

# HOUSING FIRST CHECK UP

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Annual check-up on Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder  
May 2020

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# WELCOME

**Sir Andrew Cubie**

Chair of the Housing First Scotland Advisory Group



When the Housing First Pathfinder was officially launched in April 2019 none of us could have imagined the position in which we would find ourselves one year on.

The pandemic has been a stress test on the Housing First Scotland Pathfinder, and at the time of writing we do not know what the full impact will be. The report captures 12 months of hard work, learning and progress that preceded the current health emergency.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the success of the programme in its first full year. Work that continues in the midst of these exceptional circumstances, moves us closer to a solution that addresses the most acute forms of homelessness.

We are grateful particularly to the tenants, adapting and striving to build and live their lives in safe and settled homes. Our funders, Scottish Government, Social Bite and Merchants House Glasgow, also deserve our warmest appreciation for their continued belief and commitment to a model that the evidence tells us works, as do Corra Foundation and Homeless Network Scotland for governance and financial management.

And of course, the inspiring Pathfinders in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Stirling, delivered on the ground in consortia led by Aberdeen Cyrenians, Transform Community Development, Cyrenians, Turning Point Scotland and Loretto Care. The work you have done and continue to do is remarkable and game-changing; thank you.

Housing First is normal, it's fairer, it works – and we all benefit.

# WELCOME

## Maggie Brünjes

Chief Executive of Homeless Network Scotland



Covid-19 has brought into focus a little of what it must feel like when shortages, uncertainty and isolation is normal life. This unfairness is what Housing First seeks to redress because what sits behind it is a rapid, highly bespoke, discreet, and respectful response – and it is working.

From the point when cross-party support was secured in the Scottish Parliament for the measures now being rolled out across Scotland, steady progress has been delivered. This forward movement has been painstaking, at times exposing barriers taken root over many years, blocking progress and innovation.

But it is the resolute cross-sector partnerships that have been especially striking, building trust, and improving local landscapes so that more people can get home. Covid-19 will transform these landscapes again, and in ways that are not all yet clear.

And as we enter into the second year of the pathfinder, our focus switches to how Housing First in Scotland can recover and continue to thrive after the pandemic eases – and beyond the duration of the pathfinder.

The method agreed in 2018 for how we do that doesn't change - first, prevent a person or family from becoming homeless: if they do, provide rapid rehousing for most people into ordinary housing in a community. Reduce time spent in all forms of temporary accommodation, and redress multiple disadvantages with Housing First.

# HOUSING FIRST CHECK UP

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# 1 LOOKING BACK a legacy to be proud of

Reaching the first birthday of a pathfinder to scale up Housing First across 6 local authority areas for the first time is an important milestone. It is also a moment built on a foundation laid by many people who have been sizing up the potential of Housing First for a decade in Scotland.



Housing First offers housing as a basic human right, not as some kind of reward or prize for good behaviour, or compliance, or having to prove one is worthy. It's a person-centered support services approach and has produced significant positive outcomes in several randomized control research trials. Today Housing First can be seen working in Canada, the USA, New Zealand, several EU countries, and now, here in Scotland. What I find so encouraging about Scotland's approach to date is how closely it aligns to the original principles of choice, fairness, and wrap-around support. With this approach, an end to the most visible and acute forms of homelessness in Scotland once and for all is achievable.

**Dr Sam Tsemberis**

Pathways to Housing speaking ahead of the 2019 Housing First Scotland Conference



Housing First was developed by Dr Sam Tsemberis in New York in the early 1990s aimed at people who were homeless and experiencing mental ill health.

The target populations later expanded to embrace people making long stays in homelessness shelters and those at risk of homelessness discharged from psychiatric care, or from prison. It was the opposite of how rough sleeping had been responded to previously, and most importantly, it worked.

The next decade and evidence was also starting to come out of Finland that something remarkable was taking place. The Finnish Housing First approach was introduced in 2007 and government policies have been based on the Housing First approach since 2008. Significant investments in new housing construction and renovation, as well as more people on the frontline in order to people with the highest needs, have been implemented as part of a €78m programme and by 2020 is the only European country in which homelessness is falling.

#### **And in Scotland?**

In the summer of 2020, Turning Point Scotland will mark ten years since the Housing First Pilot was launched in Glasgow, the first not only in Scotland but in the UK. Ian Irvine was the change-maker, a colleague from Turning Point Scotland and Board Member of Homeless Network Scotland who studied Housing First as part of a travel scholarship with the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.

In Glasgow, early discussions identified that the pattern of homelessness and addiction in the city made it suitable as a test bed for Housing First. Wheatley Group got on board along with Queens Cross, New Gorbals, Southside, Thenue and Govan Housing Associations plus NG homes, all helping to make it happen. An evaluation carried out by Heriot-Watt University demonstrated significant success, and this led Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire councils to establish local projects with a partnership also formed in Aberdeenshire to consider rural application. Rock Trust joined Almond Housing Association to pilot an approach for young people in West Lothian. Homeless Network Scotland and Crisis got alongside Homes for Good, Glasgow City Mission and Simon Community Scotland to test delivery in the Private Rented Sector.

#### **From Pilot to Pathfinder**

The Scottish Parliament's Local Government & Communities Committee, followed by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group in 2018, asserted a housing-led approach as a cornerstone recommendation for ending homelessness including Housing First. Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder was starting to take shape, designed to be a litmus test for how this approach could work in all 32 local authorities as the default response to homelessness with complex needs.

Social Bite took the decision to target their fundraising efforts at Housing First, following their successful Sleep In The Park event. The Merchants House of Glasgow applied targeted, local funding to help alleviate rough sleeping in the city and when the Scottish Government came on board, weaving Housing First into its £50m Ending Homeless Together Action Plan, the scene was set.

The Pathfinder began accommodating people in Glasgow in 2018, launching officially in April of the following year.



