

From: **(Redacted)**
Better Homes Division
Housing and Social Justice
7 May 2020

- 1. Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning**
- 2. Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government**

PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR TEST AND LEARN PILOT IN EDINBURGH

Purpose

1. To seek your agreement to provide £64,454 of funding to set up a pilot service to facilitate access for individuals currently accommodated in hotels in Edinburgh to accommodation in the private rented sector (PRS).

Priority

2. **Immediate.**

Background and proposal

3. For the first time ever, the number of people rough sleeping and using care shelters in Edinburgh is extremely low. Frontline partners estimate that fewer than 30 people are still on the streets across Scotland, but the majority of people who would have been sleeping on the streets or in night shelter accommodation are now in hotels, with tailored support. However, as restrictions ease, we want people to transition from hotels into settled accommodation. The private rented sector is an increasingly important source of housing given the short supply of social rented housing. An uplift of Local Housing Allowance presents a unique opportunity as more properties are becoming available, as well as decrease in demand from the holiday and student market and reports of reducing rent prices mean that there is now a clear opportunity for change and a way to end rough sleeping for good.

4. A consortium comprised of Edinburgh Cyrenians, Crisis and Simon Community Scotland (Streetwork) has developed a proposal to make greater use of the PRS to prevent homelessness. The pilot service would run for six months, during which time learning would be captured and initial outcomes evaluated, and if successful, there is scope for the project to be expanded across Scotland. For the pilot, Crisis would build on its current 'Help to Rent' service, which would enable the brokerage of tenancies for a client group with higher support needs, and who have a good quality package of support already in place. Cyrenians and Streetwork would work to identify appropriate referrals to the service, make assessments of their support needs and preferences and coordinate the offer of visiting tenancy support for those who are housed.

5. The pilot would initially support around 15 individuals who are currently living in hotels in Edinburgh, having previously been rough sleeping or using the night shelter. This would establish a pathway from hotel to PRS, which could be up-scaled and ultimately maximise PRS supply for rapid rehousing aims. This would also support a deeper engagement with PRS landlords and letting agencies to establish what it would take for them to offer tenancies to households with higher support needs and less favourable housing backgrounds in the long-term.

Funding breakdown

6. We have options about whether to fund this bid from the Immediate Priorities fund versus the Ending Homelessness Together Fund. We believe an appropriate principle is that where a cost arises just because of Covid-19 and is related to protecting people in the immediate term it should be met from the Immediate Priorities fund. Where a measure is about longer term solutions and where it aligns with the broader aims of the Ending Homelessness Together action plan we could and should consider whether it would be possible to fund it through that route.

7. While this year's Ending Homelessness Together budget was fully allocated at the start of the year, we do believe there may be some small flexibilities partly arising as a result of Covid-19 and we are likely to be able to free up a small amount of funding for immediate measures – we do not estimate the flexibility to be large, but this project could be accommodated. It's not clear how many other similar projects we could fund through this route, though. We are currently working on establishing the position more concretely and will provide more advice on the overall picture shortly.

8. This pilot service would require two additional posts, as well as funds to support additional tenancy brokerage. The first post would be a PRS relationship manager within Crisis, who would work on expanding the current 'Help to Rent' scheme and engage with landlords/letting agents with whom they already have successful partnerships. They would also develop a marketing strategy to increase the supply of good quality PRS accommodation and manage relationships throughout the tenancies. Total costing for the initial six month period would be £20,000. Crisis is willing to make a contribution towards the costs of this post.

9. The second post would be for a PRS tenancy access and support coordinator within Cyrenians/Streetwork. The post holder would develop materials to allow those who are homeless or sleeping rough to understand their options, rights and responsibilities within the PRS in Edinburgh so they can make informed choices. They would also be responsible for identifying interested households, defining an assessment process and coordinating support packages and links with relevant partners to support sustainment. This role would include the development of training and information for support staff on PRS as a housing option, tenancy rights and responsibilities, Edinburgh's housing market and how support may differ to that in the social rented sector. Total costing for the initial six month period would be £21,204.

10. The additional funds required for this pilot to encourage take up are a flexible 'incentive budget' of up to £12,000 to cover rent in advance, furniture, rent relief and savings incentives for tenants and funding of £11,250 to cover bond liabilities for 15 tenancies (we anticipate some of the bond liability income being returned to Scottish Government, depending on the bond recovery rate).

Cost effectiveness

11. PRS access schemes have been shown to make significant savings. From 2010-16 Crisis ran two subsequent PRS access programmes in England, funded by the UK Government, under which over 150 access services were set up. These programmes created over 8000 PRS tenancies and had a 90% sustainment rate. The cost effectiveness of expanding PRS access in Edinburgh is in its potential to help the Council reduce its temporary accommodation, and in particular, its use of the cost ineffective option of B&Bs, which is not fully covered by Housing Benefit.

