

**SCOTTISH
HOUSING
DAY**



REPORT

**HEALTHY
HOMES**

**HEALTHY
FUTURES**

**16 SEPTEMBER
2026**

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Foreword

Good quality homes and housing services provide the foundations for people to thrive. We know that a well-functioning housing system is essential to our physical health and mental wellbeing, creating vibrant communities and the social structures needed to keep people active, safe and living independently.

The quality of building fabric can make our homes more energy efficient and easier to heat, reducing fuel poverty and health issues associated with cold, damp homes. Homes that are built to high standards of accessibility can be adapted to meet people's changing needs, help people to live independently and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions or costly residential care. Emerging technology and digital solutions are also playing more of a role in keeping homes and residents safe and healthy.

But the health benefits of housing go beyond just the bricks and mortar. Housing security is essential for our mental health, allowing people to put down roots in their community, build support networks and access education and employment opportunities. Affordable homes allow people to keep more of their income for other essentials like healthy food, hobbies and socialising. Housing and third sector organisations also offer a range of additional services to support wellbeing like debt advice, tenancy sustainment and community activities.

When done well, new housing developments and housing-led regeneration create places that facilitate active travel, provide access to green spaces and encourage people to spend time outdoors.

Housing organisations also employ thousands of people across Scotland and have a vital role to play in supporting wellbeing and building a resilient workforce.

There is a growing body of evidence to show that housing provides the foundation for good health and that better partnership working and investment in housing can improve outcomes for individuals and save money for the public purse.

As the Scottish government grapples with some real challenges around the funding of public services while demographic change is increasing demand, this report presents a tangible solution. Investing in new homes, improving existing homes and access to a range of support services will improve outcomes for communities and provide better value for money.

This year, the Scottish Housing Day partners are calling on the Scottish government to recognise the role of housing in supporting health and wellbeing, to invest in making sure our homes are fit for purpose and that support is available when people need it to stay safe and healthy in their communities.

1

About Scottish Housing Day

Scottish Housing Day is an annual campaign aimed at encouraging people to engage in conversations about housing and the role it plays in all of our lives. We choose a different theme to explore each year to reflect a particular priority or challenge being faced by our sector and our communities across Scotland.

It is delivered in partnership with organisations across the housing sector and third sector and is supported by the Scottish government.

We encourage participation from everyone with an interest in housing, but a core group of volunteers helps to keep things running each year. This year's Scottish Housing Day partners are:

- Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO)
- Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Scotland
- Cohousing Scotland
- East Ayrshire Council
- Hanover Scotland
- Housing Options Scotland
- Kingdom Housing Association
- Scotland's Housing Network
- Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)
- Share
- South Lanarkshire Council
- Tenants Information Service (TIS)
- Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)
- Wheatley Group
- Under One Roof.

We also thank all of the organisations who contributed examples showcasing the vital contributions that housing and housing services make to our health and wellbeing.

2 How does housing impact our health?

When we think about housing and health, the most obvious connection may be the physical condition of the building. We know that cold, damp homes are bad for people's health, and poor building standards and fire hazards can cost lives. But housing impacts a whole range of factors which influence our health and wellbeing.



Physical health – a home that is affordable to heat and free from disrepair, damp and mould will reduce the risk of illness. Fire, electrical safety and water supply are also key to keeping us safe. Homes that are designed or adapted to meet people's needs also help to avoid injuries from trips and falls and support people to live well and independently for longer.



Mental health – secure, affordable housing is essential to mental wellbeing. We know that worrying about housing causes stress and anxiety and can impact people's confidence, employment opportunities and ability to contribute to society.



Social connections – secure housing helps people to put down roots in a community, build and maintain social connections. Housing organisations often support this by providing places for people to meet, organising social activities and coordinating volunteering opportunities.



Financial security – being able to afford housing costs, whether in the private or social sector, gives people more financial freedom. It means that they can spend more money on things that keep them healthy like good food, socialising and activities, and that they have more of a financial buffer to deal with emergencies. Many housing providers offer income maximisation and budgeting advice for tenants.



Access to other essential services – having the right home in the right place helps people to access essential local services like GPs, libraries, community centres, education and employment. Housing organisations also help to facilitate access by providing information and signposting.



Community spaces – housing shapes communities and creates places where people want to live, socialise and enjoy outdoor spaces. Well planned communities also encourage active travel and exercise.

6 Housing providers also employ thousands of people across Scotland and have a vital role to play in the health and wellbeing of the housing workforce.

3 Scottish Housing Day surveys

The Scottish Housing Day partners carried out two online surveys to inform this report, one aimed at tenants and residents and the other at housing practitioners.

We wanted to know the extent to which people think their current home and housing services are meeting their physical and mental health needs. We also asked about the barriers to living well and what more could be done to enable good health. Housing practitioners were asked about the extent to which their own organisation supports the health of residents living in their communities and the health and wellbeing of housing staff.

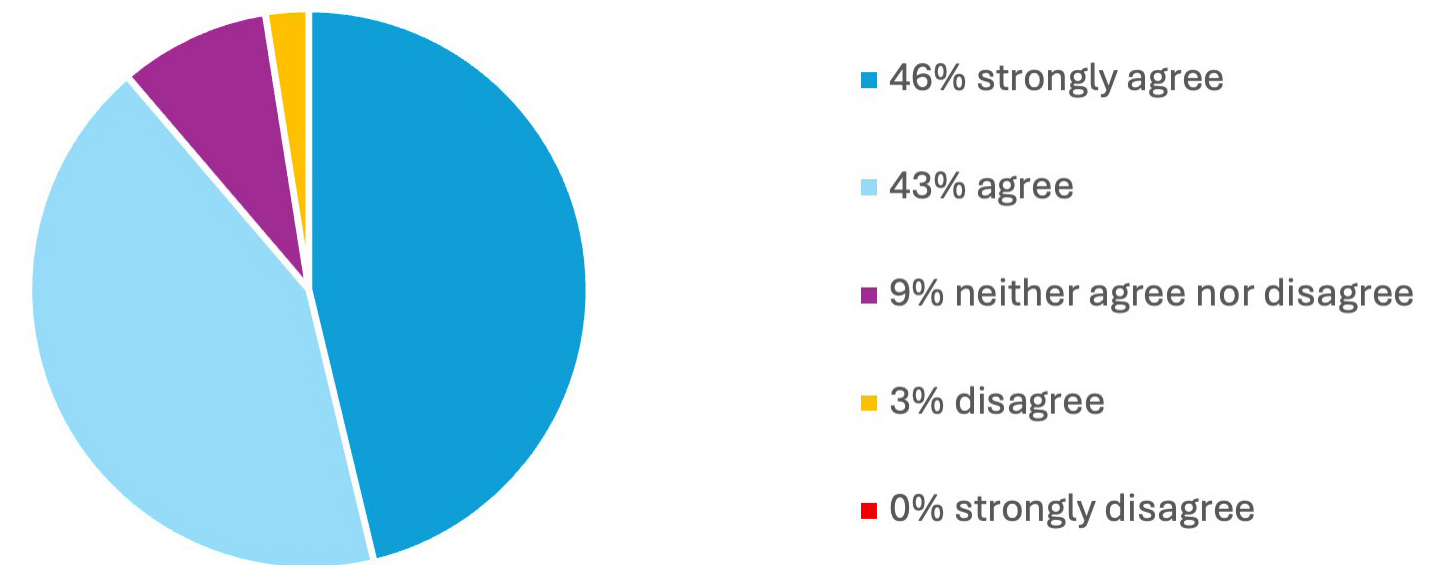
We received a total of 80 responses from housing practitioners and 58 responses from tenants and residents. The results are summarised below.

Housing practitioners survey

We received responses from people working in 18 local authority areas across Scotland with the majority working in the local authority sector (59%) or for a housing association (29%). Of the responses, 4% worked in the third sector with the remainder working in the private sector or 'other' organisations.

Of housing practitioners, 98% were confident in their own understanding of the links between housing and health, and the vast majority were positive about their organisation's role in supporting the health and wellbeing of tenants and residents as well as employees.

Graph 1: My organisation supports staff health and wellbeing.



- 83% agree or strongly agree that their organisation supports good physical health for tenants and residents. Only 1% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 83% agree or strongly agree that their organisation supports good mental health for tenants and residents. Only 1% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 89% agree or strongly agree that their organisation supports the health and wellbeing of staff. Only 3% disagree or strongly disagree.

We also asked where housing has the biggest impact on health and what the biggest barriers are to improving health and wellbeing. The top answers from a multiple-choice selection were:

Where does housing make the biggest impact on health?	What are the biggest barriers to improving health and wellbeing?
• Good quality repairs and maintenance • Adaptations and accessibility • Preventing homelessness • Energy efficient homes	• Lack of funding • Lack of affordable housing • Fuel poverty and cost of living pressures • Shortage of accessible/ adapted housing

Commenting on what more could be done to improve the health and wellbeing of tenants and residents, respondents also pointed to the need for more affordable housing supply, improvements to existing homes, investment to build capacity in organisations and better partnership working across housing, the third sector and health and social care. Several also mentioned the need for more proactive outreach to identify people who may need support before reaching a crisis point.

“A lot of tenants slip through the net because their rent is paid but they are struggling financially or mentally and won’t reach out if in crisis until it’s too late”

Housing is filling the gaps left by cuts elsewhere

Budget cuts and reduced capacity of partner organisations was frequently mentioned, suggesting that housing is often left to try and fill the gaps without the skills and specialist knowledge to do so.

“One of the most important ways to improve the wellbeing and health of tenants is to ensure there are sufficient support services and agencies available to meet people’s needs. Many tenants require specialist support. However, these services are often overstretched, have long waiting lists or do not have the capacity to provide ongoing support.”

Respondents mentioned difficulties with social work referrals and access to mental health support.

“Housing providers are increasingly left trying to fill these gaps, despite not having the specialist training or resources to deliver the level of support that some tenants require. While we play an important role in identifying concerns, making referrals and supporting tenancy sustainment, we cannot replace the expertise of dedicated support services. Strengthening partnerships with health services, social work, and other support agencies, alongside increased investment in these services, would ensure tenants receive the right support from the right professionals at the right time.”

“There [are] still a high number of residents who are dealing with a range of either physical or mental health related conditions, who struggle to get adequate support put in place. Often, staff within our Housing Teams have to assist but they are not the appropriate person to deal with these issues - often challenges in a tenancy are seen by partners as purely a housing issues, rather than wider issues that should involve meaningful input from all partners”

Housing staff can’t do their job properly if they are stretched too thin

While the vast majority of respondents were positive about the support their organisation offered to staff, we did ask what more could be done. Respondents talked about the need for increased capacity to reduce workloads and support better work-life balance, and for practical support such as training, information sharing and communities of practice.

“Increasing staffing capacity would help reduce workloads to more manageable levels, allowing staff to provide the quality advice, support, and intervention that customers require. This would not only improve outcomes for customers but also reduce stress, burnout, and work-related pressures experienced by employees.”

It was also pointed out that heavy workloads often meant that staff were unable to build relationships with residents or provide early intervention to prevent situations from escalating resulting in a cycle of crisis management.

Trauma impacts staff as well as tenants

Many responses mentioned having to deal with increasingly complex cases and the stress of having to deal with other people’s trauma not always being recognised.

“We are lucky that our staff have a very good sense of team and work well together, however some of the issues and/or tenants we deal with can be very challenging and understandably upsetting. I think most organisations would benefit from regular mental health check-ins, training for management on how to support staff with challenging/ upsetting issues and ensuring their mental health is not affected by it.”

