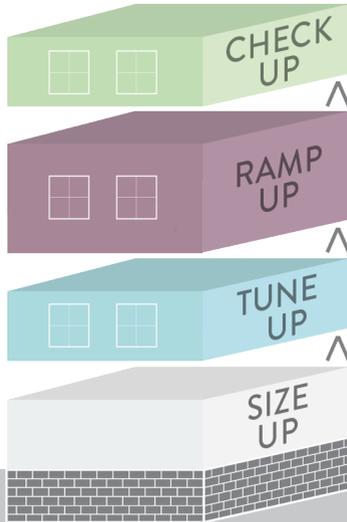




HOUSING
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THE STORY
SO FAR

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Why Scotland is “RAMPING UP” Housing First

Hearing a senior housing official describe homelessness as ‘normal’ in a modern, western European country is a reminder of how far we’ve come in Scotland.

Homelessness is not normal of course and is driven by the big social issues of poverty and inequality, interactions with local housing and labour markets and is influenced by how far (or not...) our welfare system provides a safety net.

Changing the conditions that create homelessness is the hardest part of all. But there are inspiring homelessness organisations already a step ahead – showing ‘place-leadership’, aligning services in communities. Sometimes without having a homeless label, but always with the range of expertise needed to help prevent it.

When homelessness has not been prevented, we must reflect honestly on how our system reacts to it. Because when homelessness hits, it means being squeezed out of your housing, your community. Often your income, relationships, your health will take a hit too. Instead of rapidly supporting people back into a community, we built a homeless system around them.

Over the years this system has become complex, expensive and difficult to maintain. It means lengthy stays in temporary forms of accommodation,

often shared and sometimes poor quality. It means sometimes making people’s experiences worse rather than better.

As with any system, we applied a set of rules to it then we asked people to live by those rules, rules which don’t apply to the rest of us. The longer people are homeless, the more damage it causes to wellbeing, opportunities and self-esteem. Our everyday collaboration with people who have direct experience of homelessness leaves no room for doubt about what people are up against, and the very normal things that most people want.

Like many who work in this sector, it’s sometimes hard to feel at home until you know everyone has one – that we’re not there until we’re all there. And this also means looking at how we get there; debate and diversity will fuel the best and most effective collaboration, but let’s resist the temptation to argue against what works, what’s obvious, what’s... normal.

Homelessness isn’t normal, but housing is.

People just need a place to call home. And some people need more support than others. Housing First, as part of a broader rapid rehousing approach, is as simple – and as normal – as that.

Sizing Up:

Housing First in Scotland (2010-2017)



When it comes to Rapid Rehousing and Housing First we have reached a significant moment in Scotland: all-party political commitment, new resources and an energy and depth of cross-sector collaboration that has never been felt before in our sector.

This moment has built on a foundation laid by many people who have been sizing up the potential of Housing First since 2010.

Scotland's Housing First story began with Ian Irvine, a colleague from Turning Point Scotland and trustee of the Homeless Network who led the delivery of the UK's first Housing First project in Glasgow in 2010. Wheatley Group got on board from the start, with Queens Cross, New Gorbals, Southside, Thenuen and Govan Housing Associations and ng homes all helping to make it happen.

This was a radically different response to homelessness compounded by experiences such as trauma, drug and alcohol misuse and mental ill health – so there was huge interest in whether it would work in Scotland. The independent evaluation carried out by Heriot-Watt University showed significant success in ending people's experience of homelessness and supporting them to achieve positive change in their health, substance use and interaction with the criminal justice system.

This led Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire councils to establish local projects with Turning Point Scotland in 2014, with a partnership also formed in Aberdeenshire to consider rural application. Rock Trust joined forces with Almond Housing Association to pilot an approach for young people in West Lothian. In Glasgow, the Homeless Network and Crisis got alongside Homes for Good, Glasgow City Mission and Simon Community Scotland to test delivery in the Private Rented Sector.

By 2017 we were approaching 100 Housing First tenancies, the vast majority of which were being successfully sustained. During this period, our academics, social innovators, politicians and policy makers were also sizing up the potential of Housing First.

