrants.

East Lothian Council's RRTP lays out a broad range of routes and approaches for increasing, as well as diversifying, housing supply. There is specific focus on increasing access to, and creating pathways for, statutory homeless people to access different tenures and models of housing, including social, PRS, MMR, shared housing and Housing First. The RRTP considers service and systemic changes which could free up additional supply, such as reviewing allocations and void processes, as well as diverse and innovative methods to finance and acquire additional units, such as open market purchase, empty homes initiative and a PRS investment model. Thought has also been given to accommodation models for particular groups, including care leavers, veterans and women with complex needs leaving abusive relationships.

Highland Council plans to employ three new Rapid Rehousing Officers whose role would be to provide person-centred, but housing-focused, advice and support to assist applicants to move onto permanent housing as quickly as possible. These officers are tasked with achieving a reduction in the average stay in temporary accommodation in Highland of 10%. The Council also aims to employ a Housing Coach, whose role would be to assist applicants interested in other housing tenures to access PRS, MMR, shared housing options and owner occupation schemes.

A small number of RRTPs include households with homelessness status other than full duties as part of their rapid rehousing vision.

Aberdeen City, Orkney Islands and Falkirk Council highlight intentionally homeless households, who are also part of their "live" caseload, and often in temporary accommodation. 13% of Aberdeen's households in temporary accommodation have this decision. In Orkney's case, such households are accommodated with no set time limit, allowing them time to source alternative options.

Falkirk's RRTP aims to ensure intentionally homeless households have a personal housing plan and support needs assessment. It sets a target for halving the proportion of those for whom a housing outcome is unknown. Falkirk also has plans to amend its appeals process for those who receive a negative decision, to ensure a housing outcome is still being considered for all homeless people, regardless of status.

Falkirk, Aberdeen City, Renfrewshire and Dumfries and Galloway Councils also importantly highlight migrant homeless households without entitlement. This is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Social housing

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

RRTP guidance asked authorities to refer to the Indigo House analysis when forming plans for social housing, in particular, authority-level data on current levels of social housing allocations to homeless households by local authorities and RSLs, and the extent of increase required if social housing were to meet all demand locally.

They were asked to calculate the housing supply required such that any "backlog" of households plus newly arising annual presentations could be rapidly rehoused by the end of year five of the RRTP, with the hope that lets could then be decreased again.

Authorities were asked to include plans to increase the proportion of social housing allocations to homeless

households in their own stock and/or by working in partnership with RSLs to increase nominations or Section Five referrals, where necessary. They were also asked to consider ways of optimising/simplifying the rehousing process, in relation to both application and allocation, including conversion of temporary accommodation to SSTs.

Where additional supply still does not meet demand, authorities were expected to refer to their Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) to increase their supply target.

Overview

Local authority lets to statutory homeless households

Over half of stock-holding authorities already allocate at least 50% of current available lets to statutory homeless people (excluding transfers),¹² the

¹² Figures used are from ARC data 2016-17, as reported in the Indigo House market analysis and Heriot Watt's interim report on temporary accommodation, both 2018 and referenced above.

highest being Edinburgh (81%), Perth and Kinross, and West Lothian (both 75%). At the other end of the spectrum are East Ayrshire (17%), Shetland (27%) and Renfrewshire (29%).

In implementing rapid rehousing, almost all authorities plan to increase Council lets to homeless households. Some can comfortably do so, as indicated above, because they currently allocate fairly low proportions. Others, such as Dundee (52%), plan to increase then decrease lets to homeless households once backlogs are cleared, allowing other housing needs groups to feature more prominently.

Some authorities in pressured areas seek to increase lets further, or maintain them at already very high levels (such as Edinburgh, West and East Lothians, East Dunbartonshire). Edinburgh has set a minimum target of 50% and maximum of 70% (which the Council currently exceeds) for itself and RSLs. West Lothian aims to go further still, aiming for a target of 75% lets to homeless groups for the authority and its RSL partners, in order to achieve rapid rehousing in five years.

Midlothian, with the highest homelessness pressure and longest rehousing timescales in Scotland, is somewhat out of step with other authorities in pressured markets, by current proportion of Council lets (43%). It does not set a clear target in its RRTP, committing only to a more general allocations review.

“Perverse incentives”

Some RRTPs, such as East Lothian, undertake to increase lets to homeless households without raising concerns, whilst others, such as Dundee, view increases as a temporary measure to address backlog (resembling the approach taken by Perth and Kinross).



Other RRTPs highlight a tension around striking an effective balance between preventing and alleviating homelessness in social housing allocations. South Ayrshire, Edinburgh and West Lothian register concerns over portraying to local communities that presenting as homeless is “the only route to a Council house”. The latter highlights this as a key risk of its approach to let 75% of its stock to statutory homeless households, with requests for local RSLs to do the same.

Clackmannanshire analysed the housing status of all households housed by the authority in the past year for the RRTP process. They concluded “the circumstances of virtually all households were such that they would have been considered statutorily homeless, if they had so presented”. The current allocations policy replaced the previous “unresponsive” policy, which effectively required households to lodge a homelessness application to have any chance of being housed. The authority is therefore reluctant to move back in this direction. The RRTP provides a table, copied overleaf, illustrating these tensions.

The 424 Council allocations made in 2017/18 break down as follows:

Table 1. Clackmannanshire Council’s breakdown of lets, by household status

Category	Band	Number	Note
Homeless	2	216	
Insecurity	3	85	Applicant has no right to accommodation and has been asked to leave
Medical	3	72	Current accommodation is unsuitable because of medical requirement – unreasonable to continue to occupy
Overcrowding	3	32	Current accommodation is overcrowded – unreasonable to continue to occupy
Syrian VPR scheme	1	8	Direct let to meet housing obligations towards refugee families under resettlement program
Direct let	1	7	Approved to promote release of larger accommodation
Throughcare	1	2	Provided under corporate parenting responsibilities and to avoid young person needing to apply as homeless
Armed Forces	1	1	Allocated in fulfilment of our obligations under the Armed Forces Covenant
No need	4	1	Technically no need – however potential overcrowding acting as a barrier to the family adopting a second child

Whilst Clackmannanshire, South Ayrshire and Moray all refer to previous experience of increased lets to homeless households bringing increases in homelessness presentations, Perth and Kinross takes a different view. This authority increased lets to statutory homeless people through its “Home First” approach, and did subsequently record a notable upturn in homelessness applications.

In its RRTP, the Council responds head on to the concern that one is the unavoidable consequence of the other. It states presentations have increased because the options service accepts a homelessness application

at an earlier stage, and offers the service more proactively. It notes this has aided prevention work, leading to more applications being closed as “not homeless” and “resolved”, but finds no evidence to support the view that Home First has encouraged more households to present as homeless.

Equality impacts on other housing needs groups



A number of authorities, such as North Lanarkshire, East Dunbartonshire and Moray, raise the potentially inequalitarian impact of increasing lets to statutory homeless on other groups in EIAs. Moray considers an increase in its (already high, at 65%) proportion of lets to

impact unacceptably on the “housing needs of other households prevalent on the Council’s housing list and covered by the Equalities Act 2010, namely disabled people, old people and children (especially overcrowded households)”. It sets a “more modest target”, acknowledging whilst this will slow rapid rehousing down, it will strike a more “proportionate and equitable balance between all needs groups [...] and better promote equality”.

The limitations of local authority-level supply and demand figures

Indigo House’s 2018 market review analysed homelessness demand and social supply at the level of Scotland’s five housing options hubs and its 32 individual local authorities. Many RRTPs suggest the local authority is too large an area through which to understand housing demand and supply, and that this needs to be supplemented by sub-market analysis.

Low proportions of lets to homeless households at local authority level may in some cases reflect variations in demand across HMAs. This means increasing average proportions of lets to homeless people at local authority-level is no simple solution to rapid rehousing. This is raised in RRTPs covering large or diverse geographies which have areas of lower demand social housing alongside cities/towns of high housing pressure (for example, 94% of all homeless applicants in Shetland wish to live in Lerwick, and 62% of those in temporary accommodation in Highland are waiting for housing in Inverness).


North Ayrshire makes clear its modelling of future lettings scenarios focused on the number of lets needed, but not on size and location of supply. The authority has therefore set a key action for the Homelessness Task Force to assess the extent to which rapid rehousing can be achieved at housing sub-market level, also using local lettings plans.

Various authorities, such as Eilean Siar and East Ayrshire, aim to set different letting targets for over-subscribed towns, with lower quotas in other areas. South Lanarkshire works with local RSLs to set tailored allocation targets for each of its four (very different) HMAs, which are incorporated in local lettings plans. Argyll and Bute, with 23 inhabited islands exhibiting both high housing pressure and low demand, aims to carry out analysis of homelessness needs by HMA profiles for its next LHS.

Authorities using or moving to local lettings plans/targets

Angus, East Ayrshire, Eilean Siar, Fife, Glasgow, Highland, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Shetland, South Lanarkshire, Stirling, West Lothian

Location, choice and rapidity in rehousing

 Resolving these challenges exposes a tension between choice over housing location, and rapidity in rehousing. Authorities respond to this in different ways. Highland has the most challenging situation, as the largest local authority in the UK by land mass, and very long rehousing timescales for Inner Moray Firth area. Its allocations review seeks to find a balance on what a “reasonable” offer of housing is. For example, whilst it is unreasonable to make an offer of housing in Caithness, around 100 miles North of Inverness, to a household seeking a home in Inverness, it may be reasonable, under the new procedure, to make an offer to the same household in Nairn, 15 miles away.

East Renfrewshire, which has shorter rehousing timescales, concludes that increasing homeless lets within its own stock would undermine choice, forcing people to live in areas they don’t want to go, due to the unequal proportions

of social housing available in different parts of the authority. The Council does not plan to reduce choice by prioritising rapidity. Clackmannanshire takes a similar position.

In contrast, East Dunbartonshire, a very pressured area with the lowest proportion of social housing stock in Scotland, will move to an expectation that homeless households queue for housing in all locations unless the household’s safety would be at risk in an area. This approach was suggested various times within partner feedback sought by the Council when developing the RRTP.

This is not the only step the authority has taken to address rehousing pressures. Its RRTP also highlights that it has a 15% nominations agreement with an RSL in a neighbouring local authority area, for households with connections in that part of the authority. This represents a better option for them than moving elsewhere within East Dunbartonshire, and is reported as a great success for all parties. This approach may not be possible in all areas, depending on pressures in the host authority’s area.

It is worth noting that Perth and Kinross, a mixed urban/rural authority reports in its RRTP that by enhancing settled lets and addressing backlog (from a rehousing timescale of 441 days in 2015 to 77 days in 2018), the Council is now in a much stronger position to be able to respond more flexibly to both fluctuations in demand and applicant choice.¹³

The impact of social stock size pressures

A heavy focus on increasing the total number of lets not only obscures factors of social stock location, but also factors of stock type and size. The great majority of RRTPs refer to a serious mismatch of stock size

to homeless household profile. In general, an acute shortage of one bedroom homes, and in many areas, four+ bedroom homes for large families, pose undeniable challenges.

In other areas, a large amount of sheltered/specialist social housing skews projections, as whilst this type of housing turns over frequently it rarely meets homelessness need. South Lanarkshire removed sheltered/specialist social housing from all of its analysis, which helps provide more clarity in this area.

To address issues on size and area, Orkney, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire are reviewing allocation policies to allow flexibility in property size offered (generally allowing single people to be housed in two-bedroom homes), though this may generate additional affordability and welfare reform issues.

Authorities highlighting a shortage of one-bedroom social stock

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Eilean Siar, Fife, Highland, Inverclyde, Moray, Orkney, Renfrewshire, Shetland, Stirling

Other changes to local authority allocations

A number of RRTPs record other changes to local authority allocations which aim to support rapid rehousing. West Lothian’s review will consider the introduction of a “strategic needs” category for households threatened with homelessness, to bolster prevention. Highland’s allocations review has focused heavily on the pointing of awards for homeless households to ensure both fairness and alignment with rapid rehousing principles.

¹³ This good practice example is highlighted in Chapter 7 of Crisis’ Plan to End Homelessness 2018, https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/239951/everybody_in_how_to_end_homelessness_in_great_britain_2018.pdf

Aberdeenshire and East Dunbartonshire are keen to explore what could be termed “vacancy chain” approaches. These aim to make best use of stock by facilitating transfers of existing tenants whilst also housing new tenants. East Dunbartonshire underlines “the total number of lets is more important than a target, as lets to transfer applicants address two housing need requirements, as always release another let”. Fife also plans to proactively use the Council’s Transfer Incentive Scheme to free up larger housing. Moray will also use its allocations review to encourage downsizing in Council and RSL stock.

Other changes to allocations policies are also planned in RRTPs, to enable quicker rehousing. Falkirk will reduce the number of offers made to statutory homeless households, to decrease the potential for longer stays in temporary accommodation or sofa-surfing. Whilst this may speed up rehousing, it does so by lessening the extent of applicant choice.

Argyll and Bute, a stock transfer area, approaches the question of social housing offers from the opposite direction, aiming to increase the proportion of offers accepted. The Council has plans to better screen applicant areas of choice, offer more transparency around what is considered a reasonable offer, and issue decoration grants to improve take-up of unfurnished homes.

The role of RSLs in RRTPs

Proportional contribution to homelessness allocations between authorities and RSLs in Scotland varies greatly, with the former letting at least 10% more stock proportionally for this group than RSL partners in 70% of stock-holding authority areas. The disparity is most stark in Edinburgh and South Ayrshire, where the gap between authority and RSL lets is 50%. In three areas of Scotland

the picture is reversed: Midlothian, Shetland and Angus, where RSLs allocate proportionally more than the respective Council.

This disparity received sharp focus in the Indigo House market analysis of 2018, from which the above figures are taken. Local authorities interviewed for the report detailed various challenges housing statutory homeless households with RSLs, often described as “risk averse”. This was regarded by local authorities as playing out through specific barriers to RSL offers, such as strict requirements for “tenancy readiness”, a first month’s rent up front or former arrears payment plans.¹⁴

RRTPs tend not to discuss disparities between Council and RSL lets, even if they record them. Almost all authorities met RSL partners during RRTP development to discuss and secure their commitment and contribution to rapid rehousing. A trend of positive partnership working between authorities and RSLs, as opposed to an ambience of conflict, therefore permeates most RRTPs, with few of the challenges expressed in the Indigo House report repeated. This positivity is equally evident in areas where RSLs historically contribute fewer lets, those where lettings are more equal, and stock transfer authorities.

RSL lets to statutory homeless

In almost all areas, a heightened contribution of lets for rapid rehousing from RSLs has either been agreed, or features in the RRTP action plan as an item for discussion. A new target has been agreed in some areas (from 25% upwards, generally around 50%) whereas in others, a nomination or Section Five review is planned. Where current contribution is low, increases have generally been set at a modest level, such as South Ayrshire and North Lanarkshire (both 25%), or not specified in the RRTP (such

as Falkirk). In some pressured areas, where RSLs already contribute above 50%, authorities have nevertheless set actions to agree further increases with them (such as East and Midlothian).

It’s also worth noting that local authority data on the proportion of RSL lets made to statutory homeless people in RRTPs at times does not bear resemblance to that provided in the Indigo House study.¹⁵ Aberdeenshire’s RRTP makes the useful point that current statistics don’t make it easy to understand the extent or nature of the RSL contribution, as some RSLs will contribute far more than others. It is worth bearing in mind that RSL sector averages do not provide a full or fair picture in the same way that local authority averages do.

Barriers to RSL housing

As above, barriers to accessing RSL stock strongly emphasised within the Indigo House review (such as practices of demanding the first month rent up front, bypassing applicants, former arrears policies) are not referred to in any RRTP. This includes Glasgow’s, where the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) highlighted such practices quite openly in its critical 2018 report.¹⁶ It is possible authorities assess a spirit of partnership around rapid rehousing, particularly in the form of increased lets from all social landlords, will also bring change to these less statistically quantifiable practices.

The only area relating to RSL practices which does receive attention in a minority of RRTPs is concern that choice-based letting (CBL), used by many RSLs,¹⁷ might disadvantage some homeless applicants. Aberdeenshire, North Lanarkshire, Orkney, Shetland

and Dumfries and Galloway make some mention of this, mainly around applicant difficulties using online systems. Most authorities will monitor the impact of CBL on RSLs’ ability to meet homelessness targets.

Aberdeenshire reports that whilst it aims for partnership working, it will increase Section Five referrals where necessary, if CBL doesn’t produce the outcomes required for rapid rehousing. Shetland reports a pilot scheme to nominate applicants who have been longest in temporary accommodation to RSLs, as they often have higher vulnerabilities and may struggle online.¹⁸

Simplifying allocations systems

A smaller number of RRTPs focus not only on increasing lets to statutorily homeless people, but also on improving or simplifying allocations systems. Not all authorities have a Common Housing Register (CHR) encompassing all or most mainstream social stock. Where a CHR is in operation a unified approach to rapid rehousing appears more simple to take. For instance, Argyll and Bute has set an action to add oversight of rapid rehousing to the responsibilities of the CHR steering group, which represents all large mainstream landlords locally.

There is no local authority-based CHR in 30% of areas of Scotland,¹⁹ though in some of these, one or more RSLs is part of a national CHR, such as HomeHunt or the specialist CHR, Homes for You. In a quarter of areas, a CHR encompassing the local authority (or stock-transfer landlord) and some of the main RSLs operates, whilst other RSLs with sizeable proportions of mainstream stock locally run one

¹⁴ See pages 25–26, 43–46 and 75 of the 2018 report.

¹⁵ Perth and Kinross, East Renfrewshire, East Ayrshire, Angus and Midlothian are examples.

¹⁶ <https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/landlord-performance/national-reports/thematic-work/housing-people-who-are-homeless-in-glasgow>

¹⁷ Whilst some Scottish local authorities use CBL, notably Edinburgh and Falkirk, it is much more common in the RSL sector.

¹⁸ There is useful discussion on current concerns around CBL and vulnerable applicants, how models can be adapted to ensure benefits are available to all, in CIH England’s recent report: <http://www.cih.org/resources/Rethinking%20allocations.pdf>

¹⁹ Eilean Siar is removed from the total, as the only authority area in Scotland with just one social landlord

or more of their own application processes alongside.

Just under 40% of local authorities have a CHR which includes *all* large, local, mainstream social landlords. In most areas, therefore, applicants seeking to maximise housing options must make multiple housing applications.

Authorities with a CHR encompassing all large, mainstream social landlords

Argyll and Bute, Clackmannanshire, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh, Dundee, Fife, Highland, North Ayrshire, Orkney, Perth and Kinross, Shetland

Even where a CHR exists, housing need assessments often diverge by landlord. A number of CHRs in Scotland have a common allocations policy, or common assessment of need, as well as a CHR. This may be agreed by all CHR partner landlords, such as in Fife, South Lanarkshire, Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway and East Ayrshire, or just some of the landlords, such as North Lanarkshire.

Methods for allocating homes (which generally means CBL or points on a waiting list), differ again; the presence of a CHR does not indicate all landlords use the same method. In almost every area of Scotland, applicants (homeless or not) seeking to maximise housing options need to understand CBL (often through different websites and providers), as well as the potential to be offered a home through a waiting list. Areas with a unified method of allocating homes, such as Highland, Dundee and Perth and Kinross, where all large mainstream landlords use a waiting list, or Edinburgh, where all use CBL, are rare.

Stirling's and Glasgow's RRTPs highlight most strongly the challenges for discharging homelessness duties when common application, allocation and lettings processes are not in place. Stirling, which has no CHR or common allocations policy, and providers using diverse lettings methods, reports "allocations policy and practice is recognised as a major barrier to speed of rehousing for homeless people". Its RRTP has an action to work with RSLs to develop a CHR and harmonise allocations.

Glasgow also recognises blockages in the Section Five process. Its RRTP sets an allocations target for each RSL and a weekly Section Five target for Council staff. It commits to improving communication with RSLs and to better understand systemic blockages and inefficiencies, as does West Lothian.

Some authorities seek to introduce CBL to provide a more efficient and transparent way of letting Council homes. Falkirk, which already uses CBL to allocate Council homes, sets an action to provide more detail within its CBL adverts to allow applicants to make more informed choices. East Renfrewshire's RRTP also contains an action to work with specialist social housing providers using CBL to maximise access to housing for people requiring age-restricted and/or adapted housing; this is not an issue picked up within most RRTPs, so is worthy of note

Authorities using CBL to allocate all homes
Edinburgh, Falkirk

Authorities looking into CBL to allocate homes
East Renfrewshire, Orkney, Midlothian

A number of authorities have also set actions to improve their lettings and allocations processes and systems to maximise efficiency and, in particular, reduce void times. East Renfrewshire, Falkirk, Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen, Stirling and West Lothian commit to this.

Converting temporary self-contained properties to SSTs

80% of stock owning authorities set out plans, some with numbers attached and others more general, to convert a proportion of local authority owned temporary properties to permanent SSTs where this fits with the applicant's needs and wishes.

Fife, East Lothian and West Dunbartonshire have gone furthest in terms of the proportion of temporary properties they wish to convert (500, 300 and 100 over 5 years), though only East Lothian appears to be reducing overall temporary self-contained stock through this approach. Other authorities, such as South Lanarkshire, Fife, Orkney and Midlothian, intend to "flip and replace", i.e. convert the temporary tenancy to permanent and replace the temporary property with a different one, generally seeking significant RRTP funding to do so.

All stock transfer authorities aim to hand back RSL owned stock used for temporary accommodation to allow the same outcome. Eilean Siar, Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders and Inverclyde have plans to work with RSLs to identify where a temporary tenancy is going well, and allow conversion without the household having to move.

Argyll and Bute uses a much lower proportion of RSL owned temporary stock than other stock transfer areas, making much higher use of the PRS. It therefore has less opportunity to consider converting temporary tenancies to SSTs. The Council does have plans to use RSL owned temporary properties for Housing

First, allowing the tenancy to be made permanent if this is in keeping with household wishes.

By far the largest reduction of RSL-owned temporary properties projected is in Glasgow, which aims to hand back almost two thirds to RSLs. However in this case it is not clear if the household would stay put, or the property would be converted once the temporary household moved out.

New supply

Most RRTPs refer to new affordable housing supply, though for some this takes a much more central role than for others. In pressured markets, there is heavy emphasis on the difficulty of achieving rapid rehousing without increased levels of funding from the AHSP beyond 2021. Councils in the Lothians and South Lanarkshire have inserted additional lets to statutory homeless people in their supply targets and are dependent on unconfirmed, aspirational levels of grant to achieve this. In Edinburgh, such funding would provide over 400 affordable lets a year, assuming 50% were let to homeless households.

Various authorities plan to reflect homelessness need in future SHIPs; Argyll and Bute refer to this as ensuring the SHIP pays its "homeless dividend". RRTPs make particular reference to increasing the proportion of one bedroom properties, as in Aberdeenshire, Moray and Angus, larger homes, as in Dundee, and homes in areas of particular housing pressure, such as Highland. The difficulties of ensuring new supply meets homelessness need in terms of stock size are acutely emphasised in Stirling's RRTP, which provides the outlook below.

Table 2. Stirling: new build supply compared to homeless demand, by stock size

Size of property/ household	SHIP (Current size proile)	Homeless household size profile	Size mismatch
1 bed	30%	75%	-45%
2 bed	46%	9%	+55%
3 bed	16%	7%	+9%
4 bed+	7%	5%	+2%

Stirling is dependent on private developers and Section 75 agreements for two thirds of its new build programme. But it faces developer reluctance to build one bedroom homes, which 75% of its homeless households require. Its RRTP lists actions to address this mismatch, such as making changes to the operation of the Section 75 process and reviewing Council procurement policy towards more direct land ownership. Though none of these provide rapid solutions, the fact they are being put forward demonstrates the extent to which homelessness need is starting to influence what is developed in future.

Around half of authorities refer to subsidised schemes to purchase, or fund RSLs to purchase, homes on the open market which meet local housing need (for instance, four+ bedroom homes in Glasgow). This may be a “buyback” scheme aimed as former Council housing, such as in Falkirk, where there is a target to acquire 95 former Council homes annually. East Lothian is aiming to identify alternative funding models not dependent on subsidy for this similar work. Some RRTPs include supply from these housing streams, whilst most do not. East Lothian and South Lanarkshire commit properties projected for purchase on the open market to meeting homelessness need and seek RRTP capital funding for these.²⁰

20 Although the RRTP toolkit asked authorities to discuss necessary new build supply in their RRTPs, capital funding is not covered by the Ending Homelessness Together fund.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

Perth and Kinross Council was the first authority in Scotland to establish a CHR (1995), linking applications for housing with the Council and the two largest RSLs (who between them own 90% of social stock in the area). Unusually, within a CHR, not only has a common assessment and allocation policy been in place since 2010, but allocations are entirely administered by Council officers. They assess and point applications as well as matching voids to applicants (removing the need for Section Five referrals and nominations, which increases efficiency).

This strong partnership approach not only brings together resources for meeting need, but also lends clarity and consistency to the application and allocation process, lessening complexity for applicants to navigate. Perth and Kinross has a loss of contact rate half the Scottish average and the second highest rate of settled outcomes for homeless applicants in the country, after Orkney. Whilst this may be due to many factors, including speed of rehousing, it is an instructive example of organisations laying aside individual procedures to provide a simple process which works for applicants.

Whilst **Aberdeenshire Council** has not increased the target proportion of lets to statutory homeless people beyond its current level of 50%, it has laid out a number of measures to improve processes by which Council housing is allocated. It recognises its current voids process is wasteful and could be improved, so intends to complete an end to end review.

It has identified that Council stock which is currently void awaiting energy enhancements, and thus not in the system, could be earmarked for homelessness allocations once upgraded. It is amending its allocations policy around size criteria to take a pragmatic approach to stock mismatches, and exploring what a “vacancy chain model” might look like. Such a model, often associated with new build properties, aims to meet housing needs of multiple households. Transferring tenants free up their own properties, creating further vacancies.

City of Edinburgh Council met with all RSL partners on its Edindex (the local CHR) Board in the RRTP development process and agreed that both the Council and all RSL partners will commit to allocating a minimum of 50% and a maximum of 70% of stock to statutorily homeless people throughout the term of the RRTP.

Highland Council and RSL partners have undertaken a review of the Highland Housing Register (the local CHR) allocations policy, considering ways in which current rules might disadvantage certain groups of homeless applicants.

They have determined that awards of “homeless at home” and “time in temporary accommodation” points means certain statutory homeless households are likely to be “overtaken” in points by other applicants and wait longer, or indefinitely for an offer. Whilst “time in temporary accommodation” points are intended to reflect the damage which can be done by long stays, an unintended consequence could be that use of temporary accommodation is incentivised. The new allocation policy aims to remove such disadvantages and support rapid rehousing.

West Lothian Council modelled four lettings scenarios for social landlords in order to determine what could be achieved under rapid rehousing by altering the proportion of lets to homeless applicants. This is helpful in laying out what could be possible if all social landlords work together.

This clearly shows continuing to allocate the current proportion of lets (59%) will generate a rise in Bed and Breakfast (B&B) use and an increase in the backlog of households awaiting an offer. It shows that increasing lets to 65% will allow this to reduce from current levels, whilst lets at 70% will facilitate B&B use being eliminated by year three of the RRTP. Letting 75% of stock to homeless households would additionally allow significant reductions of all temporary accommodation, elimination of backlog and achievement of rapid rehousing.

South Lanarkshire Council has a CHR, a common needs assessment framework and works with RSLs to set local targets for homeless allocations which are then incorporated into Local Lettings Plans. For the RRTP, all CHR partners agreed to set targets for a higher proportion of lets to meet needs identified in each lettings area, with a 50-60% target for all partners in pressured areas, such as East Kilbride.

Most usefully, within PCS from RSLs published as appendices to the RRTP, it is possible to view the commitments made (for example, some state clearly they are willing to allocate more than 50% of lets) and activities RSLs are taking responsibility for in respect of communicating with their own staff and reviewing their own policies in light of rapid rehousing and Housing First. It's also useful to see in black and white some of the barriers and concerns RSLs foresee (for example, around support and information-sharing) which could undermine rapid rehousing if not heard and understood.

Moray Council reviewed its allocation policy in light of HARSAG recommendations and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. It has aimed to strike a balance between meeting the needs of statutory homeless households and those who are not homeless, but who are covered by the Equalities Act 2010, namely disabled people, old people and children (especially those living in overcrowded households). It has identified the potential for the housing needs of these groups to be unfairly impacted by increases in statutory homeless lets.

To address this, the Council will introduce new priority categories for “underuse of specialist housing” and under-occupying social tenants. These changes are intended to facilitate increased supply of specialist housing and increased downsizing which will in turn mitigate any negative effects of increased quotas of homeless allocations on disabled people, older people and families with children.

Mid-Market Rent (MMR)

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

RRTP guidance asked authorities to consider “other housing options” along with the social and private rented sectors when thinking about what their annual rehousing target should entail. This, along with the statement that options for statutory homeless persons should be “equal to the housing choices and options available to all applicants locally” suggests MMR, as an affordable and subsidised tenure, should count as one of the housing options local authorities are supposed to be thinking about.

Not mentioned in RRTP guidance, but our view is...

MMR is not explicitly mentioned in the RRTP toolkit, nor was it by HARSAG. MMR is an expanding tenure in many authorities,²¹ provided as a type of affordable housing by subsidiaries of social rented landlords or housing trusts, rather than private individuals. As such, it can be said to offer not only a greater level of affordability to employed homeless applicants than much of the PRS, but also of security,

as it is unlikely such landlords will seek possession for some of the reasons PRS landlords do (i.e. house sale, moving in family member, change of use).

But the current picture of where MMR is available, who receives it, and whether their homelessness status is recorded, is not readily obtainable. It is also impossible to quantify the proportion of statutory homeless people for whom MMR would represent an affordable or accessible option, as homeless household income and employment status are not part of HL1 statistics.

The toolkit guidance asked authorities to record data on local private rents and their correlation with Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates in order to inform the extent to which the PRS may be affordable for homeless households claiming benefits. But they were not asked to offer income or employment data for homeless applicants. This data is especially pertinent for MMR housing, as an option for working people on lower (though sometimes not the lowest) incomes.

21 See www.gov.scot/publications/rent-affordability-affordable-housing-sector-literature-review

Understanding the proportion of statutory homeless people in work, their income levels, local MMR availability including new build, and how this differs by authority, would be key in assessing the suitability of MMR as an additional option to facilitate rapid rehousing.

Overview

A lack of discussion on MMR within the toolkit may explain why most authorities do not comment on this tenure at all in RRTPs, especially if it provides a very small number of lets annually in their area (or none at all). Some authorities mention MMR within the context of new build, but only five provide statistics on annual planned supply of intermediate tenures through the AHSP. Of those, only in Edinburgh is MMR the dominant new build tenure (ratio 2:1 MMR:social), with the opposite ratio in Glasgow, and less than 20% everywhere else.

91% of authorities don't reference the tenure in relation to meeting the needs of employed homeless households, or refer to it only fleetingly (such as West Lothian). Edinburgh and East Lothian are the only RRTPs which really engage with MMR as a tenure for this group, considering pathways for improving awareness and access. However despite including potential additional PRS and shared housing supply in its additional supply target, East Lothian doesn't include its anticipated 25% of MMR lets.

Highland makes brief reference to MMR, as one of the options a Housing Coach might assist applicants to better understand and access. However Highland does not focus on MMR more generally. This may seem something of a missed opportunity, as it appears to be one of the only areas of Scotland where the MMR application and allocations process is closely linked to the social housing one (see box overleaf).

