



**From mountain to sea**

**Aberdeenshire**  
COUNCIL



# **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan & Action Plan**

**2019-2024**

**February 2019**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was set up by the Scottish Government in October 2017 to produce short and long term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping. The 70 detailed recommendations made, provide a vision of a whole system approach, with prevention of homelessness paramount and responsibility lying with not just local authorities but all parts of the public sector. The cornerstone of the recommendations is a transition to a Rapid Rehousing approach with Housing First as part of it.
- 1.2 Rapid Rehousing involves taking a housing led approach to rehousing people that have experienced homelessness, ensuring that they reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible and that any stay in temporary accommodation is for as short a period as possible.

Where homelessness cannot be prevented, Rapid Rehousing means

- A settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible
- Time spent in any form of temporary accommodation reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better
- Temporary accommodation, when needed, should preferably be mainstream, furnished and within a community.

And for people with multiple needs beyond housing:

- Housing First is the first response for people with complex needs and multiple disadvantages.
- Highly specialist provision within small, shared, supported and trauma informed environments if mainstream housing, including Housing First, is not possible or preferable.

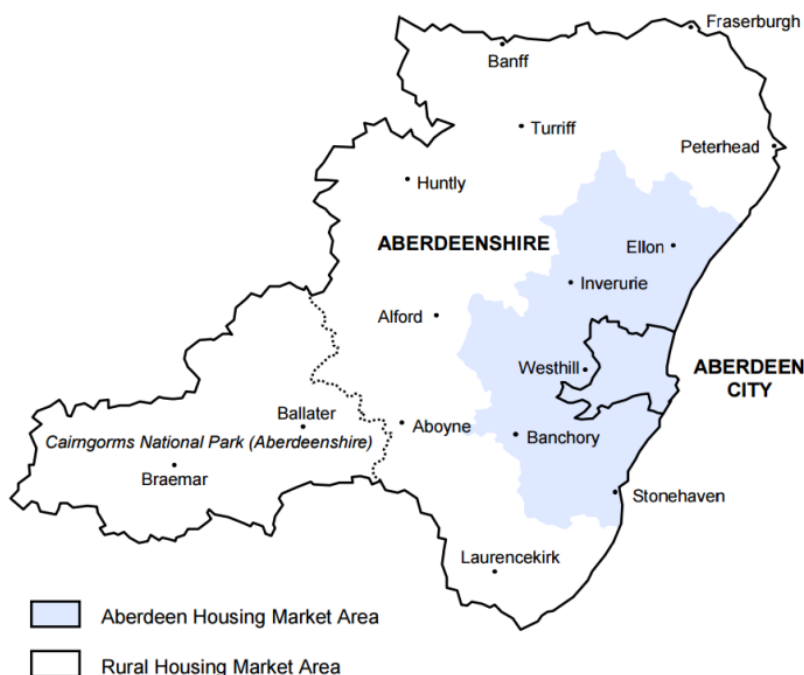
## 2. Links to other strategies/plans

- 2.2 The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) is a new planning framework for local authorities and their partners to transition to a rapid rehousing approach. Each Local Authority is required to develop their plans in collaboration over a planned and costed phase of 5 years (2019/20 to 2023/24) by 31 December 2018. The RRTP will then be an integral part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and will be reviewed annually as part of the SHIP process. RRTPs will sit within the Community Planning Partners wider strategic planning framework of the Local Outcome Improvement Framework and the Local Housing Strategy.
- 2.3 This RRTP has been developed in collaboration with Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership, our Community Planning partners and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) together with a range of other relevant partners which include support providers, representatives of the Aberdeenshire Community Justice Partnership, and third sector organisations.

- 2.4 The development of the plan has been overseen by a Member Officer RRTP Working Group and informed by a series of workshops that took place between October and December 2018. These focussed on the Options and Homelessness Team, the wider Housing Service and Health and Social Care and a further workshop included wider partners, tenants, elected members, RSL partners and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector representatives.
- 2.5 The Member Officer Working Group will continue to monitor and review the implementation of the RRTP to ensure that this is in accordance with the direction agreed by Communities Committee and to work with partners and stakeholders to ensure buy in to the required changes at all levels.

### 3. The Housing Market in Aberdeenshire

- 3.1 There were 110,296 households in Aberdeenshire in 2016. This is expected to increase by 25% over the next 25 years with the population expected to increase by 20% over the same period.
- 3.2 The numbers of different types of households are expected to increase at different rates however there is a high rate of growth expected in the number of single person households. According to the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2017 there is expected to be a rise in the number of single person households of 42% over the next 25 years.
- 3.3 In 2016 there were 116,421 dwellings in Aberdeenshire, an increase of 20% since 2001. The majority are either detached (47%) or semi-detached (29%) with terraced dwellings and flats comparatively fewer (12% respectively). Most properties are privately owner occupied (73%) The private rented sector accounts for 10% and the social rented sector for 16% of the overall housing stock.
- 3.4 The Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2017 identifies two housing market areas within the Aberdeen City and Shire area: the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (AHMA) and the Rural Housing Market Area (RHMA).



3.5 Particular issues highlighted within the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) 2017 is the proportion of families under 24 in Aberdeenshire living in concealed households, which would include young couples living with parents (15.2% compared with 10% for Scotland) and under occupation which is estimated at 41% compared to 29% nationally. Under occupation is greatest in owner occupied housing.

