

ALL IN FOR CHANGE



TAKING THE TEMPERATURE

a national conversation on progress made on
ending homelessness together in Scotland

September 2021

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As members of the Change Team, we are well connected to people and services across Scotland. We wanted to learn from their wider knowledge and experiences about the progress being made on the '4 New Directions' to end homelessness.

Before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, the Change Team were setting up to begin a national roadshow, to speak to as many people as we could. But with new restrictions in place preventing us from travelling and meeting in groups, we had to postpone our plans. Instead, we decided to launch an online National Conversation, enabling us to share and gather information in a safe way.

The National Conversation launched in April 2021. This report highlights the first round of our findings.

What are the 4 New Directions to End Homelessness?

They are a plain-language summary of the Scottish Government/COSLA Ending Homelessness Together action plan and guide the work of the Change Team. They are also the framework we used to host the national conversation.

People First

People having choice and control and building from their own strengths and successes, focusing efforts on preventing homelessness.

At Home

Increasing housing options and understanding that settled housing, as quickly as possible, is our right and the best base to build and live our lives.

No Wrong Door

Imagining a future where people are helped earlier and never left on their own to navigate the system.

Good Vibes

Designing our interactions in a way that dispel myths and share power.

What were we asking?

- Have there been any developments, or examples, where progress towards the 4 New Directions is already happening?
- Can you tell us what you think gets in the way of more work happening on the ground?
- What will help to reduce the gap between what we say we will do, and what we actually do to achieve these?

How did we encourage people to join the conversation?

To ensure that as many people as possible could be involved, we created 3 ways to join the conversation:



1. An online survey

– intended for people to answer the questions in their own time.



2. A conversation starter worksheet

– to help the Change Team to have a conversation about the 4 New Directions and prompt them to ask questions.



