

Whole System Approach Fife

Turning Point Scotland and Fife Council

Learning Partner Inception Report

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1. Introduction and Context

1.1 Introduction

Turning Point Scotland (TPS) is working in partnership with Fife Council to develop a 'test of change' to develop a Whole System Approach to prevent homelessness and to support people to thrive in their own home.

TPS has commissioned Indigo House as a learning partner to support various aspects of the Whole System Approach (WSA) to enable learning from the work as it goes along, rather than waiting until an evaluation report is published at the end. The partners want to use the Fife experience to provide insights for other local authorities who wish to take a similar approach.

The WSA approach in Fife is being tested at the same time as 'No Wrong Door' Fife (NWD) which is in its early testing phase, the vision for which has strong parallels to WSA. Both are being tested in the Cowdenbeath area which includes - Cowdenbeath, Crossgates, Hill of Beath, Kelty, Lochgelly, Cardenden, Lochore, Crosshill, Ballingry, Coalgate.

This inception report sets out the start of the learning partner process to summarise our initial understanding of the WSA Fife approach, and to set out next steps:

- **Context** - sets out the broad context on homelessness in Scotland and Fife.
- **Definition of Whole System Approach Fife** – what does WSA in Fife mean, as defined by partners in Fife; we also draw on other public sector approaches and note the work of the national 'No Wrong Door' initiative led by Homeless Network Scotland.
- **'No Wrong Door' Fife** - describes the parallel work on 'No Wrong Door' Fife and considers the synergies with WSA Fife.
- **The WSA Fife Journey - from idea to inception and what's happening now** – setting out the journey so far, and what is happening on the ground now including how WSA Fife is governed.
- **Evaluation and Next Steps** – how will lessons be learned as we go along, and how is progress going to be tracked through regular learning cycles, with proposals on a revised evaluation framework.

This inception phase has been completed through a three-month period of familiarisation with the initiative – document review, data analysis, 1:1 consultation with all of the WSA steering group members, and with wider partners.

1.2 Homelessness in Scotland and Fife

Scotland overall is experiencing a worsening homelessness picture. The Scottish Government's latest Homelessness statistics¹ show for Scotland:

- Continued increases in all homelessness applications, households assessed as homeless, households and children living in temporary accommodation, and open applications.
- Continued increases in the incidence of rough sleeping.
- Increase in the number of adult homeless households, but a slight decrease in children in homelessness.
- Increased use of B&B, and increased time spent in temporary accommodation.

However, Fife shows a more nuanced picture with reducing applications but increases in the number of people, and length of time living in temporary accommodation:

- Application rates remained stable in the past year after a previous increase between 2021-22 and 2022-23 while the numbers assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness reduced by 6% to the levels in 2019-20.
- The numbers in temporary accommodation increased by 33% in Fife, compared with a 9% increase across Scotland, with numbers of children in temporary accommodation in Fife also increasing at a rate above the Scottish average.
- Rough sleeping increased at a lower rate recently in Fife (8%) compared with Scotland overall (28%) but this was after a year when it almost doubled from 65 to 120 cases.
- In Fife, the number of adults and children in homelessness reduced by 7% and 17% respectively – higher than across Scotland where adults in homelessness increased by 2% and children reduced by 7%
- Average time in temporary accommodation in Fife has increased to above the Scottish average. However, B&B use as at 31st March was down from 60 in 2022-23 to 40 in 2023-24, compared with an increase of over 50% across Scotland. (see tables in Appendix 1)

The latest Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Annual Report 2024² for Scotland overall points to the increasing pressure on homelessness services, with several local authorities declaring Housing Emergencies during 2023/24. Fife Council declared a Housing Emergency in March 2024³ with reasons cited for the emergency as: building being interrupted by the pandemic with adverse effects on the capacity of the construction industry; increased building material costs and difficulty acquiring land; the reduction in the affordable

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-update-to-30-september-2024/>

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-annual-report-scottish-parliament-november-2024/documents/>

³ <https://www.fife.gov.uk/news/2024/fife-council-declares-housing-emergency>

housing budget from the Scottish Government; increased pressure on homelessness services and temporary accommodation since Covid and the cost of living crisis with a lack of homes for people to move on to; the increased costs of buying or renting private property and many private landlords stopping letting homes due to the costs of maintaining them to appropriate standards.⁴

The Housing (Scotland) Bill (March 2024) placed a stronger importance on preventing homelessness by making the prevention of homelessness a shared public responsibility and to ensure that intervention starts as early as possible. The 'ask and act' duties on social landlords and other relevant bodies, such as Health Boards, Police Scotland and the Scottish Prison Service, require them to ask about a person's housing situation as early as they can, and act to avoid them becoming homeless wherever possible.

