

Guidance for Local Authorities Published June 2013

Housing Support Duty to Those Found to be Homeless or Threatened With Homelessness – Amendment to Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (inserted by Housing (Scotland) Act 2010)

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HOUSING SUPPORT DUTY TO THOSE FOUND TO BE HOMELESS OR
THREATENED WITH HOMELESSNESS - AMENDMENT TO HOUSING
(SCOTLAND) ACT 1987 (INSERTED BY HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010)

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Foreword to Guidance

The prevention of homelessness is one of the foremost challenges currently facing local authorities and their partners. Councils are well aware of the costs which can result from failing to support homeless households and of the value of effective preventative measures.

Significant progress has been made in this area in recent years, but there is still a way to go. That is why councils responded positively to the new duty to assess needs and support homeless and potentially homeless households where appropriate, and have played a leading role in the preparation of this non statutory guidance to augment the Regulations introduced in June 2013.

Having been designed by practitioners, the guidance is intended very much as a support to implementation. We hope the guidance will be helpful in assisting compliance with the duty, but have also built in a review process to allow the incorporation of improvements and good practice examples over time.

I am grateful to all who participated in the working group to prepare the guidance and to Scottish Government colleagues for providing drafting and secretarial support to the group.

Jim Hayton, Chair of Housing Support Guidance Working Group

**Policy Manager, ALACHO
(Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers)**

PART 1: BACKGROUND TO THE HOUSING SUPPORT DUTY

Introduction

1. With the achievement of the '2012 target' that all those assessed as unintentionally homeless by local authorities in Scotland are entitled to settled accommodation, unprecedented housing rights for those experiencing homelessness have been established.
2. While these housing rights are a crucial aspect of addressing homelessness in Scotland, access to accommodation alone will not be sufficient to meet the needs of some of those that are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
3. Against this backdrop, the prevention of homelessness has been taken forward across Scotland by five regional local authority led 'Housing Options Hubs'. Housing options encompasses looking at an individual's options in the widest sense, featuring early intervention and exploring all options available to a household. This approach has led to falls in recorded homelessness across Scotland since 2010. This work will continue to be developed following the establishment of the Scottish Government/ COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) Homelessness Prevention Group in 2013.
4. The provision of housing support can be an important part of preventing homelessness and repeat homelessness. Following the provision of a tenancy, it will be important that the tenancy has the best possible chance to be sustained. The housing support duty for local authorities covered by this Guidance can therefore be an important tool in addressing homelessness in Scotland.

Purpose of the Guidance

5. This Guidance is provided to assist local authorities and their partners in implementing the housing support duty ('the duty'), which came into force on 1st June 2013, to help achieve the best possible outcomes for homeless households in their area.
6. The Guidance has been developed, and should be read, against the backdrop of the development of housing options approaches to prevention of homelessness with local partners in local areas and the practice that has emerged as a result of that approach. It is intended that this approach to prevention and the housing support duty should complement each other and that housing support resources should be allocated flexibly across these key objectives whilst adhering to the relevant legislation.
7. In order to reflect the need for local flexibility and innovation, which was highlighted in the public consultation on the duty, this Guidance has been developed by a cross sector working group (please see Annex 2). This included the Scottish Government as facilitator of the Group's collective views. While this is not Scottish Government Guidance, it can be read in conjunction with the Scottish Government's statutory guidance to local authorities on homelessness, prevention of homelessness and for children facing homelessness:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/05/31133334/33366>

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/06/08140713/0>

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/homeless/las/children>

8. Feedback on this Guidance is welcomed, including the highlighting of housing support practice examples. Any comments on the Guidance can be sent to the Scottish Government Homelessness Team who will collate on behalf of the Working Group. Any feedback on the Guidance should be sent to: homelessness@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

9. It is intended that the Guidance will be subject to regular review.

The Housing Support Duty for Local Authorities

10. The purpose of the housing support duty ('the duty') is to help prevent homelessness among people that the local authority believe may have difficulty in sustaining their tenancy. The duty is intended to complement the preventative approach developed in recent years through the Housing Options Hubs across Scotland rather than to shift focus and resources from prevention to dealing with the crisis of homelessness.

11. Local authority staff are already providing housing support and advice to applicants through homelessness prevention activity. The housing support duty will, in many cases, mean that these existing approaches continue but will now have the status of being a legal duty.

12. The legislation which established the housing support duty (Section 32B of the of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 inserted by Housing (Scotland) Act 2010) states there is a duty on local authorities to conduct a housing support assessment for applicants who are unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and that they have 'reason to believe' need the housing support services prescribed in regulations. 'The regulations' are the Housing Support Services (Homelessness) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and are outlined below.