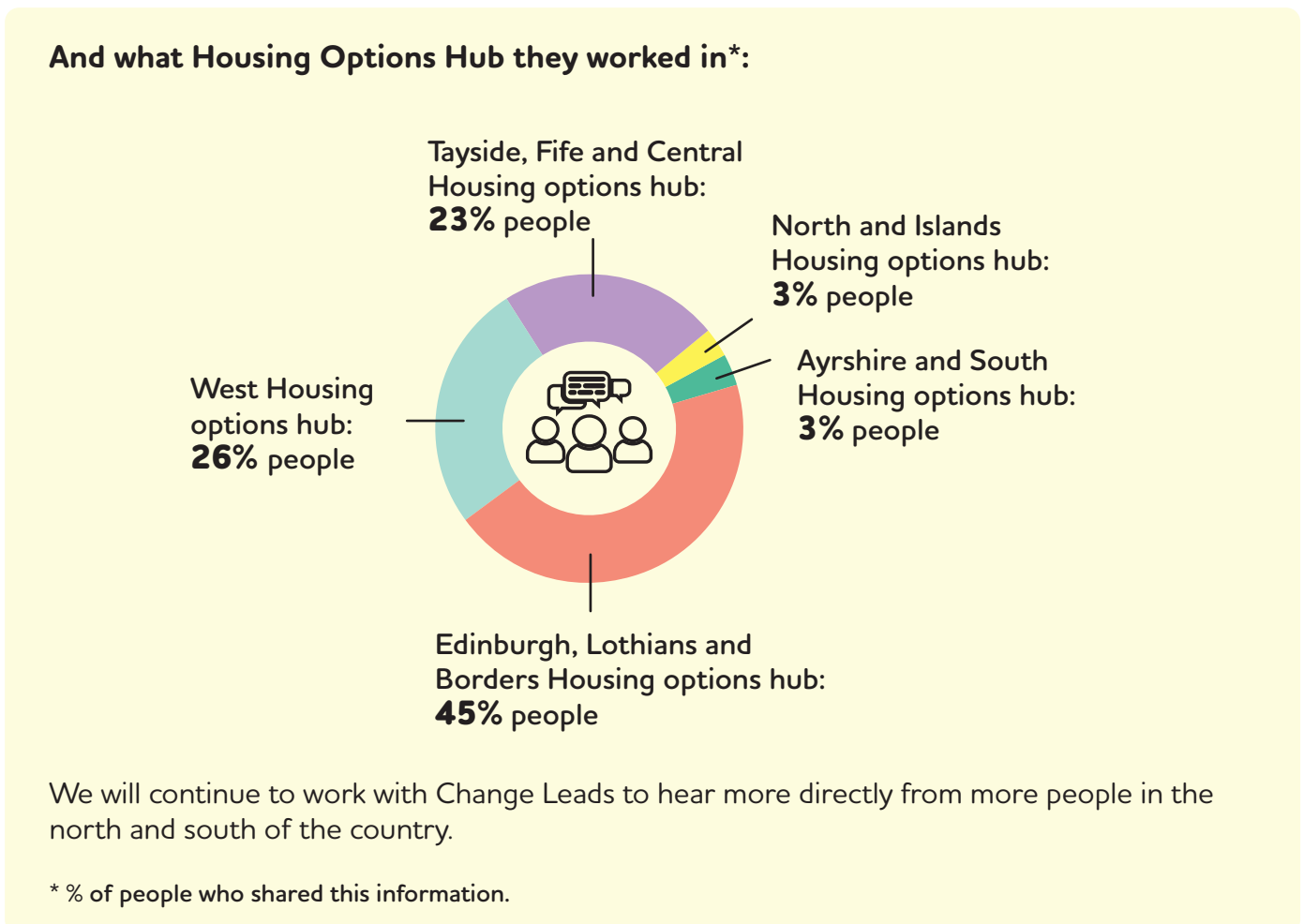
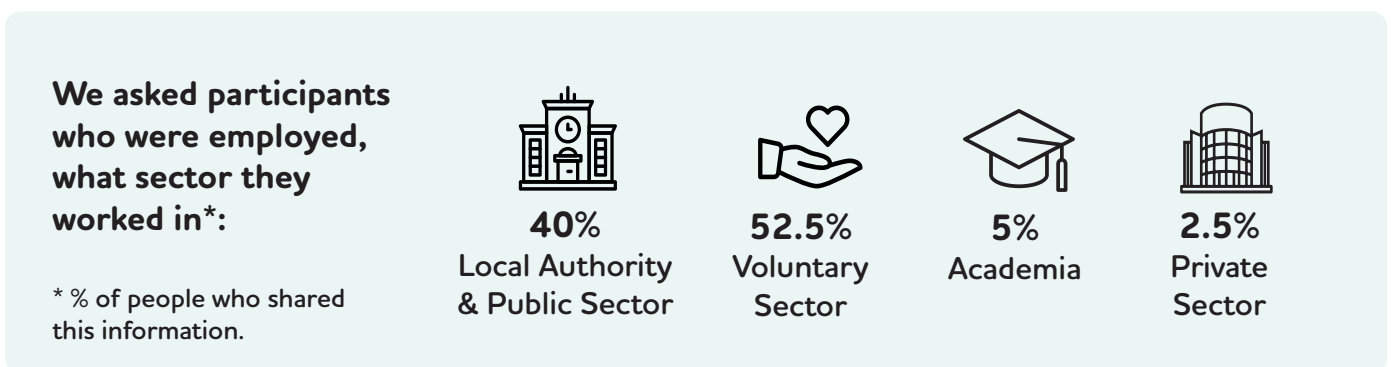
3. A series of online workshops

– An interactive opportunity for people to connect and learn about the 4 New Directions

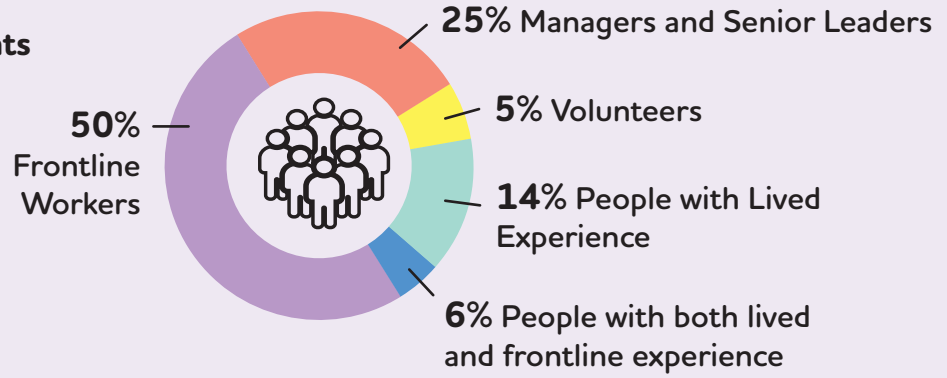
An overview



About our participants:



