

# **Measuring Impact Task and Finish Group**

## **Final Report and Recommendations**

**December 2023**

## Foreword

**Every experience of homelessness is unique.** Every person affected navigating a personal set of past experiences, current circumstances and aspirations for the future.

**But what drives homelessness is predictable.** Inequality in our society, the health of our housing and labour markets and the strength of our welfare safety net.

And so, determining whether we are getting closer to ending homelessness needs us to understand the interplay between those structural causes, the level of resources and tools needed to tackle them and the adequacy of the system of services that help people through it. And it needs us to understand how all this is experienced by the individuals and families who are most exposed to a failure or shortfall in any part of this bigger picture.

The Measuring Impact Task and Finish Group has embedded this understanding into a new framework, the Ending Homelessness Together Monitor, that will measure the impact of the Ending Homelessness Together Plan and demonstrate whether and where we are making progress toward ending homelessness in Scotland. Through an iterative and detailed process, the group's contribution spanned the expertise of academics, analysts, advocates, sector leaders, policy advisors, practitioners and people with experience of homelessness.

**If you can't measure it, you can't improve it.** Among our key recommendations include that the Ending Homelessness Together Monitor is adopted by Scottish Government, COSLA and local partners from 2024. And that a clear route-map between the commitments in the Ending Homelessness Together Plan and the outcomes in the Ending Homelessness Together Monitor is now needed to sequence, cost, target and time the range of actions needed.

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# Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	About this report	
1.2	About the development phase	
1.3	About the Ending Homelessness Together plan	
1.4	Corresponding strategies and statistics	
1.5	What matters to people	
<b>2.</b>	<b>How homelessness is measured in Scotland</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1	Brief history of measuring homelessness	
2.2	How homelessness is currently measured	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Data gaps and limitations</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1	Statutory data	
3.2	Monitoring systems	
3.3	Experiential and qualitative measures	
3.4	Data gaps being addressed	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Measuring what matters</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1	Intentions of the Ending Homelessness Together Monitor	
4.2	Criteria for selecting indicators	
4.3	What we will measure	
4.4	How we will measure	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations and Schedule</b>	<b>20</b>
5.1	The case for broad sector consultation	
5.2	Scope of consultation	
5.3	Short-term recommendations	
5.4	Medium-term recommendations	
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>24</b>
(i)	Group Membership	
(ii)	Reference List	
(iii)	Acronyms	

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 About this report**

This report provides the background and context to a new framework to measure the impact of the Ending Homelessness Together Plan and includes recommendations on how to implement it effectively in the short-medium term.

The new framework, called the [Ending Homelessness Together Monitor](#), is provided as a supplement to this report.

### **1.2 About the development phase**

This report and the Ending Homelessness Together Monitor were co-developed by the Measuring Impact Task and Finish Group incrementally between November 2022 and November 2023. The group (membership at appendix i) was appointed by the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group (HPSG) to deliver:

- An outcome focused framework with indicators to measure the impact of the Ending Homelessness Together Plan.
- An overview of evidence and data sources that will be used (or needed).
- Recommendations on how to implement and report on the framework.
- Recommendations for improvements to equalities evidence.

The criteria to select indicators to measure the outcomes in the Ending Homelessness Together Monitor draw on international best practice and are the criteria used by Scottish Government to monitor key policy areas, including the National Performance Framework [\[ref 1\]](#) and Wellbeing Economy Monitor [\[ref 2\]](#).

Evaluation Support Scotland and Homeless Network Scotland also facilitated a series of groundwork sessions with key stakeholders between April and August 2022 to scope the parameters and refine the task for the Task and Finish group.

### **1.3 About the Ending Homelessness Together Plan**

The Ending Homelessness Together High-Level Action Plan (EHT Plan) [\[ref 3\]](#) is a joint Scottish Government and COSLA plan published in 2018 and updated in 2020. It sets out how national and local government and third sector partners will work together to end homelessness.

The key themes in the EHT Plan reflect the recommendations made by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) in 2018 [\[ref 4\]](#). HARSAG was set up to recommend to Scottish Government Ministers the actions needed to eradicate rough sleeping and transform the use of temporary accommodation in Scotland.

Since 2020, Scottish Government has reported annually to the Scottish Parliament on the progress of priority actions set out in the EHT Plan [\[ref 5\]](#). The Task and Finish Group was established because Scottish Government and partners wanted to improve reporting so that the focus was on measurable outcomes instead of activity and practice examples.

#### **1.4 Corresponding Strategies and Statistics**

Statutory homelessness in Scotland has a broad definition and each experience of it is unique. It can impact on many aspects of someone's life, including health and wellbeing, relationships, education, employment and on ability to travel and have digital access.

Consequently, almost all social policy and strategy, and their related monitoring frameworks, connect to varying extents with the objectives of the EHT Plan. The National Framework for Housing First summarises the range of connected strategy and policy frameworks [\[ref 24\]](#).