Scottish Parliament's Local Government & Communities Committee, followed by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group in 2018, asserted a housing-led approach including Housing First as a cornerstone recommendation for ending homelessness in Scotland. And based on independent research commissioned from Heriot-Watt University, Social Bite made the magnificent decision to target their fundraising efforts on Housing First to make the biggest impact in Scotland – disrupting our homelessness system - but in the best way.

Housing First is intuitively right but is also backed by the strongest international evidence. But we knew we needed to go bigger...



Tuning Up:

Pathfinders and Leaders (2018-19)



Every experience of homelessness – and every path out – is unique. But one thing common to each is that housing ends people’s experiences of homelessness.

Scotland’s vision to end homelessness is now focused on ordinary, settled housing as quickly as possible for everyone with Housing First wrap-around support available for those who want it.

And this is the approach of Scotland’s Pathfinders and Leaders working to make Housing First a reality on a much bigger scale than what we’ve so far known. Working in a new, collaborative way across sectors, to understand and establish the relationships, structures and processes necessary to ramp up Housing First.

The Pathfinder was set in motion by the substantial fundraising efforts of thousands of people across Scotland energised by Social Bite and with funding support from Merchants House Glasgow. The Homeless Network and Corra Foundation were appointed as Project and Fund Managers.

Designing and then building a single Housing First approach in Scotland, with local application, is what will keep the momentum building and make sure principles are honoured.

We were all excited when the Scottish Government connected the Government/CoSLA high level commitment to Housing First to the Social Bite programme that was already underway. In doing so, Scottish Government became the main funder of a much larger £10m Housing First Pathfinder programme that can now promise to reach further.

More than 800 homes have been pledged in Aberdeen/shire, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling – mostly in the social rented sector, but with some private rented tenancies too. Support for people is delivered by local consortia comprising a formidable group of support providers. 15 services in total in fact - all freshly trained by Turning Point Scotland – with a lead in each area (in same order): Aberdeen Cyrenians, Transform Community Development, Cyrenians, Turning Point Scotland and Loretto Care.

We call this phase Tuning Up for a reason – the first nine months of making Housing First real in Scotland have been loud, out of tune, exciting, frustrating, challenging, encouraging - with a strong feeling that something really big is about to happen.

Senior decision makers, politicians and policy makers, funders, tenants, frontline support workers, service managers are all coming together to change a system.

Working, thinking, solving, leading, supporting – sharing their wins, and losses too.

Together, we've been tuning up something very modern, a way forward. A new way of working. Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder aims to transform the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in Scotland by disrupting a system that has failed them time and again. Housing will end their homelessness; they – and the support alongside them – will do the rest.



2011-13

Scotland one of six 'test sites' in the European Commission funded 'Housing First Europe' social experimentation.

Heriot-Watt also publish evaluation of Glasgow pilot.

2014

Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire Councils establish local Housing First projects with Turning Point Scotland.

2016

GHN launches Housing First Scotland in partnership with Turning Point Scotland and Heriot-Watt University

Glasgow the first city in Scotland to adopt Housing First 'by default' policy.

Aberdeenshire Housing First project.



In Glasgow, the Homeless Network and Crisis got alongside Homes for Good, Glasgow City Mission and Simon Community Scotland to test delivery in the Private Rented Sector.

2010

Ian Irvine, Turning Point Scotland and GHN Board.

The Glasgow Pilot.

Social Bite commissions Heriot-Watt to provide an evidence base and guide a funding framework for the 2017 Sleep in the Park.

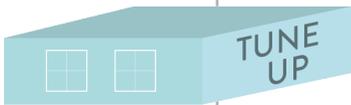
Focus groups in 4 cities lead to Housing First as key recommendation.



2017

Rock Trust and Almond Housing Association launch Housing First for Youth project in West Lothian. The first in the UK for young people.

Corra Foundation and GHN are appointed to deliver the programme.
Turning Point Scotland launch the Housing First Training Academy.
15 services are commissioned across 5 consortia.
Local structures, assessment processes and by-name lists developed.



