

RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

2022/23 Monitoring Report

Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Fund



Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans Monitoring Report

In previous years, we have asked all local authorities to provide a written report detailing how they have spent their allocation of funding including funding carried over from previous financial years. For this return we are refocusing on the outcomes of rapid rehousing transition plan spend and have included four questions which ask local authorities to provide qualitative information to capture an overview of rapid rehousing transition plan (RRTP) progress and challenges between 2019-2023.

These questions are designed to identify where RRTP funding has improved outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, to identify best practice and highlight where more support is needed. It is a free text return designed to allow local authorities to capture successes and challenges. We are also seeking anonymised case studies of people who have directly benefitted from the implementation of RRTPs in local authority areas. This qualitative information will be used in the consideration of future funding.

Please complete this report and include it with the latest version of your RRTP for 2022-23 and updated EQIA by **25 August 2023** to:

RapidRehousingTransitionPlansMailbox@gov.scot.

Please provide an overview of progress/outcomes since the implementation of your RRTP including anonymised case studies where helpful to demonstrate outcomes.

Word guide: approximately 500 words per question.

Can you describe how implementation of your RRTP has helped prevent homelessness within your local authority area?

Prevention of homeless has been a strong focus throughout the RRTP. It allowed us to trial new posts and ways of working including developing and strengthening joint working.

The role of Housing Officer (mediation) was developed and embedded to include the provision of housing options advice to young people at risk of homelessness ensuring consistent advice and access to appropriate resources. **(Case Study 1)** Joint work with Children's Services and Through Care social work enabled the development of prevention pathways for young people, including those who are Care Experienced, and the provision of accommodation that includes training flats and supported accommodation.

The Housing Officer (PRS) provides options advice facilitating access to tenancies in the PRS and provides landlords and tenants with support to sustain those tenancies. Addressing issues effectively at an early stage is vital to preventing repeat homelessness.

Recognising the increased risk of homelessness for those in prison we reviewed arrangements with Housing and Social Work colleagues and the Scottish Prison Service to meet SHORE standards and to identify sustainable housing on release. **(Case Study 2)**. This links with the development of Housing First and the establishment of a team to provide support to those with more complex needs. Many clients receiving Housing First support have been in prison, some multiple times, and each prison sentence would lead to the loss of accommodation and the need to present as homeless on release. With increased awareness and support, more tenancies have been able to be sustained.

RRTP funding allowed the trial of a mental health link worker post which has now been mainstreamed. This post was a direct response to the adverse impact of the pandemic on the mental health of clients of the housing service and on the housing issues they were raising. Linking clients to appropriate services and community resources has led to positive health and wellbeing outcomes and improved housing situations including the prevention of homelessness and tenancy sustainment. **(Case Study 3)**

Improved joint working and information sharing with Tenancy Services colleagues and Registered Social Landlord partners enabled tenancies at risk to be identified and appropriate interventions to be made including assessing for housing support, signposting to or providing financial assistance and the prevention of evictions. The RRTP has acted as a catalyst and focus for homeless prevention within housing management and enabled us to respond quickly and effectively to distribute both our Tenant Grant Fund allocation but also LACER funding.

With Resettlement and Social Work colleagues the Housing Officer (support) has ensured that New Scots households have settled into permanent accommodation. Households who have arrived through the various visa schemes, including more recently Ukraine displaced households, have been provided with dedicated housing options advice and assistance by a specialist Housing Officer (Ukraine), including identifying

settled accommodation without having had to go through a homeless route. **(Case Study 4)**

We reviewed our outreach support services and developed a prevention pathway in relation to Gender Based Abuse. This included working with commissioned services to move from refuge to outreach support and the development of domestic abuse housing guidance in line with the Chartered Institute of Housing “Make a stand” campaign. A housing procedure also detailed the practical assistance that can be offered to those affected by domestic abuse.

Can you describe how implementation of your RRTTP has helped speed up the process of rehousing homeless households?

A priority was to increase the supply of available settled accommodation and we took a cross tenure approach. We carried out a review of our void process and void management with input from an external consultant to reduce the overall void period and ensure that vacant council properties were available for relet as quickly as possible. RRTTP funding allowed us to trial different roles through tests of change and some of those roles have been mainstreamed. We have reduced the average number of days to relet mainstream properties from 75 to 52 days and are working to achieve target of 40 days.

We promote and assist with access to property in the private sector, particularly for those households with need of a specific type of accommodation or location or those we do not have a statutory duty to rehouse. The Housing Officer (PRS) is responsible for the administration of the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme where previously it was up to officers providing housing options advice to promote and administer. 62 tenancies were created in 2022/23 with £25,000 guaranteed. The Housing Officer (PRS) shares information re vacancies with wider options team and promotes vacancies on the council website.

