



Everyone Home Collective

A route-map to protect homes in communities across Scotland



#EveryoneHome

Closer to home...

There is already a network of services and systems for people who live and work with homelessness after it has happened. But this is often too late and sometimes too slow.

Instead, we want to connect what we know about the causes of homelessness with the local knowledge and services that can reach people earlier — and closer to home.

Preventing and ending homelessness needs many responses developing on many fronts. It ultimately needs a fairer Scotland with healthy housing and labour markets underpinned by a strong UK-wide welfare system.

We also need the help of community groups and structures to prevent homelessness. This means elected members, community planning partnerships, community councils, other local governance and decision-making structures — along with the wealth of local services, groups and networks.

All homelessness starts in a community. A place-based approach can help us do more earlier and much closer to home. This route-map sets out a way forward to help protect homes and prevent homelessness in your area.



Homelessness starts here

At least **8% of the Scottish population** has experienced homelessness at some point in their lives, which makes it a constant and relatively common event.

But we are not all at equal risk. Poverty is the main driver of homelessness, while childhood poverty is a key predictor of homelessness in later life. Evidence also points to a spike in the use of health services, including GPs, before somebody becomes homeless.



Homelessness and poverty affects **people and places**. This means that some groups of people are more at risk of homelessness and some communities in Scotland are too.

What increases that risk more?

The health of local housing systems



The extent to which housing demand matches supply in the places people want to live and whether people are enabled to afford and access that housing rapidly.

The health of local labour markets



The extent to which potential employers of people in any occupational sector matches with the numbers and skills of people who are available for work.

The strength of the welfare safety-net



The extent to which the benefits system adequately compensates people during periods of not being able to work for personal or health reasons, or as a consequence of local labour markets.

And what can reduce that risk?

There are a range of protecting factors that can help prevent homelessness:



Access to adequate income and/or savings



Having positive relationships, social networks and support



A sense of belonging, being involved in meaningful activity with a valued role



Useful advice, advocacy and information including from the types of services listed on page 7

Time to go...

Any period of homelessness damages people's lives – and the longer people are homeless, the more damage it causes. As illustrated above, there are bigger factors that drive homelessness and make some of us much more likely to experience it than others.

But what then happens that triggers homelessness in communities? Often, it is because relationships break down. A couple split up, or you're young and you're not getting on with your parents. Most of us share the life experience of different types of relationships ending for many reasons, that it's time to go. But if you're skint, the housing options available to you are more limited and the immediate threat to your living arrangement creates a constant pressure - how do you leave, how do you afford it, and where do you go?

While most people will 'just' be dealing with a looming housing crisis, we know that other people's situation will be made harder by a range of other challenges and experiences. With their physical or mental health for example, or managing the impact of trauma, addictions or other coping strategies.

Some people don't have anyone in their social network they can call on for help, to stay for a few days, to borrow money, or just talk it through. Or sometimes people feel they've overstayed their welcome or used up the goodwill of friends and family. While of course many people's social circle are just not in the position themselves to provide any practical, financial or emotional support.

When social networks can't help, people are reliant on professional services, including advice and information, to find housing and support. In local communities, it is not always clear where people can get help before their situation turns into homelessness.

...or want to stay

Most evictions in Scotland are because of rent arrears. Data from the [Scottish Housing Regulator](#) shows that there were 1,759 evictions for rent arrears in Scotland during 2019-20. 1,062 evictions were made by local authority landlords and 697 were made by Registered Social Landlords (housing associations and cooperatives).

20% of court actions initiated by housing associations and 15% by local authority landlords resulted in eviction for rent not paid during 2019-20. This means **many more people** live with the threat of eviction which impacts on relationships, mental and physical wellbeing, creating a cycle of conditions that create homelessness.



Why local?



