



Homelessness & Supported Housing Options in Scotland

Why this research is important

Rapid Rehousing (including Housing First) is now a major policy objective in Scotland to reduce temporary and homeless accommodation in favour of mainstream housing in ordinary settings. Every local authority in Scotland now has a 5-year plan setting out how they plan to transition their housing and homelessness systems to meet this objective.

It comes with the strongest evidence that most of us, with the right support, can manage our own home. This needs a transition in local strategy, housing supply and service commissioning - but also a significant culture shift that recognises homelessness happens as a result of inequality that needs redressed, rather than personal mistakes or differences that always need a specific 'homeless' response.

Consequently, the future of supported accommodation as a response to homelessness in Scotland is a key and current consideration. Fieldwork is due to commence Oct/Nov 2020 with findings available in spring 2021. Homeless Network Scotland will also be facilitating a series of conversations and events on this important research and next steps throughout 2021 and beyond.

Why it is happening now

Supported housing is integrated into existing homelessness and commissioning strategies across many parts of Scotland in many different forms and sizes. Guidance to local authorities on Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (2018) described a 'new model' of supported housing for a smaller number of people where mainstream housing, including the support-intensive Housing First approach, is not possible or preferable. The guidance encourages transition plans to progress toward smaller, specialist units within a psychologically informed environment, where this provision is needed at all.

The guidance also indicated that local Health and Social Care Partnerships should consider whether those units continue to be part of their local homelessness response, or whether the specialist nature aligns them more closely with broader health and social care strategy and commissioning frameworks. This theme was also picked up in the pivotal [Hard Edges Scotland](#) research.

Homeless Network Scotland

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No coordinated work has as yet been undertaken to understand what the characteristics of this 'new model' of supported housing should be. This new model needs to capture very best policy and practice regarding physical, social and emotional environments, needs funding models that mitigate against financial disincentives for residents, along with a culture that remains open to the future possibility of people moving into mainstream housing. This research is intended to fill this gap.

What we need to know

This project will collaborate with people who are (or have) stayed in supported housing as a consequence of homelessness, providers of supported housing and other key policy and practice stakeholders to examine:

- a) the optimum characteristics, features and benefits of a new supported housing model.
- b) the conditions and criteria in which it is best used, as part of an overall rapid rehousing approach that values a move to mainstream housing as part of a community.
- c) how much is needed and the most likely funding model it should operate within.
- a) directly related contexts and differences, including geography, age and gender, housing markets – and the interplay of choice, options and rights.
- b) how Housing First can be adapted to meet the needs of those it doesn't succeed for.
- c) whether a group remains that neither mainstream housing, Housing First or supported housing will provide an appropriate or successful living arrangement.

Those involved in the research

The research has been commissioned by Homeless Network Scotland, with a funding contribution from Action for Children, Turning Point Scotland and Crisis. The research will be led by Anna Evans and the team at Indigo House. An Advisory Group will oversee it, chaired by Dr Beth Watts from I-SPHERE at Heriot-Watt University and with the following membership:

- Maggie Brunjes, Homeless Network Scotland
- Yvette Burgess, Housing Support Enabling Unit
- Grant Campbell, Crisis
- Cassandra Dove, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
- Claire Frew, Homeless Network Scotland
- Marion Gibbs, Scottish Government
- Angie McDonald, Action for Children
- Nicky Miller, Turning Point Scotland
- Myra Quinn, Scottish Government
- Sarah Rowe, Crisis
- David Simpson, Dundee City Council
- Graham Thomson, Scottish Government