MMR could have a larger role to play in rapid rehousing in more areas of Scotland. This may be worthy of further scrutiny in Glasgow, especially in view of concerns expressed in its RRTP around PRS affordability, conditions and management. In South Lanarkshire's RRTP, no attention is given to MMR by the Council, though it is mentioned within one of the PCS, from East Kilbride Housing Association. This RSL states that it is commissioning research on the tenure as recognises a limit to social housing meeting all need in pressured East Kilbride.

A further area of enquiry could be the role to be played by rent deposit or similar services in assisting employed households who struggle with a deposit to find out about and access MMR,²² as well as PRS.

²² A Crisis survey of local authorities and PRS access schemes in 2018 found that though 76% of services agreed that MMR was available in their area, and 62% assessed the tenure offered a potentially affordable option to some of the households referred to their schemes, only 26% offered advice on MMR to applicants and 19% believed there was an established pathway into MMR locally. Over half did not know whether MMR providers would accept a bond instead of a cash deposit. See <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240362/prs-access-schemes-the-landscape-in-scotland.pdf>

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) provides the statistic that around a third of its homeless households are in employment. The MMR programme in Edinburgh is also significant in scale, with over 6000 new builds planned in the RRTP timeframe, following previous healthy investment in the tenure. This means there will be some level of annual turnover of existing stock.

The Council has assessed that MMR should therefore be a key part of options and advice provided by Housing Officers to applicants, and has also negotiated with all RSLs with an MMR subsidiary to develop a prioritised pathway for working homeless people. It has also been agreed that 50% of lets in the first MMR development from Scottish Futures Trust and CEC ("Edinburgh Living") will be offered by priority to statutory homeless applicants. Between them, these options potentially add over 200 homes a year to Edinburgh's additional supply target.

Highland's CHR facilitates applications not only to all main social housing landlords, but also to MMR developed by four RSLs and Highland Housing Alliance. Priority for MMR housing is determined by housing need, which means statutory homeless applicants, who have a high amount of points on the Highland Housing Register, tend to be considered as a matter of course.

Whilst homeless applicants still need to meet MMR criteria in terms of income and affordability, the single application system ensures that if they want and qualify for MMR, the urgency of their housing situation increases their chances of an offer. The unified application also assists applicants to understand and explore alternative tenures without having to proactively look into and apply for them on their own initiative. This approach heightens the likelihood that MMR is allocated to those most in need of it, as long as this is affordable and sustainable for the household.

Private Rented Sector (PRS)

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

Unlike MMR, settled housing options in the PRS were highlighted in RRTP guidance. Authorities were asked to provide data on local private rents in relation to LHA rates, to give an impression of the extent to which the tenure may be affordable for households on lower incomes,

including benefits, coming through the homelessness system. The PRS also received a focus in HARSAG recommendations. Specifically, authorities were asked to make more use of the sector as an option for rehousing homeless households, by developing a variety of solutions, including rent deposit services, social letting agencies, Help to Rent schemes and conditional empty homes grants.

Not mentioned in RRTP guidance, but our view is...

As above, authorities were not asked to provide income or employment data for homeless applicants. This detail has bearing on how feasible the PRS is as an affordable option, as well as MMR.

Authorities were not expected to provide any detail on whether they currently provide or commission a PRS access service, and if so,²³ its features, outcomes and any challenges.

In our view, this makes it harder to assess whether PRS actions planned for the future are based on analysis of existing service data, new research or ideas alone. It also makes it difficult to know whether current PRS outcomes are linked to access schemes or simply reflect individuals accessing the PRS without any Council-based assistance.

RRTPs which provide some detail and analysis in this regard, offer, **in our view**, examples of good practice.

Overview**PRS as part of additional supply**

Two thirds of RRTPs do not include increased PRS outcomes in their future projections, even where they have planned actions to improve access to PRS in their areas. For instance, though a rent deposit service has been recently commissioned in Edinburgh for three years, with an annual target of 40 properties, these statistics are not added to the supply total, though aspirational additional supply from new build social, MMR and increased RSL allocations are. In relation to the PRS providing solutions for households who are homeless, this may suggest a lack of confidence or a lack of consideration, or both.

Current PRS access services

Over a third of RRTPs make generic statements about reviewing rent deposit schemes and exploring other PRS opportunities, but give no detail on their current service (East Renfrewshire, Eilean Siar, Falkirk, Stirling, Fife, Inverclyde, Dumfries and Galloway). Others, such as Glasgow, West Lothian and Argyll and Bute don't mention that they have a scheme.

Though many of these authorities engaged widely with partners in preparing RRTPs, there is little from the perspective of providers of PRS scheme services (if commissioned) or from Council staff (if in-house). A small number of RRTPs do consider the experiences and impact of current PRS access services. These are East and South Ayrshire, which commission services, and North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Perth and Kinross, which provide services in-house.


LHA and rents

The majority of RRTPs, when comparing average private rents to LHA rates, conclude the PRS is unaffordable for most homeless households. Exceptions to this are East Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire and Renfrewshire, where rents and LHA are more aligned. Some RRTPs also make reference to local incomes, for instance using CACI Paycheck income data, usually again concluding households on lower incomes cannot afford the sector.

It's our view that, in many areas, more research may be needed on the amount of PRS property available at LHA, and its suitability. Average rents collected nationally at Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) level²⁴ don't necessarily offer an accurate guide as to whether affordable properties are available locally, as BRMAs can include large market variations. Whilst


below average rents may point to questionable standards in some areas, this is best assessed through local research, rather than assumed.

RRTPs may also benefit from more focus on the income and employment status of homeless households. Not all are dependent on benefits, but employment will have different impacts on PRS affordability depending on local rent levels. Determining what is and what is not affordable for households in work, and when the social/private differential kicks in, is challenging. However it is key in clarifying the extent of the feasibility of the PRS as a reasonable discharge option in each area.

 The role the PRS *should* play in rapid rehousing given affordability (and, to a lesser extent, quality) concerns is a tension in RRTPs. Statements on concerns over affordability in RRTPs often appear alongside actions to increase the proportion of homeless households discharged to the PRS, with little explanation. Somewhat ironically, authorities in areas of less housing pressure often foreclose PRS as an option based on affordability, whereas those in areas of lower PRS affordability are more likely to consider the tenure for additional supply. Finding a means of assessing the feasibility of the PRS for the full range of homeless households locally, and models which can help improve affordability, would appear to be of benefit to RRTPs.

For example, despite stating an aim to increase use of the PRS as a discharge option, Glasgow's RRTP quotes Arneil Johnston's 2016 research study,²⁵ which registered concerns over affordability in the PRS for lower income households in the city. The RRTP doesn't mention that the same study was strongly supportive of further development of the existing rent deposit service and/or other PRS access models, such as a

link with the Council's Private Landlord Support Officer (PLSO), much in the way Dundee's PLSO links in with the Council's rent deposit service, Homefinder.

 The role the PRS *should* play in rapid rehousing in areas where sufficient social supply exists (numerically at least), is a further tension in RRTPs. North Ayrshire has traditionally made strong use of the PRS for homeless households, but reports welfare reform affecting its suitability as an option for many of these today. Locally, it is possible to substantially increase social (both authority and RSL) lets to this group. The Council has therefore decided to "run down" the PRS access service in terms of staffing, in order to release funds for other rapid rehousing work.

Whilst North Ayrshire's is the only RRTP which reports a planned decline for its PRS access service, as indicated above, other authorities place little focus on this area. Some of these resemble North Ayrshire in being able to achieve rapid rehousing (numerically, at least) through social stock alone (Glasgow is one) whereas others (such as West Lothian) already allocate very high proportions of social lets to this group. The question of whether a tailored PRS homeless pathway should exist in every local authority area is raised but not answered by RRTPs.

Increased discharge of duty into PRS

The lack of focus on the PRS in some RRTPs may be explained by the tenure's longstanding status in Scotland as short-term and insecure. Some RRTPs suggest the PRS has been historically positioned as a homelessness prevention rather than alleviation measure, due to difficulties and complexity associated with discharging duties to the PRS via Section 32a. Since the advent of the Private Residential Tenancy (PRT), which gives more security to tenants, some authorities intend to place more

²³ Ensuring access to a rent deposit, or similar, service is an expectation for every local authority in statutory guidance. See 2.91. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/code-guidance-homelessness/pages/3/>

²⁴ RRTPs generally refer to average PRS rents by BRMA collected nationally, as reported at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/private-sector-rent-statistics-2010-2018/>

²⁵ <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36365&p=0>

emphasis on the PRS as a settled destination for homeless households into which duties can be discharged.

Authorities seeking to increase discharge of duty into PRS

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Perth and Kinross, South Lanarkshire

Ways of enhancing PRS access

Roughly two thirds of RRTPs give consideration to developing the PRS as a positive rehousing option. A number of authorities with no current PRS access service have proposals to implement one, whilst the majority of those with some sort of PRS access service at present have plans to enhance it. Many PRS access schemes currently have no dedicated member of staff.²⁶ This is recognised as a barrier to creating and maintaining relationships with landlords and letting agencies; a quarter of RRTPs set plans to recruit a dedicated staff member for this purpose.

RRTPs contain a range of other ideas for increasing access to the PRS, such as offering cash deposits where bonds aren't accepted (Highland), a "recyclable fund" for deposits (Midlothian), rent in advance payments (Aberdeenshire) and using tenant insurance to improve access (Highland).

Some of those place an emphasis on building up partnerships with landlords and lettings agencies through different methods to improve trust and engagement, such as landlord education (East Lothian), online advertising platforms (Aberdeen; Angus - suggests using CBL for this purpose); and increased preventative work (Edinburgh; Midlothian; Argyll

and Bute). The use (or re-instatement) of local PRS landlord forums and the useful links this provides to further housing opportunities is mentioned in around a quarter of RRTPs.

A small number also contain actions to raise staff and tenant awareness of the new private tenancy regime and tribunal system. East Dunbartonshire and Highland set out plans to develop more structured support for households entering the PRS.

Authorities setting up a new PRS access service

Angus, Edinburgh, Midlothian, South Ayrshire, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire

Authorities enhancing or diversifying existing PRS access services

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Highland, North Lanarkshire, Orkney, Perth and Kinross, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire

Authorities focusing on improving relationships with PRS landlords

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Fife, Highland, Orkney, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire

Social Lettings Agencies (SLA)

There is only one Council-run SLA in Scotland at present, in Perth and Kinross. Within RRTPs, almost a third of authorities mention the potential role of an SLA in their area. Orkney does not use the term "SLA" but discusses the possibility of its one RSL taking

on a letting agency role for the PRS, which seems to suggest a similar approach.

In some cases, PRS has no or very little discussion in the main RRTP and simply appears in the Action Plan (usually in its later years), in a bullet pointed list of "rent deposit services, social letting agencies, Help to Rent schemes". This list seems to have been simply "lifted" from the toolkit. In other RRTPs, more thought appears to have been given to PRS access, for which an SLA is one route the authority is exploring, such as East Ayrshire. South Ayrshire is the only authority to submit a fully-developed proposal for an SLA in its RRTP.

Authorities exploring a Social Lettings Agency (SLA)

Aberdeenshire, Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Orkney, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling

Midlothian's RRTP mentions ongoing work with the Scottish Government, Cyrenians and the National Homelessness Property Fund to purchase open market homes to rent to people who are homeless at LHA rates, with tenancy support from Cyrenians. This is an interesting approach, though it is not clear in the RRTP whether accommodation would be offered as a PRT, or a form of temporary accommodation.

PRS access and empty homes

A third of RRTPs link empty homes work to rapid rehousing. In some, this takes the form of an action to target empty homes locally which could meet homelessness need, if brought

back into use. It is not always clear in plans whether actions relate to social landlords acquiring homes for their own stock, or providing support (in the form of advice, grants and loans) on the condition they are rented to households in housing need at affordable rent levels for a set period of time. In some cases, both actions may be on the table.

Perth and Kinross has, for some years, had an active link between the empty homes service and the PRS initiatives team (see box overleaf). East Ayrshire has had a successful Empty Homes service (37 properties brought back to use since appointment of an Empty Homes Officer in 2017), but its RRTP sets plans to make more targeted links between this work and expanding PRS options for homeless households in Kilmarnock. This is simultaneously a town with a high homeless demand and the largest number of empty properties in the authority.

Authorities linking empty homes work to PRS access

Aberdeen, Angus, Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, Perth and Kinross, Stirling

²⁶ See results of 2018 survey in <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240362/prs-access-schemes-the-landscape-in-scotland.pdf>

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

South Ayrshire Council's RRTP sets out an innovative proposal to launch a Council-run SLA, and seeks RRTP funding for start-up costs. The RRTP recognises the Council could make better use of the PRS as settled accommodation in light of the new tenancy regime, the fairly large PRS locally and the potential the sector has to broaden housing options (for instance, there is PRS stock in areas of low social housing). However, following consultation with staff and service users, the Council recognises concerns over quality of PRS property management, affordability and access to support.

The Council has noted broad satisfaction from tenants and landlords with the Private Sector Leasing (PSL) service, and aims to use PSL landlords as a starting point for the SLA, keeping what's positive about the service (such as guaranteed rent and property management) but moving away from its status as temporary accommodation. They have consulted with PSL landlords and received favourable responses. The SLA aims to attract mixed portfolios and tenant groups, allowing flexible rent top-ups for those on benefits, with an aim to become self-sufficient within five years. The SLA has been fully costed and the Council has included targets for the new service within its expected PRS outcomes for next five years.

Perth and Kinross Council describes its private sector access initiatives, which include its SLA, PKC Lets, as key to the success of its successful rapid rehousing programme, Home First. The Council is keen to enhance the role played by the PRS as a settled outcome for some homeless households in future, including discharging duties which it did not do under the previous tenancy regime.

PKC Lets manages 130 properties, with the Council running a rent deposit service alongside. Landlords can use both services or just the rent deposit service. Last year, 180 households were housed through these two services, with 10% of homes coming through the linked Empty Homes Initiative. 18 grants were allocated to owners of empty properties on the condition they were subsequently rented out through the Council's bond scheme, for a period of at least five years. The Empty Homes Initiative is funded internally from the Council Tax levy on second homes.

The Council is clear that this level of service requires adequate staffing capacity, especially in a harsher climate under welfare reform in relation to enhanced prevention work, and seeks continuation funding for this through the RRTP.

Aberdeen City Council sees an opportunity in a declining local PRS market which is becoming more affordable. The Council already helps households into the PRS by providing cash deposits and/or rent in advance from their Homelessness Prevention Fund, but would like to move to a bond scheme which is more cost effective.

Their plans to engage further with PRS landlords are based on a wide landlord and tenant education programme to raise standards and skills in the sector, with the possibility of greater access to some Council facilities as an incentive for landlords assisting in the rehousing of homeless households. To embed this work as an integral part of housing options, landlord registration and PSL teams will be co-located and integrated with allocations, housing options and homelessness. The Council also plans to launch an online self-serve portal with housing options from all providers and private landlords operating across the City, and potentially beyond.

The Council is also funding 50% of an Empty Homes Officer (match funded by the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership) alongside £50,000 "test of change" empty homes loan fund which has a specific remit to bring empty properties back into use, targeted towards properties (in relation to size, type and area) which could address unmet housing needs on the Council's waiting list.

Scottish Borders Council acknowledge that the role of the PRS is important in providing additional options to households in a rural area. The RRTP notes a lack of dedicated PRS resource is a barrier to developing relationships with landlords. They aim to widen access criteria for their rent deposit scheme; explore ways in which the Council can support and offer services to PRS landlords; consider a PRS landlord and tenant matching service; develop a communications plan for improving awareness of the new tenancy regime for PRS landlords, tenants and a full range of frontline staff, including promotion of Mortgage to Rent schemes; link the Empty Homes scheme more clearly with the rent deposit service; and consider the feasibility of an SLA.

East Ayrshire Council includes information on the nature and performance of its rent deposit service ("DIGS"), and also includes additional PRS housing supply achieved through DIGS as part of its overall supply totals. East Ayrshire has a relatively large social housing sector and could achieve rapid rehousing within social stock more easily than many other authorities, however it recognises that the PRS can also provide a valuable alternative housing option for some households.

DIGS has been run by the Community Housing Advocacy Project (CHAP) for 15 years, offering online benefits and housing costs checks, help with utility and other bills, income maximisation and budgeting skills; mediation; signposting and referral to other agencies. Also, unusually in Scotland, as most PRS access services note a decline in settled tenancy outcomes,²⁷ CHAP housed more households last year than ever before.

The Council includes plans in the RRTP to review scheme criteria in order to increase access, as has noted that a high number of applicants are refused a service due to unsatisfactory references from previous landlords. By year two, the Council wishes to complete a feasibility study for an SLA and implement this the year after, if feasible.

East Dunbartonshire Council has a number of actions planned around PRS access, given its extremely limited social housing supply and very long rehousing timescales. The Council already employs a member of staff focused on PRS access and has a proposal in its RRTP for funding for an additional officer to provide a "Housing Plus" approach. This role will provide more support around tenancy sustainment for this sector particularly. The current rent deposit service already offers assistance with first month's rent.

The Council aims to create a pathway into the PRS for young people which enhances affordability of the sector. Young people over 25 subject to the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) who need temporary accommodation will be prioritised for the Council's "First Stop" supported accommodation. After three months young people will qualify for the SAR exemption, widening their options in the PRS. Young people interested in this sector will be interviewed/reviewed every four weeks by a dedicated officer and supported through the "Housing Plus" service.

East Dunbartonshire is also exploring ways to assist households who wish to move out of the area, by establishing partnerships with letting agencies in neighbouring towns. This mirrors the partnership the Council already has with an RSL in West Dunbartonshire for households content to move just over the authority's boundary.

²⁷ See results of 2018 survey in <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240362/prs-access-schemes-the-landscape-in-scotland.pdf>

Owner occupation

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

RRTP guidance asked authorities to consider "other housing options" along with the social and private rented sectors when thinking about what their annual rehousing target should entail. This, along with the statement that options for statutory homeless persons should be "equal to the housing choices and options available to all applicants locally" suggest home ownership options, as the majority tenure in Scotland, could have a role to play, albeit a smaller role than rented options in view of the likely higher barriers many homeless households may face in accessing mortgage finance.

Not mentioned in RRTP guidance, but our view is...

Ownership options are not mentioned in the RRTP toolkit, nor was this a theme considered by HARSAG. However Scottish Government Housing Options Guidance (2016) is clear that housing options services and advice should not be constrained by tenure. Whilst the finances of many homeless households limit their options, for others, options may only be limited by their knowledge of what is available and accessible to them.

There are a range of routes to home ownership in Scotland, some financed through the AHSP, which are not necessarily perennially out of reach for every homeless household. Ensuring households are aware of how to access ownership and what they would need to be able to do so should therefore be a key part of a housing options service.

This may also entail showing households different pathways for their future, allowing them to make informed choices. For example, a young person in work may choose to

share housing for a number of years if shown that the ability to save could allow them to access a first-time buyer scheme in future, which might be more affordable to them than long-term renting.

Overview

Highland is the only RRTP which mentions pathways for homeless people into owner occupation, when discussing a future Housing Coach role. This role will assist applicants to understand, navigate and pursue to access to the whole range of housing options, which includes "Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO), through access to Help to Buy ISAs or the Scottish Government's shared equity scheme etc".

North Ayrshire refers more generally to its affordable housing model "HOME" (Home Ownership Made Easy) and Orkney to LCHO new build, but without specific reference to homeless housing options.

The fact owner occupation is not mentioned in any other RRTP doesn't mean it is not discussed by housing options services, such as in this guide²⁸ from East Renfrewshire.

Though owning a property isn't discussed as a destination for homeless households in RRTPs, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Scottish Borders, Highland, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire and East Lothian mention owner occupation when discussing prevention activities. Some of those authorities have noted increased presentations from owners in mortgage difficulties and reference mortgage advice provided by staff and referrals to Mortgage-to-Rent schemes.

²⁸ <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=14258&p=0>

Shared housing options

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

The RRTP toolkit expected authorities to consider “other housing options” along with social and private rented housing, when thinking about what their annual rehousing target should entail. This, along with the statement that options for statutory homeless persons should be “equal to the housing choices and options available to all applicants locally” suggest shared housing, as an affordable and routine form of housing in many areas of Scotland (especially cities), could have a role to play.

Shared housing is only mentioned in the RRTP toolkit in relation to specialist supported housing for those unable to live independently in the community, as opposed to settled housing for people with lower support needs, or none.

Unlike MMR housing however, shared mainstream housing was considered by HARSAG, which recommended that the tenancy and Council Tax arrangements for shared tenancies should be clarified, so that shared housing options could be used as settled mainstream accommodation in Scotland within the social rented sector, as well as the PRS.

Overview

Given the lack of discussion on sharing in the RRTP toolkit, it is possibly unsurprising that sharing as a settled accommodation option is not referred to in over two thirds of RRTPs. It might be expected that authorities considering shared housing are more likely to be located in pressured housing markets, in which there is more impetus to consider a full range of housing options, and/or in cities, given a greater existing sharing culture.

This holds true to an extent for pressured markets, with three of the four Lothian authorities placing

some emphasis on developing shared housing options. But apart from Edinburgh, Aberdeen is the only other city RRTP which mentions it. It is interesting that neither Glasgow nor Stirling, both of which have long rehousing timescales, complex homelessness systems and cultures of shared housing, have considered this as an additional option, given the potential affordability and companionship benefits shared housing could offer a diverse applicant base.

The remaining seven authorities with plans, at the very least, to explore the potential for sharing options, are in a range of geographies and markets as diverse as Scottish Borders, Angus and Renfrewshire.

Authorities with plans to explore, or which already offer, shared housing options

Aberdeen, Angus, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Edinburgh, Fife, North Lanarkshire, Midlothian, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders

Permanent shared options

Ten authorities have plans for exploring or expanding schemes for mainstream shared housing within their RRTPs. North Lanarkshire, East Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders and Aberdeen simply include a sharing project as an option to explore, whilst Angus wants to examine the need and demand for a sharing project to assist owners renting a room (also mentioned in Orkney’s homelessness prevention guide). Angus is also trialling shared temporary properties, and will shortly be evaluating this project.

Fife and Renfrewshire already have house-sharing schemes for young people. Their RRTPs make clear that both authorities aim to enhance these schemes. Fife gives little detail on its shared tenancy service, provided by a


commissioned partner, but does set actions to develop the scheme with the aims of providing benefits to those at risk of social isolation, exclusion or exploitation whilst identifying more innovative ways to address mismatches in supply and demand.

Three Lothian authorities request RRTP funding for a feasibility study on shared temporary and permanent options, with particular focus on approaches to matching, sustainability and resources (Edinburgh), dedicated staff to take forward a shared multi-tenure project (Midlothian), or both (East Lothian). The latter two Councils have included shared housing outcomes in their supply targets for the next five years.

The question of tenure is not specifically discussed in these RRTPs, though the legal context for sharing does vary by tenure. Individual PRTs within a shared house are possible with MMR and the PRS, whilst a joint SST is currently the only route to implement sharing within social rented housing.²⁹ Renfrewshire has successfully made use of the joint tenancy option through its shared housing pilot for young people (see example overleaf).

Temporary shared options

Two authorities which don’t mention shared housing as a settled option, Aberdeenshire and Highland, have made extensive use of shared dispersed temporary accommodation. Both highlight just how successful this has been in the RRTP and have plans to expand it, though not into the settled accommodation arena. Temporary shared options are discussed further in the next chapter.

 It is possible that Glasgow, along with other authorities with sufficient social stock (in numbers, at least) to be able to achieve rapid rehousing, sees no reason to consider shared tenancies. As with the PRS, sharing as an option can be perceived as hard to manage, unpopular and “second best”. As such it is not a housing option which garners support in all quarters. Whether shared models of settled housing *should* form part of the options offered to homeless households is therefore another question raised, but not resolved, by RRTPs.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

East Lothian Council has developed an innovative shared housing scheme, Home and Belonging, for care-experienced young people using the supportive peer flatmate model successfully deployed by Rock Trust in Edinburgh for over 20 years. They have partnered with Queen Margaret University to source student flatmates in the role of a live-in mentor, who receives free accommodation in return for their support to the flatmates. The Council has already received some funding for this project, which is also supported by Who Cares? Scotland, in order to purchase three-bedroomed homes. The Rock Trust will provide support for the project.

²⁹ One of HARSAG’s recommendations on promoting the widest range of move-on options included clarifying tenancy and Council Tax arrangements for sharing in the social sector.

Renfrewshire Council has been piloting an in-house social housing sharing programme for 16–24 year olds since 2017. The Council assesses that sharing offers young people more choice, more affordability, easier access to work and alleviation from feelings of isolation. In addition, it is a practical means of addressing the severe lack of one bedroom homes.

So far, six pairs of young people have moved into two-bedroom Council stock, with structured support whereby a mediator works proactively with each pair to produce a house-sharing agreement. There is a named contact should relationships fray. The Council has also designed a house-sharing App for individuals interested in sharing who don't have a flatmate. Renfrewshire is keen to expand this project, in partnership with a third sector agency.

Housing First

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

RRTP guidance is clear that Housing First should be the first and “default” housing option for homeless households with multiple and complex needs who traditionally “may not consider (or be considered for) mainstream housing as an option”. Authorities were asked to note any current Housing First projects and their capacity in RRTPs, and to make plans for how they would mainstream/upscale such options, or how they would implement Housing First, if this did not already exist in the area.

In order to plan provision, authorities were asked to assess and quantify the level of support needs of the current (and future) homeless cohort and display this in the format of number of households within each of four categories, the first two of which were low/no support needs and medium needs which could be met by mainstream support services in the community.

The third group were people with complex needs, also described as people with Severe and Multiple Disadvantage (SMD), for whom Housing First, with its intensive wrap around support, would be the best

option. The last group was people with needs so complex that “independent living within the community is not possible or preferable for whatever reason (safety, risk to self or others, choice), and for whom shared, supported accommodation is the preferred housing option”.

Authorities were advised in the toolkit that Housing First tenancy sustainment outcomes at the two-year mark were around 80–90%, but also that it was generally not possible to know in advance who would make up the 10–20% for whom Housing First may fail. This leads to the statement that the “best approach is Housing First, *first*, for people with multiple needs”.

This clearly encourages authorities to err on the side of placing more households in the complex needs than the specialist accommodation group, giving everyone a chance of their own tenancy unless they opt against this, “even after strong encouragement”.

Not mentioned in RRTP guidance, but our view is...

Authorities were not asked to describe how households with complex needs are currently dealt with by their homelessness services or where the cohort they think will benefit from Housing First tends to reside currently. They were also not asked to comment

on whether or how far the concept of “tenancy readiness” pertains in their areas, though some do so.

Not all authorities have a high stock of supported accommodation or long stays in temporary accommodation, suggesting that in some areas, households with complex needs are being housed but possibly not sustaining, instead of being “held” in the homelessness system.

In our view, this detail is useful to see in the RRTPs which provided it, as it has not been established how prevalent the “tenancy readiness” concept is across Scotland (as opposed to an absence or insufficiency of flexible, personalised support services which enable more complex households to sustain tenancies).

Overview

Existing Housing First provision in Scotland

All authorities include plans for exploration, implementation or expansion of Housing First within their RRTPs. Eleven had Housing First projects underway in their areas at time of RRTP submission, with South Ayrshire about to start a pilot shortly after the RRTP was published. Four of five cities with Housing First had only recently started to implement it through Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder.³⁰ Glasgow has a much more established relationship with Housing First. Turning Point pioneered its use there from 2010. This was complemented by Homes for Good/Glasgow City Mission's Housing First in the PRS project from 2016, and the Pathfinder from 2018.³¹

There are established Housing First projects in Renfrewshire (local authority commissioned service,

operational since 2013); East Dunbartonshire (Big Lottery and local authority funded, from 2013); South Lanarkshire (two commissioned projects, with Shelter providing Housing First for families and YPeople Housing First for single people, from 2016), Aberdeenshire (local authority run rural Housing First, now also a Pathfinder area, from 2018), West Lothian (RSL/Rock Trust Housing First for youth, from 2017), and North Ayrshire (in-house pilot focused on repeat offenders, from 2016).

Authorities with Housing First services, pre-RRTP

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Dundee, East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh, Glasgow, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling, West Lothian

Quantifying support needs

RRTPs suggest that authorities assessed support needs using different methods and to different levels of rigour. Over a third do not say which data they used. Some authorities, such as Renfrewshire, North Lanarkshire and South Ayrshire, triangulated data from various sources including Health and Homelessness research and data sets from hostel and support providers. Others, such as Stirling, used the Hard Edges methodology, complementing this with input from frontline staff. Glasgow referred to HL1, local research on SMD and survey returns on the Glasgow housing options model.

West Lothian completed a thorough analysis of all live homeless cases along with their corresponding accommodation situation, which is especially useful. East Lothian and Perth and Kinross focused on households in temporary accommodation, alongside HL1 data.

³⁰ The Pathfinder is a three year programme, funded by Social Bite (£3million), Scottish Government (£6.5million) and Merchant's House Glasgow (£200,000)

³¹ Despite distinct origins, the latter two share stock pledges and discussions are underway to merge the projects.

East Ayrshire assumed all households not in temporary accommodation, unless under Multiagency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), had no or low needs, and case reviewed all other households. Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire had recently completed modelling on future temporary accommodation requirements, so had a good grasp of the support needs of households.

Various RRTPs observe that this exercise often turned up levels of support needs which do not necessarily correlate with HL statistics. A number of authorities, including East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh and Fife also imply that difficulties experienced completing this exercise has caused them to identify areas for future service improvements.

For example, East Dunbartonshire resolves to record the level as well as the type of support need in future, whilst Fife spots an “intelligence gap” it aims to address urgently. Whilst the Council has “a wealth of evidence to underpin the nature, profile and scope of homelessness [...] this level of understanding does not extend to the support needs of households experiencing homelessness”. This is likely to be the case in other areas, and a useful illustration of the way in which rapid rehousing may shift the focus

of how authorities assess and record vulnerability.

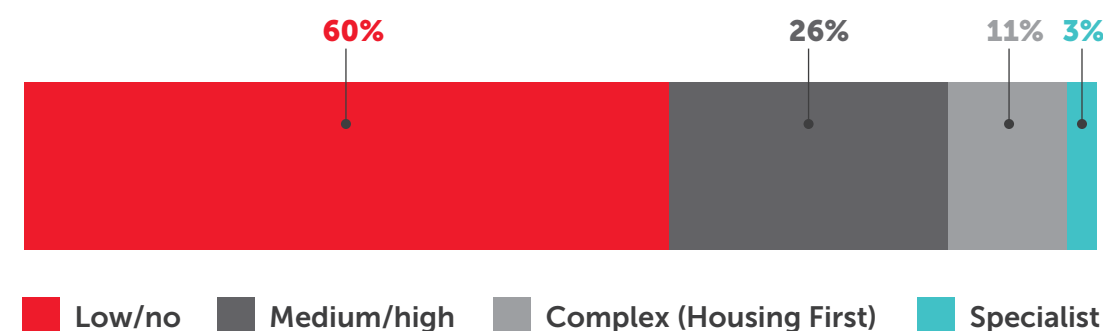
Distribution of support needs by authority

It was possible to find complete figures on support needs distribution for 26 authorities, with five more providing statistics for just one or two of the four groups.³² The general pattern, as expected, is the majority of homeless households in Scotland have no or low support needs.

However, the red section in Chart 4, overleaf, shows the extent of variation across the country. This group ranges from 35% to 88% (average: 60%) Medium needs is less consistent, from 8% to 45% (average: 26%) possibly suggestive of a lack of clarity as to whom the category refers. But all authorities bar one (Renfrewshire) assess this group as smaller than the first group, and all but Inverclyde assess this group as larger than the Housing First cohort.

