

RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

2022/23 Monitoring Report - activity and funding
(RRTP funding - part of the Ending
Homelessness Together Fund)



Local Authority	ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL		
Reporting Period	01/04/2022 <small>DD/MM/YYYY</small>	to	31/03/2023 <small>DD/MM/YYYY</small>
Reporting Officer	Allan Jones		
Position	Housing Manager (Options & Homelessness)		
Date Completed	27 July 2023		
Total RRTP Funding carried over from 2021/22	£23,491		
RRTP Funding received for 2022/23	£247,000		

2022/23 Activity

Activity Name:	INCREASE ACCESS TO SETTLED ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS			
Activity Description: Provide a short overview of the aims and the transformative nature of this activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and reduce homeless backlog – including flipping • Reduction in average days to relet • Monitor and review impact of specialist officers – Community Care Grants (CCG) and Private Rented Sector (PRS) • Increase access to properties in the Private Rented Sector including discharge of homeless duty • Ensure access by homeless households to properties in social rented sector including where Choice Based Letting (CBL) is in place • Use of information to identify potential fraud through access to Insight 			
Allocation Spent on activity:	£	SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding	Other
		Insight - £5000		
Overview of progress made to date: Provide a short summary of the work undertaken in the past year, progress made and challenges.	<p>The homeless backlog was monitored closely throughout 2022/23. At the end of March 2023 there were 141 open homeless cases not under offer.</p> <p>We experienced a 10% increase in homeless presentations during 2022/23 compared with the previous year and this had the effect of increasing the average number of open homeless cases at the end of each month from 146 to 172.</p> <p>At 31.3.23 10 cases had been open for more than 9 months compared with 6 at 31.3.21.</p> <p>These cases were being actively case managed and were open for an extended period due to circumstances that affected the type/location of property that could be offered or that was required to meet the needs of the household</p> <p>66% of the cases that made up the homeless backlog were single adults with no children</p> <p>28 temporary tenancies were flipped bringing the overall total during the RRTP to date to 319.</p>			

Whilst this activity has slowed it has continued to be significant in discharge of duty and reduction of the homeless backlog.

The average number of days to relet mainstream properties was 52 days at the end of 2022/23 compared with 75 days at the end of 2021/22.

The total average days is negatively impacted by low demand sheltered housing properties.

The staff structure introduced in Autumn 2021 continues to bed in.

Staff are confident in the new roles and their focus on case management with additional responsibility for temporary accommodation placements. The changes made since the introduction of the RRTP have put us in a good position to respond to recent and ongoing challenges that have come from changes to homeless legislation, the pandemic, supporting Ukraine displaced households and the unknown of the cost of living crisis.

The specialist Housing Officer post to prioritise the processing of Community Care Grant (CCG) applications and to facilitate prompt take up of settled accommodation by homeless applicants continues to work very well.

Issues with the delivery of items and completion of CCG orders by the contracted supplier have been addressed. These were having a negative impact on the overall timescale from application to delivery of goods and on customer satisfaction. The move to a cash first approach and a reduction in available budget for CCG in 2023/24 will be monitored and managed by finance colleagues.

The specialist Housing Officer (PRS) role is achieving positive results. Administering the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (RDGS) through a central point supports Housing Officers (Options & Homelessness) managing their case load to identify and achieve settled outcomes in the PRS where appropriate. This is important in relation to homeless prevention/housing options and in securing settled outcomes for those where homelessness cannot be prevented.

The Housing Officer (PRS) supports staff, landlords and potential tenants in the PRS by providing detailed information and advice, identifying available properties and facilitating access and promoting tenancy sustainment. There is close working and

communication between the Housing Officer (PRS) and the Private Sector Team. Advertising of available private rental properties on Aberdeenshire Council website has begun.

During 2022/23 79.3% of those assessed as statutory homeless in Aberdeenshire secured a settled outcome in the social rented sector compared with 3.3% in the private sector. This is very similar to previous years. The private sector plays a small part for those who have been assessed as homeless compared with outcomes through housing options advice where almost 8% of outcomes were in private sector.

Success in reducing the homeless backlog to current low levels and the impact of homeless prevention activity has impacted the proportion of mainstream lets being made to homeless applicants which was 42.6% compared with 41.9% in the previous year and short of the target of 50%.

The demographic of the homeless caseload means that we need a higher number of one bed properties than are available to let. Where there are suitable vacancies, given the large geographical spread of Aberdeenshire, they are often in areas where there is little or no current homeless demand. This mismatch in supply and demand is experienced by all social sector landlords in Aberdeenshire.

We, and the majority of Registered Social Landlords (RSL) operating within Aberdeenshire, allocate properties through CBL. We are in regular discussion with RSL partners to identify homeless applicants who could be matched to/offered available property before it is advertised. A similar approach is taken with our own vacancies and direct offers to applicants with homeless priority may be made prior to a property being advertised. Homeless applicants are also encouraged and supported to bid for appropriate properties either directly or through autobid. Changes to the Allocation policy ensures that those who have a homeless priority are considered for a wide a range of areas and that settled accommodation is identified as quickly as possible.

