

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 5 November 2020

Housing First – Year 1

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Committee is asked to note the update on the first year of the delivery of the Housing First service in Edinburgh.

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Housing First – Year 1

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council and its partners began full delivery of a Housing First service in January 2019. This report was scheduled for Committee in March 2020 to cover Year 1, but now includes figures to date.
- 2.2 This report provides a summary of the progress to date so far, including the number of people being supported, tenancies allocated and sustainment rates.

3. Background

- 3.1 Housing First has been developed as an alternative approach to mainstream housing for homeless people with multiple and complex needs.
- 3.2 Initially developed in the United States in the 1980's, this service model has been implemented successfully in a number of other countries, most notably in Scandinavia.
- 3.3 Traditional Housing First prioritises the right to a home above and before the obligation to engage with housing support services. The concept is based on the individuals primary need to obtain stable housing.
- 3.4 The aim of the service is to move people into permanent housing as quickly as possible with ongoing, flexible and individual support on a voluntary basis for as long as it is needed using a harm reduction approach.
- 3.5 Since January 2019, the Council has been working with a range of partners to deliver this service in Edinburgh.
- 3.6 Permanent accommodation is provided by the Council and its Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners and the support is provided by a consortium of support providers.
- 3.7 The consortium of support providers is led by Cyrenians and includes Turning Point Scotland, Rock Trust, Streetwork, Bethany Christian Trust, Gowrie Care and Barony Care.

- 3.8 The Council and partners committed to providing 275 Housing First packages by 31 March 2021, which includes a youth project for up to 17 households, under the age of 24 and/or from a care background.
- 3.9 The original intention was to provide around 10 tenancies per month, to ensure that support provision and capacity is maintained and avoid the need for several potential service users to be bidding for available homes at the same time.
- 3.10 Whilst there is a strong commitment from partners to deliver Housing First tenancies and support, it should be noted that all tenancies are from existing social housing stock.

4. Main report

- 4.1 As of 17 September 2020, 64 Housing First tenancies have been created, with a further 93 service users identified and receiving support to access housing.
- 4.2 To date there have been no evictions from Housing First tenancies, although in two cases planned moves were arranged for service users.
- 4.3 From the tenancies created 56% of households were in temporary accommodation (including rapid access accommodation), 32% were rough sleeping or sofa surfing others included, for example, a tenant who received their property through gold priority and a case where a package was provided to an existing tenant whose tenancy was at risk of failure.
- 4.4 Since the inception of this service, three service users who were receiving Housing First support have died. One was in a property and two were receiving support to secure a property.
- 4.5 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the pause in letting, it is unlikely that the initial target of 275 tenancies, by 31 March 2021 will be met.
- 4.6 Housing providers are committed to providing as many tenancies as possible, but this is dependent on stock turnover and availability. Work is ongoing between housing and support providers to identify appropriate routes to maximise opportunities for the creation of Housing First tenancies.
- 4.7 The support provision for this service is funded through the Corra Foundation, on behalf of Social Bite and the Scottish Government. This fund covers financial years 2019-20 and 2020-21, up to 275 tenancies.
- 4.8 The Scottish Government have confirmed that they will meet 50% of the support costs for 2021-22 by funding the first six months, with the expectation that the Council will meet the remainder of the costs, from 1 October 2021 and then continue to fund support costs from then on.
- 4.9 To deliver this service from 1 October 2021 onwards, the Council is required to comply with procurement regulations. To do so the Council will work with partners over the next year to ensure a compliant solution.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Council will continue to work with partners to monitor the performance of the service, this includes monitoring progression of the scheme to ensure the number of tenancies created reaches the original objective.
- 5.2 Research on the success of the pilots, nationally, is being undertaken by Heriot Watt University. A summary report will be provided for Committee when this is available.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There is no direct financial impact on the Council from this update report.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 There are no direct impacts from this update report.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Housing First Evaluation | Heriot-Watt University](#)
- 8.2 [University of York review of a range of Housing First research from across the UK, Europe, and America](#)
- 8.3 [Scottish Government Local Government and Communities Committee Report on Homelessness](#)
- 8.4 [Chartered Institute of Housing – Housing First in the UK and Ireland](#)
- 8.5 [Housing First Guide Europe](#)
- 8.6 [Housing First in Permanent Supportive Housing Brief - HUD Exchange](#)
- 8.7 [Glasgow Homelessness Network Seminar May 2017](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.