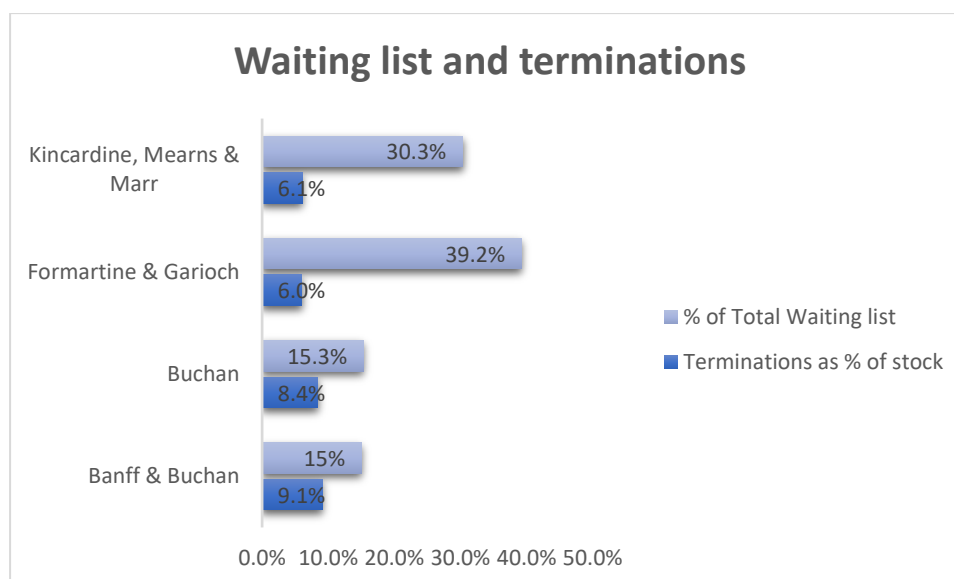
3.6 Aberdeenshire Council had a stock of 12,903 properties in 2017 broken down as:

bedsit	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed +	Total
38	5,063	5,194	2,468	140	12,903

3.7 At 31 March 2017 there were 7,280 households on the waiting list for local authority housing with the highest demand in Inverurie, Stonehaven, Ellon and Fraserburgh. Typically the areas where there is least demand are within the rural housing market area. The greatest demand across all areas is for one bed property.

Area	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	other	total
Banff & Buchan	642	228	128	52	30	20	1099
Buchan	613	223	143	58	12	67	1116
Formartine	528	183	145	47	16	8	927
Garioch	1124	388	277	91	32	16	1928
Kincardine & Mearns	611	315	209	67	25	35	1262
Marr	513	191	136	41	14	51	946
All	4032	1528	1038	356	129	197	7280

In 2017/18 1157 tenancy terminations were received, representing 9% of the total stock, however only 7.4% were mainstream properties with the remainder being sheltered properties. Vacancies were highest in Banff and Buchan and Buchan and lowest within Garioch and Formartine where the demand for properties of all sizes is greatest.



- 3.8 Twelve Registered Social Landlords have a stock of 4,737 properties in Aberdeenshire. The largest of these have almost a thousand properties but half of the RSLs in Aberdeenshire have fewer than 100 properties.

Registered Social Landlord	No of Units
Ark Housing Association Ltd	93
Blackwood Homes & Care	26
Castlehill HA Ltd	605
Grampian HA Ltd	956
Hanover (Scotland) HA Ltd	412
Langstane HA Ltd	776
Next Step Homes Ltd	34
Sanctuary	741
Abbeyfield	29
Osprey	955
Cairn HA Ltd	37
Kincardine Co-op	76
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,739</b>

- 3.9 Aberdeenshire Council are part of an online common housing register – Apply4Homes. This comprises Aberdeenshire Council, Moray Council, Osprey Housing and Osprey Housing Moray, Langstane HA, Hanover HA and Blackwood HA. There is currently no common Allocation Policy.

- 3.10 A number of RSLs with properties in Aberdeenshire allocate their properties using Choice Based Letting and operating as Homehunt NES. These include Castlehill HA, Grampian HA and Sanctuary. This accounts for 48.5% of the total RSL stock within Aberdeenshire.
- 3.11 Figures taken from the HL1 annual statistics and ARC data, together with information from RSL partners, indicate that 50% of all lets by Aberdeenshire Council, excluding transfers, during 2017/18 were to statutory homeless households compared with 33% of lets by RSLs. When transfers are included the proportions are 42% of LA lets and 30% of RSL lets.
- 3.12 The current target for allocation of mainstream lets by Aberdeenshire Council to statutory homeless applicants is 50%. Any decision to increase this target would need to be made having fully considered the potential impact and any unintended consequences. Consideration needs to be given to balancing the need to achieve permanent housing outcomes as quickly as possible for homeless households with the need to also address other categories of urgent housing need.
- 3.13 Aberdeenshire Council has nomination agreements in place with our RSL partners and these include a protocol in respect of Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Section 5 referrals are mainly vacancy led. On receipt of a nomination request from an RSL, the designated officer within Aberdeenshire Council, having regard to the waiting list for the property, will provide a maximum of three nominations or alternatively nominate a specific homeless household and specify that this represents a Section 5 referral. Arbitration Arrangements are in place within the nomination agreements to resolve any dispute between the RSL and Aberdeenshire Council and to ensure that all parties are aware of, and work together to address issues particularly in relation to potential refusal and impact on homeless priority and discharge of duty.
- 3.14 Although the housing waiting list has reduced and the supply of affordable housing has increased housing need continues to outstrip the supply of affordable housing. An aging population as well as an increasing proportion of single person households will continue to place increasing pressure on 1 bed properties.
- 3.15 The Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) 2017 informs the Aberdeenshire Strategic Development Plan, the Local Development Plan as well as the Local Housing Strategy. The assessment projects need and demand over three different scenarios up to 2039 and takes account of economic and market factors including the build out rate of Developers and the availability of resources. Based on the assessment and these factors it is estimated that an additional 2,125 houses across all tenure are required and the housing supply target for affordable housing in Aberdeenshire is 425 per year. This will be made up of an increase in the supply of rented housing by 340 units per year and intermediate housing and affordable home ownership by 85 units per year.