There is a lot to gain by taking a place-based approach to preventing homelessness in Scotland. Just some of the benefits are:

Local Knowledge

Rooting efforts within local communities builds from the existing networks of active, known and trusted organisations that already have a deep understanding of the challenges faced by local people and how best to embed local solutions to ensure they last in the longer term. Focusing on a specific place helps genuine local ownership of the challenges and solutions, linking to the assets already there and avoiding well-intentioned solutions experienced as having been ‘parachuted in.’

Live Intelligence

While local-authority and national data can be used to identify homelessness risk at an aggregate level, community intelligence is invaluable in knowing the people rather than just the profile, making it easier to spot and respond to identified risk swiftly

Relationships at the Heart

Connecting with community anchor organisations that represent the community and provide local leadership (for example, community centres, community trusts or housing associations). This can act as a shortcut to identifying people in housing need; the right local partners will know people by name and may already have a trusted and credible relationship to build from.

Removing Stigma

Local services can provide early support and advice for people in ordinary settings. This can prevent the stigma that some people feel when reaching out to homelessness services. Local networks can also play an important role in creating the space for dialogue to move beyond something that might feel abstract or too distant, as the language of ‘homelessness prevention’ has often done for those who do not work in the homelessness sector.

Changing the Record

Rethinking and reframing our language – and who says it – can also lead to honest and realistic discussions where local people are more easily able to recognise themselves or people they know in conversations about homelessness risk and housing instability, how it can be prevented, and what steps they can take to play a part in resolving their own challenges.

Connected

At a national and local authority level, efforts to prevent homelessness can be limited by sectors and services not always working in a joined-up way. Community-based services are often better placed to respond flexibly and in-the-round, rather than focusing on any specific issue. These existing connections are also invaluable in bringing in the expertise of health and other sectors to prevent homelessness.

Diverse

Taking a place-based approach can make it easier for diverse and personalised responses to local priorities. There can be occasions of a similar solution being favoured by different communities, but it may be implemented differently to best fit the local service and response networks that already exist. This is harder to do at a local authority or national level.

Are there limits to a local approach?

Local action to protect homes has an untapped potential to stop homelessness before it happens.

Research has shown that when communities feel empowered to act on local priorities, there is:

- greater participation in local democracy
- increased confidence and skills among local people
- more people volunteering in their communities
- greater satisfaction with quality of life in the neighbourhood



So there is no limit — but there are some considerations.

Local approaches to protect homes need to be bolstered by a council, national and UK-wide focus on preventing the conditions that cause homelessness – poverty, inequality, the health of local housing and labour markets and the strength of the welfare system. Without this broader focus and national leadership, **evidence has shown** that local policymaking may disadvantage socially marginalised groups. This is often because the numbers of people affected are smaller at local level and often less likely to be involved in local groups and governance to make sure insights and priorities are included.

Better still, if a local approach to protect homes is informed and supported by experts (people who live and work with homelessness) it can help to make sure that responses are based on knowledge of what works. The risk and impact of homelessness is not distributed equally or in the same ways. A place-based approach to preventing homelessness also has a well-placed opportunity to be sensitive to the different forms of inequality and the rights of people who have characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. **Click here** for an overview of equalities considerations when preventing or responding to homelessness.

There is a new, national programme of change directing how we respond to homelessness in Scotland; local approaches will want reassured that they can align with this and don't inadvertently perpetuate 'old' ways of responding to homelessness.

For example, **evidence has shown** that interventions offering the highest levels of support alongside unconditional accommodation were more effective. But that basic interventions, for example those that only satisfy very basic human needs such as a bed and food, may actually harm people.

And to dispel myths and stereotypes about homelessness, it is also important to use evidence to make deliberate choices in the words and images we use when talking about homelessness. There is a very **useful toolkit** available to help community groups and organisations do that.

What can communities do right now?

This route-map is to connect our knowledge about what causes and prevents homelessness with the local knowledge of partnerships and services who are already delivering information, advice and support to local people, in many different ways.

In some places, this will not need new services. There is already a huge amount of work delivered by communities which builds from and develops the assets of people and places. This in turn can help to protect homes and prevent homelessness, even if that is not the main aim.

