

HSEU strategy briefing on recent Scottish Government publications

August 2025

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Introduction

The Scottish Government published three interconnected high-level strategy and framework documents for health and care – thereby including housing support – in June 2025.

These were:

- [Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework](#)
- [Scotland's Population Health Framework](#)
- [Scotland's Public Service Reform Strategy: Delivering for Scotland](#)

This summary outlines the Housing Support Enabling Unit's briefing on the key messages within these documents, and what these could mean for Scottish housing support providers now and in future.

Our key takeaway is that existing housing support services can serve as exemplars for the health and social care improvements the Scottish Government seeks. Ironically, however, despite housing support's virtues, these strengths can make it less visible and more vulnerable in financially straitened times.

The Housing Support Enabling Unit therefore calls on the Scottish Government to more explicitly recognise the unique value and contribution of housing support to delivering some of Scotland's very best health and care services. We make the case for Scottish Government investment in 'trying, testing and learning' through focus on housing support services, and thereby offering scope to better help the people of Scotland live well, be healthier and feel more fulfilled.

Overview of the Scottish Government strategy and frameworks

In summary, the strategy and framework documents emphasise similar and complementary themes and priorities, including prevention; local, community and individually focused services; digital development; integration and efficiency; and holistic application of principles.

Scotland's Public Service Reform Strategy: Delivering for Scotland

This strategy is aimed at making public services more preventative, joined-up and efficient to better serve the needs of people in Scotland.

Key aspects and priorities include:

- Focus on prevention: Investing in prevention to reduce long-term demand on services and address root causes of challenges like poverty, smoking, and obesity.

- **Joined-up services:** Promoting collaboration and partnership working across public bodies, local government, the third sector and communities to ensure services are integrated and meet local needs.
- **Efficiency:** Streamlining processes, reducing duplication, and rationalising public sector assets.
- **Digital transformation:** Embracing automation and accelerating the digitisation of government services to improve accessibility and efficiency, including initiatives like the NHS digital front door and secure mailbox service.
- **Workforce reform:** Focusing on workforce management, planning guidance and leadership capability to ensure the workforce is equipped to deliver on reform goals.
- **Leadership and cultural change:** Fostering trust, collaboration, and long-term strategic planning across sectors.
- **Reducing public bodies and rationalising estates:** Initiatives include reviewing the public service delivery landscape and commencing a single Scottish estate programme to manage public property more efficiently.

The strategy sets out over 80 key actions, with a public service reform board driving and overseeing the work. A stated ambition is to build a culture where ‘trying, testing and learning is the engine for improvement’.

Health and Social Care Renewal Framework

This framework sets a long-term strategic vision for transforming health and social care in Scotland by 2035 so people live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives. It is based on five core principles designed to guide the planning, decision-making and delivery of health and social care services:

- **Prevention:** Shifting the focus towards preventing illness and promoting wellbeing across all stages of life, including addressing the social determinants of health and wellbeing. This involves primary prevention (stopping problems before they start), secondary prevention (early detection and intervention) and tertiary prevention (managing existing conditions and situations).
- **People:** Designing care around the individual, empowering them to take charge of their health and care, and to make informed decisions about their treatment and support.
- **Community:** Providing more care and support closer to people's homes and within their communities, reducing reliance on hospital-based care.
- **Population:** Basing service planning on evidence-based assessments of population needs across Scotland, at national, sub-national, and local levels, rather than purely geographical boundaries.
- **Digital:** Utilising technology and innovation to improve access to services, empower individuals to manage their health and care, and enhance the efficiency and quality of care delivery.

The document contends several key areas of change are required to make these principles reality:

- Enhancing preventative services: Including improving early detection and management of long-term conditions and promoting healthy living.
- Delivering people-led and value-based health and social care: Providing services around the individual's needs and values, fostering shared decision-making and ensuring resources are utilised effectively to deliver outcomes that matter most to people.
- Strengthening integration across the system: Promoting seamless coordination and collaboration between different parts of the health and social care system (e.g., primary care, hospitals, social care, third sector).
- Improving access to services and treatments in the community: Shifting resources and expanding capacity in primary and community settings to make healthcare more accessible closer to home.
- Redesigning hospitals and care: Focusing hospital services on acute and complex procedures while shifting more routine care into community settings.
- Delivering digitally accessible services: Utilising digital technologies to improve access to information, enable self-care, and streamline interactions with the health and social care system.

