

Housing Options Hub Update for RRTP Sub-group: East Hub

Hub Update

- The development a Peer Mentor service in Scottish Borders through our Hub funding
- Health and Homelessness conference is in planning stages for March 2020 to investigate and share information about Autism and homeless, the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and Psychologically Informed Environments
- To review and develop our Housing options website
- Develop Tenancy sustainment videos to upload onto the East housing Options Website and advertise to young people particularly those in supported accommodation units with assistance from Champions boards from Falkirk and East Lothians, the videos will be made available for use to all HUBs.
- Collectively we will assist the Scottish Government in its review of the SHORE standards and review our current practices to ensure that service are available for all local authorities in our local prison once the contract with four square has ended in March 2020
- Collectively look at how we support those who have experienced domestic abuse as a hub by sharing good practice
- Continue to support the development and rollout of the Housing Options Toolkit.
- We have developed and published an easement card for homeless applicants to present to the DHP.

Falkirk

Falkirk Council is continuing to progress its actions with it RRTP

- We launched our Rapid Rehousing Plan to Partners at an event on the 25th of November 2019 with contributions from the Scottish Government and Glasgow Homelessness Network
- Our review of service delivery will be completed by March and we will start to implement the key recommendations from April onwards.
- Amendments to our allocations policy were presented to members in December 2019. We are now at consultation state with a view to implementing agreed proposals in June 2020. For Rapid Rehousing we are hoping to increase lets from 33% to 50% for statutory homeless.
- We are continuing to work with partners and our local CVS on a structure for furniture provision for those accessing permanent accommodation
- We are working with a local provider in partnership with our Health and Social Care Partnership to establish our Housing first project and are looking to launch a service early 2020. We are delighted at the commitment and joint working that our Health and social Care partnership has shown in regards to our plans.
- We are reviewing our Deposit guarantee scheme and talking with landlords about launching a new scheme

Housing Options Hub Update for RRTP Sub-group: East Hub

- We have developed a prevention plan as part of our RRTP action plan and are starting to implement actions within this.
- We are reviewing our support service for those affected by domestic abuse and working on our Domestic Abuse Policy for the Housing Service
- We are refining our processes to address our commitment to the SHORE standards and developing some literature for clients explaining the services available. We are holding a focus groups to inform how we can deliver services
- We are developing our Temporary accommodation action plan which will address the key aims within our RRTP as well as ensuring that we meet our minimum standards
- We will develop a service user engagement plan over the coming months to ensure that the voice of our service users assists us to deliver services that meet the clients' needs
- Our service users have been involved in the "all in for change" groups and enjoyed the opportunity to have their experiences and voices heard.

East Lothian

East Lothian Council is progressing well with RRTP actions. Of the 46 actions in the Plan, 11 are complete as set out below and 32 are in progress.

- Implement pre-tenancy checks for early identification of vulnerabilities
- Re-establish mechanisms for Private Landlord engagement
- Implement a rolling programme to re-designate temporary accommodation as permanent tenancies
- Review the proportion of allocations to homeless applicants
- Refer long-term cases to re-housing panel for additional points
- Review existing Council Allocations Policy with a focus on addressing urgent homelessness pressures
- Maximise use of rent deposit scheme
- Carry out training and awareness raising sessions across the Council
- Establish a starter pack scheme, optimising support from local churches
- Explore the potential of developing a 'Home and Belonging – My Space My Place' project for care experienced young people and implement
- Commission / develop a supported accommodation service for vulnerable young people

A significant culture shift is evident in respect of the transformation of homelessness services and key figures evidence a slow steady move towards a rapid rehousing approach. However supply remains the key issue in East Lothian and additional capital funding is required to alleviate pressures in the west of the county. While progress is positive and encouraging to date, particularly in the east of the county, changes to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order will create significant pressures and potentially detract from progress towards rapid