We asked all participants to tell us where their experience about homelessness in Scotland had come from*:

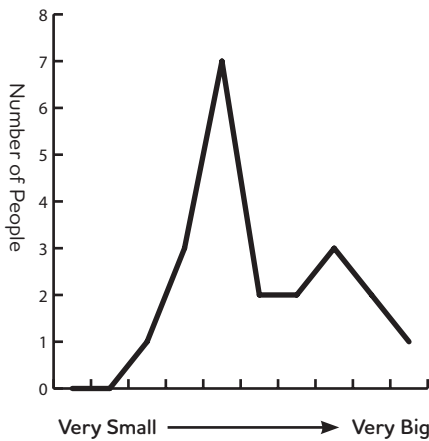


* % of people who shared this information.

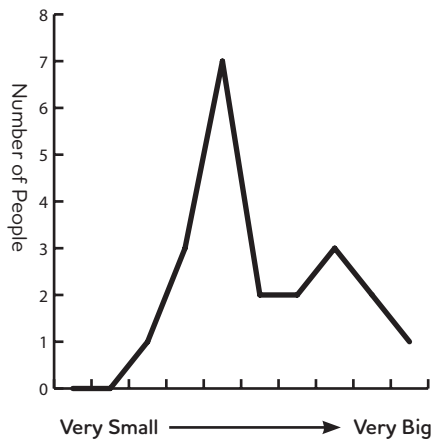
What we found out:

How big did our participants say the gap is between what we say we will do and what actually happens to achieve these 4 New Directions?

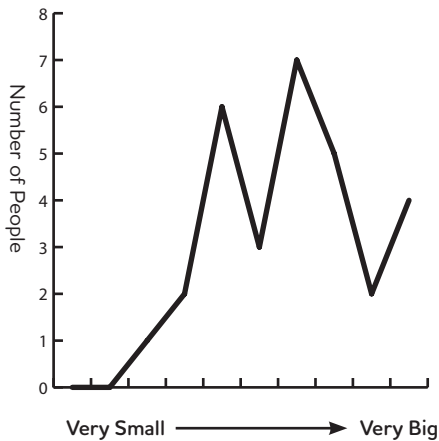
PEOPLE FIRST



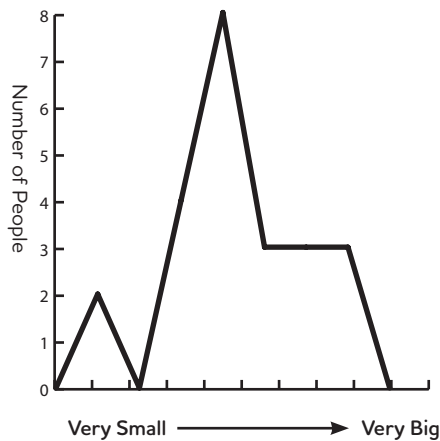
NO WRONG DOOR



AT HOME



GOOD VIBES

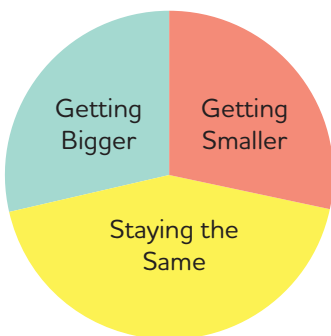


- More people lent towards the gap between what we say we will do and what actually happens to achieve **People First** being small.
- More people lent towards the gap between what we say we will do and what actually happens to achieve **No Wrong Door** being small.
- More people lent towards the gap between what we say we will do and what actually happens to achieve **At Home** being big.
- More people lent towards the gap between what we say we will do and what actually happens to achieve **Good Vibes** being small.