12. This pilot will also benefit people with more complex needs. Service costs are higher for this group, as more work is required in ensuring the correct support is in place and that landlords remain on board. Although a cohort with higher needs will incur higher costs, the social benefit and cost savings of PRS access to this group will also be greater. This is because homelessness for this cohort is often accompanied by expensive use of crisis and emergency services. Private landlords will see the benefit too as this will offer them secure tenancies during a period of economic recovery.

Upscaling the scheme Scotland-wide

13. The current situation provides an opportunity to build on the progress that has been made in recent weeks. Resourcing staff to actively work in the PRS and engaging with landlords as soon as possible is a key part of a successful recovery strategy and, in parallel to this pilot, we will build on work we have already started with local authorities and other partners to encourage and support use of the PRS where this is appropriate. Testing this pilot now would allow time to learn from this work and consider ways to roll it out nationally, particularly as LHA rates have risen. Scottish Government support for this pilot could encourage private landlords across Scotland to engage with this work, and we will be in a strong position to share good practice and encourage changes in practice as the pilot evolves.

Monitoring and evaluation

14. Officials would ensure that attention is paid to the learning process and the understanding developed during the pilot, particularly in relation to how it affects individual outcomes.

Recommendation

15. Officials recommend that you agree to provide £64,454 of funding to Edinburgh Cyrenians as lead partner in the consortium to allow them to develop and test this pilot in Edinburgh over the next six months.

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning	X				
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government	X				

Director for Housing and Social Justice
 (Redacted), DD Better Homes Division
 (Redacted), Unit Head, Energy Efficient
 Scotland
 Homelessness Team
 Communications COVID-19 mailbox
 CLG Coordination Unit
 Jeanette Campbell, Special Advisor

Mitchell G (Gary)

From: on behalf of Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning

Sent: 06 May 2020 18:53

To: News Desk; Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning

Cc: (Redacted); Communications Covid-19; (Redacted); Homelessness Team; Campbell J (Jeanette) (Special Adviser); (Redacted); Nicolson S (Stuart) Special Adviser; (Redacted) (Comms)

Subject: RE: LINE TO CLEAR PLS: MEDIA QUERY RE HOMELESS STATS

Thanks all – Mr Stewart is content with the lines.

(Redacted)

(Redacted)

Private Secretary to Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning

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From: (Redacted)

Sent: 06 May 2020 18:34

To: (Redacted) ; News Desk ; Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning

Cc: (Redacted); Communications Covid-19 ; (Redacted); Homelessness Team ; Campbell J (Jeanette) (Special Adviser) ; (Redacted) Nicolson S (Stuart) Special Adviser ; (Redacted) (Comms)

Subject: RE: LINE TO CLEAR PLS: MEDIA QUERY RE HOMELESS STATS

Adding duty colleagues

Senior Media Manager
Newsdesk

Scottish Government | news.gov.scot

From: (Redacted)
Sent: 06 May 2020 18:05
To: News Desk Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning

Cc: (Redacted) _____
Subject: RE: LINE TO CLEAR PLS: MEDIA QUERY RE HOMELESS STATS

Adding late newsdesk colleagues _____

From: **On Behalf Of** News Desk
Sent: 06 May 2020 17:10
To: Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning
Cc: (Redacted) Communications Covid-19 ; (Redacted); Homelessness Team News Desk
; Campbell J (Jeanette) (Special Adviser) Nicolson S (Stuart) Special Adviser (Redacted)

Subject: LINE TO CLEAR PLS: MEDIA QUERY RE HOMELESS STATS

PO Mr Stewart,

The Bureau of Investigative Journalism are asking re numbers of people rough sleeping in Scotland at the moment and numbers of homeless people being placed in hotels.

Pls see below in yellow for their full questions.

Would Mr Stewart be content for us to issue these lines pls?

Best wishes,

(Redacted)

(Redacted) | Team Leader | Newsdesk | Scottish Government | news.gov.scot |

Housing Minister Kevin Stewart said:

“Outreach services are reporting there are fewer than 30 people sleeping rough across Scotland, down from a few hundred before the crisis. Around two hundred people who might otherwise have been rough sleeping have been accommodated in hotels with support from third sector and local authority providers, with many already being supported to access more suitable and settled accommodation.

“We have recently expanded the Unsuitable Accommodation Order to prohibit local councils from placing anyone experiencing homelessness into unsuitable temporary accommodation such as bed and breakfasts (B&Bs or hotels for more than seven days. However, we have made sure local authorities have flexibility up to 30 September to provide people with the best way of

adhering to physical distancing guidance in response to Covid-19, including in hotels if that is the most practical option.

We know that providing people with a settled home, and the support they need, is the best way of solving homelessness. That's why a rapid rehousing approach will remain our focus in the months ahead."