13. The regulations were established after public consultation and the services prescribed are:

- (a) advising or assisting a person with personal budgeting, debt counselling or in dealing with welfare benefit claims;
- (b) assisting a person to engage with individuals, professionals or other bodies with an interest in that person's welfare;
- (c) advising or assisting a person in understanding and managing their tenancy rights and responsibilities, including assisting a person in disputes about those rights and responsibilities; and
- (d) advising or assisting a person in settling into a new tenancy.

14. If an assessment of a need for support is made, local authorities must ensure the housing support services are provided. If this assessment is made, an assessment also needs to be made for others that reside with the applicant as part of their household.

15. The legislation states that ‘housing support services’ include any service which provides support, assistance, advice or counseling to an individual with particular needs with a view to enabling that individual to occupy, or to continue to occupy, residential accommodation as the individual’s sole or main residence. The form and duration of housing support will vary depending on the individual’s circumstances and/or those of the people in the household.

16. If you wish to read the details of the amendment to the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 Act in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, which brought in the housing support duty, you can find it at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/17/section/158>

17. If you wish to read the report written on the responses to the consultation on the housing support duty by Reid Howie, you can find it at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/06/7425>

Corporate Responsibility and Joint Working

18. The housing support duty is a corporate duty for local authorities and consequently its implementation is a corporate responsibility. This Guidance should be used to highlight the importance of the duty across local authorities and to local partners. The successful implementation of the duty leading to improved outcomes for those assessed as unintentionally homeless will require the involvement of a range of local authority departments such as housing, social work and education and local partners such as health and third sector organisations.

19. Joint working and developing a corporate approach to tackling homelessness was one of the key priorities agreed by the Scottish Government and COSLA in achieving the 2012 homelessness target. Local authorities can use the opportunity presented by the housing support duty to raise awareness and promote good practice around this issue.

20. Local authorities will need to work with cross-sector partners in their area to meet the support needs of every applicant with a legal entitlement to housing support. Where required, partner agencies (such as registered social landlords) should work closely with local authority housing departments to address support needs.

21. Where they are not already in place, local authorities may wish to consider establishing clear working arrangements and protocols with partner agencies in order to maximise efficiency and use of resources. Local authorities may find it helpful to share experiences and positive practice examples in the development of such protocols.

22. At a more strategic level, local authorities may wish to highlight the requirements of the duty through Community Planning Partnerships to help improve joint working and better plan and deliver services. Future developments could also include Health and Social Care Partnerships and that their strategies should reflect the housing and support needs of homeless people.

PART 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HOUSING SUPPORT DUTY

Who the duty is to: assessment

23. The duty to assess the need for housing support is relevant to every applicant assessed by the local authority as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and who the local authority has reason to believe would benefit from housing support services as prescribed in regulations (see paragraph 12, Part 1 of this Guidance).

24. Once the duty has arisen and the local authority has reason to believe that the applicant may need the support, the local authority must assess others residing with the applicant. If it finds that support services are needed, it must ensure they are provided. If the applicant does not require support, but a local authority is aware that others residing with the applicant may have support needs, it may be considered best practice (and most likely to lead to successful outcomes) to address these needs.

When the duty begins: provision

25. The duty to provide housing support services begins following assessment of the need for housing support. This reflects the need to provide support to prepare for, or search for, settled accommodation.

26. If support is not determined as being required at this initial assessment stage, local authorities should consider the potential triggers for a further support assessment at a later stage e.g. when moving out of temporary accommodation, in reaction to unforeseen crises.

27. The duty is to the applicant, or those residing with the applicant, assessed as requiring housing support rather than to the accommodation. Consequently, while the legislation makes no specific reference to temporary accommodation, in practice, the duty to provide support may begin when in temporary accommodation and after the decision has been made of a right to settled accommodation.

Defining 'Reason to Believe'

28. The duty only applies to those assessed as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness who the local authority has 'reason to believe' is in need of support. Each case should be considered on its merits, avoiding the adoption of blanket policies.

29. It will be important for local authorities to establish clear triggers for a housing support assessment to ensure assessments are not driven by resource considerations. A local authority should be able to demonstrate a process that it follows to identify people that may be in need of housing support.

30. This Guidance does not seek to specify a particular process in this regard, but local authorities should be able to demonstrate that they have one and that it is implemented consistently.

31. While not an exhaustive list, triggers for having 'Reason to Believe' may include:

- Previous tenancy history;
- Previous involvement in anti-social behaviour or previous significant rent arrears;
- A history of repeat homelessness;
- Age, such as a young person (16-25), including those that have been through the care system
- A person leaving an institution, such as prison
- Those with substance misuse issues
- Those with health issues including mental ill health
- Broad identification of particular groups at risk of homelessness as specified in the Scottish Government/COSLA's Prevention of Homelessness Guidance <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/06/08140713/14>

32. Assessments of the requirement for housing support services may need to be on-going and may be informed by the views of partner agencies as further support needs become evident. If 'reason to believe' is identified at any point between, and including, assessment and resettlement, an assessment of housing support should be carried out.