The overarching frameworks that the EHT Plan is currently aligned with are:

- The vision and values of Scotland's National Performance Framework [\[ref 1\]](#).
- A wellbeing economy, which recognises the importance of delivering not just economic, but human and ecological wellbeing [\[ref 2\]](#).
- Housing to 2040, which sets out a vision for housing in Scotland and a route-map which sets the overarching strategy for housing in Scotland [\[ref 25\]](#). Housing to 2040 commits to, but does not yet have, a published monitoring framework.

It is also significantly important to underline that the housing sector does not have all the levers to end homelessness. By including a strong focus on causation and using evidence on the factors that drive homelessness and housing demand in Scotland, we can better demonstrate how they interplay with progress of the EHT Plan. Therefore, the new EHT Monitor will reach beyond existing homelessness and housing data to include:

- A new core data set relating to the upcoming duties to prevent homelessness across the wider public sector, as specified in the upcoming Housing Bill.
- Data from 4 external statistical frameworks to demonstrate the links between homelessness, housing supply and reducing poverty as follows:

Lever	Data Source
<p><b>The Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP):</b> <i>increasing housing supply to meet demand.</i></p> <p>Progress toward the Scottish Government commitment of 110,000 affordable homes by 2032. At least 70% for social rent and 10% will be in rural and island communities.</p>	<p>Scottish Government’s Housing Statistics for Scotland: New Housebuilding and Affordable Housing Supply <a href="#">[data source 1]</a></p>
<p><b>Reducing Poverty in Scotland:</b> <i>The main driver of homelessness.</i></p> <p>The most commonly used poverty threshold is 60% of the median household (not individual) income. Poverty is measured before and after housing costs. Scottish Government combines data sources to report on poverty in Scotland.</p>	<p>Scottish Government National Statistics: Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland <a href="#">[data source 2]</a></p>
<p><b>Reducing Child Poverty in Scotland:</b> <i>A key predictor of homelessness in later life.</i></p> <p>Target to reduce relative child poverty to less than 10% and absolute child poverty to less than 5%. To reduce low income and material deprivation to less than 5%.</p>	<p>Scottish Government National Statistics: Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland <a href="#">[data source 2]</a></p>
<p><b>Reducing shortfall between UK welfare benefits and housing costs in Scotland.</b></p> <p>Through Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), Scottish Government aims to redress the shortfall between UK welfare benefits and housing costs, including housing benefit and mitigating the bedroom tax and benefit cap. The Scottish Welfare Fund can provide Community Care Grants, which help people live independently, and Crisis Grants, a safety net in a disaster or emergency.</p>	<p>Scottish Government Social Security Statistics: Discretionary Housing Payment <a href="#">[data source 20]</a> and Scottish Welfare Fund <a href="#">[data source 23]</a></p>
<p><b>Prevention duties on the wider public sector, to be specified in the upcoming Housing Bill.</b></p> <p>Crisis convened a Prevention Review Group to make recommendations <a href="#">[ref 27]</a> on new duties to prevent homelessness earlier and across the wider public sector. In 2022, Scottish Government confirmed they will develop legislative provisions for inclusion in the upcoming Housing Bill.</p>	<p>Core dataset for the new prevention duties to be confirmed. <a href="#">[data source 15: source tbc]</a>.</p>

## 1.5 What matters to people?

How homelessness is measured and reported matters to many people who experience homelessness. We acknowledge with thanks the people who have shaped this work through two programmes from which the following priorities emerged:

### a. Aye We Can

*Aye We Can* [\[ref 6\]](#) is one of Scotland's largest consultations with people currently using homelessness services. It was facilitated by Homeless Network Scotland as part of HARSAG during 2017-18 to inform and influence recommendations. 425 people took part in discussion groups, surveys and 1:1 interviews.

Six priorities emerged – among them, to improve how homelessness is counted. People reported that they had experienced or witnessed hidden homelessness and rough sleeping that is not counted. And wanted data used in a better way to identify people who could be helped earlier to prevent their homelessness.

The 'Aye We Can' strapline came from Poverty Alliance Challenge Poverty Week, with its roots in two Frameworks Institute projects: *Talking about Poverty* [\[ref 7\]](#) led by Joseph Rowntree Foundation and *Reframing Homelessness* [\[ref 8\]](#) led by Crisis.

### b. All in For Change

Scottish Government were committed to continuing a platform for lived experience and All in For Change was launched in December 2019. Facilitated by Homeless Network Scotland and Cyrenians, the Change Team are committed to blending the expertise of academics, policy makers, frontline workers and people with lived experience [\[ref 9\]](#).

The Task and Finish group invited the Change Team to help define what person-centred services are. The following priorities mattered to the Change Team:

- It is the responsibility of a monitoring framework to use 'people-first' language and definitions that are sensitive to how people define and express themselves. People-first is a language etiquette which puts the person before their circumstances, characteristics or conditions. It is intended to address conscious or implicit bias and to avoid marginalising, categorising or labelling people. For example, a person who is facing homelessness, rather than a homeless person.