Over the past year, did they think that gap was: getting smaller, staying the same or getting bigger?

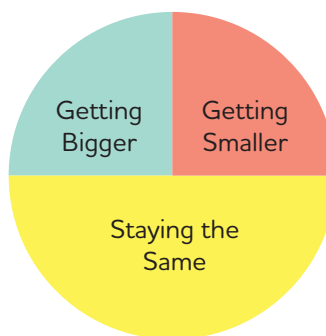
PEOPLE FIRST

Most people said they thought the gap was staying the same



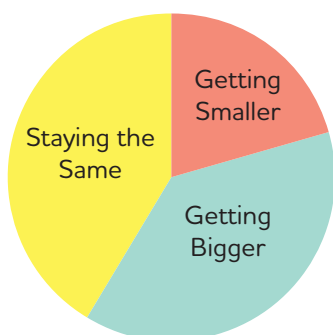
NO WRONG DOOR

Most people said they thought the gap was staying the same



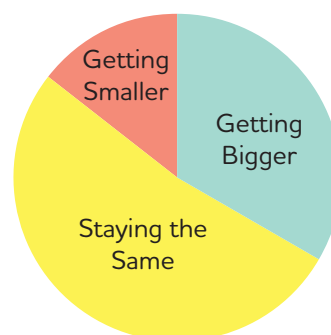
AT HOME

Most people said they thought the gap was getting bigger



GOOD VIBES

Most people said they thought the gap was staying the same



PEOPLE FIRST

People having choice and control and building from their own strengths and successes, focusing efforts on preventing homelessness.

What progress have people seen?

We asked people to describe the progress they are seeing locally as we work together to meet the policy objective of putting **People First**. Positive progress was identified in relation to:

- More organisations are becoming more trauma informed, offering more training to staff, and building the approach into their daily work to improve the offer of support
- A growing understanding of the links between homelessness, mental ill health, addictions, and domestic abuse
- The growth of Housing First across the country means more housing and support is offered on the principle of choice & control
- Improvements in digital engagement and access during the pandemic have allowed services to offer different ways to access support, at times reaching more people

What is getting in the way of more progress?

We asked people to tell us what is getting in the way of making even more progress to meet the policy objective of putting **People First**. Current challenges include:

- Difficulties in recruitment mean too many services are short-staffed and limited in what they can deliver, leaving little time to develop relationships with people
- Funding is still too often limited and short term, making it difficult to spend time to build positive relationships with people and understand what is important to them
- Limitations on available housing mean too many people in recovery are still being offered tenancies in blocks/closes where there is identified drug dealing/use, forcing people to choose between a home and their recovery
- The dispersed nature of temporary accommodation and housing in rural Scotland can often mean people have to move miles from their families, friends, and social networks, often impacting negatively on their wellbeing



Yes, we have begun rolling out trauma training to all staff. It is most definitely the way forward and very exciting to be a part of.



If you are housed miles away from support networks (sometimes as much as 90 miles) it is too expensive to travel by bus to get anywhere. You are disproportionately affected if you live in a rural area.

NO WRONG DOOR

Imagining a future where people are helped earlier and never left on their own to navigate the system.

What progress have people seen?

We asked people to describe the progress they are seeing locally as we work together to meet the policy objective of **No Wrong Door**. Positive progress was identified in relation to:

- More areas developing prevention pathways, with dedicated teams and interventions being established
- Better partnership working during the pandemic, with more trust being built and the right people round the table to make the right decisions
- Public health responses during the pandemic have contributed to ensuring access to accommodation for everyone, including those with no recourse to public funds
- Multi-agency working in the Welcome Centres in Edinburgh and Glasgow has been important in minimising rough sleeping and offering move-on housing and support, making it as easy as possible for people to get what they need in time of emergency
- Housing First teams across the country are helping coordinate support for people we have struggled to find lasting solutions for in the past



We have seen a real change in emphasis towards prevention ... acting at an early stage to avoid the situation where a homelessness application is required



The pandemic means we get everyone we need in the room, so partnership working is better

I think Housing First in Edinburgh has helped. People having the same support worker to tie into other services, advocate for them, and mediate between services, is very helpful and makes sure that people don't have to repeat their story over and over

What is getting in the way of more progress?

