

Homelessness Policy 2021-2026:

Changing lives and communities

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Introduction

Our Group Strategic vision is that:

Customers have increased control over their services, their communities and their lives, with new opportunities for building skills and resilience.

Our Homelessness Policy is a key contributor to this vision. It sets out how we will work with our customers and our key partners to reduce homelessness while creating balanced and peaceful neighbourhoods. It forms part of our contribution to the UN's sustainable development goals as laid out in our Group Strategy. In particular, it will have a positive impact on poverty, health and wellbeing, reduced inequalities and sustainable cities and communities.

The key outcomes of the Policy are to:

1. **Create balanced communities** which are peaceful, welcoming and supportive in which people of all backgrounds want to live and can contribute;
2. **Prevent homelessness** wherever possible so that more households avoid the trauma and stigma of homelessness;
3. **Co-create** the services in this Policy with customers who have experienced homelessness or the threat of homelessness so that our services and products are directed in the way that works best for the households that need them;
4. **Provide more homes for homeless households** who have become homeless and supplement this with access to our Lowther mid and private rented homes where these are suitable; and
5. **Develop a unique multi-skilled expertise** which ensures an understanding of all the impacts which can face those threatened with homelessness so that our staff can provide an empowering and supportive experience for our customers.

We have set out a range of targets which will help us to assess the impact of the policy in the table below.

Measure	Target
Number of homes provided to households assessed as homeless by the local authority	10,000
% of lets provided to homeless households: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Glasgow- Edinburgh- Dumfries & Galloway	65% 50% 50%
% of homes let through nomination agreement with local authority: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- West Lothian- West Dunbartonshire	50% 50%
Increase the number of Housing First tenancies across our footprint	500
% of Wheatley households at risk of homelessness who are helped to avoid homelessness	Baseline to be determined in 2021
Increase the % homeless households very satisfied with the process of getting their new home (segmentation of existing indicator)	Baseline to be determined in 2021
Increase the supply of new build homes	5,500
Maintain tenancy sustainment levels for all households	Above 90%

Measure	Target
Maintain tenancy sustainment levels for households who were previously homeless	Above 93%
Number of households whose temporary let is "flipped" to a mainstream SST (new)	500
Increase the percentage of our customers who live in neighbourhoods categorised as peaceful	70%
Number of jobs, training places and apprenticeships given to people affected by homeless (new)	500

Ending homelessness is a key priority for our partners in the Scottish Government, local authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships who have the statutory responsibilities in this area. We will work closely with them to help prevent homelessness from happening in the first place and to rapidly house people where they do become homeless.

The Wheatley Group (The Group) is Scotland's leading housing, care and property management organisation and one of the UK's best-accredited organisations. It is in a unique position to support these aims through its range of sector leading skills, its size and its geographic range. It owns or factors over 89,000 homes, provides care services to approximately 7,000 individuals each year and delivers award-winning services to over 250,000 people across Central and South Scotland.

Our care services are experts in support services to homeless households, in resettlement from temporary accommodation and in working with households with some of the most challenging support needs. We are able to combine this with our housing expertise where our housing officers have a patch size of 200 and know each of their customers well. They are increasingly skilled in support and trauma needs which they can use to help each of their customers.

Our approach to joint working has allowed our Care services to lead in the creation of a partnership to successfully bid for Glasgow's "alliance to end homelessness". This 10-year partnership will be focused on delivering innovative responses to redesign commissioned services in line with the rapid rehousing approach. Our joined up housing and care expertise places us well in the development of this new approach.

Our work has helped to support and strengthen communities across our geography. The people we house almost always stay in their home and neighbourhood and many go on to make significant contributions in their community or further afield. Some of our customers, including those housed from a homeless route, have gone on to become Board members, members of staff and key volunteers in the community.

Given the importance of this Policy it will be reviewed annually to assess progress and consider any changes which may be required.

Our organisation

Wheatley Group has a unique integrated Group value proposition that gives our customers unrivalled access to expertise and resources across housing, homelessness, care, support, advice, training, volunteering and employment. Our Subsidiaries are:



Wheatley Homes Glasgow is Scotland's largest social landlord. WHG works closely with Glasgow Police Division and the Glasgow City Council Multi Agency Tasking & Coordinating Group to tackle anti-social behaviour. Wheatley Group are also represented on Glasgow's Strategic Community Planning and Safe Glasgow Groups.

Glasgow, as Scotland's largest city, has the highest proportion of our anti-social behaviour. The proportion of ASB incidents reported to us in WHG is broadly in line with its proportion of stock and accounts for almost 80% of our cases. This is often concentrated in areas of high deprivation – in 2019 nearly half of Glasgow's population lived in areas identified as amongst the 20% of most deprived communities in Scotland. Almost a quarter of the most deprived zones in Scotland are to be found in Glasgow.



Wheatley Homes South—formerly Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership - joined Wheatley Group in December 2019 with 10,300 affordable homes spread from Dumfries to Stranraer. It provides the majority of the social rented stock in the area. WHS have well established links with their local police division to ensure a joined up and effective response is provided to all reports of anti social behaviour. Outside Dumfries the area is largely rural with long distances between communities. One third of the population live in communities with less than 500 people. Approximately 10% of data zones in Dumfries and Galloway are amongst the 20% most deprived in Scotland. The nature of deprivation in such a rural area means that these areas tend to be highly concentrated and also suffer from poor connections – both physical and digital.



Wheatley Homes East—formerly the two separate social landlords, Dunedin Canmore and West Lothian Housing Partnership – provides more than 5,500 homes across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife. They work with 3 Police Scotland divisions (Edinburgh City, Lothian & Borders & Fife Division). Wheatley have 2 seconded police officers working with frontline staff in the east of Scotland to tackle antisocial behaviour. Edinburgh has just under 15% of its datazones in the most deprived 20%, while Fife has 20% and West Lothian 15%.



Loretto Housing Association has more than 2,500 affordable homes across the central belt and works closely with a number of local authorities and police divisions to tackle anti-social behaviour. Our Loretto housing has a higher proportion of customers in supported or specialist accommodation where we work closely with care colleagues.



Wheatley Care provides services to approximately 7,000 customers each year. Wheatley Care's innovative Tenancy Support Service is integral to supporting vulnerable customers and works closely with Wheatley 360 resources to prevent, and respond effectively to, antisocial behaviour. Our wider care services provide support to customers in a whole range of areas including homelessness, alcohol abuse and other vulnerabilities. Some of our vulnerable customers will receive support from Wheatley Care. While the majority will receive care from other providers our expertise means we work to ensure our customers receive the services they need.



Wheatley Foundation invests over £3million annually on improving the life opportunities of disadvantaged people in Wheatley's communities which includes funding our Home Comforts and Eat Well services to customers experiencing poverty. It provides jobs, training and apprenticeship opportunities to many of our customers. These opportunities have given customers with some of the most challenging histories opportunities, optimism and better life chances.



Wheatley 360 is our wraparound support division changing lives from every angle. Its role is at the heart of making our communities safer and helping people to settle in their homes. It encompasses the Community Improvement Partnership who work with seconded officers from Police Scotland. This has demonstrated the effectiveness of joint working and knowledge sharing across housing, care and police. Our anti-social behaviour team work closely with communities and households impacted by or perpetrating anti-social behaviour to provide advice, support and resolution. Concierges and neighbourhood environmental teams provide a local and visible service. They keep our communities clean, tidy and provide a friendly face. Our Think Yes approach allows them to do much more—helping our customers where they most need assistance. W360 also includes the homelessness and allocations teams which will create an important synergy as we help people to settle in resilient neighbourhoods.

Our track record

Our Group already has a strong track record in preventing homelessness and in supporting customers when homelessness does happen, working jointly with our partners. Over the last five years we have delivered a range of innovative and successful new services including:

- Development of the MyHousing on line application and allocation system;
- Leading on the Housing Options approach across Glasgow, using this to influence other areas in which we operate;
- Developing innovative protocols to help young care leavers access housing without needing to navigate the homelessness system;
- Taking a leading role in the implementation of Housing First;
- Progressing the development of a virtual home experience for young people in our housing support services;
- The creation of hub and cluster services for some of our vulnerable customers, bringing together housing, care and health services;
- Using our combined expertise in our Flexible Housing Outreach Support Service and Housing Access Team to remove barriers to settled housing for households in temporary accommodation;
- Co-production of the tenancy star approach;
- Creation of a tenancy support service which uses our Care expertise to support housing tenants;
- Development of our locations as hate crime and third party reporting centres; and
- Award winning training in relation to domestic abuse.