33. Where existing service provision involves external providers, local authorities may wish to consider how external service providers can be involved in the assessment for housing support. Appropriate data sharing protocols should be developed.

34. It is the local authority that has the legal duty to carry out the assessment and ensure that services provided. The assessment by the local authority could include information from any other agency already working with the applicant, but it is the local authority that would be expected to decide what the housing support needs are and that these are being met.

Existing Support Services

35. Many local authorities and their partners will already be providing support for those waiting for and living in settled accommodation. It is important to recognise that in many cases the duty should not lead to extra demands on resources or a duplication of current services, but to a formalisation of practice through housing support becoming a legal duty.

36. Where there is an existing support plan at the point of assessment of a duty to provide housing support, a review of the plan should ensure that the support plan is updated. It may not be beneficial to the applicant to start a new assessment process where services are already being provided.

Housing Support Standards

37. Most of the Housing Support Services (as defined in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010) covered by the regulations in the housing support duty will be required to be registered by the Care Inspectorate. The Care Inspectorate will, through inspection and regulatory activities, seek evidence that the service is being provided in keeping with the National Care Standards and associated regulations.

38. Where providers of Housing Support Services are already registered with the Care Inspectorate, it may be appropriate to include housing support to homeless households within an existing registration, through a variation or notification to the Care Inspectorate. The Housing Support Standards can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/05/16143310/0>

Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (SSSTs)

39. Housing support may already be provided to some in SSSTs and interim or transitional accommodation, such as those with a history of anti-social behaviour. However, the assessment for housing support as part of the duty will only apply when the local authority assessment of a duty to provide settled accommodation is made, irrespective of the type of tenancy.

Those residing with the Applicant

40. There is a requirement within the housing support duty to assess the support needs of the homeless applicant *and any other person residing with the applicant* as part of their household.

41. In most cases, where housing support is provided to an applicant, the support needs assessment and support plan would be expected to consider the needs of all those that reside with the applicant. In specific circumstances, for example where individual adults have very specific needs, where there is disagreement among the adults in a household or a suspicion of abuse, local authorities may consider carrying out separate assessment and support plans for different people residing with the applicant. Local authorities should be alert to this possibility.

42. The requirement to assess the support needs of others residing with the applicant also means that where there are children, and there is reason to suspect that the children require support or help, the referral should be made to appropriate lead professional or named person with reference to the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People>

Those not entitled under the Duty

43. While the housing support duty specifically applies where the local authority has duties relating to unintentionally homeless households, local authorities should also consider the longer term benefits of ensuring that housing support can also be provided to intentionally homeless households. In many cases, this will involve applicants who may be most vulnerable to repeat homelessness.

44. In these circumstances, the legal duty to those found to be intentionally homeless is to ensure provision of temporary accommodation and advice and assistance to find accommodation.

When is the Duty discharged ?

45. The legislation does not give details about appropriate timescales for support. This could have been detailed in regulations, but this was not taken forward in light of feedback in the consultation. The main reasons given for not covering this in regulations were: the need to maintain flexibility to respond to individual circumstances; the view that current legislation and practices are sufficient; and that detailed regulations would have issues relating to costs and resources.

46. A resettlement plan would normally be expected to run for an agreed period following the provision of settled accommodation. In some cases this may be for a very short period of time, but in other cases resettlement support may be for a longer period where there are high level or complex needs. It may be that these needs are best met by other services rather than housing support. It should also be recognised that some applicants may have long term needs which have not been identified before.

47. The key point is that the length of housing support being provided will depend on the individual support plan developed for each household or individual. Discharge of the housing support duty would happen once the support plan objectives have been achieved. The discharge of duty should happen on an individual planned basis with an agreed timescale for each of those to whom the housing support duty applies.

48. However, a local authority will also need to be able to discharge their housing support duty, such as where a person or household continually fails to co-operate with the support plan or continually refuses offers of settled accommodation. Each case may be best considered on an individual basis in light of specific circumstances. Local authorities may wish to evidence every attempt made to continue working with an individual, and to consider the implications of investing time and resources where there is non engagement and people do not want to co-operate with the support plan.

49. A planned disengagement of the service will be important. The Beyond Homelessness report published by the Rock Trust in 2013 highlights the need for disengagement with assessment of both formal and informal network supports: [:http://www.rocktrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Beyond-Homelessness-Final-Report-2013_low-res.pdf](http://www.rocktrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Beyond-Homelessness-Final-Report-2013_low-res.pdf)

50. It is recognised that there will be a challenge for homelessness services in housing support capacity being tied up for long periods following resettlement, where support needs and indeed, health and care needs, may be better met by other services, such as NHS and Social Care services. Consequently, early contact and effective partnership working with such services at the point of the housing support assessment will be important. The importance of partnership working to the achievement of the most sustainable outcomes may also increase over the time of any support plan.