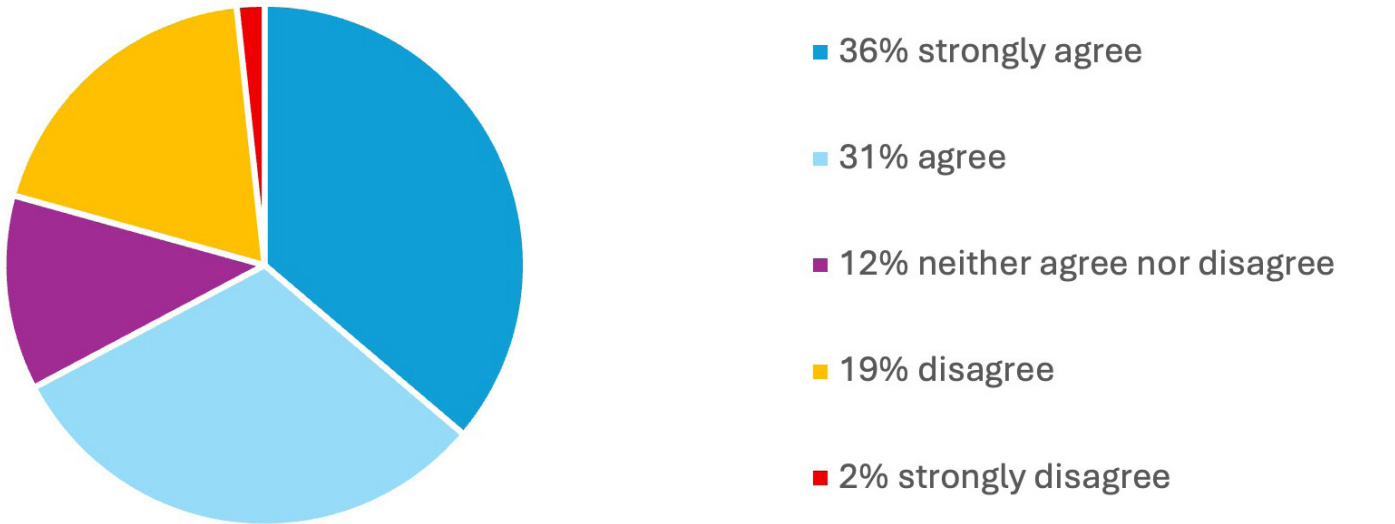
Although not the most common answer, several respondents mentioned the need to protect staff from verbal abuse and the potential risk of physical abuse which is concerning. Suggestions included the need for strong leadership, a “no tolerance” policy and clear procedures in place for home visits.

Tenants and residents survey

We received responses from people living in 19 local authority areas across Scotland. 77% of respondents live in the social housing sector, 19% are homeowners and 4% are private tenants.

While tenants and residents were slightly less positive than housing practitioners about their own home meeting their health needs, the general outlook is still fairly optimistic.

Graph 2: My home meets all of my physical health needs.



- 67% agree or strongly agree that their home meets all of their physical health needs. 19% disagree and 2% strongly disagree.
- 61% agree or strongly agree that their home meets all of their mental health needs. 17% disagree and 5% strongly disagree.
- 78% agree or strongly agree that their home or neighbourhood has access to outdoor areas for exercise or recreation. 2% disagree and 9% strongly disagree.



We also asked tenants and residents what the biggest barriers were to them staying healthy at home. The top answers from a multiple-choice selection were:

What are the biggest barriers to getting what you need to stay healthy in your home?

- Waiting time for repairs or improvements
- High cost of heating
- Lack of the right type of housing to move to
- Antisocial behaviour
- Cost of repairs or improvements
- Lack of information about the support that is available
- Poor energy efficiency

The majority of respondents were positive about their home, and some said they didn't need any further support. One commented,

"My housing association goes out of their way to assist my needs."

However, comments from some social housing tenants pointed out issues with repairs, maintenance and improvements that hadn't been addressed.

Other respondents mentioned long waiting periods to get the adaptations they needed or to move to a more suitable home.

"I live in [an] upstairs flat and have very poor mobility due to health condition. No adaptations have been done to my property as occupational therapy had advised I need to move. It has been months now since I was put on the waiting list for an accessible home and looks like it will not happen any time soon."

Another described taking on the financial burden of carrying out adaptations to their home to avoid waiting time.

"[My] terminally ill father needed 24-hour care and he moved to my home. The time the local authority estimated that they would have the budget and the time to do the bathroom adaptations an OT said he needed was longer than the 18 months life expectancy he was given. So my father could live the remainder of his life with dignity I cashed in my pension to make the alterations he needed."

Several respondents mentioned issues with neighbours and anti-social behaviour, one suggesting unmet mental health issues may have been contributing to the problem.



4 Housing, health and inequality

Changing context

After decades of increasing life expectancy, we are now seeing progress stalling. Years of austerity, the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis are widening inequalities while the global financial climate is eroding the funding which supports our public services. Every pound needs to work harder just to stand still.

National Records of Scotland¹ reports that despite a recent increase, Scotland still has the lowest life expectancy of all the UK nations. Female life expectancy in the most deprived areas is 10.5 years lower than in the least deprived areas, while male life expectancy is 13.2 years lower.

Access to safe, warm, affordable housing is critical to improving health but too many people are still living in homes that do not meet their needs. The Scottish House Condition Survey² shows that:

- 694,000 homes are Below Tolerable Standard, the most basic standard for homes across all tenures
- The majority of these have failed for not meeting new requirements for smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- 1.4 million homes do not meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard
- 255,000 homes have damp or condensation and 195,000 have mould
- 732,000 households are living in fuel poverty and 357,000 are living in extreme fuel poverty.

Scotland's Census 2022 found that 24% of our population is living with a limiting long-term health condition or disability – that's over 1.3 million people. This includes a wide range of conditions including arthritis, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, mental health issues, physical disabilities, sight and hearing impairment and learning difficulties, all of which will be impacted by housing conditions.

As of 2024, only 3,173 homes in Scotland had been adapted for wheelchair users³ and research suggests that demand for more accessible homes will increase as our population ages.

Too many people are in hospital when they don't need to be

Audit Scotland's recent report into delayed discharges found that people who were medically ready to leave spent 720,000 unnecessary days in hospital in 2024/25. These delayed discharges cost the NHS at least £440 million per year, but the cost isn't solely financial. They can affect the physical and mental health of those stuck in hospital and, if delayed for long enough, may mean never being able to return home.

Getting people home from the hospital as soon as possible makes sense for individuals and provides much better value for money, but too often barriers stand in the way. The causes are complex and are not always down to housing issues. They can include waiting for adaptations, not having the right care package in place or not having Power of Attorney.

¹<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/life-expectancy-in-scotland-2022-2024/>

²<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-house-condition-survey-2024-key-findings/documents/>

³<https://www.gov.scot/publications/evidence-review-inequalities-challenges-experienced-disabled-people-scotland/pages/9/>

⁴<https://audit.scot/news/delayed-discharges-a-sign-of-wider-challenges-in-health-and-social-care>

Prevention is key to improving outcomes

The Scottish government recognises the need to do things differently and to focus on prevention. Scotland's Population Health Framework 2025-2035 is a ten-year plan which aims to improve life expectancy at the same time as narrowing the gap between the most deprived 20% of areas and the national average.

Housing has a key role to play in this aim, and 'Places and Communities' is identified within the plan as one of the five key prevention drivers.

The Scottish government's long-term strategy, Housing to 2040, also makes a clear link between housing and the National Performance Framework outcome on health. It states that:

"Safe and warm homes and good neighbourhoods improve physical and mental health and wellbeing and build strong communities."

Turning ambitions into reality

The Scottish government has strong ambitions on housing and health outcomes, but funding challenges, capacity, and sometimes competing priorities mean that there is a gap between ambition and delivery.

The Scottish Health Equity Research Unit (SHERU) has considered the extent to which the commitments within Housing to 2040 have the potential to contribute to health equity⁵. It found that despite recognising the strategic role of housing in tackling inequalities, and setting ambitious commitments, the strategy faces significant implementation challenges.

External factors such as funding constraints and differences between national aims and local implementation have limited progress on tackling health inequalities. But SHERU also suggest that lack of clarity within the strategy itself has hampered progress. For example, the lack of a clear definition of 'affordable housing', lack of transparency about financial commitments (new versus repurposed financial allocations and the role of private finance) and tensions between differing stakeholder interests.

Our asks:

- While the new Scottish government considers the future of Housing to 2040, we ask that the focus is on deliverability, setting out clear targets and regular transparent reporting on progress.

⁵<https://scothealthequity.org/raising-the-roof-can-scotlands-housing-to-2040-strategy-help-as-an-approach-to-reduce-health-inequalities/>

5 Designing healthy homes

Mainstreaming accessible design

The 2022 Census⁶ found that just under a quarter of Scotland's population is living with a long-term illness, disease or condition that limits their day-to-day activities. With many health conditions linked to age, the number of people living in poor health is expected to increase as our population ages.

Scotland is ageing faster than the rest of the UK. There has been a 43% increase in the number of people aged 75 and over since 2004 and this group is expected to increase by more than 341,000 by 2047⁷.

We know there is a significant shortage of accessible homes for people with additional needs and that funding for adaptations is falling far short of demand.

The Scottish government realises the need to improve accessibility and is currently reviewing Housing for Varying Needs, the guidance that sets basic accessibility standards for new affordable housing. We understand that consideration is also being given to standards in the private sector and how to move towards alignment of standards across tenures.

While, understandably, the costs of factoring in additional accessibility must be taken into account, the long-term benefits of mainstreaming accessibility cannot be underestimated. Improving accessibility across the board will ensure that new homes are fit for purpose and support more people to live independently in their communities.

Many accessible features do not have to cost extra if they are factored into the design from the start. For example, careful use of colour and signage can help people with visual impairment or dementia. The placement of plug sockets can make them easier to reach for people with restricted mobility without adding to the cost of construction.

Designing homes for healthy cognitive ageing

Designing Homes for Healthy Cognitive Ageing (DesHCA) is a research project based at the University of Stirling. It has gathered insight from architects, designers, developers, occupational therapists, local authorities and older people to identify challenges and solutions to providing age-inclusive housing.

Resources developed by the project include a wide range of research and evidence, a digital demonstrator that shows how accessible features can be included in different rooms of a virtual house, an interactive game that helps people to think about adaptations and a guide with simple 'tips and tricks' to improving accessibility.

Find out more: <https://www.deshca.co.uk/>



⁶<https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/2022-reports/scotland-s-census-2022-health-disability-and-unpaid-care/>

⁷<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/latest-news/unprecedented-changes-in-scotland-s-population/>

Blackburn Square: Working together to shape the future of housing

Blackburn Square in Barrhead shows what's possible when organisations come together with a shared purpose and a willingness to do things differently. Barrhead Housing and East Renfrewshire Council have worked side by side to explore a new kind of housing – one that puts people, community and sustainability at its heart.

The design concept sets out plans for fully accessible homes with lift access supporting independent living but also incorporating shared amenities and sustainable landscaping which could include features like community spaces for food growing. High levels of energy efficiency will reduce the environmental impact of the development and significantly reduce bills for residents.

From the beginning, this has been a true partnership. The council made land available to support the project, and a joint team was set up early on, bringing together both organisations, alongside designers, specialists and wider partners.

A key strength of the project has been the involvement of the local community. Early conversations showed strong support, and people were invited to play an active role in shaping the homes and wider space. Through workshops and engagement sessions, residents and partners have come together to explore ideas, listen to each other and help shape something for the future of the neighbourhood. The local primary school children have learned about the project and designed art installations which will be included in the homes.

Partners are exploring how to create homes that are energy efficient, lower carbon and flexible for people at every stage of life. There is also a clear focus on how housing can do more, supporting independent living, strengthening community connections and helping people manage the cost of living.

The project involves a wide range of partners, including health and social care, academia and industry. By bringing different perspectives together, the project has created space to test new ideas and learn together as it develops. There are also plans to evaluate the project and capture learning in relation to tenant satisfaction, energy costs and usage, the carbon footprint of the design and build process and feedback on the technologies used.

While still in development, Blackburn Square already shows the power of working in partnership. It reflects a shared commitment to doing things differently and creating homes and places that work better for people, now and in the future.



Smart design can also incorporate digital technology from the start of the planning process and anticipate how homes may need to be adapted in the future to meet changing needs.