Background

Shelters, for instance hotels and B&Bs, are not considered suitable long-term accommodation for people experiencing homelessness, however during the lockdown period there may be cases where they are the best place for people experiencing homelessness to stay safe and self-isolate. That is why the suspension of the order is until September as the priority is keeping people safe during the pandemic.

We are committed to eradicating rough sleeping and transforming temporary accommodation and in 2018, we published an action plan to set the direction for real and lasting change, working with the wider public sector and backed by investment of £50 million. We are aware that the current pandemic provides us with an opportunity to ensure people at risk of rough sleeping are supported into suitable accommodation.

From: (Redacted)

To: (Redacted)

Subject: Enquiry from Bureau of Investigative Journalism Re Homeless Stats

Hi (Redacted),

Good to speak.

We're running a piece on the UK-wide response to housing homeless people across Covid, and beyond. I have a few questions I'd love to get some answers on by end of play today if possible. How many people have been moved into hotel accommodation (or similar, bed and breakfasts etc) across Scotland due to the Covid crisis?

Are these all rough sleepers, or does that include e.g people at risk of homelessness?

We saw the press release about moving forward the plan to house people in temporary accommodation for a max of 7 days. Does that mean the current hotel population will be kept there until they can be moved on to somewhere permanent, even if that's a commercial hotel?

Many thanks,
(Redacted)

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Housing First Stakeholders Call – 8 May 2020

Attendees:

Kevin Stewart MSP Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning
Social Bite
(Redacted) Wheatley Group
Wheatley Group
Homeless Network Scotland
City of Edinburgh Council
Glasgow City HSCP
Glasgow City HSCP
Homelessness Team
Homelessness Team

Minister thanked everyone for their work during the current epidemic and does not want any backward movement. Housing First (HF) is a key strategy for moving people out of hotels but he would be happy to look at other proposals.

(Redacted out of scope)

Housing First Opportunities

Minister confirmed it is difficult to know exact numbers of people suitable for HF, who are in hotels at present. There will also be people in hotels who are NRPF and are currently being accommodated. Highlighted to UK Government in a letter that there are changes needed around NRPF, welfare and local housing allowances. Also took the opportunity to highlight the success of HF, and encouraging UKG to look at HF across England which might unlock some Barnett Consequentials.

Minister reflected on the support being provided in hotels, capacity to move people which is being recognised by 3rd sector organisations that there needs to be a change in what people are doing and moving skills. Going to be competing interests moving forward and raised concerns about domestic abuse and other tensions which might come to light when lockdown measures are eased.

MA suggested there is the potential for an enormous amount of properties to become available at the same time. Also suggested that as staff are recruited,

Housing First Stakeholders Call – 8 May 2020

training could be carried out jointly across the Pathfinders and compressed to get new staff ready quickly to provide support.

JL commented that the 100 additional HF properties committed to by Wheatley Group was a fantastic commitment to scaling up HF. What is the timescale for the additional 100 properties for HF that Wheatley have committed to? And location? Also asked how many of the additional 150 properties flipped into permanent tenancies were likely to require HF support?

MA confirmed that Wheatley have a lot of void properties which need some work to get them into a lettable condition and there is a need to ensure they keep their staff safe at this time. Happy to be led by others in the requirements for HF but this needs to be done in parallel with voids being prepared for tenancies.

Minister confirmed that we do not have a picture yet of the need for how many in hotels require HF support and the number who do not require intensive support.

MG confirmed that there is a need to get people together on the total number of people being supported in Edinburgh and Glasgow and need to do something additional with service providers. MG and MB to take forward (meeting on 11 May).

Progress Update from Edinburgh

NB confirmed that services across sectors are working a lot closer together at the Cairn Hotel, capturing people that services were not aware of. Highlighted that they are doing work with Streetwork around accessing the PRS due to the uplift in LHA rates. NB also confirmed that the Old Waverley Hotel which has replaced the Care Shelter has had positive learning for Edinburgh on the future needs of these people as council staff they have been engaging 24/7 along with staff from Bethany.

Edinburgh is now focusing on their recovery plan which is based on vulnerability and up to 80% of lets will go to those experiencing homelessness including those that require HF. Hope that they now have a better understanding of vulnerable people in Edinburgh.

Progress Update from Glasgow

PT also confirmed that recovery planning was moving ahead in Glasgow. A recovery oversight group met for the first time the day before this meeting and will now meet on a weekly basis. A demand report will be developed which will assist with the data and trajectory they are on. Reconciled most of the data but this needs to be completed. Requirement for emergency accommodation for nearly 1000 people since Covid-19 pandemic started. Each week another 30 rooms are needed over and above the usual presentations.

Identified five or six rough sleepers in Glasgow. GCHSCP Outreach Team is working well and will continue to be expanded. Confirmed that there are 200 people alone that the addictions team are aware of.