Trial of Insight as a tool to identify whether there is fraud within homeless applications was progressed and the initial one year contract has been extended for a further year.

<p>Impact of Activity: Evidence of the impact of this activity, including any financial saving and how many households have benefited from this activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 99 referrals, from a variety of sources including Housing Officers (options) and the Resettlement Team, received for access to Rent Deposit Guarantees. 62 tenancies were created with £24,930 guaranteed. This is an average of £410 per tenancy. During the same period claims against RDGS amounted to £9549. • 613 CCG applications were processed as a priority. Positive feedback on both timescales and support provided to ensure delivery. • A case identified where false information had been given – this did not result in action being taken to recover the property. 			
<p>Future spend planned on this activity in 2023/24:</p>	£	SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other
<p>Implementation in 2023/24: Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2023/24.</p>		£5000 - insight		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and maintain homeless backlog at current low levels • No homeless cases open for more than 9 months except in exceptional circumstances. • Reduce average days to relet mainstream properties to 40 days • Maximise allocations to homeless households • Monitor and support settled outcomes in Private Rented Sector 		

2022/23 Activity	
<p>Activity Name:</p>	<p>REVIEW TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION STOCK AND ITS USE</p>
<p>Activity Description: Provide a short overview of the aims and the transformative nature of this activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review temporary stock, including shared tenancies, in line with reduced homeless presentations and demographic of homeless backlog

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor number of placements and time spent in temporary accommodation – continue to reduce • Support Options & Homelessness staff to focus on case management approach and increased responsibility for temporary accommodation placements within it • Review community hosting project implementation and outcomes in partnership with Aberdeen City Council • Support colleagues in the resettlement team and within Children & Families SW to meet objectives in relation to Resettlement & Integration and Corporate Parenting.
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Allocation Spent on activity:		SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding	Other
	£	£29,861.20 – Community Hosting		
		£25,200 – flipping		

<p>Overview of progress made to date:</p> <p>Provide a short summary of the work undertaken in the past year, progress made and challenges.</p>	<p>The overall homeless journey time has significantly reduced with average days to complete homeless cases at 85 days compared with 98 in 2021/22.</p> <p>The average days in temp was also reduced to 66 days from 73 due to placements being actively monitored and move on managed.</p> <p>Residential Accommodation Units (Hostel), Stonefield House and Katteburn Court, are now used for assessment and short-term placements and comply with the Unsuitable Accommodation Order. The majority of placements are for less than 7 days.</p> <p>At the end of March 2023 the temporary accommodation stock included 155 self- contained furnished properties and 32 shared 2 bed properties compared with 350 self-contained properties prior to the introduction of the RRTP.</p> <p>We have responded to demand for homeless assistance from Afghan and Ukrainian nationals entering the UK through established visa routes and placed with hosts or joining family settled within Aberdeenshire. We are working with colleagues in Children and Families SW to support a number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. We developed a small number of</p>
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	<p>additional properties in response and have continued to provide further resource as required.</p> <p>We were not required to report any breach of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.</p> <p>Reducing and re-profiling the temporary accommodation stock alongside the introduction of the new staffing structure within the Options and Homelessness Team has enabled change to how temporary accommodation is used and managed. Integrating former Temporary Accommodation Officers into the role of Housing Officer (Options & Homelessness) reflects the shifting of priorities away from maintaining high levels of temporary accommodation, and moves within it, towards an effective case management approach that moves people to settled solutions quickly.</p> <p>We recognised within the RRTP that our levels of youth homelessness were higher than the national average and that a different response might be required. We jointly commissioned Aberdeen Foyer to carry out a feasibility study to explore Community Hosting in Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire. Following evaluation of the study and completion of procurement a contract was awarded to Aberdeen Foyer for the delivery of a community hosting service using the `Nightstop` model. The contract began on 1 April 2022 and is jointly funded by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Recruitment of hosts has proved more difficult than expected and we have not achieved the target of recruiting 10 hosts in Year 1 despite extensive advertising and engagement. We currently have three hosts and referrals can now be accepted for placement. Further recruitment is ongoing.</p>
<p>Impact of Activity: Evidence of the impact of this activity, including any financial saving and how many households have benefited from this activity.</p>	<p>128 households were in suitable temporary accommodation at the end of March 2023, including 27 households with children and 55 children. There were no placements in unsuitable temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Monthly variations during 2021/22 saw a peak in placements of 152 in May but reduced to 120 in December.</p>