Our customers live in high quality, refurbished or new homes, but we also support them to have better lives. Our housing officers have small local patches and are on hand to welcome and support tenants in their homes. They are often the first or only contact in our customers' homes. Our housing management approach already helps to reduce homelessness through our work to reduce anti-social behavior and to mitigate the impacts of poverty.

Drawing on our care expertise, we have developed a Tenancy Support Service which helps customers to settle into a home or to navigate through a crisis. This builds on a long history of expertise and partnership working around housing support, resettlement and supporting those with complex needs.

Tenancy support expertise is increasingly integrated into the frontline of housing services through training, co-working and direct access to advice from care specialists. This means that we can link housing and support issues together in a way few other organisations can.

Our Changing Lives employability programme supports people living in our communities who have multiple barriers to work; including experience of homelessness. It provides a one year practical placement within our Neighbourhood Environmental teams. Trainees are given support by a dedicated Support Officer who works closely with them to build essential work skills and the confidence needed to help make the transition into work. This worker makes a huge difference to job sustainment, with subsequent positive impacts on tenancy sustainment.

Our care and housing expertise is supported by a specialist homelessness team which can liaise across all our services and ensure strong links with each local authority. This team not only works with customers once they are homeless, but has led on the design and implementation of a number of innovations.

The table below shows some of the ways in which we support different groups of homeless customers.

All households	My Great Start (package to assist in setting up a home) Welfare advice Fuel advice Eat Well Home Comforts Suicide and Mental Health support via signposting Fire Safety Referral Jobs and training opportunities including changing lives
Housing First	Specialist support integrated with housing provision Fire protection (LD1/stove guard)/ Fire retardant bedding Furniture package/ Eatwell Training & employment opportunities
Families	Modern apprenticeships for young tenants and children of tenants
Care leavers	Housing options and early intervention to prevent homelessness Additional meetings with SWS to do check-ins to pick up any issues early and address them
Domestic abuse	Access to tailored support, information and guidance from their Housing Officers and our specialist Group Protection Team Referral to MARAC forum where Wheatley are a key strategic partner Home Safety Service Bespoke signposting to Domestic Abuse organisations and agencies where Wheatley have a strategic partnership

We provide a proportion of our stock to local authorities to use as temporary accommodation in a more independent and “homely” environment. We also provide emergency accommodation to provide services and support to our customers at the point of need.

Our Dunedin Harbour Hostel delivers an integrated pathway into housing. The hostel provides 35 bedspaces alongside on site independent flats. Fordneuk supports those with complex needs, commonly with alcohol or other dependencies, who are often excluded from most or all other housing options in Glasgow. We also have temporary accommodation units in Dumfries and Galloway.

These strengths provide a positive basis on which to build our services of the future. Appendix 1 provides a current position statement of our work by local authority while appendix 2 provides some case studies.

Homelessness in Scotland

Homelessness has been a key priority for the Scottish Government and local authorities over many years. As a result, Scotland has some of the most progressive legislation to support those at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness. Appendix 3 outlines the range of statutory changes which have been made in the last 20 years.

The statutory duties for homelessness lie with local authorities. However, a whole system approach has been adopted in Scotland with RSLs at the heart of services. Our RSLs have the largest number of social rented homes in Scotland and Wheatley will continue to be at the forefront of these partnerships.

The number of households applying as homeless remains high and has increased in the last two years. Almost 37,000 homeless applications were received across Scotland in 2019-20. The dislocating effects of homelessness are substantial. These include the impact on health, relationships and educational outcomes. Often, homeless households face stigma across all aspects of their life, including as they move into a new neighbourhood. Similarly, neighbourhoods which receive high numbers of homeless households can also be stigmatised. Changing this narrative is an important part of our approach.

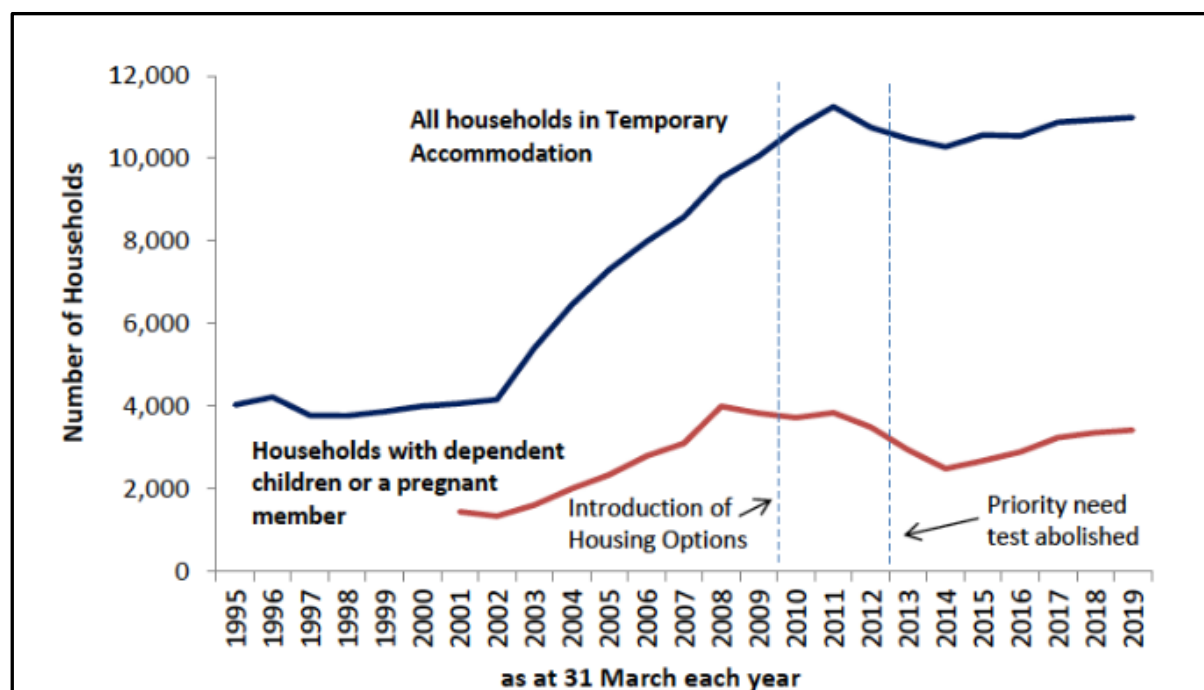
Homelessness can present in a variety of ways. For some households, the provision of a new home in the right place will resolve their issue and allow them to continue their lives. However, the shortage of supply across Scotland means that even the provision of a home in the right place is not always straightforward. In many of the areas in which we operate there is exceptionally high demand for limited numbers of social rented homes, particularly for smaller homes. In rural areas there are often no homes available in the areas of choice.

Families are the second biggest segment of homeless applicants after young single males. Supporting families is at the heart of our Group Strategy and where they have become homeless there is even more need for support. Many of these families have a single female parent and there are often particular issues around safety and/or domestic abuse which may need to be addressed. Support will enable families to settle in an area connecting well to schools, clubs and other networks. It is important that this support is delivered in a way which gives parents more confidence and allows them to parent rather than having things “done to them”.

For others, homelessness is in part a symptom of other issues. Those who experience poverty, childhood trauma, domestic abuse and mental health issues are often more likely to experience homelessness. Drug and alcohol issues can also compound the likelihood and impact of homelessness. For these households, the solution will generally require more than bricks and mortar. They will need additional support to settle into a home and may need more long term services to help avoid homelessness recurring. Creating opportunities such as training, employment and stronger community networks can be key to better life chances.

Almost 12,000 households were in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2020. The number of households in temporary accommodation increased by 6% in 2019/20 but is likely to have increased further in the first quarter of 2020/21 due to the suspension of

letting during the coronavirus lockdown. The chart below shows the trend in numbers in temporary accommodation.



The Scottish Government announced in September 2019 that it would extend the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order. This previously required local authorities to limit the time that pregnant women and households with children were placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation. The 2020 Order extends this requirement to all households. The extension of the order is likely to increase pressure on local authorities to move people out of certain types of temporary accommodation more quickly or to avoid the need for its use altogether.

