

# A National Framework to START-UP and SCALE-UP Housing First in Scotland

2021-2031



# Acknowledgements

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# Contents



<b>1. Welcome</b>	<b><a href="#">4</a></b>
a. What is Housing First?	5
b. Why Housing First?	6
c. How to use this Framework	7
<b>2. The Evidence</b>	<b><a href="#">8</a></b>
a. International Gold Standard	9
b. More Cost Effective	10
c. More Effective Housing System	10
d. Better For People	11
<b>3. The Policy</b>	<b><a href="#">12</a></b>
a. Overarching Policy	13
b. Housing Legal Framework	13
c. Homelessness Policy	14
d. Health and Social Care Policy	14
e. Community Justice Policy	15
<b>4. From Pilot to Pathfinder. What have we learned?</b>	<b><a href="#">16</a></b>
a. What Have We Learned?	17
b. How Much Did it Cost?	25
c. Cost Modelling Going Forward	26
d. Commissioning Framework	26
e. Rural Considerations	29
<b>5. Equalities Considerations</b>	<b><a href="#">31</a></b>
Equality Duty	32
Policy Recommendations	32
<b>6. Fidelity, Evaluation &amp; Quality</b>	<b><a href="#">36</a></b>
a. Fidelity to Housing First Principles	37
b. Pathfinder Evaluation	40
c. Measuring Outcomes	40
d. Assuring Quality	40
<b>7. What Will it Take? Live Status Report</b>	<b><a href="#">42</a></b>
a. The Overall National Target	43
b. Initial targets	45
c. What it needs	45
d. What it will take	46
<b>Appendices</b>	<b><a href="#">79</a></b>
<b>Appendix 1</b> Acronyms	80
<b>Appendix 2</b> Housing First Scotland Governance & Strategy Structures	81
<b>Appendix 3</b> Housing First Outcome Indicators	83
<b>Appendix 4</b> Housing First FAQ	85

# Section 1

## Welcome

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



## a. What is Housing First?

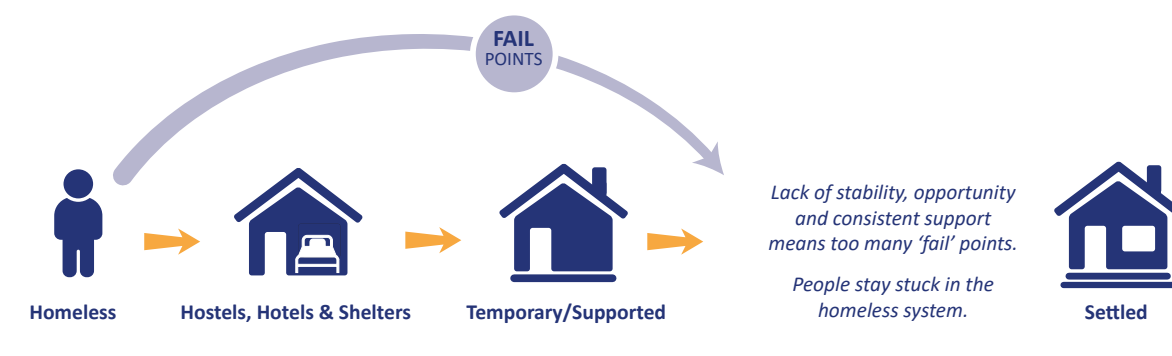
Housing First should be the **first** response for people whose homelessness is made harder by experiences such as trauma, addictions and mental ill-health.

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

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

## Housing First by default

### Housing Readiness



### Housing First

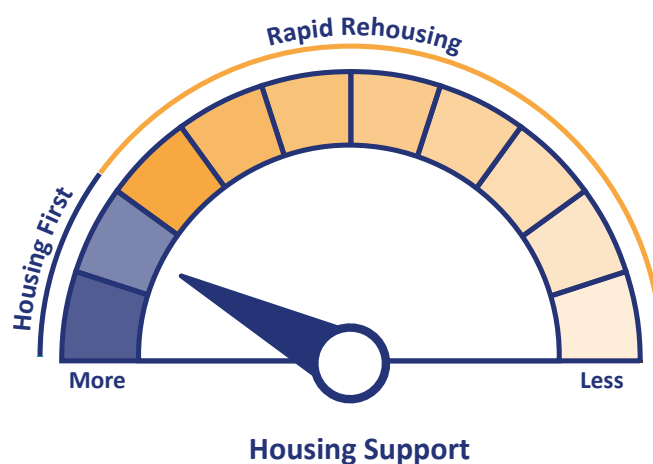


Fig.1 Housing Readiness v Housing First Model

## Housing First is one part of Rapid Rehousing

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

Fig.2 Housing Support



## **b. Why Housing First?**

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

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

#### ***Housing First is normal***

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

#### ***Housing First is fairer***

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

#### ***Housing First works***

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

#### ***Housing First benefits all of us***

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

## c. How to use this Framework

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

### 1. SECTION 2

provides an overview of the strong evidence and rationale for scaling up Housing First. This is useful to understand the success of Housing First, and the benefits and outcomes that can be expected.

- **SECTION 3**

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

- **SECTION 4**

summarises the timeline of Housing First in Scotland to date and condenses key learning and cost modelling from across this period for local partners who are starting or scaling-up Housing First. Many questions and challenges are universal, and this section is intended as a shortcut to solutions.

- **SECTION 5**

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

- **SECTION 6**

establishes what is needed to ensure Housing First in your area is effective, following proven principles and supporting new tenants in the best way. A benchmarking method, at an organisational and area-level, is also outlined.

- **SECTION 7**

is a live section setting out what each key partner brings and needs to plan, commission and deliver Housing First. It will be updated regularly to monitor what is in place, what is still in development - and what each partner can do to help scale up Housing First.

# Section 2

## The Evidence

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





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

- **More effective** at resolving homelessness than traditional interventions for this group.
- **More cost effective** than traditional approaches and responses to homelessness for this group.
- **A more effective housing system** as a result of more detailed scrutiny of local systems.
- **Better for people** with better housing and health outcomes.

### a. International Gold Standard

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

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

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

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

## b. More Cost Effective

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

A [study of the delivery of Housing First in England](#) calculates the average total costs for Housing First at £9000 - £10,000 per person, per year. This is approximately 40% lower than annual costs for hostels, and approximately 60% lower than annual costs for high intensity fixed-site supported accommodation, all the while achieving positive outcomes and ending a person's homelessness.

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

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

### *Perth & Kinross Council*

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

## c. More Effective Housing System

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

By placing great scrutiny on the local systems and processes, the evidence for the first year of [Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder](#) (2019-20) shows the following outcomes that are contributing to more effective housing and homelessness systems:

- High levels of tenancy sustainment can continue to be achieved as the number of tenancies significantly increase, with **92%** of 252 tenancies being sustained and 58 people having been in their own home for more than one year.
- Housing First has contributed to **less repeat homelessness** with four people (1.6%) returning to homelessness after moving into their own home.
- Challenges have been met by housing officers, local authority staff and Housing First support teams ensuring **no evictions** at the time of writing.
- By working together, local partnerships have reduced the **average time** for people to move into their homes **by 43%**.

## d. Better For People

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

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

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

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

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

What Hard Edges Scotland told us	Who has benefited from Housing First in Scotland so far?	
That those who will benefit most from Housing First are more likely to be male.	Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 69% male</li> <li>• 30% female</li> <li>• 1% transgender</li> </ul>
That those who will benefit most from Housing First are more likely to be in the lower to middle age ranges, with few under 25 or over 65.	Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8% under 25</li> <li>• 74% 26-49</li> <li>• 17% 50-64</li> <li>• 1% 65+</li> </ul>
That the overwhelming majority of people who will benefit most from Housing First will be White Scottish.	Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vast majority White Scottish (90+%)</li> <li>• Small numbers White Other British, White European, Mixed Race and Gypsy Traveller</li> </ul>

# Section 3

## The Policy

Scotland has a determined policy environment which understands what is needed to end homelessness and the role of Housing First in achieving it.



## a. Overarching Policy

[Scotland's National Performance Framework](#) tracks performance towards agreed outcomes and indicators. Housing First can positively contribute to several outcomes contained within the framework, including that people:

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

[Local Outcome Improvement Plans](#) are the mechanism by which Community Planning Partnerships deliver improved outcomes for their communities. They are based on a clear understanding of local needs and reflect agreed local priorities and link to the National Performance Framework.

## b. Housing Legal Framework

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

Changes to **local connection** provisions are planned from 2021 which will suspend local connection referrals between local authorities. This change will create more opportunity for people to choose where they want to live and move more easily across local authority boundaries, as it is recognised that a person is more likely to sustain accommodation if it is an area they choose to stay.

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

### c. Homelessness Policy

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

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

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

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

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

### d. Health and Social Care Policy

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

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

Those who benefit most from Housing First in Scotland are also likely to have significant health and social care needs in both the immediate and longer term. While Housing First has emerged as a response to chronic homelessness and rough sleeping, its long-term success is inextricably tied to the Health & Social Care integration agenda and strong partnerships with local Health & Social Care Partnerships.

This should include:

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

## **e. Community Justice Policy**

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

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

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

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

# Section 4

## From Pilot to Pathfinder. What have we learned?

Many of the questions and challenges posed by Housing First are universal and this section is intended as a shortcut to solutions.









## a. What Have We Learned?

A decade of learning from the early pilots to the current Pathfinder provide key **learning take-aways** for local areas preparing to start-up or scale-up Housing First in all parts of Scotland.

The evaluation of the 2010 Glasgow pilot carried out by Heriot-Watt University demonstrated significant success, and this led Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire and East Dunbartonshire councils to establish local projects with a partnership also formed in Aberdeenshire to consider rural application. Housing First approaches for young people have been developed in West Lothian and a concept-test project to understand outcomes in the Private Rented Sector were also delivered across this period.

But by 2018 these were still relatively small projects, with fewer than 100 Housing First Tenancies overall. Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder was designed to be a litmus test for how Housing First could scale up across all 32 local authorities; catalysed and part-funded by Social Bite and Merchants House Glasgow to March 2021 with Corra Foundation and Homeless Network Scotland appointed as fund and project managers. Scottish Government connected the emerging Housing First national policy objective with the Pathfinder already being mobilised and became the primary funder of it.

