



Everyone Home Collective

Route-Map 1

Ending the need for night shelter & hotel room provision

#EveryoneHome

What are these route-maps?

In the spectrum of international responses to homelessness, Scotland is considered to have the most progressive legal framework with informed commentators also placing it among a small group of leading countries with the greatest potential to follow Finland's success, the only European country with sustained reductions in homelessness over a 10-year period.

Ending homelessness in Scotland ultimately needs a sustained programme of economic and social renewal to reduce the income poverty that creates health inequalities, provide a supply of affordable housing, a flexible welfare system and opportunities for everyone to earn and learn.

The top-level priorities of national and local government and of housing, health and third sectors overlap to drive this **structural change** - with [high consensus but inconsistent progress](#). These parts also overlap to create the **system** that responds to homelessness on the ground.

This homelessness system is in itself not always highly functional, evidence-based or cost effective. We can reach further toward our potential as a country that reduces homelessness with better outcomes for people by working in a way that seeks to change this system, each of our roles within it and how we connect. This is also the objective of the Scottish Government/COSLA [Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan](#).

Combined, this would give the **structural and systems** change we need to get Everyone Home.

Our **route-maps provide a way forward** for all local and national partners on the 'big questions' to end homelessness and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.





Night and winter shelter provision is strongly associated with homelessness in many people's minds and with very different operating contexts internationally.

Historically and still in some places today, night shelters provide the sole response to homelessness in a city or neighbourhood. As policy and practice evolved and improved, in some areas night shelters became an important safety-net responding to either a gap in rights to housing or in a local authority's duty to house people. A few cities have succeeded in removing (or never having) the need for them entirely, including most parts of Scotland.

Today in Scotland, night shelters operate in **Edinburgh** (delivered by Bethany Christian Trust since 1996) and in **Glasgow** (delivered by Glasgow City Mission since 2010). Less experienced groups have occasionally attempted to open a night facility for people who are sleeping rough across this period, but they are *strongly* discouraged and close quickly or never really get off the ground.

It is probably no surprise that the two largest cities would create and maintain this safety-net given the additional challenges they face in relation to having:

- The greatest prevalence of poverty and inequality that drive the sharpest forms of homelessness.
- The greatest swell in the use of temporary housing; an [unintended consequence](#) of the universal right to settled housing now being redressed by the transition to rapid rehousing.
- The biggest challenges accessing affordable housing at all (in Edinburgh especially) and in the areas people want to live (in Glasgow especially).

The models of night shelter provision in both cities are not identical, although there are elements common to both, for example, being free to use, shared sleeping arrangements, night entry and morning exit routines, monitoring and security systems, access to food and support services.

The focus of the shelters' work as well as providing immediate care and safety is to assist people to move beyond their immediate emergency circumstances and both shelters have developed extensive partnerships over the years.

Health, both general and psychiatric, housing, advocacy, employability, addiction recovery, and street outreach services all attend the projects regularly to provide direct support for people accessing the services, or to facilitate clear ongoing referral pathways. The local authority in both settings are involved in supporting the assessment of housing options and need through casework staff and link workers.

There are also distinct differences in how the services are used and by whom:

- Proportionately, more people use shelter provision in Glasgow which is open for a shorter period each year.
- On a nightly basis, more people use the Edinburgh shelter and people stay nearly 2.5 times longer than in Glasgow.
- The Edinburgh shelter is used by 3 times as many EEA nationals as its Glasgow equivalent.

This is how the services were used 2019-20 (Edinburgh data to date):

	Glasgow 2019-20	Edinburgh 2019-20
How long the night shelter was open shelter was open	112 days	259 days (to date)
Number of people who used it (at least one night)	606 people	1012 people
Average nightly occupancy	29 people	52 people
Average length of stay	5-6 nights	13-14 nights

More about people

Gender	85% male 15% female 1% other	78.9% male 20.8% female 0.3% other
Average Age	38	38
Scottish/British	73%	60%
Positive accommodation outcome	81%	68%

Other nationalities

European	11%	34%
African, Asian	15%	3%

Important note on people with no status or recourse to public funds

People seeking asylum from outside Europe were more likely across this period to use a different shelter in Glasgow, the Glasgow Night Shelter for Destitute Asylum Seekers.