We asked people to tell us what is getting in the way of making even more progress to meet the policy objective of **No Wrong Door**. Current challenges include:

- Limited resources still leading to high caseloads and high staff turnover, making partnership working a challenge
- Frontline staff remain very busy and focus on immediate priorities mean the window of opportunity to intervene early can be missed
- Concerns around GDPR can still a barrier to working together
- Still not enough coordinated working between addictions and mental health services
- There are still too many cracks for people to fall through, e.g. when leaving prison



Time is getting in the way for frontline staff, trying to deal with individuals in a crisis leaves no time for other sides of the work

AT HOME

Increasing housing options and understanding that settled housing, as quickly as possible, is our right and the best base to build and live our lives.

What progress have people seen?

We asked people to describe the progress they are seeing locally as we work together to meet the policy objective of At Home. Positive progress was identified in relation to:

- The rollout of Housing First across the country has seen increasing numbers of people get access to the housing and support they need
- The practice of converting (or flipping) temporary furnished flats to Scottish Secure Tenancies has meant more people have avoided having to move again and now feel more settled at home
- More areas are creating easier access routes into the Private Rented Sector, where it is affordable and viable, providing more housing options in local communities
- The establishment of the Welcome Centres in Glasgow and Edinburgh has seen the move away from dormitory-style night shelters



Pandemic rules meant that dormitory-style care shelters were not allowed, and hopefully we will never go back

There has been a paradigm shift in attitudes in Edinburgh in terms of the private rented sector. Landlords are more willing to let to people who are homeless



We have seen a huge reduction in rough sleeping since people were accommodated under emergency covid legislation ... it has been proven that this can be achieved essentially overnight

What is getting in the way of more progress?

We asked people to tell us what is getting in the way of making even more progress to meet the policy objective of At Home. Current challenges include:

- New homes not being built quickly enough to respond to local demand
- Mismatch between available housing and people who need it (e.g. challenges accessing larger homes, accessible homes)
- Lack of temporary accommodation and settled housing in rural areas means people have to move away from their families

GOOD VIBES

Designing our interactions in a way that dispel myths and share power.

What progress have people seen?

We asked people to describe the progress they are seeing locally as we work together to meet the policy objective of **Good Vibes**. Positive progress was identified in relation to:

- More examples of peer support being available for people, helping to build trust and allow people to link directly with others who have navigated the system in the past
- Services seriously considering the environment of the buildings they use, and how it feels for people coming in. More examples of services ensuring people feel welcome and are treated with dignity
- Organisations thinking carefully about the language they use, moving away from words like ‘assessment’ – more focus on talking to people and understanding what they want
- More training and regular reflective practice for staff are creating opportunities to
- Learn about different approaches and think about the person and not the system



Good training can challenge staff to think differently and put it into practice

What is getting in the way of more progress?

We asked people to tell us what is getting in the way of making even more progress to meet the policy objective of **Good Vibes**. Current challenges include:

- Difficulties in recruitment are leading to staff shortages, making it difficult to prioritise Good Vibes and leaving staff at risk of burnout
- Too many messages are still about the help people need rather than what they achieve – too negative and can contribute to stigma
- Language can still be too complicated and different language in different sectors can make communication difficult

Priorities for delivering the 4 new directions on the ground

- Build enough affordable homes, of the right size and type, to make rapid rehousing and Housing First work for everyone in all parts of Scotland
- Continue to look at how services are funded, making it easy for people to access long-term, flexible support
- Build a strong understanding of what contributes to recruitment challenges and work across all sectors to put solutions in place
- Learn from successes during the pandemic and make sure what was achieved is maintained (e.g. development of Welcome Centres, reduction in rough sleeping, increase in Housing First)



THE CHANGE TEAM | KEEP IN TOUCH

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Homeless Network Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland (SC0 03453) and company limited by guarantee (SC112361).
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