

Homeless Network Scotland

we are all in



Our Impact

July - December 2023

Connect, Learn & Act

on homelessness to end it for good

During this period, the annual data on homelessness showed the true extent of the enormous pressures facing individuals and families securing a settled home in Scotland. And signalled a stressed housing system that increasingly cannot meet demand.

There is a pressing risk that this becomes the new normal for housing and homelessness in Scotland, and not the brighter future envisaged by the Ending Homelessness Together plan, or the 'can-do' collaborative culture fostered during the pandemic months that followed.

Spanning this period, the Homeless Network Scotland team of staff and associates have pro-actively connected with thousands of people working in and around homelessness, in many different roles, and including people navigating homelessness services themselves. That range of interactions paints a mixed picture – but overall, a determined and committed sector of people who care about housing and homelessness. Understandably impatient and at times frustrated and angry. But not prepared to give up, despite the everchanging circumstances and challenges.

But what is most marked is a growing collective sense that those who make the budget and strategy decisions need to make *bigger* decisions, and quickly.

Maggie Brünjes
Chief Executive



Connect

In this section we reflect on the spaces we have created to collaborate and connect with people across Scotland and beyond to progress what works and what matters.

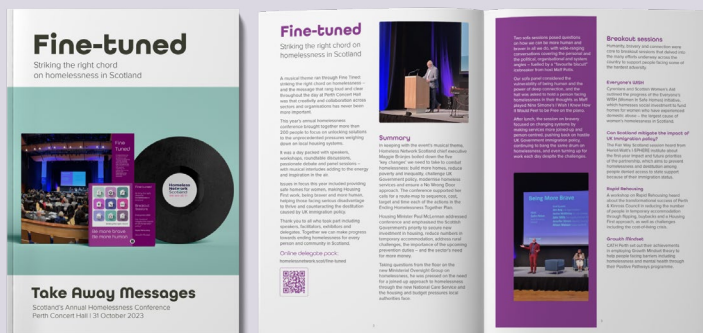
Our Impact across Scotland



Fine-tuned Scotland's annual homelessness conference

An annual highlight for Homeless Network Scotland is to host Scotland's annual homelessness conference in autumn. **Fine Tuned** was held in October in Perth Concert Hall bringing together more than 200 people to share points of interest, knowledge and inspiration – in the backdrop of unprecedented pressures on local housing and homelessness systems.

What impact does the conference have? Evaluations and feedback tell us that it offers important time out from the day-to-day work of a sector campaigning, raising awareness and sharing knowledge and learning about homelessness, and the practitioners who support and advise people affected by homelessness. People value the opportunity to come together to draw from the latest evidence and research, debate points of concern, identify emerging themes and be inspired by new and innovative practice.



Conference Report and short film
bit.ly/Fine-tuned23

Everyone Home collective

The collective of over 40 third and academic sector organisations continue to emphasise the possibilities created when influencing as a larger group together.

During this reporting period, the collective considered the role of the Private Rented Sector (PRS). The collective’s position is that people who experience homelessness must have access to the same range of housing options as other members of the public – and we recognise that for some people, the PRS offers the right choice, in the right place, at the right time. For this reason, it is in everyone’s interest to work together to ensure the PRS is a viable and affordable option.

In August, the collective launched a route map and a framework of ideas and actions which aim to bring the PRS more confidently into the mix of housing options available to households who are homeless or at risk across Scotland, with recommendations at a national and local level to improve the overall sustainability of the sector for private tenants at highest risk of future homelessness.



A route forward for the private rented sector (PRS)

bit.ly/prsroutemap



Member Forums

Quarterly forums are held online, each focusing on a single topic or issue that is of interest or concern to members of Homeless Network Scotland. It is an important forum for sense checking what matters to people delivering and using housing and homelessness services, and this goes on to inform the type of topics and priorities we provide at future forums and events. During this 6-month period, we welcomed 200 people to online member forums with topics including:

- **The Very Best of Intentions** – a series exploring when good does harm.
- **Human Rights Bill for Scotland** – through a housing and homelessness lens.

Associates

We believe that learning from lived experiences of homelessness will help find better solutions to homelessness and we do this by:

- Creating a platform for people who want to advocate for better policies and services, raise awareness and understanding.
- Creating and maintaining direct routes for people with lived experience to influence national and local government and other key partners.