51. Housing support services are not expected to provide resettlement support over a long period, except where this is indicated as required by an individual support plan. If the support plan does not indicate this is necessary, the provision of longer term support to individuals may impact on providing housing support to new applicants. A focus of the resettlement period should be on engaging other appropriate services such as providing on-going health care and support services. Where possible, the transfer to mainstream services should be seamless.

52. Where withdrawal of support is being considered due to the achievement of objectives as part of an agreed support plan or because of non engagement, a local authority should consider whether the withdrawal is likely to lead to tenancy failure and repeat homelessness.

53. The length of time where housing support is provided may be less important than the outcomes that are achieved and the support plan should be in place for as long as would be effective. It would be for a court, ultimately, to assess what was reasonable in terms of the timescales if a failure to assess or provide housing support was challenged by Judicial Review.

54. Local authorities may wish to establish clear procedures to record agreement with the applicant in relation to the housing support duty and to ensure they have the means of formally notifying the applicant of the discharge of the duty.

What if support is refused?

55. It will be important for local authorities to be clear at which point they have fulfilled their duties and be able to establish why someone is refusing support and what they are refusing. Support being provided should be explored in order to see if it could be tailored to better meet the needs of the household.

56. If an applicant does not wish to engage at the initial assessment process or when in temporary accommodation, it is recommended that a further assessment be considered on discharge of the duty to settled accommodation if there is reason to believe it is required.

57. Where a household does not accept or engage with support as part of the duty, it is recommended that this may be considered as discharge of the housing support duty for local authorities.

Right to Review

58. The right to review homelessness decisions is covered by s35A and s35B of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

59. The applicant has the right to request a review if they think that the council has not adequately discharged their duty to provide housing support. While not exhaustive, some examples may include:

- Failure to provide a housing support needs assessment when there is reason to believe that housing support is required;
- Failure to assess the housing support needs of individual members of the household where there is an indication that different members of the household require different assessments;
- Failure to ensure that prescribed housing support services are provided to any person that is assessed as being in need of them; or
- Unreasonably discharging duty to provide housing support before a housing support plan is successfully completed.

60. The ability of the applicant to request a review on any of these grounds needs to be considered in light of some of the other points that are made above. While not exhaustive, questions the local authority may wish to consider include:

- Has a process been applied to identify whether or not there is reason to believe that housing support services are required?
- Is there real reason to believe that separate members of a household need a separate assessment and support plan?
- Did the assessment identify that prescribed housing support services were required, or is this just the perception of the applicant?
- Did the input of housing support end prematurely or was it at an appropriate time?

61. These issues can be resolved through the review process. However reference should be made to the four categories of support covered in regulations when considering what housing support services it is reasonable to expect a homelessness service to provide.

What type of housing support?

62. As outlined at paragraph 12, regulations have outlined four categories of housing support which apply to the duty:

'advising or assisting a person with personal budgeting, debt counselling or in dealing with welfare benefit claims'

63. While many local authorities will already have established services to ensure help with budgeting is provided, the implications of welfare reform should be considered in providing services:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/16342/hbreform>

64. Local authorities may also wish to consider the implications of the implementation of the Scottish Welfare Fund when developing support plans:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/welfarereform/socialfund>

'assisting a person to engage with individuals, professionals or other bodies with an interest in that person's welfare'

65. This category provides an opportunity for broad and innovative support services. Local authorities could consider needs around health, employability and social networks. Local authorities could also adopt a holistic approach to ensure issues such as addictions, self-esteem, ability to 'gate keep own front door', loneliness and isolation are considered. Local authorities may also wish consider the particular needs of young people and take into account the recommendations of the Supported Accommodation Implementation Group. Its final report, published in November 2012, highlighted developing appropriate, person centred support services with a focus on employability and service user involvement. It also emphasised the potential importance of providing support to those in their own tenancies and those in short term accommodation preparing for their own tenancies: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/11/1267/0>

66. The Scottish Government funds national co-ordinators based in the third sector, to promote services to tackle and prevent homelessness around social networks, employability, furniture re-use and service user involvement. Local authorities may benefit from their expertise in seeking to develop support services in these areas. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/homeless/HomelessnessPrevention/co-ordinator>

'advising or assisting a person in understanding and managing their tenancy rights and responsibilities, including assisting a person in dispute about those rights and responsibilities'

67. Local authorities may need to give some thought to the potential for conflict of interest here, with local authority staff supporting people who are in dispute about tenancy responsibilities.

'advising or assisting a person in settling into a new tenancy'.

68. Support for resettlement may include different issues from support required whilst homeless, so existing housing support plans should always be reviewed when moving into settled accommodation.