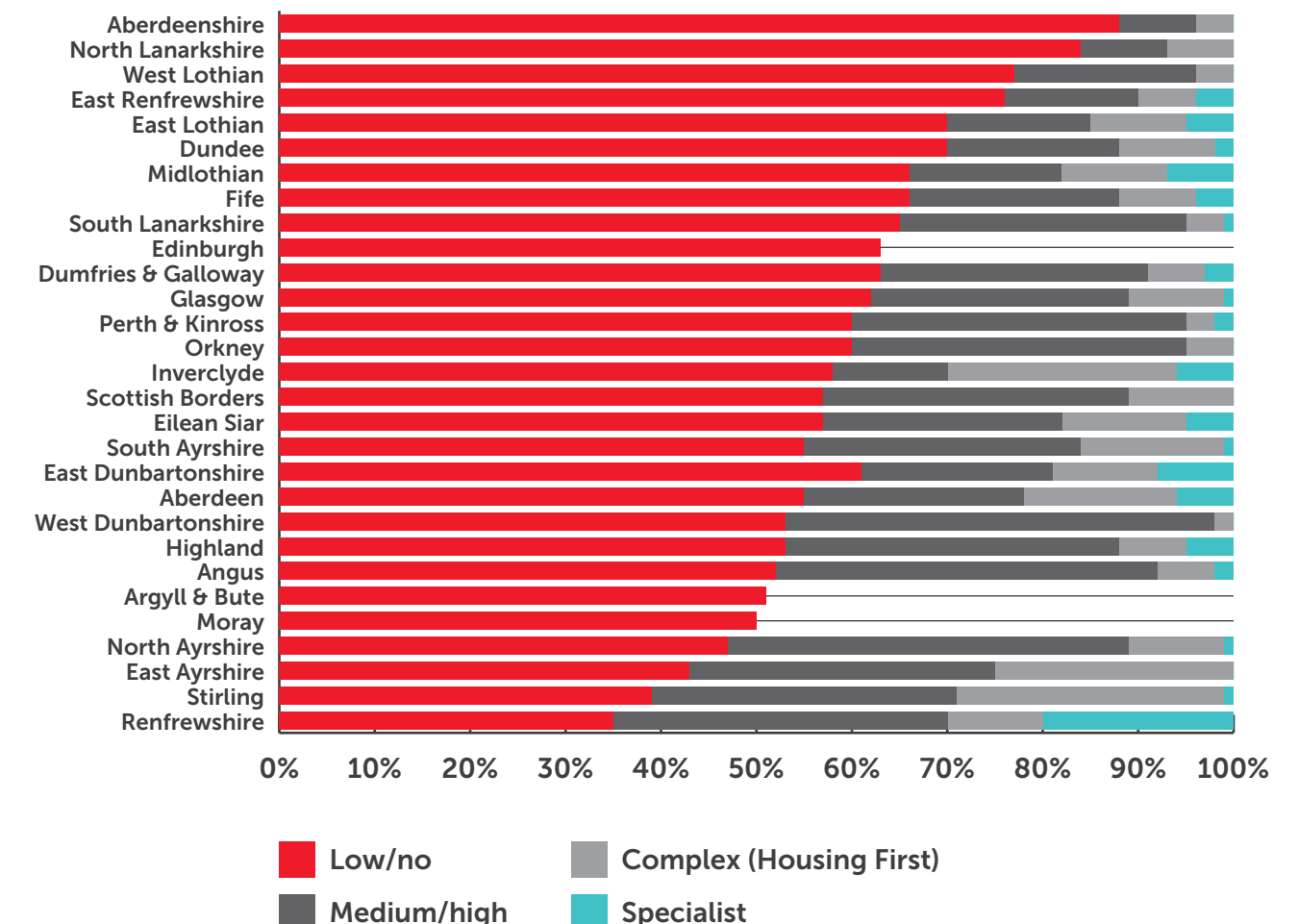
The “complex” cohort ranges from 2% to 28% (average: 11%), again showing diversity in need but likely also in assessment approach. In every authority apart Renfrewshire there are more people in this group than in the specialist supported accommodation group, which range from 0% to 20% (average: 3%).

Chart 3. Distribution of support needs of homeless households: Scotland averages



³² Argyll and Bute, Moray, Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Edinburgh. In the former case, a different classification system was used. In the latter case, being unable to quantify medium, complex and residential groups was attributed to poor recording by staff. No figures could be found for Shetland.

Chart 4. Distribution of support needs across RRTPs from 29 authorities³³



Comparison with SMD and SIMD

Applying the proportion of “complex” cases in each authority to their current open homeless caseloads produces a figure of around 1500 individuals across Scotland. This indicates the number of Housing First tenancies required to meet needs of people who are currently homeless *and* who have a live homelessness application with their local authority. This is extremely crude, and only includes 26 or 32 authorities.³⁴ But it is useful to compare this to the Scottish Housing First target of 5,000 households per year,³⁵ formulated from data gathered by Herriot Watt University on SMD in Scotland.

We also compared the RRTP support needs data to authority-level statistics from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), to test any correlation between these two data sets. The yellow block in the chart overleaf records the % of households in each authority within the 20% most deprived communities in Scotland, against the proportion of homeless households with complex needs (grey) and residential care needs (teal). It suggests no clear correlation.

“Tenancy ready” culture

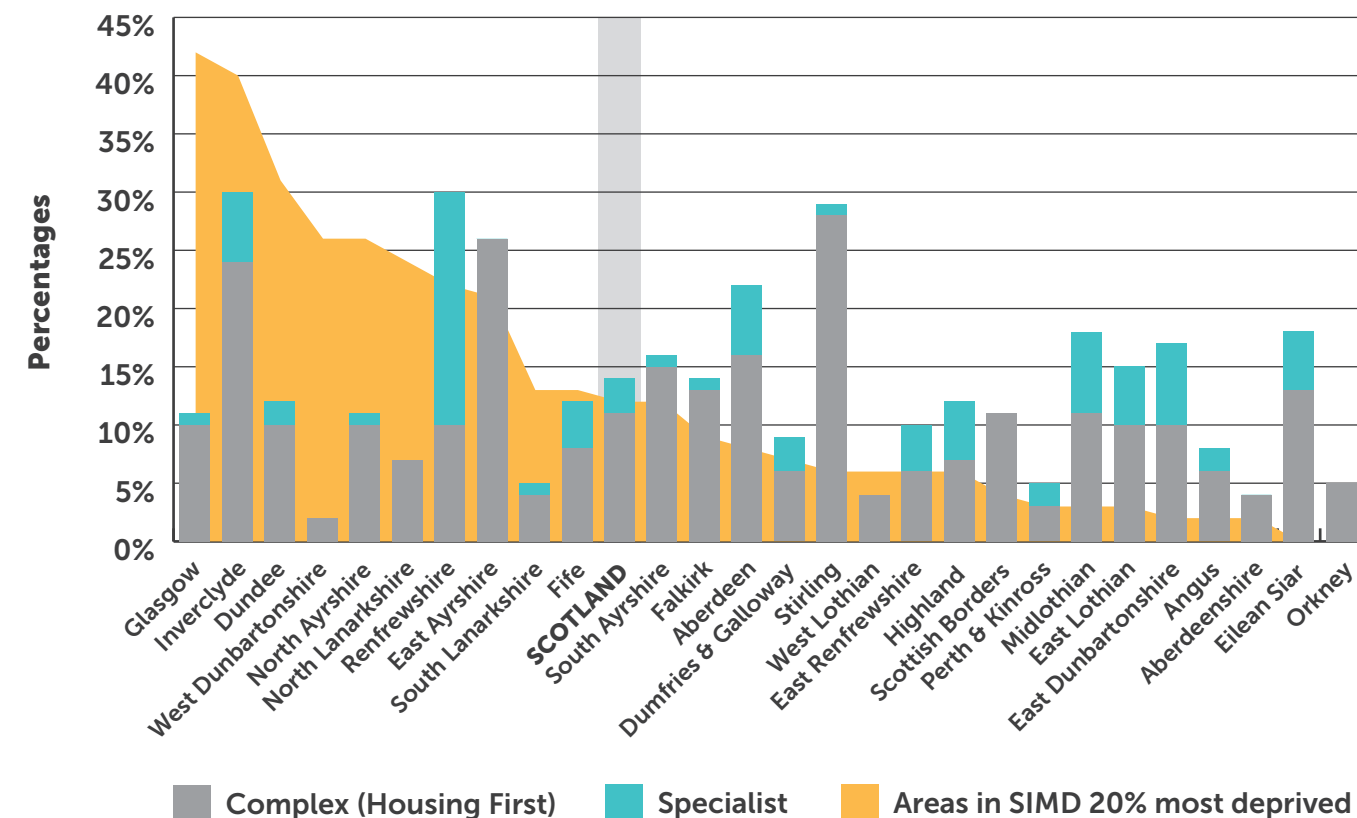
As a key area for change identified by the HARSAG, it is interesting that the concept or practice of “tenancy

³³ Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Shetland are not included.

³⁴ As above, we could not find a % for the complex group in 4 RRTPs, or a figure for live cases in 2 RRTPs.

³⁵ The SMD figure reflects the number of people experiencing homelessness, substance use and offending in any one year. This data, presented by local authority, is provided in Appendix I of the RRTP toolkit.

Chart 5. Comparison between complex support needs in RRTPs and areas in SIMD



readiness" is not mentioned at all in 44% of RRTPs; very crudely, many of these fall within the East of Scotland or islands.

RRTPs which don't mention tenancy readiness culture
Aberdeen, Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Moray, Orkney, Perth and Kinross, Shetland, South Lanarkshire, South Ayrshire

28% of RRTPs contain a general statement, often appearing as a line within the Action Plan, around "the need to shift away from the language and culture of tenancy readiness". That it is included at all suggests, to some extent, authorities recognise the existence of such a culture in their areas, though it is not dwelled upon.

Again, very roughly, this group tend to be found in more rural areas.

RRTPs with a fleeting mention of tenancy readiness culture
Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dumfries and Galloway, East Dunbartonshire, Eilean Siar, Highland, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders

Only six authorities appear to "own" the use of tenancy readiness practice within their current homelessness systems. This small group tends to cluster in areas of multiple deprivation in and around greater Glasgow. Though not mentioned in Glasgow's RRTTP, the practice of requiring households to have a resettlement plan agreed by their case officer before they can be put forward for a Section

Five referral, as outlined in the SHR's 2018 report,³⁶ is a fairly recent example of systemic tenancy readiness culture.

West Dunbartonshire highlights that some accommodation options are used for households with complex needs assessed as "not tenancy ready", and set out plans to remodel these options. North Ayrshire provides data on the proportion of hostel residents assessed as "not tenancy ready", alongside compelling evidence of why some hostel provision is not improving this. Inverclyde acknowledges that rejection of tenancy ready practice will be challenging, given high levels of support needs and repeated tenancy breakdown of a high proportion of their formerly homeless customers.³⁷

North Ayrshire, Stirling and Glasgow set out plans to introduce equality in rehousing timescales for households of all support need groups, showing each Council committing to move away from a system that sets tenancy readiness as a prerequisite for obtaining settled housing.

RRTPs owning tenancy readiness culture in their areas
Glasgow, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, Stirling, West Lothian, West Dunbartonshire

Three authorities, in contrast, specifically state that they do *not* recognise tenancy readiness culture as operating in their areas. East Renfrewshire and Clackmannanshire, neither which have extensive supported or congregate accommodation, suggest complexity of need does not prevent rehousing, the latter stating "there are no tenancy readiness barriers or tests operated by any social landlord within the area". Both acknowledge that reframing how support is delivered would be

beneficial, but are clear this doesn't stop individuals being housed in their current system, albeit not always sustainably.

Argyll and Bute interestingly reports that, some years ago, the Council adopted a principle that "with the right level of support the vast majority of people can sustain a mainstream tenancy", making a simultaneous effort to avoid tenancy readiness terminology. The RRTTP underlines that this hasn't always been successful, as the extent and complexity of tenants' support needs (often outwith the "housing" domain) are not always well addressed by current support providers and/or current partnership working between agencies.

Their future focus will therefore be *more* on ensuring ensure support provision, in the widest sense, is enabling of tenancy sustainment, and less on challenging tenancy readiness culture. East Kilbride Housing Association articulates this dual focus within its PCS appended to South Lanarkshire's RRTTP. The Association is keen to reframe the question around "the concept of tenancy sustainment and what support can make that happen". Our broad reading of RRTPs suggests that an emphasis on reconfiguring support services may be more relevant in some areas than outlawing tenancy readiness.

RRTPs which refute tenancy readiness culture in their areas
Argyll and Bute, Clackmannanshire, East Renfrewshire

Identifying the Housing First "cohort"

Some authorities are further on than others in identifying who would benefit from Housing First, and

³⁶ See <https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/housing-people-who-are-homeless-glasgow> (SHR report on Glasgow City Council's homelessness service 2018)

³⁷ At 13.3%, repeat homelessness rate in Inverclyde was the highest in Scotland.

where those people are in (or out of) their current system. Some suggest they provide Housing First in “all but name”, or have pilots which are very close to the model. For instance, Moray suggests its scatter properties initiative for care leavers “with some minor changes, is nearly identical to outcomes that Housing First seeks to achieve”.³⁸ Clackmannanshire has a similar view, whilst Aberdeenshire’s Pitstop project with Turning Point blends supported accommodation for people with substance use with onward tenancy support from the same provider, offered on Housing First principles.

For authorities without provision, some, such as East Lothian, East Ayrshire, East Renfrewshire and Perth and Kinross (which despite using “Home First”, a housing-led approach for over two years, has no Housing First) are at the stage of conducting feasibility studies and research to identify the potential Housing First client group. In Edinburgh’s case, despite being a Pathfinder authority, there is no detail on the size of the potential Housing First cohort.³⁹

Other authorities (with or without existing provision) have honed in on specific client groups. Around a quarter of RRTPs set out plans to install some provision for Housing First for young people, based on positive experiences of the RSL/Rock Trust care leaver initiative in West Lothian. West Lothian Council is keen to expand the project beyond care leavers, to other young people with complex needs indicators. Eilean Siar also aims to offer Housing First to young people with complex needs, regardless of whether they have been in care.

Authorities with Housing First for Youth

West Lothian, Edinburgh

Authorities with plans to introduce Housing First for Youth

Aberdeenshire, Dundee, Eilean Siar, Fife, North Lanarkshire, Orkney, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire

Eilean Siar has identified people with substance issues as the other primary group for the service; this is also the cohort targeted by Falkirk, Highland and Moray. Dundee aims to provide five Housing First tenancies per year specifically for women with complex needs fleeing domestic abuse. Fife will focus on Housing First for prison leavers, to support Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) standards. West Lothian intends to develop modifications of Housing First for a range of specific groups with complex needs who are at risk of homelessness.

One RRTP (South Lanarkshire) discusses a Housing First service for families. The Council has commissioned a service from Shelter Scotland since 2017, with positive results, and aims to expand this. The extent to which Housing First might be relevant for families is not discussed in any other RRTP.

Housing First tenure and building type

Most Housing First plans are for mainstream dispersed tenancies and social housing SSTs, though Pathfinder areas also include the PRS as an option. This tenure has already been used for Housing First in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Dundee. North

³⁸ Neither Moray or Clackmannanshire lay out the principles (as opposed to the outcomes) of existing models so it is not possible to assess the extent to which these fit with a Housing First approach.

³⁹ Pathfinder tenancy targets were not set in relation to local figures for the potential Housing First “cohort”. Targets were initially informed by pledges of stock from social landlords, then subsequently increased as additional funding was received (from Scottish Government and Merchant’s House Glasgow) for support staff.

Lanarkshire also aims to explore use of PRS for Housing First. In terms of tenancy type, South Lanarkshire’s two distinct services for families and single households differ from most by using short SSTs or Occupancy Agreements, with a commitment to review at six months, rather than a full SST. Many English and European versions of Housing First operate using what could be regarded as “probationary” or “trial” tenancies, but this is unusual in Scotland.

Argyll and Bute identifies temporary RSL owned properties which can be converted to SSTs specifically for Housing First tenants. Aberdeenshire’s Council-run service uses temporary self-contained properties as a starting point for Housing First, offering to convert the tenancy to an SST, or allow the person to move, based on their preferences. This is due to permanent accommodation not always being immediately available in the area of people’s choice, as well as some clients enjoying the option of trying out a tenancy, but not being stuck with it if they are unsure.

The Pitstop project referenced above also offers a way of mixing Housing First support with prior stays in specialist supported accommodation.

In our view, this is a potentially valuable model, as long as this is not the only way complex people with substance issues can access Housing First locally (which, in Aberdeenshire, it isn’t).

East Renfrewshire’s plans for a block of flats used for temporary accommodation to be re-designated as Housing First are suggestive of a congregate model. Dundee also has plans to reconfigure current hostels into self-contained blocks for Housing First tenancies, with on-site support. This model is one of those used in Finland, for those whose needs are deemed too high for dispersed living.⁴⁰

Housing First service inception and scale

Many authorities without current Housing First provision set out plans to introduce this within the first year of their RRTP. This is the case for Scottish Borders, Fife, West Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire and Midlothian, for example.

Others plan to implement Housing First in future years. East Ayrshire, Argyll and Bute and Moray plan to start in year two of the RRTP, and Eilean Siar and Dumfries and Galloway in year three (when funding has been able to be diverted from other temporary accommodation and support contracts). Some authorities are less clear when their services are expected to start, such as East Lothian, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire.

There is diversity across Scotland as to the extent to which planned Housing First projects will meet identified need. In some areas, the amount of Housing First tenancies planned appears to roughly match need. This is the case in East Lothian, Falkirk, South Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire. In others, the proportion of Housing First planned exceeds the proportion of current households with complex needs. The extent to which it does so however differs greatly, most obviously in Fife, with a current caseload of just under 100 complex persons in the cohort, but with plans for 375 tenancies over five years.

In other areas, the planned provision barely touches the current complex caseload. Midlothian assesses that 112 Housing First tenancies are required for its current caseload, yet has only planned for 45 during the course of the RRTP. This disparity isn’t explained. Stirling determines that a high proportion of its caseload would require Housing First (28% - over 100 people), but has only planned 66 tenancies over the next five years. East

⁴⁰ https://ysaatio.fi/assets/files/2018/01/A_Home_of_Your_Own_lowres_spreads.pdf

Dunbartonshire wants to extend its successful Housing First project, but the extent by which it aims to do so barely reaches half the caseload of complex individuals.

Housing First staffing structures

A minority of authorities set out their Housing First staffing structures in RRTPs. These differ by ratio of client to workers, and in terms of which staff will form part of the Housing First team. Aberdeenshire's rural Housing First (as opposed to the Pathfinder) has the highest caseload, with 15 clients listed as being supported (successfully) by one worker. One additional worker has been funded, but with a waiting list of 12 clients, both may still have a high caseload, based on UK and international guidelines.⁴¹ This model, as a rural rendition of Housing First, does however make more use of direct support from other agencies than may be typical of other Scottish services.

Renfrewshire's existing (successful) model has a ratio of seven clients to one worker. This is also the maximum caseload for Pathfinders. A smaller ratio of six to one is planned in West Dunbartonshire, and five to one in Stirling and North Ayrshire. Moray's plans to recruit five workers for 15 tenants provides the smallest caseloads, though these will rise as years go on.

A minority of Housing First projects plan for other staff, as well as support workers, to be embedded in the team. Nine RRTPs include a peer support role.⁴² Five projects also include health or addictions specialists from NHS or H&SC. South Ayrshire adds a public health nurse, East Ayrshire a mental health nurse, North Ayrshire's model contains two addictions

and two mental health specialists, Highland's team two nurses and North Lanarkshire two qualified H&SC professionals. Housing First projects developed jointly with H&SC/NHS appear more likely to feature these roles.⁴³ Only Argyll and Bute's plans see H&SC professionals as lead workers within Housing First.

Authorities with plans to build peer support into Housing First services

Argyll and Bute, Falkirk, Midlothian, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, Stirling, West Lothian

Housing First costing and funding

As with all other aspects of Housing First plans, there are great differences in costings and funding requests across Scotland. Highland, Fife and Scottish Borders estimate the costs of Housing First per client up front in their RRTPs. These sit fairly consistently at £6,000–£7,500 per annum mark. This corresponds to Pathfinder costings of £7,500 per client in year one, which includes £1,500 for furniture, and £6000 per annum thereafter.

RRTPs from North Ayrshire, Stirling, Glasgow, South Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire, which all use similar modelling, estimate higher costs for Housing First. Part of this may relate to lower maximum caseloads, therefore more staff required to provide Housing First support, as well as inclusion of other job roles. Another part reflects the costs allocated for décor and furniture, of £5000 per tenancy in these examples⁴⁴ (in contrast, the Pathfinder costs furniture at £1,500 per tenancy). Other models seek to work

with voluntary sector partners on the issue of furniture, and do not cost it.

Projects modelled by consultants have been costed in a transparent manner and are fairly similar, albeit with some differences in staffing. Many authorities don't lay out their staffing models (or salaries) which makes their costings challenging to understand. Regardless, there appears to be a great difference in how projects have been costed.

For example, neither Midlothian nor East Lothian have current provision. Both aim for 50 tenancies over five years. The former costs this nearly three times higher than the latter (£1.1million/£375,000) despite presupposing 15 hours per client weekly, in contrast to nine. Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee have funded Pathfinders. Glasgow requests £8.6 million additional RRTP funding for Housing First, in contrast to Edinburgh's £1million and Dundee's £600,000.

Pathfinder apart, it's rare to find Housing First services receiving commitments for funding from sources other than local authorities themselves. This places a heavy weight on funding requests made for this aspect in RRTPs. Renfrewshire was the first local authority in Scotland to commission Housing First, followed by Glasgow, East Dunbartonshire, South Lanarkshire and Aberdeenshire. South Ayrshire and Aberdeenshire are using homelessness prevention funds to pilot Housing First for one year, but do not have this option in future.

In East Dunbartonshire's case, most of the funding comes from the Big Lottery, though unusually, there is an £11,000 contribution from the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP). Highland is the only other authority which, on this reading, has secured ADP monies for Housing First. This investment represents half of the total sought. West Lothian moots the use of ADP funding for this purpose, whilst North Lanarkshire cites in its resource plan that business cases will be submitted for ADP and H&SC monies to match fund resources which may be forthcoming from RRTP funding.

Future funding of Housing First tends to be referenced in terms of "mainstreaming" through the commissioning process during years four and five of the RRTP. In a small number of cases, authorities have calculated that savings made from other rapid rehousing actions, such as closure of hostels and eradication of B&B, will allow them to fund Housing First in the future without reliance on external sources. This is the case in Highland, North Ayrshire and Angus for example. Argyll and Bute has costed two transitional "health liaison" roles to build the foundations of an integrated model of support between housing, health and Social Work. By year five of the RRTP they hope integration between services will be such that these roles are no longer required.

41 Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder plans for a maximum caseload of 7 clients, Housing First England guidance is 5-7 clients, and Housing First Europe reports caseloads between 5-10 across various European projects.

42 Peer support/mentoring roles are planned in other RRTPs, such as South Lanarkshire and East Ayrshire, though not specifically referenced in relation to Housing First.

43 Though this does not usually translate to a funding contribution from H&SC.

44 West Dunbartonshire's second RRTP draft reduces furniture costs by half, presumably after Government feedback

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

Glasgow City Council has made plans to set up a dedicated Housing First assessment team within each community homelessness team to assess, coordinate support and manage the process for homeless households with complex needs. The team will work with the broader Housing First network in Glasgow. Homeless households presenting to the Council will therefore, within 28 days of presenting as homeless, be referred to an RSL through a Section Five referral, or referred to the Housing First service.

This approach facilitates Housing First being positioned as the default option for households with complex needs, rather than relying on Housing Officers with generic caseloads or other services used by vulnerable people to refer them. It wires a Housing First pathway into the bricks of the homelessness system.

North Ayrshire Council completed a review in 2016, concluding that homelessness service provision for people with multiple and complex needs required further scrutiny and improvement. It took an inter-agency approach to improve outcomes for this group and acknowledged the need to try a new type of service model, in the shape of a Housing First pilot. The Council consulted widely with partners and homeless service users on the design and intended outcomes of the Housing First service.

In 2017, they set up a small pilot targeted at six individuals with a background of repeat homelessness and offending. A multi-agency steering group was set up, a Housing First support worker appointed, and a peer support worker with a history of homelessness and offending recruited. All six tenants remain in their tenancies at the 12-month review period and all reported positive experiences with Housing First, with notable outcomes in the area of addiction recovery.

The Council was also able to identify savings in temporary accommodation costs when compared to the traditional journey. This small pilot provides excellent local learning and evidenced outcomes on which to build, as Housing First becomes a larger part of the service offer in North Ayrshire.

West Lothian Council aims to set up a Housing First co-ordinating team which takes inspiration from their successful Syrian Refugee Service model. The team (for which the Council requests Scottish Government funding) will identify support packages, develop peer mentoring, procure Self Directed Support (SDS) and reconfigure services (including ADP-funded support in temporary accommodation) using the principles of Housing First.

Renfrewshire Council has had an operational Housing First service in place for five years. It was the first Scottish authority to commission a Housing First service, which is delivered in partnership with Turning Point Scotland. It has a tenancy sustainment rate of 90%, which is higher than the sustainment level for lets to all homeless applicants in Renfrewshire in 2017/18. No Housing First tenant has had to present to the homelessness team since joining the service. The service has been running for long enough to be able to show clear outcomes in terms of recovery and the journeys service users have made.

This experience gives Renfrewshire an excellent basis on which to cost the development of its Housing First service. It plans, through RRTP funding, to add to the peer-support role, implement digital inclusion, target younger homeless applicants, and pilot Housing First in a shared tenancy setting.

North Lanarkshire Council does not have Housing First provision at present but has made extensive progress in securing the multi-agency foundations on which to build a service in future. The Health and Homelessness Steering Group has made a strong H&SC contribution to the RRTP, following actions identified by health and homelessness research completed in the Lanarkshire area in 2016.

The H&SCP commits to developing a care management model to support localities to coordinate care for Housing First tenants, aligning a dedicated Health and Homelessness lead professional and support worker to each locality to work closely with locality H&SC colleagues. The H&SCP also commits to trialling extension of SDS to Housing First tenants who are eligible for packages of care. A business case is being put forward to the ADP and H&SC commissioning for additional capacity.

Chapter 3 Transforming temporary accommodation

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

HARSAG and ensuing RRTP guidance are clear that authorities should “redress the balance of temporary accommodation”, which generally means a reduction in both overall provision and average lengths of stay. This is to be achieved by increasing settled housing options and decreasing demand through prevention activities.

It also means a change in the sort of accommodation used, with a move away from larger, congregate and unsupported premises (such as larger hostels and Bed and Breakfasts (B&Bs)) in favour of dispersed, self-contained premises in communities. Alternatively, and only where supported accommodation is necessary in relation to a household’s support needs, provision should be small in size, high in quality, and staff and premises should operate within a psychologically informed environment (PIE).

HARSAG also recommended accommodation should be affordable to those in work or with no Housing Benefit (HB) entitlement, and that moves around different placements should be kept to a minimum. As RRTP guidance notes, the HARSAG vision

is not too distant a reality for some authorities in Scotland, whilst very far from it in others.

Authorities were asked to provide details on the capacity, nature, average stays and costs of temporary accommodation in their area, and analyse trends in demand since 2003, suggesting whether this has peaked or continued to rise.

They were then asked to set out a five-year vision for transforming temporary provision, factoring in the scaling up of Housing First and refining supported accommodation capacity, and provide a “locally agreed” target for the *maximum* (as opposed to average) time households should spend in temporary accommodation, of any sort, by the end of the five year RRTP period.

One of the four areas for which authorities could request funding is for redesign of existing temporary accommodation supply.

Not mentioned in RRTP guidance, but our view is...

Whilst authorities were asked to state average length of stays by temporary accommodation type and provide a maximum stay by 2024, they

were not asked to provide current data on longer or the longest stays, nor *total* time spent in temporary accommodation before rehousing currently. This doesn’t allow a clear picture of what customer journeys look like now, and which households get “stuck” in the system.

This is especially important when considering the role played by unsuitable temporary accommodation. For instance, in some areas B&B use is routine, but not protracted. In other areas there is little option but B&B for the whole homelessness period. As B&B accommodates so many households on a short-term basis and has many comings and goings, average stays occlude often particularly harmful⁴⁵ long-term stays. Some RRTPs choose to provide this detail, but many don’t.

Authorities were also not asked to comment on their ability (or otherwise) to consistently meet legal duties to provide temporary accommodation,⁴⁶ including through out of hours services, or to describe night shelter provision within their areas. In areas where entitled people are sent away due to accommodation shortages and shelters are a routine part of accommodation provision, numbers of households accommodated in HL returns cannot tell the whole story in respect of overall need.

Lastly, authorities weren’t expected to mention in RRTPs the options available (or not) through their temporary accommodation services for households with pets, couples or for storage of belongings, including furniture, though HARSAG did make recommendations that all of these should be catered for.

In our view, RRTPs that critically analyse who gets what, how well needs are matched and the degree of choice for customers, if any, within an authority’s current temporary accommodation system, are suggestive of good practice. This is also the case for RRTPs which reflect on the nature and extent of households that may currently be in need of, but not accessing, temporary accommodation in their areas (due to overall shortages or refusal of the sort or location of accommodation on offer).

Overview

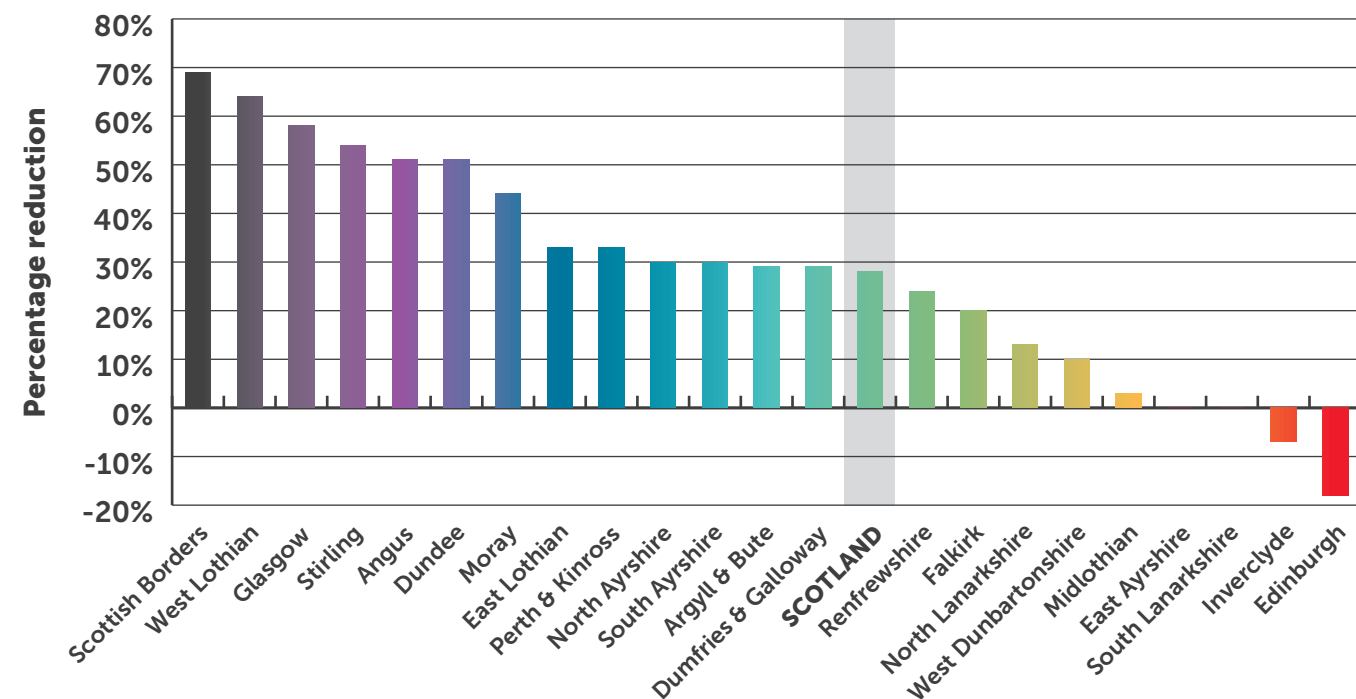
Plans for future quantity of temporary accommodation

Three quarters of all authorities aim for a reduced stock of temporary accommodation by 2024. Of the 70% of authorities for which figures were obtainable, the extent of reduction of units runs from 3% in Midlothian to 69% in Scottish Borders. Five other authorities aim to more than halve their temporary accommodation units (Glasgow, Dundee, Stirling, West Lothian, Angus). A further 20% plan a “greatly reduced stock” without specifying numbers. The average reduction in temporary stock across Scotland, bearing in mind a handful of authorities aim to increase it and some don’t offer figures, is 28%.