Existing community-based services can further help protect homes and prevent homelessness by doing two simple things:



ASK about housing

When people you connect with or provide a service to have money worries or problems at home. Ask about housing and listen to what would help.



ACT on what people tell you

Make introductions to local advice and support services and encourage people to get help. The quicker people act, the more chance of homelessness being prevented.

What are the types of community-based services and supports that can help protect homes and prevent homelessness?



Advice and advocacy



Local health services including GPs, pharmacists and dentists



Relationship counselling



Food services, including foodbanks and community pantries



Mediation services



Young people's services and drop-ins



Money matters, especially rent arrears



Community-based employability support



Women's support groups



Faith based groups and places



Housing options awareness — what's available and what's best for you and your household



Black and minority ethnic groups



What about when local services aren't available that can help people closer to home?

There are lots of services that respond to homelessness after it happens, but not enough that can prevent homelessness before it does. This might mean new services are needed in some places. Or it might mean existing services doing a bit more of what can protect homes and prevent homelessness. There are also some things we can do together.

What can we do together?



There are also great ways that community-based services could work in partnership with specialist housing, homelessness and advice services who might not be located in your area, but who want to help prevent homelessness there. This could include:

- Connecting with local leaders in community development roles (e.g. community connectors)
- Outreach surgeries providing information and advice sessions
- Co-location of key workers in community settings
- Local homelessness risk analysis

The Everyone Home Collective will also:

- Lend a hand to community groups and networks with an awareness raising campaign during 2021. We want that to reach people whose living arrangements might be at risk and local people who can help closer to home.
- Share a range of examples of activities, projects and interventions that are effective in preventing homelessness in a practical guide to help inspire ideas, learning, replication and adaptation. Tell Crisis about what is already successful in preventing homelessness in your local area – [click here to respond](#) to the call for evidence.
- Working with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, we will create a new resource that will help put sustaining tenancies at the heart of the housing management functions of local housing associations and cooperatives.





What do we all need?

- 1** **Community Planning Partnerships to include Preventing Homelessness as a priority outcome in [Local Outcomes Improvement Plans](#) and Locality Plans. LOIPs are the mechanism by which Community Planning Partnerships deliver improved outcomes for their communities, based on local needs that reflect agreed local priorities.**

This would give the best lever to local services and networks to adapt and align what they do to help protect homes and prevent homelessness closer to home.

- 2** **A Community Planning statement in Local Housing Strategies on the role of communities to protect homes and prevent homelessness.**

This would give the best lever to connect community aspirations with the local authority's housing and investment strategies.

- 3** **Scottish Government to include 'preventing homelessness' in the Communities Outcome of the [National Performance Framework](#). Scotland's National Performance Framework tracks performance towards 11 agreed outcomes and indicators of national importance.**

This would give the best lever to Community Planning Partnerships to include protecting homes and preventing homelessness as a priority outcome in Local Outcomes Improvement Plans and Locality Plans.

- 4** **People who fund services (local authority commissioners, grant making bodies) to shift their approach to enable us to focus on building the positive relationships needed to protect homes and prevent homelessness in communities. The importance of recognising and trusting emerging outcomes, rather than hard outcomes set at the start, is especially important for place-based approaches to preventing homelessness.**

The 'Staying In' approach funded by the [National Lottery Community Fund Scotland](#) is a great example of trusting emerging outcomes. It will test different ways to prevent homelessness in two Glasgow communities— Pollok and the Gorbals. The funder enabled a £200k 'community chest' for targeted prevention work based on local evidence and shared decision-making with people living and working there.

About The Collective



Everyone Home is a collective of 31 (and growing) third and academic sector organisations that have come together during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect the progress that's been made and the principles that must now guide the next steps.

Read our framework for going forward at www.everyonehome.scot and join us on social media at **#EveryoneHome**

This route-map developed in partnership with:

All in For Change (thanks to David and Lisa!)
Scottish Federation of Housing Associations

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