We know that homelessness remains a key priority for the Scottish Government. In September 2017 it announced £50 million of additional expenditure for tackling homelessness over the next 5 years (the Ending Homelessness Together Fund). This was followed with the creation of a shortlife Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) in October 2017. HARSAG was tasked with identifying both short and long term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping in Scotland. The group's recommendations were brought together in "Ending Homelessness: The report on the final recommendations of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group" published in June 2018. The report made 70 recommendations.

This resulted in the development of some key changes in the way homelessness is considered. The Government has required all local authorities to deliver **Rapid Rehousing Transition plans**. The aim of the Plans is to take a housing led approach, ensuring people get a settled housing option as soon as possible. This approach will require strong and agile support services that are commissioned and managed in new ways to ensure individual households build resilience and increase sustainment.

Research carried out prior to Covid-19 showed the scale of letting required to clear the backlog. The table below shows the results of this work. The Covid-19 pandemic will have increased the backlog.

Housing Option Hub	Current total lets in year to homeless SRS + PRS	Total annual lets needed for homeless annually for next five years **	Proportional increase in lets to meet annual new demand and backlog	Proportion of all social lets to homeless households IF SR was to meet ALL homeless need
Ayrshire and South	1,531	2,365	54%	40%
Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders	3,850	6,750	75%	84%
North & Islands	2,635	3,572	36%	54%
Tayside, Fife and Central	3,903	5,138	32%	54%
West Hub	5,766	9,485	65%	50%
Total Scotland***	18,871	27,310	45%	52%

An important element of the rapid rehousing initiative is the **Housing First** approach. This is designed to ensure that those who are homeless and have complex needs can also take control of their lives and choices. It ensures that settled accommodation is provided as soon as possible, avoiding the approach of waiting until someone is “tenancy ready”. Instead, customers are provided with the support they need at the same time so that they can successfully maintain that home. New models to deliver Housing First may need some smaller scale housing developments linked to support for those with the most complex needs. Our existing care services give us the experience to build and develop this approach.

As a consequence of the transition to rapid rehousing, the proportion of temporary accommodation required from our stock should reduce. Positively, this will increase the number of homes available permanently. However, it is likely to affect demand in some of our multi-storey stock where there tends to be more temporary accommodation.

Covid-19

Letting was suspended during lockdown but in many areas applications from homeless households have continued at a significant rate. This means the numbers awaiting housing have risen, particularly in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Many of these households are currently in temporary accommodation. Wheatley has assisted local authorities in meeting this challenge by providing more than 400 additional homes for temporary lets. Where possible we are now working with local authorities and customers to “flip” these to permanent lets where they are suitable.

Some of those in hotel accommodation were previously rough sleeping or had significant other issues. It is likely that enabling move on for some of these households may require a process similar to that used when decommissioning the large scale hostels.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the Scottish Government reconvened HARSAG to consider further recommendations. Their report was issued in June 2020 and contained 105 recommendations, followed by an action plan published in October 2020. The recommendations include:

- Increased new build supply;

- Increased use of the private rented sector;
- Extension of the emergency legislation delaying eviction processes; and
- That 80-90% of social housing lets should be made to homeless households.

These recommendations have been agreed in principle by the Scottish Government.

Our key areas

Although in total we have services in 18 local authorities, our care services and homes are focused in 5 key areas – Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dumfries and Galloway, West Lothian and West Dunbartonshire. We have strong relationships with the local authorities in each of these areas although the nature of the relationship varies.

In Dumfries and Galloway, DGHP was created from the transfer of all local authority housing stock and as a result we are the main provider of social housing in the area. In Glasgow we are the largest landlord in the city and have specific arrangements in relation to homelessness. These situations result in a unique partnership with the relevant local authorities. In other areas our homelessness services and homes provide part of a range of services in the area.

The table below shows some of the statistics across our key local authority areas. Unsurprisingly, Scotland's two largest cities have the highest levels of applications. The data also shows that approximately half of customers in most areas have at least one support need. This level has risen over recent years. The length of stay in temporary accommodation is also high, with the shortest average stay in our key local authorities still over 100 days.

	Scottish Figure	Glasgow	City of Edinburgh	Dumfries and Galloway	West Dunbartonshire	West Lothian
Total applications	36,465	5,679	3,229	910	1,037	1,516
Applications accepted	29,894	4,660	3,077	716	930	1,110
% assessed with at least one support need	14,506 (49%)	2,099 (45%)	1,286 (42%)	587 (82%)	475 (51%)	458 (41%)
Average length of days in temporary accommodation	180 days	204 days	268 days	107 days	159 days	179 days

The diagram below summarises some of the key issues in each authority.

Local authority

Challenges

Glasgow

- Access to temporary and settled accommodation
- Speed of process from application through to settled home
- Impact of Asylum Dispersal contract on homelessness and house size
- Large scale resettlement from hotels required post Covid-19

City of Edinburgh

- Cannot deliver rapid rehousing over 5 years as demand exceeds supply
- Long average time in temporary accommodation
- Propose major reduction in emergency accommodation and move to temporary furnished flats including homeshare and private sector leasing

Dumfries and Galloway

- High levels of support needs identified in homeless population
- Challenge of meeting housing need across a rural area with many individual towns and villages
- Support services & temporary accommodation concentrated in main towns

West Dumbartonshire

- Highest rate of homelessness per 1,000 of the population
- High rate of youth homelessness
- High support needs

West Lothian

- High levels of youth homelessness
- Lack of supply of affordable housing
- Local authority nominates a lower proportion of homeless households to our stock

Our Wheatley Strategy

Our Strategy for 2021 -2026 sets out our vision for Wheatley, our customers and communities.

Wheatley in 2026

We want our customers to reach their potential for a brighter future for themselves and their families. We recognise the challenges our customers are facing in this post-Covid 19 era and we believe we are ideally placed, working alongside our partners, to support them and play a strong role in a fair and socially just economic recovery.

Our Strategy will deliver an unprecedented shift in the balance of power and control towards our customers, empowering them to make their own choices about the services they want, ensuring they are properly equipped to do things for themselves and involving them in the design of products and services from start to finish.

We will continue to make a significant social impact by investing in our communities, supporting the lifelong health and wellbeing of our customers, creating job and apprenticeship opportunities and reducing the inequalities experienced by many of those living in our communities. We will deliver an ambitious Wheatley Green Investment Plan to accelerate our transition to net zero carbon, enhance our role in combatting the effects of deprivation and strengthen our role in tackling homelessness across Scotland.

Our strategic purpose, vision and values



Our Approach

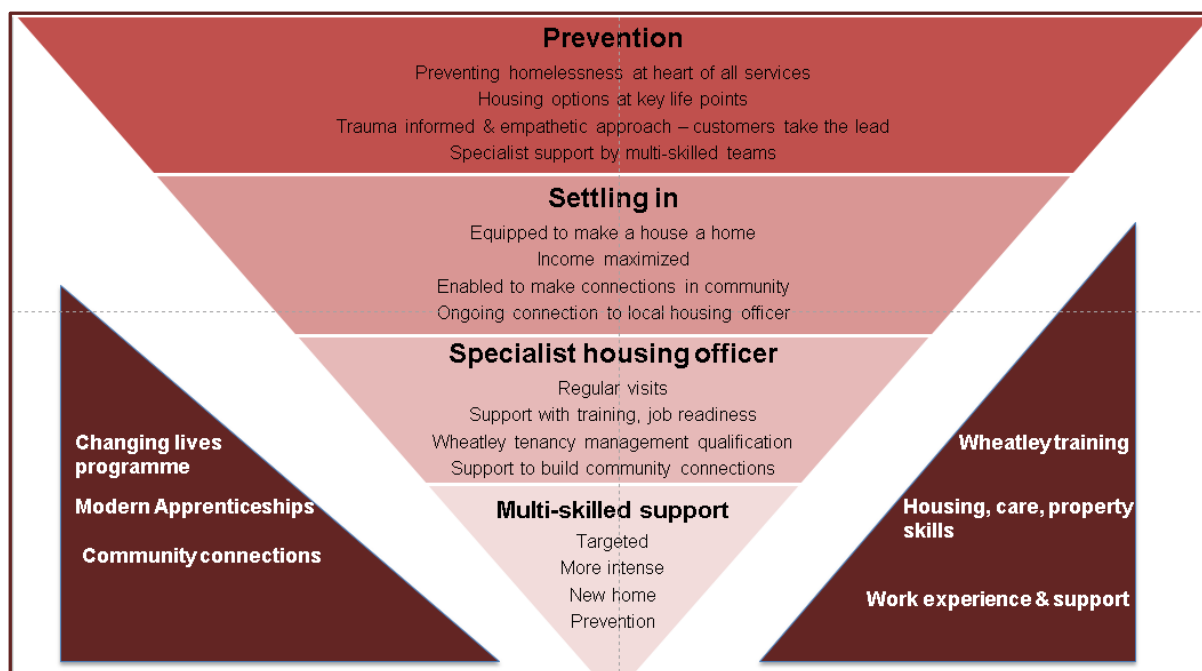
Our approach is to reduce homelessness by creating balanced, strong and peaceful communities. It will be shaped and developed by our customers who know best what they need and will help to build resilient, strong households and communities. Where people do become homeless our approach will help them to return to a home of their own as quickly as possible with the support and services they may need to help them stay in that home.