- 3.16 Potential completions of affordable housing over the 5 yrs. to 2023/24 as indicated through the Strategic Housing Investment Plan are:

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
<b>Council - Social Rent</b>	80	47	81	34	0
<b>RSL - Social Rent</b>	552	284	340	269	262
<b>Create Homes Aberdeenshire - Mid Market Rent</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>RSL - Mid Market Rent</b>	35	18	50	12	11
<b>RSL Low Cost Shared Equity</b>	20	0	0	8	0
<b>Aberdeenshire Low Cost Shared Equity</b>	64	81	29	53	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>297</b>

It should be noted that this plan is subject to working in partnership with the private sector, with developments coming forward timeously, including obtaining the necessary approvals and consents where appropriate. Meantime a review of the Housing Revenue Account has identified the capacity for the creation of up to an extra 1,000 homes in partnership with the private sector.

- 3.17 Rents within the private rented sector in both the Aberdeen and Shire broad rental market areas have decreased since reaching a peak in 2014. This is consistent across one, two and three bedroom properties however the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for a two bed property in the broad rental market area is £8,436 per annum which is lower than the average 2 bed property advertised at £9,444 per annum.
- 3.18 Within the Rural Housing Market Area it is difficult to obtain a robust picture as properties tend to be advertised through informal networks, however the rent of a 2 bed property can range from £5,856 per annum to £9,000 per annum and the LHA is £7,180. According to CACI pay check in 2017, 21% of households in the Aberdeen HMA and 24% of households in the Rural HMA had a gross annual income of less than £15,000.

## 4. Homeless Position in Aberdeenshire

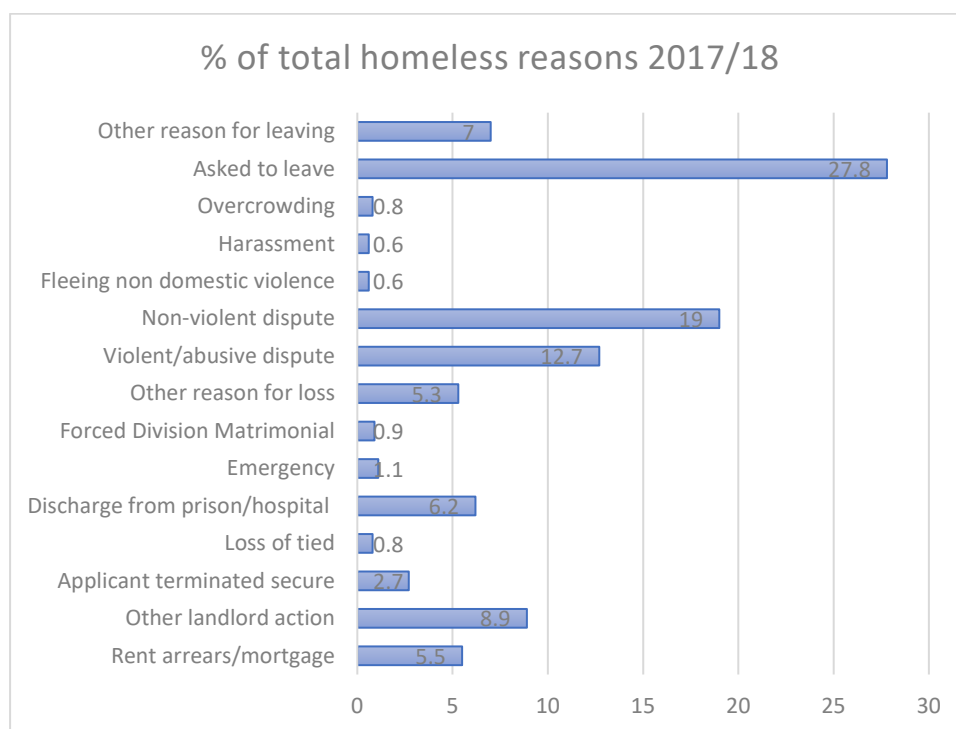
- 4.1 There had been a gradual decrease in the number of homeless applications made from 1600 in 2012/13 to 1042 in 2016/17, however 2017/18 saw a slight increase to 1086. This increase of 2% on the previous year is consistent with the figure for Scotland. The fall in homeless applications is attributed to the impact of housing options and homelessness prevention activities, however the rate of reduction, and now slight increase, in Aberdeenshire could be viewed as bottoming out of the opportunities realised through current prevention activities. It may also be as a result of change to recording practice. Until October 2017 homeless prevention activities were carried out and recorded within Prevent 1 and if appropriate a homeless application would be taken and Prevent 1 closed with the outcome– ‘made homeless application’.



Since October 2017 we have promoted a twin track approach with housing options activities and homeless applications being undertaken and recorded simultaneously. We are aware, having represented the North & Islands Housing Options Hub in the development of national guidance for recording prevention activities that twin tracking is not recommended and we will further review this practice in line with the draft guidance when it is issued. This, together with the Housing Options Training Toolkit, will give Officers access to the necessary guidance to ensure consistent and accurate recording of prevention activities.