Envision: A digital blueprint for a smart home of the future

Envision is a flagship project within the Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre's (DHI) Rural Centre of Excellence in Moray. Developed by a multidisciplinary team led by Evolve Capex and Architype, Envision is a bold rethinking of the home as a living system: one that generates energy, supports wellbeing, anticipates need, and evolves with its occupants over time. It combines low-carbon construction, digital health and care, and adaptive design into a single, integrated blueprint.

The model is structured across three horizons (short, medium and long term), allowing housing providers and policymakers to act immediately while planning for future integration and ambitions. This flexible approach enables housing providers, developers, and communities to tailor plans to local priorities, budgets, and readiness for innovation.

Envision sets out the costs of implementation within the context of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) benchmark rates with digital infrastructure adding only around 1.4% to the cost of a new home. Additional targeted features could be funded with support from partners such as health and social care with evidence to support investment in prevention.

Current building standards describe a minimum viable home. Envision defines a minimum healthy home.

Six early adopters are already exploring how the blueprint can be applied across both new-build and retrofit projects, helping to shape resilient, future-ready homes for generations to come.

Find out more: dhi-scotland.com/projects/envision-a-digital-blueprint-for-a-smart-home-of-the-future



Designing with people in mind

If design decisions are taken by people who haven't experienced living with a disability or without consulting them, even well-intentioned interventions can have unintended consequences.

The Intersectional Stigma of Place Based Ageing (ISPA) project⁸ has identified that fire regulations requiring self-closing fire doors – which can be heavy and cumbersome to open – have not taken the needs of older and disabled people into account. While intended to improve fire safety, the group found that for many people with reduced strength or mobility, the doors were unusable and potentially putting people at greater risk. In some cases, fire doors were being wedged open. In others, people felt unable to leave their home, becoming trapped and socially isolated.

"I had brought the doors to the housing association's attention in the past, but was brushed off and told that there's nothing they can do [...] I told them I was having major surgery in February and my mobility would be restricted further, so it was really very urgent [...] Being trapped inside for months does not bode well for recovery, and severely impacts my mental health. I can only get out of the building during care hours when I have someone to help me through the doors, and I am only entitled to 12 hours care a week [...] it is a complete lack of accessibility, as well as a serious health and safety issue." - Example from Scottish Housing News cited in the ISPA report

Designing community spaces

The areas outside of our homes can be just as important to our health and wellbeing, creating spaces that encourage exercise and a place for people to meet and socialise.

⁸<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Trapped-by-Safety-Fire-Doors-Accessibility-and-Policy-Tensions-in-Housing/>

Design that keeps people connected

West Dunbartonshire Council's Creveul Court is situated in Alexandria and consists of 16 flats with full lift access and five terraced bungalows, one of which is fully wheelchair accessible. The location of the development, close to the town centre and health services, is ideal for older people and dementia-friendly elements have been incorporated into common areas and individual homes to help residents maintain independence as they age.

The design also includes a community garden and orchard with benches for seating, encouraging residents to spend time outdoors and creating opportunities for neighbours to meet and socialise.

Creveul Court was always intended to be for older tenants, but during the project, the team at West Dunbartonshire Council became aware of dementia-friendly design elements that could be included to further improve accessibility and meet the changing needs of residents over time. The architect, Anderson Bell + Christie, had experience in designing for dementia and helped to reimagine the development including simple changes like:

- Colour-coded doors and tiles on each floor to help residents navigate
- Glass-fronted kitchen cabinets to help easily identify contents
- Colour-coded taps
- Colour contrast between walls and floors
- Full-height glazing to maximise natural light and additional task lighting
- Outdoor seating for every bungalow to encourage outdoor living and community connections
- A secure courtyard with communal orchard for all residents encouraging outdoor socialising, a sense of ownership and integration.

Had the additional dementia-friendly features been factored into the design from the start, they would not have added any significant cost to the development. The team at West Dunbartonshire Council are now considering how to incorporate similar design features into other projects, continuing to evolve their approach with feedback from tenants.

So far, the lessons from Creveul Court have influenced two new developments. Mount Pleasant, a 19 home social housing development in Old Kilpatrick, and Ottawa Crescent, a 21 home mixed development of flats and bungalows in Clydebank due to be completed in summer 2027.



Chapelton: Designing health and wellbeing into everyday life

Good housing supports health beyond the home itself. People also need access to green space, opportunities to be active, local amenities and places where social relationships can grow. Chapelton responds by treating health and wellbeing as a priority, embedded within the design of the community.

Chapelton is an inclusive community for families, single people, couples, and residents of different ages. Homes range from one to five bedrooms, with social rent, mid-market rent, shared equity and private sale enabling different households and generations to live side by side.

Community involvement has shaped the development from the outset through a ten-day workshop, stakeholder reviews, an open design studio and public meetings. Local schoolchildren contributed through a neighbourhood design competition, helping the plans reflect local priorities and establishing a foundation for continued intergenerational involvement as Chapelton grows.

The masterplan makes healthy choices easier. Green spaces, car-free areas and pedestrian-friendly routes including footpaths, cycle paths and back lanes, encourage walking, cycling, exercise and play. Front gardens, picnic and play spaces, and a planned central park provide places to spend time outdoors and connect with neighbours.

Shops, cafés, business space, community facilities and a primary school are distributed across the development, reducing reliance on cars and encouraging everyday interaction. Meanwhile, public transport, including a dedicated Park & Choose stop, connects residents beyond the town. Geddes Square is the heart of the neighbourhood, with retail space supporting daily needs, including The Boxes, an innovative retail hub made from converted shipping containers. This provides space for local entrepreneurs while giving Chapelton a distinct local character.

Chapelton's community-centred design is supported by a growing programme of communal activity. Residents partake in a range of activities, including the annual Chapelton bike ride, 10K run, farmers' market, Scarecrow Festival, Christmas wreath-making and family fun days. Shared spaces like the back lanes are also used for street parties, Easter egg hunts and other activities, building participation, identity and belonging.

The impact

From the outset, Chapelton places homes amongst nature, accessible facilities and local enterprise, facilitating healthy living and community building. This allows healthy, inclusive and intergenerational communities to thrive.



Our asks:

- The Scottish government must prioritise the review of Housing for Varying Needs, taking on learning from projects like DesCHA and Envision.
- People with lived experience must be involved in developing accessibility standards.
- We understand that the new national housing agency, More Homes Scotland will have a research function. This should be used to improve data on accessible housing needs to inform housing supply targets.

6 Maintaining and improving existing homes

Poor housing is a drain on our NHS

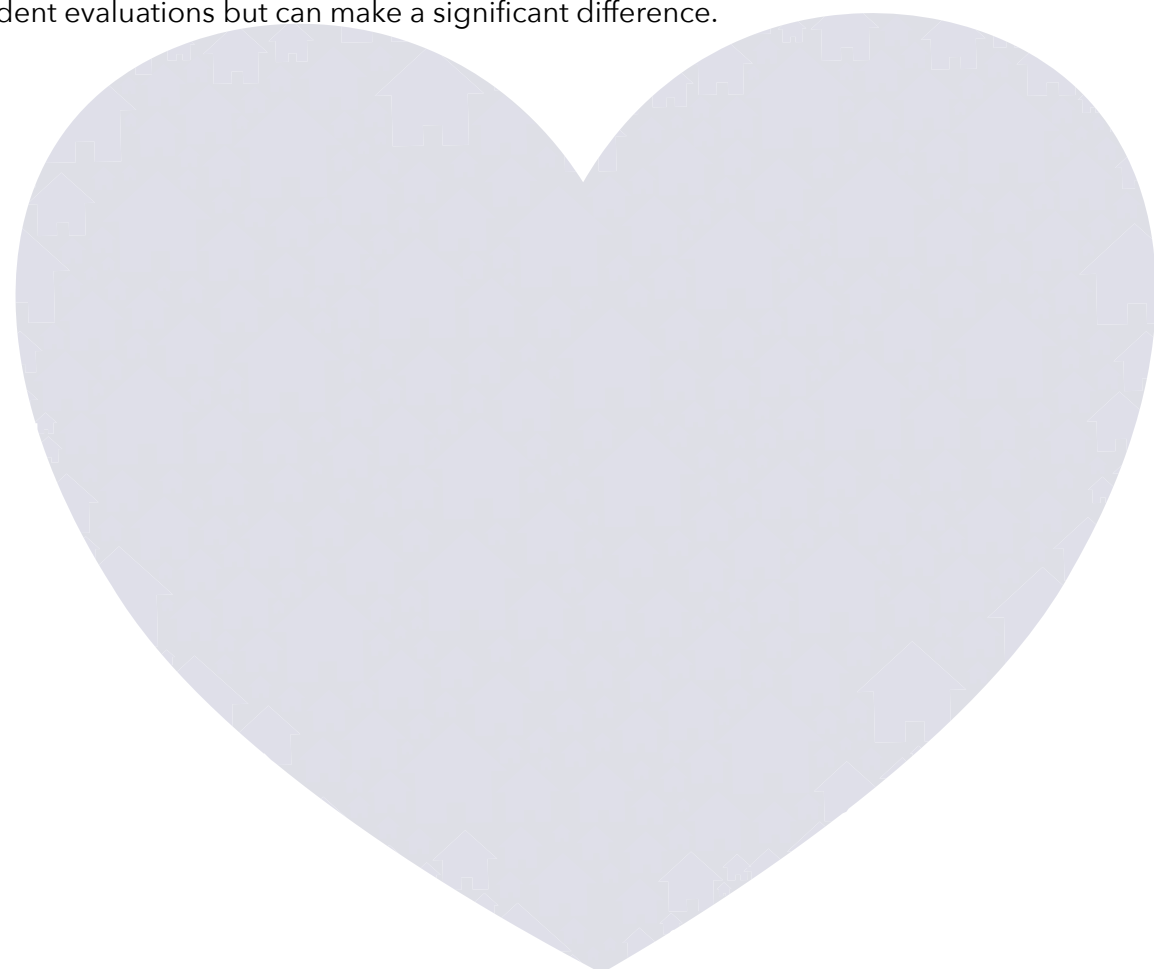
We know that poor quality housing can lead to a range of health problems for individuals and it also results in increased costs for the NHS. A recent report commissioned by Public Health Scotland and Scottish Futures Trust found that poor housing conditions cost the NHS around £530 million per year.

It found clear links between:

- Cold temperatures and cardiovascular disease and respiratory conditions
- Damp and mould and poor respiratory health
- Overcrowding and infectious diseases
- Hazards and falls for older people.

While there are gaps in existing data which limit the economic analysis, the report states that "...aligning housing improvements with public health objectives has the potential to deliver significant co-benefits, including reduced healthcare utilisation and improved wellbeing."

The report estimated that the one-off cost of addressing these hazards could amount to £7.7 billion. While this may seem like an unfeasible amount, we should recognise that millions of pounds are being invested in maintaining and improving homes every year, but the financial benefits may not always be tracked and measured. This can be especially true of small-scale investments which do not come with independent evaluations but can make a significant difference.



Small interventions can make a big difference

Care and Repair services operate across Scotland, providing independent advice and assistance to help people improve or adapt their homes so they can continue to live safely in their communities. The service is available to homeowners, private tenants and crofters over the age of 60, or who have a disability, but funding can vary across different local authorities.

Every case is different, but the service can provide home visits to assess what's needed and discuss different options, help with applying for financial support and coordinating repairs.

Care and Repair services help to avoid accidents in the home, can keep people living independently for longer and help people to return home from hospital. While it's difficult to put an exact figure on the savings generated by preventing a crisis from happening, the example below demonstrates how a small intervention helped to keep a client in their own home and avoid costly residential care.

The person's story

The client is an 82-year-old homeowner living with Alzheimer's disease. They had been unable to use the stairs in their home safely by themselves, risking a fall with severe injury, hospital admission or a move into residential care.

The Care and Repair service arranged for additional banisters to be provided for the staircase at a cost of £350 (based on 2025 costs).

Financial savings

The modest investment of £350 allowed the client to continue living safely in their home. If they had to move into residential care, costs were estimated to be £36,750 to £80,000 per year.

