

welcome to

The Big Ask

acting now to
prevent homelessness



TODAY'S SESSION



Duties to prevent homelessness - a brief update



Learning from lived experience - with Shea Moran



Learning from the Third Sector - with Pauline Kerrigan



Learning from Local Places - with Andy Peline



Prevention: what did the Christie Commission say?



- The adoption of preventative approaches, in particular approaches which build on the **active participation** of service users and communities, will contribute significantly to making the best possible use of money and other assets.
- They will help to eradicate duplication and waste and, critically, **take demand out of the system** over the longer term.
- Maximise scarce resources by utilising **all available resources** from the public, private and third sectors, individuals, groups and communities.

”

PREVENTION TYPOLOGY¹



1: universal preventing homelessness risk across the population as a whole. Including poverty reduction, affordable housing, employment and welfare.

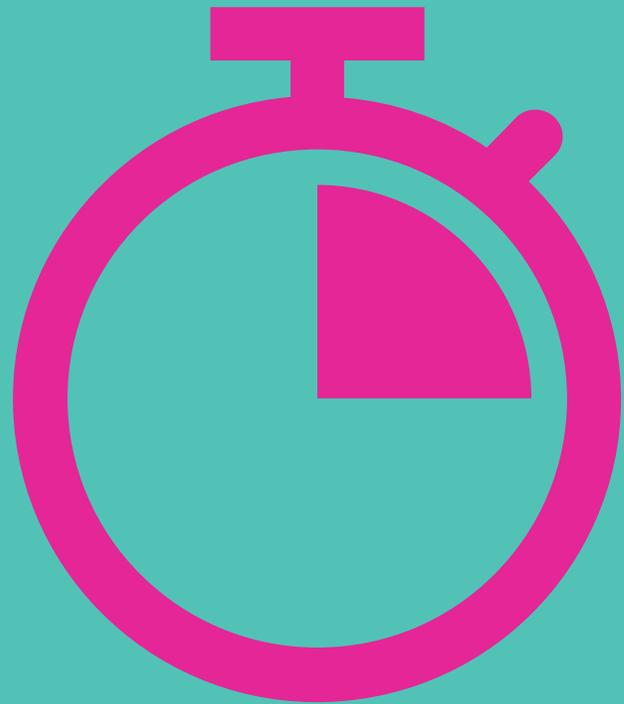
2: targeted early intervention focusing on **people and places** at the highest risk of homelessness – e.g. people leaving prison, young people leaving care, place-based approaches.

3: crisis people at imminent risk of homelessness (prevention duties withing 6 months).

4: emergency people at urgent including same-day risk of rooflessness or homelessness.

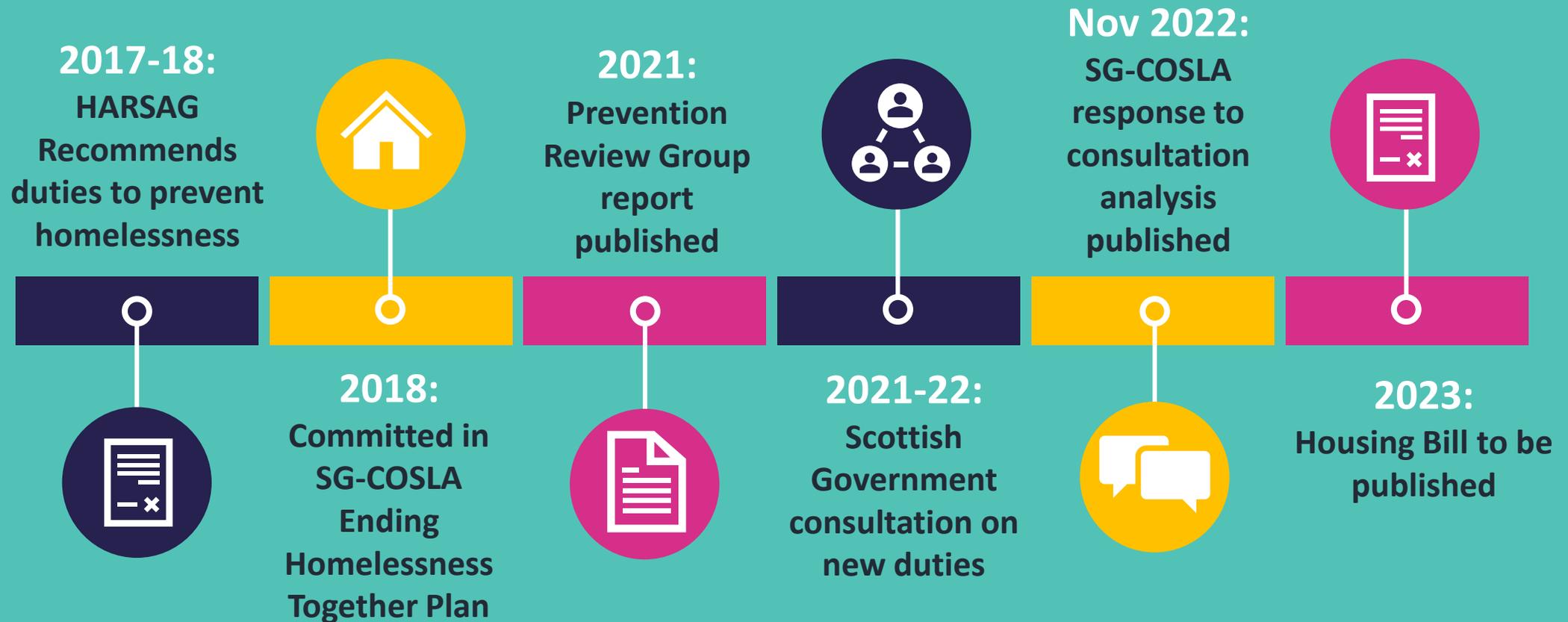
5: repeat working with people who have previously been homeless to prevent the experience being repeated.