4.2 Of the 1086 homeless applications made in 2017/18 Aberdeenshire Council had a duty to find settled accommodation for 843 of them and as of March 2018, 485 cases remained open. The average length of time that a homeless case would be open is 164 days and this has reduced on previous years. The number of homelessness assessments as a percentage of the total number of households within Aberdeenshire is 0.8% and the number of assessments where Aberdeenshire Council had a homeless duty in 2017/18 equated to 77.6% of total applications.

4.3 The majority of homeless applications made in 2017/18 to Aberdeenshire Council were as a result of relationship breakdown and households being asked to leave. This accounted for 59% of the total applications, with 21% of those presenting as a result of relationship breakdown or having been asked to leave stating that there was violence or abuse as a contributing factor. 12.7% of the total applications made said that violence or abuse was a contributing factor). 15% of homeless applications in 2017/18 were as a result of action being taken by their landlord, and this included arrears, and a further 6% of homeless applications were made following release from Prison, or move on from care or discharge from hospital or other institution.



67 homeless presentations in 2017/18 were due to discharge from prison, hospital, care or other institution and these are broken down further as:

- Prison = 50 (4.6% of total presentations)
- Care = 5 (0.4% of total presentations)
- Rehab/hospital = 12 (1.1% of total presentations)

- 4.4 Two thirds of homeless applications are from households where the main applicant is under 35yrs. (668) 31% of the total homeless applications received by Aberdeenshire Council in 2017/18 were from those aged between 16yrs and 24yrs. Considering this age group makes up only 11% of the total population of Scotland this would suggest that they are over-represented in accessing our homeless service and that we need to develop appropriate prevention strategies and support provision. We also need to consider the particular issues faced by LGBT young people who are more likely to find themselves homeless than their non LGBT peers and are over-represented within the UKs youth homeless population.

Homeless Presentations by assessment and age of main applicant:

	16-24yrs	25-34yrs	35-54yrs	55-64yrs	65+yrs
Homeless/potentially homeless - unintentional	262	245	271	51	14
Homeless/potentially homeless - intentional	16	25	29	1	1
Not homeless or potentially homeless	11	11	6	1	0
Resolved before assessment	19	25	24	3	4
Lost contact	17	9	7	0	1
Application withdrawn	13	14	3	0	1
Ineligible	1	0	0	0	1

Applicants aged 16-24 are less likely to present as potentially homeless – only 22% of those who were assessed as potentially homeless were aged 16-24 compared with 78% aged 25 and older.

In terms of sex there is an even split between lead applicant being male (551) or female (535). Outcomes in relation to access to secure RSL/LA are slightly different – 477 households were offered property and broken down as 259 (54.3%) had a female lead applicant and 218 (47.7%) had a male lead applicant.

- 4.5 One hundred and ten (110) homeless applicants in Aberdeenshire in 2017/18 indicated that they had slept rough at least once in the last 3 months, with 45 of those stating that they had slept rough the night before. There is no evidence of entrenched rough sleeping within Aberdeenshire however individuals do report that they slept rough when asked this during the homeless interview on presentation.
- 4.6 The number of households re-assessed as homeless within the same year or repeat homeless cases was 50 in 2017/18. This represents a 9% decrease on the previous year and follows the introduction of the Aberdeenshire Rural Housing First Pilot in September 2017.
- 4.7 In 2017/18 we lost contact with 35 applicants before the assessment decision was made (3.3% of total decisions) and 80 applicants had an outcome of not known or lost contact following assessment recorded (10% of all outcomes) which is below the Scottish average of 15%. We recognise that we need to promote an active case management approach in order to ensure regular contact with applicants and the use of appropriate digital technology would support this.

Given the rural nature of Aberdeenshire we need to ensure that we use all appropriate means to ensure that we are working with applicants to resolve their homeless situation and where appropriate to give more control over the homeless journey.

4.8 The number of households in Temporary Accommodation within Aberdeenshire as at 31 March 2018 was 393 and households with children or pregnant women accounted for 90 of those households. This figure has reduced year on year since 2012 when households with children or pregnant women accounted for 205 of households in temporary accommodation in Aberdeenshire. There have been no breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order during 2017/18 or within the last 10 years

4.9 The average length of stay in various types of temporary accommodation within Aberdeenshire in 2017/18 was:

Type of Temporary Accommodation	Average No. of days
LA Ordinary Dwelling	166
HA/RSL Dwelling	202
Hostel (LA)	73
Bed & Breakfast	25
Women's Refuge	76
Hostel – Other	196

Households with children had longer average stays in temporary accommodation than households without children – in 2017/18 the average duration for households with children was 194 days compared with those without children at 161. This is attributable to a slower turnover of the size of property required, particularly of larger properties, but it is also due to an understanding that a sustainable housing outcome is one that is within the applicants preferred areas. Given the rural nature of Aberdeenshire and turnover of stock it may be possible to identify a housing outcome that meets housing need but which would not be suitable as it would lead to isolation and financial exclusion, and not be sustainable in the longer term. A longer stay in temporary accommodation to ensure that a sustainable housing solution is identified may be justified.