The higher length of stay in the Edinburgh shelter is attributed to a much higher use among EEA (European) nationals who have no settled status. Fuller consideration of this is the focus of our Route-Map 2.





There is an evidence-gap on the efficacy of Scotland's night shelter accommodation. This is largely because it is understood that there is no need to 'prove' them as meeting any objective beyond the immediate crisis response, as respite from rough sleeping and as a symptom of issues in local homeless systems.

However, within the operation of the shelters, positive housing and health outcomes are reported as a result of the effective partnership and triage working across the health, housing, legal and third sector.

More broadly, the most relevant and robust research covering rough sleeping, shelters and hostels was an international evidence review commissioned by Crisis and undertaken by Cardiff and Heriot-Watt Universities in 2017 - [Ending Rough Sleeping: What Works?](#)

Although this did not review the night shelters in Scotland, the key findings from the review of existing research concluded that:

- Hostels and shelters can provide some immediate relief from life on the street and protect from some health hazards.

- Many people describe them as unpleasant and intimidating places to be, finding themselves stuck in the system because of lack of move-on options.
- People with complex needs rarely do well in hostels and shelters, with young people, transgender people and women often expressing concerns about staying in them.
- High running costs and unstable funding streams make them difficult to maintain.
- Hostels and shelters are preferable to rough sleeping for some, especially in colder temperatures.

What do people who use the night shelter say?

For most people, the need to use a night shelter is short-term. The two night shelters in Scotland routinely record positive feedback from people who used the service, including:

Thanks so much for taking the time to care for me. No one has ever cared for me this much. You guys make me feel so welcome

I had the best sleep I've had in weeks, talking to staff has been more helpful than talking to psychiatrists, this is better than a hotel

It is understood that some people with no alternative do *not* choose to stay in the night shelter or a hotel room because they consider the alternative of rough sleeping preferable. This is usually due to specific issues with protecting their personal safety or to avoid the constraints it would put on their choices.

But it should be noted that these considerations are not unique to night shelter provision but are a dynamic across all types of homelessness (and other social) services, including the current hotel provision. Our satisfaction with services can directly relate to what our alternative options are, but relative improvement should not **limit or lower** expectations of what physical standards are 'good enough' – for people who plan, commission, provide or use services.

So, what's the Collective position?

All agree that we need to end rough sleeping and the need for using dormitory night shelters.

The Collective respects and acknowledges our colleagues providing night shelters, their key workers and volunteers who step up each year to ensure that *anyone* without shelter has respite from the weather. Somewhere to sleep, to eat, to connect with legal advocacy and direct routes to housing and support, as well as having the company of people who care.

Night shelters provide a rapid response and direct access to basic human needs that have not been met elsewhere by the person that day – if they had been, they would not have any need for the shelter. The Collective also shares the position that it is unlikely any organisation could provide a shelter response *better* than current providers given their experience.

The impact that having no night shelter may have had on the hundreds of people who use it each year will remain unknown, but we do know - through care, support and advocacy - that positive move-on outcomes were achieved by many people who have used them each year. We need this learning and experience over many years about what works (and what doesn't) to move forward together.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced faster progress and bigger ambition on this issue. It also poses additional health and practical considerations and constraints on all homelessness services due to continuing social distancing and other public health measures, this is especially the case for night shelters.

To move forward together with ambition and pragmatism, there are practical assurances and alternatives required to be satisfied that there's no *need* for night shelters that prevent rough sleeping, especially across the colder winter months.

Finland

a comparison



Finland is an important comparison as a country with similar population as Scotland and being the only European country where homelessness is reducing. Their homelessness legislation is not as progressive as Scotland, but their outcomes are better. Why is that?

Finland designed-out the need for people to sleep rough and the need for night shelters by adopting a Housing First and housing-led approach to homelessness and by retaining 'big government' leadership, infrastructure and accountability that enabled local flexibility based on local needs. Helsinki retains a 52-bed short-stay emergency accommodation.