This project signifies the dawning of a new era in how Scotland responds to the systemic issue of homelessness. The project's wider goal is to act as a catalyst for the adoption of Housing First across all 32 Scottish local authorities, so it becomes the default solution to tackling the systemic issue of homelessness. We aim to cause a structural shift away from the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation that perpetuates repeat homelessness, towards people being housed as quickly as possible in permanent homes with appropriate wraparound support.



**Josh Littlejohn**  
Social Bite

## 2 ANNUAL CHECK UP 2019-20

Scotland's Housing First pathfinder will be independently evaluated by Heriot-Watt university who will review and report on the process adopted, the outcomes achieved, and the cost benefit delivered.

This annual check-up provides a summary of who has benefited from Housing First so far, and the progress made against 3 measurable goals that the pathfinder has been working toward:

- **Goal 1**  
Increase the number of people moving into their own safe, secure home
- **Goal 2**  
Reduce the time taken for people to move into their own homes
- **Goal 3**  
Increase tenancy sustainment and reduce repeat homelessness

### Who benefited from Housing First?

The people most likely to benefit from Housing First in Scotland largely align with the experiences of severe and multiple disadvantage discussed in the Hard Edges Scotland report: overlapping experiences of homelessness, offending, substance dependency.

With the local assessment and referral processes prioritising people experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage, we have compared the demographics of Housing First tenants with the Hard Edges population:

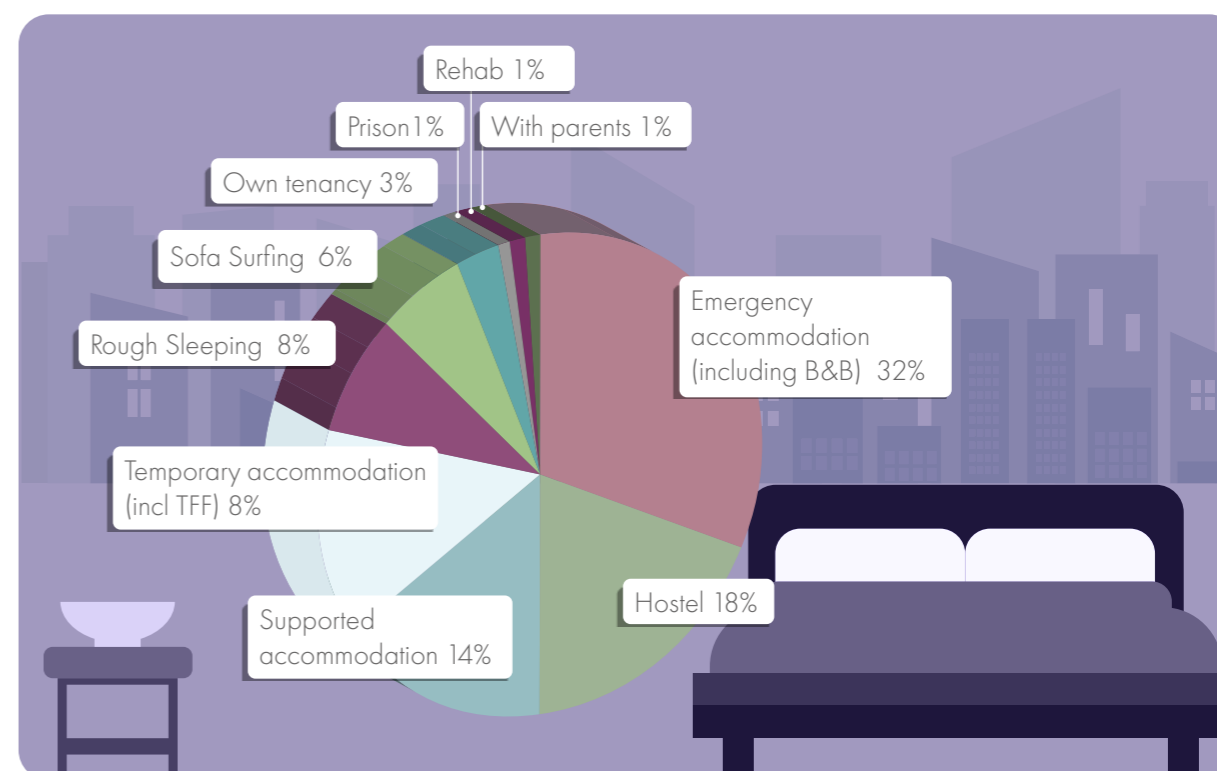
What Hard Edges report told us	Who has benefited from Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder?	
That those who will benefit most from Housing First are more likely to be <b>male</b> .	Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 69% male</li> <li>• 30% female</li> <li>• 1% transgender</li> </ul>
That those who will benefit most from Housing First are more likely to be in the <b>lower to middle age</b> ranges, with few under 25 or over 65.	Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8% under 25</li> <li>• 74% 26-49</li> <li>• 17% 50-64</li> <li>• 1% 65+</li> </ul>
That the overwhelming majority of people who will benefit most from Housing First will be <b>White Scottish</b>	Ethnicity	Vast majority White Scottish (90+%) Small numbers White Other British, White European, Mixed Race and Gypsy Traveller

### Who Benefited From Housing First?

White Scottish men  
between the ages of  
26 and 49 are most  
likely to benefit  
from Housing First\*

\*Data from Hard Edges by Lankelly Chase

### Previous Accommodation Before Housing First Tenancy



People often have cycles of experiences of rough sleeping, sofa surfing and temporary 'homeless' accommodation.



## GOAL 1

Increase the number of people moving into their own safe, secure homes



### Summary

Our purpose is to learn about how Housing First can be scaled up in a diverse range of situations across Scotland, and what particular challenges emerge as we aim to continually increase the pace month on month, quarter on quarter, year on year.

Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder aims to support as many people as possible into their own safe, secure home across local communities by 2021, with housing capacity pledged and funding available for more than 800 tenancies.