- A method should be developed for services to demonstrate that they are strengths based and trauma informed. But this focus should not override material needs, such as problem debt and financial hardship.
- People need to work within an empowering environment so they can support others. This work is challenged by service capacity and referral routes, high caseload levels and by low pay that can lead to stress, vicarious trauma and burnout. Staff retention and recruitment is a significant issue affecting the social care sector overall, within and beyond Scotland.

## **2. How homelessness is measured in Scotland**

### **2.1 Brief history of measuring homelessness**

#### **a. Scottish Government Homelessness Data**

Data is collected by local authorities when households are homeless or threatened with homelessness (called the HL1 data), when providing temporary accommodation (HL2 and HL3) or carrying out Housing Options work (PREVENT1).

HL1, HL2 (and latterly HL3) returns have provided the main sources of regular statistics on homelessness in Scotland since the early 1990s. Where an application is made under homelessness legislation, local authorities record this through electronic case-based returns to the Scottish Government's Homelessness Statistics unit.

HL1 data has been collected since the reporting year 1992-93, and for the first decade data was supplied on paper forms. Electronic data capture was introduced in 2002-03, incorporating improvements in recording household information and repeat homelessness. 2007-08 was the last major revision to HL1 which accounted for the new legislative framework of the 2001 and 2003 Housing and Homelessness Acts.

Mandatory collection of PREVENT1 data started in April 2014. This is case level data collection to monitor the housing options process and homelessness prevention activity undertaken by local authorities. A PREVENT1 approach may also link to an HL1 application. The data collected by each of these returns is listed here [\[ref 12\]](#).



**b. Measuring Rough Sleeping 1997-2004**

In 2000, the Scottish Executive commissioned Glasgow Homelessness Network (now Homeless Network Scotland) to roll out a common monitoring system used in Glasgow across 57 services in 23 local authority areas. The monitoring programme was intended to measure the scale and demographics of people using services funded through the second phase of the £63m Rough Sleeping Initiative.

This system had two main limitations; firstly, the reach of the system was limited to the services and areas funded by the initiative and therefore not a complete national picture. Secondly, outcomes data was not recorded reliably which meant people's pathways, or effectiveness of service interventions, could not be established [\[ref 13\]](#).

However, it was the first real-time, common monitoring system on rough sleeping which provided the most detailed picture to date of the demographics and presenting support needs of people using a diverse range of services across multiple areas. The common monitoring system ended with the initiative in 2005, when rough sleeping services were integrated into local authority homelessness and Supporting People strategies.

**c. Scottish Household Survey to 2015**

A set of questions in the Scottish Household Survey asked adults about retrospective experiences of homelessness, with a particular focus on the last two years. The survey contained specific questions on duration of homelessness, on rough sleeping and on engagement with local authorities. Although the homelessness data from the survey was used by academics to triangulate with other data sources, homelessness related questions were dropped from the Scottish Household Survey from 2015-16.

**d. Measuring Rough Sleeping 2004 to date**

Beyond the HL1 returns, there has been no national, cross authority or common monitoring of rough sleeping since the Rough Sleeping Initiative. In some larger local authority areas, HL1 data is supplemented by qualitative research at a local level and/or through periodic 'street-count' style measures usually led by third sector organisations.

In 2018, HARSAG highlighted that existing frameworks cannot produce the right information in the right way to facilitate joint working or provide a complete picture of rough sleeping in Scotland. And that street counts, while a practical means to gain a point-in-time count across a specific search area, are of limited use for policy development and an unreliable method for giving a full picture of rough sleeping at local authority or national level [\[ref 14\]](#).

HARSAG also noted limitations in how HL1 data measured rough sleeping, including a lack of consensus on whether it represents an overestimate (should an applicant assume a disclosure of rough sleeping will expedite an application) or an underestimate (that it only captures people who present to the local authority and can't capture the episodic nature of some people's experience of rough sleeping).

## **2.2 How homelessness is currently measured**

While there is likely to be additional measures at organisational level, there are key methods that draw data from across multiple or all local authority areas. Not all methods are mandatory, and some are undertaken independently using existing data sources.

*Mandatory data collection:*

### **a. Scottish Government - HL1-3**

The HL1 return has three parts: application, assessment and closure. Data is resubmitted as an applicant moves through stages. HL2-3 returns are used for the monitoring of households accommodated in temporary accommodation under the legislation and this information is returned by local authorities to Scottish Government quarterly.

### **b. Scottish Government - PREVENT1**

Mandatory collection of PREVENT1 data started in April 2014. It is case level data collection to monitor the housing options process and homelessness prevention activity undertaken by local authorities. A PREVENT1 approach may be standalone or may link to an HL1 record if a homelessness application is then made.