Wider benefits

Beyond the financial savings, the client's mental wellbeing and physical health improved. They now feel safe and reassured when using the stairs and confident that they can stay at home for longer. Their partner has added peace of mind and the reassurance that they can leave the house without worrying.



Tackling damp and mould

The tragic death of Awaab Ishak in 2020 – caused by a severe respiratory condition due to exposure to damp and mould in a home in Rochdale – shone a light on poor conditions in the social housing sector and the consequences that could arise when requests for help were not taken seriously or prioritised. Governments across the UK have now taken steps to ensure a more proactive approach to dealing with damp and mould.

In Scotland, the Investigation and Commencement of Repair (Scotland) Regulations 2026¹⁰ will come into place from October. The regulations introduce strict timescales for investigating and responding to damp and mould in the social and private rented sector (PRS).

While the regulations are not yet in force, social landlords have already taken steps to address cases of damp and mould and to work more proactively with tenants to improve awareness of the causes of damp and mould and the steps they can take to help reduce contributing factors such as condensation.

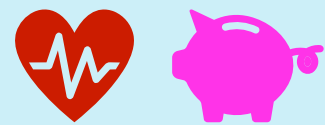
¹⁰<https://www.gov.scot/news/tenants-to-be-better-protected-from-damp-and-mould/>

Putting Safety First

Guidance for social landlords published by CIH Scotland, SFHA, ALACHO and the Scottish Housing Regulator provides an overview about how to deal with damp and mould proactively, understand tenants' experiences and resolve the underlying issues. It covers:

- How to work with tenants to identify and report potential problems early
- Staff training from general awareness raising to technical expertise
- Identifying and treating the root causes
- The use of technology in prevention and monitoring
- Data management
- Responding to complaints.

Find out more: <https://www.cih.org/media/aaukbpmd/putting-safety-first.pdf>



Improving energy efficiency and addressing fuel poverty

Improving the fabric of our existing buildings through measures like insulation, draught-proofing and double glazing can help keep homes warm and healthy. These upgrades can also lower bills, easing pressure on household budgets. For many people, that relief can also ease the stresses and strains of managing the cost of living.

Warm homes that are affordable to heat are essential to personal comfort, reducing the risk of health problems, and help to prevent damp and mould forming through condensation.

The social housing sector has been leading the way on upgrading homes to meet statutory energy efficiency standards. The Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) 2024¹¹ shows that 71% of homes in the social rented sector have an EPC rating of C or above, compared to 52% of owner-occupied homes and just 50% of private rented homes.

Introducing minimum energy efficiency standards for the private sector would ensure that private tenants and owner occupiers are not left behind and can also benefit from warmer, healthier homes.

Having access to the right kind of financial support, advice and information would help homeowners and landlords ensure that homes are fit for the future. The Existing Homes Alliance suggests that a network of local 'retrofit agencies' and better consumer protections would help to encourage people to invest in their homes.

¹¹<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-house-condition-survey-2024-key-findings/documents/>

Retrofit agencies could help people make their homes warmer and healthier

Retrofit agencies provide personalised support to help homeowners upgrade their homes. There are examples across the UK and Europe, offering a range of services such as retrofit plans, project design and management, and post-installation evaluation.

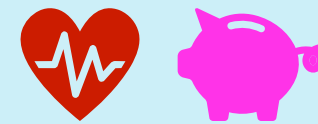
EcoCosi is based in Scotland and offers an end-to-end service which takes homeowners through the whole retrofit process. EcoCosi's retrofit journey has three stages:

Stage 1: Discover how to transform your home – the service offers a range of surveys and reports to help homeowners create their retrofit plan.

Stage 2: Connect with trusted installers – EcoCosi will help homeowners engage pre-vetted contractors from their trusted network database.

Stage 3: Project support and quality assurance – EcoCosi can provide support throughout the installation, ensuring work is carried out to the highest standards.

Find out more: www.changeworks.org.uk/improve-my-home/what-is-ecocosi/orks



However, it's not just the fabric of the building that matters - energy costs, household income and understanding new heating systems are also significant drivers of fuel poverty. Improving the energy efficiency of a home and upgrading the heating system will not address fuel poverty if the household still cannot afford to switch the heating on. The SHCS shows that despite having better levels of energy efficiency, social housing tenants are still more likely to live in fuel poverty.

Many housing organisations offer advice and support to residents on how to use their heating systems, how to access financial support, and how to switch to better tariffs. Energy advice is also available from a wide range of other sources, with one of the main sources being the Scottish government's Home Energy Scotland service which can help people access advice and financial support.

Partnerships between NHS and Home Energy Scotland help people stay warm, lower their bills and access the support they need.

Working closely with NHS teams helps Home Energy Scotland reach people who may not otherwise seek advice. Energy advice is provided at a range of hospitals and community health facilities across Strathclyde and Lanarkshire.

NHS teams can also use a referral portal to quickly refer patients for personalised energy advice, making energy support a part of wider care.

Find out more: <https://www.homeenergyscotland.org/supporting-health-services-partnerships-for-healthier-homes>



Energy efficiency programmes like the Scottish government's Area Based Schemes (ABS) can reduce hospital admissions

The ABS programme is delivered by local authorities and local delivery partners and focuses on upgrading homes in areas with high levels of fuel poverty.

Research carried out by the Energy Agency in partnership with NHS Ayrshire and Arran, South Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council, found that home insulation improvements not only lead to reduced emissions and lower energy bills, but also a reduction in hospital admissions for respiratory and cardiovascular conditions.

Find out more: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666535223000423?via%3Dihub>



South Lanarkshire Council: Whole home approach to addressing fuel poverty

Several residential streets in Meikle Earnock, Hamilton, were identified by South Lanarkshire Council as a priority area for action on fuel poverty. The homes, built in the 1960s, were becoming increasingly difficult and expensive to heat due to significant heat loss and poor thermal performance. The council developed a major investment programme to improve 11 four-storey residential blocks, containing 99 homes.

The project took a whole-home approach. External wall insulation was installed alongside cavity wall insulation, replacement uPVC windows, upgraded entrance and communal doors, improvements to mechanical and electrical systems, roof insulation and waterproofing works, and internal redecoration.

Delivering the improvements presented some challenges. Residents remained in their homes throughout the eight-month programme, and narrow residential roads restricted access. A dedicated tenant liaison officer worked closely with tenants and the site team to provide regular communication, explain the programme of works, and give residents a clear point of contact for concerns or individual requirements.

But the results have been significant. A tenfold improvement in thermal performance was achieved which brought the homes closer to the standards expected of modern new-build properties. For residents, this means homes that are easier to keep warm and more comfortable to live in. Improving the building fabric reduced heat loss and the amount of energy required to maintain a suitable temperature. This reduces financial pressure on households and helps to reduce the risk of fuel poverty.

The improvements also support healthier living environments and reduce the potential for damp and mould. These benefits can be particularly important for people who spend longer periods at home, including children, older residents, and those with additional vulnerabilities.

The transformation has also improved residents' wider living environment. The blocks now have a modern, contemporary appearance, complemented by new windows, doors and upgraded communal areas. Creating homes that are attractive, secure, and comfortable contributes to residents feeling safer, more positive and prouder of where they live.

The Meikle Earnock project demonstrates how investment in existing homes can contribute directly to healthier lives. By tackling fuel poverty, reducing heat loss and improving the quality of the living environment, the programme has transformed 99 homes into warmer, healthier, and more sustainable places to live.



Maintaining and improving mixed ownership buildings

According to the Scottish House Condition Survey, 35% of all homes in Scotland are flats and 25% of these were built before 1982. It can be difficult for flat owners to organise and pay for repairs and improvements, especially if there is no factor managing the building. This can lead to significant disrepair and delays to improvements like energy efficiency work if all owners are not in agreement about the work that's needed or they can't afford to pay for it.

The Scottish government has recognised the issue and the work of the Scottish Parliamentary Working Group on Tenancy Maintenance has helped to identify practical solutions to support flat owners including:

- **Compulsory owners' associations** to manage maintenance and repair budgets and contract work to be carried out
- **Building reserve funds** to help spread the cost of repairs through regular affordable payments
- **Five yearly inspection reports** to identify work that needs to be done and provide building condition data to researchers, policymakers and stakeholders.

Our asks:

- The Scottish government must act swiftly to introduce a heat in buildings bill to help drive improvements in our existing homes, and put the right framework in place to deliver on statutory net-zero and fuel poverty targets.
- The Scottish government must progress the recommendations of the Parliamentary Working Group on Tenement Maintenance during this parliamentary term.

¹²<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-house-condition-survey-2024-key-findings/documents/>

¹³<https://www.befs.org.uk/policy-topics/buildings-maintenance-2/>

7 Adaptations, support and specialist housing

People’s housing needs change throughout their lives as their health needs change. When housing, support and health services are working well together, people should have a range of options available. They may want to stay in their current home with adaptations and support. They may want to move to a different home that is more accessible or closer to support networks, or they may want to move into specialist housing like sheltered housing or housing with care.

The Scottish government has a long-standing commitment to support people to live well at home, or in a homely setting, for as long as it is safe for them to do so. The ultimate aim is to keep people out of hospital and living independently in their communities and housing is key to achieving this.

Adaptations are essential to living well

The demand for adaptations will increase as our population ages and people are living with complex needs for longer periods of time. However, we know that the existing adaptations system is underfunded and overcomplicated. Research commissioned by SFHA, ALACHO and CIH Scotland into future demand for adaptations¹⁴ found:

- Increasing costs to install adaptations
- A reduction in the number of installations post-COVID-19 despite evidence of increased need
- A complex system of different funding streams across tenures and approaches across different local authorities making adaptations more difficult to access.

The research suggests that meeting the need for adaptations could increase from £68 million per year in 2025 to £76 million by 2040 (not taking inflation into account). If this increase in funding is not met by the Scottish government it will result in costs being passed on to residents, or people going without adaptations, risking increases in accidents, hospital admissions and moves into residential care that could have been avoided.

A recent report from the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT), Building Health into Homes¹⁵, outlines the role of occupational therapists in navigating people’s needs and how to adapt environments to support them to carry out the activities that mean the most to them. At home this simply means being able to live a normal life with dignity. The report calls for stronger leadership and closer working between housing, health and care, more focus on preventative spend, delivering accessible and adaptable housing at scale, and building workforce capacity.

“Your home is meant to allow you to live your life to the best that you can, and to open up the world to you, not close it down. I feel lucky to be in a home that meets my needs... but I shouldn’t have to feel lucky. Accessible housing should be a given.”
Expert by experience, extract from RCOT report

Alongside the report, the RCOT has published an operational toolkit¹⁶ for service leaders, managers and commissioners and a practitioner toolkit¹⁷ to support occupational therapists in practice settings.

We know that there are issues in the system with funding, workforce capacity and complexities, but when the system works well, adaptations can be transformative.

We also know that the aesthetics of some adaptations can be stigmatising and can create a barrier to seeking support. People don’t want a home full of ‘ugly’ equipment that makes it look like an institution, especially if they feel it might impact on other members of the household. The next case study demonstrates how good design has been combined with practicality to transform a shared space.

¹⁴<https://www.cih.org/media/xgzk3lj5/1sfha-ispa-whats-next-for-adaptations-full.pdf>

¹⁵<https://www.rcot.co.uk/health-into-homes>

¹⁶<https://www.rcot.co.uk/media/2918/download?attachment>

¹⁷<https://www.rcot.co.uk/media/2917/download?attachment>

Hanover Scotland - combining practicality with good design

A Hanover Scotland tenant with fibromyalgia was living with her adult son. They shared a bathroom that was inaccessible for her, with poor lighting and no grab rails making daily tasks exhausting and dangerous, especially during flare ups.

Hanover worked with the tenants to design a new bathroom that would meet their needs at the same time remaining as “normal” as possible to avoid any stigma. The new design needed to include accessible features but also be delivered within budget.

The new bathroom incorporates a level-entry shower, non-slip flooring, grab bars and comfort-height toilet. The impact of the new bathroom also goes beyond mobility. The renovation has improved air circulation, reducing the chances of damp and mould.