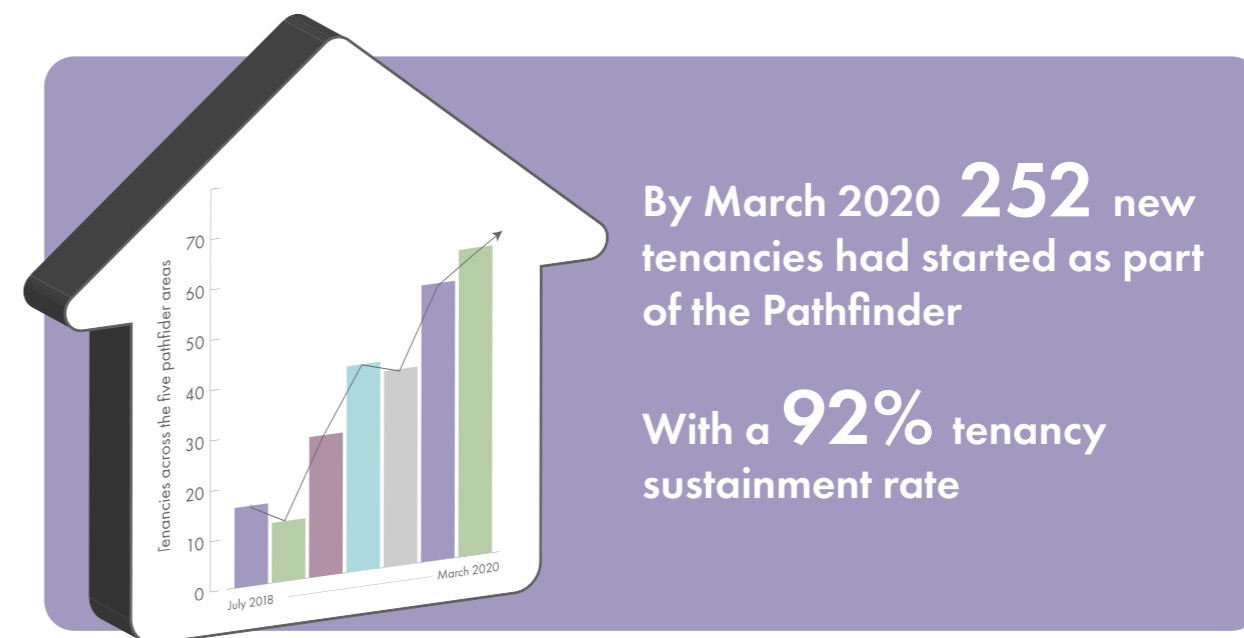
As we do this, we are looking to learn from the delivery of Housing First across a range of different housing market environments. From the experiences of one of Europe's largest social housing stock transfers, in Glasgow, also taking into consideration choice based letting, common housing registers and traditional allocations policies.



### Key Points

- By the end of March 2020, 252 new tenancies had started as part of the Pathfinder, with 232 people remaining in their new home. With a 92% tenancy sustainment rate so far, this compares very favourably to European and other international models.
- The average number of new monthly tenancies during January to March 2020 (20) is more than double the average starting during the same quarter in 2019 (9), with Glasgow and Dundee seeing the quickest sustained increases in new tenancies starting over the period.
- The time taken for 50 people to move into their new homes continues to reduce – 70% reduction from 1st block of 50 tenancies to 5th block of 50 tenancies (209 days to 62 days)

## Housing First increases the number of people securing safe homes



### The rate that tenancies have started has fluctuated across the Pathfinder areas

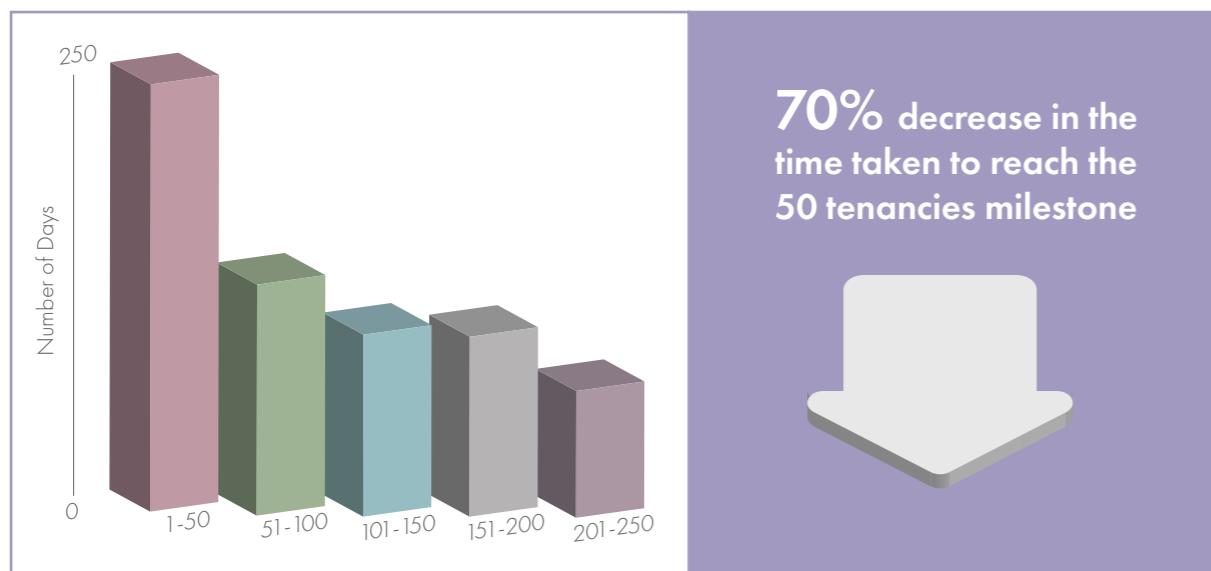


The international evidence base supporting Housing First is overwhelming. While no one approach will ever suit everyone, there can be no doubt that Housing First is the best possible way to help the great majority of homeless people with complex needs. What is critical now is to use this game-changing opportunity to structurally embed Housing First as the 'default option' for homeless people with complex needs across Scotland. There will be vital lessons here too for the rest of the UK."

**Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick**  
I-SPHERE at Heriot-Watt University



## Picking up the pace of new tenancies starting



Tenancies	Number of days
1-50	<b>209 days</b> 1 new tenancy every 4.18 days
51-100	<b>113 days (-46%)</b> 1 new tenancy every 2.26 days
101-150	<b>89 days (-21%)</b> 1 new tenancy every 1.78 days
151-200	<b>88 days (-1%)</b> 1 new tenancy every 1.76 days
201-250	<b>62 days (-30%)</b> 1 new tenancy every 1.24 days



The current Coronavirus has made it crystal clear that the only sustainable solution to homelessness is permanent housing with Housing First. Whatever obstacles and challenges we may come across we have to continue to work together to end homelessness without any hesitation. In this work we need beacons of hope like the Pathfinder. The work done in Scotland to upscale Housing First is an inspirational example for many countries.”

**Juha Kaakinen**  
CEO of Y-Foundation



## Goal 2

Reduce the time taken for people to move into their own safe, secure homes



## Summary

The knowledge that people were spending too much time in temporary accommodation prompted a focus on rapid rehousing across Scotland, and with Housing First sitting as part of this wider approach the focus of the Pathfinder is to challenge and change our current processes in the short and long term, creating new approaches and gradually leaving behind the old.

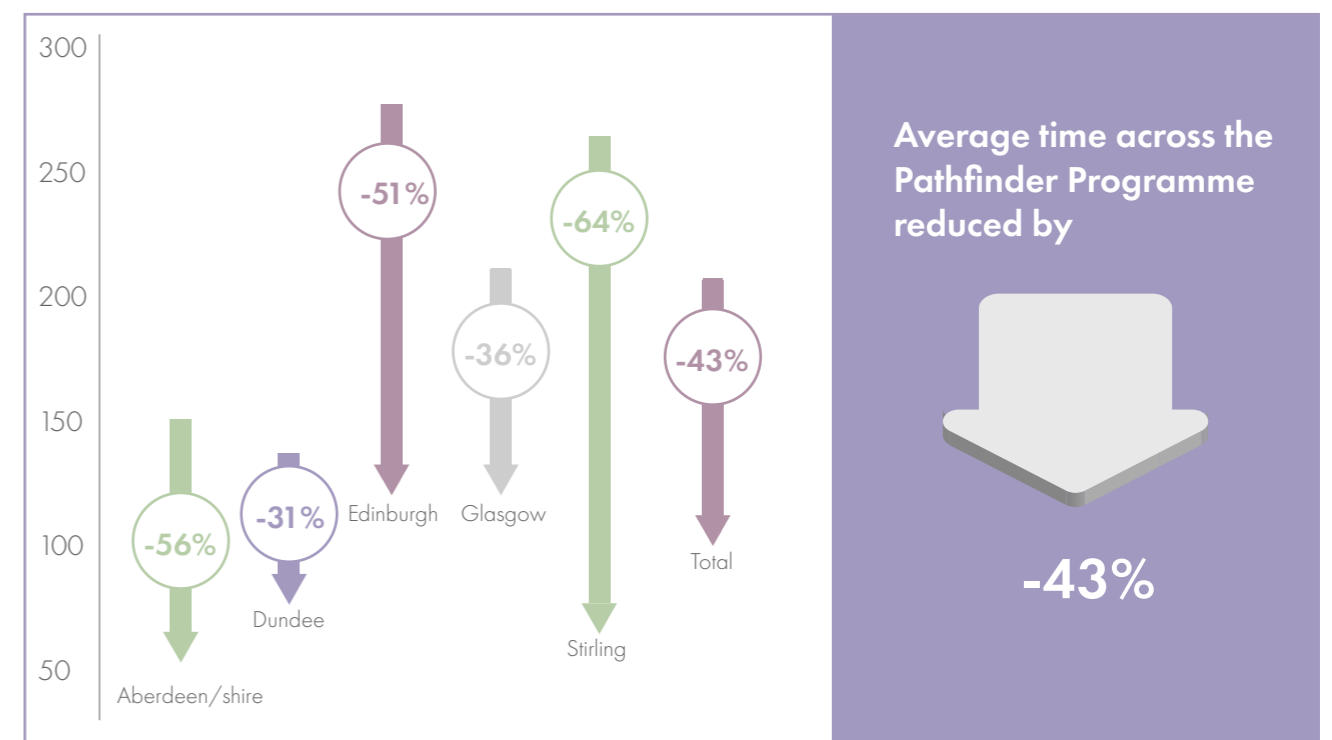
For the purposes of measurement, our starting point is the average length of time spent in temporary accommodation during 2018/19 in the Pathfinder areas, with a determination to reduce this during each year of the Programme going forward and beyond. The overall goal is for people to be moving into their own homes within 28 days of referral to Housing First.



## Key Points

- The average length of time for people moving into their Housing First tenancies across the Pathfinder Programme (114 days) reduced by 43% compared to the average length of time spent in temporary accommodation in same areas in 2018-19 (200 days)
- Stirling (-64%) and Aberdeen/shire (-56%) saw the largest reductions of the Pathfinder areas, with Aberdeen/shire showing the greatest progress in achieving the 28-day target with 39% of people moving into their homes within 1 month.

## Reducing the average time for people to move into their own homes





# John, Glasgow

John is a military veteran and former nurse. For as long as John can remember he says he has always felt out of place in a house. Even as a young boy he felt more at home in the outdoors. As he grew older John began living in a tent. John's health began to deteriorate as he got older leading to a hospital stays. His condition became so bad that he was no longer fit enough to continue living outdoors and was given a place in shared accommodation – he is now a Housing First tenant in Glasgow.

“When I was a kid, I hated living in houses. It got to the stage that I ran away from home as a young boy. When I came back I asked my mum to get a tent and put it round the back garden. I don't think she was too pleased, but it was probably the only thing she could do so she agreed.” Says John.

“When I got a bit older, I began camping out with some other folk. At the time I was serving in the armed forces, but I continued to stay in the camp site on and off for most of my adult life. For some reason I just didn't like houses. I felt trapped in them, like the walls were closing in.