This learning can be summarised in 4 points:

-  **Plan for Change**
-  **Measure Progress**
-  **Work Together**
-  **Problem Solve the Process**

There are learning tips on each of these below.

## Plan for Change



Housing First is not just transformational to the lives of the people who need it, but also for broader housing and homelessness systems and processes. Plan for this and expect it.

For **Housing First start-ups**, create a positive environment that drives change as early as possible to ensure that the collective focus on using the learning from day-to-day operations to make tangible improvements to the wider homelessness system that will be of benefit to everyone.

For **Housing First scale-ups**, use learning from the start-up phase toward fully integrated strategies for Housing First, including joint approaches to commissioning, and formalising the multi-agency partnership working needed.

Local partners should:

- Engage Elected Members and leaders, utilising the community and financial benefits of Housing First. Keep them involved through regular progress reports.
- Consider the joint strategic priorities across the Community Planning Partnership to determine where Housing First sits and how it can help deliver key objectives and targets.
- Collate baseline data across partners to determine the clients who would benefit most from the Housing First.
- Consider housing allocation policies and determine how Housing First will be managed.

### ***Practice Example***

Housing First partners in **Glasgow** undertook a review in 2019 when progress started to slow and the throughput of people into tenancies was not corresponding with the time, effort and resources contributed by everyone involved.

The review considered the end-to-end process that had been developed and how it fitted with the wider homelessness system, identifying where parts of the process could be streamlined, shortened, or simply removed if not necessary (even if they had traditionally been thought of as standard ways of working).

The review led to the development of a 12-point improvement plan in mid-2019 which led to improvements in partnership working and more people moving into their own homes.

## Measure Progress



Work with all partners to have a clear way of measuring progress with agreement that a plan for improvement is key to local success. Agreeing the core indicators that provide as much insight as possible, with a clear plan for gathering and reporting information, plays an important role in identifying successes and challenges and supporting joint forward planning. Indicators should also include the experience of people being supported to measure what matters most to them.

For **Housing First start-ups**, prioritise as early as possible a shared approach with clear indicators of success, that meet the needs of all partners involved. Identifying the resources required to ensure regular reporting and who is best placed to deliver this function.

For **Housing First scale-ups**, it is important to review agreed indicators and consider how the intelligence built up through the start-up phase can be used to maintain partnerships, bring new partners on board (where relevant) and support the development of integrated strategies.

### *Practice Example*

The Pathfinder prioritised a monthly tracking approach to measure progress towards the shared goals of all partners and funders, ensuring that all indicators met a series of key tests: (a) that all information is easy to collect, (b) that the information is consistently and accurately comparable across different areas, (c) that the information collected speaks directly to the key questions of partners, and (d) that the information genuinely highlights the value of the Pathfinder. Regularly publishing core information has played an important role in ensuring transparency, inviting scrutiny, and strengthening partnerships

## Work Together



Take a broad approach to finding the right partners. No single organisation or sector can deliver Housing First on their own and working together is important to plan for and provide long term housing and support for people with multiple needs. Think about what positive partnerships mean for you locally, both in terms of operations and governance.

For **Housing First start-ups**, identify local partners across the homelessness, housing, addictions, health and justice sectors (among others) as well as organisations with specific practical skills, for example furniture provision or home decoration. Create strong, formal partnerships for planning and delivery. Housing associations are a core partner from pre-start-up.

For **Housing First scale-ups**, regularly review partnerships, making improvements and ensuring they lead not just high-quality delivery, but also embed Housing First within local policies and strategies to tackle ill health, addictions and offending.

### *Practice Example*

Local partnerships have been established across the Pathfinder areas to ensure a shared ambition for Housing First beyond the traditional homelessness sector. In most areas this has led to the creation of Governance Groups and Delivery (or Operations) Groups. Delivery Groups comprise key partners involved in the day-to-day activities of the Housing First service – support providers, housing providers, local authorities, health and social care partnerships to name a few.

Governance Groups take a more strategic view with partners including Police Scotland, DWP, Integrated Joint Boards, Councillors, Health, Housing Providers, Scottish Government and more. This multi-agency cross-sector approach to governance and delivery ensures that, over time, Housing First is embedded into a variety of processes as default.

## Problem-Solve the Process



Homelessness systems are often complex and difficult for people to navigate. This can prolong someone's experience of homelessness and the further damage it causes.

A problem-solving approach is important to simplify and shorten the processes from when someone becomes homeless to settling in their own home. International experience highlights Housing First as an effective catalyst for broader improvements in local housing and homelessness systems, and this has been the early experience of the Housing First Pathfinders too.

The Pathfinders have shown that progress was made by partners scrutinising in detail local systems, processes and relationships – clarifying more precisely who does what and when. This also demonstrated that providing the houses and funding is only half the story; the real change is in what people in the system do every day.

### ***Practice Example***

Setting out an end-to-end process from the point somebody is referred to Housing First all the way to the point that person is housed sounds straightforward. In reality it is a process built on a series of moving parts where responsibility for each lies with partners in different sectors, operating under a different set of constraints.

In one example of Housing First being delivered quickly and at scale, Clyde Place was decommissioned in Glasgow in 2018 and local partners had 3 months to assess and support over 50 men into new accommodation, with Housing First the default response where possible.

To achieve this, a multi-agency group was quickly established comprising representatives at both a strategic and operational level from housing provision, support provision, Health and Social Care, Community Justice and funders. By establishing this group and ensuring regular updates and strong communication, the process was refined week-to-week based on shared conversations about what was needed and who could provide what resource and which stage.

While the basic steps were to engage, assess, support, allocate housing, and move in, the granular detail beneath this meant that without close and regular conversation among partners in the earliest weeks of delivery, the successful outcome would not have been realised.

## What not to do?

There have also been some key lessons learned across this period:

### Limiting landlord involvement limits housing choice



Choice and control, including over the location, tenure and type of home someone wants to live in, is central to Housing First, as is people moving into their own home as quickly as possible. But it is important that this choice is placed in the 'real-world' context of local housing markets and availability which are different across all parts of the country.

Achieving both goals will require partnerships with multiple local landlords, across the social and private rented sector, to be well placed to respond rapidly and positively to housing priorities. Working with minimal landlords, even in the short term, places limits on the real housing choice available to people, in turn increasing the time taken for people to move into their own homes and unnecessarily extending their experience of homelessness.

It is also important to invest in training and regular briefing for frontline and support staff to be kept informed on local housing markets and availability so they can help people make an informed choice about what is right for their household.

For **Housing First start-ups**, embedding housing providers as partners in Housing First is crucial. Review all the landlords offering housing locally, building formal referral partnerships with as many as possible as early as possible to get off to the best possible start. Integrate training and briefing on local housing markets and availability for frontline staff.

For **Housing First scale-ups**, review the geographical spread of the housing available through existing landlord partnerships, identifying areas of minimal or no coverage and actively seeking landlord partnerships to fill gaps. Further develop training and briefing on local housing markets and availability for frontline and support staff.

#### ***Practice Example***

Dundee City Council made a strong commitment to providing homes for local Pathfinder delivery. Using this as a strong basis for the early phase and as an opportunity to show progress and success, the Pathfinder team initiated a planned programme of reaching out to local RSL's to bring them on board. This has seen the RSL contribution to Dundee's Housing First tenancies rise to almost 20%, complementing the significant commitment of the Local Authority and offering more choice for local people.

## Repeating old approaches creates repeat homelessness



Many people lack trust in services and all routes into Housing First should prioritise the (re) building of trust. Housing First is an opportunity to build fit-for-purpose assessment and referral processes that don't replicate old approaches that didn't work for people. People have often repeatedly attempted to complete the process to settled housing without success; experiencing assessment and referral processes that are not flexible or sensitive enough and ultimately further exclude. Replicating more traditional assessment and referral processes will too often create additional barriers, making it even more difficult to get to the right people.

The concept, and in some cases assessment, of whether someone is 'housing-ready' should be consigned to history as it runs against evidence and good practice. The starting presumption should be that most of us, with the right support, can manage our own home.

For **Housing First start-ups**, think carefully about assessment and referral procedures to ensure they are very easy to access, have multiple routes in, don't work to restrictive timescales and don't see referrals closed due to not all information being provided or missed appointments.

For **Housing First scale-ups**, review the balance achieved between open, easy access referrals and assessments, building in improvements, and sharing learning. Continue to ensure fidelity to the key principles of Housing First for everyone.

### *Practice Example*

Housing First partners in Aberdeen/shire were mindful from the beginning about creating routes into housing and support that understood people's trauma and lack of trust in professionals and systems. They created an approach to referrals and assessments that could move quickly when needed, while giving people space and time to make their own decisions about their future. This includes the example of staff continuing to reach out to someone for 9 months after they initially decided against moving forward with a Housing First referral. It was this stickability, keeping the door open, and not closing a case that created the opportunity for trust to be built and for someone to take the first step in their own time.

## Don't mistake Housing First support for standard housing support



Housing First support is built on a series of fundamental principles, rather than a list of tasks to deliver, and goes beyond traditional approaches to housing support. For some people who have felt excluded from services, it is not possible to overstate the importance of the first connection with a skilful, patient support worker. It requires a high and varied range of skills and experiences across the team and lower caseloads for support workers. This additional responsibility should be reflected in the remuneration levels for Housing First support colleagues; learning from the Pathfinder demonstrated the impact of getting this right and wrong.

For **Housing First start-ups**, consider the range of skills required of Housing First support workers and the range of training and support that will be available to them. Recruitment processes should take this into account alongside the appropriate salary levels.

For **Housing First scale-ups**, don't lose focus on continued staff development and ensure that trauma informed approaches are built in, including regular reflective practice.

### *Practice Example*

Finding the right people to deliver Housing First support is not easy, as the role demands a significant level of expertise, local knowledge, confidence, energy and compassion. It is therefore crucial to recruit in a way that gives your organisation the best opportunity to assess who a person is and what they can bring to the role.

One Pathfinder area, Edinburgh, did this in a unique manner, by asking people to select a random object from those in front of them and, with some time for preparation, to speak about a time, a place, and a memory that the object reminded them of. It is a simple exercise but one that provided an insight into the applicants' personalities that traditional interview setups do not – and led to a successful round of recruitment.