2. What is Whole System Approach Fife?

2.1 Whole System Approach Fife

Synthesis of opinion and observation with the Fife partners currently working through the Whole System Approach to Homelessness Prevention identifies the main drivers and defines the key elements of the approach:

- **Homelessness is complex** and cannot be solved by a single housing service approach; it needs a multi-disciplinary approach as many different public and community based services interact with a household during their homelessness experience/s.
- A whole system approach is one where the individual's needs are met and the **whole system follows the individual** involving a range of services and organisations; it shouldn't be up to the individual to have to navigate and follow different services and processes.
- There is an **integrated and coordinated approach to meet individual needs**, no matter where and how the person interacts with the system. **All services have a responsibility to collaborate and communicate** to better meet individual needs.
- Any change to the system needs a **collective learning approach**, stepping back from the day-to-day processes to understand the linkages and barriers in the system. This means working across services/organisations to reflect, learn and adapt to coordinate change.
- A whole system approach does not mean whole scale change to the whole homelessness system at one time. It means exploring **promising opportunities, starting small and building on these opportunities to influence the whole**, but it does need all relevant services and organisations to be involved.

⁴ <https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/housing/housing-emergency>

- Whole system change requires a **change in culture and attitudes** so that organisations and staff are continually looking at the needs of individual rather than a set process. **Change may be ongoing and iterative as staff are empowered** to identify areas for change.

Examples of what stakeholders understand as WSA means in practice:

“People are not sent here there and everywhere, not bouncing around different services”

“There is one person to connect to, through a case management role, holding onto that person all the way through”.

“It’s not about process, it’s about focusing on the person’s needs to solve them properly”.

“It’s about removing barriers, easier access to services, creating links with other services”.

One example of what whole system approach to service change in Fife involves:

A short life task and finish group on Out of Hours and Rough Sleeping has a remit to provide recommendations for a person centred out of hours service and to establish if there is rough sleeping in the Cowdenbeath area (or wider) and what changes could be introduced to reduce rough sleeping. The work involves identification of issues, action planning and recommendations final report to the WSA Steering Group. This involves 17 different staff from 14 organisations/teams including Fife Council Area Housing team, Safer Communities, Criminal Justice, Welfare Team, Customer Services, Social Work Out of Hours, Fife Council Temporary Accommodation, Turning Point Scotland, Police Scotland, The Clearing, ADAPT, Fife Alcohol and Drug Partnership, Mental Health lead from A&E and Fife Women’s Aid.

2.2 Other Whole System Approaches

By way of comparison, another example of a Whole System Approach being used in Scottish public services is Public Health Scotland’s approach⁵ which has adapted the FSB Systems Thinking Toolkit⁶. This suggests a similar philosophy to WSA Fife where it identifies the opportunities for collaboration and partnership to understand the issues and identify collective actions for change:

⁵ <https://publichealthscotland.scot/about-us/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/supporting-whole-system-approaches/applying-a-whole-system-approach/>

⁶ <https://www.fsg.org/blog/putting-systems-thinking-practice/>

“Adopting a whole system approach to Scotland’s Public Health Priorities is a long-term endeavour. It will require new partnerships between a broad-range of stakeholders to deliver better lives for the people of Scotland.”

It identifies 3 phases:

- Collectively form an understanding of the issue, context and wider system
- Create a plan for action collaboratively with a wide set of stakeholders. Actions should be aligned and jointly prioritised
- Learn and refine as you go by involving stakeholders and embedding monitoring and evaluation. Considering the "so what?" and "now what?"

The FSB toolkit provides a useful set of ‘principles of practice’ for working on complex systems which focus on context; connectives, patterns and perspective:

Characteristics of Complex Systems	Principles of Practice for Working on Complex Issues
CONTEXT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context matters; it can often make or break an initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay particular attention to contextual factors; seek to understand, describe, and/or respond to changes as they occur
CONNECTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships between entities are equally if not more important than the entities themselves Everything in a complex system is connected; events in one part of the system affect all or some of the other parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand, describe, respond to, and/or plan to influence the nature of relationships and interdependencies within the system Understand, describe, respond to, and/or plan to influence the whole system, including components and connections
PATTERNS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cause and effect is not a linear, predictable, or one-directional process; it is much more iterative Patterns emerge from several semi-independent and diverse agents who are free to act in autonomous ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand, describe, and/or respond to the non-linear and multi-directional relationships between an initiative and its intended and unintended outcomes Understand, describe, and/or respond to patterns (both one-off and repeating) at different levels of the system
PERSPECTIVES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A system cannot be fully understood from one perspective; complex problems cannot be solved by any one actor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triangulate multiple diverse perspectives (or “lenses”) in any research, planning, or reflection process Remain open to different ways of seeing and doing things

Source: <https://www.fsg.org/blog/putting-systems-thinking-practice/>

2.3 No Wrong Door Fife

The ‘No Wrong Door’ Fife (NWD) initiative has been researched and developed over the last 2 years through the Council’s 21st Century government transformation agenda. It is now being pilot tested in Cowdenbeath, alongside WSA Fife. There are strong synergies between the WSA Fife approach and NWD Fife, with WSA concentrating on homelessness prevention, whereas NWD covers all aspects of the Communities Directorate from a customer services perspective.