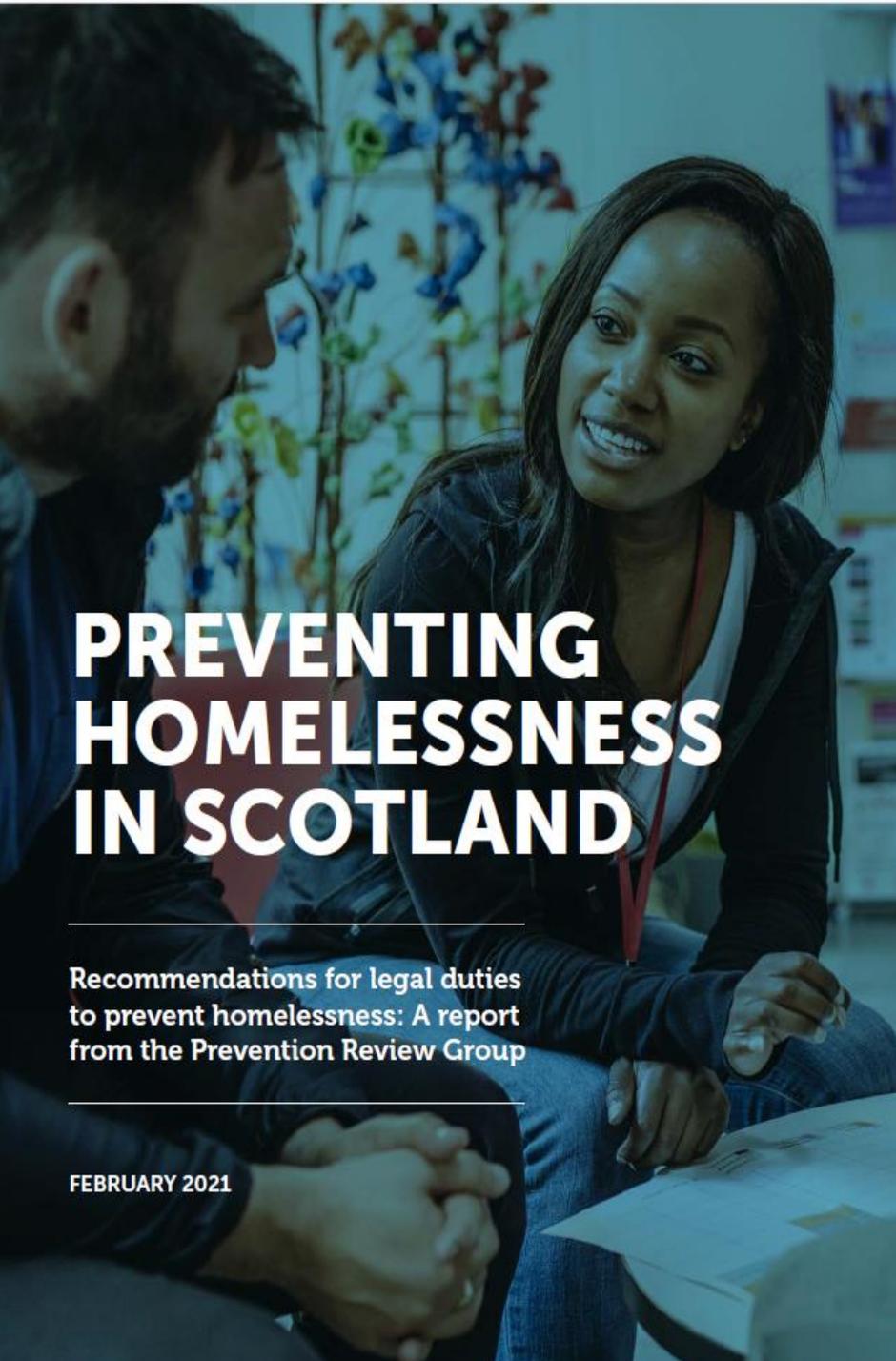
¹ Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Jenny Wood | Heriot-Watt University
Peter Mackie | Cardiff University