**c. Scottish Housing Regulator - ARC**

The Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) and Annual Assurance Statement are used by social landlords to evidence to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) that they have met the outcomes set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter [\[ref 15\]](#). Detailed statements on homelessness, alongside measures on section 5 referrals<sup>1</sup>, tenancy sustainment, rent arrears, evictions, abandonments and void properties are particularly relevant in this context. The Scottish Housing Regulator also regulates local authority's homelessness services and will take a view on RSL contributions.

*Utilising existing data sources:*

**d. National Records of Scotland - Homeless Deaths**

Experimental statistics on deaths of people experiencing homelessness in Scotland, with a breakdown by demographics and geography. Published annually since 2017 although the data remains experimental until it has been assessed against the rigorous quality standards which apply to National Statistics [\[ref 16\]](#).

**e. I-SPHERE at Heriot Watt University - Homelessness Monitor**

A longitudinal study into the homelessness impacts of economic and policy developments in Scotland. Commissioned and funded by Crisis with a research team led by I-SPHERE at Heriot-Watt University, University of New South Wales and Newhaven Research. The monitor uses existing data sources to assess trends in statutory and 'core homelessness' and integrates a qualitative analysis [\[ref 17\]](#). Core homelessness is a concept which captures the most acute forms of homelessness which are often not captured in statutory homelessness statistics and includes rough sleeping, people living in sheds, garages and other unconventional buildings, sofa surfing, hostels and unsuitable temporary accommodation such as B&Bs.

**f. Scottish Government - RRTP Annual Returns**

Since 2019 local authorities have developed and implemented Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs), initially returning annual 'activity and spend' information to

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<sup>1</sup> When a local authority refers a household who is statutorily homeless to a Registered Social Landlord for housing. Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 sets out the rules on Section 5 referrals.

the homelessness unit at Scottish Government. The first annual report for the period 2020-21 was published in May 2022 [\[ref 18\]](#). In 2023, the format of the monitoring return was updated to focus on impact and is the main way for local authorities to report on the impact of local action relating to priorities set out in their RRTP.

**g. Scotland’s Housing Network - RRTP Monitoring**

SHN produce annual reports collating local authorities’ core RRTP data, clustered by 5 regional housing options hubs. While not published, the cross-sector membership of the HPSG RRTP sub-group and the housing options hubs review the reports which use published and unpublished homelessness data from the Scottish Government using HL1 and HL3 returns from local authorities, alongside SHR ARC data.

**h. Public Health Scotland - Data Linkage**

Since 2016, local authorities have been invited to send a subset of their HL1 data to Public Health Scotland who link it to health data which enables an examination of HL1 applicant interactions with health services. 23 local authorities currently participate in this data linkage, which is at exploratory stage but with a significant amount of potential to measure health and wellbeing across the population of people who experience homelessness.

*Opt-in data collection:*

**i. Scottish Government - Housing First Monitoring Framework**

Since 2021, data from local authorities is shared with Scottish Government to measure progress in scaling up the Housing First approach. While not mandatory, all local authorities delivering Housing First provide data on household characteristics, referral routes, support provision and tenancy sustainment. It also records positive outcomes in Housing First tenancies, including training and employment [\[ref 19\]](#).

**j. Housing Support Enabling Unit – Outcomes Framework**

The Housing Support Enabling Unit manages *Better Futures*, an outcomes monitoring tool used by 40 housing support providers in Scotland. It measures progress toward 5 goals from the person’s perspective: accommodation, health, safety and security, social and economic wellbeing and employment and meaningful activity [\[ref 20\]](#).

### **3. Data gaps and limitations**

Methods to measure homelessness predominantly focus on people engaging with the statutory homelessness system – that is, households who make a presentation to their local authority for homelessness assistance. Not everyone who experiences homelessness will do so and their homelessness may remain hidden. Understanding hidden homelessness is the topic of research commissioned by Scottish Government which is due to report in 2024.

Additionally, current datasets and monitoring systems to measure statutory homelessness in Scotland have a number of gaps and limitations. These are summarised as follows:

#### **3.1 Statutory data**

- Most local authorities do not link HL1-3 data, Strategic Housing Investment Plans (SHIP) and Housing Need and Demand Assessments (HNDA) to connect local housing need and demand analysis.
- The need for a method to determine actual housing need from housing waiting lists, so that this can be measured consistently at local and national level.
- HL1-3 does not measure wider health or social care outcomes. Support needs are difficult to capture at point of contact with an assumption that this is under reported, especially overlapping support needs. Housing First data is separated from HL1 data.
- HL1 does not enable us to understand the equality impact of the EHT Plan, with specific gaps on people who identify as LGBTQ+ and people with a disability.
- We want to better measure the scale and circumstances of people with no recourse to public funds/other restricted eligibility, including those who do not approach the local authority for assistance.
- The need for an improved HL1 measure that more specifically measures the link between domestic abuse and homelessness among women. HL1 should also measure instances and housing outcomes where suspected perpetrators of abuse are removed from a home they share with a person at risk.
- The need to get behind and breakdown 'other' fields where this represents a sizeable proportion of the data.