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DUTY

69. The Scottish Housing Regulator has a duty to inspect local authorities' homelessness services which includes housing support and may require to see evidence from local authorities that the duty is being carried out effectively. The Care Inspectorate, as the independent regulator of social care and social work services across Scotland, will regulate, inspect and support the improvement of housing and also has a role in commissioning housing support services.

70. Under the Concordat between Scottish Government and COSLA, local authorities develop and report on Single Outcome Agreements. Provision of housing support may play an important role in achieving objective outlined in these agreements.

71. The Scottish Government collects statistical information on homelessness applications, assessments, and outcomes and identified housing support needs. This information is published annually and on a quarterly basis in the Operation of the Homeless Persons Legislation in Scotland statistics. More detail on this is available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables>

NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS

72. With the agreement of local authorities, the Scottish Government has changed the amount of detail about support collected in two questions in the homelessness statistics (HL1) return. These will identify whether an assessment of housing support needs was carried out, whether housing support was needed and whether this was provided. In discussion about the revised questions, local authority practitioners stressed that in many cases support is provided during the application while households are in temporary accommodation awaiting settled accommodation.

73. Full details of the changes to the HL1, introduced from July 2013, can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0041/00418809.pdf>

CONCLUSION

74. Local authorities are encouraged to refer to this Guidance when meeting the housing support duty to help achieve the best possible outcomes for homeless households.

ANNEX 1

HOUSING SUPPORT – PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND CASE STUDIES

1. There are many examples of housing support being provided across Scotland. The practice examples and case studies below, provided at the time of publication of this Guidance in June 2013, seek to cover some of the experiences of local authorities, third sector organisations and service users. They are not intended to cover all forms of practice and experience and it is recognised there will be other approaches being implemented across Scotland with innovative and flexible responses being developed in response to local circumstances.

2. The examples below highlight practice and case studies in relation to housing support assessment and housing support provision. A link is provided in each study for those wishing to know more about the local authority area. For further information on any of the practice examples in this Guidance please contact the local authority area concerned or contact homelessness@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

A PRACTICE EXAMPLE - HOUSING SUPPORT ASSESSMENT – SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

The local authority adopts a triage system where every homeless applicant has a discussion with the homelessness officer regarding their support needs. This is based on a checklist approach and helps decide whether or not a household needs a referral for housing support. If at the point of application it is decided that housing support is not required, yet at a later date it is identified that housing support is in fact required, there can be a referral for housing support at that stage. The Housing Support Standards set out how a housing support service should be delivered. However, an effective housing support service would be expected to provide:

- A full assessment of their housing support needs – there should be a format for this assessment which is consistently applied across all households and a record should be kept.
- A support plan is developed on the basis of the housing support assessment covering all the areas that have been identified and the support plan should be reviewed on a regular basis.
Some form of case note recording the evidence of on-going work with the household or individual and that the work set out in the housing support plan is in fact being progressed.

There are opportunities to develop models which include outcome measures. They are very useful in assessing (quantifying) the level of support required by a household and identifying progress made.

The Better Futures assessment model, developed through the Housing Support Enabling Unit, has a full IT package which covers assessment planning and case notes, along with an outcomes measure. Specific systems used by each Council need to be compliant with Care Inspectorate requirements. More detail can be found at:

<http://www.ccpscotland.org/hseu/information/better-futures>

More detail on South Lanarkshire Council :

<http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/>

A PRACTICE EXAMPLE AND CASE STUDY – HOUSING SUPPORT PROVISION - CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY AND JOINT WORKING – NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

North Lanarkshire Council has a locality planning structure in place. Each locality has five Locality Planning Groups (LPGs) covering each of the main care group areas:

- Addictions
- Children & Families
- Disability
- Mental Health
- Older People

All LPGs have representation from the Council including Social Work and Housing as well as from specialist health services and voluntary/private organisations. Each LPG provides a quarterly report to each of their Locality Health and Care Partnerships who have overall responsibility for maintaining an overview of performance in each area and across all care groups. The purpose of the LPGs is to co-ordinate services and supports for people who have complex needs and require a joint response to allow them to achieve their desired outcomes. This includes support to maintain their ability to live as independently as possible in their own homes. Each of the LPGs meet on a fortnightly basis to plan and discuss progress on specific cases and enables a partnership response to be targeted and outcome focused.

Case Study

Mr A is 49 years old and has a history of repeat homelessness. Mr A represented as homeless and was accommodated in temporary homeless accommodation with 24 hour support in place. The accommodation type meant that Mr A shared a lounge, kitchen and bathroom with other residents. Over a period of a year Mr A's health deteriorated and the ability of staff within the accommodation to manage his behaviour became extremely difficult. Mr A's behaviour began to have a negative impact on other residents and he would regularly display periods where he would injure himself but not be aware of it. During this time, Mr A required a significant level of support to maintain his everyday living and was in excess of 5 hours per day. After a case conference, it was agreed to refer the case to the LPGs for joint planning to source suitable assessment of Mr A's mental health.