This approach is underpinned by some key principles:

- Those with lived experience will be at the heart of the development and ongoing improvement of our services;
- Our approach will always be “Housing First” – providing a home without having to wait until someone is “tenancy ready”;
- Households should have access to effective additional support to build resilience and reduce the risk of homelessness recurring;
- We will use our expertise to co-create new and innovative ways of working; and
- We will work with and influence our partners to deliver the best outcomes for our customers.

Our Policy sets out a structured approach to addressing homelessness. In line with our Group Strategy, it focuses on ensuring that our customers will be empowered to make their own choices about the services they want, be properly equipped to do things for themselves and involved in the design of products and services from start to finish. It will support digital provision of services where these are appropriate, recognising that it is important that “no-one is left behind”. In particular, we recognise that those who are homeless may have particular challenges in gaining access to or using digital services. Our communities will be key to the success of this Policy by providing safe, resilient and engaged places which people want to stay in or move too.

The benefit of having a home as soon as possible, irrespective of support requirements, is well evidenced. For that reason, we will always seek to provide a home as soon as possible. We also recognise that many homeless households will require additional support to settle into a home, to resolve or manage other issues and we will work with our partners to ensure the support required by the household is also in place at the right time and for the right length of time. The diagram below summarises how we will do this.



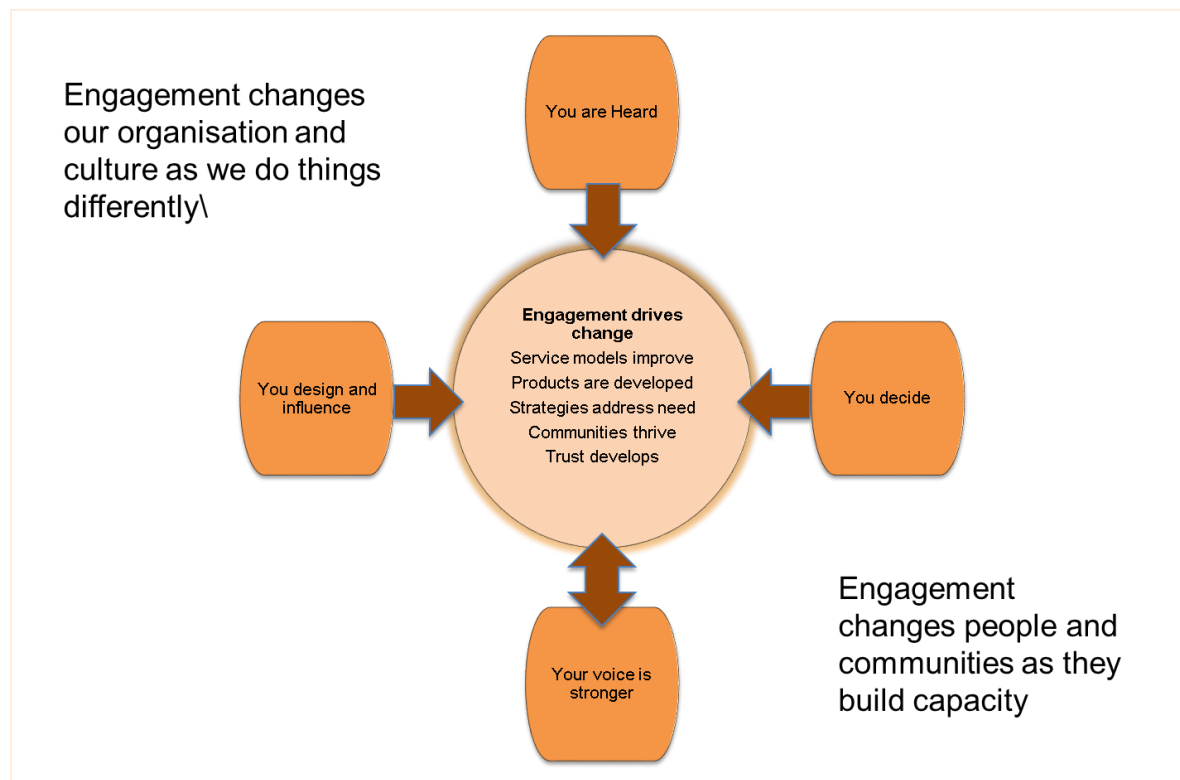
Excellence is embedded in the Wheatley DNA, so we will build on the innovative approaches that we have used to date. We will continue to push towards outstanding service, challenging our performance and outcomes in each area. As part of our new relationship with customers, we will measure this in different and more stretching ways, looking to further improve the aspects of service which matter most to customers.

Homelessness is a vital part of our creation of sustainable communities but it is not the only part. Other households with acute needs will receive our services through different routes including transfers, mutual exchange and medical priority. These households will also be able to access the full range of services we provide. They can also be linked to other agencies for specialist support and care where this is required. This will help to increase the resilience within wider communities.

This Policy recognises that ending homelessness requires a partnership of many organisations. We will continue to support local authorities in their statutory role and to further strengthen relationships with support providers. Our people are supported and trained to think innovatively, to think yes together with their customers and to provide leadership in digital transformation. We will use this innovative style to help provide thinking which challenges and encourages a new approach to services. We will work with partners across the country to share innovation and best practice to deliver our aims.

Voice of the customer

In line with our Group Strategy, the process of refining and developing our services in relation to homelessness will be led by our customers. Wheatley customers already influence services through a wide range of engagement processes. Our new Engagement Framework “Stronger Voices, Stronger Communities” puts customers at the heart of decision making as shown in the chart below.



This Policy will take engagement to a new level for those customers who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness. A key part of this process will be mapping lived experience through the customers' journey in a range of areas. We recognize that our prospective and potential customers may have many issues in their lives and will ensure that our engagement approach makes it as easy as possible for people to talk to us and to become involved in directing service decisions. Our partners will also be working to engage with customers so we will work with them to ensure maximum joint benefit from each engagement. The diagram below sets out the key pillars of our approach.



Our engagement will look at a range of issues which will be directed by our customers but are likely to include:

- What do you need at the start of your new tenancy to help make your house a home?
- How can Wheatley help you to make the connections you want to make in your community?
- What are the key things your housing officer can do to help you?
- What have you learned from your journey that could be helpful for others who face the same situation?
- For those transferring to avoid homelessness – what are the key things that you need to know and the services you require to make that work?
- What else could we do to help you fully understand your housing options?

Some key items are shown in the chart below.



In addition to specific engagement related to homelessness, our customers can become involved in a range of Wheatley wide engagement forums which provide the opportunity

to come together around specific topics to help shape our products and services. They include:

- Becoming a tenant inspector to help improve the environment where they live;
- taking part in focus groups and surveys;
- one-to-one customer conversations in their home;
- sharing their views at engagement events;
- through social media, compliments and complaints; and
- Care engagement processes

Our key actions

The actions within the Policy are structured around the key outcomes from our Group Strategy as shown in the diagram below. All of these are relevant to the Policy, for example without funding and digital platforms we will not be able to progress the ground breaking services we aspire to achieve. However, those highlighted are those most relevant.