“I had been camping until last year when I was taken into hospital. The campsite was up a big hill and I wasn't able to make the walk up anymore, so I had to think about staying somewhere else. I moved into Rodney Street shelter in Glasgow. I didn't know what to expect but it was Ok, and the staff were incredible.

“A few months after arriving at Rodney Street, I was offered a home of my own through the Housing First programme. I refused it but when a house came up in an area of Glasgow, I was familiar with, I decided to take the chance. At first, I hated it. I could feel the walls closing in like before. But the Housing First support staff were incredible. They stood by me every step of the way and did everything they could to help me adjust to living in my own home. I've now been in my wee house for almost a year and I love it. I'm always thinking about different things to do to improve it. I can see me living here for the rest of my life, hopefully.”



## Goal 3

Increase tenancy sustainment and reduce repeat homelessness



## Summary

The substantial international evidence behind Housing First points to a tenancy sustainment rate of 80-90% and through the Pathfinder we aim to match this, while better understanding the impact that scaling up has on this success rate.

For example, it is important to understand how we ensure what we can make work for 50 people can work equally well for 500, and in time, 5000. We will be asking questions going forward about what happens to tenancy sustainment beyond the 12-18-month project timescale, only through scaling up and checking up can we develop an understanding of the tenancy sustainment rate we can expect to achieve in the longer term.

We also want to accurately monitor and record tenancies that come to an end, and for what reasons, paying particular attention to examples of repeat homelessness.



## Key Points

- Each of the areas recorded a significant improvement on the number of people experiencing repeat homelessness, with Edinburgh and Stirling seeing nobody returning to homelessness
- Tenancy sustainment has stayed above 90% for the full Programme so far, sitting at 92% at the end of March 2020, with 232 households still living in their own secure home
- Edinburgh (98%) and Glasgow (92%) report the highest levels of local tenancy sustainment
- 58 people (25%) have been in their own home for more than a year, 21 of whom have been at home for more than 18 months
- Nobody has been evicted from their tenancy since the Pathfinder Programme began

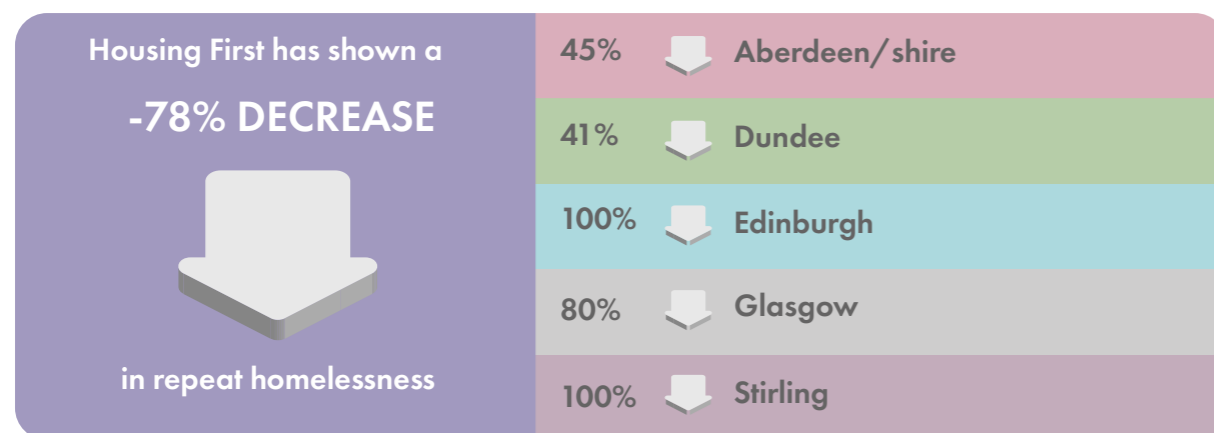
## However:

- 20 people (8%) are no longer in their tenancies with the most common reasons for tenancies ending being the death of the tenant (sadly, 8 people) and long-term prison sentences (6 people).
- 4 people (1.6%) have returned to homelessness after moving into their Housing First tenancy, representing a 78% decrease in the repeat homelessness rates recorded by the local authorities in the Pathfinder Programme during 2018-19 (7.2%)



## More tenancies are being sustained for longer

This table illustrates how long people have been sustaining their tenancies for, alongside the number of different reasons for tenancies ending. It shows that far more tenancies are being sustained than have ended, and that over time the successful tenancies are lasting for longer.



Pathfinder Area	2018-19	Pathfinder at end March 2020	Change
Aberdeen/shire	5.8%	3.2%	-45%
Dundee	3.9%	2.3%	-41%
Edinburgh	6.8%	0%	-100%
Glasgow	8.6%	1.7%	-80%
Stirling	9.8%	0%	-100%
Pathfinder	7.2%	1.6%	-78%



Wellbeing, mental and emotional health are significant areas of support during this time, combating isolation and loneliness, and keeping people connected is vital. Harnessing social distancing, some visits are still being made face to face, meeting people in their local street, using digital platforms and being really creative about how we link with each other. Whatever the mechanism, we are determined that support continues to be provided.

Partnership working is the hallmark of the Housing First success story, at these difficult times, the strength of this investment from each of the partners is evident as we all strive to do the best for each client's needs. We have also been working hard to prepare clients to move on into their new homes when lockdown is lifted.

We can see clients responding too, they recognise that things are not good for society at the moment, but it has made them embrace this negative situation and use it to aid their own recovery and the recovery of their community; one client is volunteering at a local foodbank to prepare take away meals for people who are currently shielding, others are supporting their neighbours by supporting them with essential shopping.

Specialist support workers are noticing that clients are embracing harm reduction techniques and some are continuing to bond with their first ever home of their own by decorating every room!

These stories say so much about how far our clients have come in the most difficult of situations – we are so proud of each of them, it is a delight to walk alongside them in this journey of a lifetime, which we are all in together.