**Duties to
prevent
homelessness**

Legislation to Prevent Homelessness





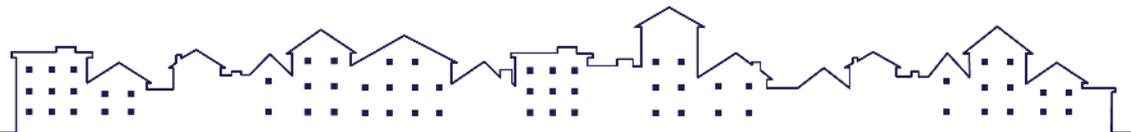
PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS IN SCOTLAND

Recommendations for legal duties to prevent homelessness: A report from the Prevention Review Group

FEBRUARY 2021

Prevention Review Group was guided by 3 principles:

1. **Collective** responsibility across public services to **prevent** homelessness.
2. **Waste no time.** Interventions to prevent homelessness should happen **earlier**.
3. **Choice and equality** in where people live, with access to the same housing options as other members of the public.





ask.

about housing

act.

to prevent homelessness

#AskAndAct



What is expected in the Housing Bill (1/2)

- Housing **rights strengthened**.
- Wider **public bodies** to ‘ask and act’ about housing situations.
- Local authorities to take **reasonable steps** to prevent homelessness (with the steps set out in either secondary legislation or statutory guidance).
- Referrals from public bodies to be treated as an **application for assistance** by the local authority.



What is expected in the Housing Bill (2/2)

- Window for homelessness risk extended from **2 to 6 months**.
- Aligning **homelessness assessment** with **prevention assessment**, recognising households may balance between both.
- Changes to the **definition of domestic abuse** and the need for social landlords to have a domestic abuse policy.
- Assessment of **housing support needs** to be included in local homelessness strategy and/or Local Housing Strategy.





Learning from Lived Experience

Shea Moran

Change Lead and Associate,
Homeless Network Scotland

David Ramsay

Impact Lead, Homeless
Network Scotland





Good Law

According to lawyers and judges, 'Good Law' is:

- **necessary** (the outcome you want can't be achieved without it).
- **clear** (it is obvious what needs to be done and people understand it).
- **coherent** (it makes sense and isn't contradictory).
- **effective** (it achieves what it sets out to).
- **accessible** (people can easily find and understand the legislation).
- **Integrated** (doesn't operate in isolation).



The Prevention Commission explored their experience of laws...

- While the intention can be positive, sometimes in practice they can be **restrictive**.
- While we talk more and more about **choice and control** for people, that can often be incompatible with legislation.
- Too often different duties and rules come **into conflict** with each other (either in their intention or practical delivery).



Balancing Security and Choice ...

- When a household is homeless the law prioritises the **security** of someone's new home above other things.
- But what about **choice**? What if there is a good solution that works for someone, but the tenancy type isn't secure enough? And would trying to incorporate choice impact on security?
- And what about **options**? Why should people have to balance security and choice at all – why not both? This question gets harder the more pressured the housing market area...

Housing choice and options



Location

considering being near to family, work childcare, schools etc.

Size or type of home

such as number of bedrooms, multi-storey, garden.

Accessibility

wheelchair or other access issues, any other medical factors.

Cost

thinking about rent, council tax, housing benefit/LHA, current or future employment.

Security of Tenure

different tenancies available in the social or private rented sector.

Safety/Security

considering issues such as domestic abuse, other risk of violence.

Time

taking account of how long you can wait to move.

Other

pets, housemates and anything else you might identify.