2019 Jan-Mar

Key Discussion 1:
Scottish Government and Local Authorities. Review Housing First capacity and commitments within the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans sent Dec 2018.

2019 Jan-Mar

Key Discussion 2:
Corra Foundation and Support Providers.
Corresponding provision of local support for local people.

Up to £6.5m Scottish Government funding is announced, combining with Social Bite and Merchants House Glasgow funding to create Scotland's £10m flagship Housing First Pathfinder Programme.

Launch & Connect Event is held in November.

2018

Social Bite announces £3m towards a national Housing First programme with housing pledged by council, social and private

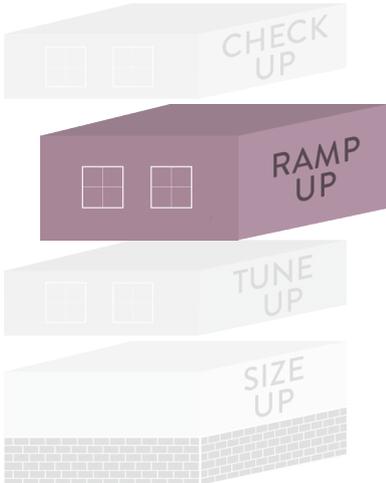
GHN and Social Investment Scotland win FEANTSA European Social Fund award: modelling social investment as a mechanism to scale up Housing First in Scotland.

Ramping Up:

A Relay not a Sprint (2019-2021)



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The three-year Housing First Scotland Pathfinder Programme exists within a broader strategy. Housing First Scotland is part of the overarching Rapid Rehousing Framework, which is in turn an element of the Ending Homelessness Together plan. We know that ramping up Housing First over the next three years will require even greater capacity, and a cross-sector commitment to working in a new way, but what else?

Ambition

Over time the aim is to reduce and end homelessness in Scotland in a way that is effective and lasting. This means reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness in any form, but it also means scaling back a system that serves (and is served by) homelessness. Scotland will decommission or adapt elements that are costly, ineffective or obsolete.

Courage

We must have courage to do more of what works and less of what does not. Making decisions not excuses, taking risks, chasing progress wherever it's found, challenging our own beliefs and attitudes. With the Pathfinders' early progress comes a duty to be bold, to test new ways of working, and to find solutions to the challenges that come when changing systems at scale.

Partnership

Rapid rehousing and Housing First calls for people everywhere, all those who care about ending homelessness, to actively choose to move it forward. As we do, those taking part must make it a priority to quickly circulate early learning and expertise to all Scottish local authorities and their partners – every problem faced, every solution found, every bit of wisdom gained. Already we're seeing what can happen when there is common purpose and commitment to seize this opportunity—a steady increase in the number of people in Scotland who are receiving tailored support in their own home via Housing First.

This is how Scotland will make the transition to a system of rapid rehousing and Housing First over the next few years: bit-by-bit, day-by-day, doubling the number of people being supported again and again until the day comes when we no longer need to.



What's Coming Next?

- **Check Up:** 2-year academic evaluation seeking to understand the impact of the Pathfinder Programme in relation to process, outcomes for people and cost effectiveness.
- 6 monthly Connect Events where cross-sector partners from the 5 Pathfinder cities and beyond join forces to share challenges, learning and successes and setting priorities for the next period.
- 'Housing First Know-How' briefings intended to gather early learning from Pathfinders and Leaders to support others implementing Housing First.
- Continued publication of monthly Housing First Scotland tenancy tracker, adding in regular outcomes monitoring, reporting and publication.
- Development of a Community of Practice for frontline staff and a Housing First Association programme for people with lived experience.



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Housing First Scotland belongs to everyone who is helping Housing First become the first response for people whose homelessness is compounded by experiences such as trauma, abuse, addictions and mental ill health. It is hosted by Homeless Network (GHN), set up in partnership with Turning Point Scotland and I-SPHERE at Heriot-Watt University.