The new bathroom design did come in at a slightly higher cost than a standard refurbishment, but Hanover recognises the social, environmental and health benefits of better design. Hanover is currently reviewing its design standards to incorporate accessibility and developing a suite of “beautiful” adaptations suppliers to further increase choice for projects in the future.

Standard specification	Updated specification
• Hanging shower rail and curtain • Basic sink • Comfort toilet • White PVC grab rails • Wet floor • Painted ceiling Cost £7,000	• Glass shower panel • Modern sink with vanity unit • Comfort toilet • Chrome grab rails • Toilet roll holder with integrated grab rail • Coordinating wet floor • PVC ceiling panels • LED mirror Cost £8,690

“I used to dread using the bathroom. Now, I feel safe. I feel in control. I would choose to have this as my bathroom - even if I didn’t need the support.” Tenant

“It’s stylish, functional - and it feels like it belongs in any home. But more than that, it’s given my mum back her independence. And it’s taken a weight off me too.” Tenant’s son

“It’s like a bathroom you’d have in your own house” Contractor



Housing support

Housing support can take many forms and should be tailored to the needs of individuals. It consists of practical assistance and advice to help people live safely and independently in their homes or in temporary accommodation and can include:

- Help with benefits, filling out forms, personal budgeting or managing debt
- Help with paying rent, tenancy sustainment and avoiding eviction
- Advice on general maintenance and minor adaptations
- Help with day-to-day activities like shopping, housework and establishing community connections.

Research from the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE)¹⁸ highlights the critical role of housing support services in delivering value for money and delivering life-changing benefits for individuals. The report focusses on two case studies, Hanover Scotland's very sheltered housing for older people and Frontline Fife's tenancy sustainment service. It showed that for every £1 invested, housing support generates at least £4.85 in benefits.

Housing with care bridges the gap between housing and care homes

Housing with care, sometimes called extra care or very sheltered housing, is specialist accommodation designed for older people or people with additional needs to live independently while accessing flexible, on-site care.

The level of care provided can increase or decrease as a person's needs change. For example, extra support can help someone to return from hospital earlier and can be scaled back as they recover. This frees up a hospital place and allows the person to recover in a comfortable and familiar setting, getting their independence back more quickly.

The Scottish Housing with Care Taskforce has identified a significant supply gap in Scotland¹⁹. Currently, the supply of housing with care in Scotland is under half a percent, despite our ageing population increasing demand for housing that meets the needs of older people. This is compared to 5% in Australia, 5.5% in New Zealand and 6% in the USA where retirement housing is more mainstream.

The report suggests that increased government focus on increasing the supply of housing with care would:

- Help to address delayed discharge, saving money for the NHS
- Provide attractive housing options for older people who may be looking to downsize, freeing up larger family homes
- Create communities where people can 'age in place', develop social networks and maintain independence for longer.

Our asks:

- The Scottish government should develop an Independent Living Strategy which sets out how people will be supported to live well in mainstream or specialist housing. This should identify housing need, demand for services and cover the roles of housing, health and social care and other partners.
- The Scottish government must complete the review of adaptations, streamlining the process and ensuring adequate funding to provide for identified needs.

¹⁸<https://housingevidence.ac.uk/project/delivery-and-funding-of-housing-support-in-scotland-assessing-costs-and-benefits-of-typical-services/>

¹⁹https://www.arcouk.org/sites/default/files/SHWCT%20findings%20document%20June%202022_1.pdf

8 Technology and innovation

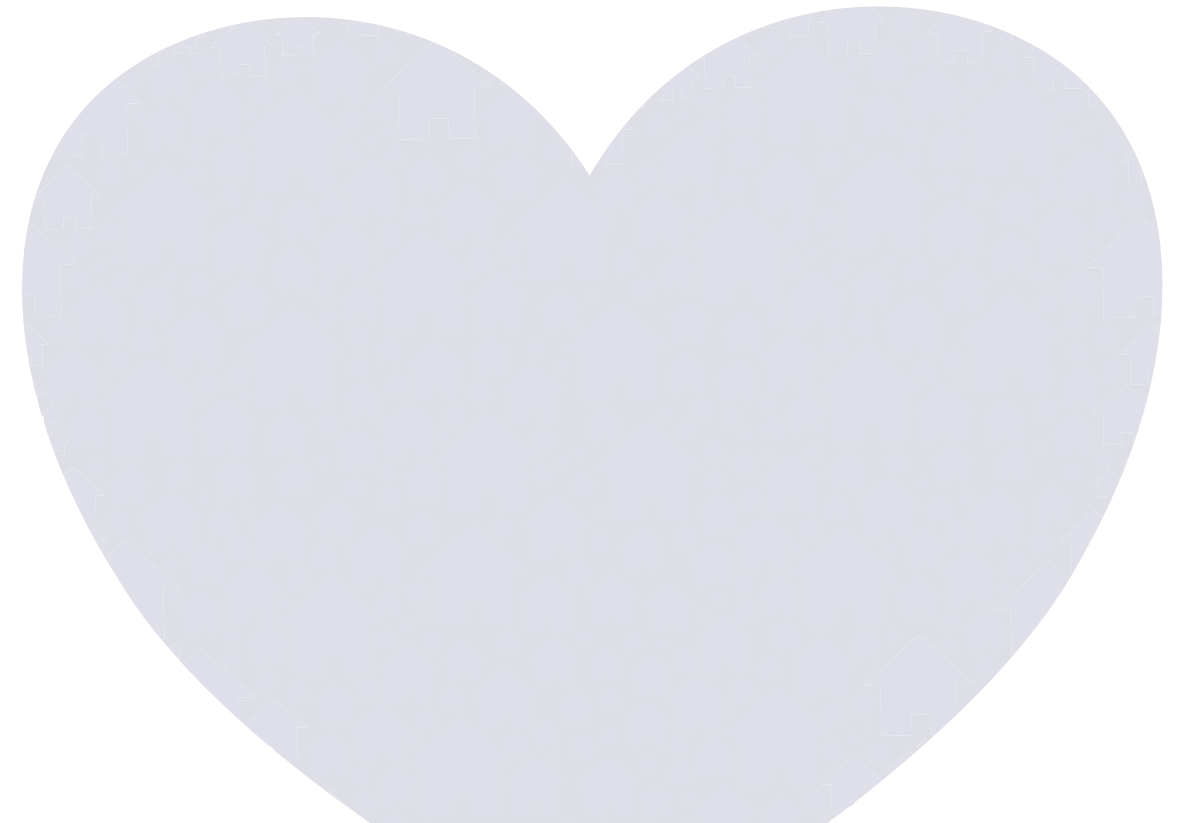
Good quality housing remains the starting point for good health, but technology is creating new opportunities to support prevention and independent living. Housing providers are increasingly using data and connected technologies to identify risks earlier, target interventions and help people remain safe and well in their own homes. Technology-enabled care, environmental monitoring and digital connectivity can support earlier intervention, improve understanding of housing conditions and help services respond before issues escalate.

The Scottish government has a long-standing ambition to support people to live well at home, or in a homely setting, for as long as it is safe to do so. Technology has an important role to play in achieving this ambition. As Scotland's population ages and demand for health and social care services continues to grow, housing providers are increasingly exploring how technology can support independent living, improve outcomes and make better use of limited resources.

Technology-enabled care is already supporting thousands of people across Scotland to maintain their independence. Telecare, remote monitoring and digital health technologies can provide reassurance, improve safety and help identify changing needs at an earlier stage. Evidence from Scotland's Technology Enabled Care Programme has demonstrated the potential for technology to reduce demand on frontline services and support more preventative models of care and support.

Technology also has an important role to play in maintaining healthy homes. Environmental monitoring systems can help identify conditions associated with damp and mould, allowing housing providers to investigate concerns at an earlier stage and target interventions more effectively. This supports a shift away from reactive, complaint-led approaches towards more preventative and evidence-informed services.

Looking ahead, digital connectivity, smart technologies and data-driven services are likely to become increasingly important features of housing that supports health and wellbeing. Ensuring that homes are digitally connected and capable of supporting current and future technologies will help people remain independent for longer while supporting wider ambitions around prevention, early intervention and community-based care.





How technology is supporting independent living

At Bield, we believe housing plays a vital role in supporting people's health, wellbeing and independence. The Bield Tech Hub, located at our West Port Retirement Housing Plus development in Linlithgow, demonstrates how accessible housing and innovative technology can work together to help older people live safely and confidently in their own homes for longer.

Designed as a realistic home environment, the Tech Hub allows tenants, staff, health and social care professionals, and partners to experience assistive technology in action. Across four fully equipped living spaces, visitors can explore solutions including predictive analytics that identify changes in daily routines, 4D radar fall detection that requires no wearable devices, and voice-enabled technology that promotes independence, wellbeing and social connection.

The Tech Hub is a key part of Bield's Independent Living Approach, which combines accessible housing, personalised support and strong community connections. By embedding technology into everyday living, we are helping people manage their health, remain connected to others and reduce the likelihood of avoidable crises, hospital admissions and long-term care needs.

The impact of the Tech Hub is already being seen in the lives of our tenants. Following a visit to the Tech Hub, members of Bield's Care at Home team recognised that one tenant who was unable to leave her bed could not activate her emergency alarm using either a pull cord or pendant due to her mobility restrictions. Inspired by the technology they had seen, they approached the Tech Hub team to explore alternative solutions.

Within just two weeks, interoperable technology had been identified and installed in the tenant's home, enabling her to contact the alarm service independently whenever she needs assistance. The outcome not only improved her safety and peace of mind but also demonstrated how greater awareness of available technology can empower staff to think differently and find personalised solutions that support independence.

As Scotland looks towards healthier homes and healthier futures, we believe housing must be recognised as an essential part of the health and care system. Investing in accessible homes and preventative digital solutions enables older people to remain independent, connected and well, while helping to create a more sustainable health and social care system for the future.



Technology can also empower tenants to understand their home environment, make changes themselves or report issues to their landlord if things do not improve.



Smart sensors give tenants a clearer picture of the air quality in their homes

Wheatley is the first social landlord in the UK to pilot Nooku's innovative indoor air-quality technology in tenants' homes. The new project, which came about through Wheatley's partnership with Smart Things Accelerator Centre (STAC), is part-funded through Innovate UK.

As part of the project, air-quality specialists Nooku are installing 140 Wheatley Homes Glasgow and Wheatley Homes East homes with small, smart sensors that will provide helpful advice on making homes healthier.

Nooku provides easy-to-understand, real-time advice for tenants through monitoring temperature, humidity, ventilation and CO₂ levels, as well as pollutants and allergens which can impact tenants' wellbeing.

Wheatley tenant Andrina is taking part in the pilot. She said: "I initially received an email, and it was talking about Nooku and air quality, and I've got a nephew, who was born with a rare heart condition, so obviously was something I was interested in.

"You've got an app and it shows you how good the air quality is, so you can monitor everything. It's a wee bit of extra peace of mind that you can go into an app, and it can tell you about the quality of your air. So, you're not sitting worrying is there anything potentially dangerous in your home that you don't know about. So, it is a really good device."

Another tenant taking part in the pilot, Mercy, said:

"I think it's been good so far because initially when I didn't have this device, I didn't know the humidity in the house, but this tells me every day, and every moment how the humidity is. It tells you whether it is good, poor or ok, and you know what else you have to do to improve the humidity. So, it's giving me an idea of how my environment is at present or at a certain time."

For many families – especially those with young children – healthier indoor air can make a noticeable difference to comfort, energy and better sleep. The information gathered will allow Wheatley and Nooku to explore how smart technology could benefit households across Scotland in future.



Our asks:

- The Scottish government must improve digital connectivity and digital infrastructure across Scotland's social housing stock. It can do this by supporting investment in technology that enables prevention and independent living, and recognising digitally enabled housing as an important part of health and social care reform.

9 Creating social connections

The [Campaign to End Loneliness](#) reports that just under half of adults living in the UK experience loneliness and 7% – which equates to 3.83 million people – experience chronic loneliness meaning they feel lonely often or always.