The LPG reviewed the case and after several attempted assessments, Mr A was diagnosed with Alcohol Related Brain Damage (ARBD) and it was noted that he would require intensive support for the rest of his life. This diagnosis was followed up by intensive efforts to source alternative suitable longer term accommodation and support. It took several more months, but eventually a suitable place became available within a 24 hour care facility and Mr A was prepared and then re-located to his new supported accommodation placement.

More detail on North Lanarkshire Council :

<http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1>

A CASE STUDY – HOUSING SUPPORT PROVISION – NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

Mr B became homeless due to a serious alcohol addiction. The addiction had taken over his life and resulted in him splitting up with his partner and losing contact with his child as well as losing his own plumbing and tiling business.

Mr B was originally accommodated in dispersed accommodation, but after an assessment Mr B decided he wished to be referred to an intensively supported accommodation project where the key aim was to help him recover from his addiction issue. Mr B worked on an outreach basis with a key worker from the project until a space became available.

Once he moved into the project, Mr B attended counselling sessions and was supported to go on a detox programme which he completed successfully. He was also provided with additional support to go food shopping, get his benefit sorted and began joining in social activities within the project. Over a period of time Mr B began to regain his confidence and his health. However, he had a set back when his partner filed for divorce and sought permanent custody of his child. At this time Mr B was admitted to hospital for a few days and then returned to the project. Mr B again began the process of detox and working with project staff to address his addiction.

Over the next few months Mr B began to thrive and managed to come to an agreement over access rights to his child. He also started applying for jobs and although he had several letters informing him that he was not suitable, he never got disheartened and instead kept on trying. At this point a support review confirmed that Mr B was ready to move into his own tenancy and within a few weeks he had the keys to his new home. Mr B poured a great deal of his energy into decorating his new flat and also attended another interview which resulted in him being offered a job as a company rep for a building firm.

Mr B has kept in touch with the project and has gone from strength to strength with a promotion and a new company car as well as reconciling with his partner and young child.

A PRACTICE EXAMPLE – HOUSING SUPPORT PROVISION – POSITIVE STEPS PROJECT AND DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

Positive Steps is a Scottish based, inter-denominational Christian charity committed to promoting good health and social welfare around the world. In Dundee, they are associated with the delivery of housing support and providing accommodation to vulnerable adults who have in the main come through the homeless system.

Protocols have been agreed with Dundee City Council and several Registered Social Landlords. These housing providers lease out property to the charity. Positive Steps then decorates and furnishes the properties before subletting the accommodation to tenants on short assured tenancies. They believe that this is an important aspect of the service as the new tenant is presented with a clean and comfortable place to live and immediately has an incentive to maintain the tenancy.

Generally the people who move into these flats are homeless or in housing need and have a poor previous housing history, frequently due to their chaotic lifestyles. By offering these tenancies time in temporary accommodation is considerably reduced. The support provided is person centred and holistic in nature. Key workers support service users to address issues which may be causing difficulties as well as helping work toward aspirations. A significant part of this engagement is the development of self esteem, often lacking in service users, and more positive social networks. The building of positive social networks and through those relationships, social capital, is important in enabling the sustaining of a tenancy in the future. Consequently supporting service users to become active in their community is a regularly occurring aspect of support plans.

Once support has been withdrawn, the service user can still re-engage should this be needed. The project believes that continuing to stay in the flat is an important component in the sustainability of the tenancy. Unlike other models where the service user is asked to move to another tenancy after completing their resettlement process, Positive Steps enable the service user to remain in the home they have created, in the community they have developed links with and among people with whom they have established relationships.

Development of the Accommodation Service into the Private Rented Sector

It became apparent that in order to sustain the Accommodation Service, Positive Steps needed to access property in the Private Rented Sector. Positive Steps started the process of developing the business plan to take this concept forward. This has led to a Private Sector Leasing Scheme which is being delivered as a social enterprise. Properties leased under the scheme will be used as accommodation for people who are experiencing homelessness or in housing need. The properties will be sub-let through a tenancy agreement. By preventing or reducing the time spent in temporary accommodation and by providing a furnished and decorated flat with support, there is an increased likelihood of the service user sustaining the tenancy and moving on in their life.

More detail on Dundee City Council :

<http://www.dundee.gov.uk>

A CASE STUDY – HOUSING SUPPORT PROVISION – THROUGH-CARE AND AFTER-CARE – DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

Supported Lodgings and Respite

The Throughcare and Aftercare Team in the Social Work Department have been working with a young person who has been residing in a supported lodgings placement for over a year and for a period of time was relatively settled. This young person has since been spending a lot of time outwith the placement, failing to adhere to placement rules and generally disengaging from supports in place advising that he would like to move into his own tenancy. There are shared professional concerns about his ability to manage living independently with limited experience and also around his capacity to cope with such a transition. However the young person believed that he could manage a tenancy and did not fully appreciate what that entailed.