During this period, we undertook a major review of the terms in which we deploy the unique knowledge and networks that lived experience provides us. Now welcomed as workers at Homeless Network Scotland, we brought Associates closer to our staff team and increased the hourly rate that Associates are paid.

We also expanded our Associate programme and welcomed 13 new associates who join an already highly motivated Associate team to coproduce our All in for Change and GHIFT programmes, to influence change, build a network of new contacts and gain valuable new skills and knowledge.



"I am excited to work for HNS, creating change for individuals and society. A heartfelt organisation wanting the best for all!"

New member of the Associate team

Learn

We continue to develop as a knowledge-based organisation, learning from and across our diverse networks so that work to end homelessness is:

- **evidence led:** using the best knowledge available
- **focused on impact:** making a measurable difference
- **contextualised:** sensitive to current environment we operate in equality competent: recognising that risk and impact is different for different people.

We are all in

Our training and consultancy offer continues to expand, and we have developed 4 new modules for local authority colleagues, being delivered to 80 local authority staff:

- A Rough Guide to Homelessness
- Closer to Home – Prevention
- Trauma and Stigma Awareness
- Tenancy Sustainment

The aim of these sessions is to build great working relationships across teams, to increase knowledge of homelessness, and to ‘think prevention’ ahead of the new housing bill. Feedback on this training to date is that it has encouraged participants to identify better ways they can work together, connect with other services and across the communities they work with – we believe a key shift towards preventing homelessness.

We also provided the following learning opportunities for colleagues across 26 diverse organisations across different sectors:

- Rough Guide to Homelessness Policy & Legislation in Scotland
- The Unequal Risk: equality in housing and homelessness

All our learning modules use the latest evidence and research and provoke meaningful conversations that encourage participants to test assumptions and ways of doing things.



Prevention in Glasgow

We have delivered a series of learning opportunities with 7 area partnerships across Glasgow, supporting how to take a place-based approach to preventing homelessness. This focused on enabling responses that prevent more people from reaching crisis point earlier and resulted in some area partners adding homelessness prevention into local area plans. This is a great local lever by which we are so encouraged.

Task and Finish Groups

Homeless Network Scotland has co-chaired two of the four task and finish groups that were appointed by the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group - with the Measuring Impact Group publishing their final report and recommendations during this period.

Determining whether we are getting closer to ending homelessness needs us to understand the interplay between the 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, intended to measure the impact of the Ending Homelessness Together Plan. Using 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.

Ending Homelessness Together Monitor



bit.ly/TaskandFinishGroup



Act

We continued to turn our connections and learning into action, ensuring we do more of what works and what matters.

Policy development and influencing:

A new ministerial oversight group on homelessness was established by the Housing Minister Paul McLennan which Homeless Network Scotland believes creates new opportunities for integrated policy and ultimately better-connected services on the ground.

Homeless Network Scotland's chief executive presented to the second meeting of the oversight group, and encouraged a large-scale framework to underpin small scale solutions that ensure that people at the hard edges find **No Wrong Door**.

HNS continue to influence policy by connecting with the Scottish Government on urgent matters, including during this period:

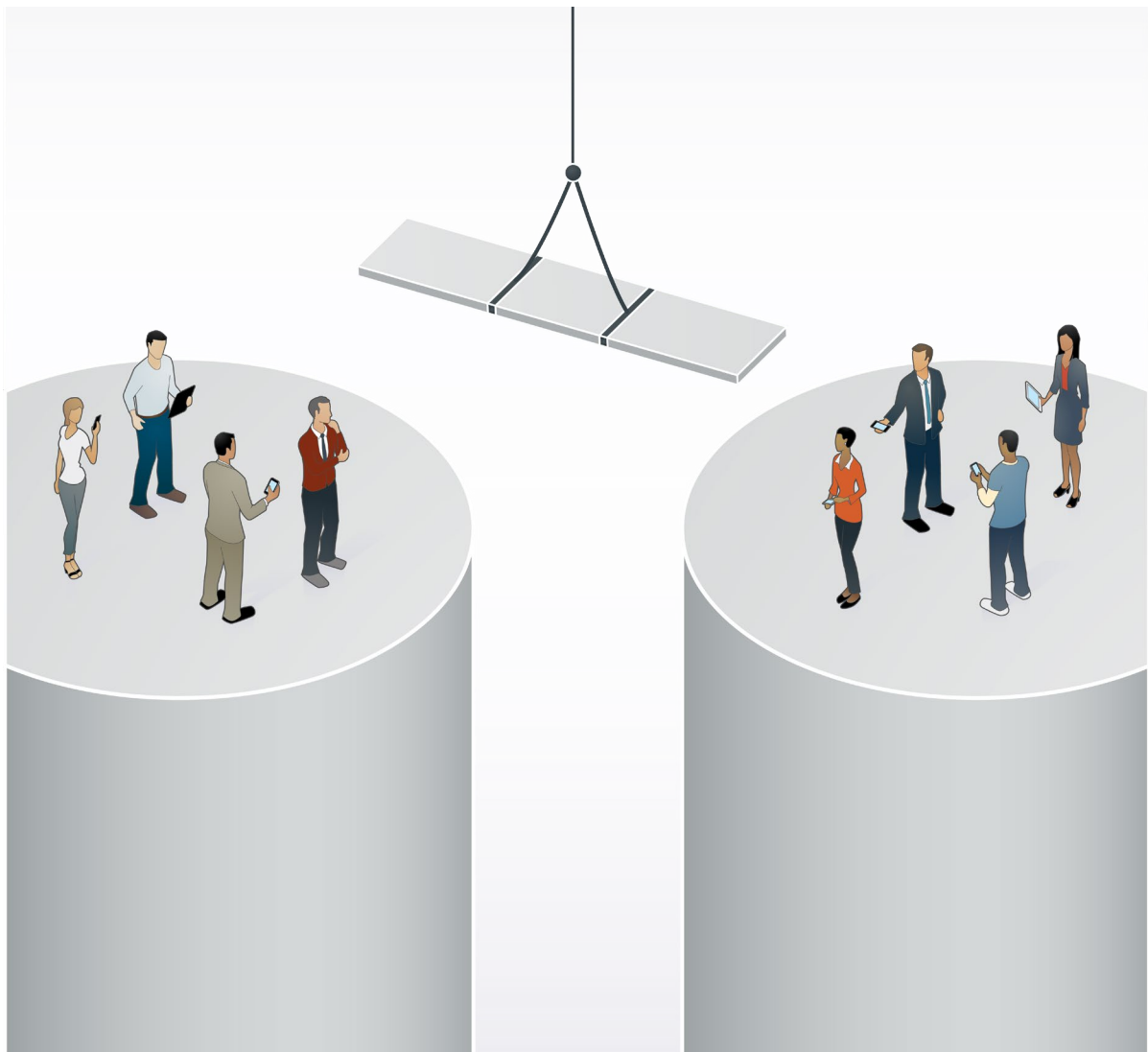
- We facilitated a broader alliance across the housing, homelessness and refugee sectors to set out our shared expectations for housing in the 2024-25 government budget and submitted this to the Finance Secretary and Deputy First Minister. The subsequent decision to cut the affordable housing budget by nearly £200m sent shockwaves across the housing and homelessness sectors.
- We circulated a briefing with key calls to MSPs prior to the housing emergency debate in the Scottish Parliament, as highlighted by Paul O'Kane MSP during the debate.
- We supported additional calls to undertake a Council Tax revaluation, review the Scottish tax system and to the First Minister outlining a range of calls to reduce child poverty.
- We responded to the Scottish Housing Regulator's consultation on the future of social housing regulation and met with the team to discuss the implications for homelessness.



2024: Something doesn't add up...



bit.ly/2024DoesntAddUp



Prioritise Prevention:

Kezia Dugdale, Professor Linda Bauld and Karyn McCluskey were among the insightful contributors to a big picture discussion in November for people who make funding and commissioning decisions to redress disadvantage in Scotland.

‘Changing Lanes’ focused on the overlapping nature of disadvantage in Scotland which cannot be adequately addressed by services and sectors that operate side-by-side, in silos. We hosted this event to bring together funders, local government commissioners and Scottish Government policy leads to explore an issue that drives poor outcomes for people experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage, and to highlight four tests of change in development to learn how to deliver No Wrong Door.