**Fi Grimmond**  
Service Manager, Salvation Army

## 3 OUR SPEND

Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder was catalysed by Social Bite, who secured housing pledges from Housing Associations and local councils and pledged their own funding to enable each tenant to have a support worker, someone alongside them to help them build and live their lives. Merchants House Glasgow were invited to take part in the pathfinder and committed a remarkable £200k. Homeless Network Scotland and Corra Foundation were appointed as project and fund managers.

Rapid Rehousing and Housing First was the cornerstone recommendation from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group appointed by Scottish Ministers following the statement in the SNP Government's Programme for Government in 2017, backed by a £50m new fund over 5 years. Housing First was also the key recommendation of the Scottish Parliament's cross-party Local Government & Communities Committee which reported in February 2018 following a year-long inquiry.

Now a national policy objective, Scottish Government funding was being considered to drive forward efforts to scale Housing First in Scotland. Partners were excited when the Scottish Government connected their high-level commitment to Housing First to the Pathfinder that was already underway. In doing so, Scottish Government became the main funder of a much larger £10m Housing First Pathfinder programme, committing up to £6.5m in funding.

The total grants paid to consortia at 31 March 2020 was **£2,198,910**

Anticipated grant expenditure for the coming financial year April 2020-March 2021 is **£3,120,000**



## 4 OUR LEARNING

### Starting with people.

There is no experience like lived experience, and this has been central to Housing First developments in Scotland. There are four key messages we hear repeatedly across a range of consultations and collaborations:

#### Already here

People are ready to engage, and we have to be patient and open to what that engagement looks like for them, and to adapt our approach to fit.

#### Been there, done that

The role of lived experience can be hugely beneficial and particularly powerful in building trusting relationships.

#### A locked door

People want their own place, a safe home – somewhere they can lock the door. Compared to the insecurity of sleeping rough or living in some hostels, it was stark that prison was mentioned many times as a better place where people can “put things on the wall,” had “control” over “who gets in your door,” and “had a routine, a job, friends, a telly.”

#### I want a bit of that

The power of feeling integrated within a community, seeing others do well, was highlighted as inspiring and motivating.



If you get on the number 2 bus in Glasgow you'll eventually end up in Baillieston. If you get on the same bus the next day and expect to get to Easterhouse, where do you think you'll end up? Baillieston... Let's get the bus to Easterhouse together.

**Duncan**  
Homeless Network Scotland



In the lead up to and across the first full year of the Pathfinder, a series of learning events were facilitated for Housing First pathfinders, champions, and leaders across Scotland to discuss challenges and progress and share solutions.

*Across this year, we are able to identify aspects that have been enabling progress, and those that have been getting in our way.*

## GETTING GOING

### The early stages of setting up Housing First

As project and fund managers, the teams at Homeless Network Scotland and Corra Foundation have worked hard to ensure transparency and ensure information about the pathfinder is available quickly. This is in a coordinated and universal way, including through the monthly 'tracker' monitoring report and twice yearly 'connect' events for pathfinders and other leaders to get together and share learning. This has also been done on a personalised way, responding quickly to the many queries about Housing First received by email, the media and through social media.

#### **When it comes to partnership and collaboration, what can make the difference in the early stages of developing and delivering Housing First?**

- A focus on transformational change and a shared long-term vision is key; stepping stones to get there can be identified along the way. Attention and time needs to be given to how you build the capacity and create the environment for change, prioritising time and space for conversations and debates across sectors.
- Although a principle of Housing First is that support and housing are independent, it is important and highly beneficial to have both closely involved from the earliest stages of a tenancy. Collaboration across organisations and sectors and the sharing of learning and insights are key to ensuring that Housing First is consistent and effective 'on the ground'.
- When current systems are slowing or blocking progress, there needs to be an early and shared willingness and ability to "short-circuit" or change the system. Integrated strategies and commissioning can succeed if there is a presumption of partnership working with all priority setting and strategy development being co-produced and owned.

- By-name lists can speed up the success of Housing First but there must be the capacity to work rapidly to house people in immediate need who may not be 'known'.

#### **What key considerations can help support and housing providers in the early stages?**

- Listening to people is key and if there must be patience and openness to understand perceived "risks" or "barriers" or an individual's reluctance to take a tenancy.
- For tenants – particularly young tenants – digital access is an imperative, and a key tool to encourage and support integration within communities.
- For Housing Associations that can make available even a handful of lets, Housing First is a win-win – if you partner with the right organisation to deliver support.

## BUILDING MOMENTUM

### How do you begin to change the system

#### **Collective problem solving**

- The establishment of a multi-agency screening group in **Aberdeen** – including the local authority, HSCP, Community Safety Partnership, third sector and housing associations – to ensure the widest reach to find and respond to those who will most benefit from Housing First.
- Focusing on culture change in **Dundee** – collectively changing mind-sets first and then establishing new processes and procedures to match. Working together to move away from the 'sausage factory' mentality, to a shared understanding of the local challenges, effective solutions and steps required to implement them.
- Housing First **Edinburgh** has had to review how it operationalises Housing First within a choice-based letting system to maximise allocations to Housing First and minimise the time between a flat becoming available and the move in date. Bids for available properties are usually managed by a partnership of the City of Edinburgh Council and 19 Housing Associations; with Housing First this is reviewed alongside Cyrenians and the local consortia.
- Working with partners in **Glasgow** to test the concept of Prison to Home, initiating Housing First assessment processes in prisons, arranging for virtual home viewings or escorted leave to view potential homes. Embedding the ambition of a home and support being available on day of release. It is intended that this initiative will increase the number of people leaving prison into their own home going forward.
- Responding to a slower than anticipated start for Housing First referrals in **Stirling**, the steering group prioritised improving local understanding of Housing First across key partners.
- This led to an increase in referrals and provided an opportunity to further test and refine referral procedures to ensure they work as intended.
- Responding to the mix of 'excitement and scepticism' experienced by people following an offer of Housing First, maintaining the positive momentum while waiting for an offer of housing was proving a crucial moment – ensuring support and housing were clear and consistent in all engagement with tenants is vital.
- Developing the right local partnerships to offer people as much choice as possible when furnishing their home can quickly make a house a home and provide the safety and security people want behind their "locked door."
- Changes in practice and language do not happen at the same pace, and ideas about 'tenancy readiness' remained well into Housing First delivery. With evidence suggesting an 80% sustainment rate, the Pathfinder Programme has proved very successful in this regard, with 92% of tenancies being sustained as of 31 March 2020.