## Don't ignore local housing mechanisms



While many social landlords continue to operate a points-based approach to housing allocations, the implementation of Common Housing Registers and Choice-Based Lettings across Scotland means that Housing First allocations are being delivered in very different contexts, creating significant implications for local delivery. How to achieve the best approach across these different housing contexts is still being tested.

It is crucial not to assume that all housing partners will operate more traditional allocations policies, and to ensure time is taken to reach out to other landlords to design local delivery approaches to embed Housing First into alternative lettings arrangements. The design of local arrangements is key, as many people who are best fit for Housing First have been or feel excluded; it is rarely enough to tweak the present allocation system as it is likely the same issues will arise.

For **Housing First start-ups**, take time to understand the different lettings arrangements of local landlords, building in Housing First as early as possible. Bring housing associations and cooperatives into local delivery mechanisms so that their key role can be developed as a full participating partner.

For **Housing First scale-ups**, review and share learning, reaching out to landlords operating different lettings arrangements and bringing them into local partnerships, thinking of different ways of achieving the shared objective.



## b. How Much Did it Cost?

Initial cost guidance for the Pathfinder was based on evidence available of average costs adopted internationally. This enabled the annual cost of delivering Housing First support to a tenant to be set as a range between **£6,500 to £7,500** in year 1, which included a £1,500 contribution to the costs of furnishing the new tenancy. From year 2 onwards, the cost *per person per annum* (without the furnishing premium) was set as a range between **£5,000 to £6,000**.

This cost model included an enhanced salary rate in the region of £25-30k per annum in recognition of the high demands of the role on the skill and care of Housing First support workers. Duration of support is not time-bound with a best-practice maximum caseload of **7 tenants per support worker**.

**Table 2: Housing First Pathfinder cost model range**

Annual Cost	Range	
Salary	£25,000	£30,000
Employer on-costs (25%)	£6,250	£7,500
Management Fee (15%)	£3,750	£4,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£35,000</b>	<b>£42,000</b>
<i>Divide by 7 (caseload) = per person/per annum</i>	£5,000	£6,000
<i>Add furniture package supplement</i>	£1,500	£1,500
<b>= per person/per annum</b>	<b>£6,500</b>	<b>£7,500</b>
<b>Per person/per month (first year)</b>	<b>£ 542</b>	<b>£ 625</b>
Per person/per month (subsequent years)	£ 417	£ 500

### ***What have we learned about costs?***

The average cost per tenancy incurred by consortia to March 2021 is projected to be **£9,531** per person, per annum – which runs ahead of the initial £6.5-7.5k modelling range.

However the length of time people were supported *prior* to tenancy-take up is the key reason for higher costs, and improvement in this areas is critical to long-term commissioning and costing – and to the effectiveness of the Housing First approach. The ambition is to achieve an **average 4-8 weeks** between referral and move-in, consistent with international best practice. The Pathfinder has to March 2020 achieved an average 16 weeks, which should also be noted as more effective than status quo, and increasingly more efficient month-on-month.

### c. Cost Modelling Going Forward

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

The phased, scaling up approach means greater cost outlay at setup and in early stages of delivery, with costs reducing as processes are established and pace and capacity increase and as traditional and more expensive forms of homeless and temporary accommodation are replaced.

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

**Table 3: Expected Range of Costs**

<b>Expected Range of Direct Costs for Housing First in Scotland from 2021-22</b>	
•	<b>£6,500 - £9,500 per person, per year – year 1 in tenancy</b>
•	<b>£5,000 - £8,000 per person, per year – from year 2 in tenancy onwards</b>

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

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

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

### d. Commissioning Framework

[Section 7](#) outlines and describes the five core building blocks required to effectively start and scale up Housing First; while the need for the right investment is specific to the funding required for Housing First, effective commissioning will cut across all five building blocks.

A robust and inclusive commissioning approach can ensure two things:

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

### ***The Pathfinder approach***

As the Pathfinder is delivered across six local authority areas and a range of local contexts, it was important to establish a common commissioning approach so that delivery is as consistent and universal as possible. This means that partners can deliver a local service yet share learning nationally. It also ensures that governance frameworks can understand quickly when issues are specific to local systems and processes and when they go beyond that.

A commissioning body was established in Corra Foundation and a common tendering framework was created, asking that consortiums of service providers be developed in each area to design and deliver local Housing First services. Prior to this, discussions were opened with housing providers in each area to pledge housing stock.

As support costs represent the most significant cost attached to Housing First, funding is directed to support providers within the consortia, via a lead organisation. However, it remains the case that broad partnerships are vital when setting up Housing First and this should be reflected when consortia are formed. For example, the consortium in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire comprises support providers, housing providers, and local authority representation.

### ***Key learning***

Commissioning will inevitably be different depending on the area of delivery but there are already some key factors that should be considered regardless of context. These are outlined below and will be further developed as this National Framework is consulted on and refined:

#### **Cost benchmarks and support provision:**

- These are driven largely by the quality of the Housing First support roles, the salary frameworks within which they sit, and the ratio of staff to people supported (maximum 1:7). An independent scoping exercise to better understand the variance in salary levels across Housing First services in Scotland was commissioned and undertaken in 2020. It concluded that while many front-line delivery posts are ‘badged’ slightly differently, they are on the whole working to relatively similar job roles and duties.
- While guidance for suggested frontline delivery salaries of between £25-£30k per annum was provided, a range of £18-£25k across third sector services has been more universally adopted. When benchmarked against equivalent salaries within local authorities, the third sector organisations are paying less. For example, a Housing Support Officer in a local authority typically has a salary banding of between £26 to £29k per year.
- There is also large variance within local areas delivering Housing First, which has impacted on recruitment. While accepting that salary is only one factor in recruitment and retention, a geographical area where wide salary differences appear will, in the long-term, lead to inconsistencies in delivery and potentially issues around consistent levels of support and credibility.
- While it has always been the case that the public sector retains higher salary bandings than the third sector for similar posts, the long-term development and roll out of Housing First in Scotland will benefit from greater equity across sectors and areas.

**Other factors to consider:**

- **Furniture costs**

The capacity to make people's house a home in the way they want is a key first step to tenancy sustainment. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans illustrated a wide range of the potential costs associated, as well as some of the options available – including furniture packages facilitated by housing providers, bulk purchasing, and local channels. In each case, a consistent budget should prioritise choice and quality.

- **Structure of provision**

Effective support relies on the skill and commitment of all partners. It is a principle that housing and support should be independent of one another, and this should be considered and clarified when support and housing providers sit within the same group. It should be noted that while a person's housing and support cannot be dependent on each other, a close and honest working relationship between housing and support providers is fundamental.

- **Local knowledge and experience**

One significant challenge faced by Pathfinder partners has been scaling up Housing First within systems and processes that are not designed for Housing First – and effecting appropriate changes along the way. For this, it is important that commissioning accounts for a high level of local knowledge and experience with providers close to the communities in which they operate.

- **Lived experience**

People with lived experience of homelessness can voice clear and direct advice on the development and delivery of services. Building this into your commissioning approach ensures that investment is directed to what works and what matters.

- **Timescale and longevity**

A necessary tension between delivering and commissioning Housing First within current systems is the indefinite nature of the support that goes hand-in-hand with the tenancy. Commissioning cannot be sustained on a year by year basis; long term gains can be expected when the right investment is aligned with the right disinvestment in traditional services. A strong focus on community integration within support contracts can help people settle and connect with mainstream services and opportunities more quickly, and so reduce their reliance on the specialist Housing First support service.

- **Integrating Housing First**

Housing First is one part of a larger transition. It therefore should sit in the context of that larger transition and the connected support solutions e.g. outreach support and housing support. Considering these early enables commissioners to avoid duplication of supply of support while intentionally structuring the broader landscape to ensure it all works together.

- **Understanding what you don't need to commission**

This National Framework is intended in part to bring together the wide range of learning and resource that we have already in Scotland so that partners are not starting from scratch. For example, there is little need to commission evaluation on questions such as "does Housing First work?" as the evidence for this is already significant.

## **e. Rural Considerations**

It is a priority across Scotland to scale up Housing First as the default response for people experiencing homelessness who have multiple support needs. This ambition is set out in each of Scotland's 32 local authority Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans.

With the highest proportion of homelessness and rough sleeping found across the central belt and in Scotland's cities, these areas have typically been the focus of progress with Housing First. However, many local authorities operate in a more rural, dispersed context.

### ***Aberdeenshire Example***

There are a number of rural authorities already well underway in their transition towards a system of rapid rehousing and Housing First. Aberdeenshire Council is one, having established its Housing First project in July 2017.

While the area does not face the challenge of long-term rough sleeping, they understand that moving people into temporary accommodation – in a location where they have no connection or networks – along with multiple moves between different temporary accommodation placements leads to poor outcomes.

The council now offers the Housing First model to people who find themselves in that position and partnerships have been formed with the local HSCP and ADP, the DWP, Scottish Prison Service, the Police, third sector services and local housing associations, among others. Working together consistently and early with multiple partners is a critical factor in scaling up Housing First and has made it easier to respond quickly in a rural setting.

In 2018 Aberdeenshire – in a consortium with Aberdeen City – also became one of six areas delivering Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder. Aberdeenshire is tasked with identifying and sharing the challenges, solutions, and learning to successfully scale up Housing First in a rural setting. This has proved fruitful to date and Aberdeenshire's progress before and during the Pathfinder Programme has shown positive outcomes:

- Tenancy sustainment remains high with over 90% of people being supported across Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City successfully sustaining their tenancy during the Pathfinder.
- Significant reduction in waiting times prior to moving in.
- Number of tenancies per client down from a two-year average of 7, to 1.8; the wraparound Housing First support key to providing greater stability.
- Increase in engagement with mental health services (from 68 to 123 /year).
- Economic benefits to bodies beyond housing and homelessness, notably the prison service as number of prison visits across sample client group reduced from 19 to 2.

### ***Current Considerations***

There are many positive aspects to delivering Housing First in a rural setting, for example more generic teams and less complex systems to navigate for support and advice.