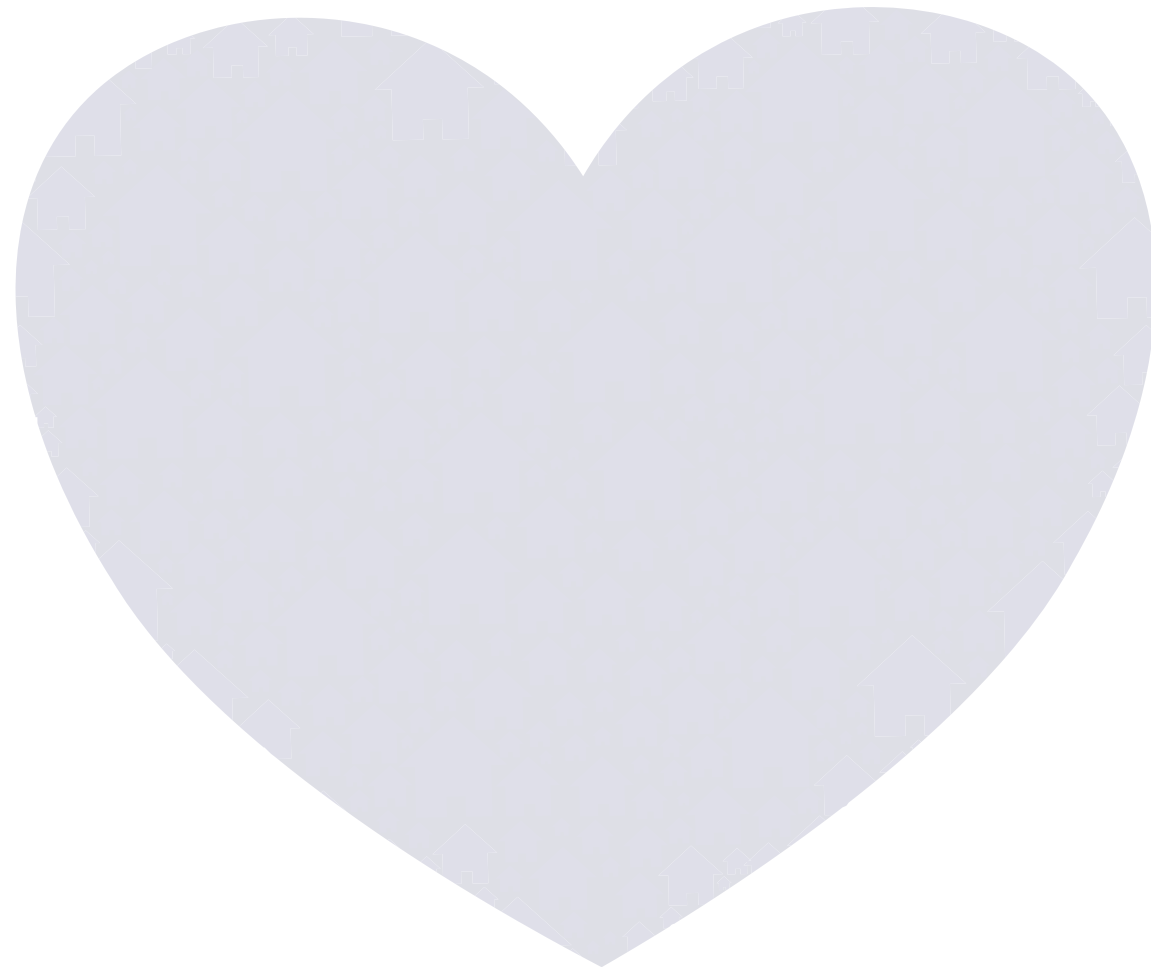
The impact of loneliness and social isolation can vary considerably, affecting different people in different ways, and can change over time. It can affect people’s mental health, reduce confidence, lower educational attainment and progression in work. It can also impact physical health, increase stress levels and the risk of early mortality. It is estimated that severe loneliness costs around £9,900 per person each year due to the impact on health and wellbeing, work and productivity.

Tackling loneliness and social isolation

Housing organisations play a vital role in creating safe, supportive communities. This can include providing access to:

- Communal spaces for residents to gather and socialise
- Advice and support services
- Training and employment opportunities.

Volunteering projects can also help to build confidence and resilience for the volunteers and the communities they support.



Investing in Communities

Whiteinch and Scotstoun Housing Association’s new Community Investment Strategy is a four-year commitment to creating stronger, healthier and more connected communities. Developed through conversations with tenants, community workshops and local partners, the strategy reflects the issues that matter most to residents and sets out a clear plan built around three priorities:

- People and opportunity
- Place and environment
- Health and wellbeing.

At the heart of the strategy is The Whiteinch Centre, a trusted community hub that brings people together and provides practical support every day. The centre plays a key role in delivering opportunities that help residents build confidence, develop new skills and improve their quality of life.

Through a wide range of activities, from social groups and family sessions to fitness classes, community meals and cultural events, local people have opportunities to connect with others, reduce isolation and become more active within their community. The centre also supports people to access training, digital learning and employability programmes, helping them build skills and confidence for the future.

Community food initiatives, including the Whiteinch Community Shop and cooking activities, provide dignified support that helps individuals and families manage rising living costs while building confidence around food and nutrition.

Volunteering opportunities enable residents to contribute to their community, gain valuable experience and develop meaningful connections. These opportunities not only support local services but also help people build confidence, expand their networks and develop new skills.

By investing in people, supporting neighbourhoods and promoting wellbeing, the association is helping to create lasting social value and ensuring that residents feel supported, connected and proud to call Whiteinch and Scotstoun home. The value of The Whiteinch Centre’s activity programme can be seen in the experiences of local residents, who said:

“It helps me in my personal life, and I feel more confident to find a job.” - ESOL with IT participant.

“Events like this remind us how beautifully diverse our community is and how much we can learn from one another. Getting to know our neighbours better - not just by name, but by heart - made this celebration extra special. Here’s to more joyful moments, deeper friendships, and a community that celebrates unity through diversity.” - Summer blowout attendee.



Cohousing

Cohousing is a type of intentional community where residents usually have their own private living space and communal spaces. Cohousing residents actively participate in designing and managing their communities and often encourage social activities which build connections and support networks across the community.

Cohousing improves health and wellbeing primarily by reducing social isolation, fostering mutual support and encouraging active community involvement.

A report published by Hope Cohousing in Orkney²⁰ sets out the key benefits of cohousing, including:

- **Reducing loneliness and social isolation**, achieved through joint activities, shared spaces and designs that encourage encounters with others and foster a sense of belonging
- **Fostering agency, mutual aid and wellbeing** through shared decision making, involvement in practical tasks and helping others
- **Contributing to affordable and sustainable housing supply** with many cohousing developments including affordable rented housing, often delivered in partnership with local housing associations. Most also have a strong emphasis on the use of sustainable materials and low energy usage
- **Strengthening local community life and sense of place** some cohousing development offer facilities that are open to the wider community such as meeting spaces, gardens and shared activities. Cohousing residents may also be more likely to engage in politics and be actively involved in local activities due to their capacity, confidence and sense of efficacy
- **Improving health** through tackling social isolation and supporting people to maintain their independence for longer, particularly older residents.

²⁰<https://hopecohousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/why-cohousing-is-good-for-people-and-communities.pdf>

10 Tenant participation and health

With an ageing population and demand for social housing continuing to exceed supply, meaningful tenant engagement and collaborative working have never been more important. There is much to be done to ensure that homes are maintained and when necessary, upgraded in partnership with tenants. Tenant participation plays a vital role in future-proofing homes and communities for generations to come.

Tenant participation recognises that people who live in homes and communities are not simply recipients of services but partners in shaping them. Meaningful tenant participation enables residents to influence decisions about the services they receive, the places they live and the priorities for investment. By involving people with lived experience in identifying issues, designing solutions and evaluating outcomes, housing organisations are better able to deliver services that meet real needs and remove barriers to good health and wellbeing.

Participation can also have direct benefits for the people involved. Having opportunities to contribute, influence decisions and work alongside others can increase confidence, reduce social isolation and strengthen a sense of belonging within communities. For many people, participating in local decision-making provides purpose, develops new skills and creates stronger relationships with neighbours and housing staff. These social connections and increased sense of control are recognised contributors to improved mental wellbeing.

Unlocking tenant potential

Tenants come from a wide variety of backgrounds bringing skills from lived experience, education, employment and voluntary work. Many initially become involved with their landlord because of a specific concern or area of dissatisfaction. However, through improved communication, building trusting relationships, and even informal conversations, it emerges that they have experience as clerks of works, teachers, landscapers, youth workers, and many other backgrounds or professions with a wealth of transferable skills.

In the interest of driving services to meet and exceed the tenants' needs, as housing professionals, we need them on board. We also need to get better at identifying and harnessing these valuable skills, nurturing interest and involvement, and empowering both individuals and communities to play active roles in shaping their homes, communities, and services.

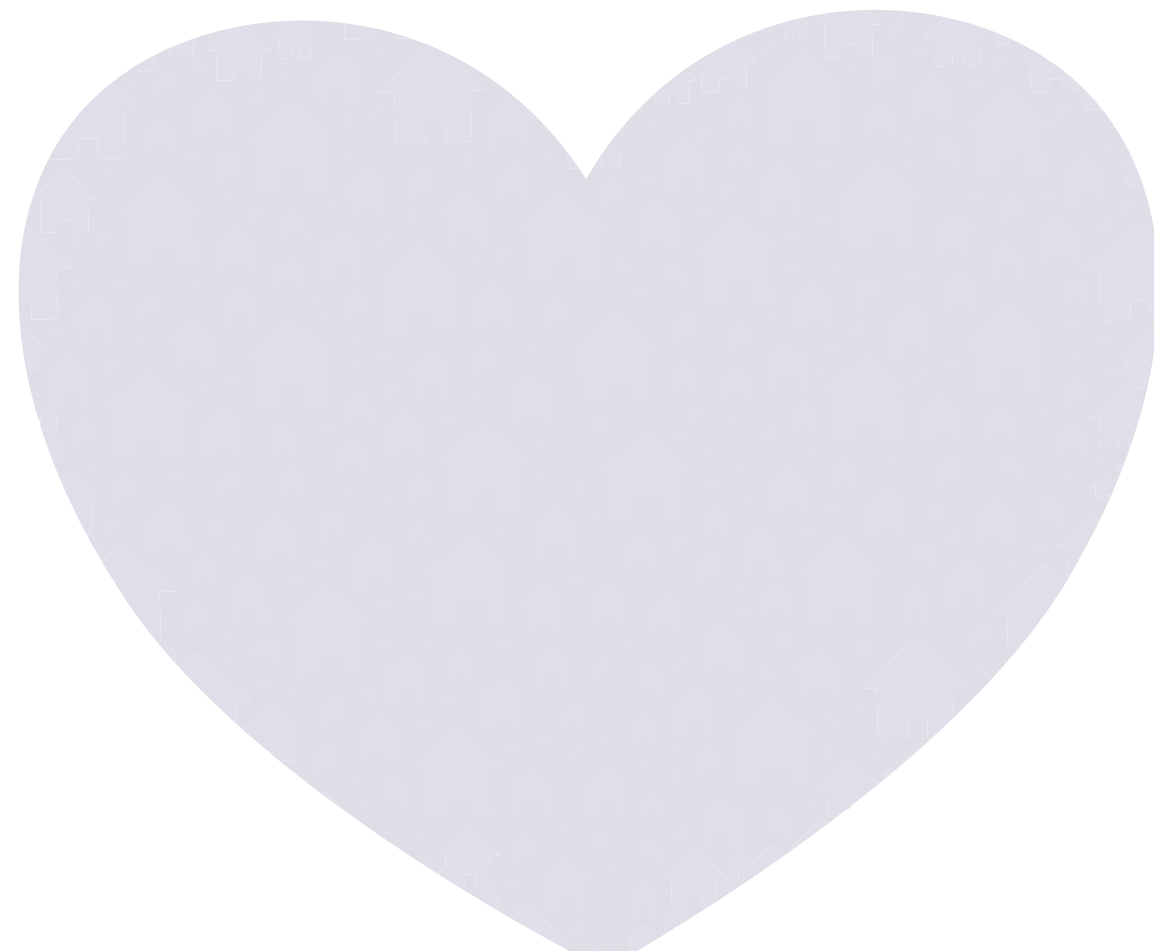
Glenoaks Housing Association

The death of Awaab Ishak in 2020 highlighted the devastating consequences that damp and mould can have on people's health and prompted housing organisations to review their approach. In response, Glen Oaks Housing Association's tenant-led Service Improvement Group identified damp and mould as a priority scrutiny topic, recognising the potential impact of fuel poverty, rising energy costs and poor housing conditions on residents' health and wellbeing.