## WHAT CHALLENGED US MOST

### Sustaining and increasing pace

Scaling up Housing First is a significant - but worthwhile - challenge for all involved. Local systems are being tested and upscaling Housing First requires people and places to adapt what they do and how they do it – and for both housing and support capacity to be available and aligned.

There are core issues that caused most challenges and that will remain our priorities going forward:

- To further speed up the access to housing in Dundee an allocations protocol has been set up specifically for Housing First to ensure that people move through and into their home as quickly as possible, including Dundee City Council keeping empty homes available for rapid Housing First allocations. For the same reason, Community Care Grants are being fast-tracked – down from six to eight weeks to two weeks, with a specific person leading from the council. These improvements have contributed to a two-thirds increase in the number of tenancies starting in the second half of 2019-20 compared to the first half.
- So that the programme is as effective as possible, Edinburgh amended its approach to finding those who will benefit most from Housing First to reflect an emphasis on supporting people who are sleeping rough, and by the end of the year two-thirds of people housed directly from rough sleeping were in Edinburgh. This important change recognises the need to avoid the chance of people believing they have to maintain difficult and potentially dangerous circumstances in order to ‘get Housing First.’
- Choice and control is a key principle of Housing First and this extends to people furnishing and decorating their new home. Recognising that this is a crucial opportunity to engage people and build relationships, Glasgow is providing support workers with individual credit cards to allow them to respond quickly and flexibly alongside those they are working with.
- While housing availability isn’t an immediate challenge across the Pathfinder areas, two main issues exist within the biggest cities. In Edinburgh there remains the challenge of a more acute demand for housing and working at pace within the city’s Key to Choice allocation system. And in Glasgow there remains the ongoing challenge of sourcing adapted properties, particularly for those who have addiction-related amputations and have specific accessibility requirements. While this remains a minority of tenants, the waiting time for a suitable property to become available (or adaptations to be completed) extends the average waiting time for a Housing First tenancy in the city.
- Where the intensity of Housing First support is not required but support needs exist, Stirling Council is now spot purchasing housing support – ensuring that a rapid, appropriate housing solution can still be found when someone doesn’t require Housing First.
- Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire work closely together in upscaling Housing First across both urban and rural communities. In Aberdeenshire, temporary furnished flats are being flipped and made permanent when a person is keen to do so – a common sense solution bringing move-in times down to 40 days in some cases.
- Across all areas, workforce planning and retention of Housing First support workers will be key to a nation-wide scaling up. It was recognised in this first year that there are a range of considerations for providers around existing salary and staff structures and ‘going rate’ across the care sector. We’ve invited CCPS to undertake a salary benchmarking with recommendations to inform the Housing First National Framework in development.

Upscaling Housing First requires strong collaboration across a range of sectors. This includes rethinking how we take a collective approach to risk and ensuring that everyone involved is safe and protected without creating unnecessary barriers.

- In Dundee, the consortium partners are testing the role of social media in managing risk. Where appropriate and consent is given, the Snapchat map feature is being used to share locations, with WhatsApp providing an encrypted, accessible method of communication among partners.
- Recognising the significance of some people’s support needs, Edinburgh has been flexible in offering two support packages where suitable. Of the five people who have received dual support, two have now tapered down to one package, illustrating that “Risks don’t become less via exclusion.”
- With the responsibility of statutory duty, the Health and Social Care Partnership are leading a training programme to create a joint risk protocol among all partners in Glasgow.
- This will be focused on a person’s aspirations and where they are now, instead of holding onto things from their past.
- Stirling has carried out community mapping exercises to understand any potential risks in the immediate vicinity of tenancies. This is done in partnership with police who can provide generic intelligence of local areas and potential issues.
- Again, on the theme of partnership, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire have been able to mitigate risk with a particularly inclusive Consortium Board. As well as third sector organisations membership includes HSCP, RSLs, three care partners, and both local authorities.

Working together the Board is able to keep fidelity to the model and to effectively share knowledge – recognising that every partner:

“Holds a different piece of the whole.”

## Impact of COVID-19

Prior to the significant, ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, partners across the Pathfinder areas moved 252 people experiencing homelessness into a home of their own, with 232 sustaining their tenancy at 31 March. The pace and progress of the Pathfinder Programme – and the scaling up of Housing First across Scotland – will undoubtedly be impacted.

The security and safety of a comfortable home is now more important than ever and the success to date of the Pathfinder Programme provides ample justification to hold Housing First at the heart of the many plans that will be developed and delivered in the coming months. Many questions from before will remain, and many new ones will need answered. Key questions that were in Pathfinders’ minds that can offer some direction to upcoming plans:

- What revisions could be made to timescale and resources to mitigate impact of COVID-19 and, importantly, to ensure that Housing First is a priority strategy in national and local recovery plans?
- How will we understand and measure the impact of Covid-19 on Housing First alongside the overall impact on Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans.
- How can support partners create an environment that supports, nurtures, and retains staff in this new environment? And how should consortia approach recruitment in the interim, and what measures should this be linked to?



## 5

# GOING FORWARD

## Five Steps To A Housing First Scotland

Housing First feels – is – intuitively right. Every experience of homelessness and every path out is unique, one factor common to each is that housing ends homelessness. But the wrap around support and person-centred approach of Housing First is also backed by the strongest, most compelling international evidence.

The formation of the Housing First Scotland Pathfinder in 2018 was designed to scale up the approach and test its effectiveness in diverse settings, taking in towns and cities from the hustle and bustle of the central belt to the dramatic rural coastline of Aberdeenshire. With a multi-million funding package in place, five steps to a Housing First Scotland were identified.