Glasgow are currently providing emergency accommodation to everyone with NRPF, this will be challenging when we come out of this period.

Housing First Stakeholders Call – 8 May 2020

Drug deaths remain an issue in Glasgow, confirmed that there is no shortage of supply of drugs or a decrease in the quality. This brings concerns for the period after lockdown is lifted and what people will do. There may be a route back for people as some are engaging at present as they don't have the finance from street begging. Looking at the risks on a case by case base and fitting it into individual recovery plans.

JM raised the point that people in hotels are being assessed on a RAG system which will give them intelligence on who will benefit from HF.

Financial cost of the current position was raised and how it would be funded by PT. Minister was clear that there was a tendency to get carried away with the financial support and injections of funding would need to be looked at in the longer term. Need to look at the benefits of HF with 92% sustainment and the reduction in costs from less abandonments.

Homeless Network Scotland

MB confirmed that the first HF Check-Up report has been published, setting out progress in year one. Now looking at pacing up and anticipate that there will be 600 tenancies after the second year. Reflected there is a need to look at the end to end process which requires to be shortened further.

MB said that it is a distraction to look at supported accommodation as they don't need any more, the plan is for people to be moved out of supported accommodation into HF in the first instance, 92% sustainment rate hides that 20 people didn't sustain their tenancy but for around 14/15 of these, the reasons for tenancy failure were death or prison.

Minister set out that we would like to hear any off the wall ideas that are potentially missing and reflected if the 'All in for Change' group were being used to capture positive changes, MB confirmed that they will develop this as part of their work.

MB said that it would be helpful from Homeless Network Scotland to have a post Covid-19 statement which could be used to support. Minister confirmed that we may look to deploy others, he is keeping the FM updated and that there is an opportunity with the current position and we can't let things go back.

Update from Homelessness Unit following Meeting

The five Housing Options Hubs are due to meet between 12th and 14th May again, we have issued an email to all local authorities asking for them to prepare an update on where they are with their considerations of Housing First being implemented and the number of people who would benefit from Housing First.

We will also look to contact ALACHO, SFHA and Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum to discuss to the allocation of tenancies for Housing First tenants.

MB and MG spoke on 11 May and agreed that the initial scoping would be done through the hub work and then analysed against the RRTPs re what extra capacity is needed. Agreed to look at how best to speed up processes for getting people into HF tenancies.

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From: Homelessness Team
Better Homes
Housing and Social Justice
18 May 2020

Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government
Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People
Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning

HOMELESSNESS: EXITING FROM HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

Purpose

1. To provide advice and background to shape our emerging exit strategy for hotel accommodation, responding to the Minister's email to the Homelessness Team of 4 May and to recommend extending funding to Simon Community, Glasgow Night Shelter for Destitute Asylum Seekers and Bethany Night Shelter for a further 5 weeks.

Priority

2. Urgent.

Issue

3. This advice provides early thinking around potential exit strategies for people currently in hotel accommodation supported by SG in Edinburgh and Glasgow that build on the discussions that took place with homelessness stakeholders at the roundtable meeting with you both on the 5 May and will help inform discussions at the next Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group meeting.
4. The solutions for this group will be complex, with challenges that may be more legal and logistical than financial. Following the email from the Minister to the Homelessness Team on 4 May, it aims to provide the background and next steps which will be developed further towards more concrete solutions.
5. Annex A provides some data on the number of people who have used and are using hotel accommodation, and the various different categories they fit into. There are very few people still rough sleeping in the cities, and a relatively small number who remain in hotel accommodation. However, as council run move-on accommodation becomes more full, it may be that the additional capacity we are funding at present needs to be maintained for a longer period as we transition once lockdown is officially ended. That will depend on the local authorities' ability to source appropriate move on accommodation (which could be good quality temporary or permanent) and support people to move into it at this time.
6. There are essentially three main groupings within the hotel accommodation:
 - UK nationals who local authorities have duties to under homelessness legislation

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- EEA nationals whose access to benefits is unclear. These people need to prove they have a right to reside in the UK in order to access benefits and therefore be able to be supported into accommodation (private rented or social sector); the simplest way to do this is to gain settled or pre-settled status. To do this they need to prove they have been exercising their treaty rights. Where people cannot prove they have exercised treaty rights, e.g. because they have been working cash in hand, or ceased work too long ago, the best thing they can do will be get a job because they legally have the right to work in the UK. Even if the job is not full time, they will be able to regularise their status and gain access to top up benefits.
- Nationals of other countries whose immigration status precludes a right to work or to access public funds.