The NWD Fife approach is a prevention and wellbeing approach, to ensure engagement with citizens 'upstream' much earlier in the intervention journey with the aim of avoiding crisis.

Principles



Source: Fife Council

Fife Council's NWD principles outlined above emphasises the importance of easier access to services in the community, providing intervention upstream in a holistic way, problem solving 'sticky' services and putting individuals and families at the centre to get the right support at the right time. The expected outcomes are:

- Prevention of crisis
- Easier access to support, community based
- Building relations, social connections and mutual support
- Simpler systems, processes and data management
- Reducing demand for services, in particular crisis management.

The vision is to be able to resolve the problem for the individual, to look at the whole person no matter where they engage with the Council and its public sector partners. Key challenges in taking a NWD approach have been building the multi-disciplinary teams, and information and data sharing difficulties. In practical terms, the No Wrong Door concept currently being developed and tested may look like:

Frontline workers e.g. Welfare Assistant roles backed up with multi-disciplinary community teams, all with a strong problem-solving focus. The Welfare Assistants will be outreach/in the field, have proactive conversations with individuals and families. They will have the high levels skills, knowledge and tools to triage and diagnose the whole situation, including the ability to access a range of data relating to the individual or family. The Welfare Assistant is 'sticky', ensures warm handovers the whole range of relevant services and crucially will 'hold onto' the person/family across the different aspects of the system to ensure a holistic approach is taken, making sure that referrals actually work, to avoid crisis later. Referrals are to the full range of community services including employability and third sector services.

There are strong parallels in this approach to that of the Turning Point Scotland and Fife Council funded Fife Community Navigators whose role is to meet people experiencing / who have experienced homelessness and provide a sticky approach to help the individuals navigate service. One of the system challenges already identified and being tested in practice has been access to personal data across different organisations and services.

While a proactive case management and sticky approach is a key element, the use of dynamic information is also absolutely key to success in taking a multi-disciplinary approach. Examples of the opportunities and challenges to be overcome is illustrated below:

Illustration - An officer in Fife Council identifies five people who repeatedly ask for Scottish Welfare Fund – they have each applied around 10 times for SWFⁱ (please see endnotes). This information is an important flag and should raise the question 'what else is going on?'. These same 5 people may well also have multiple experiences of homelessness, issues with rent arrears, council tax arrears. In some cases, there may have been involvement with social work and/or criminal justice, and wider health and social care engagement. All of that information will be held on a myriad of Council/HSCP data systems; some data can be seen as read only, other data cannot be seen at all at initial service contact points. Ideally, to understand the whole picture, and to take a holistic and efficient no wrong door approach, there must be access to dynamic data. Then flags are quickly identified, and relevant conversations can be started with the individual across traditional service boundaries to help identify and solve problems and ultimately avert crisis. Work is ongoing on a data strategy to support NWD Fife.

It is noted that the original Business Case for NWD Fife included four different services including Employability. There were suggestions to include Health and Social Care, and Education, but it is also recognised that the concept needs to start somewhere, provide learning and then be built out to incorporate other services through an iterative process.

2.4 No Wrong Door Scotland

At the same time as Fife's WSA and NWD work, there is a national 'No Wrong Door' Scotland⁷ initiative led by Homeless Network Scotland. HNS is bringing national players together to understand what NWD could look like in practice. Similar to the Fife approach, the philosophy is around a journey of discovery through an action-based approach – starting, failing and learning as silo'd thinking is challenged and systems are reworked. It is acknowledged that while many people are using 'No Wrong Door' language, few people have clearly defined what it means. It is collating experience and learning lessons from four local projects, one of which includes WSA Fife. The other 3 local projects are – Aberdeen Foyer, Dundee Penumbra and Edinburgh Cyrenians.

It has identified five 'keys' to define what a better system may comprise – preventative, person centred, place based, co-ordinated, equality competent. The initiative is bringing people together through quarterly learning cycles on what is working, what is not working, what to challenge and change. By working with the local projects, in the different locations the aim is to help articulate what 'No Wrong Door' is, and help influence the discussion nationally. It is noted that in addition to shifting how services are delivered, there is also a requirement to shift how services are commissioned and how this drives services and behaviours i.e. to move away from commissioning through a single professional/service discipline; by taking the whole person approach that allows flexibility across different disciplines and services.