### 1. Size Up

Horizon scanning and assessment of the scale and potential in diverse settings. The Glasgow pilot and the emerging international evidence.

### 2. Tune Up

Getting it right, creating new partnerships, ensuring good governance, planning and support in place to smooth out the bumps and refine processes in the lead up to launch.

### 3. Ramp Up

Move rapidly to house as many people as possible in the Pathfinder areas, learning as we go in order to introduce Housing First at scale in the Pathfinder areas and beyond.

### 4. Check Up

Where we are now. Ongoing assessment of impact and measuring performance. Moving forward with independent evaluation carried out by the award winning I-SPHERE at Heriot Watt University, which is among the UK's top social and housing policy research centres.

### 5. Housing First Scotland

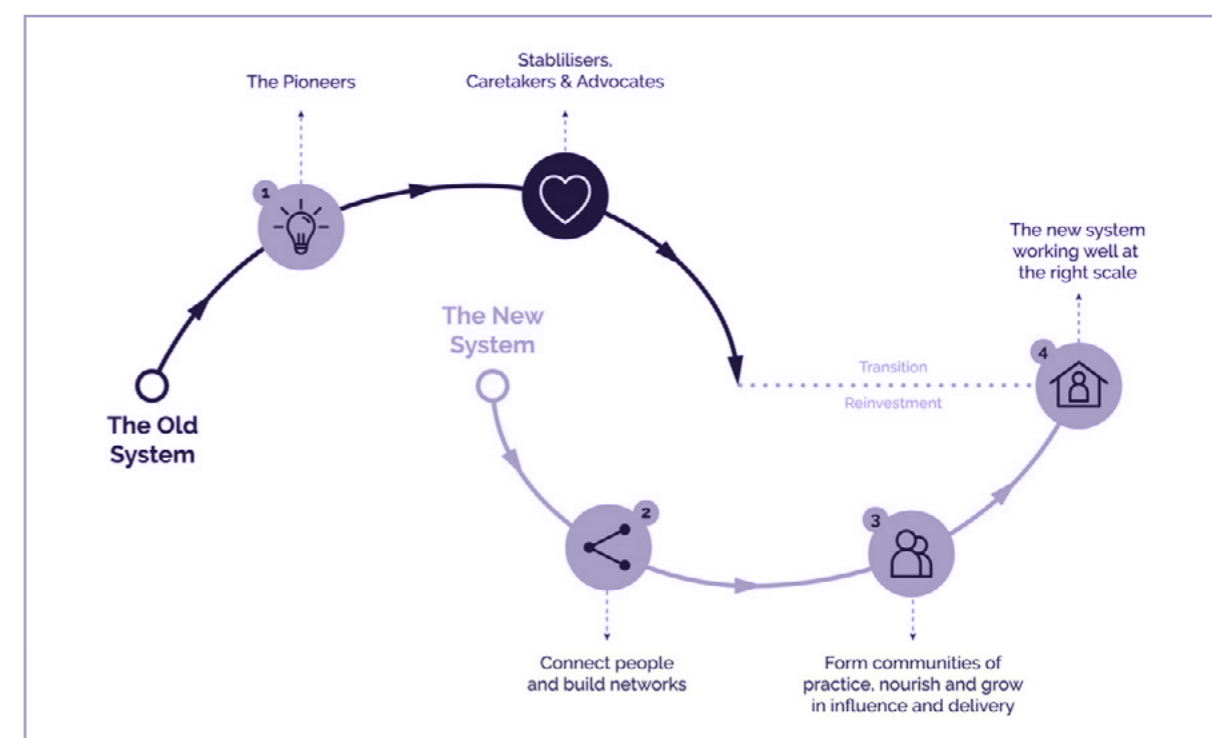
A new national framework to support all partners continue to ramp up across all 32 local authority areas in Scotland, in line with local need.



## CHANGING A SYSTEM – WHAT'S YOUR ROLE?

Scaling up Housing First as part of a new Rapid Rehousing approach is a significant change programme for people working at national and local level. But the transition now underway is based on overwhelming evidence and experience and, once it has been achieved, will reduce the time people spend homeless and the damage it causes. It will also be more effective and cost-effective for local authorities and partners. The Berkano2 'two loops' is a useful way to understand this change and each of our roles within it.

For tackling homelessness in Scotland, the dominant system has peaked and become ineffective - with homelessness no longer reducing and people spending long periods of time in temporary forms of accommodation, sometimes segregated from their community. In this unequal system, people face real disincentives to work or learn due to the housing benefit models within different types of homeless accommodation.



The new system of earlier prevention, rapid rehousing and Housing First is emerging. To ensure a safe transition, the old system needs experienced 'care-takers' to support services and approaches – and most importantly, the people using them - until the services are no longer needed.

The new system needs leaders to drive change and ensure it is embedded and maintained – the new normal. And this transition needs people to monitor and scrutinise it – to advocate for and defend the rights of people - until the new system of responding to homelessness is of the right scale and working effectively.

### What's your role?

## THANK YOU

Housing First Scotland belongs to everyone who is helping Housing First become the first response for people whose homelessness is made harder by experiences such as trauma, abuse, addictions, and mental ill health. It is hosted by Homeless Network Scotland, co-founded with Turning Point Scotland and I-SPHERE at Heriot-Watt University in 2016. Housing First Scotland is funded by the Corra Foundation to work across all parts of Scotland.

Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder is led by multi-agency partnerships in Aberdeen/shire, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Stirling. 15 services are delivering support, with a lead support provider in every area: Aberdeen Cyrenians, Transform Community Development, Cyrenians, Turning Point Scotland and Loretto Care.

Catalysed by Social Bite and Scottish Government, the Pathfinder is managed by Corra Foundation and Homeless Network Scotland and funded by Scottish Government, Social Bite and Merchants House Glasgow. Heriot-Watt University are undertaking a full evaluation.

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**Homeless  
Network  
Scotland**  
we are all in



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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