- It is not currently possible to compare PREVENT1 data across local authorities and there will be new data requirements with the new prevention duties.
- RSL data to SHR does not measure activity that prevents homelessness, although it is widely understood that this early intervention work is undertaken by RSLs.
- The HL1 measure on rough sleeping is unreliable, including the framing of the questions, inconsistency in data input and interpretation, and that it does not capture data on people who do not seek assistance from local authorities.
- There are large postcode gaps in the data entry in some areas, making further analysis at local and national level more difficult.
- Health and homelessness data linkage needs to be sustainably funded to maximise its potential as a data source in the longer term.
- Gaps in data on employment and economic status limit how this information can be related to the question of affordability of housing.

### **3.2 Monitoring systems**

In 2019, HARSAG recommended that an options appraisal on monitoring rough sleeping be undertaken by the new Centre for Homelessness Impact. The appraisal outlined 3 options – centralised reporting, a street homelessness register and shared case management [\[ref 21\]](#). While none of the options were progressed, this may have been driven by 3 related factors rather than a reflection on the suitability of the specific options: firstly, the changing environment and context, especially resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, an acknowledgement that many available monitoring systems were disproportionate in complexity and cost to the scale of rough sleeping in Scotland. And thirdly, that the options might lend themselves better to a broader homelessness common monitoring or caseload system not limited to rough sleeping.

From a local authority or third sector perspective, there is no common monitoring or caseload system for homelessness casework and support services. The overarching potential of shared case management is improved joint working across sectors and reducing the number of times that a person is asked to share personal, sensitive and in some cases retraumatising information. Consultation on the feasibility of a common monitoring system is included as a recommendation in this report.

### 3.3 Experiential/Qualitative Measures

In 2022, the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Scotland and Fife Council collaborated on a monitoring framework for RRTPs [\[ref 22\]](#). As part of the consultation with CIH Scotland members on the framework, housing practitioners recommended more experiential and qualitative data linked to the RRTP reporting tool; the importance of tracking people's experience of the homelessness system, not just the number of people going through it.

This aligns closely with the views of the Change Team in their contribution to the Task and Finish Group's work, who highlighted the importance of people's experiences of homelessness policy and practice being reported as part of the EHT Monitor.

### 3.4 Data gaps currently being addressed

Some identified data gaps have projects in development that will link to the EHT Monitor in the short-medium term and are:

- **HL1 review** - Scottish Government Housing Statistics team have set out a timetable for a review of the homelessness data.
- **Health outcomes** - about interactions with health services and health outcomes. Led by Public Health Scotland, albeit sustainable funding is not yet committed to this analysis beyond the short-term.

The Task and Finish Group also supported the following outcomes proposed by the Change Team who will develop a peer research approach to measure them. The need to first establish a baseline will be progressed alongside researchers from I-SPHERE at Heriot Watt University to develop robust, measurable indicators over the next phase:

- **More services are trauma informed** - a review of literature provides evidence that trauma-informed practice is effective and can benefit both trauma survivors and staff [\[ref 10\]](#).
- **More services have relational and strengths-based approaches** - the importance of building trust and not narrowing focus, working in relation to the 'whole person' or 'whole family' and with a focus on material disadvantage.

- **More services and policies use person-first language** - a change that can positively contribute to reducing stigma and improving public perceptions of homelessness.
- **More people feel respected and listened to** - an indicator specifically from the perspective of people using services about their experience of services.
- **More people benefit from a cash-first approach** - less reliance on foodbanks and charity. Greater uptake of cash-first approaches, in line with national strategy [\[ref 11\]](#).

The Change Team also encouraged specific outcomes relating to the workforce. These are summarised below, alongside the position adopted by the Task and Finish Group in July 2023:

Outcome	Task and Finish Group Direction
<p><b>Reduce Pay Inequality</b>  <i>Why:</i> Minimum £12ph pay rate to increase retention and recruitment of social care staff in council and third sector services and to ensure equivalence with NHS personnel. (Subsequently committed in the Programme for Government 2023 for specified social care workers).</p>	<p>Agree with this outcome but measuring progress on pay should be the responsibility of existing local structures. A broader indicator on staff satisfaction can capture this and other forms of support such as reflective practice and professional development.</p>
<p><b>Reduce Caseloads</b>  <i>Why:</i> The need to build consensus on realistic caseloads for frontline support/advice workers and to assist more rapid outcomes for people using services.</p>	<p>Support this outcome; recommend a project to scope the feasibility of an optimum range of caseloads for different types of service delivery.</p>
<p><b>Increase Reflective Practice</b>  <i>Why:</i> Ensure protected time for staff, with reflective practice factored into service contracts as standard.</p>	<p>Support this outcome; recommend it be included as a qualitative measure on staff satisfaction.</p>
<p><b>Less Competitive Tendering</b>  <i>Why:</i> Demonstrate progress toward less competitive and more ethical forms of commissioning.</p>	<p>Agree with this outcome, but not possible to measure within the EHT Monitor.</p>
<p><b>More people lead a Personal Housing Plan</b>  <i>Why:</i> Embedding principles of choice, control and community connection. Incorporating the role of independent advocacy where relevant.</p>	<p>Support this outcome. The Personal Housing Plan has been highlighted as having a key role to play by each of the HPSG Task and Finish groups.</p>



## 4. Measuring what matters

The Task and Finish Group developed the EHT Monitor taking account of the background, context, data gaps and limitations as summarised above.