Strategic themes:				
Delivering exceptional customer experience	Making the Most of our Homes and Assets	Changing Lives and Communities	Developing our Shared Capacity	Enabling our Ambitions
Strategic outcomes:				
Progressing from Excellent to Outstanding	Increasing the supply of new homes	Shaping Care services for the future	W.E. Think – creating our “Thinking Yes Together” culture	Raising the funding to support our ambitions
Enabling customers to lead	Investing in existing homes and environments	Developing peaceful and connected neighbourhoods	W.E. Create – driving innovation	Maintaining a strong credit rating and managing financial risks
Developing a customer led repairs service	Setting the benchmark for sustainability and reducing carbon footprint	Supporting economic resilience in our communities	W.E. Work – strengthening the skills and agility of our staff	Evolving digital platforms to support our activities
Differentiating Lowther from its competitors	Building community voice, engagement and resilience			Influencing locally and nationally to benefit our communities

The following sections summarise the key actions we will undertake through this Policy.

Delivering exceptional customer experience	<p>Progressing from excellent to outstanding: our new models of service will be faster and more effective. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance our existing excellent prevention service through:
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- Developing a multi-skilled team to support those at acute risk of homelessness.
- Further strengthening the focus and effectiveness of our wraparound services
- Increasing resilience through community involvement skills, training and job opportunities
- Defining our contribution and approach to prevention at key life points where homelessness is an identified risk – for example when leaving prison, care or the armed forces)
- Using priority transfers for existing customers in immediate need who might otherwise become homeless (for example rehousing perpetrators of domestic abuse linked to the proposed new legislation from the Scottish Government, finding transfer arrangements for those whose relationships have broken down)
- Housing options advice and support for young family members in our tenant households include experience using our virtual home
- Identifying pathways of support for those at risk of repeated homelessness through anti-social behaviour
- Ensure a rapid rehousing model for all our customers by undertaking a customer led review of processes to minimise the time between application and housing, both in our own services and by influencing our partner local authorities.
- Provide at least 10,000 homes to homeless households
- Piloting a joint research approach with our partners to further enhance our understanding of the causes and prevalence of homelessness amongst particular groups
- Use our experience in award winning Housing Options development to benefit customers in other local authority partner areas.
- Further developing our Tenancy Support Service to help people settle in their home or stay in their home using early assessment of issues. TSS will also link customers to their community; expanding a virtual service where that will work for our customers
- Continue to enhance and evolve our commissioned support services to enable the rapid transition of homeless households from temporary accommodation into permanent accommodation

Enabling customers to lead: Customers will be at the forefront of the development of our new services.

- Our customers will drive the continued strengthening of our services through:
 - Detailed customer journey analysis by those who have lived experience of homelessness to improve our rapid rehousing approach and further increase the effectiveness of our sector leading support and advice services

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing digital customer engagement across the range of our services from instant feedback to full scale review. • Customers will lead in their own lives through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using our innovative tenancy star to lead their discussions with our staff and direct their support resources to where they are most needed ○ Their involvement in the creation of a sector leading self-service model which allows them to draw down additional support and services through quick and slick digital options. These will include the use of our virtual home, virtual shop front and technology enabled living. Face to face discussions will still be used to support those who need them. ○ Developing the connections in their community which allow the level of active participation each household wants, enabling the increase in resilience and confidence which comes from linking with and helping others. ○ Having an organisation and its staff who understand their story and needs – equipped to ensure the story only needs to be told once through our digital care platform and other developments • Our communities will be supported to direct the future of their neighbourhood through informed co-creation of plans and the building of community connections, <p>Differentiating Lowther from its customers Lowther mid-market and full market rent homes will be an easy and quick option for some working households. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use our housing options approach to maximise the potential use of our mid-market and full rent homes where these are appropriate • Creating an easy online tool to review full and mid-market housing rent options immediately at point of homeless application, housing options interview or before. • Creating rapid pathways to move into a selected home with advice and support available to help navigate any challenges and settle into the neighbourhood.
<p>Making the most of our homes and assets</p>	<p>Increasing the supply of new homes: Homeless households will have direct access to our high quality new build. New build will increase the supply of homes available but we will also use our existing stock to increase supply where we can. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 5,500 new build homes to provide one of the biggest contributions to social housing supply in the country • Ensure customer led design input to our new build including input in relation to the cultural needs of New Scots

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options to increase the availability of flexible, larger family homes and downsizing options through our new build and acquisition programme. • Explore the options for new types of temporary provision in partnership with HSCPs and other partners <p>Investing in existing homes and environments: We will make the best use of our existing assets by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the rapid rehousing approach to allow us to review our current temporary accommodation provision and develop a managed transition plan to move this into permanent accommodation where appropriate • Flip temporary accommodation leases into permanent lets where this is appropriate for the occupying household to minimise disruption • Deliver homes for 500 Housing First customers <p>Building community voice, engagement and resilience: Our customers will be supported to overcome challenges and create better lives for themselves and their families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through our Alliance partnership in Glasgow, and our influence in other areas, ensuring that commissioned support services have a strong focus on building customers' community connections • Providing training in tenancy management for customers who want this • Using our customer engagement and housing officers to promote community networks for those customers who do not receive additional support • Working with our partners to develop options to end the repeat cycle of anti-social behaviour, eviction and homelessness that occurs in a small number of cases.
<p>Changing lives and communities</p>	<p>Shaping care services for the future: Services will be completely transformed to support the delivery of outcomes that matter most to our customers by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring our alliancing approach in Glasgow leads in innovation and new ways of working to provide the best outcomes for customers and is an exemplar for other areas • Reviewing the options to strengthen the pathways through our care and housing services to provide our customers with the most integrated service possible • Developing a DGHP specific proposal for Housing First using our own housing and care services • Developing a Group Housing First Action Plan • Working with partners to develop clear pathways to the right support services for all our customers

	<p>Developing peaceful and connected neighbourhoods: Settling in a welcoming neighbourhood will be a key element to sustaining a home and successfully ending homelessness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our better lives focus will include connecting households to their neighbourhoods through support which encourages engagement including group activities, volunteering and other actions. • We will review the options to build community resilience and connectedness through volunteer community connectors and activists, building on the experience of others in the community who may once have been homeless or faced trauma, supporting communities where high turnover might result in a rapid change in demographics. • We will use our virtual spaces to create room for community discussion to help grow the understanding and support for newcomers but also to address the impacts or concerns existing tenants may have. • We will provide specific support to families to ensure that they are settled in new schools and activities • Using our expertise across Community Improvement and fire safety to ensure people can live in peaceful environments, safe in their own homes. <p>Supporting economic resilience in our communities: Jobs, skills and income are at the heart of sustaining a home and achieving the ambitions people have. We will help those who are in our most vulnerable communities and those who have been or are at risk of homelessness through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using our changing lives and other Wheatley Foundation services to increase employment opportunities for those who have been homeless or threatened with homelessness. • Reviewing our Wheatley Foundation and other wider services to maximise the employment, training and skill building opportunities available to customers who have been homeless or are at risk of homelessness. • Using our expanded Wheatley Benefit to harness our size and buying power to get the best deals possible for our customers, providing them with a growing range of opportunities to save money and reduce the cost of running their home.
<p>Developing our shared capability</p>	<p>W.E. Think – creating our “Thinking Yes Together” culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our customers will tailor the service and support that works for them using sector leading self-service models to draw down what they need and innovative online engagement tools to shape the services of the future. <p>W.E. Create – driving innovation:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will examine the use of predictive analytics to target our tiered levels of prevention support to achieve the best results. • Testing, delivering and evaluating new service options will be core to the Policy. • Working with local authorities to find a more efficient way to deliver fast outcomes for our customers. • Working with our partners to examine options for integrated commissioning of support across homelessness, addictions, mental health, criminal justice and general health budgets in order to achieve a comprehensive and effective service for our customers • Enabling customers to access online learning to build up Wheatley Credits for housing, care and property management that will be a recognised part of Wheatley's Pathways into Work programme. <p>W.E. Work – strengthening the skills and agility of our staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All our staff will be trained in our approach to preventing homelessness and building community resilience • Our staff will be trained in supporting community connections across all our services. • We will create a specialist digital qualification for frontline housing, care and other staff which develops an empowering approach to support and the skills to support customers through trauma and disruption. This will be complementary to the Scottish Government's national trauma training programme led by NHS Education for Scotland.
<p>Enabling our ambitions</p>	<p>Influencing locally and nationally to benefit our communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will use our existing strong partnership arrangements with local authorities, care services and others to enable the delivery of increasingly excellent services which meet our customers' needs. • Influencing our neighbourhood organisations to support new residents