Working independently with support from the Tenants Information Service, tenants examined the Association's policies, procedures and performance, benchmarked practice with other landlords and gathered evidence from staff and residents. The review recognised examples of good practice while making 41 recommendations to strengthen inspections, communication, data collection, staff training and support for tenants.

The scrutiny led to tangible improvements in service delivery, including co-designed information for tenants, enhanced tenancy support visits that encourage earlier reporting, improved inspection processes, better recording of health and wellbeing concerns, and stronger links to financial inclusion and energy support.

It also helped shift organisational culture away from assumptions that damp and mould are primarily caused by tenant behaviour, instead promoting a more proactive, evidence-based and preventative approach. By combining lived experience with robust scrutiny, the project demonstrates how tenant participation can improve both housing services and health outcomes while strengthening trust between landlords and residents.



11 Preventing homelessness

Homelessness can have a devastating impact on physical and mental health outcomes. Research published by the Scottish government in 2018²¹ linking homelessness and health records clearly showed that repeat homelessness resulted in more frequent use of health services, often unplanned and at a point of crisis.

Households living in temporary accommodation for extended periods of time also face a range of health issues which can be caused by unsuitable accommodation, the stress of uncertainty or inability to access services, education, employment or support networks because of location or frequent moving.

Shelter Scotland's recent report, *In Their Own Words*²², highlights the harms that temporary accommodation can cause to children – impacting safety, education and health.

The new duty to prevent homelessness

Everyone agrees that the best way to mitigate the impacts of homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place. New measures set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2025 will require a range of bodies to take steps to prevent homelessness, recognising that homelessness can be a complex issue requiring partnership work beyond just the housing sector.

The new duty has been widely welcomed but the legislation does not contain detail on how the new measures will work in practice and there is some concern that well-intentioned legislation will not lead to the cultural and practical changes required if it is not resourced properly or fully supported by all partners involved.

The £4 million that has been made available for 'ask and act' pilots to test how the new duty will work is welcome. But if the successes from these projects are to be embedded, the Scottish government must commit to long-term funding, allowing flexibility for organisations to invest in prevention measures alongside day-to-day work.

Research into the implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs) published by CIH Scotland in 2023²³ found excellent examples of prevention and partnership working across Scotland but highlighted that progress was often hampered by annual funding allocations. The short-term funding made it difficult to commission services, recruit and retain staff.

²¹<https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-homelessness-scotland/>

²²https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/in_their_own_words_childrens_experiences_of_temporary_accommodation

²³<https://www.cih.org/media/pzwly0ik/making-the-case-for-the-next-five-years.pdf>

Demonstrating the value of prevention

The Scottish government's Upstream Homelessness Prevention Fund made £1 million available in 2025/26 for housing associations and their partners to test practical approaches to homelessness prevention ahead of the 'ask and act' duty coming into force. Evaluation of the fund which was managed by SFHA and Homeless Network Scotland showed:

- There were 943 people were supported, with 662 households (70%) helped to prevent homelessness
- An estimated £10 million in savings was generated
- Rapid cash-first interventions that prevented evictions reduced legal costs and rebuilt trust
- Dedicated tenancy sustainment and community connector roles that reached people who disengaged from traditional housing management
- Improved colleague wellbeing, as practical tools reduced the sense of powerlessness many felt when they wanted to help but previously lacked the means to act
- Routine 'asking' at multiple touchpoints, supported by clear escalation pathways
- Strong collaboration between RSLs and third sector, delivering joined-up support and 'whole person' outcomes.

The report calls for sustained investment to ensure learning from the pilot projects and a genuine step-change in Scotland's approach to homelessness can be embedded.

Find out more: <https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/pdf-ask-and-act-housing-associations-going-upstream-4.pdf>



Tenancy sustainment

Landlords provide a wide range of services to support tenants to maintain tenancies, avoid crisis points and the risk of eviction. Common approaches include:

- Debt advice, support with benefit claims and income maximisation
- Mediation between family members or neighbours
- Skills, training and employment opportunities to build financial resilience
- Digital skills and access to equipment and internet connections in community spaces.

East Ayrshire Council: CHAT (Connecting Housing and Tenants)

Good quality housing is more than just bricks and mortar; it is a foundation for health and wellbeing. We strive to ensure that all tenants live in good quality homes, which are warm, safe and affordable in vibrant communities. In 2025 the housing service embarked on a transformative journey to improve service delivery, to enhance the quality of lives for our tenants, increase tenancy sustainment and protect our assets.

At a development day with stakeholders, we agreed that it's crucial to engage meaningfully with tenants regularly to explore underlying causes of social and economic disadvantage and poor health outcomes, and through a coaching approach, help them to achieve their goals and aspirations. We needed to be radical and put tenants at the heart of service delivery. We took a transformational, collaborative approach which was creative, caring, and citizen-centred and the concept of a Connecting Housing and Tenants (CHAT) visit was born.

Neighbourhood coaches carry out the CHAT visit which has a number of goals including strengthening relationships with tenants, proactively identifying support needs and working with the household to address them, checking for any outstanding repairs and promoting health and wellbeing. New IT devices were provided to neighbourhood coaches, to elevate the efficiency and effectiveness of the CHAT visit, enabling actions to be instructed on-site, for example, a referral to Lemon Aid for energy advice or to housing asset services for a dampness inspection in the home, streamlining the process and reducing officer time and duplication.

The neighbourhood coaches take time to build nurturing, trusting relationships with tenants and instead of reacting to tenancy breaches through an enforcement lens, the CHAT visit provides an opportunity to discuss matters in a safe, comfortable environment varying from income maximisation, help to look after the home and garden, promoting contents insurance and identifying the need for adaptations.

CHAT visits are an excellent opportunity to focus on ensuring tenants are receiving all benefits to which they are entitled to. This increases household income to reduce rent arrears and poverty within the home and maximise opportunities for children and young people to thrive in a healthy home.

The CHAT visit takes a trauma-informed approach to engaging with our tenants, recognising that quite often, a lack of engagement is due to challenges within the home such as mental health problems, social isolation, loneliness, and self-neglect. By taking time to reach out to tenants and establish a trusting relationship, we can identify complex support needs, enabling signposting to support services and community resources.



Our asks:

- Homelessness prevention work will only be successful if it is provided consistently over the long term. The Scottish government must provide multi-year budgets to support commissioning of services and time for culture change to embed.
- As the Scottish government develops formal requirements on "ask and act" it must make roles and responsibilities of relevant bodies clear, transparent and accountable.

12 Supporting better health in the private rented sector

A changing private rented sector

The private rented sector (PRS) provides homes for around 300,000 households in Scotland and meets a range of needs providing shorter-term accommodation for people who want choice and flexibility. However, as the housing market has changed over the last decade, more people are settling in the PRS for longer periods of time and are seeking greater security. It's also home to a more diverse range of people with different needs, including families and older people.

We know that in some cases, private tenants may find it challenging to access the right type of home to meet their needs or may find it difficult to get adaptations or support. This can be due to a range of factors, including lack of awareness of what is available and assumptions (rightly or wrongly) that requests for physical adaptations will be declined.

The Scottish government has introduced several changes to the PRS in recent years with the aim of improving conditions, security and affordability for tenants. However, studies such as the Rent Better project²⁴ have found that power imbalances between tenants and landlords, as well as a lack of enforcement, mean that intentions are not always realised. Research carried out by CIH Scotland²⁵ into the potential role of the PRS in addressing homelessness found that the PRS is lacking strategic direction and leadership, with the last dedicated PRS strategy published in 2013 – within a very different housing context.

Normalising accessibility in the PRS

The Intersectional Stigma of Place Based Ageing (ISPA) project has been exploring how stigma linked to disability, ageing and place impacts people's ability to live well in their homes and communities. A recent report of theirs considers the experiences of people living in the PRS²⁶. It found that while accessibility in the PRS is the exception rather than the norm, it did identify small changes in processes that could significantly improve experiences of disabled people. Suggestions for change included:

- Embedding accessibility-related search filters within standard property websites so that relevant characteristics can be identified quickly
- Training property photographers and agents in the visual information that should be routinely captured in listings to help with decision making
- Prioritising rapid provision of accurate property information to renters with accessible housing requirements to help them act quickly when properties become available.

Making a Home in the Private Rented Sector²⁷, a practice guide for landlords and letting agents published by the University of Stirling, also urges landlords not to make assumptions about renting to particular groups of people. Landlords and letting agents must be mindful of rules around unlawful discrimination, including the new rules introduced by the Renters Rights Act²⁸. But the guidance also argues that excluding groups of people based on assumptions about them doesn't make good business sense. Accommodating needs where possible can foster respect and can lead to long term tenancies and secure income.

²⁴<https://rentbetter.indigohousegroup.com/>

²⁵<https://www.cih.org/publications/rapid-rehousing-transition-plans-improving-access-to-the-private-rented-sector/>

²⁶https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Ordinary-Accessibility-PRS-Report-25.06.26.pdf

²⁷<https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/33476/1/Making%20a%20Home%20PRS%20Practical%20Advice%20Guide-McKee%20et%20al-2021.pdf>

²⁸<https://www.gov.scot/publications/rental-discrimination-guidance-for-scotland/>

Homes for Good

Homes for Good is Scotland's first social enterprise letting agency and landlord, managing more than 600 homes through an ethical model that combines warm, secure homes with personalised tenancy sustainment support. This approach helps individuals and families sustain their tenancies and build positive futures, improving lives, strengthening communities and reducing pressure on public services.

At the heart of the Homes for Good model is an in-house tenancy sustainment team that provides tailored, person-centred support based on tenants' individual circumstances. This can include helping with finances and benefits, accompanying tenants to appointments, connecting them with specialist services, supporting mental health and wellbeing, or simply providing a listening ear.

Combined with the security of a safe, affordable home, this support improves physical and mental wellbeing and gives tenants the confidence to connect with their communities, build relationships and plan for the future. By helping tenants sustain long-term tenancies, it also reduces demand on health and other public services, combats homelessness and gives tenants a more secure platform to build healthier, happier lives.

"My flats with Homes for Good have changed the trajectory of my life. I sometimes wonder what would have happened if I'd been late for my appointment or if I had missed it – how my life might have turned out." John



Our asks:

- The Scottish government should develop a new strategy for the PRS, recognising its role in supporting a wide range of people. It should set an expectation for accessibility to be embedded into the letting process with support for landlords and letting agencies.



13 Supporting a healthy housing workforce

Scotland's housing sector employs tens of thousands of people across a wide range of roles from customer service, advice and information to finance, HR, development, repairs, maintenance and many more.

We know that the constant pressure of needing to make budgets stretch further can be challenging. We also know that cuts to services in other areas often result in more complex issues being left for housing staff to deal with.

The survey we carried out for Scottish Housing Day (summarised in chapter three) found that the vast majority of those who responded think that their workplace does support staff health and wellbeing. However, there were consistent comments on the need for more resources to ensure manageable workloads for housing staff, investment in training and development to equip people to do their jobs well, and for clear boundaries to be set between the roles of housing staff and partners where specialist support is needed.