As well as the questions and challenges presented to everyone scaling up Housing First, those in a rural setting have other considerations including:

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

# Section 5

## Equalities Considerations

The risk of experiencing homelessness is not distributed equally, and the impact of homelessness does not affect everyone in the same way.



**Some groups of people are more impacted by, overrepresented in, or excluded from the homelessness system. Housing First is often the right response.**

**This section is not intended as a full Equalities Impact Assessment, but instead offers a set of considerations to assist local partners undertaking an EQIA when starting up or scaling up Housing First in their area.**

## Equality Duty

Planning and delivering Housing First needs consideration of existing inequalities so that local partners can tailor and target decisions, actions and resources with full consideration of protected characteristics. All Scottish public authorities have [statutory obligations](#) to meet in this area. The public sector equality duty (or general duty) in the Equality Act 2010 came into force in 2011 and means Scottish public authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to:

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

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

## Policy Recommendations

In addition, [HARSAG recommendations](#) in 2020 invited local authorities to:

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

With specific Housing First recommendations to:

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

**R47.** *Establish a Housing First pathway for **women with complex needs**.*



	Considerations	Role of Housing First
<b>Income Inequality</b>	<p>Homelessness risk is not distributed equally, and poverty is the greatest driver of homelessness in all its forms. Housing First has the opportunity to have a positive impact on those with a low socio-economic status.</p>	<p>Housing First redresses disadvantage by providing Housing First and fast. It connects people with community and with opportunities to learn and earn.</p> <p>Provision of furniture packages to furnish property, or access to a supervised budget to furnish property, as well as maximising benefits, applying for Community Care Grants and all other available funding sources.</p>
<b>Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people are over-represented in homelessness statistics overall.</li> <li>• Rock Trust are the first UK charity to pilot Housing First for Youth and have built up further evidence of the success of the Housing First model in a youth context, with a particular focus on the benefits to young people leaving care.</li> <li>• Consideration of people under 35 being subject to Shared Accommodation Rate of housing payments, limiting their choice in properties.</li> <li>• Older people are more likely to experience loneliness and social isolation, before and after a Housing First tenancy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Housing First planning should account for an over representation of young people.</li> <li>• The Rock Trust pilot in partnership with Almond Housing Association was independently and positively evaluated and you can read the <a href="#">final report here</a>.</li> <li>• If affordable properties are not available in areas desired, apply for DHP to widen the choice for those under 35, and explore benefit maximisation that would allow someone to “top up” their rent payments.</li> <li>• Strong focus on making connections in local areas to increase tenancy sustainment and reduce risk of repeat homelessness.</li> </ul>

	Considerations	Role of Housing First
<b>Sex/ Gender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Men are more likely to be rough sleeping, in unsuitable temporary accommodation and now make up the largest population in hotel accommodation in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Men are at increased risk of suicide ideation or attempts.</li> <li>Women benefit equally from a Housing First approach, but with often different pathways to support. Housing First England provides an excellent online resource of evaluations and guidance relating to <a href="#">Housing First for women</a>.</li> <li>Domestic abuse is the key reason for homelessness among women without access to routes to support and safety.</li> <li>Additional considerations around Housing Benefit shortfalls if pregnant women are housed in 2-bedroom properties.</li> </ul>	<p>HARSAG 2020 recommendations include to:</p> <p><b>R46.</b> <i>Upscale Housing First to extend support to those with complex needs who are a) housed, but at risk of repeat homelessness b) currently in public institutions including Local Authority care.</i></p> <p><b>R47.</b> <i>Establish a Housing First pathway for women with complex needs.</i></p> <p>Ensure pregnant women housed through Housing First receive DHP if shortfall in Housing Benefit arises due to spare bedroom (i.e. child's future bedroom)</p>
<b>LGBTQ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 in 4 LGBT people experience domestic abuse.</li> <li>LGBT young people are over-represented in the young homeless population. 24% of young homeless people are LGBT; 77% state that their LGBT identity was a causal factor in becoming homeless.</li> </ul>	<p>HARSAG 2020 recommendations include to:</p> <p><b>R46.</b> <i>Upscale Housing First to extend support to those with complex needs who are a) housed, but at risk of repeat homelessness b) currently in public institutions including Local Authority care.</i></p> <p><b>R47.</b> <i>Establish a Housing First pathway for women with complex needs.</i></p>

	Considerations	Role of Housing First
<b>Race</b>	<p>Over the last decade the proportion of homelessness applications from main applicants of White Scottish ethnicity has reduced from 85% in 2008/09 to 76% in 2018/19.</p> <p>Awareness of subliminal racism from services, or from local communities where people are resettled should be constantly developed.</p> <p>The Gypsy and Traveller community may not find the provision of Housing First in line with cultural values and beliefs.</p>	<p>Staff involved in the delivery of Housing First Scotland should be supported, trained and encouraged to highlight issues and provide culturally sensitive responses.</p>
<b>Disability</b>	<p>Increased vulnerability due to ill-health, physical or mental disability.</p> <p><b>Physical Disability</b></p> <p>Local issues of availability of accessible properties and length of time to have properties adapted.</p> <p><b>Learning disability or limited English language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires support staff to have clear understanding of learning disability.</li> <li>• Difficulty communicating aspirations to support provider.</li> </ul> <p><b>Neurodiversity and communication problems:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frustration, confusion, anxiety.</li> </ul>	<p>Enhanced staff training for practitioners to ensure understanding of impact of disability on pathways to Housing First and successfully tenancy sustainment.</p>

# Section 6

## Fidelity, Evaluation & Quality



## a. Fidelity to Housing First Principles

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

Housing First Principle	Examples of Meeting this Principle
<p><b>1. People have a right to a home</b></p> <p>People are offered a home of their own as quickly as possible, with no requirement to be 'housing ready.'</p> <p>Their tenancy agreement will be the same as any other tenant and they will not be asked to meet any additional rules or criteria.</p>	<p><b>Progress towards achieving this includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Housing First tenants have either a Scottish Secure Tenancy or a Private Residential Tenancy.</li> <li>• No tenants are required to spend time in supported accommodation, rehab etc. before being offered their own tenancy.</li> <li>• All tenants have choice over where they want to live, and report that their choice was respected.</li> <li>• All tenants move into their home within 28 days, or as close as possible.</li> <li>• The average time for tenants to move into their homes reduces year on year.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Flexible support is provided for as long as is needed</b></p> <p>Support offered is not time-bound and is flexible enough to work with people at different levels of intensity based on their individual situations and experiences.</p> <p>This includes people choosing not to accept support or deciding they no longer need support as their situation has improved.</p>	<p><b>Progress towards achieving this includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no requirements in place for people to accept Housing First support, and tenants report being advised that they can opt out of support without it impacting upon their tenancy rights.</li> <li>• There are no time limits placed on the provision of support, no minimum or maximum number of hours or duration of time.</li> <li>• Decisions to end support are led by the Housing First tenant.</li> </ul>

Housing First Principle	Examples of Meeting this Principle
<p><b>3. Housing and support are separate</b></p> <p>Landlord and support functions are delivered separately, and choices people make about support do not affect their housing security</p> <p>The offer of support stays with the person – if they decide to move to a new area or their tenancy fails, they are supported to avoid homelessness crisis by finding and maintaining a new home.</p>	<p><b>Progress towards achieving this includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions to end support are led by the Housing First tenant.</li> <li>• Proactive joint work to prevent evictions for rent arrears or anti-social behaviour.</li> <li>• Tenancies remain open for tenants to return to following a short-term prison sentence or stay in rehab.</li> <li>• Ended tenancies do not result in repeat homelessness, with people supported by the landlord and support provider to move into another secure tenancy.</li> <li>• Support staff continue to offer support through time spent in prison, rehab and house moves.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Individuals have choice and control</b></p> <p>People are involved in choosing their own home, in a location that best suits their circumstances.</p> <p>Through person-centred planning they are also in control of the support they receive choosing where, when and how support is provided.</p>	<p><b>Progress towards achieving this includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support packages are co-produced, and tenants report being part of decisions about the nature of their support including choice over content, timing, frequency and staff.</li> <li>• Support packages are regularly reviewed, and changes requested by tenants are implemented.</li> <li>• Tenants report being actively involved in choosing the location, tenure and type of housing based on their own priorities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. An active engagement approach is used</b></p> <p>Support staff have small caseloads, allowing them to be proactive and persistent in offering support; doing ‘whatever it takes’ as many times as necessary to build a positive relationship with people.</p> <p>Cases will remain open even when engagement is low.</p>	<p><b>Progress towards achieving this includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caseloads are small and support staff report being able to commit necessary time and attention to each tenant.</li> <li>• Cases are not closed due to missed meetings or lack of contact.</li> <li>• Housing First tenants report support staff proactively building positive relationships.</li> </ul>

Housing First Principle	Examples of Meeting this Principle
<p><b>6. The service is based on people’s strengths, goals and aspirations</b></p> <p>Support is based on the understanding that there is always the possibility of positive change and improved health &amp; wellbeing, relationships and social and economic integration.</p> <p>Support staff work alongside people to identify strengths, goals and skills, building self-esteem and confidence.</p>	<p><b>Progress towards achieving this includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support planning is future focused, based on positive goals in people’s lives.</li> <li>• Tenants report improvements in health and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Tenants report improvements in self-esteem and confidence.</li> <li>• Tenants report improvements in social and economic integration.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. A harm reduction approach is used</b></p> <p>All engagement is based on the principle of reducing harm from alcohol and drugs and supporting people to minimise self-harm</p> <p>Support is based on promoting recovery in physical and mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>Progress towards achieving this includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caseloads are small and support staff report being able to commit necessary time and attention to each tenant.</li> <li>• Cases are not closed due to missed meetings or lack of contact.</li> </ul>

## b. Pathfinder Evaluation

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

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

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

A full evaluation published in 2022, with an interim report in 2021, will provide those starting-up and scaling-up Housing First across the country with robust evidence in a Scottish context. This National Framework will be updated in accordance with the evaluation conclusions and recommendations.

## c. Measuring Outcomes

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

A national outcomes framework and tool for consistent monitoring and measurement of outcomes will support understanding of where progress is being made across Scotland, the pace with which it is being made, and the wider value of Housing First in people's lives. This is being scoped ([see section 7](#)).