What about hotel rooms?

Given the extensive use of hotel rooms in many parts of Scotland during the pandemic, we have linked this route-map with the **step-down needed in the use of hotel provision** as it is inextricably linked with rough sleeping and night shelter provision in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

There are clear aspects of how hotel rooms provide a better physical environment than night shelter provision:

- ✓ They provide a door to close, a bed to sleep in and private washing facilities.
- ✓ There is no need to vacate your room in the morning.

The Collective's position is that the use of hotel rooms is also *not* a positive or sustainable response to rough sleeping in the longer term and for the following reasons:

- × We risk re-creating a large-hostel environment, especially when whole floors are used, and reception areas used communally - we know this structure doesn't work for people and incidents are already being experienced in and around the vicinity of the hotels.

- × Hotels are commercial providers and the transaction is not in any way cost-effective for local and national government – providing ordinary homes is cheaper and better.

- × As private businesses the hotels utilised have been helpful and socially responsible. However, the key risk is that as private businesses we have absolutely no control over when they will want to revert and access to rooms either altered significantly or switched off entirely.

- × There are bottlenecks in how the emergency hotel provision is used, meaning this intervention has not demonstrated 'anything to lose' in terms of becoming an efficient part of local homelessness systems.

- × While hotel rooms have contributed to reducing rough sleeping in the two city-centres, it is also understood that the pandemic incident influenced key behaviours. The public health emergency, reduction in city-centre footfall and high-level directive to accommodate everyone, regardless of rights, will also have contributed to this outcome.

Why can't we just close night shelters now?

There are four good reasons for this:

- The impact on levels of rough sleeping is untested and not fully understood, especially in post-pandemic months with an unknown scale of additional homelessness risk. To protect lives, we need a safe transition that its impact monitored and reviewed as we go.
- Other groups *will* step in and provide a night shelter service, with significantly less health and safety experience than current providers. Instead, we want a safe transition that clearly communicates our joint intentions and reasons – the national and local position.
- Hotel rooms are currently the only thing holding a return to previous or higher levels of rough sleeping or use of direct access night shelters. This is not a stable option as we have no control over their use, the quantity we can access or for how long.
- Some councils have not always fulfilled their duty to accommodate everyone when they need it. While we are calling on these councils to urgently prioritise addressing this failure, the current challenges they face may be exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic and its aftermath and on-going provision of third sector support for people who are rough sleeping will be required.

Our options are therefore to:

- 1) do **nothing**.
- 2) **wait** until rough sleeping has ended, then close shelters.
- 3) **increase** night shelter and hotel room capacity in the short-term to meet an expected post-pandemic spike in homelessness this year and going forward.
- 4) collaborate to expedite the conditions in which night shelters and hotel rooms are not needed – to actively **'design-out'** the need for both with mixed-model alternatives.

The Collective have agreed to act together on **option 4** – to modify existing night shelter provision this winter and to actively design-out the need for night shelters and hotel rooms in Scotland going forward.

When the wider mechanisms are proven to be robust enough for the task of accommodating people on the day they need it, the overnight centres will become surplus to requirements.



The Focus

For this route-map, we are focusing on people who have rights to housing, health and support within Scotland's legal framework and rights to work and to welfare benefits within the UK Government legal framework.

It is important we don't blunt our ambition for this majority group by the constraints of the UK Government's 'no recourse to public funds' policy for people seeking asylum or European nationals without settled status. Please be assured that *Route-Map 2* will focus entirely on those issues and the overlaps in how support could be provided on the ground will be made clear then.

We are also focusing on Edinburgh and Glasgow to modify existing night shelter provision, but the components outlined may be of interest to all parts of Scotland and beyond.



What's the way forward?

The significance of this Collective route-map is that it includes the ambition of Scotland's current night shelter providers. This offers the best opportunity to get this right and a sustainable way we can move forward together.