UK nationals

7. A significant proportion of those accommodated in hotels in Edinburgh and Glasgow are UK citizens with access to benefits and the vast majority will be owed the homelessness duty by the local authority. This means our normal tools can and should be used to support them quickly into mainstream accommodation. However, the normal problems will also apply here, with challenges around capacity in mainstream social housing and in access to good quality temporary accommodation that complies with the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.
8. All local authorities have a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan which has at its heart that people are moved on to appropriate settled accommodation as soon as possible. This does not mean that people rapidly move from temporary accommodation as quickly as possible but takes into account choices of the household so that the accommodation is sustainable and people will not represent as homeless from it.
9. Currently, in some parts of the country, it has been difficult to access temporary accommodation so there has been an increase in accommodation that would not have been used pre-Covid and there has been a stop/slowdown in lettings to all households, not just homeless households. This is due to concerns around contamination of void properties. However, with the publication of allocation guidance, landlords in both social and private rented sectors have been given practical advice about how to deal with this situation.
10. Some RSLs have given LAs access to their voids as a means of providing temporary accommodation. Some RSLs have also indicated that, in certain circumstances, these tenancies might be “flipped” to settled accommodation (Wheatley indicated that they intended to flip 150 temporary accommodation to settled during the meeting on 8 May). However, this is dependent on whether or not the provision to the LA was on a temporary basis to provide accommodation during the pandemic as it had been offered and accepted by another household who, due to some issues with removal forms, had not been able to move in or was adapted and the household in the property does not need the adaptations.
11. Some discussion among stakeholders has been around what the percentage of lets to homeless households should be when we move out of lockdown. The

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percentage of allocations to homeless people (both LA and RSL) through the RRTP was seen generally as high in the first years of the RRTPs to overcome the backlog of people in temporary accommodation. Stakeholders have indicated that in this unprecedented time, that the allocations should even be higher. We know from the EQIAs that accompanied the RRTPs that some concern had been raised about impact on other groups such as overcrowded households, potentially hospital discharge however, LAs were aware and would mitigate by being sensitive to these needs. Everyone over 16 can apply to go onto a housing list, but as that is not an indicator of need, social landlords have a track record of balancing these priorities.

12. Areas that would be useful to discuss with COSLA, ALACHO, SFHA and GWSF would include their plans for reletting voids and any barriers they are facing with this, plans around reviewing the percentages of allocations to homeless households in the context of the RRTP and impact of Covid with the opportunity of being able to rehouse people who had been excluded from services in the past that are now engaged with services.
13. LAs have also been looking over the past year at using the PRS as a means of both providing temporary accommodation and discharging duty. Many areas have been innovative in this area pre-Covid working with local PRS landlords. We understand that some PRS landlords have been approaching LAs during the pandemic to offer accommodation so there will be opportunities to use this further. You have agreed to the proposal developed by Crisis and Cyrenians on this due to the change to the LHA rates making more PRS accommodation in Edinburgh more affordable. This also may be an opportunity for other areas of the country to use the PRS where they might have been reluctant to do so given the potential difficulties around affordability.

Housing First

14. You asked about expanding Housing First provision. It is not clear at this point whether people in hotels right now are more or less likely to be people who would be Housing First candidates in normal times. While it is true that some entrenched rough sleepers have come inside for the first time and these people are likely to need significant support to move into a tenancy after lockdown, we also know that we are seeing a certain degree of people who are newly homeless because they have lost precarious employment or had a relationship breakdown as a result of lockdown – and this latter group may not need as much support to move into settled accommodation after their hotel stay.
15. Early thinking from providers (including Simon Community and Wheatley) suggests that only quite a small number of people currently in hotels are likely to be Housing First candidates. We are aware of 13 who were ready to move into Housing First tenancies in Glasgow but whose moves were delayed by the pandemic, and one estimate suggests around 9 of those currently accommodated in the Ibis could be eligible. A small number of people in hotel accommodation, especially some of those who have moved from very entrenched rough sleeping, may have higher needs than Housing First allows for and would need care

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settings that provide onsite 24 hour support. However, this would be part of the discussion between LAs and their HSCPs given the care that would be required.