2.5 Summary

In summary, we can see strong similarities between the emerging Fife WSA and those of Fife 'No Wrong Door', and wider public sector approaches in Scotland and internationally. At the same time 'No Wrong Door' Scotland is developing its approach by learning from four local examples including Fife.

Key to all of these is the ability to 'step back', look at the system as a whole, and be willing to connect and take a collaborative approach to learning and make necessary changes as you go.

3. Whole System Approach Fife – the Journey So Far

3.1 From idea to inception

Turning Point Scotland (TPS) had the idea of taking a whole system approach to homelessness prevention and social care from its approach to Housing First which uses a system change approach. This concentrates on the individual, treats the system as a living organism, encouraging ongoing change through an iterative learning approach. In this way TPS wanted

⁷ <https://homelessnetwork.scot/no-wrong-door/>

to break down the silos in homelessness commissioning and service delivery – centred on the individual outcomes rather than established professional boundaries, processes and tasks.

The following sets out a broad timeline of the TPS/Fife experience. While presented broadly chronologically, none of the journey from idea to inception was linear, or one-directional.

- 2021-23 TPS Strategy included the challenge to find local authority (LA) partners to take a transformational whole system approach to homelessness prevention in partnership with TPS.
- 2021 - discussions between TPS and several LAs around whole system approach but which failed for various reasons
- 2022-2023 – Initial discussions, and agreement on a proposal to Fife Council on Housing First, combined with a wider Whole System Approach. The wider WSA element was co-funded between TPS and Fife Council.

The period between initial discussion in 2022 and agreement in 2023 involved an iterative process of relationship building, development of a common vision between TPS and Fife Council, understanding how the WSA may work, agreement on contract and evaluation approach, and governance processes within both TPS and Fife Council.

- March 2023 - The Fife Housing First service was opened and work started on WSA.
- 2023-2024 - TPS discussed and entered a joint venture with HNS on 'No Wrong Door' Scotland with National Learning Set starting in September 2024.
- 2023-2024 – A series of internal papers, meetings and governance processes to mobilise WSA. This required understanding the local corporate Fife context, fit with strategy and other initiatives, ensuring synergy and avoiding duplication (including NWD Fife).

From summer 2023 to September 2024 there were 2 different events and 2 surveys with internal and external stakeholders to introduce the WSA concept, talk through case studies to help think through linkages and connections between services/organisations, establish interest and garner support from stakeholders.

Understanding of lived experience was gathered through 2 in-person meetings with a small gathering of people experiencing homelessness followed up with a group of support workers to understand what they wanted to change.

Branding of WSA was discussed (but not completed yet).

- September 2024 – WSA Steering Group established membership, Terms of Reference and initial governance structure.
- October 2024 – First Task and Finish Group established.

- January 2025 – Lived experience event through HNS regarding an ongoing engagement process.

3.2 Reflections on Fife WSA so far

Reflections with Steering Group members shows the Fife experience is consistent with wider WSA evidence from elsewhere:

- The WSA experience is **iterative and fluid, and does not follow a straight line**. It has sometimes been stop-start including some lurches forward after what may seem like lulls in activity. This is due to the need to navigate different people/organisations, getting the right people on board and approvals at the right time. Different people and organisations will take different time to understand and buy-in.
- **Nurturing relationships** are key to connect with the right LA partners to drive forward the WSA who have the same **philosophy, vision and energy** around the concept. Initially this may rely on key individuals with enthusiasm to drive and get “hearts and minds” behind the concept. Developing relationships continues when working across the different stakeholder to understand and challenge the system as a whole.
- The **vision** needs to recognize the status quo isn’t working, backed with a LA culture and risk profile around doing transformational work, the exact process and final outcomes of which are unknown.
- This **challenges commissioning** approaches - it will not be through a traditional task and output/performance indicators approach. It’s about commissioning an ‘approach’ to achieve outcomes across different services and organisations.
- WSA is about ‘**making a start somewhere**’ through tests of change and gradually pushing out from there to change attitudes and cultures as you learn collectively.
- The culture needs to empower staff at all levels to be ‘**system stewards**’ - to whistleblow on the system if it is not looking after the individual.
- There needs to be an individual driver or project manager that **co-ordinates** the WSA tests of change.
- There are some concerns about a few **key stakeholders being missing**, and work will have to continue to address these gaps if the WSA is to be fully effective.

