

RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

2022/23 Monitoring Report



Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans Monitoring Report

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

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

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

RapidRehousingTransitionPlansMailbox@gov.scot.

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

Word guide: approximately 500 words per question.

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

The ring fenced funds allowed for options to be explored and trialled at a quicker pace. Which isn't always the easiest when budgets are limited within Local Authorities. Being able to explore options then allowed for monitoring to take place to assess the impact at preventing homelessness which meant some options were mainstreamed and others we used as lessons learnt.

One of the early pilots trialled was made a permanent part of our structure after assessing the impact was a dedicated prevention role. We created a temporary Enhanced Prevention Officer to work and concentrate on section 11 notices. Previously this was shared between all caseworkers via the duty service. The dedicated role seen greater engagement with our service which ultimately prevented homelessness occurring.

This role itself also allowed for more options to be trialled to prevent homelessness. We were able to create a small prevention fund which then encouraged earlier approaches to our service for assistance and therefore stopped court action. Without dedicated funds this may not have been possible due to continued budget cuts. 53 referrals have received payment and approximately 50 are all continuing to sustain tenancies.

CASE STUDY

Received a referral to the prevention fund from a RSL prior to them issuing a section 11 notice for one of their tenants. Their tenants had a low level arrears balance due to a change in employment however their arrears began to escalate. The main earner went off sick for 6 months only receiving SSP and the partner gave birth prematurely. This lead to their arrears increasing to around £2,000 at the time of the referral. This household didn't have knowledge of benefits and entitlements as they were always in employment. Through engagement with our Prevention Officer they were assisted with a DHP claim and helped to update a Universal Credit claim to include housing costs. They also received a payment of £400 from the prevention fund for an affordable repayment plan to be reached for the remainder of the balance and no further action taken on the tenancy.

We are also in a pilot process with one of our RSL partners where they are sending earlier section 11 notices, again to assist with engagement and being able to have more options available to try to help prevent any evictions from taking place. We are due to analyse the impacts this can have but early indications show positive impacts.

Through our Youth Pilot with Action for Children and still having high youth homelessness in the local authority area we looked at reviewing our allocations policy. Following consultation and Committee approval it was agreed to add a youth priority group to our allocations policy. The intention behind this is that it will reduce the need for young people to enter the homeless service to be housed therefore reducing presentations. As part of this we have a dedicated youth resettlement worker to assist and boost tenancy sustainment.

CASE STUDY

21 Year old female presents for advice, not roofless but lives with mother who has addiction issues (Aug 22). Then finds out she is pregnant and can no longer live at her mothers. Discuss all housing options; rent deposit, private let and homeless presentation so can make an informed decision. Nov 22 Youth priority is rolled out so this option is then discussed and application updated (18 wks. pregnant). She is then made an offer and housed in Feb 23, resettlement assisted with DHP and Community Care Grant.

Our Housing First service has enabled a 91% tenancy sustainment rate for those who have been in and out of our homeless service therefore reducing repeat homeless presentations.

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

The development and subsequent implementation allowed for discussions with all partners to begin and be agreed about increased allocations to households experiencing homelessness. These discussions were both internally with our colleagues in Housing Operations and our Registered Social Landlords. The focus and commitment from the Scottish Government encourages a more open conversation. Historically there has always been a push back to allow more than 45/50% of lets to be allocated to those in homelessness need.

The agreed time targets set out in the plan ensured there was both a strategic and operational focus. New review processes introduced as part of managing an open HL1. Cases were reviewed their areas of choice at 30 days, and again at 60 days where more areas had to be added. When external factors began to affect void times, new Void meetings were set up with an action plan to mitigate external impacts affecting void times.

It helped look at things in different ways to try and speed things up. For instance looking at older cases why not on offer and finding solutions such as focusing acquisition programme to meet a family's need.

It ensure all areas offices operated to maximise the use of section 5 by sending to multiple landlords who had suitable stock for the household and not one at a time. This removed waiting 6 weeks between each by the caseworker closely managing offers and updating relevant landlords quickly.

New discussions and new perspective on doing things meant our supported accommodation carried out a review of their timescales of the work we carry out. For example the review timescale used to be 12 weeks, we have now reduced this to every 6 weeks which has helped up speed up the process for people being put on the housing list waiting for an offer of housing.

It helped to break old ways of working. For instance, young people going into supported accommodation if they've never had a tenancy. It was a practice seen as practical help but by changing default start positions to always be low need and only work up based on information and assessment. Doing this means if more people assessed as low/no support needs our aim would then to be rapid rehouse.

Conversions "flipping" were an option prior to RRTP. What the implementation of our RRTP helped was make this a more readily available option by having a larger budget to offer it to more households. This has helped reduce transitions, and help rehouse some households quicker than if they had to wait for a ready to let property.