How we will measure our progress

We will measure our progress using the following key measures

Measure	Target
Number of homes provided to households assessed as homeless by the local authority	10,000
% of lets provided to homeless households: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glasgow - Edinburgh - Dumfries & Galloway 	65% 50% 50%
% of homes let through nomination agreement with local authority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - West Lothian - West Dunbartonshire 	50% 50%
Increase the number of Housing First tenancies across our footprint	500
% of Wheatley households at risk of homelessness who are helped to avoid homelessness	Baseline to be determined in 2021
Increase the % homeless households very satisfied with the process of getting their new home (segmentation of existing indicator)	Baseline to be determined in 2021
Increase the supply of new build homes	5,500
Maintain tenancy sustainment levels for all households	Above 90%
Maintain tenancy sustainment levels for households who were previously homeless	Above 93%
Number of households whose temporary let is "flipped" to a mainstream SST (new)	500
Increase the percentage of our customers who live in neighbourhoods categorised as peaceful	70%
Number of jobs, training places and apprenticeships given to people affected by homeless (new)	500

Innovation

Innovation is at the heart of our Group Strategy. It is no less important to this Homelessness Policy. Achieving our vision will require a completely new approach to each facet of what we do. Through our shared capability theme we have developed three key outcomes which will support our future innovation: W.E. Think, W.E. Create and W.E. work.

W.E. Think sets our organisation the challenge to “Think Yes together” with our customers as we consider the services that are needed and how we design them. It will support our people to work together with our customers and communities to design the outcomes that will work best for them as individuals and groups.

W.E. Create is our approach to stimulating innovation across our people and our communities. We will do this with new partnerships with academic and other institutions to inform our new Community Academy. Our training and skills development will be increasingly customer driven. It will include increasing use of community technology and crowdsourcing style approaches to inform our progress.

W.E. Work will develop new more agile work roles within a redesigned authorising environment. It will focus on rewarding talent and innovation from within our workplace and from our communities.

Legislation, planning and guidance

This Policy has been developed taking into account relevant legislation, strategic drivers and guidance:

Legislation

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001;
- Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003;
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010;
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014;
- Regulation of Care Act 2001;
- General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679);
- The Data Protection Act 2018;
- Equalities Act 2010

Plans and Guidance

- Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Guidance (June 2018)
- Local Authority Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans 2018/19 – 2023/24
- Social Allocations in Scotland: A Practice Guide (February 2019)
- Code of Guidance (interim update November 2019)

Complaints

Our aim is to get it right first time, however, where there is dissatisfaction with this Policy or its operation, customers can make a complaint.

A summary of our Complaints Policy and Procedure is available on our website and in local offices.

Appendix 1: Current position statement

Across all of our subsidiaries there is a commitment in everything we do to improve the fabric of customers' lives while creating great communities. Since 2015 the Group has continually evolved and improved its services with actions including:

- Creation of a centralised homelessness team to coordinate our operational response to homelessness;
- Commitment to provide 300 tenancies for Housing First customers over 2 years, participating in 3 Housing First partnerships in relation to housing and/or care;
- Leading Glasgow's award winning development of Housing Options across 55 RSLs covering 72% of the social rented stock;
- Increased supply of affordable housing of national significance with almost 3,000 new homes delivered in the last 5 years
- Launch of MyHousing – our Group online housing information, advice and letting service – to improve accessibility for customers;
- Allocations targets that prioritise homeless prevention and homeless applicants;
- Creation of Wheatley 360, our wraparound support division;
- Wheatley Care's creation of the Flexible Homeless Outreach Support Service (FHOSS);
- Creation of Wheatley Care's tenancy support service and more recently Tenancy Support Plus which provide short term reablement and support to tenants to help tenants through a crisis or to settle in a new tenancy; and
- Close working with City of Edinburgh Council to ensure that our Dunedin Harbour Hostel supports their objectives of prevention of homelessness and efficient move on to permanent accommodation

Across our 18 local authority areas we provide high quality social rented homes to our customers alongside the biggest programme of additional support and opportunities in the country. Our housing officers have an average patch size of 200 and are therefore able to be familiar with all their customers. As part of the approach to moving into a Wheatley house, we work with tenants to identify any support they may need. Using our Wheatley 360 division, we are able to provide support with access to specialist support to start a tenancy (My Great Start), benefits advice, financial inclusion services, fuel advice and specialist support in relation to Universal Credit. Where customers need it we can explore options for carpets, white goods, furniture and food vouchers. Our Eat Well package provides support with food packages in crises where tenants have no income to ensure they can at least have food on the table.

Where our housing officers identify a customer as needing extra support extra visits and calls can be arranged in addition to our standard new tenancy visits. Customers are also provided with access to our 24 hour call centre and encouraged to call at any point they might need to. Call centre staff are equipped with knowledge about our wrap around services and can also link effectively to housing officers.

Our specialist Tenancy Support Service provides support for tenants who are struggling with aspects of maintaining their tenancy. It works for 6-8 weeks to help tenants get back

on their feet and ensures the transition to other longer term services where these are required. The Tenancy Support Service Plus is designed specifically to support tenants through their transition onto Universal Credit. Housing officers are able to draw on home fire safety visits to ensure tenants are as safe as possible in their property.

Housing officers' expertise in the services we offer and their knowledge of their customers means they can quickly link tenants to support services they might need at any point. Housing Officers are often "first through the door" and can use this to identify early signs of crisis before it will impact the tenancy. Our staff have training in housing options, allocations systems, domestic abuse and hate crime which can all be used to support customers. They use this knowledge to work closely with our partners in social work, police and fire to link tenants to the services they may require from these agencies.

In addition to wrap around services, being a tenant of the Wheatley Group provides a range of opportunities. Over 2,500 jobs, training places or apprenticeships have been created either within the organization or through our work since 2015/16. More than two thirds of these go to our customers. A further 50 customers each year are supported with bursaries for further education. We also run programmes to support child literacy, tenant internet skills and sports and cultural engagement.

Our co-ordinated support to provide both better homes and better lives ensures that across Group more than 90% of our tenants who have been homeless sustain their tenancy for at least a year.

We provide specialist care services across our priority areas through Wheatley Care. Almost 1,000 people are provided with housing related support at any one time. These services include outreach housing support in Glasgow, Stirling, South Lanarkshire, Falkirk and Fife, some of which specialize in services for young people. We provide a specialist alcohol and accommodation unit in Glasgow, together with a related outreach service. We also deliver the care and support element of Housing First in some of the earliest projects in the country in Edinburgh and Stirling.

Glasgow City

Our housing provision in Glasgow City Council is led by GHA and supported through Cube and Loretto Housing Associations. Together they provide almost 43,000 social rented homes. A significant proportion of our care services are located in Glasgow, managed by Wheatley Care. These support approximately 1,000 customers at a time through tenancy support, outreach housing support and building based services. Through Wheatley Care we have been successful as part of the partnership to deliver the Council's "Alliance to end homelessness" which will take the lead in the City's move to rapid rehousing. Much of our new build programme is contained within Glasgow and since 2015/16 this has added 1,700 new homes in the local authority area.

Glasgow City Council receives the largest number of homeless applications in the country, with over 5,500 each year (16% of the total). It faces particular challenges in providing temporary and permanent accommodation for the scale of applicants it receives. Glasgow City's draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan states that resources will be focused on:

- The fastest possible journey through temporary accommodation to settled housing; and
- The provision of flexible, person-centred support that follows the household from temporary to settled housing to enable successful sustainment.

The City Council expects this to result in a systemic change to the current systems. This will include a focus on person centred rather than accommodation-based services and a strong focus on partnership working. This will include partnership working with people with lived experience of homelessness in the development of new services.

Wheatley receives 70% of all homeless referrals in the City (although many will also be referred to other housing associations) and it housed 46% of all section 5 lets in 2018/19. It already provides a person centred approach to those it houses with extensive wrap around services and tenancy support.

A key area of focus will be the 63% of refusals which are the result of multiple referrals being made and another RSL then housing the applicant and the referral therefore being withdrawn. These referrals will already have generated work within the system and possibly even offers of accommodation. There is significant scope to reduce this wastage and use the resources to better meet the needs of homeless households.