16. There are a number of HF projects across Scotland: those that predated the Pathfinders; the Pathfinders themselves; and the ones being developed through RRTPs. In terms of this submission, the critical one is the Pathfinder HF programme concentrating on the five cities in particular Glasgow and Edinburgh. At the end of March, 252 people had been given tenancies and support: the figures were 117 for Glasgow; and 51 for Edinburgh. When the Pathfinder programme was launched, Social Bite had 830 “pledges” of accommodation. Scottish Government has contributed £6.5m to this programme and is fully involved in the governance around this.
17. The Pathfinder programme has taken time to expand from its early tenancies. This has been for a number of reasons and has been different in each city for different reasons and at different times. This has included recruitment of staff, training staff, inter-organisational relationships, structural issues such as too many parts of a process before someone could access a tenancy, having to change culture around assessments and others. Most of these have been worked through, though these do crop up on an ongoing basis.
18. During the pandemic, support is still being given to tenants, however the nature has changed. For some areas (including Glasgow) a RAG rating is being used around how many calls a week a tenant receives which will vary as required. This runs alongside an escalation process where if the tenant does not pick up or respond to calls, then the police are informed to ensure there is no risk to the individual.
19. There has been a recent issue (just pre-Covid) in Glasgow of a problem in recruitment, however that seems to have been overcome and new workers are in place to provide support. For Housing First to work, there needs to be access to tenancies and the availability of good quality wrap-around support. Wheatley had offered 200 tenancies and 122 of these have been used so there is capacity already in the system to upscale Housing First in Glasgow. Wheatley raised its offer by 100 during the meeting on 8 May.
20. The Pathfinder project is fully funded up to 830 tenancies so there is current scope in the programme for scale up if people are identified and assessed for Housing First. Local authorities are working through their RRTPs to help all people into settled accommodation and although focus will have been on responding to the immediate crisis, we are aware that discussions are taking place about restarting allocation processes and how to plan for this.
21. We are currently undertaking an exercise with local authorities, through the housing options hub meetings, to identify how many people are in Housing First tenancies currently, what their plans are to provide Housing First, does this correlate with the numbers they had identified in their RRTP and any costings around this.

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22. The RRTP sub group of the HPSG next meets on 19 May and this will give us an opportunity to test where all local authorities are in terms of HF and RRTP activity which we can report back to the Minister and to HPSG the following day.

EEA nationals

23. We are aware that a significant fraction of the EEA nationals we are now accommodating have recently been working but have lost their jobs as a result of lockdown. (This is also the situation for a proportion of UK nationals in hotels.) They may have had low paying, irregular or cash in hand work, and will not necessarily be able to evidence easily that they have been exercising their EU treaty rights. This means it is difficult for them to access some benefits from DWP, which requires proof of a right to reside. Without access to benefits or a job, they cannot access local authority temporary accommodation or find permanent accommodation for themselves in the social or private sectors.

24. On the one hand, this means this group is particularly vulnerable and will often be excluded from local authority or PRS accommodation because they do not have access to benefits. On the other hand, it is likely they will be that much closer to the job market and, potentially with support, could access employment – which will give them immediate income and also support them to access more benefits.

25. In Edinburgh, Streetwork have been receiving grant funding from the Home Office to provide appropriately qualified advice to support people experiencing homelessness to access the EU Settlement Scheme and have a bid in to the Home Office for similar funding for a post in Glasgow, however this exercise won't conclude until later this year.

26. They are not allowed to use the existing resource outside Edinburgh and have developed a funding proposal with Just Right Scotland and Shelter to provide this advice in Glasgow and expand provision in Edinburgh. This kind of advice is something that, arguably, the Home Office should be funding, as they are doing in Edinburgh. We are therefore working through the detail with colleagues and the organisations who put forward the proposal and will provide further advice on this in due course.

27. We have also had early contact with officials in Employability to start understanding whether there are central initiatives which we could connect into including around agricultural workers schemes which might be relevant for those closer to the workforce, especially if they have previously had a physical job. In the shortest term, Simon Community are working to make contact with local large employers such as supermarket regional managers or large scale cleaning companies who may have needs for staff at this time.

28. We know that some EEA nationals have expressed a desire to return to their home countries. This information largely anecdotal and comes from the Simon Community who have reported that they have had some success with organising returns on a case by case basis to a number of EU countries. The Simon Community identified particular challenges around supporting people to return to

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Romania, to do with joining up with services on the ground, however, a group of 10 Romanians have said that they want to return and this is being actively pursued by the local authority. Neither the Council or Simon Community see a role for SG at this stage but we will continue to engage with it.

29. There is a further subset of the EEA nationals group who may need a tailored approach – which is those who have severe addiction (mainly alcohol) issues who cannot access residential care settings because of their benefit situation. There is a group of around 60 mainly Polish men in Edinburgh, who tend to congregate in graveyards and squares. It is a group that CEC had been starting to consider before the crisis and it is not clear exactly what the options are at this stage. Getting greater clarity on what it would take to support them into rehab facilities if they could be persuaded to go will be one angle – there will be financial and logistical questions to answer, and levers are likely to lie in health.
30. In conclusion for EEA nationals in hotels, most will need support to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme, and a significant fraction will then be able access alternative accommodation either funded through benefits or via employment with fairly minimal support. Another significant fraction are more challenging to help because their situation, including addiction, makes it hard to regularise their status. Where they need specialised support, this can be limited and hard to access even for people where access to benefits is not in question.

Redacted out with Scope Sections 31 to 38

31.

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Funding

39. At the start of the financial year, this year's £10m Ending Homelessness Together budget was already fully committed, as set out in the table below.