### 4.1 Intentions of the Ending Homelessness Together Monitor

The EHT Monitor intends to:

- Demonstrate whether we are making progress toward ending homelessness in Scotland.
- Measure what matters to people who experience homelessness.
- Indicate the impact of policy and practice decisions.
- Create a shift from reporting activity to measuring outcomes.
- Reduce unnecessary data and reporting burdens on local authorities.

### 4.2 Criteria for Selecting Indicators

The criteria to select indicators for the EHT Monitor draw on international best practice and are the criteria used by Scottish Government to monitor key policy areas, including the National Performance Framework and Wellbeing Economy Monitor. They are:

- **Relevance:** there must be a clear relationship between the indicator and the strategy outcome.
- **Validity:** the indicator must measure what it is supposed to measure.
- **Distinctiveness:** the indicator must not measure something already captured under other indicators.
- **Practicality:** the indicator must provide value for money, and it must be feasible and affordable to obtain data.
- **Clarity:** the indicator must be straightforward to interpret by the intended audience. It must clearly communicate the measure that it is trying to assess.
- **Credibility:** the indicator must be based upon impartial, reliable data that is precise enough to show change over time.
- **Public interest:** indicators must be engaging and relevant for members of the public.

### 4.3 What we will measure

The EHT Plan describes a set of commitments to act upon:

- Embed a person-centred approach.
- Prevent homelessness from happening in the first place.
- Prioritise settled homes for all.
- Join up planning and resources to tackle homelessness.
- Respond quickly and effectively whenever homelessness happens.

The EHT Monitor will determine the impact of those commitments by measuring progress toward the following **10 outcomes**:

#### **a. Structural Outcomes**

The wider structural change needed to end homelessness, and which rely on levers that are not fully held by partners of the EHT Plan:

1. Sufficient social and affordable homes.
2. Fewer households experience poverty which drives homelessness.
3. Fewer children grow up in households experiencing low income and material disadvantage.
4. Fewer households experience a shortfall between welfare benefits and housing costs.
5. More public sector bodies ask about housing and act to prevent homelessness earlier.

#### **b. Strategic Outcomes**

The highest-level change that can be reasonably attributed to the programme. Levers are held by partners of the EHT Plan and outcomes directly linked to it:

6. Fewer people become homeless.
7. Time spent homeless is reduced.
8. More equality in housing outcomes.
9. People have more choice and control if they experience homelessness.
10. More equipped and enabled workforce.

#### 4.4 How we will measure

The EHT Monitor is intended to provide the framework for the Scottish Government's annual report to Scottish Parliament and for this to be reported at a local level through the planning and decision-making structures for housing, homelessness, health and social care. It is also intended for the Board and executive teams of third sector partners.

The EHT Monitor is a new and combined framework that will:

**a. Use measurable indicators from existing data sets**

The EHT Monitor will use a clear set of indicators that draw from existing data sets (see section 2 above) and report on them annually.

**b. Improve existing data sets**

The identified gaps or limitations on the existing data sets (see section 3 above) will be progressed through the Scottish Government's review of HL1 data monitoring. Improvements to PREVENT1 should be considered alongside the development of new core data on the prevention duties in the forthcoming Housing Bill.

**c. Fill data gaps**

The better use of existing data will be supplemented with the development of two methods to fill key data gaps:

- **Annual Survey of Housing and Homelessness Sector**

A survey of organisations to be developed by Scottish Government and/or a relevant intermediary, network or membership organisation. It will span the indicators specified in the EHT Monitor.

- **Peer Research Programme**

Peer research delivered by All in For Change and co-designed with I-SPHERE at Heriot-Watt university to span specific indicators identified in the EHT Monitor focused on the experiences of people and services. A team of Change Leads will receive specialist training, support and mentoring to undertake a peer research role. The role will include co-designing research questions, research tools, fieldwork management, co-analysis of findings and reporting against specific indicators.