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rehousing, which is concerning. The second formal iteration of the RRTP is currently being prepared, building on the successes of year one, which is anticipated to be approved by Cabinet in March 2020 prior to submission to the Scottish Government by June 2020.	
Edinburgh	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with people with lived experience of homelessness continues and will do until the end of the month. I have completed survey's with 30 service users so far. • A second stakeholder event will take place at the end of March, invites should go out next week. • The Private Rented Sector Team is established and a team leader has been appointed and will start shortly. A homeless prevention fund will be trialled initially in this team. • Interviews for the Income Maximisation Capacity Building post – essentially a training post to deliver training on income maximisation and welfare rights matters to frontline staff, third sector partners working in homelessness and RSLs – took place last week. The preferred candidate should be in post soon 	
Midlothian	
Outcome 1: The Supply of permanent accommodation for homeless households has increased	
Action from RRTP	Update
Increase the supply of new build affordable housing in Midlothian	<p>In January 2020 a new Housing Application Policy was given approval by elected members. This includes to following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased the percentage of void properties allocated to homeless household from 45% to 60% • Offering those who have been in self-contained temporary accommodation the longest the opportunity to be offered the property as permanent housing (in addition to 60% of void properties allocated to homeless). • Homeless applicants are now required to widen their areas of choice and property types, to improve the chances of being made an offer more quickly.
Review Midlothian Council's Housing Allocation Policy to ensure homeless households are housed more quickly.	
Reduce the average number of weeks to close a homeless application	
Review nomination agreements with RSL's to ensure homeless households are housed more quickly.	
Target open market purchases for council housing to areas and house types in high demand from homeless applicants.	Number of properties purchased: 2018/19 – 17, 2019/20 - 45
Outcome 2: Bed and Breakfast accommodation is no longer used as emergency accommodation for homeless households and the time households spend in temporary accommodation has reduced.	
Action from RRTP	Update

Housing Options Hub Update for RRTP Sub-group: East Hub

End the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for temporary accommodation	<p>The use of shared temporary accommodation (2 people sharing a two bed flat with own bedrooms) as an alternative to B&B being rolled out in Spring 2020.</p> <p>Revised plans for Jarnac Court approved by Council in January 2020.</p> <p>Approval received at Council to convert a property in Loanhead to a 7 bedroom temporary accommodation unit.</p>
Convert Jarnac Court – an existing office building owned by Midlothian Council – into 22 short term emergency accommodation units.	<p>Revised plans approved by Council in January 2020.</p> <p>Approval received at Council to convert a property in Loanhead to a 7 bedroom temporary accommodation unit.</p>
Lease or make use of existing council housing to provide 16 short term emergency accommodation units designated for larger homeless households, such as applicants with children	Accommodation secured, this will be able to accommodate up to 7 households at any time in self-contained accommodation. To date 4 households with children have been accommodated.
Work with the Scottish Government and Scottish Councils to review the rent model for temporary accommodation.	Currently being reviewed, proposed changes are being consulted on.
Outcome3: Homeless households with support needs are supported to access and maintain permanent accommodation	
Action from RRTP	Update
Roll out the use of housing first tenancies for the most vulnerable homeless households in Midlothian.	<p>Currently procuring a dedicated support provider for Housing First in Midlothian.</p> <p>Plan to have first tenancies in operation in Spring 2020</p>
Work with Women's Aid to identify additional accommodation with support in Midlothian.	Revised agreement with Women's Aid being implemented. This will double the number of nominations made directly to Women's Aid.
Support young homeless people to obtain a qualification to support their tenancy sustainment skills.	Pilot completed with 4 young people successfully completed the qualification. This is now being rolled out to be delivered as part of individual support plans in supported accommodation.
Implement SHORE standards.	Ongoing work with partner agencies to ensure the implementation of SHORE standards.