CASE STUDY

Single female in her 50s presents in March 2023. She is made an offer of housing which is still under repair in June 23. Following discussions with the caseworker she states she likes where she is and is happy. Caseworker speaks to colleagues to establish if it is an option to convert this temporary unit, and it is confirmed it is. Further discussions take place with applicant, housing operations and homeless services to get this moved on as quickly as possible. The conversion takes place and the tenancy is converted over to a SST on 10th July 2023.

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

Table below shows the numbers of households in temporary accommodation in West Dunbartonshire at the end of each of the first 4 years of RRTP and the average times spent in the temporary accommodation:

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
No in temp	264	296	253	285
Avg time	15 wks	19 wks	16.5 wks	17.5 wks

We were reporting an average of 23 weeks in temporary accommodation before the implementation of rapid rehousing. Our aim when the plan was initially written was to reduce this to 13 weeks by the end of year 5.

The renewed focus and new initiatives in place managed to make significant progress in the first year around times in temporary accommodation. In the second year we began trying to put focus on older cases which impacted the average times. There were also some new builds beginning to be allocated, some of which had delays impacting times. Despite this we were still on track in terms of times. However, the numbers in temporary accommodation also increased significantly at the end of year as this was the beginning of the pandemic and lockdown.

During Year 3 once lockdown restrictions began to be lifted and allocations resumed we were able to not only reduce numbers but times too.

However, the external factors impact of Covid19 and then the cost of living crisis began impacting both numbers and time and continue to do so. The demand for our prevention and homeless services began increasing in 2021/22 which in turn led to more requests for temporary accommodation.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Prevent 1 Approaches	178	240	332	576*	455

*this included 220 Covid19 Tenant Hardship Fund applications

On top of this the supply of available homes began to reduce. The cost of living crisis is a likely reason for a reduction in tenancy terminations in WDC tenancies. The table shows the average pre Covid19, during and after:

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
No of terminations	752	654	475	586	477

It shows how levels remain very low. Less people are moving into private rented and homeownership. This is likely linked to less people moving into home ownership due to high mortgage rates.

The number of new build completions are beginning to reduce, with no completions due in 2023/24 which would assist to top up available lets.

We have started to see a rise in larger families present in West Dunbartonshire Council for homelessness assistance. With very limited larger family home stock meaning increased times spent in temporary accommodation and more children in homeless services. Although the demand for larger properties have been incorporated into new builds development none will be ready until 2025. We are also utilising our increased buy back budget to focus on suitable larger family homes. There are currently 11 x families who require 4/5 bed size property and 6 also have medical needs.

All of these factors have led to higher numbers in temporary accommodation and longer times. Demand has become so great for temporary accommodation that as a local authority who prided itself on not requiring the use of bed and breakfast, we are now having to use it to accommodate demand which has led to reporting breaches of accommodation.

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

During the first three years of the RRTP we were able to meet our reduced target times and seen increased lets to households experiencing homelessness. Unfortunately in year 4 we were unable to meet our target and seen an increase in times. Factors highlighted in the above section demonstrate we do have an increased in demand, higher numbers in temporary accommodation and an increase in times spent in temporary accommodation.

As a result, we have had to adjust the target for year 5 but look to improve on current times.

Below shows our demand into our homeless service prior to RRTP and to present which shows the impact external factors are having:

2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
1038	1022	1053	1203	1202

If things had remained as they were in the first two years in terms of demand and supply, and there hadn't been external factors impacting both then West Dunbartonshire Council would be on track to a transition of rapid rehousing for those with no to low support needs.

We will continue to prevent homelessness as much as possible but current climate means this becomes more difficult or reduces available housing options for some households. It is hoped that prevention can assist to reduce demand, however the decisions and consequences around the cost of living cannot all be mitigated by the homeless services.

There are other factors adding to the demand of available social lets. Competing demands for those available and the reduction of available private lets.

The private rented sector, despite demand outstripping supply, is beginning to shrink. Many landlords are leaving the sector due to unintended consequences of legislation brought in to assist with the cost of living crisis such as taxation and rent caps.

We have also seen additional demands and pressures associated with a wide range of humanitarian programmes, most recently including the Homes for Ukraine and Scotland Super Sponsor Schemes. The Homes for Ukraine was at a scale never seen in Scotland which has exacerbated the demand for available affordable housing across Scotland, which ultimately amplifies the demand for the shrinking social housing supply.

Available supply of properties is a key element to enable rapid rehousing and current factors are impacting this.

Times properties are at void stage have been increasing which affects numbers available. Some of the issues that are affecting time is the lack of available contractors to carry out work and issues recruiting internal staff due to high demands for tradespersons. The availability of materials or lack of has also led to delays. Another significant issue is delays with utilities meters. Some of the issues and months delays in resetting meters/installing new meters, are all things which mean a new tenant cannot move in. This is a nationwide issue.

CASE STUDY

Single male parent household presents in July 2021. Made original offer in August 2021 but had to be withdrawn once new medical information provided meant no longer suitable for the child. It was then January 2022 before another offer was made due to the needs of the household. However, by end of April we are unable to provide a ready for let date as ongoing meter issues despite the property being ready in January. Therefore, a decision was made to convert or “flip” current temporary accommodation to a permanent tenancy due to multiple delays and limited stock to meet needs of the household.