Workstream	Committed EHT spend
Rapid Rehousing	£8,000,000
Housing First	£1,250,000
RSL Homelessness Prevention Fund	£250,000
Third Sector Fund	£600,000*
Total	£10,100,000

**The total funding available for the 3rd Sector Fund was £1.5m, with the other £900,000 coming from a non-EHT budget line. That line carries an unfunded pressure of £535,000.*

40. There is a possibility that some savings could be made on the Homelessness Prevention Fund as a result of this work being paused and we will hold discussions with SFHA in the coming weeks about how and when to open up the funding again. Your decision to continue to fund former recipients of the Housing Voluntary Grant Scheme at this point rather than provide funding to successful bidders to the Third Sector Fund means that there could be a small amount of flexibility. Further advice will be with you shortly on the next steps in relation to the Third Sector Fund. However, as a result of the unfunded pressure, the total savings in these two budget lines would only amount to around £200,000 at most.
41. Clearly, we are already operating within the margins of our budget and we are aware of the significant pressures faced by the Scottish Government budget as a whole in this financial year. As further projects emerge later in the year we will have limited flexibility within our own budget to fund both accommodation itself and the help required to support individuals to move on and may find that it takes time to negotiate additional funding, which may or may not be available.

Hotel funding

42. In response to (redacted) submission of 4 May 2020, you approved £35,000 funding to Glasgow Night Shelter for Destitute Asylum Seekers, and £84,103 to Simon Community Scotland for funding accommodation in the Ibis in Glasgow and the Cairn Hotel in Edinburgh from the Immediate Priorities Fund to extend hotel provision until the end of May in Edinburgh and Glasgow.
43. In addition to the Ibis and the Cairn Hotel, the funding we provided to Bethany Christian Trust for accommodation in the Old Waverley hotel also comes to an end at the end of May. Discussions with Glasgow and Edinburgh city councils, Simon Community, Glasgow Night Shelter for Destitute Asylum Seekers and Bethany Christian Trust, aided by the data in Annex A, clearly shows that while lockdown continues there is still a need to provide accommodation to support former rough sleepers.
44. While the local authorities have helped many people move-on there remains significant numbers of EEA nationals and those with NRPF in the hotels, where move-on is more challenging and as lockdown continues, new UK nationals are

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becoming homeless, some of whom are identified by street teams and are therefore using this emergency accommodation.

45. At this point in time along with a continuation in demand for this accommodation and no significant easing of the lockdown restrictions anticipated, then there is still a need for the continuation of provision of this accommodation to prevent people returning to the streets. At the same time, the local authorities and their third sector partners do need to make sure they continue to focus on moving people on from the hotels and anticipate that progress can be made in the weeks ahead to reduce the numbers of people accommodated.
46. On this basis, we would suggest that funding to the three third sector organisations be continued until the end of June with demand and funding pressures being reviewed again in mid-June in order to consider a further extension. Five weeks of funding to the three organisations would be as detailed in this table

Organisation	Funding
Simon Community	£210,258
Glasgow Night Shelter for Destitute Asylum Seekers	£87,500
Bethany Christian Trust	£73,500
Total	£371,258

Recommendation

47. We recommend that you note the contents of this submission and provide a total of £371,258 from the Immediate Priorities Fund to allow Simon Community, Glasgow Night Shelter for Destitute Asylum Seekers and Bethany Christian Trust to continue providing hotel accommodation in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

(Redacted)
Homelessness Unit Better
Homes
Housing and Social Justice
18 May 2020

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Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constituent Interest	General Awareness
Minister for Public Finance and Migration			X		
Director for Housing and Social Justice (redacted) Communications Covid-19					

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Annex A

Data Annex

People at risk of rough sleeping or using shelters accommodated in hotels since 24 March to 1 May	Edinburgh			Edinburgh total	Glasgow		Glasgow Total	Notes
	Cairn (Simon Community + CEC)	Merith	Waverley (Bethany + CEC)		Ibis - Simon Community	Ibis - GNS		
<i>totals to 1 May</i>								
Number of people who have used hotels, total to 1 May	124	19	150	293	135	61	196	
of which, EEA nationals	39	12	22	73	40	0	40	
of which, other insecure immigrations status	26	12	4	42	6	61	67	
Number of people currently in hotels	79	18	65	162	42	61	103	
of which, EEA nationals	39	12	15	66	20	61	81	
of which, other insecure immigrations status	26	12	4	42	5	0	5	
Number of people who have moved on	45	1	85	159	112	0	112	People have moved into Rapid Access Accommodation, a variety of TA, some have received assistance to travel back to other cities, some have been reunited with family and some have moved on without knowing where they went to.
Estimate of rough sleepers helped	124		150	274	23		23	