A partnership arrangement has been put in place for this young person to move into one of the flats allocated on a 'respite basis' for a 4-week period in order for him to experience living on his own and for a thorough assessment to be carried out about around his abilities/areas of support. This was intended to enable the young person to make an informed choice about his progression and also for the Social Work Department to establish how to best support him. The young person has now understood that he has come across several issues that he cannot manage and also the feeling of isolation that he did not appreciate. The Supported lodgings placement has been held open and it is becoming increasingly likely that he will return to this placement now that he understands the implications of living alone in a tenancy and the subsequent management issues.

Partnership Working

Social Work were working with a formerly looked after and accommodated young person who was pregnant and living in Action for Children Street Level. She hoped to move into her own tenancy after the baby was born.

Unfortunately, due to the increasing number of concerns about her relationship and the potential risks associated with this, the Social Work Department was carrying out an unborn baby assessment and consideration was being given to a child protection order being taken at birth, which would have meant the baby being removed. In an attempt to prevent this, the Throughcare and Aftercare Team approached the Carolina House Trust requesting that they extend their supported lodgings remit to pilot a 'mother and baby' supported lodgings placement. This was approved by the appropriate panel and the young person moved in with the provider before giving birth to her son. There was an intensive level of work which went into this during the initial few months but the young person and her baby remain in this placement and housing applications are in for her to now move into her own tenancy.

A PRACTICE EXAMPLE AND CASE STUDY – HOUSING SUPPORT PROVISION – LOREBURN HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICE (LHSS) AND DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL

Loreburn Housing Support Services (LHSS) has been providing housing support in varying forms for over 25 years. After consulting with Dumfries and Galloway Council's Housing Support Team, LHSS decided to pilot the Outcomes Star for 6 months. The [Outcomes Star](#) is an approach to measuring change when working with vulnerable people. These measurable changes are referred to as outcomes. It is used within the key work process and is integrated within assessments and reviews. This approach can be used in key work with service users.

The pilot was conducted across three services and involved 6 staff members and 24 service users. The three services were an outreach service, a family support service and a supported accommodation service. Service users participated in the completion of an initial Star within the first month of the pilot which enabled a minimum of two reviews to be facilitated within the 6 month time period. The resultant scores were recorded on a spread sheet.

The simplicity and adaptability of the Outcomes Star enabled service users with extremely complex needs to engage with the assessment of their support needs and to decide how best to plan intervention. Staff stated that previously service users who presented as unwilling or unable to recognise their own needs were by far the most challenging to engage, requiring significant skill and input on the part of the staff member just to start to address this initial barrier. The findings suggest that this system appears to alleviate elements of this difficulty by reducing some of the mysticism surrounding assessment and intervention for service users. Evidence suggested that the use of straightforward terminology such as being 'stuck' or 'believing' and, more significantly, through the use of visually expressive imagery such as the star itself and the red, amber, green colour coding of the ladder were key. Staff were able to use the Outcomes Star with various techniques such as motivational interviewing and cognitive behaviours approaches and felt it facilitated a level of self-assessment that helped to reveal underlying issues that could act as barriers to effecting positive change:

I have one service user who has literacy difficulties which without a lot of staff input would cause him to withdraw and become uncommunicative when any form of assessment or support planning was broached. However the structure of this system very quickly engaged him and in doing so not only alleviated his anxiety regarding reviews but ultimately actively engaged him in them” – LHSS Keyworker

“The adaptability of the system enables you as the worker to assess which approach best suits the needs of your service user from giving them a copy of the user guide to read over themselves to breaking it down to its very basic components.....I love it just for that reason” – LHSS Keyworker

“It was just so easy to get my head round...am I stuck...do I need help...can I do it myself” – Outreach service user.

More detail on Dumfries and Galloway Council :

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/>

A PRACTICE EXAMPLE – HOUSING SUPPORT PROVISION – RAVENSWOOD PROJECT AND EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Ravenswood is a service which provides accommodation with support to vulnerable homeless households and is run by the Mungo Foundation in partnership with East Dunbartonshire Council. The service offers temporary accommodation and support to homeless households aged 16 years and above who have additional support needs, and can accommodate single people, couples and families. The service provides advice and support to individuals who may have mental health issues, substance misuse issues, learning disabilities or to those who need to develop their independent living skills to maintain a future tenancy.

In order to access the service, customers need to be at least 16 years of age (children under 16 may be accommodated alongside their parent or guardian) and referred to the project by East Dunbartonshire Council's Homelessness Team. The length of stay in the accommodation depends on support needs, although in general terms, some households will be accommodated on a short stay basis. Others will, on a long stay basis, be supported to develop the skills required to enable them to live independently. The staff team from Ravenswood also provide outreach advice and support to homeless households living within some multiple occupancy homes.