## d. Assuring Quality

Beyond the evaluation, [Homeless Network Scotland](#) will provide support to assure fidelity to the Housing First principles and outcome monitoring. This 'light-touch' and non-regulatory role has been requested by partners in local authorities and support providers to benchmark and share good practice across the country.

The new approach will be based on:

- i. The recognition that organisations are naturally reflective and are well placed to understand their own circumstances. Consistent, supported self-assessment that supports those who manage, deliver and use services to understand where they perform well, where their challenges are and where and how improvements can be made.
- ii. An acknowledgement of an important professional peer review role to help drive progress in fidelity, among housing providers, support providers and local authorities. On-the-ground experience and relationships mean their insight will be invaluable in understanding strengths, challenges, and improvement.



- iii. An understanding that that the Housing First principles are challenging, can apply differently in different circumstances, and can at times come into conflict with each other, meaning that the principles can be met in different ways for different people and what constitutes fidelity in one case is not necessarily transferable to another.
- iv. An awareness that support to measure fidelity is based on the understanding that there is no 'end point' where principles are absolutely being met. Support to measure fidelity is based on capturing and understanding progress towards meeting the principles rather than a binary assessment of fidelity.

And the approach will include:

- The development and delivery of consistent materials to support quality self-assessment.
- Independently facilitating self-assessment and professional peer review.
- Integrating 'participatory audit' of Housing First tenants, with an incentive for their participation.
- Supporting performance benchmarking based on core indicators of success, sharing intelligence and learning through regular publications and events.

# Section 7

## What Will it Take? Live Status Report

Scotland is on a mission to scale up Housing First in Scotland. Each partner brings something unique and important to this — but also has a set of expectations of what they need in place to enable them to deliver.



Scaling up Housing First needs to happen in tandem with ongoing improvements to the wider context in which it operates. This section sets out the contributions and expectations of all partners – what each brings, and what each needs. This will be updated regularly to provide a live status report on the wider context that Housing First needs to succeed.

## a. The Overall National Target

### *How Many?*

The in-depth statistical analysis linking information contained in twelve datasets, carried out as part of the [Hard Edges Scotland research](#), provides strong pointers on the scale of Housing First needed in Scotland. Further analysis undertaken by Heriot-Watt university for Homeless Network Scotland and partners concluded that around **3,560 Housing First tenancies** per year, over a 10-year programme, would meet the requirement for people already in the homelessness system, and those forecast to be affected by the toughest forms of homelessness over the next decade.

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

**Table 4: Housing First Demand Estimates**

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

### How does this compare?

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

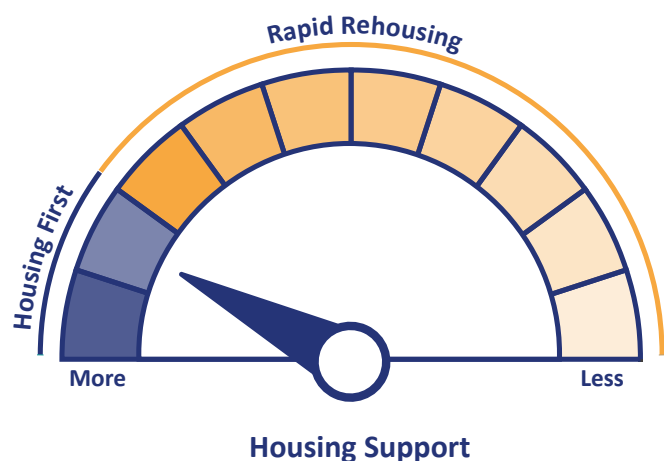
To understand the difference and move forward together, there are new calls for a national Housing Support Needs Analysis to be undertaken. This will enable local and national partners to understand the full level of housing, health, support and care needs in their area and the gap (if any) between local assessments of need and the figures illustrated at Table 4. In parallel with this, key partners will scope whether HL1 monitoring can be adapted to measure Housing First tenancies and outcomes post-pathfinder (from 2022-23).

On the basis that the Rapid Rehousing approach incorporates the full spectrum of housing support needs that people have after experiencing homelessness (from none, to Housing First intensive), these enquiries can assist the overall transition to Rapid Rehousing in Scotland and help scale up Housing First in line with local need.

### Housing First is one part of Rapid Rehousing

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

Fig.2 Housing Support



## b. Initial targets

The first year of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans drawn up by local authorities in consultation with local partners and Scottish Government have now been implemented. Local authorities were invited to collate and submit revised ambitions by June 2020, including relevant targets for Housing First.

For **2020-21**, a continuing pandemic year, 350 additional Housing First tenancies are forecast across 21 local authority areas. This is in addition to the 6 Pathfinder areas, which means 27 out of Scotland's 32 local authority areas are expected to have a Housing First response in their area by March 2021.

But from **2021-22**, the ambition is to go much further and faster.

## c. What it needs

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

### 1. High Level Intent

commitment to scale up needed from national and local government, across the housing, health and public sectors along with strategic buy-in from Elected Members.

### 2. Right Investment

adequate resources and investment in tandem, including housing supply. This can be achieved by an integrated strategic and policy agenda with shared financial commitment and agreed joint outcomes.

### 3. Strong and Supported Partnerships

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

### 4. Shared Goals and Learning

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

### 5. Good Communication

build momentum and support for Housing First with strong communication and storytelling, both through national and local media streams and via feedback to Elected Members.

# Key Partners

## d. What it will take

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



### Firm Foundations

developments and commitments already in place.



### Drawing Board

planning and development needed or in progress.



### What You Can Do

ideas and actions to get involved.

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

### a. Scottish Government

[GO>](#)

### b. Local Government

[GO>](#)

### c. Housing Providers

[GO>](#)

### d. Support Providers

[GO>](#)

### e. Beyond Homelessness

[GO>](#)

# a. Scottish Government

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

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

The Scottish Government has been instrumental in supporting Pathfinder partners to start and scale up Housing First. The Ending Homelessness Together Fund has included substantial financial commitment to the model; the Ending Homelessness Together Plan has been developed in wide and comprehensive consultation; and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans set out by each local authority in 2018-19 in response to request by the Scottish Government have provided coordinated yet distinct blueprints for ambitions to be met locally and nationally in the coming years.

These ambitions to end homelessness in Scotland need the ongoing effort and input from all parts of Scottish Government. This provides the foundation for lasting, systemic change for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

## Do you have a role in Scottish Government?

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





## High Level Intent



- Housing First is a national policy objective, set out in the 2018 report from the Scottish Parliament's [Local Government and Communities Committee](#) and the [2018 HARSAG recommendations](#). These were accepted in principle by the Scottish Government and:
  - Positioned within more recent [2020 HARSAG recommendations](#) made in response to COVID-19;
  - Developed in tandem with people with experience of homelessness via [‘Aye We Can’](#)
- Scotland's First Minister and Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government have reiterated in official statements that Housing First is the default, priority response for people with multiple and complex needs in Scotland; the group of people described in the Hard Edges Scotland report.
- Having accepted in principle the 2020 HARSAG recommendations; an updated [Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan](#) was published in October 2020.
- In light of COVID-19, Housing First has been positioned as a key part of recovery, with commitments and strategies agreed locally and nationally and set out within this Framework.
- In 2018 the Scottish Government and COSLA requested 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans from each local authority; a summary report of these plans drawn up by Crisis is available [here](#)
- Returns from local authorities on the progress made on RRTPs to date and updated ambitions for Housing First are reviewed annually by Scottish Government Homelessness Team.



- Scotland's ambition for Housing First will be clarified and quantified in the Scottish Government's [‘Housing to 2040’ long-term programme](#).
- The housing policy circle of Scottish Government's [Social Renewal Advisory Board](#) is expected to prioritise the role of Rapid Rehousing and Housing First as central to post-Covid recovery.
- [A Prevention Review Group](#) is underway to explore the options and potential benefits of a new law ensuring all public bodies work closely together to prevent homelessness.
- National support for a Housing Support Needs Analysis. This will enable local and national partners to understand the full level of housing, health, support and care needs in their area and the gap (if any) between local assessments of need and the statistician's forecast outlined on p.32.
- A national Housing First outcomes framework and tool for consistent monitoring and measurement, potentially aligned with the statutory HL1 monitoring of homelessness.





## High Level Intent continued



- Connect, communicate and consult on Housing First and especially Scottish Government colleagues in directorates beyond housing and homelessness; the sustainability and impact of Housing First depends in large part on often-siloed sectors working to the same goals.
- Review the Housing First specific recommendations set out by HARSAG and consider how these can be supported and achieved and what is already established that could help. These are:

**R18.** *Announce national roll out of Housing First, building on and learning from the pathfinder programme, and rapid procurement of additional lets for Housing First from social and private landlords, supported by housing representative and umbrella bodies.*

**R19.** *Ensure stable funding for the existing Housing First consortia across the 6 Pathfinder areas. National Framework developed to support rapid scaling of Housing First across all 32 areas in Scotland and consider options for commissioning and procurement.*

**R24.** *Adopt a local policy of pre-lettings against the social housing stock that has continued to become available but not yet ready to let – so that people can move when safe. Prioritise these as Housing First tenancies where needed to redress the severest disadvantage, and support this with guidance and practical mechanisms to enable people to view properties remotely.*

**R33.** *National learning/sharing programme of what's worked to prevent/rehouse in year one of RRTPs (including an evaluation of the Housing First Pathfinders) and practical resources made available for Local Authorities to use now.*

**R46.** *Upscaling Housing First to extend support to those with complex needs who are a) housed, but at risk of repeat homelessness b) currently in public institutions including Local Authority care (on the basis of 'if you can predict it, prevent it').*

**R47.** *Establish a Housing First pathway for women with complex needs.*



## Right Investment



- The Ending Homelessness Together Fund committed £50m to end homelessness in Scotland, including £32.5 million over 5 years to 2024 for the development and implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Housing First.
- Scottish Government is the primary funder of [Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder](#) catalysed by Social Bite with Corra Foundation and Homeless Network Scotland fund and project managers. From 2021-22, Scottish Government will pay 50% of the cost in the Pathfinder areas, with the local authority investing the remaining amount for that year and in full going forward.
- Resource was allocated in the rapid response to the pandemic to ensure that people were sheltered and supported; Housing First will play a key role in ensuring people do not return to unsuitable accommodation or sleeping rough.