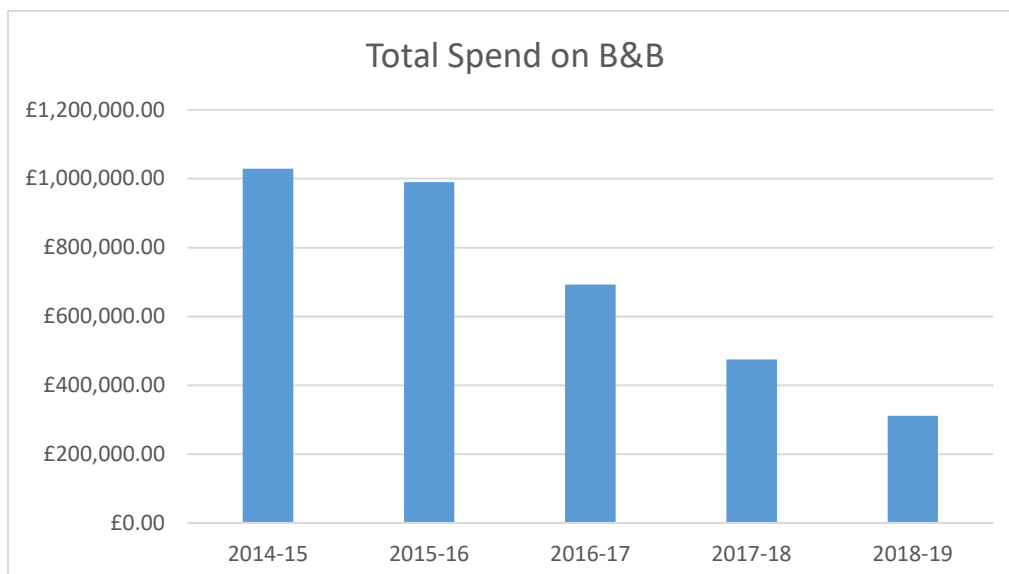
4.10 In 2017/18 lets to homeless households represented 58% of new annual homeless demand. A total of 492 lets to statutory homeless were in the social rented sector and there were none recorded in the private rented sector. This is an area that we expect to change as a result of the opportunities afforded by the new Private Rented Tenancy, in terms of enhanced security and the ability to discharge duty into the private rented sector. This will be reflected in the actions identified in the RRTP and build on the work of Options staff in promoting the private sector as a housing option.

4.11 The proportion of all social lets to statutory homeless applicants by Aberdeenshire Council in 2017/18 was 50% and by RSLs was 33%.

4.12 Using the Rapid Rehousing Tool provided we have established a baseline of 31 March 2017 and have calculated that within Aberdeenshire an additional 388 lets per annum would require to be made to statutory homeless applicants to meet both the current backlog, and the new demand, over the 5 year Rapid Rehousing Transition period. These lets would be required across the housing sector. The Rapid Rehousing Tool populated for 2017/18 is provided and will be updated regularly during the life of this plan.

## 5. Aberdeenshire Temporary Accommodation Baseline

- 5.1 At 31 March 2017 there were 384 households living in temporary accommodation in Aberdeenshire.
- 5.2 The current cost to the General Fund of providing temporary accommodation within Aberdeenshire, excluding rent and Housing Benefit payments, was £193,460 for the year 2017/18. This relates to the provision of mainstream temporary accommodation in Local Authority ordinary stock or property leased from RSLs. £470,000 was spent on Bed and Breakfast in 2017/18, a reduction of 30% on 2016/17.
- 5.2 Forty Seven (47) of the households were in Bed and Breakfast type accommodation with almost three quarters of these placements in the Buchan area. None of these placements were in breach of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004 (amended 2007). During 2017/18 the number of households in B&B accommodation as a percentage of the total households in temporary accommodation was 8.6%.
- Bed and Breakfast spaces are not block funded and placements are spot purchased as necessary. The quality of the accommodation provided is good and standards are monitored by specialist Housing Officers (Temporary Accommodation). We recognise that levels of satisfaction with this type of provision can be lower than for other types of temporary accommodation.
- 5.3 B&B is used to provide emergency and short-term accommodation only. The average length of stay in 2017/18 was 25 days and the average weekly charge £296. Use of B&B has been reduced significantly with spend halved within the last 5 years due to fewer placements and shorter stays. This has been due to a range of measures that have been put in place which include increasing the number of temporary units, the introduction of shared tenancies and the Aberdeenshire Rural Housing First Pilot.



- 5.4 Two small scale hostel type units Stonefield Place in Inverurie and Katteburn Court in Peterhead currently provide temporary accommodation with support provided on an outreach basis.
- Katteburn Court, Peterhead, built in 1995 has 12 en-suite rooms with shared kitchen and communal areas. Caretaking staff are present 24 hours but it is not a registered supported unit and low housing management based support is provided by outreach support staff.
  - Stonefield Place, Inverurie, built in 2003 has 8 en-suite rooms with shared kitchen and communal areas. Staffing and access to support is the same as at Katteburn Court.

The average weekly charge in 2017/18 was £315.56 and the average length of stay 73 days.