We will not be in a position to recommend that any source of support and respite is immediately withdrawn, until the impact on homelessness of the pandemic and its aftermath is more closely understood. However, we do not want to go back to night shelter provision exactly as it was previously provided, and which would in fact pose a serious health risk in a post-pandemic environment.

To design-out the need for night shelter accommodation entirely, the alternative offer for people who would otherwise use it needs to be compelling. For most of us, this means our own home as part of a community. This is backed by the strongest evidence.

The Collective position is also that we must not inadvertently 'design-in' the sustained or increased use of hotel rooms, adding an additional layer to already complex housing and homelessness systems locally, beyond the short-term (2020-21) option they offer. This will not move us forward.

The new task

By taking everything in this route-map into account, the task then more clearly becomes a dual objective - to **scale down** hotel rooms and night shelter provision and **scale up** rapid rehousing and Housing First. Over time, this will also have a positive impact on scale of local emergency and temporary accommodation.

Doing it together and in a coordinated way will ensure a safer transition to prevent rough sleeping, and to support people who experience it.

Communication of this dual objective will be key. We know if existing night shelters didn't open, less experienced groups would 'fill the gap.' We need to work together to actively discourage any new group from establishing a night shelter approach in any part of Scotland. And to explain the reason and method behind the new task and everyone's key roles within it.

For the winter period of 2020-21 (October – March) this dual objective needs to effectively support local authorities and partners to get back on track with Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs).

Achieving this will require all partners to act and pledge their support in two ways:

1) Modify the function of night shelter provision and position it in line with local Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTP).

For October 2020 opening, night shelter providers in Edinburgh and Glasgow will prepare to modify their service and how it aligns with other local services and partners.

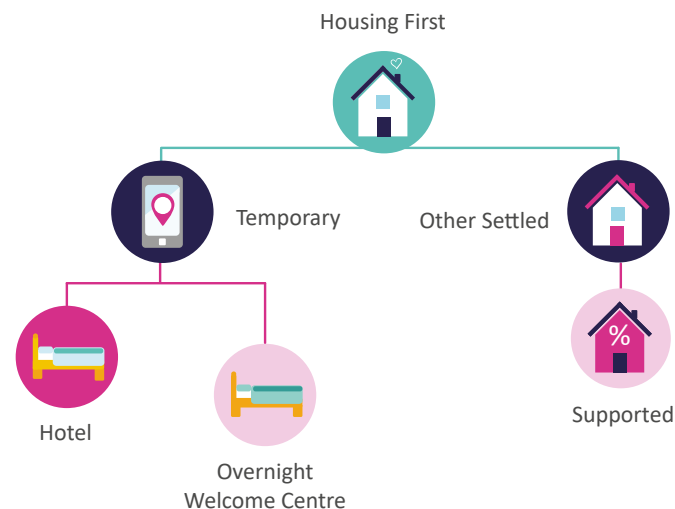
The new **Rapid Rehousing Overnight Welcome Centres** will build on existing good practices to provide an under-one-roof and multi-agency triage for people at the sharpest end of homelessness. A key objective is to provide rapid access to Housing First in all possible cases. This enhanced service specification will be characterised by:

- Multi-agency triage, including legal advocacy; a linked conduit through which people are connected with appropriate services to achieve better outcomes.
- Immediate and direct referral to local Housing First consortia.
- Immediate signposting from commissioned and voluntary outreach teams.
- Coordinated continuation/handover from all local day centre provision.
- A live vacancies list: access to live vacancies list for temporary and supported housing for same-day or next-day rehousing (council partner lead).
- Same-day or next-day placement to procured hotel room, only if:
 - Temporary or supported housing could not be secured
 - Waiting for temporary or supported housing
 - Waiting for Housing First offer of tenancy (target 4-weeks).
- Overnight and on-site sleeping arrangements will remain available as a last resort. Partners will test and then work toward a reduced capacity that achieves social distancing and increased privacy.
- The overnight centre may operate temporarily with single or couple occupancy room provision.

2) Clearly define function of hotel rooms, planned reduction in capacity and parallel approach

The hotel rooms are not a stable option at the scale needed – but they do offer capacity that may be needed, especially over the first winter 2020-21. The overriding focus must be on maximising settled housing options in the social and private rented¹ sector. The use of temporary and supported housing as a route there, with hotel rooms and overnight stay at the welcome centres as last resort.