- [Housing to 2040](#) is an ongoing national conversation on Scottish Government's draft vision and principles for what we all want our homes and communities to look and feel like in 2040.
- [Affordable Housing Need in Scotland post-2021](#) reports on analysis commissioned by Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, CIH Scotland and Shelter Scotland and calls for the next Scottish Government to commit to delivering 53,000 affordable homes and a capital investment programme of £3.4 billion over the next Scottish Parliament.
- Discussions are ongoing to review proposals that explore social investment in the form of low-cost loans as a means of financing the implementation of specific aspects of RRTPs and Housing First.



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



Scottish Government

## Strong Partnerships



- The Scottish Government convenes a national [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans sub-group](#) of the [Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#). A multi-agency Housing First Advisory Group also feeds into these structures. ([see appendix 2](#))
- The Scottish Government facilitates a National RRTP Coordinators and Leads group, coordinating and sharing learning and challenges across local authorities. A group focused on rural considerations has also been established in October 2020.
- The Scottish Government connects with the five [Housing Option Hubs](#) led by local authorities across Ayrshire & South; Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders; North & Islands; Tayside, Fife & Central; and West.
- The Scottish Government is a key partner and funder of [Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder](#).



- Further partnership between departments of Scottish Government is required as Housing First scales up as a national response and especially on shared messaging, funding and governance.
- Stakeholders in Scotland are committed to connecting with international partners via forums such as Housing First Europe, FEANTSA and World Habitat, with a further ambition to demonstrate and share the potential of our national approach.



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



Scottish Government

## Shared Goals And Learning



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



- To ensure Housing First is delivered effectively and to its core principles, a quality assurance and fidelity professional peer-review approach is in development so that partners can work together to build effectiveness in the long term. Further information can be found at [section 6](#).



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

## Good Communication



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



- Sign up to relevant newsletters, including:
  - [Housing First Scotland](#)
  - [Housing First Europe](#)
  - [Scottish Housing News](#)

## b. Local Government

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

[Scotland's Transition to Rapid Rehousing](#) details the context and purpose of this transition:

*“Rapid rehousing is about taking a housing led approach for rehousing people that have experienced homelessness, making sure they reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation for too long.*

*“Transition to a rapid rehousing approach means that some local authorities and partners will have to redress the balance of housing and support options that are available, and how quickly they are accessed.”*

The new approach for local authorities is to ensure:

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

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

### Do you have a role in Local Government?

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





## High Level Intent



- Housing First is a national policy objective, set out in the 2018 report from the Scottish Parliament's [Local Government and Communities Committee](#) and the [2018 HARSAG recommendations](#) accepted in principle by Scottish Government and:
  - Positioned within more recent [2020 HARSAG recommendations](#) made in response to COVID-19;
  - Developed in tandem with people with experience of homelessness via ['Aye We Can'](#) .
- Local authorities have committed to transition to a Rapid Rehousing approach with Housing First as a key component. These plans have been endorsed via the relevant local planning structures and council committees. Five-year [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans](#) were prepared in December 2018, with the first 2019-20 annual returns made in June 2020.
- As of October 2020, 27 Local Authorities, including the 6 Housing First Pathfinders, had committed to implementing Housing First during 2020-2021.



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

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

Local Authorities should ensure that overall scale of Housing First is aligned with a local assessment of housing support needs and consider how that compares with the local demand forecast on p.32.



## High Level Intent



- Connect and communicate across Local Authority services and departments beyond housing and homelessness. The success of Housing First is dependent on integrated planning, working and communication in order to deliver joined up, barrier free services working to the same goals.
- Review the most up-to-date Housing-First specific recommendations set out by HARSAG and consider their implications locally, including what local networks, partnerships, projects and tools can be engaged. Those most relevant to Housing First at a local level are:

**R19.** *Ensure stable funding for the existing Housing First consortia across the 6 Pathfinder areas. National Framework developed to support rapid scaling of Housing First across all 32 areas in Scotland and consider options for commissioning and procurement.*

**R24.** *Adopt a local policy of pre-lettings against the social housing stock that has continued to become available but not yet ready to let – so that people can move when safe. Prioritise these as Housing First tenancies where needed to redress the severest disadvantage, and support this with guidance and practical mechanisms to enable people to view properties remotely.*

**R33.** *National learning/sharing programme of what's worked to prevent/rehouse in year one of RRTPs (including an evaluation of the Housing First Pathfinders) and practical resources made available for Local Authorities to use now.*

**R46.** *Upscaling Housing First to extend support to those with complex needs who are a) housed, but at risk of repeat homelessness b) currently in public institutions including Local Authority care (on the basis of 'if you can predict it, prevent it').*

**R47.** *Establish a Housing First pathway for women with complex needs.*



## Right Investment



- The Ending Homelessness Together Fund committed £50m to end homelessness in Scotland, including £32.5 million over 5 years to local authorities for the development and implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Housing First.
- The national [Housing First Pathfinder](#) is testing how Housing First can best be scaled up across local authorities. As a result of the success across the six Pathfinder authorities, they have committed to mainstreaming funding for Housing First delivery as an on-going commitment.
- Innovative examples of investment in Housing First are emerging. For example, a 50/50 split between homelessness and health in Highland Council and contributions to cost from across an integrated health & social care budget in City of Glasgow council.
- Perth and Kinross Council, who embarked on a transition to Rapid Rehousing several years before it was adopted policy, can now demonstrate success in homelessness trends and local spend with directed investment that's been made.



- Sustainable investment in Housing First is still being established and coordinated at local and national government level. However, in order to deliver sustainable change, it is necessary for costs to be mainstreamed within partners' budgets moving forward
- Guidance is being sought via the economic analysis being carried out as part of the Pathfinder evaluation which is designed to better understand specific cost benefits beyond the homelessness sector.
- Following HARSAG 2020 recommendations, Scottish Government will address the proposal to update plans and funding for the scale up of Housing First, including implications for consortia delivering Housing First in Pathfinder areas.
- Discussions are ongoing to review proposals that explore social investment in the form of low-cost loans as a means of financing the implementation of specific aspects of RRTPs and Housing First.



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





## Local Government

## Strong Partnerships



- The chair of [ALACHO](#) also chairs the national [Rapid Rehousing Transition sub-group](#) of the [Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#). A multi-agency Housing First Advisory Group also feeds into these structures.
- Local authorities participate in a national RRTP Coordinators and Leads group, coordinating and sharing learning and challenges. A group focused on rural considerations has also been established in October 2020.
- Local authorities facilitate five [Housing Options Hubs](#) across Ayrshire & South West; Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders; North & Islands; Tayside, Fife & Central; and West.
- 6 local authorities participate in [Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder](#), funded by Scottish Government, Social Bite and Merchants House Glasgow. 15 support providers across those areas provide Housing First support, with Corra Foundation and Homeless Network Scotland providing a fund and project management role.
- Including the Housing First Pathfinder spanning 6 local authority areas, at October 2020 27 local authorities in total had outlined plans and partnerships for delivery of Housing First in 2020-2021.



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



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



## Shared Goals and Learning

FIRM  
FOUNDATIONS

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

DRAWING  
BOARD

- A professional peer-review quality assurance approach is being developed, which will ensure that partners work together effectively in the long term, delivering services which meet people's needs. As Housing First is increasingly built into local commissioning plans and procurement processes, there is a need to ensure the fidelity of the Housing First principles while considering local needs and service options.
- The monthly [Housing First Tracker](#) published by Housing First Scotland currently updates on the progress made in six local authority areas; discussions are underway to extend this in order to offer an accurate and full overview of headline progress made against national policy.
- ISPHRE at Heriot Watt University are leading an evaluation of the Housing First Pathfinder including a section exploring how it is developed within a local authority framework, and an economic analysis exploring the model's cost impact across sectors. An interim and final report are due in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

WHAT YOU  
CAN DO

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



## Good Communication



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



- Scottish Government has completed a consultation on 'local connection' rules to inform the forthcoming Ministerial Statement on suspending referrals to be made to the Scottish Parliament. This will have implications for Housing First allocations.



- Sign up to relevant newsletters, including:
  - [Housing First Scotland](#)
  - [Housing First Europe](#)
  - [Scottish Housing News](#)

## c. Housing Providers

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

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

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

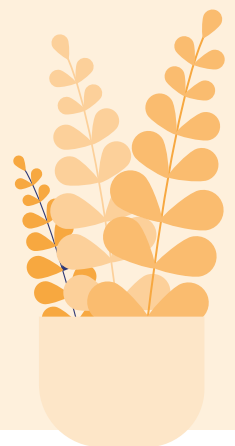
- a settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible for people experiencing homelessness.
- that time spent in any form of temporary accommodation is reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better.
- when temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished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

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

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

### Do you have a role in social housing — or in the private rented sector?

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





## Housing Providers

## High Level Intent



- Housing First needs homes. Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Chartered Institute of Housing and Shelter Scotland commissioned a report on [Affordable Housing Need post-21](#) detailing the levels required to ensure adequate housing in the next parliamentary term.
- The committees and senior management teams of several housing associations have already made strong and public commitments to Housing First. National housing umbrella and membership bodies SFHA and CIH Scotland have also backed the national scaling up of Housing First.
- Housing First is a national policy objective, set out in the 2018 report from the Scottish Parliament's [Local Government and Communities Committee](#) and the [2018 HARSAG recommendations](#). These were accepted in full by the Scottish Government and:
  - Positioned within more recent [2020 HARSAG recommendations](#) made in response to COVID-19;
  - Developed in tandem with people with experience of homelessness via '[Aye We Can](#)'.
- Housing providers contributed to local Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and feature considerably; an overview of those plans has been published by Crisis [here](#).
- [Homes for Good](#) is a social letting agency providing supported access to the private rented sector. Homes For Good have also pledged homes to help scale up Housing First.