Wheatley currently provides a range of services to help homeless households and support GCC in its statutory obligations. These include:

- 30% of all lets provided to homeless households, and homeless households given priority through Covid-19 pandemic period.
- Housed 46% of all section 5 lets in GCC in 2018/19.
- An assisted bidding process through MyHousing for those who need it on behalf of the GCC section 5 team.
- A new matching process to help homeless households quickly move to a suitable home following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Additional support to customers where English is not their first language.
- A choice based letting system for applicants in Glasgow providing access to a much wider range of homes by allowing them to bid for homes across GHA, Loretto and Cube irrespective of which RSL they may have been referred to.
- Integration with GCC to allow MyHousing system for GCC to allow instant access to our MyHousing system to use online housing options and application forms and to directly upload the section 5 referral.
- Leasing over 1,000 homes to Glasgow City Council for temporary accommodation and flipping these to permanent lets for households where this is suitable as part of our Covid-19 support;
- Support to over 400 customers at any time through our specialist Wheatley Care services at the Flexible Homelessness Outreach Housing Support Service and Wheatley Accommodation and Alcohol Support Services (Fordneuk).
- Provision of housing options advice as an integrated part of the application system
- Provision of 120 homes for Housing First by October 2020.
- Development of the MyHousing system to allow customers to use a digital application and allocation process.
- Provision of robust performance information to support policy development and decision making, enhanced by the development of MyHousing.

- Participation in key GCC partnership arrangements including the Housing Access Board, Strategic Homelessness Group and Housing First consortium
- Participation in the Council's Housing Access Board.
- Participation in a range of working groups including the Council's operational, temporary accommodation, prevention/tenancy sustainment and review and development homelessness working groups.
- Monthly liaison meetings with the Council's Homelessness Management Team, Temporary Accommodation Management Team and MAPPA processes.

City of Edinburgh

Our provision in Edinburgh is led by Dunedin Canmore Housing Association. This amounts to just over 4,500 houses in the City. Our new build programme has added over 400 homes in the City since 2015/16.

As Scotland's capital, Edinburgh faces high pressure on affordable housing. Demand and costs for the private rented sector are also high. The Council receives a large number of homelessness applications (just over 3,000 in 2018-19). The Edindex partnership made a commitment to let an additional 275 homes to statutory homeless households during 2018/19. This target was met and exceeded with an additional 305 lets to homeless households during this period. The current Edindex business plan is committed to increase the proportion of lets to homeless households. The rapid rehousing transition plan commits the Council to looking at a range of innovative options for accommodation including shared housing and supported lodgings.

Wheatley Group currently provides a range of services for homeless households and supports City of Edinburgh Council in the delivery of its homelessness duties through:

- Participation in the Edindex choice based letting system and Edindex Board.
- Participation in Housing First in Edinburgh with 38 tenancies already provided by October 2020.
- Providing approximately 50% of all lets to homeless households (including first lets of new build homes).
- A 25 room/35 bedspace hostel providing temporary accommodation and support in helping homeless applicants to move on to permanent accommodation.
- Dunedin Hostel Resettlement Flats providing supported accommodation to customers including veterans experiencing homelessness, with a pathway to permanent housing.
- Leasing of properties to City of Edinburgh and West Lothian Council for use as temporary accommodation.
- Provision of tenancies for the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.
- Training Flat project with Four Square – provision of 18 flats for young people age 16-21 experiencing homeless to move in to supported accommodation with a pathway to permanent housing.
- Membership of the Edinburgh Affordable Housing Partnership

Dumfries and Galloway

Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership is the largest provider in the Council area with 10,300 units. The Partnership joined the Wheatley Housing Group in December 2020 and will in future be able to draw on new build development to extend supply in the area.

There are particular challenges in Dumfries and Galloway in relation to the rural nature of the area. More than 100 miles separate one end of the local authority area from the other. Providing temporary and permanent accommodation in the locality of choice for homeless applicants is more difficult than it would be in a more urban area. The level of repeat homelessness is relatively high. Applicants in Dumfries and Galloway are also much more likely to have one or more identified support need than in many other areas and this has implications for the additional services required by customers.

Wheatley Group supports Dumfries and Galloway Council through:

- Providing approximately 40% of all lets to homeless households (almost 500 lets in 2018/19)
- 24 units of temporary accommodation with support
- 73 units leased back to the Council for temporary accommodation
- Out of hours accommodation to support DGC in provision of its statutory obligations.
- Support to Dumfries and Galloway Council in delivering improvements in their homelessness service.
- Reducing the level of tenancy failure through the use of the DGHP Housing Support Team before any court actions are undertaken to ensure all options are explored to maintain the tenancy.
- Support to those housed through the refugee resettlement programme in DGHP homes and those of other RSLs.
- Management of a specialist project that supports care experienced young people to transition into main-stream accommodation (linked to prevention of homelessness of a vulnerable group).
- DGHP leads the Common Housing Register including monthly liaison with the lead officers for Strategic Housing & Homelessness, covering performance policy and the un-met need list for the region (this has been a success story).

West Dunbartonshire

Cube is our main provider in West Dunbartonshire with Loretto Housing Association providing a small number of homes. Together they have just under 550 homes in the area.

West Dunbartonshire received approximately 1,000 homelessness applications last year. This is the highest rate per 1,000 in the country. The rapid rehousing transition plan for the area identifies youth homelessness as a particular issue together with rising numbers of applicants with multiple and complex needs. The transition plan identifies four key priorities which are to:

- Deliver a whole systems approach to the prevention of homelessness;

- Enable service users with no or low support needs to access settled housing quickly;
- To develop interim housing options which enable independent living and housing sustainment; and
- Implement a Housing First model which enables the most excluded users to achieve housing sustainment.

The Wheatley Group currently provides the following services for homeless households in West Dunbartonshire:

- Review of referred homeless households against all void properties as soon as they are available for letting, with a secondary check to local authority staff if no suitable household is found to ensure any newly homeless households are also considered.
- Participation in the Council's quarterly section 5 meeting and housing providers forum

West Lothian

Wheatley provides almost 1,000 social rented houses within the West Lothian Council area through West Lothian Housing Partnership, Dunedin Canmore Housing Association and Barony Housing Association.

The West Lothian RRTP identifies that applicants are largely in low need of support, tend to be homeless as a result of being asked to leave existing accommodation and are mostly younger people. Sofa surfing is more common than rough sleeping. The level of demand for social housing is high across the area.

Wheatley Group supports West Lothian Council through:

- Providing more than 30% of all lets to homeless households (including first time lets of new build homes).
- Nomination arrangement with West Lothian Council for 50% of all lets.
- Development of 140 new homes in the area in 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- Partnership working with the Council to deliver housing support & temporary accommodation, Housing Options and homeless prevention.

Appendix 2: Case Studies

Case Study 1: Building resilience to create independence

The **Sandyhills** multi-storey flats were constructed in the late sixties and comprise of more than 500 flats, the majority of which are 2 apartment. Given the size of many of the properties we have a significant number of properties being allocated to single people, including those who have come to GHA via a section 5 referral.

There are a substantial number of the customers in the Sandyhills area where financial literacy is likely to be poor and households are struggling on relatively low incomes as well struggling with debt. Many households are also struggling with social isolation and feel they have no-one to turn to in a crisis. These customers are particularly vulnerable and more susceptible to lack the ability to manage a tenancy. They may also require significant support to sustain their recovery from addictions or deal with multiple issue such as poor mental health and addictions .

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 has introduced a raft of changes to the benefit system which has had an adverse effect on our customers' income; in particular Universal Credit. The ethos underpinning this benefit is that recipients should take more responsibility for their finances including paying their rent. In theory this position is sound however in reality we have many customers who have very poor budgeting skills and have never had the responsibility of paying their rent in the past. A prerequisite to claiming this benefit is a bank account as this is the only method of payment that the DWP will consider. This is a particular barrier for many of our customers and many have encountered various challenges when trying to open an account. The closure of local branches has exacerbated their difficulty in accessing banking services.

Our approach at Sandyhills is to see the individual and discuss with them using the tenancy star how they see themselves ensuring we have a full overview of the customers' circumstances. This includes any named support organisations or individuals that we can start to build relationship with as this is essential to ensure everyone is clear about their role and expectations.