3.3 What is happening in practice?

The WSA is governed by a Steering Group currently including TPS, a range of representatives from Fife Council and Homeless Network Scotland. It is overseeing a range of activity, or tests of change through the WSA. These are:

- **Out of Hours and Rough Sleeping Task and Finish Group** – comprising 17 different staff from 4 organisations/teams who are working through understanding this system, developing actions and will provide a final recommendations report to the Steering Group in the summer. The group meets monthly. In due course this approach may be taken for other reviews e.g. Homelessness Case Management, and separately, Support.
- **Community navigators** – two navigators recruited through TPS are working in the field through proactive outreach, meeting individual people experiencing homelessness, helping them navigate the system, collecting data and making note of challenges in the system as they go along to report to the steering group.
- **Temporary accommodation review** – this is a separate review and it is intended that WSA will influence this review by taking a whole system approach
- **‘No Wrong Door’ Fife** – this is a separate Fife Council initiative, with one of the WSA Steering Group members being the NWD Fife senior management lead which should help ensure synergy and learning across the two initiatives.

Learning from all these projects will be brought together through regular quarterly learning cycles with the Steering Group and other key stakeholders.

3.4 Identifying where to start with whole systems work

Fife WSA drew on the feedback from stakeholders and lived experience to decide where to start testing a whole system approach. Lived experience feedback noted challenges with the Out of Hours service, and there was also feedback that there was rough sleeping being experienced in Cowdenbeath when it was previously considered to be non-existent. Those with lived experience also highlighted the poor experience and condition of temporary accommodation.

All steering group members confirmed they have been happy to take this approach in deciding where to start with the WSA, noting that you ‘have to start somewhere’, and that it’s important to ensure people experiencing homelessness are heard, and that they can see progress with change in services. The Community Navigators will also be collecting data through a survey, and through their work with people on the ground to provide more intelligence on where WSA activity could be focused.

Indigo House’s observation is that there could be a hybrid approach by combining evidence on:

- Lived experience
- Case study data for people that have recently experienced homelessness
- LA’s homelessness statistics.

Taking all this evidence together we see a pattern of experience in Cowdenbeath which shows higher incidence of homelessness as a result of violent relationship breakdown, and case studies show common experience of homelessness where rent arrears or household financial distress is experienced. This may provide pointers for future areas of WSA focus (Appendix 2).

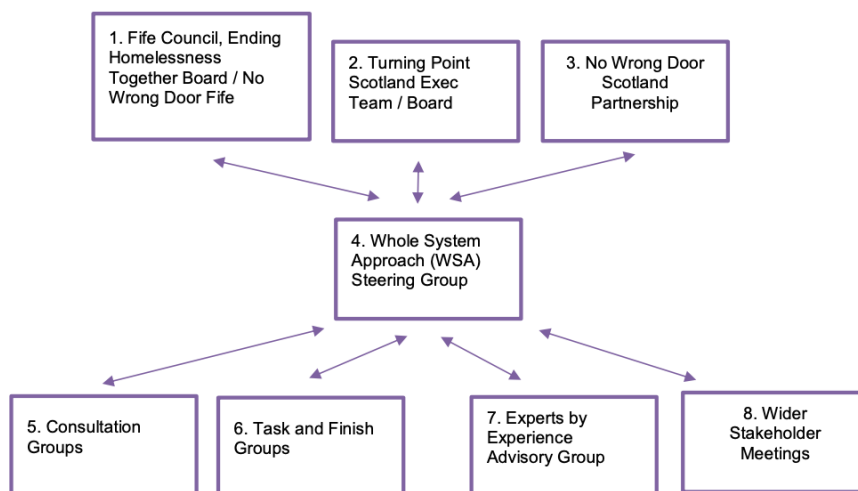
3.5 Governance structure and relationship with national initiatives

WSA Fife's work is overseen by its own senior office Steering Group which in turn reports into three different over-arching governing structures/Boards

- Fife Council's Ending Homelessness Together Board (the homelessness strategy)
- TPS Board
- Homeless Network Scotland in relation to the national No Wrong Door approach.

The 'No Wrong Door' Fife initiative does not currently have an associated governance structure and is being overseen by senior officer implementation group.

Through the work of the learning partner, the effectiveness of governance structure will be considered on an ongoing basis.



4. Evaluation Framework and Next Steps

Taking into consideration all the understanding at inception phase, Indigo House has proposed a revised evaluation framework to clarify the overall aim and impact, with a set of three aims. Each of these aims then have a series of measures (need, activities, outcomes and indicators) which will be used track progress over time and to assess what difference the WSA is making.

The next step will be to start populating the framework with data, and to use this through the quarterly learning cycles to reflect, and to see the extent to which there is:

- collective understanding of each issue
- collaborative action planning across stakeholders
- joint learning and refinement on an ongoing basis to answer the "so what?" and "now what?" questions.

Whole System Approach to Housing Stability & Thriving in your Home

Our Aim - Ensure people in Cowdenbeath at risk of or experiencing Homelessness, and people who need help to strengthen their housing stability get the right support, at the right time through a co-ordinated system response.