- Clarity on assessment processes and protocols and the role of housing providers. While this will be carried out locally, some consistency is needed in terms of the approach and how this will work in practice to make sure that assessment of need for housing and other support is carried out quickly and simultaneously with the housing allocation. This will help minimise delays, people spending too long in temporary accommodation or in places without support.
- Of the recommendations set by HARSAG and accepted in principle by the Scottish Government, a number are specific to Housing First as it relates to housing provision. It is important that national and local discussions continue to ensure wider awareness and sharing of ideas about what these mean in practice:

**R24.** *Adopt a local policy of pre-lettings against the social housing stock that has continued to become available but not yet ready to let – so that people can move when safe. Prioritise these as Housing First tenancies where needed to redress the severest disadvantage, and support this with guidance and practical mechanisms to enable people to view properties remotely.*

**R33.** *National learning/sharing programme of what's worked to prevent/rehouse in year one of RRTPs (including an evaluation of the Housing First pathfinders) and practical resources made available for Local Authorities to use now.*

**R46.** *Upscaling Housing First to extend support to those with complex needs who are a) housed, but at risk of repeat homelessness b) currently in public institutions including Local Authority care (on the basis of 'if you can predict it, prevent it').*



## Housing Providers

### High Level Intent continued



- Connect, communicate and consult on Housing First across your organisation and wider local partnerships; the sustainability and impact of Housing First depends in large part on often-siloed sectors working to the same goals.
- Review the Housing First specific recommendations set out by HARSAG and consider their implications locally – consider as well your networks, partnerships and relationships with previous and current tenants that could help implement these.



## Housing Providers

## Right Investment

FIRM  
FOUNDATIONS

- The Ending Homelessness Together Fund committed £50m to end homelessness in Scotland, including £32.5 million over 5 years to local authorities for the development and implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Housing First.
- Examples of investment (in addition to housing) made by housing providers during the Housing First Pathfinder has included practical mechanisms to address risk of fire-raising, housing adaptations and furnishing homes. Housing associations have also contributed in-kind staffing costs concerned with housing management and contributing to local planning and delivery groups.
- With 'choice and control' a core principle of Housing First, new tenants have been provided a budget to furnish and decorate their home, with examples of housing associations offering ready-to-go furniture packages. Both offer an investment in the individual and the relationships with their housing provider. The [Scottish Welfare Fund](#) is also in place to help families and people in Scotland who are on low incomes through Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants.

DRAWING  
BOARD

- Sustainable investment in Housing First is still being established and coordinated at local and national government level, and it is encouraged that costs are mainstreamed via a range of departments and budgets due to the preventative nature of the spend.
- Following HARSAG 2020 recommendations, Scottish Government will address the proposal to update plans and funding for the scale up of Housing First, including implications for consortia delivering Housing First in Pathfinder areas. The first year of the national [Housing First Pathfinder](#) returned an average cost of £9,500 per person per year for wrap-around support. The cost impact is being evaluated nationally to better understand the actual cost and benefits to housing providers.
- An alternative scale-up model that places the commissioning levers for Housing First support to housing associations is being scoped before a small test and learn project is mobilised.
- Discussions are ongoing to review proposals that explore social investment in the form of low-cost loans as a means of financing the implementation of specific aspects of RRTPs and Housing First.
- Housing providers will continue to review the implications of the HARSAG recommendations, accepted in principle by Scottish Government, on the proportion of lets made to homeless households, including Housing First.

WHAT YOU  
CAN DO

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



## Housing Providers

## Strong Partnerships



- Local authority housing providers are represented on the five [Housing Options Hubs](#) – Ayrshire & South; Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders; North & Islands; Tayside, Fife & Central and West. As well as some areas having direct responsibility for housing stock and allocation, strong ties with local housing associations and the private rented sector are also made.
- Housing providers and national umbrella and membership bodies are represented on the national [Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#), the [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans sub-group](#) and the Housing First Advisory Group. Housing providers are also members of local delivery groups where Housing First operates.
- Housing providers are key partners in each of the 6 local authority areas participating in [Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder](#), funded by Scottish Government, Social Bite and Merchants House Glasgow. 15 support providers across those areas provide Housing First support, with Corra Foundation and Homeless Network Scotland providing a fund and project management role.
- A new strategic partnership between SFHA and Homeless Network Scotland has a priority focus on Housing First.



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



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





## Housing Providers

## Shared Goals And Learning



- A new strategic partnership between SFHA and Homeless Network Scotland has a priority focus on Housing First.
- CIH Scotland and Homeless Network Scotland published a useful guidance tool in 2019 to assist housing professionals delivering or supporting Housing First on the ground. This is [available to download here](#).
- COSLA and the Scottish Government reported against the Ending Homelessness Together Plan [one year on](#) including progress to date on Housing First.
- The [Hard Edges report](#) commissioned by Lankelly Chase and the Robertson Trust and undertaken by Heriot-Watt University illustrates the interrelated experiences of adults in Scotland with three 'core' forms of severe and multiple disadvantage (homelessness, offending and substance dependency).
- Housing First Scotland facilitates an annual conference, training, events, a monthly tracker and newsletter and an ongoing webinar series – sign up and access materials and reports at [www.housingfirst.scot](http://www.housingfirst.scot).



- CIH Scotland and Homeless Network Scotland are scoping options to incorporate Housing First training within the CIH accredited training programme for housing professionals. This will supplement the offer from the [Housing First Academy](#), provided by Turning Point Scotland.
- To ensure Housing First is delivered effectively, a quality assurance approach adopting a professional peer-review method is in development so that partners can work together to build effectiveness in the long term. As Housing First is increasingly built into local commissioning and procurement processes, this will need an approach sensitive to local differences while ensuring fidelity to the principles of Housing First. Further information can be found at [section 6](#).
- The monthly [Housing First Tracker](#) published by Housing First Scotland currently updates on the progress made in six local authority areas; discussions are underway to extend this in order to offer an accurate and full overview of headline progress made against national policy.
- ISPHRE at Heriot Watt University are leading an evaluation of the Housing First Pathfinder including the role of housing providers and an economic analysis exploring the model's cost impact across sectors. An interim and final report are due in 2021 and 2022, respectively.



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



## Housing Providers

## Good Communications



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



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



- Sign up to relevant newsletters, including:
  - [CIH Scotland](#)
  - [Housing First Scotland](#)
  - [Housing First Europe](#)
  - [Scottish Housing News](#)
  - [Scottish Federation of Housing Associations](#)

## d. Support Providers

Support providers play a vital role in establishing and improving Housing First services. Housing First support in Scotland has mostly been provided by the third sector, while some local authorities have, or intend to, create Housing First support teams as part of their homelessness response.

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

Housing First is intended to be a long-term cost-effective response for those it supports, however cost cannot be prioritised above quality in decision making and commissioning. Support provision accounts for the highest proportion of direct costs associated with Housing First and it is therefore essential that support providers are clear and accountable in their planning and reporting.

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

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

Scaling up Housing First is a national policy and its success to date has been built largely on the significant efforts of people working day and night to provide the right support to people.

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

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





## Support Providers

## High Level Intent



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



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



## Support Providers

## Right Investment



- The Ending Homelessness Together Fund committed £50m to end homelessness in Scotland, including £32.5 million over 5 years for the implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Housing First.
- Scottish Government, Social Bite and Merchants House Glasgow committed £6.5 million to the national [Housing First Pathfinder](#) with Corra Foundation and Homeless Network Scotland appointed fund and project managers.
- An independent salary benchmarking exercise was undertaken to assess optimal cost levels for Housing First to support future budgeting and commissioning ([see section 4](#)).



- Following HARSAG 2020 recommendations, Scottish Government will address the recommendation to update plans and funding for the scale up of Housing First, including implications for consortia delivering Housing First in Pathfinder areas.



- Review the cost guidance at [section 4](#) against internal frameworks and budgets and where appropriate consider the organisational implications of delivering a Housing First approach.
- Connect with Corra Foundation ([hello@corra.scot](mailto:hello@corra.scot)) for guidance as a third sector support provider looking to start or grow involvement in Housing First delivery.
- Set aside budget for training and upskilling specific to Housing First.



## Support Providers

## Strong Partnerships



- Housing First support providers are represented on the national [Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#), the [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans sub-group](#) and the Housing First Advisory Group. Support providers are also members of local delivery groups where Housing First operates.
- [Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder](#) hosts five support consortiums made up of 15 providers with extensive involvement in the setup and delivery of the Housing First Scotland Pathfinder Programme. Further information and contact details can be found at [www.housingfirst.scot](http://www.housingfirst.scot).



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



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



## Support Providers

## Shared Goals And Learning



- The [Hard Edges report](#) commissioned by Lankelly Chase and the Robertson Trust and undertaken by Heriot-Watt University illustrates the interrelated experiences of adults in Scotland with three 'core' forms of severe and multiple disadvantage (homelessness, offending and substance dependency).
- CIH Scotland and Homeless Network Scotland published a useful guidance tool in 2019 to assist housing professionals delivering or supporting Housing First on the ground. This is [available to download here](#).
- Housing First Scotland facilitates an annual conference, training, events, a monthly tracker and newsletter and an ongoing webinar series – sign up and access materials and reports at [www.housingfirst.scot](http://www.housingfirst.scot).



- To ensure Housing First is delivered effectively, a quality assurance approach adopting a professional peer-review method is in development so that partners can work together to build effectiveness in the long term. As Housing First is increasingly built into local commissioning and procurement processes, this will need an approach sensitive to local differences while ensuring fidelity to the principles of Housing First. Further information can be found at [section 6](#).
- CIH Scotland and Homeless Network Scotland are scoping options to incorporate Housing First training within the CIH accredited training programme for housing professionals.



- Consult with colleagues on the [\(see appendix 4\)](#) and review internal capacity to deliver. Housing First Scotland can connect you with partners already involved in the delivery of Housing First to swap notes, share learning and access training – please contact [housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot](mailto:housingfirst@homelessnetwork.scot) to be connected.



## Support Providers

### Good Communication



FIRM  
FOUNDATIONS

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



DRAWING  
BOARD

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



WHAT YOU  
CAN DO

- Sign up to relevant newsletters, including:

[CIH Scotland](#)

[Housing First Scotland](#)

[Housing First Europe](#)

[Scottish Housing News](#)



## e. Beyond Homelessness

### Public Health, Health & Social Care, Addictions, Community Justice

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

Scaling up Housing First in Scotland will significantly redress the disadvantages and unfairness experienced by people going through tough times. Many people at the sharpest end of homelessness cycle in and out of the 'system' of homelessness services and support. It is likely that many come into contact with and be influenced by a number of other systems too – including the care system, the justice system, addictions services, mental health services and emergency health services. While this is widely understood – and developed in depth in the [Hard Edges Scotland](#) report – homelessness services are often left 'carrying the can' for many missed opportunities and tasked with supporting people in a range of ways beyond their need for housing.