## 5. Recommendations and schedule

### 5.1 The case for a broad sector consultation

Improvements can be made to data collection and reporting on homelessness in the short-medium term with a modest outlay in terms of time and resource, as outlined above. However, more significant improvements could be made with a greater outlay by considering:

- i. Alignment of datasets including HL1, PREVENT1, the national health and wellbeing outcomes framework and the development of a new core data set for the prevention duties.
- ii. Development of a case management and common monitoring system; *and/or*
- iii. Greater interoperability between existing data and software systems used by local authorities with unique identifiers to enable better integration and exchange of information.

These more advanced improvements could have the following potential benefits:

- Reduce unnecessary data burdens on local authorities through data sharing.
- Integrate third sector data in key areas, especially on rough sleeping measure.
- Integrate data in relation to new prevention duties.
- Link SHIP and HNDA frameworks to homelessness and RRTP data.
- Create new linked data sets and new opportunities for statistical analysis.

**However, a broader view is not yet clear on what would be desirable and proportionate to key stakeholders and especially local authorities.**

To move to a new digital monitoring system, or even to improve interoperability of existing systems, would involve a time and cost outlay in design, training, implementation and maintenance. However, this would also be an investment that is time and resource efficient in the longer term and ultimately assist better outcomes.

## 5.2 Scope of consultation

A broad sector consultation is not intended to significantly alter the detail of the strategic outcomes or indicators set out in the EHT Monitor, although top-level confirmation of its suitability will be sought to consolidate it.

Instead, it is intended as targeted roundtable discussions through existing structures, combined with a survey response option, to determine the following:

- How to enable and maximise local interaction with the national EHT Monitor, including feedback on reporting cycle and frequency.
- A core data set for the prevention duties in the Housing Bill in conjunction with a review of PREVENT1 data. As this will cut across the wider public sector, the need to fine-tune core data and methods will be key.
- How to measure the extent to which people access coordinated health and social care, from the perspective of health and social care partnerships. This will include consideration of the national health and wellbeing outcomes framework and Standard 8 of the Medication Assisted Treatment standards.
- The appetite among local authorities and other key stakeholders for a common monitoring and case management system or for alternatives that improve interoperability between existing systems.
- The benefits of a combined system that enables data partnership with third sector organisations, specifically on an improved rough sleeping count in key areas.
- The feasibility of collecting data about the scale and circumstances of people with restricted or uncertain eligibility due to their immigration status.
- The scope of a route-map to connect the commitments in the EHT Plan with the outcomes in the EHT Monitor (see 5.3).

### 5.3 Short-term recommendations

The Measuring Impact Task and Finish Group recommends the following short-term actions during 2024-25:

- Scottish Government and COSLA adopt the EHT Monitor as the outcomes framework for measuring the EHT Plan and as a structure for reporting annually from 2024.
- Scottish Government considers options to enable a clear route-map between the commitments in the EHT Plan and the outcomes in the EHT Monitor. This is intended as a mechanism to sequence, cost, target and time the range of actions needed.
- Scottish Government facilitate a broad sector consultation on the terms outlined at 5.2 above and commit to sustain the agreed data and reporting infrastructure required to monitor the EHT Plan.
- A core dataset to be developed for the new prevention duties in conjunction with a review of PREVENT1. This should be included in the broad sector consultation.
- The design and development of the 'Personal Housing Plan' approach taken forward by partners with a schedule to implement.
- An analytical project on caseloads for key support and casework roles working within the EHT Plan. Determine optimum range for best practice and financial implications.
- An annual survey of organisations be developed by Scottish Government and/or a relevant intermediary, network or membership organisation to address the data gaps specified in the EHT Monitor.
- Support wider efforts toward data integration. The Scottish Government strategy for data-driven care should include stronger focus on housing and homelessness [\[ref 26\]](#).

The EHT Monitor should be updated during this period when:

- The hidden homelessness research is published to ensure key principles, definitions or recommendations are included.
- The All in For Change peer research programme has identified the outcomes and indicators specified as pending in the EHT Monitor.

#### 5.4 Medium-term recommendations

The Measuring Impact Task and Finish Group recommends the following medium-term actions from 2025-26 and beyond:

- Corresponding activity is scheduled following the EHT Monitor broad sector consultation, including a position on whether new systems or frameworks need scoped and developed.
- Bring forward the timetable for the Scottish Government Homelessness statistics review of HL1 data and use experimental statistics if it so requires in the short-term. Ensure data gaps and limitations listed at 3.1 are included in the revised version of HL1 data monitoring as part of the review.
- Scottish Government undertake an annual national assessment of affordable housing need using the stock-flow model adopted for the CIH Scotland, SFHA and Shelter Scotland commissioned 'Affordable Housing Need in Scotland' [\[ref 28\]](#). This model estimates existing housing need in Scotland, adds an estimate of future 'newly arising' need, within the existing and new population. Then deducts the supply of affordable lettings to provide a measure of affordable housing need in Scotland.