Housing Options Hub Update for RRTP Sub-group: East Hub

Outcome 4: Housing Options and support is in place to prevent homelessness	
Action from RRTP	Update
Reduce the overall number of open homeless cases by 20%.	Ongoing – Measures taken within updated allocations policy will contribute towards this target.
Continue to provide housing education classes in Midlothian Secondary Schools.	All schools have a housing education on the curriculum.
Continue to work with Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Housing Options HUB to ensure joint working on homeless prevention activities across the region.	Ongoing
Scottish Borders Council	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have appointed an RRTP Development Officer and the person has recently taken up the post. • The partnership held a Housing First workshop on the 18th November, attendees from health, social care and all 4 of the main local RSLs operating in Borders and Cyrenians. We are currently considering our next steps in establishing a Housing First pilot within 2020. • Looking to complete Self-Assessment work on housing options, homelessness prevention and early intervention activities within SBC, to be completed by 31/03/2020. • Continue to Develop Crisis Intervention funds for both preventing and responding to Homelessness, target for funds to be operational by 01/04/2020. • In process of introducing a 'Crash Pad' property within temporary accommodation to reduce use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation. • We will shortly commence a review in regards to the provision of furnishing permanent tenancies to allow people to move on from temporary accommodation quicker. 	
West Lothian	
<p>West Lothian have been allocated £302K for 2019/20 and £311K for 2020/21 through the Ending Homelessness Together fund compared to the £746K transition funding requested for 2019/20 and £954K in 2020/21 as part of the RRTP.</p> <p>In addition to the £613K allocated a further £240K per annum has been allocated to the RRTP through the West Lothian Alcohol Drugs Partnership (ADP). The ADP resources have been allocated to support the delivery of Housing First specifically targeting alcohol/substance abuse and mental health.</p>	

Housing Options Hub Update for RRTP Sub-group: East Hub

Given the reduced levels of funding from the Scottish Government, the West Lothian RRTP Board has reviewed the priorities of the RRTP against this reduced level of funding.

Priorities:

- Housing Options and Resettlement Team
- Housing First
- Prevention

Governance:

The multi-agency West Lothian RRTP Board has four working groups responsible for:

- Early intervention and Prevention of Homelessness
- Housing Support and Housing First
- Housing Supply and Temporary Accommodation
- Homelessness Health and Wellbeing

All working groups meet on a bi monthly basis reporting to the RRTP Project Board which meets quarterly.

Utilising the provisions of the Ending Homelessness Together fund resources alongside additional ring fenced partner resources the council has recruited a number of key posts to support the Housing Options and Resettlement Team including Housing Options Team Leader, Housing Options Officers, Housing Options Youth Team, and Tenancy Support Officers. A Quality Development Officer post has also been recruited.

The service has commenced the re provisioning of the Housing Options service moving to an East/West delivery, with locations in Bathgate and Livingston. This new model of delivery will be fully operational in February 2020.

West Lothian held a Housing First Workshop during Autumn 2019 attended by over 35 delegates across all partners which benefited from the experience from Housing First pathfinder projects and agreed a way forward for West Lothian including the importance of the establishment of a Housing First Assessment and Co-ordination Team.

Housing Options Hub Update for RRTP Sub-group: East Hub

West Lothians Housing First model, has the following priorities:-

- Young People: a twelve person project delivered through the Rock Trust and Almond Housing has been operational since 2017 and is currently being evaluated.
- Mental Health/Addictions: a ten person project being delivered through a Public Sector Partnership process with Cyrennians identified as the lead agency.
- Women/Domestic Abuse: to be developed

Key actions/results:

- Reductions in Homeless presentations by 5% between Q1-Q3 2018/19 and Q1-Q3 2019/20
- Agreed targets for lets to homeless with each RSL
- Increased social lets to homeless people, average of 66% during Q1-Q3 2019/20 (WLC and RSLs)
- Reduced use of B&B Accommodation
- Reduced length of stay in Temporary accommodation
- Reduction in average homeless case duration
- Transitional resources – initial recruitment completed
- Refocused housing options approach,
- Housing First Assessment and Coordination Team established
- Housing First pilot for Addictions/mental health underway
- Housing First for Young People being evaluated
- Partnership approach to Housing Options with RSLs
- Increased focus on prevention starting in schools, all secondary schools piloting resources in S2, S4, S6 and with school leavers.
- Mediation service being commissioned
- Continued increase in Supply of Affordable Housing
- Securing of additional private sector leases
- Developing Sustainable Models of Support
- Five year vision for Temporary Accommodation
- Pilot sharing space temporary accommodation underway