IMPACT: Reduced homeless presentations

AIM 1: Provide earlier interventions for people to prevent housing crisis and homelessness happening the first place

Need	Inputs/activities	Outcomes	Indicator/target	Data source
<p>Housing Options data shows violent and abusive relationships and impending eviction as of particular importance at the pre-homeless stage.</p> <p>Case studies highlight the need for early help to prevent rent arrears from becoming unmanageable. These also indicate that vulnerable customers avoid seeking help until at a point of crisis.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback – need for early intervention – education, better use of data e.g to act on arrears quickly,</p>	<p>Task & Finish Groups</p> <p>Community Navigators – upstream interventions/sticky approach</p> <p>Influencing other reviews e.g. NWD</p>	<p>Support gained from a minimum of 3 key services who have clarity on their role in preventing crisis on a day-to-day basis – understand what ‘ask and act’ means for their part of the system</p> <p>People experience a more collaborative / co-ordinated support from the system</p> <p>Improved information on level/drivers/triggers of housing crisis.</p>	<p>People are engaged in other partner agencies before stepping back.</p> <p>Number and variety of interventions / referrals we are making increased.</p> <p>Indicators of effective early intervention – (reduced repeats/lost contacts, improved tenancy sustainment, OOH, case management data, housing support data)</p>	<p>Community Navigators confirmation/follow-up contacts logged (TPS)</p> <p>Community Navigators Data Capture Form (TPS)</p> <p>Reduced repeats (HL1)</p> <p>Lost contacts (HL1)</p> <p>Tenancy sustainment (CX system)</p> <p>OOH use – call centre (would need bespoke data capture)</p> <p>Prevent1 reasons</p>

right benefits/income maximisation, correct/consistent advice, starting discussions,		Upstream interventions effectively target vulnerable groups.	<p>Data sharing/monitoring approach designed/developed</p> <p>Interventions/new practices perceived to be effective</p> <p>Number of recommendations of T&F groups taken forward</p> <p>Number of recommendations of T&F groups not taken forward and reasons why</p>	<p>Narrative update on progress. CNs have basic access to enable referrals at present</p> <p>Learning cycle feedback on changes arising from T&F groups</p> <p>Action tracker for T&F groups plus narrative of reasons why actions have not progressed.</p>
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AIM 2: When people experience homelessness, there are co-ordinated services that are easy to access, with the right support at the right time, while making best use of resources available

Need	Inputs/activities	Outcomes	Indicator/target	Data source
<p>Lived experience and stakeholder views on the main gaps/needs:</p> <p>Better connections between organisations</p> <p>Better support</p> <p>Reduce rigid rules and processes</p> <p>Person centred services</p>	<p>Task & Finish Groups</p> <p>Community Navigators – sticky approach</p> <p>Influencing other reviews e.g. NWD and referral process, temporary accommodation, Household Support Review, single shared assessment, FVA service database.</p> <p>Communicate to all stakeholders through agreed channels regarding Task and Finish Groups, experts by Experience, Evaluation Framework.</p>	<p>People will see positive change happening to services and to the system</p> <p>The community and agencies know where to go for support and how to access service database</p> <p>People will be assisted at the first point of contact and supported to access the right part of the system to meet their needs.</p> <p>People will only have to tell their story once to get the support they need and limit trauma.</p> <p>People are engaged in other partner agencies before stepping back.</p>	<p>Improved perceptions of the system through our communication or on a day-to-day basis.</p> <p>Assess stakeholders' views through a survey every 6 months</p> <p>Perceptions of relevant services and referral processes.</p> <p>Positive impact/influence on other reviews</p> <p>Number and variety of interventions / referrals we are making increases.</p>	<p>Learning cycle participants – survey of c.170 wider stakeholder group</p> <p>As above</p> <p>As above plus Knowledge Hub annual survey</p> <p>Narrative indicator of impact on progress of other reviews</p> <p>Community Navigators Data Capture Form (TPS)</p>

AIM 3: System change is taking place and evidence is showing progress towards a WSA