More detail on East Dunbartonshire Council :

<http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/home.aspx>

ANNEX 2

HOUSING SUPPORT GUIDANCE GROUP

REMIT, WORKPLAN AND MEMBERSHIP

1. REMIT OF GROUP

‘To inform development and assist in the completion of non statutory guidance in relation to the implementation of Housing Support Regulations for Homeless Households. To liaise and work with cross sector stakeholders as appropriate to inform the drafting and completion of guidance in the timescales agreed by the Housing Support Guidance Group’.

2. WORK PLAN

1. Guidance will be drafted by Scottish Government Homelessness Team officials based upon comments and contributions collected from Group members.
2. General comments from members on the content of Guidance can be collected at the first face to face meeting on 28th March followed by more detailed and specific comments and contributions from members sent electronically during April (see attached timetable below).
3. As well as having an opportunity of recommending additional members (see current membership list below), members may alternatively wish to liaise with other stakeholders as they feel appropriate to better inform specific comments and contributions to the Guidance.
4. Members may choose to comment on each aspect of the Guidance or may wish to identify an area of expertise (e.g. debt advice, tenancy rights) on which to focus their comments and contributions.
5. The Group may wish to focus specific comments and contributions relating to local authorities initial assessment of homeless households to see if a full assessment is required and on the implementation of the four main themes of Regulations (listed below):
 - (a) advising or assisting a person with personal budgeting, debt counselling or in dealing with welfare benefit claims
 - (b) assisting a person to engage with individuals, professionals or other bodies with an interest in that person’s welfare
 - (c) advising or assisting a person in understanding and managing their tenancy rights and responsibilities, including assisting a person in disputes about those rights and responsibilities
 - (d) Advising or assisting a person in settling into a new tenancy.

3. GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Jim Hayton (Chair)	Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers
Ken Milroy	Aberdeen Foyer
Susan Shone	Chartered Institute of Housing
Yvette Burgess	Housing Support Enabling Unit
David Ogilvie	Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
Fiona King	Shelter Scotland
Robert Aldridge	Homeless Action Scotland
Lewis Hannah	Highland Council
Steven Caddis	North Ayrshire Council
Audrey McGuinness	North Lanarkshire Council
Val Holtom	South Lanarkshire Council
Marion Gibbs	Scottish Government

In attendance

Stephen White	Scottish Government
Matt Howarth (Secretariat)	Scottish Government
Alex McGhie (Secretariat)	Scottish Government

4. TIMETABLE

Thurs 28 March 2013

First meeting of HSGG, opportunity for general comment or proposed specific content of the Guidance

Thurs 11 April

Deadline for submission of proposed Guidance content

Thursday 25 April

Issue first draft of Guidance to Group

Thursday 9th May

Deadline for comments on first draft and for final proposed content for Guidance

Wednesday 22nd May

Deadline for final Guidance to be sent to Group with papers for final meeting

Wednesday 29th May

Second meeting of Group – Final comments on Guidance

w/c 3 June

Guidance issued

ANNEX 3

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Better Futures

A web-based IT tool developed through the Housing Support Enabling Unit to enable housing support service providers working with individuals to record their support needs over a period of time.

Concordat

Sets out the terms of a relationship between the Scottish Government and local government, based on mutual respect and partnership.

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

A national approach which promotes joint working and partnership between professionals and families, to provide the right help for a child or young person at the right time.

Housing Options Hubs

Five regional groups of local authorities and their partners established across Scotland in 2010 with Scottish Government funding. Focus is on sharing practice and joint working to prevent homelessness through developing housing options approaches.

HL1

A system by which information is collected by local authorities and provided to the Scottish Government, about homelessness in their area. The information helps produce statistics on homelessness such as applications to the local authority and the characteristics of homelessness in the area.

Registered Social Landlords

Provider of social housing, also known as housing associations.

Scottish Secure Tenancy

A form of tenancy introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Tenants of social housing (local authorities and Registered Social Landlords) will either have a Scottish Secure Tenancy or a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy.

Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF)

Administered by local authorities and Introduced in April 2013, it provides financial support to the most vulnerable in society in times of crisis. It replaced the previous Social Fund which provided Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants. The SWF provides crisis grants and community care grants for living expenses or household goods.

Single Outcome Agreement

Sets out how Scottish Government and partners such as local authorities will work in the future towards improving outcomes for people who live in an area by finding local solutions.

Supported Accommodation Implementation Group (SAIG)

Established to consider how best to take forward the recommendations of the cross sector Supported Accommodation Working Group final report, originally published in [March 2011](#). The group's [final report](#) and [executive summary](#) were published in November 2012.



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