⁴⁵ www.crisis.org.uk/media/239523/i_wont_last_long_in_here_experiences_of_unsuitable_temporary_accommodation_in_scotland_.pdf

⁴⁶ Table 29 shows 10 authorities completed HL3 returns last year in relation to being unable to meet duties <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables/homelessness1819tablescharts>

Chart 6. Projected reduction in temporary accommodation units from 2019-2024, by local authority



RRTPs setting plans to reduce temporary accommodation

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Dundee, Dumfries and Galloway, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Eilean Siar, Falkirk, Glasgow, Highland, Midlothian, Moray, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Perth and Kinross, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders, Shetland, South Ayrshire, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian

Eight RRTPs set no plans to reduce temporary accommodation. For five, no change is planned. East Renfrewshire suggests it can only reduce provision by requiring people to live in areas they don't want to go to. South Lanarkshire sets no targets to reduce stock, as "any reduction in supply of temporary accommodation will be linked to a reduction in need".

The Council does not expect to see this until 2021.

East Ayrshire predicts a rise in temporary accommodation demand. It refrains from normal practice of procuring additional units, but also refrains from planning reductions. Orkney does not plan decreases in temporary accommodation either, possibly due to having low amounts of future new build social supply, reducing the Council's ability to move people on.

RRTPs not setting plans to reduce or increase temporary accommodation

East Ayrshire, East Renfrewshire, Fife, Orkney, South Lanarkshire

Edinburgh, Inverclyde and Clackmannanshire are the only authorities expecting to increase rather than decrease temporary units.

Edinburgh projects an increase of 18% in temporary stock, mainly in the form of temporary flats and PSL. Inverclyde expects a small decrease in temporary self-contained properties and hostels, but an increase in "core and cluster" supported accommodation.⁴⁷ Clackmannanshire wants to grow supply to avoid sending households to B&Bs in Stirling, which the RRTP states is an unpopular option, often refused.

RRTPs setting plans to increase temporary accommodation

Clackmannanshire, Edinburgh, Inverclyde

No authority discusses an inability to meet temporary accommodation duty, nor attempts to estimate the numbers of households who may be part of an entitled cohort but who use night shelters or sleep rough due to accommodation shortages. Glasgow makes a fleeting reference to some rough sleeping being attributable to shortages, but this isn't dwelled upon.

Our view is that when estimating future temporary accommodation demand, a key consideration for pressured authorities is to understand the extent of this partially concealed group, and factor into future temporary accommodation requirements the current extent of ability to meet duties.

! Balancing sufficient supply to meet legal duties with sufficient ambition for system change is a key tension within the transition to rapid rehousing. Authorities planning "no change" or growing temporary stock could appear to defy the rapid rehousing ethos, or to lack ambition.

But the consequences of reducing supply too quickly, dogmatically or in the wrong order could be far-reaching, as Heriot Watt's 2018 report documents.⁴⁸ Whilst closure of some supported accommodation meets Glasgow's RRTP vision, doing so in the context of ongoing failures to meet temporary accommodation duties has generated acute concern, legal challenge and regulatory intervention.⁴⁹

Our view is that this underlines the need for extremely careful planning and monitoring as system change proceeds, ensuring people are never faced with rough sleeping as a result.

Plans for future duration of stays in temporary accommodation

A higher proportion of authorities (84%) aim for reduced length of stay in temporary accommodation by 2024, than aim for reduction in capacity. Figures were only obtainable for just over half of all authorities. It should be noted that a number of authorities report service objectives to reduce temporary accommodation journey time which pre-existed the RRTP, and have already brought about positive change, for example, Aberdeen and Dumfries and Galloway.

For those, average reduction in stay is 42%. Reduction in average stays range from 6% in East Dunbartonshire to 71% in West Lothian. As above, six other authorities (with some overlap in relation to 50%+ reduction in temporary units) aim to reduce average stays by more than half. These are Glasgow, Dundee, Angus, North Ayrshire, Argyll and Bute and Aberdeenshire.

⁴⁷ This is referred to as "interim" so is viewed as a type of temporary accommodation; this may be a mis-reading.

⁴⁸ https://pureapps2.hw.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/23430074/SB_TempAccommReport_FinalReport.pdf Chapters 4 and 5

⁴⁹ <https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/shelter-scotland-begins-court-action-against-glasgow-city-council> and <https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/regulator-launches-inquiry-into-glasgow-city-council-s-homelessness-services>

Only three authorities do not plan to reduce average stays, these are Edinburgh, East Renfrewshire and Clackmannanshire. In the former case, the aim is to halt a rise in average stays, rather than setting targets to reduce them, in view of the city's extremely difficult housing market.

East Renfrewshire reports below average stays currently, and that decreasing these would undermine household choice and tenancy sustainability. Clackmannanshire makes a similar argument, but also questions the usefulness of a "simple target that does not take account of the quality and effectiveness of the applicant's final housing outcome". It suggests this "may encourage practices effective at reducing time spent, but less effective at ensuring long term sustainability and customer wellbeing".

No authority plans to *increase* average stays in temporary accommodation. However it should be noted that some authorities aiming to reduce average lengths of stay for households with no/low or complex needs, expect average stays to *increase* for those with "medium" support needs. North Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and Inverclyde fall into this group.

B&B

In relation to the sort of temporary accommodation being decreased, 22 authorities use B&B currently with six of these doing so in exceptional cases, five more often but for short stays, and eleven with longer term use. Of the 16 authorities using B&B more routinely, ten aim to eliminate it entirely by year five of the RRTP (the majority, by years two or three) whilst three commit to minimising length of stays to seven days or less.

East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian and Edinburgh are the only authorities using B&B for extended periods currently that don't commit to end or reduce use to comply with a seven-day limit. By 2024, the former predicts a reduction from the current 60-day average, whilst East Lothian aims for a maximum B&B stay of 12 weeks. Edinburgh does not set a timescale, but aims for a 13% reduction in B&B use, alongside elimination of traditional B&B models (i.e. curfew, no cooking/laundry facilities).

Private Sector Leasing (PSL)

Of 21 authorities mentioning PSL, four have already phased it out; often because it wasn't an affordable source of temporary accommodation to the Council following various welfare reforms. Eight further authorities aim to greatly reduce or eliminate PSL over the RRTP period. Whilst four do not specifically talk about reductions of PSL, they are significantly reducing self-contained temporary stock, implying PSL will also be reduced.

Both Lanarkshires, East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire don't specify reductions of PSL (of these, only North Lanarkshire specifies reduction in *any* temporary accommodation type). Edinburgh bucks the trend, with plans to significantly increase units of PSL by 2024, from 1420 to 1850+, an increase linked to the B&B issue mentioned above.

Temporary self-contained properties

All authorities use temporary self-contained stock, though there are great differences in proportional use of their own stock and that of other social (RSL) and PRS landlords. Again for reasons of welfare reform, many authorities, such as Highland, Renfrewshire and Angus, aim to minimise leased stock and use their own stock for temporary accommodation where possible. This is clearly not an option for stock transfer authorities.

Just under three quarters of authorities aim to reduce dispersed temporary stock. Of those providing figures (65% of total), this ranges from a 76% reduction in Perth and Kinross to a 3% reduction in Falkirk. 80% of stock owning authorities will convert some temporary stock to permanent SSTs, and all stock transfer authorities aim to hand back RSL owned stock to allow the same outcome. But a majority of stock-owning authorities providing figures intend to replace temporary properties converted to SSTs, thus not reducing the total.

As above, five authorities make no plans to reduce any temporary accommodation, including temporary self-contained properties, preferring to evaluate the success of rapid rehousing measures on reducing demand before setting plans to reduce capacity. Five further authorities (Highland, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Clackmannanshire and East Dunbartonshire) plan to increase dispersed stock, for reasons particular to each area, generally centred around reducing or eradicating the need to use B&Bs.

Supported temporary accommodation

The vision for supported accommodation in 2024 is less consistent across Scotland. Current proportion of supported accommodation per applicant and per household assessed as having support needs, varies widely by authority, as does the nature of accommodation classed as "supported". Supported accommodation ranges from self-contained, dispersed properties with visiting support to larger, generic hostels with shared facilities. This makes comparisons less robust.

Regardless, almost all authorities plan to review and remodel their supported provision. A small number understand some of their supported provision as potentially breaching a future (extended) Unsuitable Accommodation Order (UAO) due to the shared nature of facilities. There is a thread in some RRTPs to focus actions on ensuring supported accommodation is well matched to applicant need, and allocated "right first time".

Twelve authorities plan reductions, of which by far the biggest are the cities of Dundee, Glasgow and Stirling, with decreases between 52%-57%. Ten authorities aim instead to increase supported beds. The rest expect, or describe, no change in capacity.

Alternative forms of temporary accommodation

A handful of RRTPs explore the use of alternative forms of temporary accommodation, such as community hosting. Three authorities (Aberdeenshire, Highland and Angus) already use shared temporary tenancies, with good results in the first two.⁵⁰ There is interest from three other authorities within RRTPs, all of which are pressured areas using B&B at present.

Plans for improving quality and move-on

A number of authorities consider resident satisfaction with temporary accommodation, and use data on this to determine future RRTP actions. In some cases, such as Renfrewshire, feedback on the standard and quality of all types of accommodation has been positive, and improving. North Ayrshire and Argyll and Bute also report high levels of satisfaction. The latter does however set an early RRTP action to design a more detailed survey of residents to ensure their experience is meaningfully analysed.

50 Angus was about to evaluate its scheme as the RRTP was published.

Midlothian reports in contrast that levels of satisfaction with temporary accommodation are significantly below Scottish averages. Though it suggests some dissatisfaction is likely to relate to the length of stay rather than quality of the property, the Council has set an action to improve tenant experiences of both aspects. Eilean Siar sets a similar action.

Edinburgh refers to service user feedback as instrumental in informing its shift from traditional B&Bs to “shared houses”. It also aims to develop an easy access rating system for residents to be used as part of the contract monitoring system. Aberdeen and North Ayrshire highlight well in their RRTPs how they have used resident data and feedback, as well as statistics on refusals of temporary accommodation, when determining the ongoing suitability of options, including which should be discontinued.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

Perth and Kinross Council set up its Home First transformation project in 2016 to reduce time spent in temporary accommodation on the basis of the stigma and uncertainty households experienced whilst there, as well as the cost, to households and the Council.

Since 2015 the Council has reduced the average temporary accommodation stay from 258 days to 81 days, more than halved the number of households using temporary accommodation at any one time, phased out PSL, eliminated B&B and reduced temporary supply by more than two thirds. In doing this it has reduced spend on temporary accommodation by more than £3 million.

The RRTP sets clear targets to further reduce temporary accommodation supply (by 33%) as well as average stays. There is an onward drive to continue to embed Home First, and no sense of complacency given what has already been achieved.

RRTPs with a focus on resident satisfaction in temporary accommodation

Aberdeen, Argyll and Bute, Clackmannanshire, Edinburgh, Eilean Siar, Midlothian, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire

Perth and Kinross, Aberdeen, Falkirk and East Lothian also discuss actions to facilitate move-on from temporary accommodation. This takes in examination of the voids and offers process, fast tracking Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) referrals and reviewing longstanding temporary accommodation cases, with a view to targeting actions which would facilitate move-on. Most of these Councils have already seen reductions in average stays in temporary accommodation, having implemented these approaches pre-RRTP.

Since 2016, **Aberdeen City Council** has had a focus on reducing total homeless journey time and time spent in temporary accommodation. Supported by a customer survey which told them most customers do not want to be placed in temporary accommodation, they introduced a maximum target journey time and a number of actions to support this including scrutinising each part of the homelessness and allocation process. This showed up delays in getting support in place, offers being refused or withdrawn, properties not being ready to move into and getting properties furnished.

To address this, in 2016, the Council set up a bi-weekly meeting of Officers tasked with looking at longstanding cases including those in temporary accommodation. This has been a successful tool in highlighting blockages and delays in the system and learning from the meeting has been applied to service wide changes. This has led to a reduction in total journey time and related to that, a reduction in total capacity of temporary accommodation.

Bed and Breakfast (B&B)

Overview

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

The RRTP toolkit did not comment specifically on B&B accommodation.

HARSAG recommended the seven-day restriction on unsuitable temporary accommodation (i.e. B&B) in the form of the UAO should be extended to all homeless people, as it currently applies to families and pregnant women. This recommendation was subsequently accepted by the Scottish Government, consulted on, and an announcement made in September 2019 that the Government will legislate on this matter, with effect from May 2021.

HARSAG did acknowledge that, in some cases, B&B provision has its place as emergency accommodation, on particular occasions and particular areas (such as in parts of rural Scotland). Therefore, the ambition is less to eliminate it altogether than to apply strict time limits and rigorous standard requirements.

Prevalence and history of B&B use

Ten authorities surveyed do not use B&B at all, and six only use it occasionally, as an exceptional measure. Half of Scottish authorities use B&B more routinely, though five of these are for relatively short stays, with eleven using the tenure for longer periods. It is worth noting that in the past five years, around two thirds of the total B&B spaces used per night in Scotland have been within two authority areas – Edinburgh and Highland.

Authorities which have eradicated B&B use

Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, East Ayrshire, Falkirk, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Perth and Kinross, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire

Looking at B&B use over time, only Edinburgh, Stirling and West Lothian have rising use: Edinburgh’s year-on-year, West Lothian having never used it until 2012, but reporting a 78% rise in

the past two years and Stirling seeing a decrease from 100 spaces a night in 2010, to 10 in 2012, but this has trebled in the past few years. Glasgow, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and East Dunbartonshire have reduced B&B use over time, though recent years show further decline has plateaued. East Lothian and Highland's use has been consistent, but they have been unable to meaningfully reduce it.

Authorities using B&B occasionally, for emergencies only

Clackmannanshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, Shetland, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire

It is worth noting that what authorities record as B&B in HL1 does not always look the same from area to area. In addition, it appears that accommodation some authorities record as "other" would be classed as B&B by other authorities. RRTPs are useful in this regard as allow the style of provision behind the name to be described and compared. For example, Midlothian, Dumfries and Galloway and Moray⁵¹ discuss provision of a similar style to that which East Lothian and Highland class as B&B. Regardless of what they call it, all authorities identify the accommodation as unsuitable and set plans to eradicate it.

It's our view that defining what "unsuitable accommodation" actually means will be a critical task for future monitoring of compliance to the extended UAO.

Authorities using B&B routinely

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Edinburgh, Eilean Siar, Fife, Glasgow, Highland, Midlothian, Moray, Orkney, Stirling, West Lothian

Meeting current and future UAOs

Of 16 authorities using B&B routinely, ten aim to eliminate it through the RRTP process, generally by 2020/21, whilst three commit to minimising length of stays to seven days or less.

Aberdeenshire aims to reduce stays to seven days, though doesn't set targets to reduce capacity, making the point B&Bs are of high standards and can be the choice of households who don't want to move away from an area. Orkney appears to already meet the forthcoming extended UAO, with average stays of three to six nights. It should be noted that the UAO does not apply where the applicant has been offered suitable accommodation but wishes to remain where they are.⁵²

Authorities using B&B with plans to eradicate, or reduce to seven-day maximum, by 2024

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, East Renfrewshire, Eilean Siar, Fife, Glasgow, Highland, Midlothian, Moray, Orkney, Stirling, West Lothian

Edinburgh, East Lothian and East Dunbartonshire are the exceptions in respect of being able to meet a seven-day UAO for adult households by 2021, or indeed, 2024. The latter's average stay is 60 days; whilst the Council aims to reduce this, its RRTP states

that it will be unable to reduce it to a seven day maximum without additional resource. It points out that doing so means keeping a significant number of vacant properties aside in case of emergency. This is a difficult call when stock is in such short supply. East Lothian's RRTP aims for a maximum B&B stay of 12 weeks by 2024; its first draft RRTP set targets to reduce stays to seven days; this was revised upwards following RRTP funding announcements in July 2019.

Edinburgh aims to reduce B&B by 13% by 2024. This still leaves 590 households a night in B&B, often for protracted periods. In recognition of the ongoing role of the option, the city plans to remove all provision without catering or laundry facilities, and stop using non-contracted providers (i.e. all B&Bs by 2024 will be on a "shared house" model). A "shared house" may still breach the UAO, depending on the final text of the Scottish Parliament's definition. If it does, maximum lengths of stay in that accommodation type for singles/couples in Edinburgh will be very far from seven days, given current timescales can be in excess of a year.

In respect of using B&B for families, not all RRTPs record whether this is currently used as a short-term option or not. Four authorities discuss their breach of the current UAO, which pertains to all households with children or a pregnant female, with East Lothian and Highland stating they did so for the first time in 2016/17 and 13 and 21 times respectively so far this year. Edinburgh reported 20 breaches last year, having not breached before (though the Order was amended that reporting year, reducing from 14 days to seven). Other authorities don't mention this aspect, though statistics show the above mentioned are not the only authorities which breached the UAO.⁵³

Alternatives to B&B

In relation to how authorities using B&B intend to eliminate or reduce use, most are reducing their overall temporary supply and increasing settled housing options, rather than growing other types of temporary accommodation.

Authorities eradicating or reducing B&B by increasing settled housing options only

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Eilean Siar, Fife, Glasgow, Moray, Orkney, Stirling, West Lothian

In contrast, Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Dunbartonshire, Highland and Clackmannanshire aim to grow temporary supply, which means going in the opposite direction to most authorities. Edinburgh requested RRTP funding to expand supported accommodation as a direct alternative to B&B, at £1.3million annually; East Dunbartonshire suggests a similar approach. Midlothian reports it was able to halve its B&B use in recent years by growing supported accommodation. It intends to eliminate remaining use through additional supported and self-contained temporary accommodation. Fife describes a similar (historical) journey. Argyll and Bute implemented a deliberate policy to eradicate B&B in 2013, increasing leased properties, mainly PSL, so as not to decrease permanent supply.

Authorities eradicating or reducing B&B by increasing other temporary options

Clackmannanshire, East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh, Highland, Midlothian

51 These authorities do not report B&B use in HL1. Whilst Moray and Dumfries and Galloway define the provision as HMO-style accommodation not B&B, Midlothian clearly refer to it as B&B in their RRTP

52 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2014/243/made> Article 6: article 5 does not apply where (b) the local authority has offered the applicant accommodation that meets the requirements of article 5, but the applicant wishes to be accommodated in other accommodation that does not meet those requirements

53 In 2017-18 homelessness statistics (as this is the year generally used for preparing RRTPs), eight authorities breached UAO.

Aberdeenshire has successfully implemented shared temporary tenancies as a direct alternative to B&B in recent years, and plans to expand these. The Council is also investigating the feasibility of “community hosting” models as an alternative form of accommodation, especially for young people. However, Aberdeenshire still predicts a reduction in overall temporary units by 2024.

Highland, which has also made successful use of shared temporary tenancies, sets out ambitious plans to both increase total local authority-owned temporary properties then convert these to shared properties on a large scale (150 units). These will be specifically targeted to areas with high B&B/House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) use, such as Inner Moray Firth and Skye, though rely on a significant funding injection. Edinburgh also aims to explore both of these options.

Improving B&B standards

Where length of B&B stays are not able to be meaningfully reduced in the short or medium term (Edinburgh only), the Council wants to introduce features which improve the experience of those who live in them. Shared houses offer facilities lacking in B&B (kitchen, laundry) and an “easy access rating system” will be introduced for residents to provide feedback. A manager will be commissioned to be based at each house with a remit to offer proactive rehousing advice and support, as opposed to the more narrow property/building manager remit of current B&B managers.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

West Lothian Council aims for a 63% reduction in temporary accommodation by 2024, the second highest of all reductions proposed in RRTPs. This is against a trend of rising B&B use since 2017, due to lack of move-on options. The Council has identified significant overspend linked to rising B&B use, including additional transport and storage costs, and wishes to divert this trend. It has set aims to decrease transitions, review models of supported accommodation, eliminate B&B and significantly reduce self-contained stock. There is a clear desire to make a fundamental shift away from expensive crisis spending towards early intervention and prevention.

Fife Council implemented a B&B diversion policy during 2012. At that time, the Council was placing over 1200 households annually into B&B. Faced with the prospect of rising demand due to increased legislative entitlements, Fife placed a focus on B&B diversion activity, along with commissioned partners in its Public Social Partnership (PSP). All partners worked together to define and implement a range of temporary accommodation models, some supported, others dispersed, such as PSL, and nine specific B&B “diversion beds”. Last year, only one B&B provider was used by the Council, with 100 short placements for single people, just 8% of previous levels. The Council continues to adopt a B&B diversion policy, and now aims to eradicate B&B use entirely over the period of the RRTP.

Aberdeenshire Council introduced shared temporary tenancies in 2016 with assistance from Crisis, and now has 16 rooms in eight properties. In Aberdeenshire, it is common for households to choose to sofa surf or sleep out if accommodation is offered in the next town or village rather than the person’s own area. B&B is often used in this context, but is expensive, especially for the many households in employment who don’t qualify for full HB.

Shared tenancies were introduced to expand the temporary options available in particular rural areas, avoid B&B and produce more affordable options for workers. Good sized homes were selected, and additional fire and smoke alarms installed. A sharer’s charter is signed. Two-bed shares do not require an HMO licence. Rents include Council Tax, heating and wifi and are set around the SAR, which brings more revenue to the Council.

Despite some scepticism from staff and no precedent for sharing in the local area, the shared tenancies have had very few management problems, and feedback from residents has been positive. The Council has found the model also works for client groups with higher support needs, including those leaving prison and rehab, for whom isolation and gate-keeping (or “cuckooing”, in which properties of vulnerable tenants can be “taken over” by others, usually for drug-related reasons) have been particular problems in the past.

Highland Council also worked with Crisis in 2016 to introduce shared temporary tenancies, for the same reasons as Aberdeenshire. Highland has the second highest B&B use in Scotland, with extreme housing pressures in Inverness and on Skye, an expensive PRS and rehousing timescales for single person households double those of families. The sharing pilot was implemented as a more affordable, “normal” option for single people with low or no support needs living in B&B in Inverness. Each property has two bedrooms with locks, a prepayment meter and a sharer’s charter. Rents are half that of mainstream temporary properties. Feedback has been positive from tenants, with minimal neighbour/antisocial behaviour (ASB) complaints.

The Council has a rolling programme to expand Council-owned self-contained temporary accommodation and simultaneously decrease more expensive, privately leased properties over the next five years. Its RRTP sets out a plan to expand the shared tenancies approach to 150 people in Inner Moray Firth and on Skye, which aims to eliminate routine use of B&B/HMO properties. The Council seeks RRTP funding for staffing (housing management and caretaker staff) to manage the shared tenancies for the initial upscaling, with the intention this will self-fund by 2024 from reductions in spend on private HMO rooms.

Private Sector Leasing (PSL)

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

PSL was not specifically discussed by HARSAG and isn't mentioned in the RRTP toolkit guidance. PSL is not a distinct category within temporary accommodation types reported in HL1 returns to Scottish Government and would tend to come under "Other" types of temporary accommodation, i.e. not hostels, B&B, or self-contained housing owned by a social landlord. This category would also include private properties used as temporary accommodation on a different basis to PSL.

PSL closely matches HARSAG's definition of "optimum type" temporary accommodation. However, welfare reform has rendered all leased accommodation more expensive to provide than local authority owned temporary stock, causing a general shift away from PSL and other leased models.

Overview

Prevalence of PSL

20 of 32 authorities reported use of "Other" temporary accommodation in the last full reporting year, though this does not mean that all of this provision is PSL. It may be possible to conclude from this that at least 12 authorities don't use PSL, though more seem to have done so in the past. Four RRTPs state the authority moved away from PSL as it became unaffordable under welfare reform.

Of 17 authorities surveyed which do use PSL, eight aim to reduce or eliminate it during the RRTP period. Four others are significantly reducing temporary self-contained stock, implying PSL will also be reduced.

Experiences of PSL

In many authorities, PSL was introduced as an alternative to B&B and a means of providing dispersed temporary accommodation without diminishing social housing supply. The experience of authorities with PSL is mixed, with some viewing it as an expensive and unsuccessful (such as Mid and West Lothian) and others citing it as largely effective, such as South Ayrshire, Aberdeen, Argyll and Bute and Falkirk. West Lothian plans to review all leased models of temporary accommodation on grounds of cost, with an implication PSL will be phased out in the RRTP lifetime.

Authorities reducing PSL

Eight authorities plan to greatly reduce or eliminate PSL. Fife, Falkirk, Stirling, Moray and Renfrewshire, with 82, 44, 22, three and two PSL properties respectively, aim to decommission PSL and have no stock left by 2024. This is generally due to welfare reform rendering PSL financially unviable. South Ayrshire, Highland and Aberdeen are taking a more gradual approach, where it is not clearly stated that PSL will be entirely ended, but that it will be phased out.

Authorities currently using PSL but aiming to reduce or eliminate

Aberdeen, Falkirk, Fife, Highland, Moray, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, Stirling

South Ayrshire intends to use PSL as the basis for a Council-run SLA (as Perth and Kinross did some years ago), offering permanent rather than temporary tenancies, but retaining the features landlords like. Perth and Kinross highlight moving away from PSL in this manner saved the Council £300,000 a year. Highland has a broader plan to move towards maximal Council-owned temporary accommodation, so wants to reduce its dependency on leasing. Aberdeen

talks of "winding PSL down", though without figures or timescales.

Five authorities do not specifically talk about ending use of PSL (indeed, East Lothian is retendering it). However all of these have planned a significant decrease in self-contained temporary options, so it is implied that units of PSL will decrease in coming years. East Lothian makes clear PSL has to be subsidised by the prevention fund, so is a costly form of temporary accommodation for the Council.

Authorities using PSL, with plans to reduce all dispersed provision

Argyll and Bute, East Lothian, Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, West Lothian

Authorities retaining or expanding PSL

East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire, South Lanarkshire and Edinburgh have different positions to other authorities surveyed. The first three don't set targets to reduce any form of temporary accommodation in RRTPs, or mention plans for PSL specifically. East Renfrewshire reports a plan to increase PSL, whereby the Council approached private landlords offering 100% of LHA. This was unsuccessful, as landlords were able to obtain higher rents on the open market.

Authorities using PSL, with plans to retain or increase provision

East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Edinburgh, South Lanarkshire

Edinburgh already subsidises PSL rents at 110% LHA in order to keep landlords in the scheme, and plans to significantly increase PSL by 2024, from 1420 units to 1850 (or as many as 2500 if they secure landlord uptake). This is partly to ensure sufficient self-contained temporary accommodation, to avoid breach of the UAO and end B&B use, in the context of very restricted social housing supply.

Edinburgh's RRTP does not explain why 1400+ units of PSL are not recorded as temporary accommodation within HL1 statistics. The RRTP explains that households are able to use the tenure as "interim" rather than temporary accommodation, choosing to close their homelessness case and stay in PSL as long as they wish, though not for reasons of requiring support. This means accurate figures on the proportion of PSL households who are open homeless cases, or total households in temporary accommodation in Edinburgh, are lacking. The RRTP doesn't say how long-term residency in a form of temporary accommodation fits with the rapid rehousing vision, or consider ways of converting these properties to permanent tenancies.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

South Ayrshire Council's plans for an in-house SLA reposition the PRS as a settled housing option, as opposed to a source of temporary accommodation. An SLA allows the Council to discharge homeless duty but also improve standards and affordability for tenants. It offers an opportunity for private landlords who already work with the Council to stay engaged in the provision of homes for homeless households, thereby retaining those properties. The Council has consulted on their plans with landlords, service users and wider services, and intends for a gradual move from PSL to SLA.

Self-contained, dispersed temporary accommodation

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

Whilst self-contained accommodation within a community is the optimum form of temporary accommodation where homelessness is unavoidable, HARSAG nevertheless aims for a reduction in capacity and length of stay across all types of temporary accommodation.

In particular, HARSAG made a recommendation that households settled in temporary self-contained housing owned by a social landlord should, where possible, be offered the opportunity to take on a full tenancy without moving.

Overview

Plans for future quantity of temporary self-contained properties

Just under three quarters of authorities have plans to reduce their dispersed temporary accommodation stock over the RRTP period, with reductions from 76% in Perth and Kinross to 3% in Falkirk. Five authorities do not provide figures for reductions (Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, Inverclyde, Scottish

Borders and South Ayrshire), though all aim to reduce stock.

Authorities aiming to reduce temporary self-contained stock
Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, East Lothian, Eilean Siar, Falkirk, Glasgow, Inverclyde, Moray, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Perth and Kinross, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders, Shetland, South Ayrshire, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian

Five authorities make no plans to reduce (or expand) capacity of self-contained, temporary properties. East Renfrewshire suggests there's little room for change based on limitations in move-on; the rest intend to plan reductions only when activities to increase supply have started to pay off, and demand has reduced accordingly. East Ayrshire and Clackmannanshire in particular predict a rise in demand for temporary accommodation in coming years, so are reluctant to plan reductions.

Authorities maintaining status quo for temporary self-contained stock

East Ayrshire, East Renfrewshire, Fife, Orkney, South Lanarkshire

Five authorities plan to increase self-contained temporary properties, in order to eliminate or reduce B&B use, whilst ensuring sufficient capacity. Midlothian wishes to procure 35 new properties, Edinburgh 155 and Highland 150. East Dunbartonshire aims to expand its supply of properties in the early years of the RRTP, before reducing them again, planning to have the same overall supply by the end of year five.

Authorities increasing temporary self-contained stock
Clackmannanshire, East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh, Highland, Midlothian

Conversion of temporary properties to SSTs

80% of stock owning authorities plan, some with numbers attached and others more general, to convert some self-contained temporary occupancies to SSTs, where this meets household wishes. The exceptions are East Renfrewshire, Highland, East Ayrshire, Falkirk and Edinburgh.

A small number of authorities commit figures in this area, such as Fife, West Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, South Lanarkshire, Dundee and Midlothian. Respectively, they aim to convert 500, 300, 100, 100, 100 and 15 properties over five years. However, only East Lothian and West Dunbartonshire (from year four onwards) describes this as a way of increasing settled supply and reducing temporary stock. The majority aim instead to "flip and

replace" i.e. procure new temporary properties. Whilst this meets the aim of rotating temporary stock, it assumes no reduction in the need for temporary accommodation as rapid rehousing proceeds, as well as bringing additional cost to the exercise.⁵⁴

All stock transfer authorities aim to hand back RSL owned stock to allow the same outcome, from 45% in Glasgow to 9% in Inverclyde. These authorities do not intend to replace properties, on our reading. Eilean Siar, Scottish Borders, Dumfries and Galloway and Inverclyde make plans to work with RSLs to identify where a temporary property is going well and offer conversion, without the household having to move again.