We meet regularly with RSL partners and promote rapid rehousing and shared responsibility towards resolving homelessness. Raising awareness and working collaboratively has led to some increase in nominations but this is a work in progress and some partners could do more.

We reviewed the structure of the Options and Homeless team to deliver rapid rehousing and to effectively case manage open homeless cases. This includes regular monitoring of the homeless backlog and particularly cases that have been open longest, with a focus on finding solutions. At the end of June there were 132 open homeless cases with only 5 having been open for more than 9 months. 92% of homeless cases had been open for less than 6 months

We reviewed our homeless temporary accommodation stock in line with homeless demand and took the opportunity to flip properties where possible to reduce the overall number and make up of the stock. Households who occupied temporary accommodation that met their needs and who had been waiting for long periods of time for a suitable permanent offer were given the opportunity to remain and for us to discharge duty. This has been very effective and to date we have flipped 319 properties.

We introduced a Housing Officer (Community Care Grant) to our structure following a test of change. This enabled fast tracking of CCG applications from household households reducing the time taken to assess and for goods to be delivered. 613 CCG applications were processed as a priority during 2022/23. This has significantly reduced waiting time and promoted prompt resettlement. **(Case study 5)**

The combination of the above has resulted in the time taken to close a homeless case having been reduced from 142 days in 2019 to 85 days in 2023.

How has implementation of your RRTP affected the numbers of households in temporary accommodation and the time spent there?

Throughout the period of the RRTP we have reviewed our temporary stock, including our residential units, in line with homeless presentations, the demographic of the households who make up our homeless backlog and the relevant legislation.

The residential accommodation units in Inverurie and Peterhead are now used for assessment and short-term placements. The majority of placements are for less than 7 days.

We trialled shared tenancies and our model has been adopted by other Authorities and recognised as an exception in terms of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order. We have used RRTP funding to explore the feasibility of Community Hosting and to jointly commission with Aberdeen City Council the development of Nightstop provision by Aberdeen Foyer. It is too early to identify whether this model will yield expected outcomes due to difficulties in recruiting hosts and referrals only now being accepted.

In April 2019 there were 303 households in temporary accommodation, we were reliant on using Bed & Breakfast and the average length of stay was 131 days. This contrasts with April 2023 where households in temporary accommodation amounted to 124, there is no use of Bed & Breakfast or breach of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and the average stay is reduced to 83 days.

The number of placements and time spent in temporary accommodation are closely monitored.

As the homeless backload is reduced and prevention activity has an impact on the number of homeless presentations made there has been a need to reduce the temporary accommodation stock that we have and the properties that are available for use.

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.

The total stock of temporary accommodation was 350 in 2019 but by 2023 it comprises 155 self-contained properties and 32 shared 2 bed properties.

The reduction in use of temporary accommodation and shorter stays has had the negative consequence of reducing income and increasing void rent loss, resulting in us currently reviewing temporary accommodation charges.

Is your local authority on track for making the planned transition to rapid rehousing? If not, what major factors are hindering progress?

We have made excellent progress towards rapid rehousing in terms of meeting performance targets and embedding the understanding and commitment to delivering within the Options & Homeless team and across the wider housing service. A strong focus on homeless prevention and housing options has led to homeless presentations being reduced. Households are spending less time in temporary accommodation and the overall homeless journey time has been reduced significantly. The revolving door of homelessness has been ended with repeat homeless presentations now minimal.

We consider that we have reached a mature stage in delivering rapid rehousing but we have concerns relating to sustaining this performance in the face of uncertainty that includes the impact of the cost of living crisis, homeless demand from Ukraine displaced people as host placements come to an end and the implications of the homeless prevention duty.

We recognise that while we have been able to reduce the use of temporary accommodation, we require to maintain a more limited stock to meet demand and for emergency use. This may make us vulnerable and less able to respond to demand where it exceeds what may be considered normal eg adverse weather events. Reduction in the overall income and increasing costs to provide temporary accommodation may make it difficult to continue to ensure that temporary accommodation is affordable.

We have had feedback from a commissioned support provider that indicates that while Rapid Rehousing is desirable for the majority of those with homeless priority, there may be instances where it may have a negative consequence. Young people for example may benefit from having the opportunity to engage with housing support and to gain skills that will ensure tenancy sustainment. Moving them too quickly towards permanent accommodation may be detrimental to some young people. We are considering how to best address this in the context of rapid rehousing and monitoring of performance.