Need	Inputs/activities	Outcomes	Indicator/target	Data source
<p>Lived experience and stakeholder views on the main gaps/needs for a WSA:</p> <p>Better connections between organisations</p> <p>Better support</p> <p>Early intervention</p> <p>Reduce rigid rules and processes</p> <p>Person centred services</p>	<p>Task & Finish Groups</p> <p>Community Navigators – upstream interventions/sticky approach</p> <p>Influencing other reviews e.g. NWD and referral process, temporary accommodation, Household Support Review, single shared assessment, FVA service database.</p> <p>Exploration and set up of an expert by experience group to act as a regular sounding board feeding into the learning loops.</p> <p>People with lived experience involved / consulted as required.</p>	<p>Policy and practice is informed by the needs of those with lived experience and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Actions are taken forward and implemented from the task and finish groups and improve policy and practice.</p> <p>greed approach to assessing qualitative and quantitative (if relevant including resources) impact developed and implemented.</p>	<p>Feedback from lived / living experience from Homelessness Client Satisfaction Survey shows improvement compared to previous years.</p> <p>Number of recommendations of T&F groups taken forward</p> <p>Number of recommendations of T&F groups not taken forward and reasons why</p> <p>Evidence that learning loops established have influenced policy/practice</p> <p>Evidence that lived experience group established has influenced policy/practice</p>	<p>Knowledge Hub Surveys (annual)</p> <p>Community Navigator case studies</p> <p>Action tracker for T&F groups plus narrative of reasons why actions have not progressed</p> <p>‘You said/we did’ format for learning cycles to track recommendations v actions</p> <p>‘You said/we did’ format for learning cycles to track recommendations v actions. Community navigator case studies.</p>

	Wider stakeholders will be involved / consulted as required.		Monitoring and evaluation framework in place and updated quarterly. Consider options and assess impact of changes made, positive and negative. Evidence how feedback is being used.	<p>Narrative of how M&E results have fed back into learning cycles.</p> <p>Also record how M&E is being used to develop/inform the work of CNs and T&F groups.</p>
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Appendix 1 – Homelessness statistics

Source: Scottish Government Homelessness Statistics:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-update-to-30-september-2024/>

Homelessness applications

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Change 22-23 to 23-24 %
Scotland	37,061	34,367	35,792	39,308	40,685	4%
Fife	2,626	2,550	2,529	2,739	2,733	0%

Applications assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Change 22-23 to 23-24 %
Scotland	31,620	28,120	29,387	32,531	33,619	3%
Fife	2,152	2,045	2,065	2,306	2,157	-6%

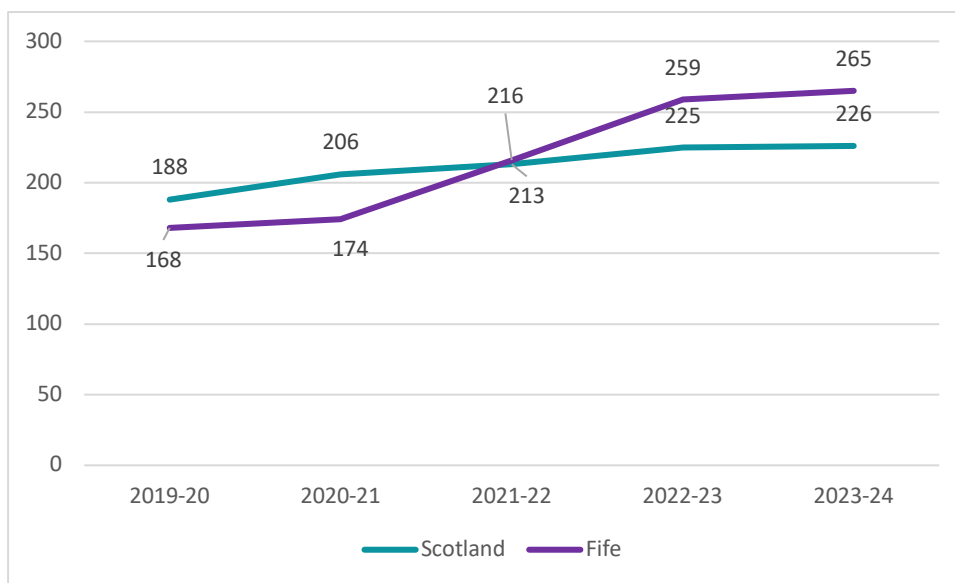
Households in temporary accommodation as at 31 March

All households	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Change 22-23 to 23-24 %
Scotland	11,807	13,753	14,214	15,039	16,330	9%
Fife	525	708	787	807	1,071	33%
Children	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Change 22-23 to 23-24 %
Scotland	7,355	7,575	8,805	9,595	10,110	5%
Fife	270	315	390	410	460	12%

Applications where at least one member of the household experienced rough sleeping the night before their application

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Change 22-23 to 23-24 %
Scotland	1,660	1,485	1,305	1,495	1,915	28%
Fife	85	80	65	120	130	8%

Average total time (days) spent in temporary accommodation for cases that closed



Appendix 2: Identifying drivers of homelessness/needs

This Annex pulls together data from homelessness statistics, stakeholder events and insights from those with lived experience, as well as case studies from casefiles.