Whilst Glasgow aims to hand back almost two thirds of its dispersed temporary properties to RSLs, it's not clear in the RRTP whether the temporary household would be offered an SST, or the property would be converted to a mainstream let once that household moved out. Argyll and Bute has a very low proportion of RSL-owned stock used for temporary accommodation, with most leased from PRS landlords, as such has lower potential for "flipping". However the Council does have plans to use RSL-owned properties for Housing First and convert those to SSTs.

Other plans for temporary self-contained properties

Other actions found in RRTPs in relation to self-contained stock include increasing the number of shared temporary tenancies (Aberdeenshire and Highland) and handing back leased properties, as these are more costly than Council-owned stock (West Lothian, Highland, Renfrewshire, Angus, Shetland). Perth and Kinross has a block of temporary flats which it recognises are often unpopular,

⁵⁴ Some authorities requested significant RRTP funding to for replacing "flipped" properties, especially in respect of furniture.

problematic and stigmatised. It has made plans to return the block to mainstream letting following a regeneration programme. This accounts for most of its significant further reduction of temporary provision.

East Lothian has plans not only to reduce stock, but also to focus on making voids and allocation processes more efficient. Fife and Inverclyde have identified that temporary properties are disproportionately located in certain parts of the authority, which does not match the area of origin of homeless applicants. They aim to rebalance this so that households with education, health and support networks in certain areas can avoid mandatory relocation if they become homeless.

Authorities increasing temporary self-contained stock

Edinburgh, Highland, Midlothian and Clackmannanshire are the general exceptions in this section, with different priorities to other areas given their use, and in the first three cases, reliance on, B&B. Clackmannanshire, Highland and Midlothian aim to increase Council-owned temporary self-contained units and remove B&B. Highland also wishes to reduce PSL.

Edinburgh on the other hand seeks to increase PSL *and* Council-owned temporary flats, whilst reducing B&B by only 13%. The Council modelled three scenarios in which mainstream temporary flats are increased, maintained or decreased. They concluded that increasing is the only way to ensure demand can be met whilst avoiding increased B&B use, especially increased breaches of the current UAO.

For Edinburgh and Highland, a supplementary reason for recruiting additional dispersed properties is to reduce nightly purchase of rooms or “short-term lets” from the PRS. In Highland this tends to be for single people, whereas in Edinburgh this can be for all household types. Families were previously placed in more readily available nightly purchase flats to avoid B&B, whilst awaiting a standard temporary flat. But stays in “short-term lets” can now be as long as stays in standard flats, as move-on has slowed. The Council will commission temporary properties from the PRS from 2020 to move away from nightly purchase, and merge this with the PSL contract. It isn’t clear from our reading whether these two options will continue to have distinct features.

Both authorities conclude that increasing Council-owned temporary properties will be cheaper over five years, with better outcomes for households, than continuing to rely on current options. Clackmannanshire’s main aim in increasing self-contained supply is to avoid having to send households out of area, to B&B-style options in Stirling. Its RRTP doesn’t reflect on costs.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

East Lothian Council acknowledges that by increasing temporary accommodation by 45% since 2012 to meet statutory duties, a significant pool of permanent housing options has thereby been removed from the system, contributing to backlog. The Council assesses that continuing to do this places them at risk of breaching the UAO. They have decided to complete a whole system review to refocus resources to deal with immediate flow and throughput.

This includes implementing a rolling programme to re-designate 100 temporary properties as permanent tenancies over five years, starting with households who have been waiting the longest. It also takes in a review of void and furnishings processes with a focus on prioritising turnaround, with plans to recruit a Homelessness Voids Officer with a rapid rehousing remit.

The Council also wants to respond to customer feedback that loneliness and isolation is compounded in furnished temporary tenancies by requirements to place a household’s own furniture in storage, and limit personal belongings in the home. The Council would like to provide furniture only when needed, enabling families to be surrounded by their own possessions, if they have these.

Supported accommodation

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

RRTP guidance asks authorities to describe and quantify their current supported temporary provision, and to give details of any plans to refine its capacity (alongside a scaling-up of Housing First). Descriptions are needed in this case as what is understood by “supported accommodation” across Scotland can be inconsistent, and provision and models vary greatly.

Authorities were also asked to quantify homeless households in their area who might require longer-term, specialist supported accommodation, and, in collaboration with H&SCPs, consider under whose departmental jurisdiction that accommodation should fall in future.

In general, the thrust of HARSAG recommendations (supported by Aye We Can feedback) on temporary accommodation is that the “focus and default”⁵⁵ should be self-contained, dispersed properties with floating support if needed, rather than congregate supported units.

However, HARSAG also made clear they were not recommending a “one size fits all system of single household housing,” and judged temporary supported accommodation, including of congregate type, may continue to be appropriate “due to reason of need or choice”.

There is an overall move to widen temporary (as well as permanent) options, in order to better meet need and choice and ensure that temporary accommodation is “a stepping stone, rather than a hindrance, to settled

mainstream accommodation in the future”.

Congregate supported temporary accommodation should be small-scale and trauma informed, with highly trained staff, designed around meeting specific needs. This means that large-scale, generic hostels have no place in Scotland’s future landscape. But there is a place for options “specifically designed and resourced to provide crisis intervention, enhanced assessment and therapeutic intervention”, including short-stay emergency models.

The change from the current landscape suggests that only households with assessed support needs should be placed in supported temporary accommodation, and that there should always be a clear rationale for these placements. There is also a recommendation that if support is required, it should be in place from the very beginning of a household’s journey, reducing transitions and putting focus on good quality, detailed homelessness and support assessments.

HARSAG separated longer-term supported accommodation from temporary supported provision, acknowledging that Housing First may not suit a small number of people with complex needs. This may refer to people whose needs are simply too high for Housing First, or those who don’t choose to try it. But it is considered that in cases where needs or choice for supported accommodation persists, the supported accommodation meeting those requirements should not fall under the definition of “temporary accommodation”.

Not mentioned in RRTP guidance, but our view is...

Authorities were not asked to describe how supported accommodation is currently allocated and what choice households have, though some have helpfully done so.

Grasping how far supported accommodation is being used only for those with support needs, which support needs residents have, and whether people with support needs have choices around accommodation type or not, is harder to do without this detail.

Overview

Proportion of supported accommodation by authority

The proportion of supported accommodation by authority in relation to total available temporary accommodation and/or total households assessed as having support needs varies significantly across Scotland. This ranges from more than one supported space for every two spaces in temporary accommodation (Dundee, Perth and Kinross), to one supported space in every 14 in Scottish Borders, to no supported spaces at all in Clackmannanshire and Shetland. The Scottish average is one supported bed in every four temporary accommodation beds as shown in Chart 7, overleaf.

In relation to homeless households assessed as having a need for support annually, Midlothian is the only authority with more supported beds than it has households assessed with support needs. At the other end of the spectrum, Scottish Borders has one supported space for every 35 households assessed with a support need. The Scottish average is one supported bed for every four households assessed with a support need, as shown in Chart 8.

Chart 7. Supported temporary beds against total temporary supply, by local authority

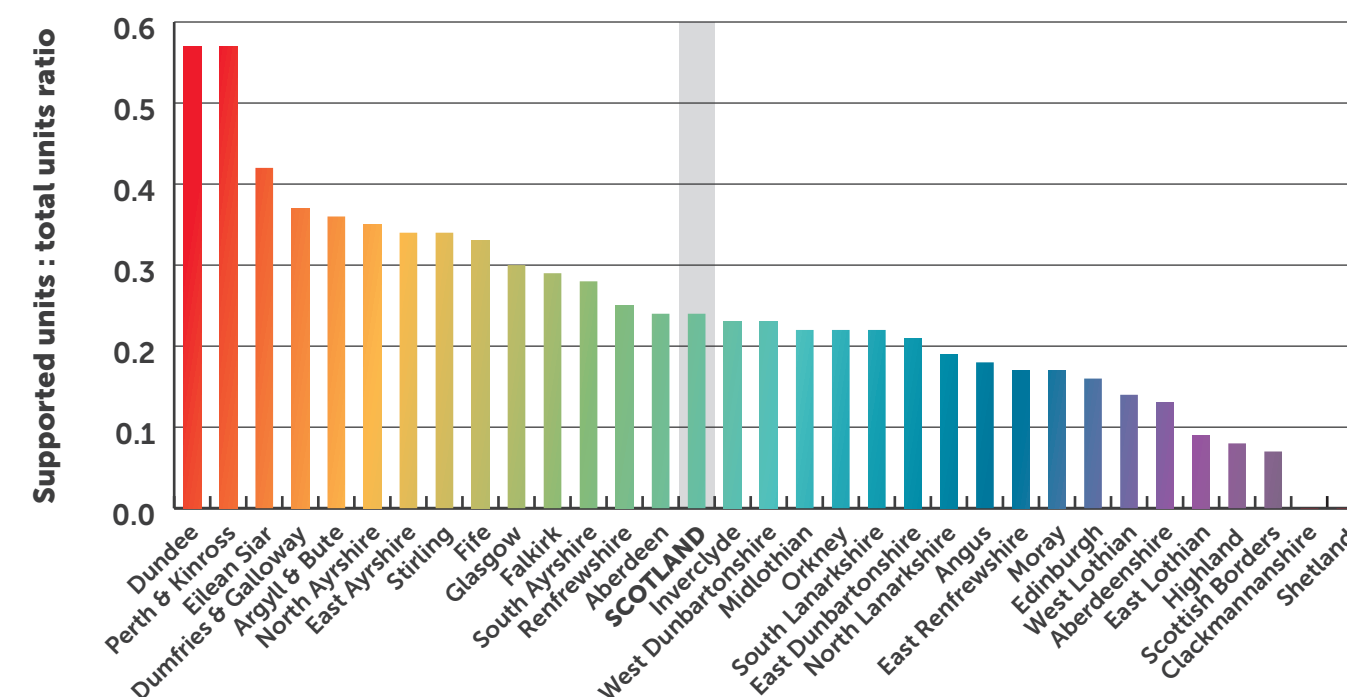
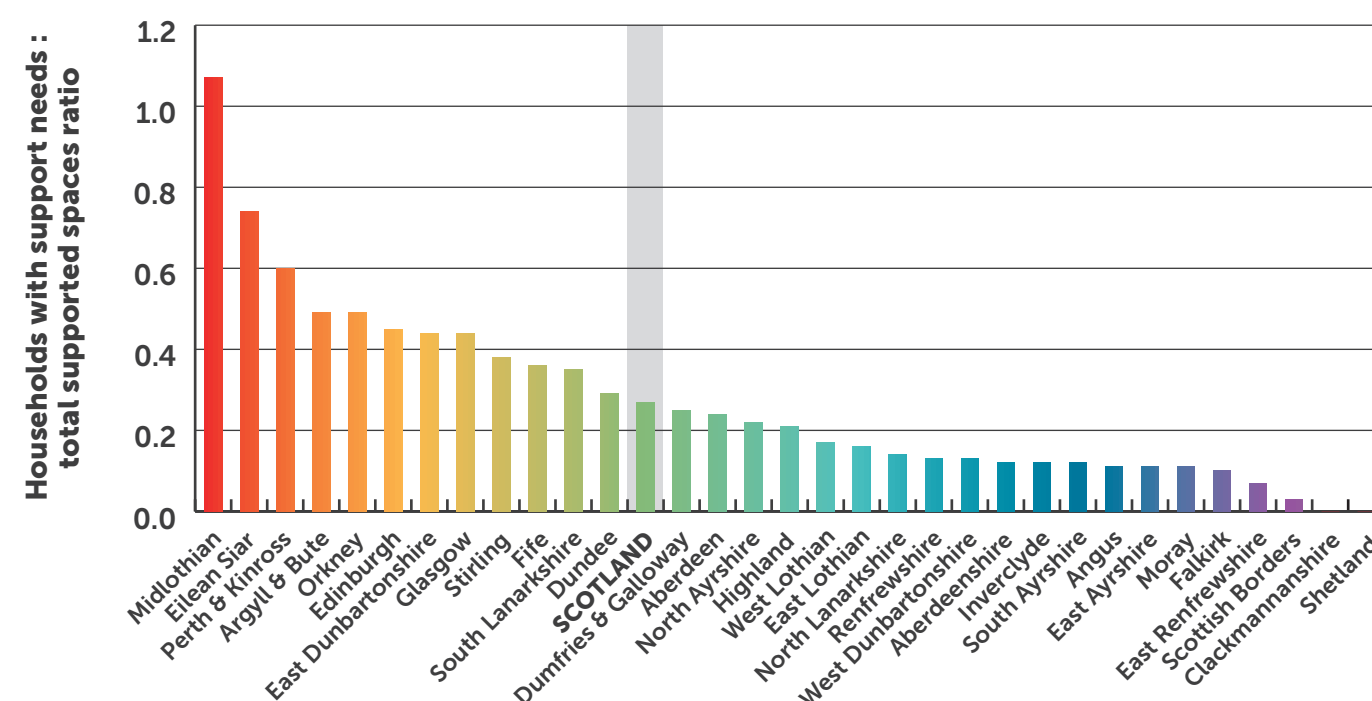


Chart 8. Supported temporary beds against homeless households assessed with support needs, by local authority



Some authorities may therefore assess an over-provision and others an under-provision of supported temporary accommodation. Given the significant variation found, approaches to reduce and increase this accommodation type may both have their merits.

Definition of supported accommodation

Supported accommodation, and what authorities understand by this, looks very different across Scotland. South Ayrshire describes three hostels, but they are blocks of self-contained flats with no communal facilities, with onsite support. Stirling has six units of supported accommodation or hostels, but only one of those (which has seven rooms) is not self-contained. All of Angus, Scottish Borders, Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire's supported provision is in self-contained properties.

South Lanarkshire reports the majority of its supported accommodation is self-contained properties in blocks of four to eight, with on-site support conforming to a PIE; something which is only a future aim in many areas. In other authorities, some supported accommodation has ensuite bathrooms, but kitchens and living spaces shared between five or six residents (Aberdeenshire, Eilean Siar, Argyll and Bute).

Cities are more likely to have larger, generic supported accommodation, and a lower provision of ensuite facilities, though Aberdeen has less of this provision than other cities. Glasgow does not describe its provision in detail. Edinburgh has over 200 units of supported accommodation within buildings with shared facilities, either flats of three-five people with shared bathroom, kitchen and living areas, or larger buildings with shared facilities on each level. Perth and Kinross has two larger hostels of more generic type, with shared facilities. Dundee has a high proportion of supported accommodation, with half being hostel

style, with shared facilities, and the remainder self-contained resettlement properties.

Some authorities already have supported provision which is largely specialist in nature, i.e. provided to meet the needs of specific groups such as young people, people with substance issues or women fleeing abuse. West Lothian, Scottish Borders, East Lothian, Orkney and East Renfrewshire for example have little or no generic supported provision for homeless people. Other authorities, such as Perth and Kinross, Edinburgh, Midlothian, North Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute and Eilean Siar appear to have a majority of provision classed largely according to the level of support provided (i.e. high/medium/low).

Allocation of supported accommodation

The way in which accommodation is accessed and "matched" to household need and/or choice is not explained in most RRTPs. West Lothian helpfully lays out their "assessment centre" model which provides emergency accommodation with support for families and single people where decisions can be made on the best option. South Lanarkshire provides "First Stop", an emergency triage service in each of its four local areas, to ensure appropriate placements according to identified needs, with a clear intention to reduce number of moves in temporary accommodation. East Dunbartonshire describes a similar service.

Whilst South Lanarkshire's RRTP portrays confidence that, for the most part, households receive the right accommodation type for their needs, West Lothian concludes many inappropriate placements and mismatches, especially for those with higher needs. Edinburgh also finds that whilst a significant number of residents of supported accommodation have no or low needs, people with complex

needs are often living in B&B. Both authorities operate in pressured housing markets, which may play a role in mismatches. Fife highlights awareness that its supported options do not necessarily meet the needs of its homeless applicants, and sets an action to undertake research to better understand these.

West Dunbartonshire engaged consultants in 2017 to assist them to analyse this, acknowledging that the number of transitions between accommodations could be high in a traditional "tenancy ready" model. They set a clear aim in future to ensure households receive the option which is "right first time". Dundee will ensure every occupant of temporary accommodation has a support assessment which will determine the level of support needed, and where this should come from.

Plans for future quantity and type of supported accommodation

In relation to future plans, all authorities are reviewing supported provision in some way or another. Two thirds make specific reference to ensuring future accommodation adheres to PIE. Others, such as West Lothian and Aberdeenshire, are reviewing shared supported in light of HARSAG recommendations on unsuitable accommodation. The former believes the shared aspects of their hostel model may breach an extended UAO and cites the model's high costs in comparison to dispersed accommodation with intensive visiting support.

40% of RRTPs set plans to reduce overall supply of temporary supported accommodation, with fairly large reductions planned in some areas. A further quarter of authorities make no plans to either reduce or increase their supply. Conversely a third of RRTPs set plans to increase supported accommodation, with a mix between minor and substantial increases.

Authorities reducing supported accommodation

By far the largest proportional planned reductions in supported accommodation are in the three cities of Stirling, Glasgow and Dundee (reductions of 57%-54% of supported stock). All of these currently have generous proportion of supported spaces within their temporary stock compared to much of Scotland, and each RRTP provides some evidence of why hostels don't work for all. Perth and Kinross, like Glasgow, still has above average current levels of supported beds, despite closing hostels in the past year.

Authorities planning to reduce supported temporary accommodation

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, Falkirk, Glasgow, Moray, North Ayrshire, Perth and Kinross, Renfrewshire, Stirling

Nine other authorities also plan reductions, at smaller levels, aiming to close between 36% (Angus) to 3% (Dumfries and Galloway) of current supported stock. Angus notes its complex needs supported accommodation has high refusal and void rates, despite a high overall demand for temporary accommodation. It concludes that concentrating households with complex needs in one block may not be the best way to address their needs.

North Ayrshire, seeking a 26% reduction in supported temporary accommodation, triangulated various data sets to determine the effectiveness of its hostel provision, including consultation with residents, before deciding to decommission its Green Street hostel. The chart below, detailing resident support needs, tells a similar story to that of Angus.

Table 3: Support needs of residents in North Ayrshire’s hostels

Complex needs	Green street %	Ardrossan %	Victoria House %
Drug / Alcohol misuse	78%	74%	65%
Mental Health issues	91%	84%	96%
Offending behaviour	78%	68%	73%
Challenging behaviour	48%	21%	27%
Tenancy ready	35%	47%	38%
Linked with multiple services	96%	89%	96%
Care leaver (Throughcare)	4%	0%	4%

Some of the other authorities reducing supported beds (Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, Renfrewshire, Moray and Angus) already have a fairly low provision of supported accommodation compared to many authorities in Scotland. It is possibly this lack of reliance on supported accommodation and, in the case of Aberdeenshire and Renfrewshire, local successful Housing First projects, which allows these authorities to make what may be seen as bold plans in other areas.

Authorities retaining supported accommodation

Nine authorities make no clear plans to reduce or increase the number of supported accommodation units, though all plan to review their provision, so changes in numbers could occur. Half of these areas already have lower than average supported stock, and may be reluctant to reduce further. Others, such as Fife, have been clear on the need to first evidence the nature and extent of client support needs, before being able to project extent and nature of future supported supply.

Authorities planning to maintain supported temporary accommodation

Argyll and Bute, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Fife, Highland, Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire, West Lothian

Authorities increasing supported accommodation

Ten authorities are seeking to increase temporary supported accommodation. In the case of East Lothian, South Ayrshire and Eilean Siar, increases are for particular, specialist types of accommodation which the authority does not have at present and has defined a need for: generally care leavers, women with complex needs, young people or rough sleepers with complex needs/chaotic lifestyles. Of these, East Lothian has a particularly small current stock, and Clackmannanshire none.

Authorities planning to increase supported temporary accommodation

Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Eilean Siar, Inverclyde, Midlothian, North Lanarkshire, Orkney, South Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire

West Dunbartonshire and Inverclyde, both areas with high rates of multiple disadvantage, undertook extensive reviews of their temporary accommodation provision prior to HARSAG. These concluded a need to remodel hostels towards “interim” or “core and cluster” supported tenancies. This is designed for those with “medium” support needs who may not qualify for Housing First, and who do not need long-term specialist supported housing, but who do not manage tenancies well and could benefit from in-house support over a set period.

New provision of “interim” supported accommodation largely accounts for West Dunbartonshire’s 27% increase in the tenure. Though this reads as permanent housing with more intensive visiting support, the term “interim” suggests it is a sort of temporary accommodation. As noted at the start of this chapter, this may be a mis-reading.


Client choice and supported accommodation

It’s our view that, as a “disruptive” innovation, acceptance of Housing First principles for one group of people naturally seems to lead to a questioning of alternative rehousing routes for other cohorts. This in itself could lead to any specifically designated temporary accommodation-based support being called into question. Authorities respond to this in different ways.

A handful of RRTPs importantly refer to client choice on the nature of accommodation and the rapidity of their journey time, and a small number consulted current or former residents of temporary supported accommodation for their views. In some cases, such as in North Ayrshire’s detailed and rounded review of its hostel provision (see practice example at end of chapter), service user feedback overwhelmingly supported the rapid rehousing vision, highlighting a preference for self-contained provision and a quicker route to permanence.

Other RRTPs offer alternative voices. Dumfries and Galloway include a valuable reflection from a former service user of supported accommodation in this regard, “I needed that time to get a grip of everything; I could’ve done with longer if I’m honest.” Similarly, in service user consultations, South Lanarkshire reports that some households experienced their time in temporary accommodation as a crisis, whereas for others it represented respite from one.

Renfrewshire held focus groups with current and former service users, including those in supported accommodation. They concluded that the amount of time a person requires in supported accommodation (if any) depends on the individual, as “different people have different needs.” Whilst they agreed it was important that no-one who accessed supported accommodation then “got stuck in the service,” they also felt residents should have a degree of control over when they can move on.

 The question of choice over which temporary accommodation pathway might be available to a homeless person with support needs isn’t really addressed in any RRTP. Whilst there is broad agreement that those with no or low needs for support should not be in

supported accommodation, the choice which could be offered to people with support needs who don't qualify for Housing First, is not explored (i.e. the choice between a temporary tenancy with visiting support, or accommodation-based support).

Modelling supported accommodation pathways

In a similar vein, RRTPs modelling different accommodation pathways according to the support needs groups set by the Scottish Government have taken different approaches to rapid rehousing of those with "medium" needs.

Whilst Glasgow, North Ayrshire and Stirling have a self-contained temporary accommodation pathway for those with no/low needs and a supported accommodation pathway for those with medium needs, they aim for equality of journey time across all needs groups. In contrast, West Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire and Inverclyde have a longer pathway for medium needs clients than those with no or low needs. In fact, total journey time for this group appears longer under rapid rehousing than it is currently.

It's our view that the role of client choice within both of the approaches above would be worthy of further exploration.

Limits of client choice in current systems



As important as it is not to casually write off temporary supported options within the shift to rapid rehousing, it is equally important to acknowledge the limitations of service user perspectives in systems where few choices exist. In some areas, people may have insufficient exposure to, or lack confidence in, other options (especially newer programmes such as Housing First),

and therefore will "choose" the "least worst" option from the current system.

These questions could form important parts of future discussions on the role of supported temporary accommodation, and underline the need for further research on this area.

Authorities in high pressure areas

Authorities with severe backlogs and high B&B use (mainly Lothians and Highland) place less focus on reducing supported provision, given priorities for reduction lie elsewhere. Edinburgh and Midlothian seek to expand generic supported provision. Midlothian already has the highest proportion of supported accommodation in Scotland, but wants to increase this by 21%. The RRTP does not describe the type of provision, or how this differs from what is already available.

Edinburgh requested RRTP funding to convert B&Bs to supported accommodation, based not on assessed needs, but as a better alternative to B&B. The Council also proposes to site a support/housing manager in every B&B (instead of the current property manager), moving towards a model of staffed, low level supported unit, rather than unsupported private B&B. The Council is also recommissioning supported accommodation, and hoping to expand capacity.

Specialist residential supported accommodation

Authorities assessed that between 0% to 20% of their current households require long-term specialist accommodation.⁵⁶ It does seem there are differences in approach to assessment here. As noted above, Renfrewshire's assessment (20%) may refer to people requiring short-term supported accommodation as opposed to long-term residential.

All other authorities assess this cohort under 10%, with East Dunbartonshire and Midlothian the next highest, at 7%. But it is interesting that the respective neighbouring, more deprived authorities of West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian record under 1% as "beyond" Housing First. Five other authorities, some with fairly large caseloads, assess no households in this group (North Lanarkshire, Aberdeenshire, East Ayrshire, Scottish Borders, Orkney).

Glasgow assesses that just 1% of households require this option, though it has 125 specialist supported beds, with average stays of seven years. Despite significant reductions in supported stock the RRTP sets no plans to reduce this provision, though it would appear to be over-provision, on their figures. Glasgow does plan for this provision to be moved under adult H&SC services, as opposed to homelessness, as suggested within RRTP guidance.

Seven other authorities (East Lothian, Dumfries and Galloway, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, Highland and South Ayrshire) plan similar reviews. Most of these have detailed actions in their RRTP to evidence need for residential accommodation to H&SC commissioners, identify opportunities within the SHIP to meet this need accommodation-wise and develop planning frameworks to ensure specialist housing needs are assessed and addressed by housing and care planning funding programmes.

To facilitate this and other joint working, Highland for example has more closely aligned its homelessness strategy with the Strategic Commissioning Group. In other areas, this appears to be more at the level of initial discussions with the H&SCP.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

Dumfries and Galloway Council analysed its rough sleeping statistics as well as its provision of out of hours advice and accommodation, concluding there is a need for improved emergency supported accommodation, especially for single men with complex needs presenting in the Stranraer and Dumfries areas. This is the demographic which often reports sleeping rough, may be refused access to existing provision and tends to lose contact with services.

The Council plans to develop a short-term direct access option specifically to house individuals directly from the street or prison. This will be developed in partnership with H&SC, Criminal Justice, NHS and RSLs. The resource will provide a PIE in which people who have experienced complex trauma receive short-term assistance, advice and psychological support before moving to more appropriate housing provision based on individual needs.

⁵⁶ Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, Moray, Argyll and Bute and Shetland don't provide a figure for this in the body of their RRTP.

Aberdeen City Council has reviewed and remodelled supported provision substantially in recent years and has further plans to do so. It considered results from surveys completed with service users within its plans, which show most customers want their own tenancy with support, as opposed to supported temporary accommodation. The Council closed a traditional hostel and is about to close a second, based on these communal “care home style” buildings not being fit for purpose. All but one of the remaining supported units have been remodelled with self-contained facilities, though the Council is now also reviewing these, with an aim to move entirely away from congregate blocks.

Young person “foyer” services were also remodelled in a recent re-tendering exercise, focusing on shortening timescales to six months, in line with ambitions to provide short, focused support before clients move to permanent accommodation and avoid institutionalisation. There is also interest in exploring community-based accommodation for young people i.e. supported lodgings. Use of supported dispersed properties where a homelessness case is closed under “interim regulations” (which takes it out of HL1 live homelessness statistics) will be ended, with occupants offered an SST, with outreach support for as long as needed.

The Council recognises some supported accommodation must continue to be available for those who need and want it, whilst ensuring it’s the right type of model (small scale core and cluster) to prepare people for tenancies in future. Aberdeen is re-modelling types of support on offer in this direction. For example, the Council set up a “test of change” pilot for institutionalised clients who were unwilling to try their own tenancy. They remodelled a six-flatted block with more limited support hours to move away from communal living, but without mandating an independent dispersed tenancy.

Lastly the Council is keen to make supported accommodation accessible as a form of “respite” to tenants with difficulties, providing short term, intensive support while retaining the tenancy. This approach could decrease temporary accommodation demand by reducing numbers of tenants who terminate or abandon when they experience difficulties, opting for the “homeless route”.

North Ayrshire Council conducted a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of its hostel provision. This entailed interrogation of move-on statistics, incidents reported to Police Scotland, refusal statistics, resident support needs and service user views.

The review determined that one hostel had the highest level of refusals, a higher incidence of crime reports, a very high concentration of residents with complex support needs and 7% positive move-on rate to permanent housing over a one year period. Despite the standards of both accommodation and support being acknowledged as high, consultation with hostel residents revealed most households would prefer a mainstream property. Other useful feedback is shown below.

“My expectations of a permanent offer of housing is low.”

- Concerns regarding the **quality of offers** and the distance from support networks

- **View that hostels “propped people up”** as opposed to preparing them for independent living

“I would prefer to have my own dispersed accommodation than live in a hostel.”

- Concerns regarding **very vulnerable people** living with people who could exploit them

- There were **barriers to accessing training and employment** opportunities and limited support

- There was **no motivation to prepare for a tenancy** by way of furniture provision or budgeting

The Council recognised the hostel had been used for years to accommodate extremely vulnerable people because the type of permanent accommodation or type of support provision they needed simply wasn’t available. Concurrently, and as highlighted in the previous chapter, the Council has been running a small Housing First pilot since 2016, following a service review which recommended a change in approach for people with complex needs.

The successful outcomes of the Housing First pilot compared with the poor outcomes and unpopularity of the hostel allowed the Council to clearly evidence a case that support provision allied with routine social housing could be made available, and could be effective for this group. This places RRTP plans to decommission one hostel and reinvest the associated savings into support services for upscaling Housing First on a strong footing.

Renfrewshire Council does not use hostels, but has five supported accommodation projects providing self-contained core and cluster models for defined groups (young people, people with complex or specialist mental health needs). Renfrewshire aims to reduce supported accommodation by around a third, based on a quicker rehousing process and upscaling of Housing First, which it has operated for over five years. Renfrewshire consulted extensively with service users who use or have used supported accommodation to inform its plans. The approach it is taking is respectful of client choice and positive outcomes from current support providers, whilst gradually enhancing the proportion of settled housing quickly offered to those who want it.

City of Edinburgh Council has commissioned a “rapid access accommodation” model for rough sleepers, including for those with no recourse to assistance (either through homelessness duty or immigration status), following a successful pilot set up with HARSAG “winter actions” monies. This approach allows rough sleepers identified by street outreach to be immediately offered and taken to accommodation without having to attend Council offices. Intensive support is provided from a link worker (street outreach seconded to Council) and usual rules within the accommodation (which may be within a B&B or hostel premises) are relaxed.

The new approach of securing immediate accommodation with intensive support has been successful in assisting individuals who have been unable to make use of standard services to secure documents and access benefits, support and housing options. The Council is now mainstreaming the provision and adding a women only resource, following feedback that mixed accommodation presented a barrier for some female rough sleepers.

Alternative forms of temporary accommodation

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

HARSAG acknowledged an ongoing need for emergency accommodation, but recommended every effort should be made to expand ‘non-institutional’ options rather than rely on B&Bs and hostels. HARSAG commissioned research on community-based solutions, such as hosting and supportive landlord models. Authorities were not specifically asked to comment on existing or

planned provision for non-institutional emergency accommodation in RRTPs.

Overview

Only four RRTPs set out plans to investigate alternative temporary accommodation models, generally for younger people: Edinburgh, as the Council with the highest use of unsuitable temporary accommodation, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, which both see particular opportunities in community-based solutions and who use B&B currently, and Scottish Borders.