We are committed to continuing to work to achieve positive outcomes. Further review of our RRTP, while ongoing, has been delayed to enable a better understanding of future homeless prevention activity and funding of it.

Case Study 1 : Options Advice/Mediation

18 year old girl referred to Housing Officer (mediation). Staying with grandparents having been asked to leave parental home. Unemployed and not on benefits. Previously supported by CAMHS but now seeing GP re anxiety.

Given full Options advice including registering to bid on Aberdeenshire properties advertised by Council and RSLs., mid market rent, private renting including Rent Deposit Guarantee. Signposted to apply for UC and job searching. Discussed areas of choice and that area where she would prefer is low turnover and high demand. Need to widen areas of choice especially if homeless priority awarded. Discussed mediation and benefits – resolve conflict and planned move without chaos of homeless journey. She wanted to make a homeless application but agreed to contact with her mother.

Mediation meeting took place between mother and daughter – issues discussed were mainly around need to get a job and pay board and behavioural changes that mother tried to support but did not understand. No resolution and temp placement made – application for crisis grant and referral to housing support. Following 1 night in temp accommodation unit she returned to grandparents and Housing Officer (mediation) encouraged ongoing contact with support re training/job opportunities, bidding for property etc.

1 week later follow up – she had returned to parental home

Case Study 2 – SHORE

Applicant being released from HMP Grampian. Release highlighted through information provided by Scottish Prison Service and discussed at Case Management Board.

Homeless application taken and permanent tenancy identified prior to date of release. CCG applied for in advance and family assisted with setting up tenancy. This allowed for support and other services to be identified and referrals made. Avoided placement in temp and a further move of location and workers which can be difficult and unsettling.

Case Study 3 – Mental Health Link Worker

Mr X expressed that for the first time someone had taken the time to listen to him about his mental health. He appreciated the encouragement and empathy that was shown. The worker took the weight off their shoulders in terms of making the appointments and going and speaking about their mental health. He has now seen his GP and has medication. He also now attends a 12-week course via Penumbra, has attended Aberdeenshire Step in Service for Alcohol and drugs and is now receiving support which has led to a decrease in his substance use. He reports that he is now sleeping better, feels much more positive about his future and is considering getting involved in farming because this was something he enjoyed when he was younger. This client had a number of housing issues including hoarding and living in poor housing conditions but his improved health has seen him feel motivated to tackle his house condition and live with improved outcomes.

Case Study 4 : Access to PRS/Resettlement

Referral made through resettlement team – host placement of Ukrainian woman and her 14-year-old daughter coming to an end. Discussed housing options and specifically wish to secure accommodation in Inverurie only. Process of making homeless application discussed and unlikely to be housed within area of choice due to turnover and demand. Applicant working and felt private renting would be unaffordable but signposted for income maximisation with welfare rights.

Decided not to make homeless application but to explore private renting. Housing Officer (PRS) provided links to properties and web sites and answered queries relating to various properties and the process of viewing. Ongoing contact over a 4-week period and she was offered a 2-bed private rented property in area of choice. Rent deposit guarantee provided and lease agreed. Applicant very appreciative of assistance received and delighted with outcome.

Case Study 5 : Fast Track of CCG applications

Miss X received an offer of permanent accommodation from Aberdeenshire Council on 21/06/23. She signed for her new tenancy on 04/07/23. A Community Care Grant application was submitted by her Support Worker on 07/07/23. This was received by Housing Officer (CCG) on a Friday afternoon and was picked up on Monday morning for processing. The application investigated and a grant awarded to the applicant.

Miss X received an award which allowed her to purchase the appliances that she required for her new home and she was also awarded carpets for the living room and bedrooms which will be supplied and fitted for her.

The process was dealt with and processed within 1 working day of receiving the application.

Details of funding recipient

Local authority	Aberdeenshire Council		
Reporting period	01/04/2022	to	31/03/2023
Reporting officer	Allan Jones		
Position	Housing Manager (Options & Homelessness)		
Date completed	27.7.23		
Total RRTP funding carried over from 2021-22	nil		
RRTP funding received for 2022-23	£247,000		
RRTP spend 2022-23	£72,709.20		
Total RRTP funding carried over to 2023-24	£ nil	RRTP funding is not ring fenced	

Housing First

Housing First tenancies

Provide a short brief overview of your progress and any obstacles to progression of Housing First in your area.