Homelessness and Housing Options data

The 2023-24 homelessness statistics for Cowdenbeath and Fife show that the most common reasons for homelessness presentations were as follows:

- Dispute or relationship breakdown (non-violent) – 32% of Cowdenbeath and 29% of Fife applications
- Being 'Asked to leave' – 21% of Cowdenbeath and Fife applications
- A violent or abusive dispute – 12% of Cowdenbeath and Fife applications

Termination of tenancy/mortgage due to rent arrears/default on payment only accounted for just 1% of applications in Cowdenbeath and 2% in Fife overall. Other actions by the landlord accounted for 2% of Cowdenbeath applications and 4% across Fife.

Fife Council also has a higher percentage of homeless applicants (8%) with whom contact is lost before the assessment decision compared to the Scottish average of 4%.

Housing Options (Prevent1) data for Cowdenbeath and Fife Quarter 2, 2024/25) shows a slightly different picture:

- 13 of 32 Prevent1 cases in Cowdenbeath were due to violent or abusive relationship breakdown (41%) compared to 26% of Fife cases over the same period.
- 11 of 32 cases were where there was a risk of eviction (34%) compared with 26% across Fife.

Case studies

Case studies collected from housing management data identified evidence that people may avoid seeking help until a point of crisis – with evidence of alcohol dependency, high levels of debt/rent arrears and abandonment.

The case studies show examples of people evicted due to rent arrears in excess of £5K (in LA accommodation) then being provided with temporary accommodation and also an example of an ex-offender moving from prison to a hotel (though more recently accessing temporary accommodation).

This highlights the need to address rent arrears at an earlier stage and address the support needs of vulnerable residents. 'Upstream' activities need to target vulnerable people but also housing staff, RSLs and private landlords to help avoid very high levels of arrears building up.

Views of those with lived experience and other stakeholders

A number of priority areas were identified at the WSA stakeholder event:

Better connections – flexible, best use of resources, know your networks, joined up, multi-disciplinary teams, easy communication/plain language, referral pathways, building relationships, collaborative working, awareness of services/resources available – need for a directory.

Better support – Wrap around, wider support, maintain contact, fit for purpose, support rather than following processes, case management to prevent repeat homelessness, trained staff, sticky support, understanding of barriers people face, listen, reduce time in temp accommodation

Early intervention – education, better use of data e.g to act on arrears quickly, right benefits/income maximisation, correct/consistent advice, starting discussions,

Reduce Rigid rules & processes – inflexibility, GDPR, systems getting in the way

Person centred – trauma informed, those with user experience involved, good conversations

There are also five **Priority Pathway Groups** that the Ending Homelessness Together Programme Board agreed should not be assessed as homeless and their pathway should be planned to prevent homelessness. Below are the numbers assessed as homeless in 2022/23 within these groups:

- Care Experienced Young People (124 applications)
- Hospital Discharge (16 applications)
- Prison Release (140 applicants)
- Armed Forces/Veterans (105 applicants, 90 assessed as homeless/threatened)
- Those suffering or in fear of domestic abuse (379 applications) .

It is noted that although those suffering or in fear of domestic abuse have been identified as having a planned pathway to prevent homelessness and should not be assessed as homeless, they still made up 12% of applications in 2023-2024. If these pathways are working effectively, we would expect to see a reduction in applications from these groups in future.

Task and finish groups/wider reviews

Based on the feedback from the stakeholders and lived experience group, the task and finish groups to drive future activities towards a WSA were identified as follows:

1. Out of hours service/rough sleeping
2. Temporary accommodation
3. Case management
4. Support.

It is noted that many of the priorities identified by stakeholders/those with lived experience relate to case management and support. This is also true in the case of the case studies, which identified the need for early support/outreach to target vulnerable people who may not be inclined to approach services until a point of crisis.

This strand of work may be being developed through the cross-cutting work of the Community Navigators, to provide upstream interventions. Outcome measures around the effectiveness of these interventions are needed – not just the number/variety of referrals. This may need further work as the activities/inputs of the Community Navigators become clearer.

ⁱ Note on Scottish Welfare Fund - It is widely recognised that the culture of applying for a Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) Crisis Grant has shifted from its original aim to provide a safety net for those experiencing a one-off crisis to a more regular payment. There are many repeat applications to Fife's SWF. The main reason for a Crisis Grant application is 'benefit spent' people tend to lean on the fund to top up their regular income. Moving forward, our assumption is that the Council cannot continue to top up the SWF at current levels. Instead, the feeling is that a different approach is required to change the cycle with more meaningful interventions. Fife's Scottish Welfare Fund team will adopt a different strategy for 2025/26 by making an offer of extra support to those who have made a 3rd or 4th application in a rolling year. This will form part of the 'No Wrong Door' project with the aim to provide more wrap around support as required. This could lead to greater pressure on local teams to provide support. Should SWF demand continue at current volumes, there may be value in establishing a hardship fund by way of contingency.