Aberdeenshire assesses that being able to keep a young person in a local

area and therefore remain linked to education, peers etc could have real benefit in a rural context, whilst the City is exploring all options which move away from institutionalised accommodation forms. Scottish Borders, which doesn’t use B&B at present, is also interested in exploring hosting for young people, from a similar perspective to Aberdeenshire, as a better option to keep people in a community within a rural area.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

City of Edinburgh Council acknowledges that supported lodgings schemes are tried, tested and well-established in England, and see this form of alternative accommodation as having a potential role for young people who are homeless in Edinburgh. The Council has requested funding for a feasibility study into setting up and managing a community hosting scheme with the aim to house up to 100 young people per night by 2023. This option could provide an important alternative in a city with heavy reliance on institutionalised forms of temporary accommodation for single people and couples.

Temporary accommodation charges

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

Authorities were asked to state weekly charges for each form of temporary accommodation at present and how these would look in five years’ time.

HARSAG was clear that temporary accommodation should be affordable

for those in employment and with no HB entitlement, and not act as a disincentive to entering work or taking up accommodation (through fear of accruing high debts).

Overview

There’s great variety in rents and service charges by authority and by type of temporary accommodation. For instance, a resident of a one bedroom Council-owned temporary property in East Lothian pays the same rent as a Council tenant of the same size property (around £63 weekly), with a £15 weekly service charge towards utilities, Council Tax etc, whereas in Edinburgh the average weekly charge for the same property type is £386. B&B charges range from £400 weekly in Edinburgh to £82 weekly in East Lothian. Supported accommodation charges go from £565 weekly in Edinburgh, to £140 weekly in West Lothian.

Nine authorities appear to already operate a charging policy which does not use “full cost recovery” i.e. does not pass on the full costs of the accommodation to the household. In South Lanarkshire’s case, government funding was awarded in 2018 to work up models to improve temporary accommodation affordability through stepped reductions in rent.

Authorities operating a non “full cost recovery” model in temporary accommodation

Aberdeen, Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, East Lothian, Moray, Perth and Kinross, Shetland, South Lanarkshire, West Lothian

Eight further authorities are working on developing a fairer charging policy or approach. For instance, Fife sets principles which include “those in TA should not be financially disadvantaged and should have equal opportunity to work and/or study in

a normal housing setting” and “no household should be in a position of debt due to accessing temporary accommodation”.

Authorities working on a non “full cost recovery” model in temporary accommodation

East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, Fife, Highland, Orkney, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders, West Dunbartonshire

Others refer to working with COSLA on the issue. One (Aberdeenshire) hopes to address this by moving away from

using expensive forms of temporary accommodation and by introducing rapid rehousing.

However, authorities introducing a fairer charging structure are not able to do so in non-Council owned stock, introducing discrepancies between RSL or PRS owned self-contained accommodation, or between Council and non-Council owned supported accommodation. One of the only authorities to pick this up is Moray (see below). Ten further RRTPs make no mention of plans to review temporary rents or charges.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

Moray Council undertook a full review of temporary accommodation rents, introducing a charging policy four years ago, which goes beyond that of most other authorities. Its EIA highlights how this reduces disadvantage to homeless households in work, by ensuring temporary accommodation is affordable for anyone who needs it.

The policy operates in what can be described as a dualistic manner. All tenants are charged LHA plus a £45 management fee, reflective of the accommodation’s cost. However the Council only seeks to recover costs it can reasonably be expected to collect. This means tenants are charged, for example, a one bed rent of £137 weekly, but those on partial or no HB are only asked to contribute £61, in line with Council rents.

Since introducing the policy, the number of tenants leaving accommodation in arrears has reduced, more revenue has been collected and complaints about affordability of accommodation have decreased significantly. In its RRTP, Moray not only resolves to continue with this policy, but also to meet with local RSLs to discuss the (higher) rents they charge for their temporary accommodation, and explore ways in which these charges can be reduced.

Dumfries and Galloway Council undertook a temporary accommodation review in 2018. Along with a number of actions which successfully reduced the average time spent, the Council agreed on a new affordable charging model for temporary properties and shared accommodation. This included removing all service charges, making accommodation more affordable for those in work (though rents remain slightly above LHA at the present time).

In 2018, **Perth and Kinross Council** removed service charges from self-contained and hostel accommodation to improve affordability. This was made possible by the significant investment the Council made into homelessness services since 2013 and the subsequent savings they have realised.

Aberdeen City Council recognises the needs of households in work, and that high costs of temporary accommodation can disincentivise this. In 2012, the Council converted a janitor’s house specifically to offer a cheaper accommodation for people in work and saving for a deposit. They expanded shared options for this group to include a small former hostel and HMOs.

In 2016, the Council reviewed costs of temporary dispersed stock and reduced service charges for occupants of its own temporary by £45 week. In line with HARSAG recommendations they aim to further reduce this, and are clear the rapid rehousing model must ensure people are not put off continuing or seeking to work or complete education by being in a homeless position.

Chapter 4

Preventing homelessness

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

HARSAG placed a significant focus on homelessness prevention, making a number of wide-ranging recommendations in this area. These pertained to legislation (in the form of a new prevention duty, to fall not only on local authorities, but also on other public bodies,⁵⁷ and revised pre-action requirements for social landlords), service provision, tenancy sustainment and clear prevention pathways for higher risk groups.

The RRTP toolkit simply asks authorities to list actions they intend to take to increase their prevention focus, within their rapid rehousing vision.

Not mentioned in RRTP guidance, but our view is...

Authorities were not asked to supply prevention (PREVENT1) statistics or comment on these, though some of them do. They were also not asked to describe their current approach to prevention. This can make it harder to assess whether actions in the RRTP are already happening or not.

Authorities were not asked to include tenancy sustainment rates for social housing, or comment on how these differ for those rehoused after homelessness (such statistics are available, as are reported to SHR).

In our view, it is particularly useful when authorities mention these, in relation to understanding the context behind their prevention activities.

Overview

Current authority prevention/ options services

Most authorities do not detail their existing prevention, options and sustainment services in great detail in RRTPs, which makes it challenging to assess current practices and effectiveness. Exceptions to this are, for example East Lothian, Renfrewshire, East and North Ayrshires, Orkney, Perth and Kinross and Aberdeenshire. These RRTPs include explanations of how housing options services work for people at risk of homelessness currently, and of prevention initiatives already in place.

⁵⁷ These recommendations are currently being taken forward through a working group convened by Crisis and chaired by Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick, which will report in summer 2020.

East Lothian Council has a dedicated team within its options service which works with households more than two months away from homelessness. This team sees 400-500 households per year, which equates to around two thirds of the number of applicants who present as homeless. Between one fifth and one quarter of households seen by this team go on to present as homeless.

Importantly, the team treats any households seeking prevention advice as entitled to the statutory housing support duty. The team has a co-located youth mediation service (provided by Cyrenians), a rent deposit service, a welfare reform officer seconded from the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) and in-house mortgage advice. They have links to furniture and youth-specific support services.

Glasgow's housing options model is distinctive, and was devised as a way of responding to the structural and strategic challenges of the city's notoriously complex housing system, in line with Christie principles.⁵⁸ It aims to maximise resources of the Council, RSLs and third sector partners to provide timely housing advice and support.

All partners (which include a majority of the city's 68 RSLs) offer personalised frontline multi-tenure options and support referral/advice for any customer making an enquiry, tenant or otherwise. The principle is named contacts for frontline staff throughout the city in key agencies. Its success has led to a similar model for older people and co-location of housing advice within other agencies such as money advice, employability and housing support services.

East Ayrshire Council reports very positive prevention outcomes when assessed against national averages (a higher proportion of applicants at risk of homelessness supported to remain in accommodation or access an alternative tenancy in the social or private sectors; a lower level of lost contacts; a much lower proportion of options interviews resulting in a homelessness application).

The Council offers a range of prevention activities, including a mediation service for all applicants presenting due to non-violent relationship breakdown, or being asked to leave; three-monthly tenancy health checks in the first year of all Council tenancies (in response to lower than average sustainment rates); use of a tenancy start matrix tool to weight sustainment risk levels and inform targeted work; and a partnership with Ayr Housing Aid providing housing advice to prisoners, of whom 40% were Council tenants, preventing homelessness in over 100 cases annually.

⁵⁸ The Christie Commission on public service reform (2011) espoused principles of partnership working; integrated service provision; empowerment of individuals and communities through their involvement in design and delivery of services; prioritisation of resources on services which prevent negative outcomes; and reduction of duplication

Renfrewshire Council's Options service offers daily access to Officers with no appointment necessary, in person, by 'phone, email or visit to a home/other address. For some years, the Options service has offered a rent deposit scheme; an in-house family mediation service; a tenancy sustainment course for young people called "Keys to Learn", delivered in partnership with Invest in Renfrewshire, local RSLs, Connect4Renfrewshire, University of the West of Scotland, West College Scotland and the DWP; and a project for vulnerable tenants to decorate homes, working alongside a tutor to up-cycle and create furniture, canvases and curtains. The role played by all of these initiatives and their positive impact on prevention and tenancy sustainment are recorded in Renfrewshire's RRTP and provide a strong evidence base for funding requests.

Orkney Islands Council's policy on prevention (written 2018) is comprehensive. There are clearly stated aims to mainstream prevention through all Council policies, that housing policies have prevention and sustainment embedded and housing support services are tenure blind. The Council uses a threefold definition of prevention, identifying early intervention, crisis and prevention of repeat homelessness. The activities covered under each of these headings are wide-ranging.

The Council has a joint project with Orkney Housing Association to target options interviews at higher risk groups on the CHR. These are identified using homelessness risk factors, triggering a single shared support assessment if care or support needs are identified. The project also proactively provides new applicants with realistic information on likely waiting times, and other options they may have, using a personal housing planning approach.

Thought is given to raising awareness of homelessness risk and protective factors publicly, through campaigns, but also by building capacity of internal teams and external agencies to be able to recognise and appropriately respond to a household at risk. A heavy emphasis is placed on options staff being professionally trained and accredited.

Authority analysis of current prevention work

All RRTPs place significant focus on prevention and set out actions to reduce homelessness demand and increase tenancy sustainment over the next five years. Given the variety in almost all other areas, an increased focus on prevention can be said to be one of the only themes which unites all RRTPs.

Where RRTPs differ is in the level of detail on planned interventions, and the extent to which these are targeted to known/analysed areas of current weakness, high homelessness risk or noted trends. Some authorities appear to be at the stage of review, exploration and analysis, with particular authorities appearing to undertake a "back to basics" review approach, whilst others already have multiple initiatives underway, or in the pipeline.

East and West Lothian, Renfrewshire, Falkirk, East Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire and Perth and Kinross refer to tenancy sustainment rates, rates of homelessness from potentially preventable sources and the need to reduce demand if rapid rehousing is to be achieved, putting prevention in context. Some authorities, such as Highland, Argyll and Bute, North Lanarkshire and Moray, set targets with numbers attached in their action plan to, for example, reduce demand from particular sources, and increase tenancy sustainment figures.


Stirling highlights that homelessness applications have increased 75% in the last five years, and that many more people go through the emergency homelessness route than engage with the options process. South Ayrshire's RRTP is frank in underlining its current prevention activities are inadequate compared to Scottish averages. As such, both plan to conduct research on tenancy failure and repeat homelessness to better understand this. East and North Ayrshire, whose prevention work has had good outcomes, have similar plans, as does North Lanarkshire. All of these authorities want to research, in particular, linkages between health and homelessness to better target multi-agency prevention work.

A third of authorities have plans to fully evaluate the extent and effectiveness of their current prevention activities and two authorities will review their monitoring frameworks for tenancy sustainment, to identify any changes required for rapid rehousing.

RRTPs setting plans to evaluate effectiveness of current prevention activities

Angus, Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, West Lothian

Tensions between prevention and legislation

 It is perhaps surprising that the tension between homelessness legislation and prevention activity is barely mentioned in RRTPs. Like barriers to RSL stock, this was something highlighted by "many" authorities in the Indigo House market analysis.⁵⁹ Edinburgh's is the only RRTP which makes explicit reference to the difficulties this tension creates. The Council welcomes the introduction of a wider legal duty to prevent homelessness, and the clarity this would provide in relation to the SHR and the utilisation of homelessness prevention funds.

Other authorities avoid emphasising any tension, rather explaining their operation of a "twin track" or "dual focus" approach (Fife, East Dunbartonshire), incorporating prevention advice alongside rehousing duties, though Aberdeenshire aims to review this practice.⁶⁰ Moray offers a range of prevention activities and states there are "robust mechanisms in place to ensure there is no "gatekeeping" of those who attend a housing options interview". Clackmannanshire attributes its very high proportion of options approaches ending in a homelessness application (95%) to options staff adhering to legal duties (i.e. not "gatekeeping").

⁵⁹ <https://social-bite.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/RRTP-Analysis-and-Review-JUNE-2018-pubv1.pdf> (see page 25)

⁶⁰ Its RRTP states this approach is not recommended by the Options Hub network which is producing national guidance.

Perth and Kinross suggests its higher number of homelessness assessments last year related less to increased demand, than to process changes according to which the authority began to automatically progress a homelessness assessment if an options approach hit a homelessness trigger. Despite more assessments, they suggest a correspondingly higher number of these now end in 'resolved', 'not homeless' and 'lost contact before assessment' decisions. This indicates that some prevention work continues to have an impact during, as opposed to before, a homelessness application.

As prevention outcomes may be found within HL1 and PREVENT1 statistics, the latter do not appear to offer accurate data on the relative effectiveness of authorities' prevention work, as has been noted elsewhere.⁶¹ But the data may still offer useful insights *within* individual authorities, as they review their statistics over time.

Changes to options services

Some authorities have plans to enhance or expand services, capacity or structure of their options services. Midlothian wants to recruit a prevention officer with a remit to develop options and support initiatives, with a target to reduce applications by 10% per annum. West Dunbartonshire plans a new prevention service offering proactive advice, support and assistance to households at threat of homelessness, whilst Dumfries and Galloway wishes to develop a multi-agency response team, to intervene quickly when vulnerable tenants are at risk of homelessness.

Stirling and North Ayrshire aim to appoint a prevention co-ordinator with a proactive, evidence-based approach to "reinvigorate" housing options. Both intend this to use year one research on homelessness risk factors and effectiveness of current interventions,

to build a multi-agency prevention model from year two of the RRTP.

West Lothian, Fife and Highland are considering altering allocations policies in favour of homelessness prevention, whilst South Ayrshire, Orkney, North Lanarkshire, East Dunbartonshire, Stirling and West Lothian are looking into staff training on "maximal" housing options, with new or more proactive approaches to contacting applicants on waiting lists about other housing options. South Ayrshire and Orkney request additional officers and housing assistants to undertake this work. This follows an approach already taken by Perth and Kinross. Over a third of authorities plan to extend or introduce a personal housing planning approach, at times extending this to partners such as RSLs.

Authorities planning to introduce or extend a personal housing planning approach

Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Fife, North Lanarkshire, Orkney, Shetland, South Lanarkshire, West Lothian

A smaller number of RRTPs lay out action to broaden awareness of homelessness prevention beyond the housing sector. For example, Falkirk is planning an information and media campaign, with information in community locations (such as schools, GPs) or advice and support services.

Inverclyde Council has decided to implement a collaborative and proactive Housing Options model across all housing providers, public and third sector agencies who meet the needs of homeless households locally. This follows their temporary accommodation review and takes inspiration from the Glasgow model, with plans for common tools for needs assessments, named contacts in Health and Social Work services, consent to share information and referral pathways, and shared training and skills transfer on risk and prevention. The Council hopes this will reduce demand by up to 15%.

West Lothian Council is undertaking an allocations review, with an intention to shift the balance towards prevention by introducing a "strategic needs" category for applicants at risk of homelessness, which, it is hoped, will reduce demand on homelessness services.

Highland Council's allocations review has revealed that applicants awarded "potentially homeless" points are unlikely to be made an offer of social housing, as they can't simultaneously have these points alongside points in another category. The Council is investigating how this can be altered to bolster prevention, whilst still giving sufficient priority to people who are already homeless.

Tenancy/citizenship education

Tenancy skills or citizenship training as a means of improving housing sustainment features in a minority of RRTPs. Midlothian already runs a Scottish Qualifications Agency (SQA) course for young parents and Renfrewshire a bespoke citizenship course for all young people. Both authorities aim to expand access to these courses in RRTPs based on their positive impact thus far.

East Lothian sets an action to explore the potential for vulnerable young, and especially care experienced, people to receive support to obtain an SQA in the Tenancy Skills module. North Ayrshire also identifies a need to work up a better educatory programme to prepare vulnerable people for

independent living. Aberdeen plans tenancy education for both new and existing Council tenants, to increase sustainment and encourage greater engagement in the management of homes.

61 https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240002/the_homelessness_monitor_scotland_2019.pdf

Renfrewshire Council plans to expand its eight-week tenancy sustainment course, Keys to Learn, following positive feedback from participants. They highlighted its impact on their self-esteem and their feeling of being more connected with their communities. Courses are delivered three days a week, in partnership with the Homelessness Network, RSLs and local colleges/universities, with peer support from previous participants. They cover modules on computing, digital media, money management, self-confidence, working with others, CV building, housing advice and interview skills.

Midlothian Council has effectively used tenancy training (the SQA accredited “Tenancy and Citizenship Group Award”) with a group of young homeless single parents. Due to its success, the Council aims to roll it out to all young people in supported accommodation to facilitate move on. Joint delivery of the course is also planned with Social Work to prepare care leavers who are moving on from residential placements.

Furniture, décor and moving in

In relation to enhancing sustainability of social housing, furniture and décor arises in over half of RRTPs. Different approaches are suggested. Aberdeenshire assesses that staff time input and timescales for the SWF and other grant providers cause significant delays to move-in. They suggest a low cost repayment furnished tenancy scheme as better for tenants and more cost effective for the Council. Perth and Kinross are moving away from furnished tenancies, instead requesting funding for personalised furniture budgets. Argyll and Bute similarly plan to introduce decoration grants, linked not only to improving sustainment but also increasing the proportion of tenancy offers currently accepted.

RRTPs with a focus on improving or enhancing furniture options for new tenants

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Lothian, Eilean Slar, Falkirk, Moray, Orkney, Perth and Kinross, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire

Many authorities are reviewing their starter pack schemes. Renfrewshire already provides starter packs for all tenants, and notes that this has been a very effective measure in helping new tenancies start well. South Lanarkshire requests £2.4million funding for starter packs for 1500 households over five years. Most authorities are exploring ways to improve relationships and/or processes with the SWF. East Ayrshire and Falkirk are looking into the feasibility of protocols for same day decisions and fast-tracking of applications.

Furniture and décor examples

Perth and Kinross Council identified that the unfurnished nature of social housing can undermine rapid rehousing in some cases. They therefore aim to trial a “ready to occupy” rather than “ready to let” approach by setting up a “property ready fund”, which expands the personalised budget approach they already use. This fund is the first priority in terms of the Council’s RRTP resource requests. They have designed three levels of “property ready packs” and costed these. They hope this will allow people to be housed quicker, with more choice in furniture, whilst avoiding the need for unaffordable service charges applied to most furnished tenancies.

Aberdeen City Council is currently undertaking a trial of re-using items from local charities Instant Neighbour and Somebody Cares to furnish temporary properties in a homely fashion, reducing the overall costs of temporary accommodation. Each tenant receives cutlery, crockery, quilts, pillows and bedding, which they can retain for their permanent home.

Argyll and Bute Council wants to establish a decoration grant scheme, having recognised that people in crisis are often the least able to undertake decoration work in unfurnished social housing. Only 73% of social offers are currently accepted; the Council has drawn a link between the level of refusals and the decorative standard in some properties. They would aim to use a decoration fund to complement assistance provided already by RSLs, thus allowing for personalisation and investment in the new home and enhancing likelihood of tenancy sustainment.

Aberdeenshire Council identified that applying for assistance from the SWF and other sources of furniture or support for new tenants can be time-consuming and piecemeal for support staff, whilst SWF timescales can result in a four to six-week delay in applicants moving out of temporary accommodation into permanent homes. They plan to address this by embedding an officer within the SWF team to fast track applications from households moving from temporary accommodation.

Renfrewshire Council funds Impact Arts, through the housing support budget, to deliver a project called Make It Your Own, whereby vulnerable applicants and new tenants work with a tutor to upcycle and create furniture, canvases, curtains and blinds. They supported 32 service users last year, of whom 96% sustained their tenancy. Their RRTP includes plans to upscale this project given its popularity and success amongst participants.

Social housing sustainment strategies

Pre-tenancy screening checks for vulnerabilities allowing a more targeted approach and reviews of Council arrears and antisocial behaviour (ASB) policies to embed a homelessness prevention remit are put forward by a third of authorities. East Ayrshire has developed a Tenancy Start Matrix tool to identify new tenants at higher risk of failure, and offers three-monthly “health checks” through the first year of a tenancy.

Falkirk plans to develop training for estates Housing Officers on identifying support needs and risks to future sustainment, including affordability and having difficult discussions. Falkirk has a useful suggestion to roll out a consistent support needs assessment and share that information as a matter of course at the point of Section Five referrals or nominations – something one of the South Lanarkshire RSLs asked for in their PCS.

Social housing eviction procedures

Three RRTPs have a strong focus on preventing homelessness from Council stock, by improving evictions processes. Moray already has such a process in place. Aberdeen aims to use alternatives to arrears escalation policies and convert tenancies to short SSTs rather than evict to homelessness. They plan to use “technical” eviction for families, and to seek to assess homelessness duties before eviction to determine available housing options.

Falkirk has similar plans, with a priority to reduce family homelessness from social housing and reduce the number of children entering temporary accommodation. Falkirk also plans to develop an eviction panel, to ensure all prevention assistance has been provided, and review the entire repossession process to seek

additional opportunities to prevent evictions. This approach aims to revisit the spirit rather than simply abide by the letter of pre-action requirements for social landlords, in keeping with the original intention of the legislation.⁶²

Moray Council has a cross-departmental Serious Rent Arrears Group, with representation from housing, housing options, Social Work and support services, with an aim to prevent households in arrears being evicted from Council housing. If court action is initiated, the Group reviews each case and agrees actions to prevent eviction. The RRTP provides figures which show its positive impact. The RRTP sets an aim to investigate the use of short SSTs with housing support as an alternative to eviction and placement in temporary accommodation. This is regarded as having the potential to minimise costs and reduce trauma of homelessness, especially for any children involved.

Embedded tenancy sustainment officers in RSLs

Perth and Kinross, Aberdeenshire and East Lothian already either fund tenancy sustainment workers within RSLs or have embedded officers at an RSL to provide move-in and prevention support. Perth and Kinross seeks to expand this service in view of rising homelessness from the RSL sector. Dumfries and Galloway has a more general action to work with local RSLs to identify early intervention initiatives to improve tenancy sustainment.

South Lanarkshire Council’s RRTP includes various PCS; those from RSLs are especially useful in understanding prevention activities from a different perspective. And the very approach of PCS is helpful in solidifying RSL commitments to the RRTP vision.

One local RSL uses a toolkit citing factors suggesting a likely risk of homelessness in the same way as factors may suggest likely risk of heart attack. They also have a tenant hardship fund, and an authority-wide support service directory to which tenants can be signposted. The RSL agrees eviction is wasteful, but doesn’t have in-house specialist support. They want to challenge the notion of “tenancy readiness” by reframing the question to ask instead, *what support can make rapid rehousing happen?*

Another RSL suggests they could better manage and prepare for tenancies with higher homelessness risk if the Council proactively shared their support assessment (routinely done at the homelessness assessment) with the new landlord. RSL staff are otherwise left to guess what needs the tenant has. The RSL would like joint training on managing support needs with the local authority. Lastly the RSL feels they don’t hear back from Section 11 notices, and that this would offer a further opportunity to work more collaboratively on homelessness prevention.

Section 11

Section 11 notices must be sent to local authority homelessness teams when RSLs, PRS landlords or mortgage providers serve a notice of proceedings. This could be a vital prevention tool (mirroring the Duty to Refer in the English Homelessness Reduction Act 2018) yet is little mentioned in Scottish homelessness statistics or literature.

Only ten authorities mention Section 11, and have plans to improve their response to notices. In reality, whilst PRS landlords are legally required to send Section 11s and that sector produces higher levels of homelessness than the RSL sector, they are less likely to comply with Section 11 requirements.⁶³

RRTPs with a focus on improving operation of Section 11

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Eilean Siar, Falkirk, Highland, Orkney, Perth and Kinross, Scottish Borders, Shetland, West Dunbartonshire

⁶² https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1790524/Evictions_by_social_landlords_in_Scotland_2016-2018.pdf/_nocache

⁶³ Section 11 statistics were last made available in 2015, but each year since Section 11 was introduced in 2009 show a tiny number of PRS landlord notifications compared to RSLs or creditors in every authority area of Scotland: <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables/annualreferencetables201415>

Section 11 practice examples

Aberdeenshire Council is working with local RSLs to set up better protocols on Section 11, including pre-eviction discussions. RSLs have been keen to work with the Council to develop this process.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has set a target within its RRTP to reduce the proportion of Section 11s proceeding to legal stages by 50% within the course of the RRTP.

West Dunbartonshire Council aims to review and update its existing Section 11 protocol by introducing a more proactive prevention service aimed at tenancies at risk on account of landlord actions, in both the RSL and private sectors.

Perth and Kinross Council have plans to embed an officer within two local RSLs and their own PRS team to respond proactively to Section 11 notices.

Three authorities in the North and Islands Hub, **Aberdeen, Highland and Shetland Councils** are running a “Section 11 plus” pilot with specific RSLs, supported by SHN. RSLs agree to issue a Section 11 notice earlier in the repossession process and supply additional specified information about the tenant, as well as stating the minimum response the RSL would need from the tenant to suspend repossession action. RSLs and authorities have agreed to work collaboratively and update each other on progress. Early outcomes from this pilot (from SHN) appear to be positive.

Preventing homelessness from the PRS

Section 11 apart, RRTPs contain multiple actions to improve prevention from the PRS, and, to a lesser extent, rapid access to the PRS to avoid homelessness where loss of the original home cannot be prevented. Edinburgh, which has the highest prevalence of homelessness from PRS, has the most ambitious plans in this area. The Council will introduce a dedicated PRS prevention service, with an officer based in every locality. Perth and Kinross aims to embed a prevention officer within their PRS access service, with a similar remit.

RRTPs with a focus on improving relationships with PRS landlords

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Highland, Orkney, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire

Eleven authorities plan to improve advice, guidance and engagement with PRS landlords as a way of decreasing homelessness from the sector. Aberdeen aims to improve support available to PRS tenants as well as landlords, especially around money and welfare advice given risks of higher homelessness risk under Universal Credit (UC). Highland sets clear targets for reduction of homelessness from the PRS. Fife seeks RRTP funding to create a “PRS Resilience Fund”, as well as planning to develop better relationships with landlords.

Prevention funds

Homelessness prevention funds operate in most authorities, though only three specifically mention how they use the funds and who can access them. One authority (East Lothian) plans to introduce a “spend to save prevention fund” through the RRTP. Scottish Borders is seeking additional funding resource to create a “crisis intervention fund”, to facilitate creative and immediate service responses to cases of homelessness risk which do not fit into established pathways. This appears to marry with the personal budget approach highlighted by HARSAG.

Four authorities make specific funding requests to mitigate welfare reforms, either through a “mitigation fund” (Aberdeenshire and East Lothian), or additional UC/welfare support officers (Glasgow and Moray). Falkirk and Scottish Borders highlight the key role of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) in preventing homelessness, and aim to review and improve protocols with Revenues and Benefits to maximise positive prevention outcomes.

City of Edinburgh Council

will embed a PRS prevention officer in each of four locality officers, with a remit to focus on provision of intensive advice and support to landlords and tenants, drawing on good practice from Shelter’s Oak-funded PRS work. Officers would have access to a prevention fund and prioritised routes into MMR housing. The intention is that this would also improve relationships and engagement between the Council and private landlords and letting agencies (which is low at present), eventually bringing gains to PRS access.

PRS access schemes as a prevention tool

A minority of RRTPs consider PRS access schemes as serving a (current or future) role to prevent, as well as to alleviate, homelessness. This is the case with South Ayrshire’s SLA proposal. Renfrewshire and Dundee note that their access schemes already play a key role in homelessness prevention.

But it is more common to find PRS schemes mentioned in relation to an additional option for those already within the homelessness system. Plans to maintain or extend such services further “upstream” are rare, which is, **in our view**, disappointing.

Authorities using (or aiming to use) PRS access to prevent and alleviate homelessness

Dundee, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Highland, Orkney, Perth and Kinross, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire

Prevention fund examples

Staff in **Aberdeenshire Council**'s options service have access to a credit card, allowing them to respond quickly to alleviate homelessness. The Council seeks funding to expand this facility, which empowers frontline staff to act at the point of need, allowing cash payments to be made if needed.

Perth and Kinross Council introduced a small budget for frontline staff replicating HARSAG's personalised budget approach in cities, for immediate crisis or prevention responses.

Argyll and Bute Council report they intend to follow in Perth and Kinross's footsteps by introducing an early intervention fund for struggling households, to be used alongside holistic support. They aim for this fund to halve the rates of homelessness attributable to rent or mortgage arrears locally.

Mediation

A third of RRTPs commit to explore or implement general (i.e. not only youth) mediation services, or to expand and/or promote existing services. This is often predicated on the proportion of homelessness applications made as a result of relationship breakdown.

Aberdeenshire has an in-house mediation service, but notes this is oversubscribed with neighbour complaint cases, and requires an officer specifically for homelessness cases. Moray recently closed an in-house mediation service for neighbour disputes, and aims to redirect this funding to mediation services with a homelessness prevention remit.

From RRTPs, East Ayrshire appears to be one of the few authorities which already runs a successful (non-age specific) mediation service within housing options, and aims to further promote this. Argyll and Bute has a family mediation service facing cuts due to wider Council budgets, and seeks RRTP funding to continue to operate it. Glasgow, Angus, East Dunbartonshire, Orkney, and West Lothian seek funding to set up new mediation services, whilst East Renfrewshire and South Ayrshire plan to train all frontline options officers on

mediation skills. Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway's first steps will be to undertake research and scope feasibility of mediation in their areas.

RRTPs with a focus on introducing or promoting/ expanding current mediation services

Services for any households presenting through relationship breakdowns

Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow, Moray, Orkney, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, West Lothian

Services for young people presenting due to family breakdowns

Dundee, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Highland, Midlothian, Perth and Kinross, Renfrewshire, Shetland, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian

Prevention for predictably at risk groups

All authorities place some emphasis on prevention pathways for groups most at risk of homelessness, though with varying levels of detail and breadth. Scottish Borders and Fife set out a large range of groups with higher than average homelessness risk in their action plans, and aim to develop prevention pathways for all of these. Stirling, North Ayrshire and North Lanarkshire's approach is to develop multi-agency pathways with named contacts, trigger points, and training on early detection and action.

Dundee's approach to defining who "at risk" groups are in Dundee has a distinctly local tone, studying homelessness risk by geographical localities rather than, or as well as, by universal characteristics known to render households more vulnerable.

Dundee City Council, in a partnership with the H&SCP and Dundee University, is mapping the prevalence of homelessness in localities across the city, alongside available supports and services: a tailored local approach to prevention.

Young people

Young people are disproportionately represented in homelessness statistics. Many RRTPs report a range of existing or planned activities in the area of youth homelessness prevention, whilst other RRTPs are largely silent on this subject.

Mediation is more likely to be offered as part of youth rather than generic homelessness teams. Dundee, Edinburgh, Renfrewshire, Shetland, East Lothian and Perth and Kinross have well developed approaches (Edinburgh's for 16-17 year olds and care leavers only). In RRTPs, Dumfries and Galloway, Falkirk, West

Dunbartonshire, Highland and West and Midlothian plan to install youth-specific mediation services.

