

January 2023

HSEU and the year ahead

The Housing Support Enabling Unit would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year. We appreciate the continued pressures faced by providers of housing support and supported housing and understand the importance of increasing sustainability in the sector through 2023.

The Unit is planning its work for the year ahead. This includes continuing to offer support and assistance to providers of housing support in the changing policy landscape. The Unit will also aim to raise the profile of housing support more generally, particularly the cost benefits associated with quality housing support. In addition, the Unit will take part in a national working group looking at the role of supported housing in homelessness, particularly in situations where a person faces complex needs and a mainstream tenancy with support is not considered to be the best option.

Inspection and Regulation

Changes to Care Inspectorate Annual Return Dates

Following discussions between the Care Inspectorate, CCPS, and Scottish Care on the current pressures faced by providers, there has been confirmation that Annual Returns will be open between 9 January and 19 March 2023. All services registered before 1 October 2022 must complete an annual return. Annual returns are accessed through the Care Inspectorate's eForms system [available here](#).

The Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation: Key Issues for Providers of Housing Support and Supported Housing

The Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation (IRISR) launched in October 2022 and will deliver an independent report in June 2023. The IRISR is looking at how social care services are regulated and inspected across social care and support services in Scotland.

At the end of October 2022, a call for evidence was launched with 17 consultation questions under five themes. HSEU contributed to the [CCPS response which can be](#)

[accessed in full here](#). The Unit reflected on the most pressing topics for providers of housing support and supported housing, including the complexities of services that may sit outside of Care Inspectorate registration or not fit clearly within a registration category.

The CCPS consultation response focussed on the importance of person-centred and relationship-based inspection, scrutiny, and regulation. This includes meaningful, ongoing engagement between inspection officers and supported people and their families.

The consultation also asked whether there were any services that should be subject to inspection, scrutiny and regulation that currently aren't. CCPS responded that there were no additional services that required scrutiny. However, the response acknowledged the importance and contribution of services that may sit outside of registration requirements and their interaction with registered services. For example, registered supported living services may connect the people they support with non-regulated services such as financial advice; befriending; tenancy sustainment; homeless streetwork; mentoring; mediation services.

Another relevant topic covered in the CCPS consultation response is registration categories. The registration categories have not been updated since the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010. The Unit wanted to acknowledge the difficulties faced by housing support services who may not fit neatly into the current registration categories.

The CCPS response advocated for inspection and scrutiny that is focused on personal outcomes and service improvement, rather than process and compliance. This theme linked to concern about proposals within the National Care Service (NCS) that the NCS would take on the role of improvement leaving the Care Inspectorate's role as one of strict scrutiny and enforcement.

Government

Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020

New legislation is being introduced to improve the disclosure system in Scotland. [The Disclosure \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#) focuses on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, while ensuring people with convictions can move on and contribute to society.

Disclosure Scotland asks that all organisations ensure their information is up to date, to ensure that only those who are required to be in the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme remain in the scheme and receive important updates. You can [notify Disclosure Scotland](#) when a PVG member stops doing regulated work to ensure users are compliant with data protection legislation.

Some key changes the Act will introduce are:

- individuals can request a review of certain disclosure content from an independent reviewer.
- those with childhood convictions eligible for review can explain the context of their previous behaviour before any disclosure to a third party.
- the PVG Scheme will become mandatory for those carrying out regulated roles with children and protected adults.
- the lifetime PVG scheme membership will end and be replaced with a five-year membership.
- the number of disclosure levels will be reduced.

New Energy Bill Discount Scheme for Non-domestic Consumers

The UK government has announced changing support for businesses with energy bills after March of this year. Instead of costs being capped as under the current Energy Bills Relief Scheme, the new scheme brings discounts on wholesale prices. The Energy Bills Relief Scheme for public sector organisations, voluntary sector organisations, and business consumers was initially introduced in October 2022 to run until March 2023 providing a discount on wholesale gas and electricity prices. The Energy Bills Relief Scheme was designed as a temporary measure to protect non-domestic consumers from the soaring energy costs.

The new [Energy Bill Discount Scheme](#) will run from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. It will be applied automatically to the bills of eligible non-domestic customers who have a contract with a licenced energy supplier unless they are already experiencing energy costs below the threshold of £107/MWh for gas and £302/MWh for electricity. Organisations will see a unit discount of up to £6.97/MWh applied to their gas bill and a unit discount of up to £19.61 MWh applied to their electricity bill. This is likely to translate to less generous support than the previous scheme.

The government is still developing support to help domestic consumers on a non-domestic meter such as those in park homes and heat networks. This is particularly relevant for providers of supported or sheltered housing who offer 'heat with rent

schemes'. The Unit will share any future developments about available support for these consumers.

Events

SFHA and Housing LIN Right to Adequate Housing Event

On Tuesday 14 February from 16:00 to 17:30, the SFHA is running a webinar in partnership with the Housing LIN (Learning and Improvement Network) to consider what the 'right to adequate housing' means for people with complex care and support needs.

The 'right to adequate housing' is recognised in international human rights law, with the right to an adequate home a key point in the Scottish Government's Housing to 2040 strategy. This webinar will provide an opportunity to:

- hear about the progress of the implementation of the 'Coming Home' Report.
- share good practice in one example of a partnership approach in Moray which delivers a Housing, Care and Support solution in the community for people with complex needs.
- hear about the impact of success and lessons learned from someone with lived experience.

More information and booking is available on the [SFHA website](#).

Cyber Scotland Week: Public and Third Sector Roadshow

Through February and March, the Scottish Business Resilience Centre are delivering a series of events for Public and Third sector organisations across Scotland. These events will focus on discussing key cyber security topics for organisations and charities in 2023. Everything discussed will tie in with additional resources available and will help you fully utilise these within your own organisation or charity. Each roadshow event is in person with networking opportunities for people working within the public and third sector with an interest in cyber security. Find out more and book at the [Cyber Scotland Week website](#).

Better Futures

DigiFest22

The HSEU's housing support outcomes monitoring system, Better Futures, featured prominently in DigiFest22, which ran from mid-October to mid-December.

DigiFest22 consisted of a broad range of virtual satellite sessions and a live-streamed in-person conference attended by over 300 people at the University of Strathclyde, with Better Futures included in both programmes. The event showcased work from around the world focusing on research and service development in digital health and care, and facilitated information sharing and knowledge exchange. At the conference, Better Futures featured in a session examining digital innovation in social care and ways in which third sector care and support providers are leading the way. It was also a key part of the virtual satellite programme, which saw Simon Community Scotland shine a spotlight on its role in using digital technologies to tackle homelessness, and a recording of this satellite session (and many more!) is viewable online at [DigiFest 2022 | TEC Scotland](#).

Annual Event

The November eForum provided an overview of the individual sessions that collectively made up the Better Futures 2022 annual event. The annual event resources sheet is now available [online](#), and includes presentation slides and video recordings of each session.