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<b>Secretariat:</b>	Ashley Campbell	Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland
<b>In attendance:</b>	Janine Kellett Kerry Shaw Karen Grieve	Scottish Government Scottish Government Scottish Government
<b>Membership:</b>	Dr Francesca Albanese Tony Cain Mike Callaghan Emma Doyle Prof Suzanne Fitzpatrick Graeme Gardner Rosalind Hamilton Kara Heron Darran Kennedy Debbie King Gordon MacRae Heather McCluskey Eileen McMullan Nicola McQuiston Pamela Newey Sherina Peek Tim Pogson Kate Polson Jack Rillie Ruth Robin Rhiannon Sims Dr Ligia Teixeira	Crisis ALACHO COSLA Public Health Scotland I-SPHERE at Heriot-Watt University <i>formerly</i> Aberdeen City Council East Renfrewshire Council <i>formerly</i> Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness Wheatley Group <i>formerly</i> Shelter Scotland Shelter Scotland Centre for Homelessness Impact SFHA Wheatley Group South Lanarkshire Council <i>formerly</i> ALACHO Scotland's Housing Network Rock Trust <i>formerly</i> Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness Healthcare Improvement Scotland Crisis Centre for Homelessness Impact
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*Special acknowledgement for detailed papers, presentations and review to Dr Francesca Albanese; Ashley Campbell; Emma Doyle; Prof Suzanne Fitzpatrick; Graeme Gardner, Rosalind Hamilton, Debbie King, Heather McCluskey; Beth Reid; Rhiannon Sims.*



**The list of documents referenced in this report are:**

1. [Scotland's National Performance Framework](#) | Scottish Government
2. [The Wellbeing Economy Monitor](#) | Scottish Government
3. [Ending Homelessness Together Plan 2020](#) | Scottish Government
4. [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group Reports](#) | Scottish Government
5. [Ending Homelessness Together - Annual Report to Parliament](#) | Scottish Government
6. [Can we fix homelessness in Scotland? Aye We Can!](#) | Homeless Network Scotland
7. [Talking About Poverty](#) | Joseph Rowntree Foundation
8. [Reframing Homelessness](#) | Crisis
9. [Taking The Temperature 2022](#) | All in For Change at Homeless Network Scotland
10. [Trauma Informed Practice Toolkit](#) | Scottish Government
11. [Cash-First - towards ending the need for food banks in Scotland](#) | Scottish Government
12. [Homelessness statistics](#) | Scottish Government
13. [Final Evaluation of the Rough Sleepers Initiative](#) | I-SPHERE at Heriot-Watt University
14. [Measuring Rough Sleeping Paper](#) | Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group
15. [Scottish Social Housing Charter Guidance](#) | Scottish Housing Regulator
16. [Homeless Deaths](#) | National Records of Scotland
17. [The Homelessness Monitor Scotland](#) | I-SPHERE at Heriot-Watt University and Crisis
18. [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans Annual Report 2020-21](#) | Scottish Government
19. [Housing First Quarterly Monitoring Reports](#) | Scottish Government
20. [Better Futures Outcomes Monitoring Tool](#) | Housing Support Enabling Unit
21. [Options Appraisal for monitoring street homelessness](#) | Centre for Homelessness Impact
22. [RRTPs: monitoring framework for local authorities](#) | CIH Scotland and Fife Council
23. [Legal Definition of Homelessness](#) | Shelter Scotland
24. [Branching Out: The National Framework for Housing First](#) | Homeless Network Scotland
25. [Housing to 2040](#) | Scottish Government
26. [Strategy for data-driven care in the digital age](#) | Scottish Government
27. [Report of the prevention review group](#) | Crisis
28. [Affordable Housing Need in Scotland](#) | CIH Scotland, SFHA, Shelter Scotland.

**The acronyms used in this report are:**

<b>AHSP</b>	Affordable Housing Supply Programme
<b>ALACHO</b>	Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers
<b>ARC</b>	Annual Return on the Charter
<b>CIH</b>	Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland
<b>COMPAS</b>	Centre on Migration, Policy and Society at the University of Oxford
<b>COSLA</b>	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
<b>DHP</b>	Discretionary Housing Payment
<b>EHT</b>	Ending Homelessness Together
<b>HARSAG</b>	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group
<b>HIS</b>	Healthcare Improvement Scotland
<b>HNDA</b>	Housing Need and Demand Assessment
<b>HPSG</b>	Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group
<b>I-SPHERE</b>	Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research at Heriot-Watt
<b>LHA</b>	Local Housing Allowance
<b>NRPF</b>	No Recourse to Public Funds
<b>PHS</b>	Public Health Scotland
<b>RRTP</b>	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
<b>RSL</b>	Registered Social Landlord (housing association or cooperative)
<b>SHIP</b>	Strategic Housing Investment Plan
<b>SFHA</b>	Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
<b>SHR</b>	Scottish Housing Regulator
<b>SHN</b>	Scotland's Housing Network
<b>SPS</b>	Scottish Prison Service
<b>TA</b>	Temporary Accommodation
<b>UAO</b>	Unsuitable Accommodation Order