- 5.5 The majority of the accommodation provided within Aberdeenshire is in mainstream, furnished and partially furnished, individual properties taken from local authority stock or leased from RSL partners and dispersed in or near to the major settlements across Aberdeenshire. The standard of the temporary units is high and customer feedback is monitored by an independent research company, IBP, who undertake regular telephone surveys with customers and report their findings quarterly. For the period October to December 2018 they reported that 100% of those surveyed were very or fairly satisfied with the temporary accommodation provided.
- 5.6 One, two and three bed properties are furnished or partially furnished. All are provided with white goods, floor and window coverings whilst the fully furnished properties provide a higher level of furnishing based on a standard inventory depending on the size of the property.
- 5.7 The properties from Registered Social Landlords are leased by Aberdeenshire Council unfurnished and then equipped following the standard inventory. Furnishings and equipment are procured through the Scotland Excel framework.
- 5.8 The 366 dispersed temporary accommodation units are made up of 6 bedsits, 140 X 1 bed units, 158 X 2 bed units and 58 X 3 bed units. Three hundred and thirty three (333) are Local Authority Ordinary Dwellings with 33 leased from RSL partners. The support provided is no support or low housing management based.

The weekly charges and average length of stay in each of these varies and is:

	Average weekly charge	Average length of stay
bedsit	£ 97.05	216 days
1 bed (f/f)	£108.77	174 days
1 bed (p/f)	£ 97.98	174 days
2 bed (f/f)	£125.04	109 days
2 bed (p/f)	£113.74	158 days
3 bed (f/f)	£144.08	141 days
3 bed (p/f)	£135.96	257 days

- 5.9 Local authority supported accommodation for young people at King Street, Peterhead can accommodate 6 young people aged 16-25 years. Provided by Aberdeenshire Council, it is staffed 24 hours and support is provided by 1 full time Housing Officer (Support).

The average weekly charge is £315.56 and the average length of stay was 73 days.

This unit will be reviewed alongside the review of the other Aberdeenshire owned hostel type units and the future needs for supported accommodation.

- 5.10 Specialist supported accommodation is provided by Turning Point, Grampian Women's Aid, and Aberdeen Foyer.

- Grampian Women's Aid provide refuge accommodation for 5 households and support women who have been subject to Domestic Violence/Abuse. Aberdeenshire Council lease the building from Osprey HA and lease this to GWA. A grant is provided for the annual running costs however this funding is to be reviewed in 2020.
- Aberdeen Foyer receive block funding to provide 24 places across Aberdeenshire. They offer self-contained flats and provide support to 16-25 year olds in the main settlements of Inverurie, Stonehaven, Fraserburgh and Peterhead.
- Turning Point provide 10 places within the Pitstop Project. Located in Fraserburgh they have 3 shared flats and 4 single occupancy flats within a block. They lease the property from Aberdeenshire Council to provide fully supported accommodation for single homeless applicants with substance misuse issues. Outreach support is provided to assist transition from supported accommodation and to settle in to their own tenancy and also to support clients waiting for a place to become available. The outreach service is based on the Housing First model.

- 5.11 In 2017 shared temporary accommodation was developed to address the needs of single applicants and to test this type of provision. 4 X 2 bed properties were used to provide self-contained rooms with shared kitchen, living area and bathroom. The properties are furnished and services are included.

The average weekly charge is £75.63 and the average length of stay was 212 days. Two properties were designated for use as part of our prison protocol and ongoing implementation of the SHORE standards.

Temporary Accommodation Provision in Aberdeenshire at 31 March 2018

Overarching type of provision	List of each individual building used at 31 March 2017	Location	Capacity	No. of households living in the TA at 31 March 2017	Total households who have entered accommodation between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018	Total households who have left accommodation between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018	No. of households living in the TA at 31 March 2018
<b>Emergency</b>	5.6 Bed & Breakfast	Buchan	34	34	261	245	34
	5.6 Bed & Breakfast	Banff & Buchan	6	6	85	81	8
	5.6 Bed & Breakfast	Formartine & Garioch	4	4	26	28	6
	5.6 Bed & Breakfast	Kincardine Mearns & Marr	3	3	61	62	4
<b>Interim</b> - provided under the Homeless Persons (Provision of Non-permanent Accommodation) (Scotland) Regulations 2010 – accommodation provided that meets the need of section 4 of that SSI and before the LA has discharged its duty into settled accommodation.	5.5 Hostel - Other	Turning Point	10	8	8	8	8
	5.7 Women's refuge	Grampian Women's Aid, Banchory	5	0	2	2	0
	5.5 Foyer	Peterhead Inverurie, Fraserburgh Stonehaven	24	24	45	45	21
	5.4 Hostel – Local Authority Owned	King Street, Peterhead	6	5	16	16	4
<b>Temporary furnished flats</b> - Self-contained flats based in the community used as temporary homeless accommodation.	5.1 Local Authority Dwelling	Dispersed throughout Aberdeenshire	370	284	418	403	289
<b>Other</b>	5.3 Hostel – Local Authority Owned	Katteburn Court, Peterhead Stonefield Place, Inverurie	20	16	70	70	19
<b>Total</b>			<b>482</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>393</b>

## 6. Aberdeenshire Vision of Temporary Accommodation Supply

- 6.1 In Aberdeenshire we will work together to prevent homelessness where possible, where this has not been possible we will identify rapid, suitable and sustainable solutions with appropriate support to meet each individual's needs.
- In developing our Rapid Rehousing approach we recognise that there can be negative experiences and outcomes for homeless households in any form of temporary accommodation, and we will strive to offer a short term, high quality, suitable stop gap en-route to settled housing.
  - Given the rural nature of Aberdeenshire, there is a recognition that a longer stay in temporary accommodation may sometimes be appropriate to ensure the best outcome for individual households. Aberdeenshire comprises a large number of settlements ranging from hamlets, villages and towns across a huge geographical area. The majority of applicants wish to be in larger settlements for access to transport, education and health facilities, shops and employment opportunities. The turnover of housing stock is such that vacancies will arise which may meet housing need but the location is not desired or preferred. Rapidly rehousing a household into a property which isolates them and increases exclusion and financial inequality would not be in the interests of the household and would not be sustainable.
  - We will make use of a greatly reduced stock of dispersed temporary units and will consider developing mechanisms to convert temporary accommodation to mainstream secure tenancies.
  - Use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation will be for emergency use only and will be limited to 7 days in all cases.
  - We will review use of Katteburn Court, Peterhead and Stonefield Place, Inverurie recognising that this type of temporary accommodation provision is significantly more expensive than alternative dispersed temporary units. In doing so we will take account of proposed changes to the temporary accommodation funding regime and to any alternative provision required.
  - We will review the requirement for, and current provision of, Supported Accommodation.