While external context continues to impact demand and supply it will continue to be a challenge to achieve full rapid rehousing in the short term.

Details of funding recipient

Local authority	West Dunbartonshire Council		
Reporting period	01/04/2022	to	31/03/2023
Reporting officer	Claire Mckay		
Position	Senior Housing Development Officer		
Date completed	24 th August 2023		
Total RRTP funding carried over from 2021-22	£36,392		
RRTP funding received for 2022-23	£238,000		
RRTP spend 2022-23	£485,159		
Total RRTP funding carried over to 2023-24	£1,263		

Housing First				
Housing First tenancies Provide a short brief overview of your progress and any obstacles to progression of Housing First in your area.	<p>We achieved 15 housing first tenancies in Year 4 which is one above our target of 14. This included a homeless prevention case where a referral was accepted to prevent a tenancy ending.</p> <p>We also carried a further 4 into Year 5 of those who have been assessed or waiting an offer.</p> <p>This was not our original target in our plan for year 4, it was 37. However, due the available funding we were unable to expand the service any further to staffing levels from 8 FTE therefore target was reduced to 14.</p> <p>As there has been no additional funding secured we are unable to expand current staff levels which impacts ability for further housing first tenancies. Only one RSL actively offers properties as housing first tenancies.</p>			
	<p>Housing First partners Provide detail of all Housing First partners who are supporting the delivery of Housing First.</p> <p>We work with our colleagues in housing services and some of our registered social landlords in the area to provide the tenancies.</p> <p>We work closely with our colleagues in finances around community care grants to help furnish the properties.</p> <p>Bi-monthly we provide updates on our housing first service to our Alcohol and Drug Partnership. We have ongoing conversations with colleagues in HSCP regarding funding.</p>			
Allocation spent on Housing First 2022/23:		Local authority funding	Other	
	£	SG RRTP funding	238,000	153,109
Impact of Housing First: Any evidence of the impact of Housing First including anonymised case studies where appropriate	<p>At the end of year 4 we had created 64 tenancies in total with 50 still active. This was with 8 “step downs” and 6 tenancies ending (4 deaths and 2 tenancy/neighbour issues). With only 6 tenancies ended means we are achieving a 91% tenancy sustainment rate. This service has given the opportunity for those who would previously not taken or sustained a tenancy before. This also means there was no a housing solution for some cases which have been opened for many years. For some individuals it has led to addressing other issues such as mental health or addictions which wouldn’t have been possible otherwise. CASE STUDY attached at end of template.</p>			
Future spend planned on this activity in 2023/24:		Local Authority funding	Other	
	£	SG RRTP Funding	241,146	120,000

<p>Future plans for Housing First :</p> <p>Provide detail of the future of Housing First delivery in your local area, including timescales and progress towards Housing First being the default option for people with multiple and complex needs experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p>We will be reviewing our Housing First Service including stakeholders and service user's consultation.</p> <p>We will also be exploring the option of procuring additional support from third sector to be able to create more tenancies during Year 5.</p> <p>We continue to have ongoing conversations with HSCP partners about long term funding as homeless services should not and cannot fully fund the current service let alone expand it.</p> <p>Understanding further demand but would want to explore Housing First as a homeless prevention tool rather than being a homeless solution which would reduce numbers of new people entering the homeless service. To enable this as a default option requires long-term funding from all partners.</p>
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Housing First Case Study

C is a single male in his fifties, with addictions spanning 20 years and several homeless presentations. Was housed in 2016 under homeless priority. However, due to his addictions he had poor door management to the point he would allow other alcohol and drug users in his property sometimes under duress. Things escalated to the point where C was assaulted in his own home where he had to stay in hospital for a month. On discharge C gave up his tenancy and returned to live with family.

Throughout his life he sought support for his dependency and receives support from Community Addictions Team and been on a methadone programme but at times also used illicit drugs too.

In 2019 following the assault, C presented to homeless services again. At this point Housing First was established therefore the case manager made a referral into the service. C was accepted into housing first with the following being identified as his support needs; current homeless situation, long term addiction support; recovery and relapse preventions; social isolation; exploitation; mental health and wellbeing; positive door control.

C secured a new tenancy late 2019 but the first 2 years remained chaotic in terms of drugs use and still being exploited by peers. However, after building trust with his HF support worker access community-based support networks. This allowed C to begin to think about his own personal recovery. C began to see positive changes. Unfortunately, C had another relapse but recognising this this time asked for more help in form of respite. Workers linked in and C was given respite for 3 months while maintaining his tenancy.

Fast forward to now, C now been abstinence for nearly 4 months of all drugs, he's involved with Scottish Drug Forum as a volunteer, is addressing all debts and now has a positive door control. He also recently fully decorated his property.