End Rough Sleeping and Destitution: Fairway Scotland

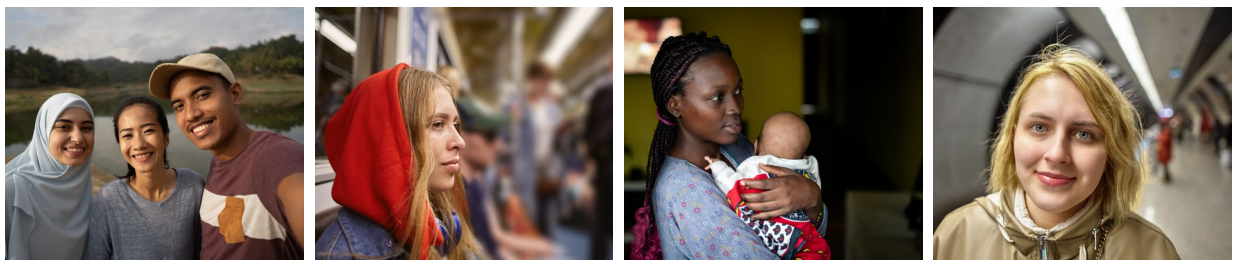
Fair Way Scotland works to stop people with No Recourse to Public Funds being pushed into destitution and homelessness through providing accommodation, access to legal advice and case work and providing emotional and practical support. In the first year, 1205 people accessed Fair Way services in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, including 730 who received casework support. Six people were accommodated by the partnership in Glasgow with linked £50 weekly cash payments because they were excluded from all forms of public support.

I-SPHERE, Heriot-Watt University and Joseph Rowntree Foundation have published their findings from the year one evaluation of Fair Way Scotland, including that despite the severe barriers to taking on this challenge, that the different components of Fair Way “are understood to function together to create conditions for positive change”. The evaluation highlights that advice provision for EEA nationals was recognised to be less well established, and “Fair Way Scotland is seen to provide an opportunity to address that imbalance.”



Fair Way Scotland Evaluation Progress Report (Year 1)

bit.ly/FairWayScotlandEvaluation



Transition to Rapid Rehousing

The Housing First annual check-up is designed to support local authorities to deliver Housing First in line with the National Framework, to reflect on how well Housing First is working in their area and identify any changes needed. Learning from the process from previous years we adapted a schedule of each stage to allow fuller participation with local authorities, organisations and Housing First tenants. We have also built on last year’s progress by including a tenant insight survey, and so far, have gathered insights from 108 Housing First tenants on their experience with Housing First.

24 local authorities have started the Check Up process for 2023, and by Dec 2023 we had received 91 self-reflection tools completed by LA housing and support staff. Two housing first connect events were held in Glasgow and Edinburgh and 7 sounding boards were held with local authorities.



Platform For Lived Experience

All in for Change continues to be represented the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group, ensuring the viewpoints of people with lived and frontline experience contribute to better policy decisions towards ending homelessness. In this 6-month period highlights for the Change Team have included:

- Speaking at Scotland’s annual homelessness conference
- Being asked to share insights and priorities with the new Housing Minister, Paul McLennan
- Contributing to HPSG Task and Finish groups

The team has also been influential in getting local authorities and partners to look at how they can improve engagement and participation in the designing and planning of their public services. People who have worked with the team have said it has inspired them to make important changes.

“Engaging with the Change Team has allowed me to help us understand the difference between active engagement with a particular demographic versus public engagement, which is a far more generic thing. And we’ve seen organisational change as a result.”

The same interviewee went on to describe how bringing in the Change Team for one specific piece of work had led to the organisation adopting a new approach to designing services, specifically in relation to co-designing drug and alcohol services for people with protected characteristics.



How has the Change Team made an impact?

Find out more in the evaluation of All in For Change that was published during this period.

 **Hitting Home the Message**
bit.ly/AIFCHittingHome23

During this period, Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership also commissioned GHIFT to conduct a peer evaluation of a commissioned service, who conducted 1:1 interviews with current residents and shared a report of their findings.

One of our Associates writes in a blog about his involvement in GHIFT:

“When you’re a service user you don’t get to see how things work at policy level. It was a privilege... being in there with managers, decision makers and CEOs, holding them accountable for things you don’t agree with, giving them a reality check.”

This reflects our ongoing efforts to create the right environments for people to connect with decision makers, share their experiences and be part of the entire change process.

Another Associate writes:

“My GHIFT roles and responsibilities... provided me with the opportunity to move beyond merely amplifying the voices of lived experience to delivering co-production and change in decision-making arenas.”

**Homeless
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Scotland**
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