Housing First started as a pilot project in Aberdeenshire in 2017 but has rapidly expanded in recent years to upscale the scheme which now provides support for up to 100 live cases at one time. During 2022/23 we submitted a bid for funding to Aberdeenshire ADP which was successful and allowed us to sustain the funding of one member of staff we had for the last 3 years and further allow us to employ 3 additional staff members. One staff member will have the role as being a floating member of staff who covers the housing first clients when their main worker is on leave, sick leave, etc. This has proved very successful and allows for more streamlined support for the clients we support. During 2022/23 Aberdeenshire Council created 21 new Housing First Tenancies. During 2022/23 our partnership working has gone from strength to strength with involvement of the housing first team in a joint initiative with colleagues around Operation Protector which carries out targeted days in locations in Aberdeenshire where partners team up to visit those most vulnerable and who are at risk of exploitation and drug related death. Some Housing First clients fall into this category, and it ensures continued additional support from all agencies with report back on outcomes following the days of action.

The cost of living crisis and availability of hardship funds has put additional pressure on those supported via Housing First and our mainstream housing support services. We are seeing

	<p>additional vulnerabilities in relation to fuel poverty, food poverty and house condition issues since the costs of essential items have increased for the general population. This has led to a number of issues in local communities where those who exploit other people will seek opportunities to make use of client's homes to sell drugs or exploit people.</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Council also lead on the Rural Housing First meetings and have been asked to speak to multiple local authorities across Scotland over the past year to pass on experience and tips in relation to Housing First and general housing support contracts.</p>								
<p>Housing First partners Provide detail of all Housing First partners who are supporting the delivery of Housing First.</p>	<p>Police Scotland, DWP, RSL Partners, Substance misuse social work and clinical teams, mental health teams, criminal justice social work teams, health, Turning point Scotland, ADA, SPS, Community Safety.</p>								
<p>Allocation spent on Housing First 2022/23:</p>	<p>£</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="687 1234 927 1308">SG RRTP funding</th> <th data-bbox="927 1234 1163 1308">Local authority funding</th> <th data-bbox="1163 1234 1398 1308">Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="687 1308 927 1408"></td> <td data-bbox="927 1308 1163 1408">470,000</td> <td data-bbox="1163 1308 1398 1408"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	SG RRTP funding	Local authority funding	Other		470,000		
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<p>Impact of Housing First: Any evidence of the impact of Housing First including anonymised case studies where appropriate</p>	<p>Housing First continues to support those who are most vulnerable in our Aberdeenshire Communities. During 22/23 we have also managed to support a number of prison leavers through this programme and outcomes for all clients are still very positive with tenancy sustainment rate of 90%.</p> <p>Case Study – Miss C was referred to Housing First because she had been living in temporary accommodation and was not responding to anyone including her homeless officer in</p>								

	<p>relation to an offer of permanent housing. She had a long history of substance misuse, had been looked after and was being exploited by others to deal drugs from her temporary accommodation flat. Initially Miss C was reluctant to engage with her Housing First worker either but the worker persisted and went round weekly only to be told to leave through the letterbox but she always left a card with her name and number. Several months later the Housing First Worker was at our Substance Misuse Step in Centre and staff highlighted Miss C was in the building. The Housing First worker then managed to speak to her and the response was that she could not believe the worker cared enough to keep coming to her door every week. From that appointment onwards Miss C engaged with her worker, has managed to move into her own permanent tenancy in an area close to her family supports, is now in treatment for use of substances and has recently given birth to a baby. She said to her worker that without the persistence and support from Housing First to continue to keep her motivated, assist to attend appointments and make her house a home she would have never managed to achieve such a positive outcome.</p>								
<p>Future spend planned on this activity in 2023/24:</p>	<p>£</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="687 1675 927 1727">SG RRTP Funding</th> <th data-bbox="927 1675 1163 1727">Local Authority funding</th> <th data-bbox="1163 1675 1401 1727">Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="687 1727 927 1854"></td> <td data-bbox="927 1727 1163 1854">£542,000</td> <td data-bbox="1163 1727 1401 1854"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other		£542,000		
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<p>Future plans for Housing First : Provide detail of the future of Housing First delivery in your local area, including timescales and progress towards Housing First being the default option for people</p>	<p>Increased promotion of Housing First as an available service for those who have multiple complex needs and experiencing</p>								

with multiple and complex needs experiencing homelessness.

homelessness. Aim to attend all partner agency meetings by end of March 2024.

Develop more reporting tools to report on multi agency outcomes and not just Housing Outcomes for those supported by the project.

Increased attendance at Substance Misuse Step in Centres. This has already been established in 3 locations but will be expanded to include a further 2 later this year.