The 'try-first' order of move-on accommodation should be:



1. Route-Map 3 will focus on the private rented sector and homelessness.



The Everyone Home Collective publishes this route map as a discussion paper and way forward for ending the need for night shelter accommodation in Scotland.

In considering this carefully, we have linked the objective with the step-down of hotel accommodation acquired during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Achieving these objectives will require the following to happen:

- Existing night shelter providers to modify their service to a reception centre for Housing First and other rapid rehousing options and provide an overnight stay for people who have absolutely no alternative, as last resort. While a core element in Scotland's two largest cities to reflect a current context, this is unlikely to be a model needed by areas with lower levels of rough sleeping.
- Glasgow and Edinburgh City councils aligning the overnight welcome centres and hotel rooms with revised 2020-21 RRTPs to support the multi-agency response, advice, advocacy and rapid rehousing.
- National and local government (in Edinburgh and Glasgow) ensuring access to a reduced number of self-contained hotel rooms during winter 2020 and until the impact of the pandemic is more clearly understood. Align the step-down in use of hotel rooms with the step-down in night shelter provision in favour of rapid and settled housing options.
- Housing First tenancies secured at a rate of approximately 22 per week in Glasgow and 14 per week in Edinburgh, from October to March (in the first instance). Proportionate use of temporary and supported options in the interim and to meet any shortfall in this target.

- An overarching national Housing First framework that stabilises funding across health, housing and social care and factors in supply and demand at local level over and above the capacity needed to achieve the objectives in this route map - people already waiting for Housing First tenancies, and those presenting to the local authority via a different route.
- Independent monitoring and review of overnight welcome centres and hotel accommodation in parallel to help inform the timing and capacity of step-down in use going forward.
- A safeguard benchmark of 10% increase in rough sleeping that necessitates a rapid review, to ensure available capacity isn't reduced too quickly as Housing First tenancies are increased.





The Ambition	Winter 2020 – 2021 (October – March)	Going Forward
<p>Rapid Rehousing Overnight Welcome Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency triage for people at sharp end of homelessness. • Immediate referral to Housing First in most cases. • Direct referrals to live temporary or supported housing vacancies. • Access to same or next-day hotel room if other options not available. • For those who have no alternative, an overnight stay. 	<p>Anticipated service use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GLA: 28 people per week with rights to housing • EDI: 17 people per week with rights to housing 	<p>Direction of travel:</p> <p>↓</p> <p>X</p>
<p>Housing First Tenancies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 4-week entry to tenancy. • A Housing First consortia worker on-site. • Accelerate procurement of tenancies, as described in the National Housing First Framework (summer 2020). 	<p>Anticipated outcome among people using the Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GLA: 22 tenancies per week • EDI: 14 tenancies per week 	<p>Direction of travel:</p> <p>↑</p>
<p>Supported and Temporary Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 10-20% Housing First won't work, but try Housing First, first. • Temporary options while waiting for settled tenancy, or Housing First Tenancy. 	<p>Anticipated outcome for people using the Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GLA: 6 per week • EDI: 3 per week <p>Plus capacity needed while waiting for settled housing.</p>	<p>Direction of travel in line with local RRTP:</p> <p>← →</p>
<p>Hotel Rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify maximum weekly capacity needed. • Capacity to mitigate any shortfall in Housing First. • Working toward no need for hotel rooms by end of winter 2020-21. 	<p>Interacting as a safety-net to prevent rough sleeping and while waiting temporary or settled housing option. With a 2-week lapse, maximum capacity needed approx:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GLA: 56 people weekly • EDI: 34 people weekly 	<p>Direction of travel:</p> <p>↓</p> <p>X</p>

About The Collective



Everyone Home is a collective of 21 third and academic sector organisations that have come together during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect the progress that's been made and to protect the principles that must now guide next steps.

Read our framework for going forward at www.everyonehome.scot and join us on social media at #EveryoneHome

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