## 7. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

- 7.1 We recognise the opportunity to trial and develop new ways of working, to share best practice and to work in meaningful partnership to provide rapid rehousing as our default response to a homeless situation where it cannot be avoided. We want to encourage best use of existing resources and achieve improved outcomes for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, however our response has to be informed by, and tailored to meet, the particular issues relating to Aberdeenshire. We will not be able to achieve rapid rehousing only by increasing lets to homeless households or by building new supply. We will renew our focus on preventing homelessness and address the challenge in providing access to our service and equality of opportunity across our rural Authority. We have to work with our customers to identify rapid rehousing solutions that are sustainable in the longer term and meet their needs and aspirations whilst recognising that we have limited resources, particularly in the location and types of accommodation required.



7.2 This plan will develop over the transition period however a number of actions have been identified and detailed in Appendix 1. These are summarised under these broader headings:

- **Prevention**
- **Access/Housing Supply**
- **Temporary Accommodation**
- **Support**

### 7.2.1 **Prevention**

In Aberdeenshire the structure of the Housing Options teams and the service offered has been developed in accordance with the Housing Options Guidance. We offer advice and information and work with customers to address their housing issues. The same officer can discuss housing options, take a homeless application if appropriate and is responsible for allocating available properties. Staff are well trained and there are established protocols in place concerning transitions from prison or from local authority care, and where fleeing domestic abuse. We have been working with RSL partners to develop effective arrangements around S11s, we have access to an in-house mediation service and staff have access to funds to respond quickly to prevent homelessness.

The rolling out of the Housing Options toolkit will enable us to implement further training opportunities with Options staff but also to involve other relevant staff and partners ensuring that there is greater access to appropriate information and effective signposting where necessary.

We will explore joint training opportunities with colleagues within Aberdeenshire Private Sector Housing team to share expertise and knowledge of the Private Residential Tenancy and the operation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Tier Tribunal.

We will have discussion with partners concerning the particular needs of young people within Aberdeenshire at risk of homelessness and establish a multi-agency group to consider the need for a Young Person Housing Action Plan. We will review access to in-house mediation and the outcome of referrals and consider provision of specialist mediation services to work with families and young people identified as at risk of becoming homeless. We will engage with Education colleagues to promote housing education within schools. We recognise the increased risk of homelessness particularly among young people who are care experienced, have mental or physical ill health or who identify as LGBTQI. There is a need to ensure that our service development is psychologically informed and is appropriate and inclusive with consideration to targeting specific prevention activities.

We will review the implementation of the Prison Discharge and Homeless Prevention Protocol and outcomes following the implementation of the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone Standards (SHORE), and identify interventions to enable tenancies to be maintained such as sub-letting.

We will work with Education colleagues in Community Learning and Development to develop service user engagement by developing `mini public` sessions to enable participation from those with lived experience and to inform the delivery of homeless services.

## 7.2.2 Access/Housing Supply

We recognise that we have an opportunity to make better use of our current resources and as a result we will carry out a review of the current void procedure. Within Aberdeenshire our current average time to relet is 44 days and we aim to reduce it significantly by reviewing the process. During workshops held to discuss Rapid Rehousing with housing staff there was agreement that there was a need to streamline the process, give clarity on roles and responsibilities, allow particular property to be prioritised and reduce the turnaround of properties that become available.

Since 2017, vacant properties that became available, and that were identified as requiring work to comply with Energy Efficiency Standards, but which were not suitable for external or cavity wall insulation have not been relet. While a satisfactory method of dealing with these property types was investigated and procured it was agreed that where appropriate these properties would be used as temporary accommodation. This has contributed to the overall provision of temporary accommodation within Aberdeenshire but the properties are not necessarily of a size or in locations that addressed our temporary accommodation requirements going forward. As these properties are brought up to standard and made available for relet there is an opportunity to significantly reduce the homeless backlog that we have. There will be a number of properties of varying sizes and dispersed across Aberdeenshire that could potentially be allocated to homeless households, freeing up temporary accommodation or used to create vacancies that could subsequently be offered to homeless households.

We will carry out a review of our Allocation Policy and have identified changes that could be considered that would assist with Rapid Rehousing. These include just in time allocations, more flexibility in the size of property that can be offered, creating vacancy chains and considering targets and quotas in relation to the proportion of allocations to those with homeless priority.

We will review nomination arrangements with our RSL partners to ensure allocation of minimum 50% lets to statutory homeless applicants including where there is a Choice Based Letting Scheme in place and we will increase use of Section 5 referrals as appropriate.

We want to make use of the opportunities within the Private Rented Sector and in the first year of the plan we will develop a platform allowing registered landlords to advertise their vacancies and potential tenants to search. We will review the use and effectiveness of our Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme and consider the characteristics of alternative Private Rented Sector Access schemes in any redesign of existing arrangements. We will discharge duty into the Private Rented Sector as appropriate. In Year three of the plan we propose to investigate the creation of a social lettings agency.

