

Discussion Paper: What is housing support?

What is housing support?

With photos and narratives from the 2021 and 2022 No Place Like Home Photography Competitions

The fundamental aim of housing support is to enable people to live at home as independently as possible by maintaining and developing their life skills and social networks. Housing support often helps to prevent crisis situations but in some cases, it will be supporting a person after a crisis or through a period of transition. There is not a single model of housing support. Different housing support services are likely to be designed to target different outcomes, with distinct funding arrangements. However, a common goal among providers of housing support is to identify solutions for people that support independence. People can use housing support to retain a sense of choice and control. Another common characteristic that defines housing support is its preventative aims. By providing support that is responsive to people's individual needs, housing support can help avoid escalation and reduce demands on statutory services.



"From ages 12 to 20 I lived in foster placements and a children's residential home, but none of those placements felt like a home. I had to ask if I could have something to eat, what food was for me, can someone unlock the cupboards so I could get something to eat. Now 2 years on I'm living in my flat where there's no need to ask those questions, and sometimes when I open the cupboard I get a sense I might have finally found a home."

Gemma Ferrie, supported by Falkirk Council

People may use housing support in different settings to help with a variety of issues, including help to access health services, social care services, and specialist services such as mental health services. Housing support is used by people to achieve their own goals and become involved in activities that lead to positive outcomes including reduced social isolation, better mental health, and improved self-esteem.

As part of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, twenty-one tasks were outlined as prescribed housing support services which covered support such as advising with personal budgeting, arranging adaptations, and assisting with security and maintenance of accommodation.¹ These support tasks, were those deemed eligible for funding from the local authority with the purpose of allowing people to remain living independently. Housing support today is no longer constrained to these twenty-one tasks although they may still be included as part of a service.



'During the lockdown I spent a lot of my time in my flat with my support worker. I undertook Open university courses and built a robotic arm and working on printing a skull with a 3d printer as seen in the photos of the ear and arm. I will now have my first ever qualification as I will graduate at the end of this year with a diploma of higher education.'

Shaun Cullen, supported by Community Lifestyles

Housing support can assist people who are facing homelessness; people experiencing addictions; older people; people with mental health problems; disabled people; women facing domestic abuse and people with a learning disability. While housing support is often delivered through the social rented sector, it is available to people living across all tenures (social renting; private renting; owner occupied). Housing support can also be accommodation based as in the case of sheltered housing or very sheltered housing for older people; women's refuges; supported housing for young people; supported housing for people with learning disabilities; as well as supported housing for people facing homelessness. Regardless of the provider or tenure type of those being supported, housing support services are regulated by the Care Inspectorate using the Health and Social Care Standards.²

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2002/444/schedule/made>

² <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/national-policy-and-legislation/health-and-social-care-standards/>
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'Throughout my life, I have always had the support of caring and loving individuals. Now living independently, I am happy cohabitating with my support staff and live each day happy.'

Claire Dempsey, supported by Blackwood Homes and Care



Housing support services may be designed for particular groups of people and types of need, but often target more than one outcome. People using housing support may have complex or overlapping needs and require support in accessing multiple services. This poses challenges because of the complex funding arrangements that often underpin housing support services. Most housing support is commissioned through Health and Social Care Partnerships or Local Authorities and can involve commissioners from housing, homelessness, social work as well as mental health and addictions. Supported people may also purchase housing support services themselves using self-directed support payments. Funding has come under increasing pressure after the ringfenced Supporting People programme ended in 2008.



'My photographic poster collage entails my story from when I first entered the accommodation to during my stay and after. It includes all the positive skills and personal goals I have achieved with the support of the accommodation staff and my lovely key worker, Nicola. I have included photos and collage pieces of all the services I have used, demonstrating how I have become more confident and independent in myself. The poster is significant as I will never forget my journey at the temporary accommodation and the service is amazing if you take hold of it. My self esteem has improved so much through the photographic experiences on my poster. The temporary accommodation has literally been my home to positively develop from.'

Emma Murphy, supported by DGHP

The Housing Support Enabling Unit is eager to engage with providers and commissioners of housing support about different understandings and examples of housing support services and further develop this discussion paper. To engage with this work, please contact the unit at hs.unit@ccpscotland.org.

About the HSEU

The aim of the Unit is to offer support and assistance to providers of housing support and supported housing across the voluntary sector, the private sector and to Registered Social Landlords. You can find out more about the work of the Unit on our website.

The HSEU is a partnership initiative between Coalition of Care and Support Providers Scotland (CCPS) and Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) and funded by the Scottish Government.



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