Future spend planned on this activity in 2023/24:		SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other
	£	£42,136.40 - Community Hosting £15,000- residual flipping		
Implementation in 2023/24: Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2023/24	<p>We are supporting Aberdeen Foyer to achieve an increase in the number of hosts recruited for the Community Hosting service from within Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire and to have sufficient placements to be able to evaluate impact and decide on future funding.</p> <p>We want to maintain the progress that we have made to ensure that the average length of the homeless journey is reduced to 75 days and the average time spent in temporary accommodation at 60 days.</p> <p>We aim to avoid any breach of the Unsuited Accommodation Order.</p> <p>We will flip properties where it is suitable and in the best interests of the individual and the service.</p>			

2022/23 Activity	
Activity Name:	HOMELESS PREVENTION ACTIVITY
Activity Description: Provide a short overview of the aims and the transformative nature of this activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention pathways for young people and those with care experience. • Housing Officer (Mediation) role and outcomes • Develop Housing Domestic Abuse Policy • Review hospital discharge arrangements – identify housing needs at early stage

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison release pathway – Sustainable Housing on release for everyone (SHORE) • Homeless Prevention budget • Resettlement / Housing Officer to work with Ukraine displaced households to identify housing options and prevent homelessness
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Allocation Spent on activity:		SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding	Other
	£	£12,648 prevention funding		£50,000 Lacer

<p>Overview of progress made to date: Provide a short summary of the work undertaken in the past year, progress made and challenges.</p>	<p>614 prevention/housing advice approaches were recorded during 2022/23 compared with 532 in previous year. 16.75% went on to make a homeless application while 57.5% secured alternative accommodation or remained in current accommodation.</p> <p>The Housing Officer (mediation) offers tailored housing options advice to the young people referred but take up of mediation has been low to date. In the initial 6 months there were 23 case contacts but increased to 90 in the following six months. 42.3% of contacts were resolved without a homeless application being made.</p> <p>The postholder provides a single point of contact for Education colleagues to access housing advice and assistance. Despite awareness raising within schools take up has been low and this is an area that we will concentrate on.</p> <p>During 2022/23, 267 homeless presentations were received from those aged 16-24 yrs reduced from 348 at the beginning of RRTP and pre pandemic. Repeat homelessness presentations have reduced by 50% and demonstrates the effectiveness of the work that is being done to reduce the time spent within the homeless system and to prevent re-entry.</p> <p>Close working with colleagues within Children`s Services around delivery of The Promise supports the Care leavers housing protocol and ongoing work of the Youth Housing Forum. It has also led to the development of initiatives such as Stepping Stone in Inverurie and housing inputs to the work</p>
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	<p>around family wellbeing hubs and the Aspen Approach (formerly the Holistic Family Support Project).</p> <p>We are active members of Aberdeenshire Community Justice Partnership and work closely with Social work and colleagues at HMP Grampian to ensure that accommodation and support needs are identified and addressed for individuals admitted to, and released from, prison. We attend the Case management board and share information re admission, releases and transfers allowing housing need to be assessed and homeless prevention activity to be carried out. This has enabled individuals to be housed directly in permanent accommodation on release and in other instances tenancies to be sustained. Homeless applications and repeat homelessness applications from prison leavers in Aberdeenshire have been reduced partly due to rapid rehousing but also through access to appropriate support through Housing First.</p> <p>A successful bid to the Scottish Government Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery Fund (LACER) provided £100,000 in additional funding. This was used to fund activity around setting up and sustaining tenancies and for the alleviation of food and fuel poverty. This directly linked to the prevention of homelessness and supplemented the funding that was made available through the Homeless Prevention Budget.</p>									
<p>Impact of Activity: Evidence of the impact of this activity, including any financial saving and how many households have benefited from this activity.</p>	<p>Payments made from the Homeless Prevention Budget and facilitated tenancy sustainment and prevented homelessness through full/partial payment of rent arrears and the purchase of household items/equipment to promote tenancy sustainment. This amounted to £12,648</p> <p>Lacer spend – RSL, LA and PRS - 90 tenancies were supported and rent arrears reduced to below level where action would be taken</p>									
<p>Future spend planned on this activity in 2023/24:</p>	£	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="663 1794 938 1850">SG RRTP Funding</th> <th data-bbox="938 1794 1209 1850">Local Authority funding</th> <th data-bbox="1209 1794 1465 1850">Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="663 1850 938 1951" style="text-align: center;">Unknown</td> <td data-bbox="938 1850 1209 1951"></td> <td data-bbox="1209 1850 1465 1951"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other	Unknown				
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<p>Implementation in 2023/24: Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2023/24.</p>	<p>We are raising awareness of forthcoming homeless prevention duty with wider partners. The pressure that this will place on our</p>									

	service in terms of resources and maintaining performance is not yet known.
Plans for mainstreaming this activity: Provide detail of the timescale and plans to mainstream / when this activity will end:	This activity has been mainstreamed

Unspent RRTP Funding		
Please provide the total RRTP funding provided by the Scottish Government for the implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in your area that has <u>not</u> been spent to date.	£	£174,290.80 cannot be attributed to specific spend as RRTP funding not ring fenced. There is no carry over into 2023/24