We will ensure that contact is maintained with homeless applicants, through effective case management, during temporary accommodation placements to ensure that there is ongoing discussion of housing options and consideration of any opportunities through changes to area or updating of household circumstances.

We will work with colleagues to deliver the affordable housing outlined within the SHIP and to inform the development of a greater number of one bed properties.

## 7.2.3 Temporary Accommodation

Shared temporary tenancies have been introduced to address our requirement for one bed temporary accommodation and to make best use of vacancies within two bed properties. This has been promoted as a good practice model by Crisis and is proving successful within Aberdeenshire as an effective alternative to Bed and Breakfast. We will increase provision as we continue to reduce use of B&B.

We have 2 shared tenancies specifically identified for use for liberated prisoners. We intend to review this model and inform further expansion.

We will review the current use of Katteburn Court, Peterhead and Stonefield Place, Inverurie recognising that this model of temporary accommodation with shared kitchen and living space may not meet future temporary accommodation standards and that it may not be sustainable if the funding model for temporary accommodation changes.

We will investigate the opportunities offered by Community Hosting Models to provide short term respite accommodation for young people. This could provide 'respite' for vulnerable young people while a longer term solution is found or allow the opportunity to work towards returning home provided it was safe and reasonable to do so. Community based solutions could be very useful within Aberdeenshire, potentially providing a local response and enabling a young person to remain within a specific area to maintain education for example. We will establish links with the existing supported lodgings scheme in Aberdeenshire to inform the process and identify whether there could be sharing of resources.

#### 7.2.4 **Support**

We wish to increase the capacity within our existing Housing First scheme, as initial outcomes have been positive. Currently we use a Housing First approach to address the needs of clients who have multiple or complex needs and who have been unable to sustain temporary accommodation. A full time Support Worker (Housing First) works exclusively with a reduced caseload to support individuals within temporary accommodation with the intention that they would be converted into permanent tenancies. The Support Worker links to, and works with, a range of partner agencies to identify the appropriate package of support. Early indications are that this rural Housing first model is proving effective with good outcomes for individuals and cost savings to partner agencies such as Scottish Prison Service.

Aberdeenshire is part of the Aberdeen City and Shire Housing First consortium which is in its initial stages. This Pathfinder project is led by Aberdeen Cyrenians working with partners which include Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen Foyer and Turning Point Scotland, with funding provided through the Corra Foundation. The Consortium aims to provide 60 Housing First Tenancies within Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire by March 2020 and a further 60 tenancies by March 2021. 20 properties in the first tranche will be ring fenced within Aberdeenshire. We are committed to this partnership and are working together with partners to develop and streamline referral processes and to identify suitable properties. All partners have agreed to participate in the evaluation that will be carried out by Heriot Watt University and Glasgow Housing Network.

The majority of homeless households within Aberdeenshire have low or no support needs but might require short interventions to assist with maintaining a tenancy or settling in a new one, particularly having experienced being made homeless. Low level housing support is provided on an outreach basis by Housing Officers (support) within the Housing and Options Teams. The service offered is free, tenure neutral and is available to assist with resolving housing issues, sustaining suitable accommodation and promoting independence and to improve wellbeing. It allows for short term assistance however if there is a need for longer term support the officer will assess and commission this. We will continue to monitor our Housing Support service and investigate ways to increase take up of support. Currently only 50% of those who are referred, engage with the service. We will review support outcomes from Castlehill, Langstane and Grampian Housing Associations who receive funding for tenancy sustainment projects.

The Homeless Service commissions an Outreach Housing Support service for individuals who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless in accordance with the housing support duty and as prescribed within the Housing Support Services (Homelessness) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The Salvation Army successfully bid and service commenced on 1 October 2018. The service provided is to enable clients to transition to independent living and promote tenancy sustainment. Support can be provided for a maximum of 2 years but is flexible and based on assessment of the needs of each individual client.

Shield Project Aberdeenshire – Community based project in conjunction with the Salvation Army and Aberdeenshire Council, providing a person-centred support service for homeless or potentially homeless people with substance misuse related problems.

Community Care grants can be required to enable households to obtain furniture or carpets. Delays in assessing these mean that temporary accommodation is occupied for longer than necessary. Funding of a post with the Social Welfare Fund Team to prioritise applications from households moving from temporary accommodation would enable fast tracking.

Given the rural nature of Aberdeenshire placement in available temporary accommodation may cause difficulty to clients in maintaining employment or accessing a particular service or support. Being able to provide assistance with travel costs would mitigate this.

## 8. Identifying support needs

- 8.1 Rapid rehousing requires a shift away from the language and culture of tenancy readiness by all housing providers. The majority of homeless households within Aberdeenshire have no/low support requirements and will easily move into mainstream settled housing with no need for specific support other than signposting and low-level housing management support. This is estimated at 88% based on existing data and correlates with the figure for tenancy sustainment by homeless households which is consistently between 85 -90% within Aberdeenshire.
- 8.2 An estimated further 8% of households would have medium support needs and require visiting support, or multi-professional wrap around support, while 4% of current homeless households have severe and multiple disadvantage or complex needs and would benefit from intensive wrap around support and a Housing First approach to rehousing. This aligns with identified provision through our existing Housing First approach and the proposed development of 20 tenancies through the Aberdeen City and `Shire Consortium Pathfinder project.

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