Duty to Ask and Act

All of these considerations led the Commission to highlight the importance of **choice** to the Prevention Review Group.

And stressed that people must have the **final say** on decisions about what is their best housing option.

Prevention Commission recommended a new duty to ASK (about housing) and ACT (just do it!)



Learning from The Third Sector

Pauline Kerrigan
Funding Manager,
The National Lottery
Community Fund



Key Learning from the Third Sector:



The National Lottery Community Fund's 2-year investment in third sector homelessness services in Glasgow and Edinburgh.



With Learning Partner, Evaluation Support Scotland.
Full evaluation reports are here

https://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/sector/homelessness/?_sft_resource_year=2022



FIRSTLY, preventing homelessness needs big structural change



Healthy local housing systems

Where housing supply matches demand in the places people want to live.



Fairer Society

When poverty and inequality is reduced, it can no longer be the key driver of homelessness.



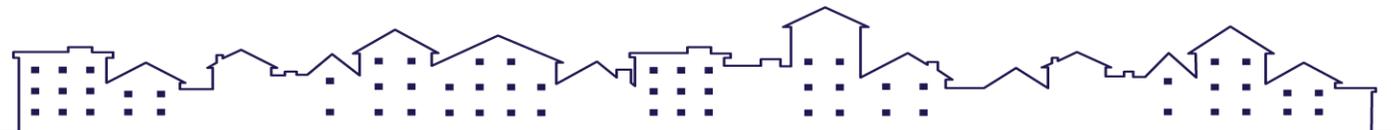
Healthy local labour markets

Where job opportunities match the numbers and skills of people available for work.

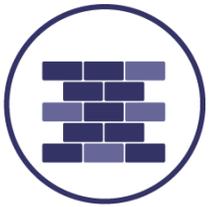


Strong welfare safety net

Where the benefits system adequately compensates us when we cannot work – for personal or health reasons, or as a consequence of inadequate local labour markets.



BUT, at a **service level** the third sector demonstrated how to help prevent homelessness by :



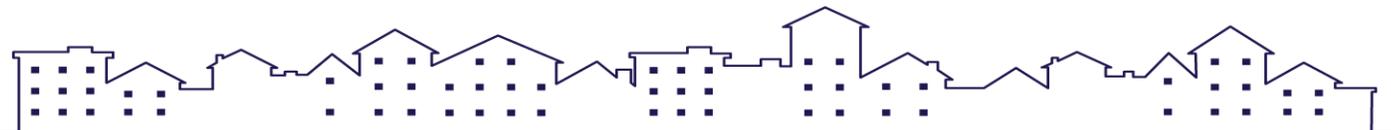
1. Working in a strengths-based way

What do you want to happen?
Building from people's own strengths,
successes and what inspires them.



2. Being housing focused

Asking about housing, protecting rights.
Acting to protect homes and prevent
homelessness.





3. Being community based and collaborative

Accessible and knowledgeable about local places and services. Working with local partners to prevent crisis.



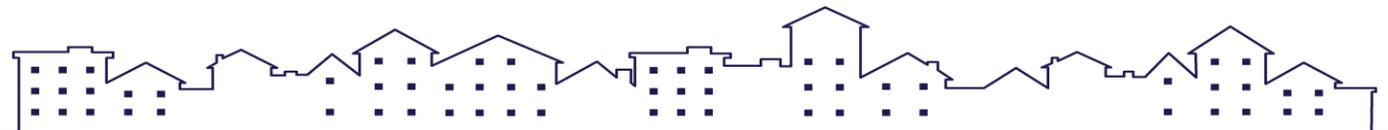
4. Being inclusive and trauma informed

Practices and environments that include people. Building trust and relationships.

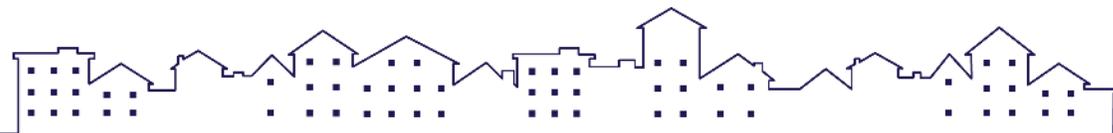


5. Increasing access to digital inclusion

Enabling access to phones, computers and the internet. And skills to use them where needed.