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

Scaling up Housing First needs the expertise and reach of a wide range of partners 'beyond homelessness'. We hope this section provides some context and ideas to invite your collaboration.

### Do you have a broader role than housing and homelessness?

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





## High Level Intent



- Scotland's First Minister and Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government have reiterated in official statements that Housing First is the default response for people facing multiple disadvantages in Scotland. In March 2019, a joint letter was circulated from the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport encouraging collaboration between housing and health.
- Housing First is a national policy objective, set out in the 2018 report from the Scottish Parliament's [Local Government and Communities Committee](#) and the [2018 HARSAG recommendations](#), accepted in principle by the Scottish Government and:
  - Positioned within more recent [2020 HARSAG recommendations](#) made in response to COVID-19;
  - Developed in tandem with people with experience of homelessness via '[Aye We Can](#)'
- With Housing First now a key component of Scotland's [Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan](#), all 32 local authority areas have a 5-year plan outlining how local partners will transition local systems toward a 'rapid rehousing' approach. This means:
  - settled, mainstream housing as quickly as possible, reducing the reliance on traditional 'homeless' accommodation;
  - time spent in any form of temporary accommodation is reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better;
  - when temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a local community;
  - that Housing First is the default option for people whose homelessness is made harder by experiences such as trauma and addiction.



- Joint strategic planning to develop and upscale Housing First, ensuring it is embedded in all Health & Social Care plans.
- The integration of Housing First with all aspects of Health will be key. This will include working toward setting a [HEAT target](#), which are focused on Health Improvement, Efficiency, Access and Treatment.
- [A Prevention Review Group](#) is underway to explore the options and potential benefits of a new law ensuring all public bodies work closely together to mitigate and prevent homelessness.



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



## Right Investment



- The Ending Homelessness Together Fund committed £50m to end homelessness in Scotland, including £32.5 million over 5 years for the development and implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Housing First; a portion of this was contributed from Scottish Government Addictions funding.
- Scottish Government (Homelessness and Addictions) is the primary funder of [Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder](#) catalysed by Social Bite with Corra Foundation and Homeless Network Scotland fund and project managers. It is a live ambition for funding to be mainstreamed in coming years via local budgets not constrained to housing and homelessness.



- Following HARSAG 2020 recommendations, Scottish Government will address the recommendation to update plans for the scale up of Housing First across Scotland, reaching out to a fuller range of sectors and skills.
- The long-term approach to funding Housing First in Scotland is to be established with a desire to build funding into a range of funding frameworks, to join up approaches and avoid long-term duplication of services and interventions.
- Joint approaches to commissioning Housing First to ensure adequate funding is available in the longer term to deliver high quality, flexible, open ended support.
- The evaluation of the Pathfinder that is underway seeks to understand the economic benefit of a Housing First approach and where the cost-benefits are found across health, addictions and justice.



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



## Beyond Homelessness

## Strong Partnerships



- Cross-authority planning and partnership on housing and homelessness is through 5 [Housing Options Hubs](#) – Ayrshire & South; Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders; North & Islands; Tayside, Fife & Central and West. Creating strong connections with sectors and organisations ‘beyond homelessness’ is ongoing.
- The national [Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#), the [Rapid Rehousing Transition sub-group](#) and the Housing First Advisory Group all benefit from insights and expertise beyond housing and homelessness sector.
- Multi-agency partnerships exist across the 6 local authority areas participating in [Scotland’s Housing First Pathfinder](#), funded by Scottish Government, Social Bite and Merchants House Glasgow. 15 support providers across those areas provide Housing First support, with Corra Foundation and Homeless Network Scotland providing a fund and project management role.



- Further partnership across departments of national and local government are needed as Housing First scales up as a national response, with an integrated approach to planning and commissioning the way forward.
- Stakeholders are committed to connecting with international partners via forums such as Housing First Europe, FEANTSA and World Habitat, with a further ambition to demonstrate and share the potential of our national approach ‘beyond homelessness’.



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



## Shared Goals And Learning



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



- To ensure Housing First is delivered effectively, a quality assurance approach adopting a professional peer-review method is in development so that partners can work together to build effectiveness in the long term. As Housing First is increasingly built into local commissioning and procurement processes, this will need an approach sensitive to local differences while ensuring fidelity to the principles of Housing First.



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



## Good Communications



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



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



- Sign up to relevant newsletters, including:
  - [Housing First Scotland](#)
  - [Housing First Europe](#)
  - [Scottish Housing News](#)

# Appendices



# Appendix 1

## Acronyms

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



# Appendix 2

## Housing First Scotland Governance & Strategy Structures

### Housing First Governance Group

*Pathfinder funders and founders:*

<b>Tom Baughan</b>	Corra Foundation
<b>Maggie Brunjes</b>	Homeless Network Scotland ( <i>Chair</i> )
<b>Martin Gavin</b>	Homeless Network Scotland
<b>Marion Gibbs</b>	Scottish Government
<b>Doug Gibson</b>	Homeless Network Scotland
<b>Janine Kellett</b>	Scottish Government
<b>Peter Kerr</b>	Social Bite
<b>Josh Littlejohn</b>	Social Bite
<b>Catriona MacKean</b>	Scottish Government
<b>Carolyn Sawers</b>	Corra Foundation
<b>Nick Smith</b>	Scottish Government

## Housing First Advisory Group

*Strategy Group to advise on national scaling. It is made up of the Governance Group (above), and:*

<b>Mike Burns</b>	Aberdeen Cyrenians
<b>Lorna Cameron</b>	Horizon Housing
<b>Grant Campbell</b>	Crisis Scotland
<b>Callum Chomczuk</b>	CIH Scotland
<b>Olga Clayton</b>	Wheatley Group
<b>Sir Andrew Cubie</b>	<i>Chair</i>
<b>Jackie Irvine</b>	Edinburgh City Council
<b>Prof Sarah Johnsen</b>	Heriot-Watt University
<b>Allan Jones</b>	Aberdeenshire Council
<b>Jeremy Hewer</b>	SFHA
<b>Eleanor Lee</b>	Glasgow City Health & Social Care Partnership
<b>Gordon MacRae</b>	Shelter Scotland
<b>Paul Martin</b>	Merchants House Glasgow
<b>Patrick McKay</b>	Turning Point Scotland
<b>Sandy Young</b>	Almond Housing Association

# Appendix 3

## Housing First Outcome Indicators

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

Below is a summary of the outcome areas that are being assessed as part of the evaluation undertaken by the Housing First Pathfinder Programme. Participation in the evaluation is voluntary, and outcomes data collected from both service users and (where users grant their permission) frontline workers.

Most of the questions asked offer a detailed list or scale so that each person completing the form can answer in a way that best represents them at that time. Many of these are validated questions that are widely used in research and evaluation.

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

## Demographic Details

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Sexual identity

## Housing and Neighbourhood Satisfaction

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

## Health and Wellbeing

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

## Social Support and Community Integration

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

**Economic status, financial wellbeing and activity**

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

**Experience of crime/antisocial behaviour**

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

**Service use**

- Use of health and other support services

**Goals and Achievements**

- Main goals and achievements

# Appendix 4

## Housing First FAQs

**One size fits all approaches generally don't work. Instead, Housing First is a highly personalised approach that ends people's homelessness with housing rapidly. It also assigns a highly trained support worker to get alongside the new tenant to make settling into their new home easier.**

### Q. Who is Housing First for?

- A.** Housing First is the first response for people whose homelessness is experienced alongside other severe and multiple disadvantage. While everyone's experiences will be different the common threads include trauma, abuse, addictions, mental ill health and experience of local authority care and prison. It is estimated that this affects around 5,700 people in Scotland, across a single year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As well as area 'by-name' lists, straightforward referral processes are being developed to enable people to refer and self-refer into Housing First. Where Housing First is not an appropriate route, rapid rehousing solutions and/or further support should be identified, as per a 'no wrong door' approach. Choice is a key principle for Housing First. Local partners work closely with individuals to realistically identify the location and characteristics of a property that they could make a home.

### Q. What about tenancy-readiness?

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

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

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

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

### Q. Does Housing First work?

- A.** There is now an overwhelming body of international evidence showing that, with close fidelity to the Housing First principles, the approach delivers:
- 80% – 90% housing retention rates after two years (with some early projects showing similar retention rates after five years)
  - improving health outcomes
  - decreasing involvement in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour
  - improved cost-effectiveness of service delivery and cost savings

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

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

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

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

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

### Q. What about supported housing and hostels?

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

### Q. What is Housing First Scotland?

- A.** Housing First Scotland belongs to everyone who is helping Housing First become the first response for people whose homelessness is compounded by experiences such as trauma, abuse, addictions and mental ill health. It is hosted by Homeless Network Scotland since 2016, set up in partnership with Turning Point Scotland and I-SPHERE at Heriot-Watt University, leading academics on housing, homelessness and related issues.

### Q. What is Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder?

- A.** The flagship £10 million Housing First Pathfinder in Scotland was catalysed by Social Bite in 2018 to accelerate Housing First delivery in six local authority areas including five cities. It is funded by the Scottish Government (<£6.5m), Social Bite (<£3m) and Merchants House Glasgow (£200k). The Programme officially began on 1 April 2019.

The multi-agency Pathfinders are scaling up Housing First across Aberdeen/shire, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling by March 2021. Homes have been pledged by housing associations and local authorities, with a smaller number pledged by private sector landlords too. 15 services across 5 local consortia were commissioned to deliver the Housing First intensive casework support in line with Housing First principles.

The Pathfinder partnerships are testing how to deliver Housing First at a scale never seen before in Scotland, setting the pace, testing new ways of working and sharing solutions to the challenges and questions that come from changing systems at scale. With a head-start to find the best path, it is now a priority to connect their learning and expertise with all other Scottish local authorities preparing to scale up Housing First.

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

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

# Homeless Network Scotland

we are all in

Homeless Network Scotland is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee.  
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