RRTPs with a focus on homelessness/housing education in schools

Authorities with existing housing education programmes

Dundee, East Dunbartonshire, Midlothian, North Ayrshire, Orkney, Perth and Kinross

Authorities with plans to develop housing education programmes

Aberdeenshire, Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, Falkirk, Highland, South Lanarkshire, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian

Intervention to reduce the risk of youth homelessness "upstream" through housing and homelessness education within secondary schools is a further theme in RRTPs. Six authorities already have homelessness education programmes, whilst nine more have plans to set these up. In Dumfries and Galloway, a stock transfer area, the schools project is being taken forward and funded by an RSL (Loreburn Housing Association).

Councils that operate, or are planning, specific approaches or services to reduce youth homelessness are recorded below.

Youth prevention examples

Perth and Kinross Council assign youth support officers to all young people assessed as having a potential homelessness risk, engaging them at a range of settings, including youth clubs. They operate a family mediation service (all youth support officers are trained mediators) and have a bespoke suite of leaflets for young people.

West Lothian Council plans to develop a school education programme on homelessness to dispel myths and introduce a risk matrix to identify potential youth homelessness so that high level support strategies can be planned. It also plans to implement a support/mediation service for school age children experiencing homelessness and create a "Moving On" model for care leavers and other vulnerable young people, with a focus on employability support for young people at risk who can only claim the SAR.

Aberdeenshire Council will set up a multi-agency group to develop Young Person Housing Action Plans. These will review access to and effectiveness of mediation and other activities.

Clackmannanshire Council aims to focus activity on young people who, having left the school system, are at risk of becoming the next generation of service users with complex support needs. The Council aims to work closely with education, health and Social Work colleagues to develop protocols for providing trauma-informed support and guidance, initially targeting young people already known to the Council through the GIRFEC model.

West Dunbartonshire Council has the highest levels of youth homelessness in Scotland. The Council is contributing to research by local partners Action for Children into youth homelessness, with the purpose of developing a youth-specific options service pilot. This service will ensure triggers and pathways are in place across all agencies allowing young people to be directed to the service.

Aberdeen City Council is running an Early Access System Change project for people leaving school with no positive destinations. The project prioritises earlier intervention and support to engage with employability and education to reduce youth homelessness. The Council is also exploring Future Builders and Living Work schemes, whereby young people learn skills and a trade whilst working on their future homes.

Highland Council is working with the Calman Trust to develop a digital housing support model for young people which is easy to engage with. All pupils in high schools will have "leaving home" sessions delivered by the Council's guidance team, and will be introduced to the digital App "HasAnswers" during those sessions. This App provides practical tips on housing and direct access to local support and advice (through an actual worker offering real time practical support).

Scottish Borders Council commissioned a study on the housing needs and aspirations of young people in its area in 2018, which included face to face surveys with young people. The Council intends to use the findings to shape pathways and interventions to prevent young people becoming homeless, meet their particular housing needs and support them in sustaining accommodation.

Other public bodies

Improving understanding of homelessness, prevention triggers and referral pathways from H&SC colleagues is mentioned in over a third of RRTPs, with some areas moving towards a way of operating as if a duty was already incumbent on those public bodies (South and East Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway) and others specifically referring to this (North Ayrshire).

Authorities improving H&SC prevention pathways

Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, Eilean Siar, Fife, Inverclyde, Moray, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling, West Lothian

Ensuring implementation, or review, of SHORE standards for those entering prison who have a tenancy, and for those leaving care in a planned manner, are referred to in more than half of RRTPs. East Ayrshire highlights the very positive prevention outcomes from its prison outreach partnership, in which over 130 inmates were prevented from losing tenancies. Renfrewshire intends to implement a new peer-mentoring project for people with convictions, enhancing sustainability of their tenancies.

East Ayrshire Council asked for a PCS for the RRTP from its H&SCP whose contribution sets out plans to develop a direct referral/point of access mechanism for people at risk of homelessness, facilitated by the Health and Homelessness Nurse. The purpose would be to provide wraparound support to help the person sustain their tenancy. The H&SCP will consider enhancing this resource to ensure equity of provision across all three East Ayrshire localities.

Moray Council and Moray IJB jointly fund an Occupational Therapist (OT) located in the housing team. This post assesses health and housing needs, with both a prevention and rehousing remit. The RRTP seeks funding to increase this resource, allowing the fast-tracking of health and housing assessments, allowing more households at risk of homelessness to be directly housed into suitable accommodation, bypassing the need for temporary accommodation.

North Lanarkshire Council received a strong contribution to the RRTP from its H&SCP, building on years of joint working on homelessness across both Lanarkshires. The H&SCP has set an explicit action to increase health improvement capacity in North Lanarkshire in order to lead and coordinate delivery of prevention actions set out in the Health and Homelessness Action Plan. These are wide-ranging, and include the introduction of routine enquiry in health and care consultations on a person's current housing status to identify risk of homelessness, and establish and evaluate pathways between housing and health which would reduce risk at a pre-crisis point.

Access to and nature of advice and advocacy

Access to and effectiveness of advice/advocacy is clearly central to the rapid rehousing vision. Half of RRTPs centre on reviewing availability and responsiveness of current advice provision to ensure fewer gaps in service. This is particularly focused on financial inclusion, benefits and money advice.

A small number of RRTPs refer to co-located services, such as Dundee, which locates welfare advice provision in GP surgeries. A minority also focus on the potential of using digital delivery to enhance reach of housing advice in rural areas (such as Orkney), for young people specifically (Highland) or across communities in general (North Lanarkshire).

Access to and nature of tenancy support

All authorities place some emphasis on the nature and responsiveness of tenancy support. Argyll and Bute plans one of the most far-reaching changes in this area, seeking the biggest part of its requested RRTP funding for a team of proactive, early intervention coaches, working in an integrated way with H&SC.

Many authorities plan to review and/or reshape housing support services, making them more overtly tenure neutral (South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire), more integrated (Scottish Borders), on a locality or "Hub" model rather than a central service (Stirling, Edinburgh, Dundee, Fife, Aberdeen) and more tailored to people with complex issues (Eilean Siar, East Renfrewshire, Dumfries and Galloway, North Lanarkshire, Clackmannanshire).

As part of its service user consultation for Housing First, Falkirk plans to work with service users to identify gaps and issues in accessing support services. Renfrewshire is aiming to expand the successful tenancy resettlement service it has for young people to be available to all new tenants. West Lothian identify key risks of support not being available or suitable undermining rapid rehousing, even if settled housing is forthcoming, and has plans to fully review and realign commissioned support and resettlement services, processes and resources including fast tracks for those with higher needs. Glasgow has requested funding

equivalent to what the Council already spends on commissioned support, whilst the balance is shifted from accommodation-based to community-based support.

Argyll and Bute Council plans to overhaul how support is delivered to people in communities through more integrated working between housing, health and addiction services. For some years, the Council has worked to remove "tenancy ready" language and culture. But it highlights that this is not enough to maximise tenancy sustainment, as people don't always engage with support in the way it is currently delivered. The Council also notes that the prevalence of mental health and addiction is increasing, and support from respective disciplines usually provided in a siloed manner.

The Council and the H&SCP recognise that the current model could be improved across all services in order to achieve better recovery outcomes. They seek to transform the working relationship between support commissioners and contractors across the Council and H&SCP. The RRTP contains a set of actions to facilitate integration, including enhancement of low level mental health and addiction support from the current housing support services, appointment of link officers between housing and health, with health or Social Work taking the lead on complex cases, and the establishment and training of a peer support network through the Reach (Recovery, Empowerment, Aspiration, Choice, Hope) Advocacy Award to offer locality based client led support groups.

Dundee City Council along with other members of the local Homelessness Partnership (H&SCP, Children and Families, Housing Services) is considering changes to how it delivers housing and other support. They are moving to a locality model of housing support, considering use of a PSP model and offering SDS, allowing people to have more choice over what support they get and from where.

Dumfries and Galloway Council identified in their 2018 homelessness strategy that action by landlord or lender was the second most common reason for homelessness. The Council devised a new Welfare and Housing Options Support Team in partnership with Revenues and Benefits staff to provide additional support to UC claimants, funded through the Council's Anti-Poverty Initiative. The Team is based with the Housing Options Team to ensure a joined-up approach to prevention, resolving issues with claims, linking clients with and/or providing options advice, liaising with landlords, budget planning and supporting applications to the SWF or for DHPs.

North Lanarkshire Council includes plans in its RRTP to pilot the extension of SDS to people at risk of homelessness who are eligible for a package of care. Through SDS, people are allocated an individual budget to fund their support arrangements. The SDS principles of flexibility, control and choice dovetail with those of Housing First, enabling people to be supported in non-traditional ways planned and chosen by them. The Council notes the value of SDS for the 73 people who were homeless or at risk in the previous year and aims to upscale this through the RRTP.

East Ayrshire Council has taken a collective, trauma-informed, community-based approach to preventative work across all homelessness support services regardless of which partner delivers them. All services are predicated on a common outcome monitoring framework, the notion of following service users into the community rather than breaking relationships, the development of peer mentoring with the flexibility of being able to link back into core services if the person is in crisis, and an emphasis on connecting people with local communities and building resilience.

Highland Council is jointly funding a "Move on" project with the European Social Fund and NHS Highland. Move on officers take a person-centred, relationships-based approach to engaging the most excluded individuals who are often known to many services and seen as "serial non-engagers". Move on officers act as navigators, co-ordinators and facilitators as well as support workers and "stick" with people. Any professional can refer to the service which is available to homeless and non-homeless people. The service started in October 2018 and is already achieving outcomes.

Chapter 5

Service and culture change

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

Authorities were not specifically asked to state their plans for service redesign, staff training/support or more generally, how they intended to introduce a change of culture around how homelessness is addressed in the authority and more widely.

HARSAG placed significant emphasis on these elements, with recommendations to support and empower frontline staff with high quality training, redesign of systems and service delivery (including more flexible means of undertaking homelessness assessments, and an emphasis on personal housing planning). Service redesign was one of four areas for which authorities were able to request funding.

Within RRTP toolkit guidance, authorities were asked to group households by the level of their support needs, rather than by type of household or type of support need. As such, authorities were not specifically asked to give detail on routes through their services for particular groups (such as young people, migrants, care leavers), with the exception of people with complex needs, for whom they were asked to describe service access and provision.

HARSAG placed significant focus on pathways for preventing homelessness for at risk groups, but less focus on the different services/options people may require where homelessness is not prevented.

Overview

Culture change in local authority options services

Over half of RRTPs place significant emphasis on culture change. A smaller number refer to service changes more fleetingly, and a handful make no mention of service or culture change in their RRTPs.

Aberdeen opens stating, “our vision for the period to 2024 is both bold and ambitious: we will work together as a city to end homelessness”. The Council is clear that, to achieve this, “radical changes to how we do business will be needed”. Authorities with far-reaching plans which buy into the ethos as well as the mechanics of rapid rehousing are both Lanarkshires, North and East Ayrshire, Argyll and Bute and East and West Lothian, amongst others.

Perth and Kinross lays out the far-reaching changes already made through their Home First programme, which included offering immediate options interviews rather than future appointments, integrating allocations, PRS and homelessness teams into one

options service, devolving options to locality offices rather than delivering all from the centre, introducing tenure neutral support services and proactively contacting waiting list applicants to offer interviews. A number of authorities seem to be stepping in a similar direction to that already travelled by this forerunner.

Staff training and awareness-raising

Staff training, workforce/employee development and awareness-raising both within homelessness services and beyond is a key strand within two thirds of RRTPs. Perth and Kinross identifies this as one of six main workstreams over the next five years. Many RRTPs mention the forthcoming Housing Options Training Toolkit, whilst some highlight specific training by type or level to be delivered to their homelessness and options teams.

Moray will provide enhanced training in relation to financial advice, benefits and health vulnerabilities, whilst Highland has commissioned The Homelessness Network Scotland to train all options staff on trauma informed care. Fife will ensure officers received accredited training on providing housing advice. East Renfrewshire, Aberdeen and South Ayrshire aim to develop whole staff training plans.

Argyll and Bute, North and South Ayrshire, both Lanarkshires, Aberdeen, West and East Lothian set out plans for training, awareness-raising and engagement across a wider range of services and agencies. RRTPs highlight job shadowing, skills transfer programmes, joint training and service user consultation and engagement. Aberdeenshire will develop an RRTP lived experience workstream with community learning and development teams. Fife’s PSP has committed to develop an “Academy” model of joint training to embed trauma informed practice across the consortium and wider housing agencies.

Glasgow recognises the need for frontline staff to be correctly skilled and supported, but also that culture change and challenging usual ways of working must be understood and driven by all levels, including senior managers and elected members.

Service delivery changes

Most authorities discuss changes to their homelessness service delivery, with some being far more wide-ranging and/or detailed than others. Aberdeenshire, West Dunbartonshire, Stirling and South Ayrshire have undertaken analysis of weak points in current systems and service shortcomings, with specific actions to address those. For example, Aberdeenshire notes 50% of clients assessed as needing support don’t go on to engage with the Council’s support service and staff need to investigate why this is and how this can be improved.

Improvements to “flow”, greater flexibility in service delivery and transformation of work processes are planned in roughly half of authorities. West Dunbartonshire and Stirling have high numbers of applicants who lose contact with the service and aim clearly to reduce this by specified amounts, by redesigning their services - on a multi-agency housing options model in the former and a locality basis in the latter. Moray identifies a need for more collaborative working between housing and H&SC colleagues and intends a review of office provision and options for co-location and shared resources.

East Lothian is undertaking a “root and branch” review of all operational procedures, roles and processes, including a focus on arrears policies and “personalised” rent collection methods. West Lothian, Argyll and Bute, Falkirk, Highland, East Renfrewshire, North Lanarkshire, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire are examining the tasks and responsibilities of staff across (and beyond) the

service, with the latter two considering generic roles across homeless/housing teams, all of which ensure a rapid rehousing focus. Glasgow plans to use the Vanguard methodology⁶⁴ to improve efficiency in its homelessness service.

Commissioning

Changes to how future homelessness services are commissioned (and by whom) are put forward within a minority of RRTPs. West Lothian is reviewing all commissioned services to ensure they support the aims of rapid rehousing, whilst Glasgow has moved away from commissioning any services which are not trauma-informed. Argyll and Bute proposes to transform the working relationship between support commissioners and contractors across the Council and H&SCP.

Fife has had a Homelessness and Housing Support PSP for some years. This offers a consortium approach to commissioning and delivering services. The PSP has a Governance Group able to commit funding for research, consortium training and “test of transformational change” pilots. Dundee and Dumfries and Galloway are considering a PSP approach, as well as jointly commissioning homelessness services with health. In the latter this has resulted in two dedicated mental health posts for homeless service users.

Glasgow has now moved to an alliance model of commissioning, an approach which is being considered by other authorities. North Lanarkshire aims to streamline commissioning through joint approaches for a shared client group, and plans to create a third sector alliance with a small number of agencies. North Ayrshire is also considering an alliance approach.

IT changes

Just over a third of authorities plan changes to their IT and/or communication systems. North Lanarkshire highlights the opportunities that improving access to digital solutions can bring to more excluded client groups. Edinburgh has plans to improve customer feedback opportunities through introducing a confidential mailbox and allowing customers to select preferred modes of communication which suit them.

Various RRTPs place emphasis on creating or improving online options portals, devising self-assessment and/or self-service and diagnostic options tools (mostly via Northgate modules). Aberdeenshire plans to develop an App to communicate better with homeless customers, as face-to-face contact is often rare in rural areas, so staff rely on more time-consuming methods. They also plan to review and improve all information available on their website.

Co-ordination of activity

Co-ordination of rapid rehousing activities and ensuring focus and collaboration across many different departments/services is regarded as challenging by a number of authorities who have plans to introduce a co-ordination/business change role to ensure oversight, communication, monitoring and oversee “test of change” pilots. Many authorities requested funding for this purpose, with West Lothian acknowledging that coordinating the RRTP draft required significant resource, which had to be removed from operational teams, and that this is not sustainable over five years.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

West Lothian Council has identified that in order to reduce demand for homelessness services, it must expand current delivery of housing options and support to intervene at an earlier stage and in a more flexible way. They have plans to develop a multifunctional Housing Options and Resettlement Team consisting of staff from a broad range of services including housing needs, allocations, options, support and temporary accommodation. The aim is to transition to a fully mainstreamed, generic “Rehousing Team” by year three of the plan. The Council has requested funding for the team to be set up and piloted alongside continued provision of its statutory homelessness and support services.

Perth and Kinross Council has identified a key challenge in co-ordinating all of its rapid rehousing activity across different services and departments. It proposes to create a specific Home First Officer post with a remit to oversee all applications and voids to ensure the need for temporary accommodation is avoided as far as possible; to provide a link between options, PRS, localities, RSLs, support teams and repairs/voids teams; to have responsibility for homelessness prevention and furniture funds and oversee test of change initiatives. A named officer ensures good communication between teams and a clear line of responsibility if issues arise.

Aberdeen City Council wants to create a Housing Support Hub, to be used by all households requiring support, comprised of in-house and commissioned housing support, accommodation providers and H&SC, with links to local landlords. The Hub will have clear outcomes to achieve in line with Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) targets, to increase tenancy sustainment and reduce repeat homelessness, and services will be measured on this basis.

The Hub will be responsible for ensuring support is delivered to households who need it on day one, and customers given a choice of support. The emphasis on developing common pathways, outcomes and digital forms will facilitate staff spending more time with people and less in offices. All services are expected to be assertive in their nature, exhausting all measures to find and support customers, including use of peer support, and teams will not be able to close cases for non-engagement.

⁶⁴ This refers to a method for improvement in service organisations which focuses on a “systems thinking” approach, customer-centric service design and the elimination of “failure demand”.

East Ayrshire Council has introduced a “neighbourhood coach” model as a new way of providing community housing services, which it believes will also improve sustainability, access to advice and support, and trust. The model aims to reimagine the traditional relationship between social landlord and tenant. It is founded on three principles: 1) relationship-based approach – shift to tenant strengths and potential rather than defining relationship with the authority in terms of need, weakness and service provision; 2) connecting tenants to local services and assets to help them thrive; 3) core belief that everyone achieves more if tenants have the right home and relationship

Service pathways for particular groups

Most RRTPs place at least some focus on specific groups identified as having unmet needs, or whose representation in the homelessness system is especially high.

For some, such as East Renfrewshire, the RRTP records a general commitment to review service responsiveness and pathways for particular groups (care leavers, hospital leavers, veterans, prison leavers, people with dementia), and to build on existing protocols, though little detail is given. Scottish Borders sets similar actions, though with more detail, whilst East Lothian offers significant focus on pathways and options for specific groups. Edinburgh’s RRTP, in contrast, has little detail on pathways for at risk groups, other than rough sleepers.

Rough sleepers/multiply excluded people

The broadest focus on households sleeping rough and/or with complex needs is found with the RRTPs of cities, given the prevalence of rough sleeping, and the generally higher proportion of persons excluded from services.

Glasgow reports a comprehensive range of current and planned projects aimed at improving engagement and access for the most excluded. These

include a citywide commitment to reduce rough sleeping by 75% by 2020, a multi-agency support service to develop relationships with excluded service users and a city centre homelessness hub. It also commits to work with partners to examine the place of the city’s winter night shelter, with the aim to improve service responses to those who use it, and the ultimate ambition to remove the need for a low threshold shelter in the city.

Edinburgh has a multi-agency health, housing and Social Work service for clients with complex needs (The Access Point), a link worker for mobile homelessness assessments and rapid access accommodation (as described in Chapter Three). The city also plans to develop a full training programme for the staff most likely to engage with rough sleepers (such as park rangers, waste and environmental health staff). The RRTP does not reference the role (or extent) of the city’s care shelter, now running for three quarters of the year.

Aberdeen has plans for a city-wide support Hub (see box on previous page), including assertive outreach services, based on positive experience of its assertive outreach rough sleeping and begging project in the past winter. The Council will also take the approach of relaxing access to temporary accommodation in winter to foreclose need for a shelter.

Dundee’s options service undertakes regular outreach work and links in with police, street ambassadors and voluntary organisations to provide accommodation for anyone sleeping rough. Stirling identifies a need to build a rough sleeper pathway into its service.

Some non-city areas with lower levels of rough sleeping also describe approaches to identifying and responding where this does occur. Renfrewshire keeps a “by name” list of individuals seen sleeping rough or begging, and maintains close links with business and other organisations to allow communication. Falkirk does not have a high amount of rough sleeping, but does have a part time dedicated resource whereby an outreach officer builds up trusting relationships with those identified as having slept rough or at risk of doing so and facilitates their journey through services. As this has worked well, Falkirk wants to extend this to a full-time role which can also address repeat presentations.

Other authorities’ consideration of households with these risks varies in depth and breadth, with for example, West Lothian, all Ayrshires, Renfrewshire, Fife, West Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire undertaking significant work to analyse the needs and extent of complex households and where they are within the current system. All these authorities plan to develop clear pathways into their services for these groups. Perth and Kinross acknowledges the Council needs a better understanding of, and engagement with, this cohort, including rough sleepers.

Prison leavers

All but three RRTPs refer to the SHORE standards⁶⁵ for prisoners, which aim to prevent avoidable homelessness occurring during sentences/remands and reduce the revolving door of homelessness/prison when prisoners

are homeless on release. The standards are designed to maximise multi-agency working such that emergency accommodation can be avoided for prisoners on day of liberation. Some authorities say they have implemented these standards already; more commit to “fully” implement them through the RRTP.

Fife is working with COSLA and ALACHO on a national initiative to adopt SHORE standards consistently across all prisons. Fife is also working with Public Protection teams to set up a Housing First model for prison leavers, as well as considering creating home leave properties as part of release planning. North Ayrshire has successfully engaged Housing First clients via prison outreach, so aims to expand this more widely through the RRTP process.

Based on RRTP detail, various authorities have well-established projects and/or protocols between homelessness services and prisons. Around a quarter of authorities already provide outreach housing advice in local prisons. East Dunbartonshire has a specific officer identified to address prison release and liaison. Shetland successfully uses video-conferencing to complete homelessness assessments three weeks before release and plan accommodation.

RRTPs describing current outreach housing advice services in prisons

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, East Ayrshire, Falkirk, Glasgow, Perth and Kinross, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire

RRTPs containing plans to explore outreach housing advice in prisons

Dundee, East Lothian (into Polmont YOI)

65 <http://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/Publications/Publication-5363.aspx>

Aberdeenshire is piloting a shared temporary tenancy approach for prisoners, to avoid release to B&B, to good outcomes, and intends to roll this out further. North Lanarkshire is considering a training property approach for prisoners nearing release. Orkney has worked in partnership with a private sector landlord to develop four bespoke properties for released prisoners who receive visiting support from Criminal Justice services.

Glasgow notes prisoners form a disproportionate number of homelessness applications with poorer than average outcomes, so sets out a range of actions/projects to address this, such as (Glasgow Housing Association) seconding a Housing Officer to support agency Tomorrow's People, for female offenders, to improve housing outcomes for this group. Renfrewshire takes a similar approach (see box at end of this chapter).

Hospital protocols

Half of RRTPs mention hospital discharge protocols or projects.

RRTPs with a focus on improving or implementing hospital discharge pathways

Aberdeen, Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, Fife, Glasgow, Midlothian, Moray, Perth and Kinross, North Ayrshire, Shetland, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian

Glasgow has a homelessness hospital discharge team which works to ensure people are not discharged with no accommodation, identifying an increased need for housing suitable for IV drug users with mobility needs. Perth and Kinross has a specialist officer working with H&SC for inpatients without housing on discharge. Fife has developed a hospital intervention project, managed

by Shelter Scotland, focused on A&E and ward-based discharges, which will be formally evaluated by Health Improvement Scotland.

West and Midlothian, Moray and East Ayrshire have hospital protocols in place, but plan to review them. In RRTPs, these authorities appear to have a strong focus on health and homelessness. Midlothian's project is piloted by the Health and Homelessness Steering Group. In East Ayrshire, the Health and Homelessness Service covers a much wider range of areas than hospital discharge. Shetland makes a funding request for an OT, with a role to intervene earlier to prevent delayed discharge and the need to move house. Moray already has an Occupational Therapist (OT) based in the housing service, but wants to increase capacity.

Veterans

Veterans are less mentioned in RRTPs, with only ten authorities referring to this group and fewer still setting out a specific housing pathway for veterans in their plans.

Of those that do, North Ayrshire reports a protocol shared across all CHR partners whereby a specific set of actions are triggered when a housing application is received from a person who indicates they are leaving the forces. Such applicants will be offered bespoke housing advice, access to Veterans' First Point, an OT assessment to ensure a suitable offer of housing, if required, and a points award for social housing allowing immediate allocation.

Renfrewshire reports a tri-Council approach to signing the Armed Forces Covenant, with Inverclyde and East Renfrewshire, to make the most of specialist services across the three areas to attain the best outcome for veterans. This is supported by a bespoke Veterans Support Advisor shared between the three Councils to which options staff can refer. West Dunbartonshire makes a commitment

to rapidly rehouse veterans leaving the forces, preventing the need for them to use temporary accommodation.

RRTPs with a focus on housing needs of veterans

Aberdeen, Dumfries and Galloway, East Lothian, Falkirk, Glasgow, Moray, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire

Veteran-specific housing is available in many areas of Scotland through national RSLs, and understanding what is available to veterans specifically (who of course may not wish veteran-specific housing or support) is important for homelessness services. Glasgow does not have a pathway for veterans, but does have specific support services and a bespoke Housing Association, with links to other RSLs. East Lothian is developing supported housing for veterans having identified a local need for this and formalised its commitment in the East of Scotland Armed Forces Covenant.

Care leavers

Care leaver pathways are covered in all but one RRTP, as would be expected given local authorities' roles as corporate parents and the existence of national standards on care leaver housing protocols.⁶⁶ These standards emphasise the range of housing options and tailored support that should be available to care leavers, as well as the right to "stay put". Most authorities have protocols, often with named contacts, to minimise care leavers coming through the homelessness system.

Ten RRTPs identified the need to diversify accommodation options for care leavers, with South Ayrshire, Orkney, Fife, Eilean Siar, North Lanarkshire, West and East Lothian, including Housing First for youth

as one of those, along with shared models of supported accommodation for those who do not wish their own tenancy. Clackmannanshire and Moray say they already offer a housing and support approach to care leavers which is very similar to Housing First.

RRTPs with a focus on diversifying housing options for care leavers

Dundee, East Lothian, Eilean Siar, Fife, North Lanarkshire, Orkney, Perth and Kinross, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, West Lothian

East Lothian's shared housing, peer support model for care leavers, called "Home and Belonging", was described in Chapter Two. North Lanarkshire plans to operate a project, also called "Home and Belonging", enabling care leavers to exercise choice and personalisation over permanent housing and assist with the transition from children's to adult services, providing integrated assessments which link to a rapid response from the NHS through quick access to necessary services, such as mental health.

Dundee has identified a need for 24-hour supported accommodation for care leavers with complex needs, as well as Housing First. East Ayrshire offers shared supported properties within a psychologically informed support service, in which residents can input into their colour scheme and furniture, access supported leisure activities, networking opportunities and community events.

South Lanarkshire offers care leavers "housing experience" try-out tenancies, developed with input from care leavers. Renfrewshire and Perth and Kinross are considering "respite properties" to allow time out for young people experiencing difficulties. Fife is

looking into a range of alternatives for care leavers such as shared tenancies, supported accommodation, Housing First and “test flats”.

Young people

Care leavers aside, rates of youth homelessness in Scotland are high. Many authorities highlight this, and some place a strong emphasis on youth-specific prevention activities. But there is little focus in RRTPs on services and pathways for young people who *do* find themselves in the homelessness system, but who have not been in, or just left, local authority care. Glasgow and Edinburgh for example say very little about young people within their homelessness system, including whether applications are dealt with by dedicated staff, given the different advice which may be required.

Most authorities have youth-specific supported accommodation (congregate and self-contained) and most aim to review this to assess its ongoing suitability. Four authorities are looking into non-institutionalised forms of temporary accommodation for young people (Scottish Borders, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire). Orkney and Eilean Siar discuss plans to develop supported satellite properties and Housing First respectively, for young people who have not been in care but who have complex needs.

RRTPs with a focus on options for homeless young people

Aberdeen, Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Eilean Siar, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian

Renfrewshire is already providing a house-sharing service specifically for young people, East Lothian has embarked on a youth-specific shared housing model and Scottish Borders aims to consider these options. East Dunbartonshire plans to enhance the options of young people from 25-35 through three-month stays in supported accommodation with dedicated advice and support on access to the PRS. East Ayrshire has actions to encourage young people into the PRS, whilst monitoring the impact of welfare reform on them and taking mitigating action.

East Renfrewshire has plans to investigate youth-specific housing options which are affordable, effective and sustainable (this may allude to sharing). Aberdeen sets actions to work with partners to explore housing options for young people whereby they can learn skills and a trade while working on their future homes. Future Builders⁶⁷ and Live and Work,⁶⁸ projects which operate in Bristol and Birmingham respectively, are mentioned.

West Dunbartonshire is developing a youth homelessness service tailored to the needs of young people. Whilst much of this service is prevention-focused, being able to receive support from a youth-specific team is clearly of benefit to those whose homelessness is not able to be prevented. This follows a similar youth homelessness service in Dundee.

Dumfries and Galloway has set a more general action to develop and implement a protocol for young people presenting to homelessness services. Scottish Borders will use findings from its commissioned study on the housing needs and aspirations of young people to inform pathways into services, as well as prevention-focused interventions.

Older people

Older people, who may also have different housing options and pathways, are not mentioned in any RRTP. Though incidence of homelessness from older people is low, it is rising as a proportion of all homelessness applications.⁶⁹ Sheltered, amenity and care social housing is more readily available than mainstream social housing in Scotland, but often applied to through CHRs, many of which use CBL, for which specific advice and support may be needed.

Particularly in larger authorities where staff have large, mixed caseloads, ensuring tailored provision of advice to this group is important. Though Glasgow has a housing options service for older people,⁷⁰ an offshoot of its successful options model with multiple partners, it doesn't mention this in its RRTP.

In our view homelessness pathways for both younger and older people within a local authority area could benefit from further attention in RRTPs.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is mentioned as a prevalent cause of homelessness in almost all authorities. Many have refuge provision in their areas though these may have long waiting lists (East Lothian) or be in need of modernisation or facilities upgrades (West Lothian and East Ayrshire). Two thirds of authorities discuss particular pathways through (or avoiding) the homelessness system for victims of domestic abuse, beyond refuges.

RRTPs with a focus on pathways for households experiencing domestic abuse

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Glasgow, Highland, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Orkney, Perth and Kinross, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian

In some cases, such as Stirling, this is to acknowledge a lack of multi-agency co-ordination and pathways locally. It sets this as the first priority of its new Rapid Rehousing Working Group. Falkirk makes the same resolution. Angus, North Lanarkshire and Aberdeen commit to reviewing their domestic abuse services in line with findings from the Women's Health Improvement Research produced by women with experience of abuse and the homelessness system in Fife, and Scottish Women's Aid.⁷¹ East Ayrshire has already done this, as has Fife, through “Improving the way we work” project.

Scottish Borders has a strong multi-agency partnership approach for domestic abuse. This include the Safer Housing Options service and the CEDAR service (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery), as well as the statutory arrangements of MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference). Argyll and Bute sets an action to prepare a protocol with all CHR partners which includes potential for enhanced security measures in social housing.