Break





Learning from Local Places

David Ramsay

Homeless Network Scotland

Andy Peline

SWAMP





**All homelessness starts
in a community.**

**And some communities
are more affected than
others.**



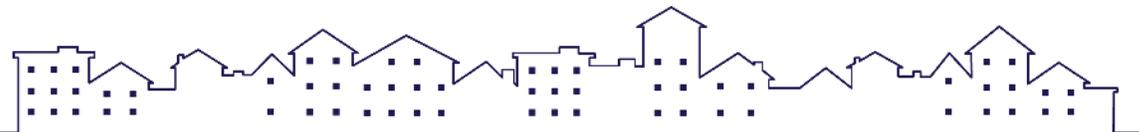
Different needs, Different response?

- Homelessness has always been addressed across national & local authority responses.
- Place Based Approaches understand that each community across the city has a different need, and a different response at a local level is needed.



Staying In: what we found out

- People were **less at risk** of homelessness.
- Having **better partnership working** made the most of the resources and assets in the local community.
- **Asking** about someone's housing and **Acting** on the information can help protect homes and prevent homelessness.
- **Acting quickly** can mitigate the risk of homelessness or eliminate it completely.



Outcomes from project:

People...

...could access services that better meet their needs

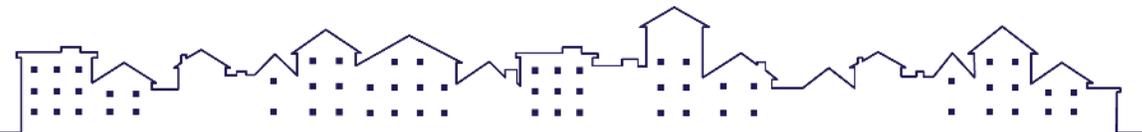
...are better able to connect with ordinary community life

...are less at risk of becoming homeless (again)

...have more access to suitable accommodation

What needs to happen now:

- Staying In demonstrated that great things happen when **subject experts** along with **local experts** and people with **lived experience** collaborate and problem solve at a local level.
- For local authorities and local partnerships – this is what needs to happen **next** to build from this - and **why**.





What needs to happen now

Community Planning Partnerships should include 'preventing homelessness' as a priority outcome in Local Outcomes Improvement Plans and Locality Plans.

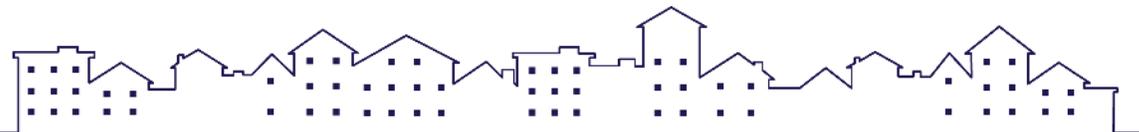


Ask & Act: what will help?

Actions should be identified to support community groups and local structures to be able to:

Ask about housing and

Act to protect homes and prevent homelessness.





Ask & Act : example case study

John has been receiving home visits from a health care professional for a wound on his leg.

At the second visit, John seems quite low and not as chatty.





Ask & Act : example case study

The health care worker asks how he is and he tells her things haven't been going so well and his mental health is low due to the fact he has been gambling.

Asking & Acting about John's housing starts now?





Steps for Asking & Acting

Ask a simple question like: is his housing situation alright and has he been able to cover his bills especially his rent. Also asking what support does he feel would help him with this.

Act on the information John has given within the remit of the job you are in.

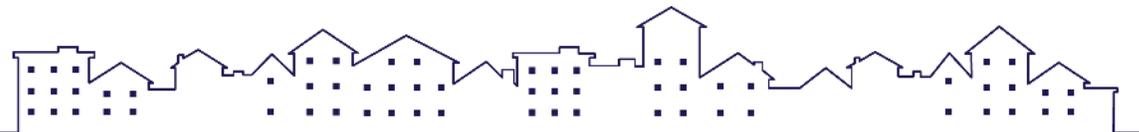
e.g. It could be a simple sign posting to a local charity for support about gambling, or a referral for a mental health assessment.

Some of us in this room:

- ... will have an **enhanced** duty to prevent homelessness
- ... will have a **new** duty to prevent homelessness
- ... will have **no specific** duty – but want to help!

For your chat room:

- What do those who will have a duty to **Ask and Act** need from the third sector and local communities (and others) so that we can **act together** to prevent homelessness?



connect, learn and act on
homelessness to end it for good

www.homelessnetwork.scot

@homelessnetscot #WeAreAllin

**Homeless
Network
Scotland**
we are all in



housing first is normal, it's fairer, it
works – and we all benefit

www.housingfirst.scot

@HFScotland #HousingFirst