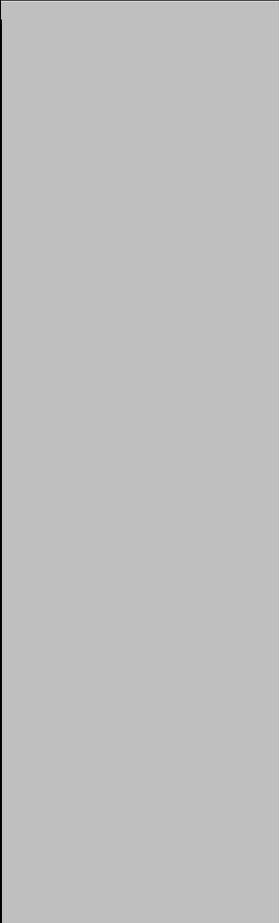
MEETING BETWEEN MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING and Cllr Whitham, COSLA	
TIMING	<p>Tuesday 19 May 2020 between 10:30 am and 11:00 am</p> <p>Given the current pandemic a virtual meeting/call has been arranged</p>
ATTENDEES	<p>Cllr Whitham, COSLA</p> <p><u>Official Support</u></p> <p>(Redacted)</p>
AGENDA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome 2. Review of Strategic Next steps for LA housing sector recovery 3. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans funding into 2021/22 4. Violence Against Women Supplementary COVID-19 Guidance and integration of Domestic Abuse Policies
YOUR MAIN OBJECTIVE	<p>This meeting will provide time for Mr Stewart to discuss the recovery and funding plans with Cllr Whitham post Covid-19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not too early to prepare for transition and recovery. • I do not want any backwards movement in efforts to tackle homelessness in the aftermath of this crisis. • This Government intends to capitalise on the powerful response from all parties, protect the progress made and work with local authorities and third sector partners to secure long term, systemic change. • Transitioning and planning for recovery will be the focus of the next Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group meeting on 20 May 2020.

**PRACTICAL
ARRANGEMENTS**

Due to Covid-19 this will take place as a conference call – conference details have been issued to (Redacted) Cllr Whitham.

This meeting relates to MiCase 202000014973.

ITEM 2	Review of strategic next steps for LA housing sector recovery
ISSUE/ BACKGROUND	<p><u>Working together</u></p> <p>Collaboration with our stakeholders and the building of trusted relationships is absolutely key in managing the challenges we may face when implementing an exit strategy. Listening to what people need and what works for them is essential. A joined up approach across the housing and homelessness sector has helped to drive forward this progress and this must continue.</p> <p>Housing as a sector is going to need continued support to recover from the impacts of Covid-19. Opportunities to improve outcomes for marginalised groups can usefully be rooted in ensuring positive housing outcomes, including housing support, but it is essential that we find ways linking with wider supports where needed. Appetite for new ways of working and challenging the previous default are important to build on and not lose: let's build back better.</p> <p>This crisis has shown us just how important our frontline workers are and we need to consider how we can truly recognise this and how we can better support them as we develop and implement our exit strategy.</p> <p><u>Rapid Rehousing and Housing First</u></p> <p>As well as working to improve outcomes during the course of the pandemic, we see this as an opportunity to capitalise on the powerful response from all parties and work with partners in local government and the third sector and those with lived experience to secure long term, systemic change for people who are homeless and sleeping rough. This means, for example, that no-one should return to unsuitable temporary accommodation or rough sleeping, or see the medical or social care they have accessed during this period withdrawn once the crisis ends.</p> <p>We want to put Rapid Rehousing and Housing First at the centre of our Covid-19 exit strategy. It is now more important than ever to provide the wraparound support that the most vulnerable need to find and sustain a settled home. By learning from what's working well now, we can build on what has been achieved over the last few weeks.</p> <hr/> <p>{redacted out of Scope}</p>



Welfare reform

Another focus of the exit strategy will be on homelessness prevention as a result of the economic downturn, potentially putting people at risk of eviction. This can be supported by an assessment of the role of welfare benefits in preventing homelessness including:

- an assessment of the recent changes to UK welfare benefits and the potential impacts they will have on supporting tenants to sustain tenancies
- working with DWP on any further temporary improvements
- understanding the interactions between the support we are able to provide for example through discretionary housing payments and UK entitlements
- planning for any future changes to benefits including to Local Housing Allowance rates.

There has already been some impact as a result of the raising of the Local Housing Allowance rates, which has meant that the use of the Private Rented Sector is a more viable option as temporary or settled accommodation.

WHAT THE STAKEHOLDER MAY SAY/ASK

KEY MESSAGE(S)

- How can we ensure we do not undermine the progress we have made so far?
- We want to build on what we have done and this Government intends to capitalise on this progress.
- Planning a safe and effective transition will help us to ensure we do not lose this.

SUGGESTED QUESTION(S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What can we do to sustain collaborative working going forward?• What challenges are we facing right now?• What more can we do to ensure those who were sleeping rough are supported in to a permanent settled home?• What can we do beyond Covid-19 to prevent people becoming homeless?
CONTACT POINT	{Redcated}