67 <https://www.1625ip.co.uk/What-We-Do/Future-Builders.aspx>

68 <https://stbasils.org.uk/projects/live-and-work/>

69 <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables/homelessness1819tablescharts>

70 http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/2219/5_bridget-curran_denise-murdoch.pdf

71 <https://womensaid.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Change-Justice-Fairness.pdf>

Dundee is looking into specialised Housing Options Officers with a remit to work with households experiencing domestic abuse, requesting RRTP funding for this. East Dunbartonshire's Options service model takes this approach already, with a dedicated Officer with this area of expertise. North Lanarkshire has created a training plan to upskill staff to be able to complete the nationally recognised evidenced based domestic abuse risk assessment tool ("DASH RIC"). This will enable staff to complete safety plans and facilitate appropriate signposting to specialist advice, support and advocacy services.

Migrant homelessness

In some areas of Scotland migrant homelessness will be a rarer phenomenon than in others. National statistics are not helpful in this regard, as only collect ethnicity, as opposed to nationality, details. Migrant homelessness is not mentioned at all in three quarters of RRTPs.

RRTPs which include mention of migrant homelessness

Aberdeen, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Glasgow, Moray, Renfrewshire

West Lothian mentions that the Syrian Refugee Resettlement approach locally was successful and will be used as a good practice model, but does not discuss homeless migrants. Moray and Clackmannanshire highlight that presentations from destitute migrants are rare in their areas, but where they have arisen the authorities have been able to provide multi-agency services including accommodation, in the latter case by using child protection powers for families.

Falkirk, Dumfries and Galloway and Renfrewshire go further, with aims to develop services for migrants with no access to benefits or homelessness

services. In Falkirk's case, there is an aim to find a way to accommodate this group. The other two Councils focus on providing advice, assistance and multi-agency services, using learning from the Syrian Refugee Programme in the case of Dumfries and Galloway.

As the only dispersal area in Scotland, Glasgow has a high proportion of migrant households and 10% of its homelessness applications are from refugees. It has a dedicated Asylum and Refugee Support team and states rapid rehousing will form the mainstay of the Council's approach for this group. The RRTP acknowledges that certain UK Government policies undermine the H&SCP's goal to end the need to sleep rough in Glasgow, and commits to work with partners to find ways to support this group. There is no more detail given.

Edinburgh, which has low applications from refugees but a high number from European Economic Area (EEA) nationals fleetingly mentions the Council's dedicated EEA homelessness team. This is a good example of Housing Officers providing a specialist service in a complex area. There is no consideration of EEA/other migrant groups who are destitute in Edinburgh's RRTP. Its rapid access accommodation model for rough sleepers will be of benefit here, but isn't specifically referenced in relation to migrants.

Aberdeen provides more detail on work done by partners to assertively outreach to migrant rough sleepers, provide tailored advice and employability support and temporary accommodation in winter. They outline the difficult problem of how to pay for accommodation for those within this group with no entitlement to housing costs at all. There is no mention of destitute migrant groups in the RRTPs of the other cities.

Whilst no RRTP reflecting on migrant homelessness offers a housing solution, **it is our view** that the few that shine a light on this very excluded group through the RRTP process should be commended.

Practice examples and ideas worth sharing

West Dunbartonshire Council has made efforts to identify vulnerable groups who are often over-represented in the homelessness system, and ensure appropriate pathways are in place for them.

The Council was the first authority to sign up to the CIH's Make a Stand scheme having launched its zero tolerance "No Home for Domestic Abuse" approach the same year, offering holistic housing options and support. The Council has an award-winning care leavers' protocol, informed by the principle that care leavers will be offered the securest form of tenancy available with dedicated wrap around support and named key worker.

There is a dedicated resettlement officer for prison leavers. The Council plans to create protocols for people discharged from hospital and the forces, preventing the need for temporary accommodation. The Council has determined that those from LGBTQ+ communities and those with autism are over-represented in the homeless population and aims to develop pathways which offer choice in accommodation and support for these groups.

Renfrewshire Council has noted that prison leavers are disproportionately represented in applications and much more likely to lose contact with homelessness services before being housed. The Council has run a successful Housing First project for five years. It wants to take the Housing First principles on how support is offered and apply them specifically to work with prison leavers.

This would entail recruiting two specialist peer mentoring and engagement workers targeted at repeat homeless clients with an offending background. The workers' personal lived experience will help build trust and greater engagement with this group. This initiative will be aligned with principles set out in the SHORE standards, in particular "adopting a person-centred approach" and "stickability" i.e. persevering when someone disengages.

Aberdeen City Council provides a Domestic Abuse Support and Accommodation Project (DASAP), in partnership with Cyrenians. The team gathers the details needed for the Council to be able to take a homelessness assessment and make a decision without the household having to present at Council offices to repeat their story, thereby reliving trauma multiple times. Commissioned accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic abuse was successfully remodelled away from communal refuge living in 2017. Further work will be undertaken before re-commissioning to direct resources towards supporting women and families to remain in their homes, should they wish to.

East Dunbartonshire Council has a small team of four officers in its homelessness and prevention team, but has a creative structure for ensuring key at risk groups have appropriate pathways into services, such that they access timely preventative or resettlement support. Each officer has a specialist role with responsibility for one of the four areas of: domestic abuse, young people, households within the prison system and welfare reform. Each member is responsible for joint working with other agencies or teams, and ensuring the rest of the team are kept on top of key information and updates. There is a separate adviser for PRS access services and rapid rehousing initiatives.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has made a commitment that all young people leaving care have suitable accommodation, and do not need to present as homeless. This includes that Housing First for youth should be available to young people requiring it, but that shared supported accommodation should remain an option for those who do not want their own tenancy at that stage. They also plan for Housing First for youth to be made available to young people who have not been in care but who have complex support needs.

Glasgow City Council has plans to open a City Centre Homeless Hub, conceived as a multi-agency “one stop shop” with routes into statutory services and H&SC interventions. It will link in with the City Ambition Network (CAN) which has been operating over recent years as third sector-led multi-agency partnership. CAN aims to build trust with excluded homeless individuals, then facilitate access towards settled housing. CAN provides support to Housing First tenants through one of the city’s projects, having developed engagement and then referred interested clients into the project. The Hub will allow this type of pathway to have a central base in Glasgow improving access to Housing First and statutory services for a greater number of rough sleepers and excluded individuals.

North Lanarkshire Council completed a gap analysis in relation to its homelessness service and identified a lack of provision and information for pregnant women and LGBTQ+ people. They refer to the World Habitat Report which highlights LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be affected by domestic abuse and widespread discrimination, but that policy focus and lack of equalities monitoring on violence to women can limit attention on those experiencing discrimination due to sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Council has incorporated recommendations from the report into RRTP actions, which include improving understanding of the needs of LGBTQ+ through local engagement and consultation, undertaking multi-agency workforce development sessions to improve staff understanding and designing tailored responses to the issues faced by LGBTQ+ people across all services.

Chapter 6

Resources

What was expected of local authorities in the toolkit?

RRTP guidance asked authorities to consider whether they were able to make changes to their services within existing resources, or whether they required additional funding from the £50 million Ending Homelessness Together Fund.⁷²

Authorities were advised that resources required for additional housing supply would continue to be channelled through the AHSP, and that RRTP funding could only be requested for actions relating to service or existing temporary accommodation re-design; support requirements; or access to housing supply.

Overview

Limitations in analysing funding requests

Funding requests have been the most complex area of RRTPs to overview, let alone analyse. This was the part of RRTPs most likely to be missing from initial drafts submitted by 31 December 2018, with many authorities making clear that more work was needed to cost their plans. We were only able to locate 24 five-year funding requests and one partial funding request (East Renfrewshire) after the second round of submissions in spring 2019.

It is clear from reviewing early funding requests that authorities had approached the task in different ways. In laying out the targets of funding, some packaged up multiple tasks/projects within one job description or role, whilst others spelt out every action and its respective cost. Perth and Kinross helpfully prioritised their funding requests in order of need, as well as the potential availability of funding from elsewhere.

Items for which funding was requested by some authorities, for instance acquisition and provisioning of additional temporary accommodation appear to come under the heading of capital costs, which are not covered by the Ending Homelessness Together fund. Other requests, such as for NHS staff providing support to Housing First projects, should arguably be funded from other budgets.

Items of a similar type, for instance, furniture for Housing First projects, were also costed in very different ways, as mentioned in Chapter Two. This diversity of approach makes it hard to compare and contrast the requests authorities put to Government.

Perhaps most importantly, ongoing feedback from the Scottish Government on the costing of bids, followed by announcement of the first year of funding allocations for RRTPs

in June 2019,⁷³ has led to original requests being substantially revised by authorities.

This context attempts to offer an insight into the complexity of the funding question, and the difficulties inherent in completing a simple “compare and contrast” exercise, either between authorities in respect of the original monies requested, or between this amount and the total funding available.

Funding requested

Taking the above caveats into account, the total RRTP funding requested in preliminary drafts of the 26 RRTPs reviewed was £102.9 million.⁷⁴ Glasgow’s initial ask (£18.3 million) dwarfed all others, and was double that of Edinburgh (£9.2 million). Fife and South Lanarkshire both requested more than the capital city, seeking £13.2 and £9.3 million respectively. North Lanarkshire requested £6.3 million.

Of the remaining 19 authorities which provided five-year requests, these range from £1.1million (Scottish Borders) to £3.5 million (South Ayrshire). The average initial request for authorities not part of the above group of five large “outliers” was £2.4 million.

Housing First funding

By far the largest single item for which RRTP funding was requested was Housing First; this totals £37.8 million, with Glasgow accounting for a fifth of this. But, as referenced in Chapter Two, how Housing First was costed and assessed varied greatly by authority. Some laid out in RRTPs how they arrived at their costings whilst others did not, making assumptions hard to understand and comparisons difficult.

The chart overleaf shows the proportion of funding requested for Housing First (in red) and for

everything else (in dark grey), plotted against the number of live cases reported by the authority in its RRTP. This shows not only the extent of variation in costings for Housing First by authority, but also that Housing First does not dominate funding requests in every authority; in fact this only appears to be the case in around half. The reason Housing First dominates overall funding requests can instead be attributed to the fact it is the only item on every single authority’s funding list.

If Pathfinder costings are those used to upscale the model in future, it is clear that some RRTPs greatly exceeded those in their funding requests. But it also suggests there is a framework available by which these costs can be pinned down more easily in future, and that only very general conclusions should be drawn from the funding detail presented here, coming as it did from the very early stage.

Funding for other activities

Other activities for which authorities requested RRTP funding are not as neatly packaged as Housing First. A crude attempt has been made here to group them, for the purposes of analysis; crude, as some activities clearly fall into more than one area, i.e. PRS access may play a rehousing and preventative role; housing support could be understood as simply another part of preventative provision.

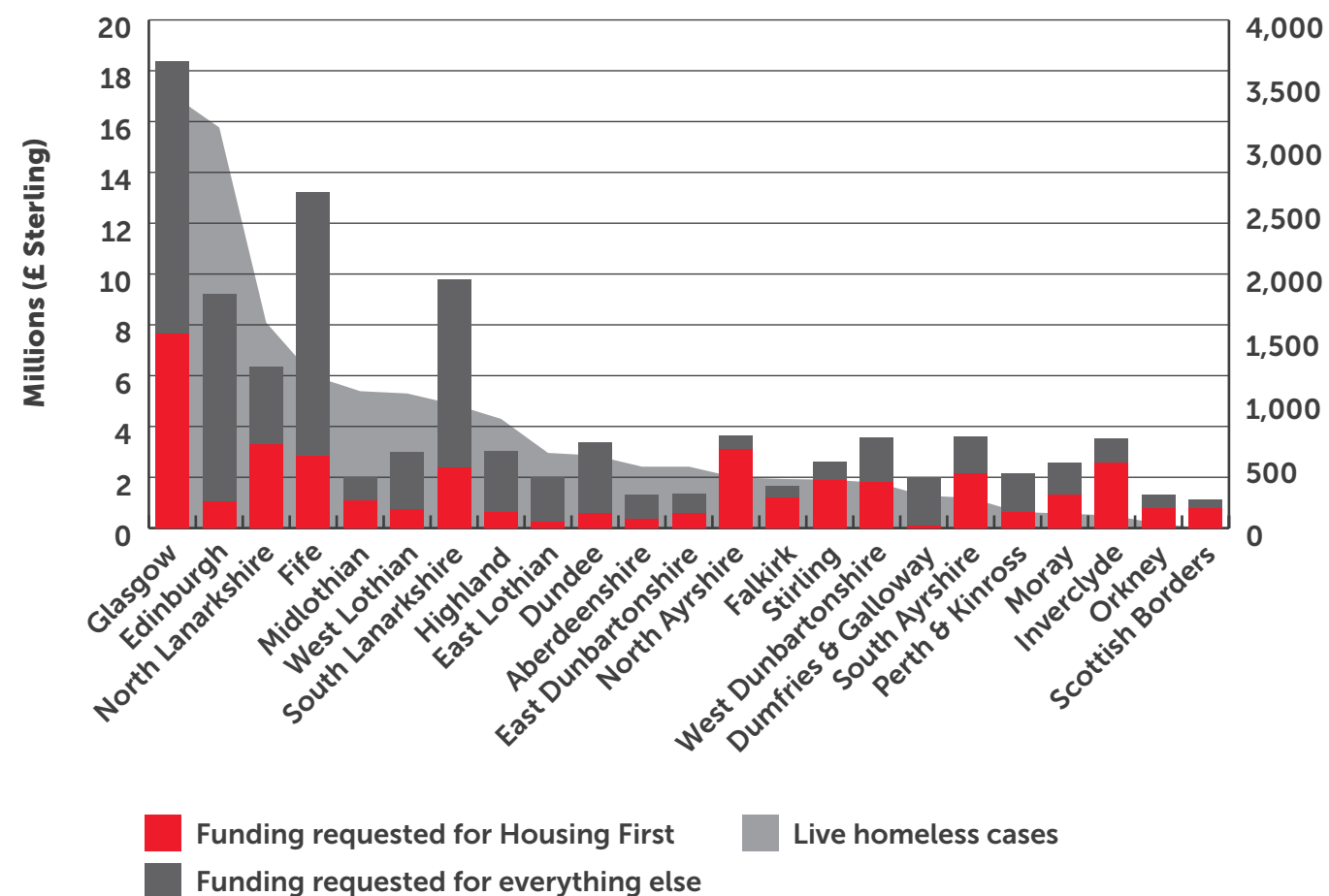
For this analysis, additional housing support capacity and redesigned support services have been classed as “tenancy support”, with “prevention” containing a much larger range of activities (prevention staff, mediation, furniture, welfare reform mitigation, prevention funds, tenancy training, employability, advocacy services, OTs, additional SWF officers and public engagement/campaigns).

⁷² Of this, £3.75million had already been allocated for Housing First in Pathfinder cities; £2 million to all authorities to help develop the RRTP and £328,000 for “winter actions” preventing rough sleeping in cities.

⁷³ Helpfully detailed on SFHA’s website: <https://www.sfha.co.uk/news/news-category/policy-update/news-article/rapid-rehousing-funding-distribution>

⁷⁴ The full total for all 32 authorities was reported in Inside Housing in June 2019 as £130million. <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/cost-of-new-scottish-homelessness-plan-assessed-as-eight-times-above-budget-61943>

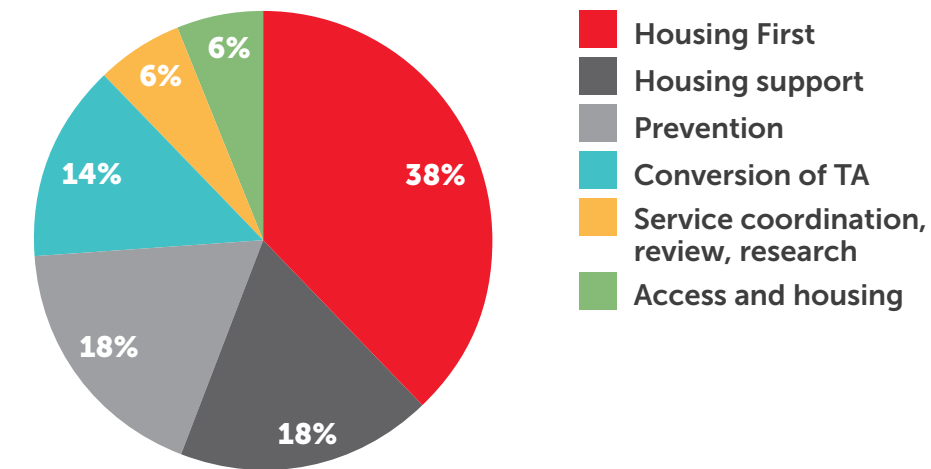
Chart 9. Funding requests compared to live homelessness cases in 23 authorities



"Temporary accommodation conversion" includes requests to: convert B&Bs into supported accommodation; convert temporary tenancies into SSTs (and often replace them); convert hostels into specialist supported accommodation or dispersed properties; or acquire additional properties for shared tenancies. As alluded to above, some of these costs fall into the area of capital funding, and would be expected to be removed at a later stage of this exercise.

"Service coordination, review and research" contains request for funding for rapid rehousing coordination staff and actions such as feasibility studies, research, consultancy, IT changes, business change resource, pilots and training. Lastly, "access and rehousing" refers to additional rehousing officers, PRS access or shared housing schemes and prison outreach.

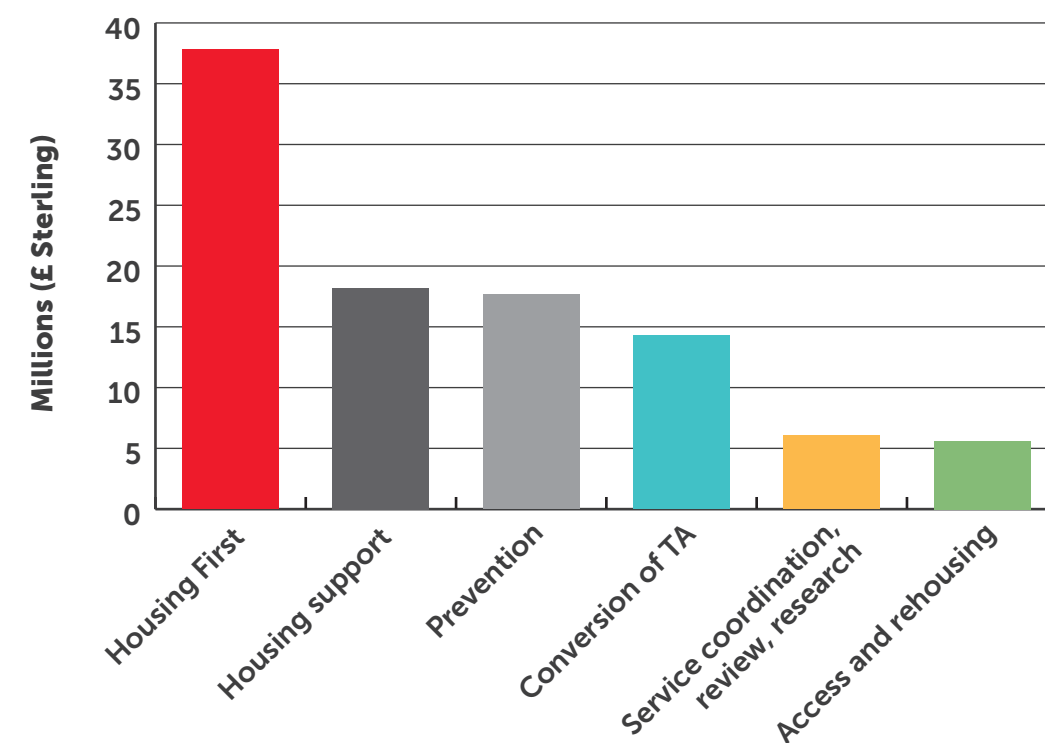
Chart 10. Nature of RRTP funding requests in 23 authorities



The above chart shows that, after Housing First, the largest area for which funding requests have been made is for more or redesigned tenancy support. Given most of the funding for Housing First is for tenancy support also, the overall direction of travel is clear: 56% of funding is for support which will assist people to sustain tenancies, whatever their level of need.

Prevention is the next largest area for funding requests, taking up 18% of the total. Funding requests to convert temporary accommodation accounts for the next largest proportion, with service redesign and settled housing access schemes taking up a smaller amount of requests. The chart overleaf shows the amount of funding requested for each area.

Chart 11. Amount of RRTP funding requested by 23 authorities, by area



Differences in funding requests between authorities

As with all other areas of RRTPs, funding bids revealed significant diversity across Scotland. For example, Housing First represents over 75% of the total funding requested in North Ayrshire, Falkirk, Stirling and Inverclyde, and between 50-70% in seven further authorities (Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, Orkney, Midlothian, North Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and Moray). But it represents less than 5% of Dumfries and Galloway's request, and less than 20% in Edinburgh, East Lothian, Dundee and Highland.

Prevention type activities take up over half the funding request for West and East Lothian and Aberdeenshire, but less than 10% of total request in eight areas (Inverclyde, Highland, Falkirk, North Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Fife and Stirling).

Funding for converting temporary accommodation dominates Edinburgh's request (71%) and is over half of Fife's and Highland's, but does not feature at all in ten areas, two of which (Stirling and North Ayrshire) report a positive balance in this section, based on closure of commissioned hostels. West and East Lothian, East Dunbartonshire, Moray, South Ayrshire, Glasgow, Scottish Borders and Falkirk also request no funds in this area.

A minority of RRTPs aim to show that if start-up or transitional funding is received as requested, services will be able to self-fund at the end of the RRTP period. Highland and Dundee request transitional funding to set up/staff a shared temporary tenancy service and effect hostel closures, whilst identifying that by the end of the process, savings from spend on B&B and direct access hostels respectively should allow new services to self-

fund. Falkirk and West Lothian also identify savings which can be made in future, allowing rapid rehousing to proceed without ongoing reliance on Government funding.

Financial impact assessments

Stirling, Glasgow, North Lanarkshire and North Ayrshire used consultants to produce a financial impact assessment for the transition they want to make. This aims to show the reduction in public spending which could be achieved by moving to a rapid rehousing approach. These assessments refer to what are termed the "most significant research findings" on the issue, which is our 2016 research, Better than Cure?⁷⁵ and use the costs below:

Per person costs have then been allocated based on the level of support needs identified within the RRTP. Accordingly, Housing First clients would cost the total of £34,518 annually in the current system. Those with no or low needs have been assumed to use homelessness services only, so cost £14,808 per annum. Costs for the medium needs group were estimated to fall in the middle of these two extremes.

Table 4: The costs of single homelessness over one year

Cost	Estimated average per person	Estimated annual spending
Drug / alcohol services	£1,320	£113,584
Mental Health	£2,099	£180,560
NHS	£4,298	£369,660
Criminal justice	£11,991	£1,031,272
Homeless services	£14,808	£1,273,488
Total	£34,518	£2,968,564

Table 5: Estimated annual cost of homelessness per person by support needs

Annual cost per person	
No or low support needs	£14,808
Moderate to high support needs	£24,663
Complex support needs – Housing First	£34,518

75 https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/20680/crisis_better_than_cure_2016.pdf

The analysis then measures the lower public spend required by shorter rehousing and temporary accommodation timescales, as well as reduced use of emergency public services, for each of the three groups identified, minus the costs of Housing First for the identified proportion of complex clients and lower level tenancy support required for “medium” needs clients. It then models the savings in public spending using scenarios whereby rapid rehousing achieves 100%, 70% and 50% success.

The analysis concludes that, with a 50-70% success rate, savings on public spending could be between £52 and £76million in Glasgow, £6-£12million in North Lanarkshire, £5-£7million in North Ayrshire and £3-£4.5million in Stirling over a five year period. This is obviously extremely encouraging in terms of making the case for rapid rehousing, and indeed the cost effectiveness of the transitional funding amounts requested.

However, for the purposes of determining the cost effectiveness of rapid rehousing in Scotland, the above analysis may be able to be strengthened by:

- breaking down to which agencies savings may accrue
- making clear where resources currently available to authorities may in fact decrease with rapid rehousing (mainly via reduction in HB income from Council-owned, self-contained temporary accommodation)
- looking more carefully at whether the costs from our 2016 research represented by “homeless services use only” (£14,808 per person per year) accurately reflect the costs of no/low needs single homelessness in Scotland

- investigating whether costings of Housing First at £12,250⁷⁶ per person annually reflects Scottish figures
- including rents in costings for Housing First

This is surely a complex task, but a worthwhile one in terms of getting to the bottom of cost effectiveness in a Scottish context.

So do we know what a rapid rehousing transition will cost?

This chapter has aimed to demonstrate the inherent difficulties in accurately costing the transition to rapid rehousing in Scotland at this very early stage. What is clear is that the top-level sum total of 32 early funding requests should be viewed with caution, given the extent of diversity across Scotland, the inclusion of capital costs and the as yet undefined contribution from other RRTP partners in most cases.

It is therefore unhelpful to contrast this sum with the RRTP fund total and conclude Scotland cannot adequately resource a transition to rapid rehousing. This is not only because it seems too early to determine what transition will actually cost, but also because resourcing responsibilities, as well as potential savings, should fall to a broader range of partners than those in homelessness services alone. It may also be possible to attract other funders to support this work, such as social investment providers.

This area is developing quickly. The next years will be key in helping to pin down costs, savings and how to interpret these from a whole public services perspective, rather than from the siloes of individual budgets.

Concluding remarks

Scotland has made ground-breaking progress in homelessness policy in the past two years, building on already progressive post-devolution foundations.

This report shows that local authorities and their partners have stepped up to the challenge set by Government, making bold plans to transform Scotland’s homelessness systems and services.

As a relatively new area of policy and practice, we don’t have all the answers to the questions rapid rehousing poses, or solutions to some of the challenges it presents.

But we do have 32 route maps which show us what change could look like in each local context.

There is learning within this report for Scotland, but also for others looking to make the change that Scotland is already making.

We look forward to supporting this change, and sharing it more widely, such that across Great Britain, we move from simply managing homelessness, to truly ending it.

⁷⁶ This figure is taken from PWC costings produced for Crisis’ Plan to End Homelessness (www.crisis.org.uk/media/238957/assessing_the_costs_and_benefits_of_crisis_plan_to_end_homelessness_2018.pdf); figures are derived from Crisis’ Housing First Feasibility study for Liverpool City Region (housingfirsteurope.eu/assets/files/2016/06/housing-first-full-report_24jul_v4.pdf)

Appendix I: links to drafts of RRTPs consulted

Local authority

Aberdeen
<https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s92398/Rapid%20rehousing%20report%20add%201.pdf?txtonly=1>

Aberdeenshire
https://cl-assets.public-i.tv/aberdeenshire/document/_08__Rapid_Rehousing_Transition_Plan.pdf

Angus
http://www.angus.gov.uk/sites/angus-cms/files/2018-11/347_AppA.pdf

Argyll & Bute
[Text to explain why no URL](#)

Clackmannanshire
<https://www.clacks.gov.uk/document/meeting/266/907/6292.pdf>

Dumfries & Galloway
<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s9726/Appendix%20-%20Rapid%20Rehousing%20Transition%20Plan.pdf>

Dundee
<https://www.dundee.gov.uk/reports/reports/9-2019.pdf>

East Ayrshire
<http://alacho.org/current-priorities/homelessness/rrtp/>

East Dunbartonshire
<http://alacho.org/current-priorities/homelessness/rrtp/>

East Lothian
https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/28600/rapid_rehousing_transition_plan_-_draft

East Renfrewshire
<https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=24301&p=0>

Edinburgh
[https://www.housingnet.co.uk/pdf/Item_8.3___Rapid_Rehousing_Transition_Plan_\(1\)](https://www.housingnet.co.uk/pdf/Item_8.3___Rapid_Rehousing_Transition_Plan_(1))

Eilean Siar
<https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/media/13225/K%2011B%20-%20Appendix%201%20C&H%20Rapid%20Rehousing%20Transistion%20Plan%20Feb%202019.pdf>

Falkirk
<https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=16033>

Fife
http://publications.fifedirect.org.uk/c64_Item11-Appendix1RRTPHomelessness.pdf

Glasgow
https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/ITEM%20No%2007%20-%20Glasgow%20Rapid%20Rehousing%20Transition%20Plan%202019-20%20to%202023-24_0.pdf

Highland
https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/75299/item_8_homelessness_rapid_rehousing_transition_plan_update

Inverclyde
<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/meetings/documents/11728/19%20Rapid%20Rehousing%20Transition%20Plan.pdf>

Midlothian
https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3272/rrtp_2019_2020_to_2023_2024.pdf

Moray
<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file122834.pdf>

North Ayrshire
<https://north-ayrshire.cmis.uk.com/north-ayrshire/Document>

North Lanarkshire
<https://mars.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/egenda/images/att89826.pdf>

Orkney
https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Committees-and-Agendas/Education/ELH2019/ELH03-04-2019/I13__Rapid_Rehousing_Transition_Plan.pdf

Perth & Kinross
https://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/44399/Rapid-Rehousing-Transition-Plan/pdf/Rapid_Rehousing_Transition_Plan_-_Revised_Final_-_May_2019.pdf?m=636953224709400000

Renfrewshire
<https://renfrewshire.cmis.uk.com/renfrewshire/Document>

Scottish Borders
<https://scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s35153/Item%20No.%209%20-%20Appendix%201%20-%20Scottish%20Borders%20RRTP%202019-20%20-%202023-24.pdf>

Shetland
<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=23789>

South Ayrshire
<https://ww20.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ext/committee/committeepapers2019/Leadership%20Panel/12%20February%202019/LP1202199a%20Rapid%20Rehousing.pdf>

South Lanarkshire
https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12664/rapid_rehousing_transition_plan_2019-2024

Stirling

<http://minutes.stirling.gov.uk/pdfs/environment%20%26%20housing/Reports/EH20190912Item04Minutes.pdf>

West Dunbartonshire

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4317195/wdc-rapid-rehousing-transition-plan-2019-24-updated-may-2019.pdf>

West Lothian

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/47498/Rapid-Rehousing-Transition-Plan->

Appendix II: list of acronyms

ADP	Alcohol and Drug Partnership
AHSP	Affordable Housing Supply Programme
ALACHO	Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers
ARC	Annual Return on the Charter (Social Housing Charter; statistical return to the SHR)
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
B&B	Bed and Breakfast
BRMA	Broad Rental Market Area
CBL	Choice Based Lettings
CHR	Common Housing Register
CIH	Chartered Institute of Housing
COSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payment
EEA	European Economic Area
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
H&SCP	Health and Social Care Partnership
HARSAG	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group
HB	Housing Benefit
HL1	Local authority statistical return on homelessness applications (to Government)
HMA	Housing Market Area
HMO	House of Multiple Occupation
IJB	Integrated Joint Board
LCHO	Low Cost Home Ownership
LGBTQ+	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer+
LHA	Local Housing Allowance
LHS	Local Housing Strategy
LOIP	Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
MAPPA	Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference
MMR	Mid-Market Rent
OT	Occupational Therapist
PCS	Partner Contribution Statement
PIE	Psychologically Informed Environment
PLSO	Private Landlord Support Officer
PREVENT1	Local authority statistical return on options activities (to Government)
PRS	Private Rented Sector
PSL	Private Sector Leasing
PSP	Public Social Partnership
PRT	Private Residential Tenancy
RRTP	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
RTO	Registered Tenant Organisation
SAR	Shared Accommodation Rate (of LHA)
SDS	Self-Directed Support
SHIP	Strategic Housing Investment Plan

SHN	Scottish Housing Network
SHR	Scottish Housing Regulator
SHORE	Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone
SLA	Social Lettings Agency
SLAB	Scottish Legal Aid Board
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SMD	Severe and Multiple Disadvantage
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Agency
SST	Scottish Secure Tenancy
SWF	Scottish Welfare Fund
SWOT	Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats analysis
UAO	Unsuitable Accommodation Order
UC	Universal Credit
YOI	Young Offender Institution

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