Scotland's Population Health Framework

This framework sets out a 10-year collaborative approach aimed at improving the health of Scotland's population and reducing health inequalities. It acknowledges that health is significantly influenced by social and economic factors and emphasises a primary prevention approach, focusing on stopping health problems from developing in the first place by addressing the underlying drivers of ill-health.

The framework is structured around five key interconnected drivers of health and wellbeing:

- Prevention focused system: Strengthening collective accountability and embedding a preventative approach across all sectors.
- Social and economic factors: Improving conditions such as income, early years, education, housing, and transport.
- Places and communities: Creating healthy and sustainable environments through community collaboration and access to essential services and amenities.
- Enabling healthy living: Developing supportive environments and promoting healthy behaviours like physical activity and healthy eating.
- Equitable health care: Ensuring fair access to healthcare services, emphasising early intervention and prevention, and addressing healthcare inequalities.

The ultimate goal of the framework is to improve Scottish life expectancy and reduce the gap in life expectancy between the most deprived areas and the national average by 2035. Progress will be monitored using a Population Health Dashboard and through ongoing research and evaluation.

HSEU perspectives: what do these strategies mean for housing support?

As is often the case with health and care discourse, housing support-related services and provisions are frequently used as exemplars of good practice without being accorded the explicit overarching responsibility and credit they deserve.

The term ‘housing support’ is explicitly referenced only twice and ‘homelessness’ not at all in the Service Renewal Framework. The other framework and strategy documents, meanwhile, mention ‘homelessness’ just once each, and do not reference ‘housing support’. By contrast, Scotland’s public service reform strategy identifies poverty, smoking and obesity as key preventable drivers of demand into the future. These are used to model benefits and avoided public spending that could be achieved through prevention efforts.

Nevertheless, clear direct references to and examples of the kinds of help and assistance housing support services offer to people are made under four of the five stated principles within the Service Renewal Framework (‘prevention’; ‘people’; ‘community’; and ‘digital’), with similar principles extolled in the Population Health Framework and the Public Service Reform Strategy. This strategy, for example, also acknowledges:

‘The third sector often provides a huge range of services from specialist to generalist support. It is often more trusted by people enabling stronger relationships to be built that help to understand need more deeply. However, short term static funding, limitations in procurement, and declines in private giving and volunteering present real challenges. At the same time the sector tells us they can feel disconnected from how services are designed and delivered, and are regarded solely as a provider, despite its knowledge, experience and significant ability to leverage in capacity and capability.’¹

The overriding focus of the Scottish Government, meanwhile, is ‘to ensure people of all ages are able to live well, with the right support, and to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives’². This is perfectly aligned with the aim of housing support, which is ‘to enable people to live at home as independently as possible by maintaining and developing their life skills and social networks.’³

The housing support paradox:

Our overriding sense is that housing support currently operates according to extolled principles – preventative models, designed around people, in partnership across boundaries. Yet, paradoxically, it faces financial uncertainty because it is often less visible precisely due to the way support is targeted and delivered. Virtues of housing support services – such as varying activities and recipient groups, diversity of partnerships and funding streams, and flexibility, fluidity, and adaptability to local or individual contexts and needs – are frequently overlooked, particularly when finances are tight.

¹ [Public Service Reform Strategy: Delivering for Scotland](#), p23

² [Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework](#), p3

³ [What is Housing Support? | Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland](#)

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The Housing Support Enabling Unit is hosted by the Coalition of Care & Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS).

It seems that, with increased visibility and attention, existing housing support models could be exemplars for the kind of reform and renewal the Scottish Government seeks. Without greater visibility and attention, however, these exemplar services run the risk of being cut or withdrawn, to the detriment of health and social care in Scotland, now and in future.

We therefore make the case that housing support should be used as a test case (trying, testing and learning) and it is recognised and acknowledged as an exemplar for the type of public sector reform the Scottish Government seeks.

Conclusion

Convincing the Scottish Government to either add a specific housing support test and scale programme, or more explicitly incorporate housing support into another test and scale programme, would have multiple benefits, such as:

- Increased visibility and awareness of housing support services
- Scottish Government involvement and assistance in measuring progress and communicating impacts
- Potential for successful models to be scaled up and rolled out nationally/more widely (whilst maintaining focus on developing local/community-rooted solutions)
- Increased investment
- Improved outcomes
- It would build and add to a much-needed evidence base for measuring impacts of housing support services

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 hosted by the Coalition of Care and Support Providers Scotland (CCPS) and funded by the Scottish Government.



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