We use our bespoke Tenancy star to work with customers to track their progress in a range of areas. The customer agrees the support they want and this is provided at the right time and right pace for the customer. This helps households become more confident and less dependent on our services.

Within Sandyhills, the housing team have developed strong partnerships with a number of agencies including DWP and Barclays Bank who were involved in regular sessions within the community facilities. These included advice, information on bank accounts that are easy to set up and options for volunteering, further education and employment.

By assessing and agreeing with customer what support they want and offering this at the right time and at pace that is suitable to the Customer. Our aim is that the customer becomes more confident and less dependent on our services .

Case Study 2: Building resilience to create independence

M moved into one of our furnished flats in 2016 as a young single parent with a new baby. She had no real support from any other family members or the baby's father. Initially she had support issues and accrued arrears.

When she initially moved in she became quite low when she realised she did not have the resources to make the house into the home she wanted. GHA staff helped her by getting a decorating team in through community payback and through assistance from the concierge. Local staff helped out with some baby equipment and clothes and ensured she was well linked in to local groups.

Her confidence built as she established her home and local connections and she became determined to create a better life for herself and her daughter. She was able to repay her arrears, go into training and learn to drive. Ultimately she obtained a job in a nursery with an aspiration to go on to become a social worker.

Case Study 3: Building resilience to create independence

This customer moved into one of our temporary accommodation units have suffered repeat homelessness and with pending charges for threatening behaviour in another property. The erratic and threatening behaviours continued on moving in and were heightened by the influence of alcohol. Although there appeared to be mental health issues no diagnosis had been made and therefore no mental health support was available. Ongoing support was provided to our customer to help her to understand that the occasions she was struggling were linked to alcohol. She continued to be derogatory and verbally aggressive to staff and others and this meant it took some time to build up a productive relationship. Initially, the majority of support was to de-escalate behaviours to prevent the need for intervention from police or other emergency services; to help our customer remain housed and safe and to ensure the safety of others in the same accommodation and neighbourhood. Social Work became involved quickly after moving in and also assisted with de-escalation. During her stay the covid-19 lockdown was put in place and this exacerbated the situation. She would frequently call emergency services, often reporting covid symptoms when these were not present, and was a frequent attender at hospital emergency services.

An interim ASBO was sought and obtained while the customer was in temporary accommodation to continue once permanent accommodation was found. This was in order to help her see that their behaviours were putting her accommodation at risk and affecting others significantly and also to ensure others in the surrounding area could be protected.

A partnership approach between Wheatley Group, the local authority homeless team and social work was put in place to ensure that the customer could maintain the accommodation and successfully move into a tenancy. A core group of officers was put in place and maintained close contact throughout the process. This approach improved the ability to support the customer to move on successfully and to ensure that everyone was updated at all points of the process.

An Adult Support and Protection assessment was carried out. This identified new support and allowed for a smooth transition through good communication. Our customer was able to be involved in the meetings. A referral to our welfare benefits advisor enabled full benefit income to be restored.

With the support and joint working our customer was able to move into a home with a Scottish Short Secured Tenancy. Properties were assessed to ensure that the home chosen maximised the chances of a successful tenancy. A full ASBO was now in place to help to prevent and address any further issues. The property was fully furnished through funding from the Scottish Welfare Fund and support from a local homelessness charity. Ongoing support has been provided from social work and the local authority homeless team. The customer continues to do well in her new home.

Case Study 4: Building resilience to create independence

A is a middle aged male who has been in the homeless system for 15 years, including nights spent sleeping rough on the streets. He is alcohol dependent, has mental health issues which deteriorate during times of non-engagement with services and has a history of reoffending. In October 2019, A was required to move on from the latest in a series of supported accommodation placements due to his erratic behaviours and fire raising. By this time he was excluded from almost all support services in the area. After intensive multi-disciplinary reviews it was agreed to move him into a temporary furnished flat with support from our Glasgow Flexible Homeless Outreach Support Service with 2 weekly reviews and updates as he was at high risk of eviction. His choice with support is to enable him to live independently in his home, improving confidence, supporting re-enablement and therefore reducing reliance on paid services.

The Outcome Star Assessment tool, Homelessness Star was used as a baseline for A's outcome plan. This measures the distance travelled within the outcome plan, using strength based approach to recognise skills, and see results, building leadership in making positive choices, improving self-awareness, therefore confidence and resilience.

After 15 years of being in the homeless system A has settled into the temporary accommodation which is his first independent tenancy in over 15 years. He has continued to engage with other agencies including mental health agencies and is no longer required to attend the challenging behaviour medical clinic as he is no longer classed as a risk to others as he has built trust with services. He has now been in the temporary accommodation for 1 year and is preparing to be discharged from homeless services once the process has been completed for temporary accommodation to now become a secure tenancy. Over the last 12 months with the support and innovation A has been able to challenge his own history and remove the barriers to become independent and live in his own home.

A talking points approach was used with A, which resulted in conversation around the benefits of independent living. He expressed a desire to live in his own home after years of living in supported accommodation and many long stays on mental health hospital wards. The benefits of independent living in his own home are:

- Reduced direct supports
- More independence
- More regular contact with close family
- Pride and sense of achievement for himself
- Being able to cook his own meals
- Make his own choices

Appendix 3: Legislative changes in relation to homelessness

The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987	As amended, sets out the powers and duties of local authorities in dealing with applications from people seeking help on the grounds that they are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Since the 1987 Act, there have been a number of changes to legislation, some of which are described in legislation referred to below
The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001	Established the right to review a homelessness decision and amended other aspects of homeless applicants rights and definitions. It also introduced a duty on registered social landlords (RSLs) to assist local authorities in rehousing homeless people.
The Homeless Persons Advice and Assistance (Scotland) Regulations 2002	Prescribed the types of advice and assistance that local authorities must provide under Section 31(3)(b) and 32(3) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 to homeless applicants and applicants threatened with homelessness
The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003	Amended the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and primarily affects how local authorities carry out their homelessness functions, strengthening people's rights to support when they are facing homelessness. The 2003 Act also improved the housing rights of people experiencing domestic abuse and provided a mechanism for the abolition of priority need. It also placed a duty on mortgage lenders and landlords to notify local authorities when they raise repossession proceedings
Housing Scotland Act 2010	Introduced a duty on local authorities to conduct a housing support assessment for applicants who are unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and who they have 'reason to believe' need housing support services as prescribed in the regulations.
Equalities Act 2010	Prohibits discrimination (whether direct or indirect) against people who possess one of the protected characteristics
Welfare Reform Act 2012	Introduced changes to the UK benefits system, including under occupancy charges for social rented sector and Universal Credit.
The Housing Support Services (Homelessness)(Scotland) Regulations 2012	Makes provision in relation to the duty of Local Authorities to assess whether some persons found to be unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness need housing support services.

The Homelessness (Abolition of Priority Need Test) (Scotland) Order 2012	Abolished the priority need test for homeless households so that all unintentionally homeless households are entitled to settled accommodation.
The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014	Revoked The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004 and prescribes accommodation which may not be used to fulfil the duty on local authorities to provide interim accommodation under Section 29(1) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 in relation to applicants who are pregnant, or whose household includes either a pregnant woman or children. Article 7 of the 2014 Order provides two particular circumstances where such accommodation may be used and this was time limited to 14 days.
Housing (Scotland) Act 2014	Introduced the abolition of right to buy, and changes to social rented sector tenancy rights including changes to assignments and successions.
Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016	Introduced a new private residential tenancy for the private rented sector in Scotland to replace the short assured tenancy and assured tenancy for all future lets.
The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2017	For families with children or pregnant women, amends the time limit in article 7 of the 2014 Order from 14 days to 7 days
The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 (Commencement No. 4) Order 2019	Commenced on 7 November 2019, brings into force sections 4 and 8 of the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 ("the 2003 Act") <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commencing the provisions in Section 4 gives local authorities the discretion to investigate for intentionality rather than it being a duty as previously. • Commencing the provisions in Section 8 allows Scottish Ministers by order made by statutory instrument to modify the operation of Section 33 of the 1987 Act, which allows local connection referral of a homeless applicant to another local authority in certain circumstances. Within 12 months of commencing the Section 8 provisions, Scottish Ministers must publish a statement setting out the general criteria by reference to which modifications would take place, and are obliged to consult before making or modifying this statement. Following the Ministerial Statement, the statutory