A new report from CIH Scotland on leadership and culture in the social housing sector²⁹ reflects these findings, pointing to the need for a better understanding of the skills and professional development required to build resilience in the workforce. While there were positive comments about leadership and culture in the sector, some felt that the workforce is overstretched, that people are often being asked to do more with less, and the sector needs to do more to attract and nurture talent.

The examples from Sanctuary Scotland and Berwickshire Housing Association demonstrate organisations that are proactively supporting their staff and securing better outcomes for tenants.

²⁹<https://www.cih.org/publications/scotland-leadership-and-culture-report/>

A trauma-informed approach to housing

Sanctuary Scotland's management team became aware of the need to focus on the root causes of challenges in engaging with some of the most marginalised tenants and communities, and the issues faced by housing staff such as rent arrears, antisocial behaviour, failed tenancies and homelessness.

In response, Sanctuary reframed these challenges from being seen as simply just "housing issues" and instead considered them through a trauma-informed lens – considering the person's history and context of their current situation. This led to embedding a trauma informed and responsive approach across the organisation through supporting tenants, communities and the workforce to recognise the impact of trauma by building and maintaining trusting and meaningful relationships.

In turn, tenants who were at high risk of losing their homes were supported to access relevant support services and rebuild their relationships with themselves and then their communities. Additionally, robust mechanisms were put in place to promote staff support, care and wellbeing.

A key piece of learning throughout this project was the importance of recognising the impact of vicarious trauma on staff. Despite the tangible appetite from the workforce across Sanctuary to embed a trauma-informed approach in their practice, there were still experienced and skilled employees were leaving the sector due to the trauma they had experienced as part of their role – this was also true when speaking to other Housing Associations. This led them on a journey of understanding the impact of vicarious trauma and that their organisational capacity to be trauma-informed was directly linked to the wellbeing of their staff. It was recognised that if staff were experiencing burnout, then this limited their ability to fully embed a trauma informed approach to their own practice.

In turn, this created opportunities for conversations to be had with staff to explore the impact of vicarious trauma and how this affected them; for example, it was highlighted how evictions were emotionally challenging and potentially traumatising for both the tenant and for staff. These engagements with frontline staff, and their willingness to do so, were imperative in understanding the reality and impact of the work they were doing, and also in developing protective supports to ensure that staff felt happy and healthy at work.

Find out more: <https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/case-studies/joint/a-trauma-informed-approach-to-housing>



Creating a culture where people thrive

At Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA), colleague wellbeing is a strategic priority rather than a standalone initiative. Recognising that engaged, healthy and supported colleagues are essential to delivering outstanding services to customers, BHA has spent the last three years transforming its approach to wellbeing, psychological safety and colleague experience.

A key focus has been creating an environment where people feel safe to speak up, admit mistakes and be themselves without fear of negative consequences. This commitment to psychological safety is embedded within BHA's business plan and supported by behavioural frameworks linked to organisational values. As a result, trust, collaboration and innovation have strengthened across the organisation.

With many colleagues working alone in customers' homes and communities, BHA has also invested significantly in personal safety and wellbeing support. This includes personal safety devices, enhanced reporting processes for incidents of abuse or harassment, personal safety training and specialist support for domestic abuse. BHA further recognises the potential emotional demands of work by providing mental health first aiders, occupational health services and external clinical supervision. Colleagues also have access to free external counselling through its employee assistance programme.

Flexible and person-centred working practices play an important role in what BHA does. Colleagues can choose where they work best, whether from home, the office or community locations, while a Right to Disconnect policy helps maintain healthy work-life boundaries. Regular one-to-one meetings focus first on colleague wellbeing before performance, ensuring colleagues feel valued and supported.

BHA also recognises the importance of connection and belonging. Quarterly engagement events, monthly team sessions, social gatherings and a peer recognition platform called Hive help colleagues celebrate success and support one another. Since its launch, Hive has generated more than 2,000 messages of appreciation ('Hive Fives') between colleagues regardless of role or position, reinforcing a positive and supportive culture.

The impact of these initiatives is reflected in strong colleague engagement, high participation in staff surveys, with a +36 employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) in a recent engagement survey, and low staff turnover. By putting wellbeing at the heart of its culture, BHA is creating an environment where people feel safe, supported and empowered to thrive.



Our asks:

- The Scottish government must do more to ensure that partner organisations like health and social care have the capacity to deliver the specialist services that are needed.
- The Scottish government should work with the housing sector to develop a workforce strategy, identifying skills gaps and planning for talent development.
- The upcoming review of the Scottish Social Housing Charter should include a new outcome on professional development, requiring social landlords to demonstrate how they are ensuring staff at all levels have the skills and knowledge required for their role.
- In the meantime, housing organisations should do more to embed a culture of wellbeing, including a clear professional development strategy ensuring that staff have the training and skills needed to do their job, and that they recognise the limits of their role where signposting would be appropriate.

14 Partnership working

Public service reform

The Scottish government's focus on public service reform recognises that services can be delivered more efficiently and produce better outcomes if providers work together, prioritise prevention and place people – staff and service users – at the heart of what they do. The Public Service Reform Strategy³⁰ seeks to maximise the value of investments and improve outcomes for people.

A renewed focus on prevention is welcome, and we think that housing is well placed to deliver value for money and generate savings for partners through homelessness prevention, improving health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities.

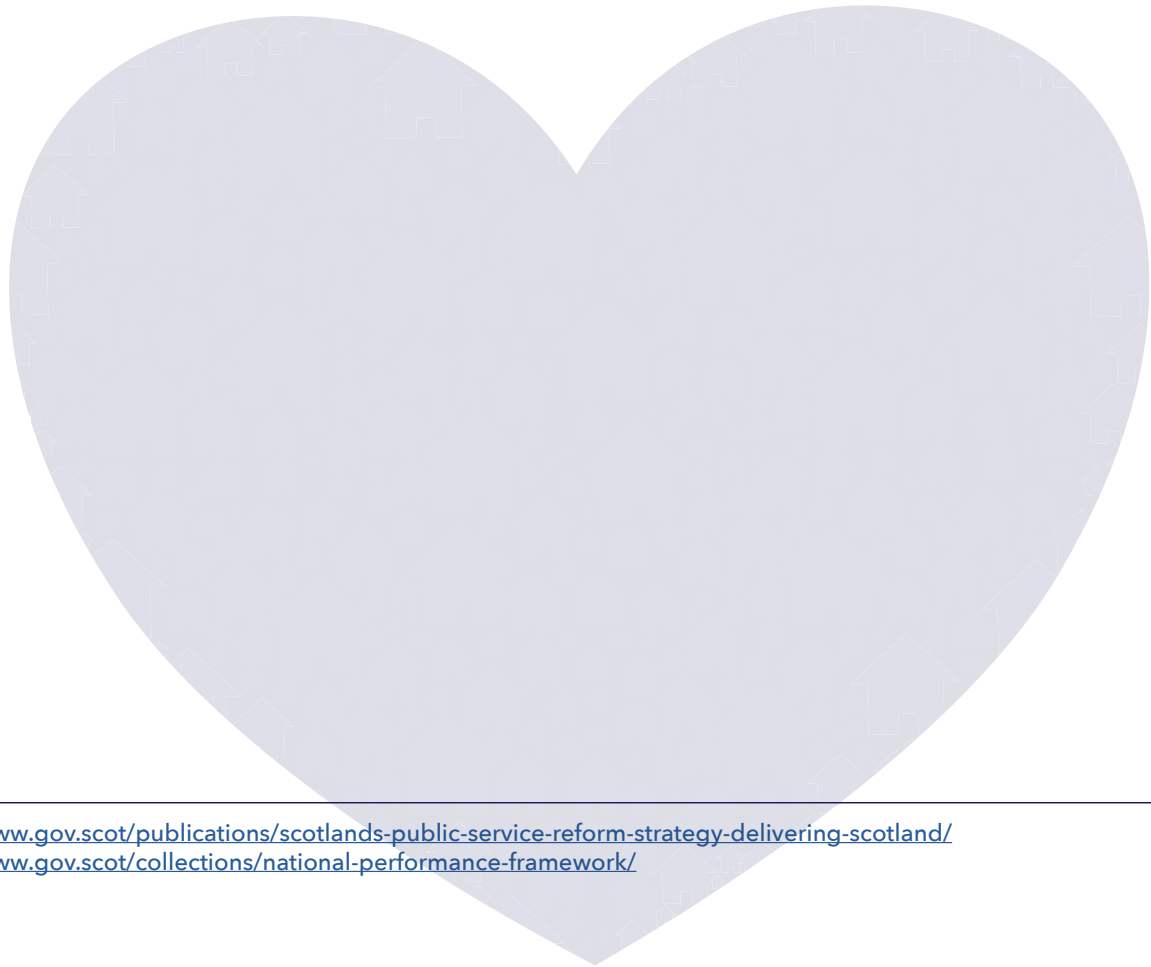
Effective partnerships in the housing sector

We know there are excellent examples of partnership working in the housing sector, including the case studies throughout this report, but a report on Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans published by CIH Scotland in partnership with Fife Council in 2023 found that examples of good practice were often the result of relationships at a local level. They happened more by chance than by strategic drivers.

There are of course financial barriers which can result in reluctance to take risks or to share budgets across departments or between organisations. But culture and organisational barriers can also stifle partnerships with people working to different priorities rather than realising the benefits of shared outcomes. The Scottish government's ongoing review of the National Performance Framework³¹ presents an opportunity to ensure alignment of objectives across organisations so that efforts and resources are used to support common goals.

³⁰<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-public-service-reform-strategy-delivering-scotland/>

³¹<https://www.gov.scot/collections/national-performance-framework/>



Japp Gardens, Falkirk Council and Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership

Japp Gardens was originally an 18-bed care home that has operated since 1949. Following a review by Falkirk's Health and Social Care Partnership (H&SCP), the facility was found to no longer meet modern standards and closed in 2017.

However, the site was well located with excellent transport links, nearby shops and a restaurant. Given the location and a recognised shortfall in accessible housing in the area, Falkirk Council's housing department saw an opportunity to redevelop the site for social housing.

A design brief was developed to include a mix of accessible housing including ambulant flats and fully wheelchair accessible bungalows. Public consultation showed strong support for the development and suggestions for linking to the adjacent park and footpaths for pedestrian access were incorporated into the design.

The desire to retain existing trees and greenery as well as the added cost of providing bungalows made the development financially challenging. However, the team was determined not to compromise on the quality or vision for the development instead forming a partnership with the H&SCP to access the necessary funding.

The design of the homes built on previous experience and incorporated feedback from tenants. Accessible features include power assisted doors, bedrooms with future adaptability in mind, including walls that can be removed for modifications such as bathroom access, and electrical points for assistive technologies.

"The council have thought about convenience. I'd be housebound if I did not get this bungalow. I like hanging my washing out using the adaptable whirly gig. My car is more accessible, and I don't need to scrape the windows. The house has made such a difference to my quality of life." -Resident

Japp Gardens won the 2025 CIH Scotland Housing Award for Excellence in Accessibility and Inclusion sponsored by Horizon Housing Association.

Find out more: <https://www.cih.org/knowledge-hub/good-practice-compendium-library/sha-good-practice-compendium-2025/excellence-in-accessibility-and-inclusion-sha-gpc-2025/>



Housing Options Scotland Hospital Housing Clinic

In September 2025, at the age of 50, Annette Barnett, had a heart attack and a spinal stroke. She was admitted to Edinburgh's Royal Infirmary and subsequently transferred to the National Spinal Injuries Unit at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Glasgow for rehabilitation.

The Hospital Housing Clinic began working with Annette in January 2026, by which point her Occupational Therapist had assessed her existing accommodation, a private rented flat in Edinburgh, as unsuitable for her to return to.

Our broker Eve Young helped Annette with her application to EdIndex, which covers all social housing options with the council and housing associations in Edinburgh, and also looked at options for mid-market rent.

With her discharge date rapidly approaching, Annette felt her "mental health was at an all-time low". Recovering from a spinal stroke, she had the added worry of not knowing where she would end up living and was terrified of being discharged into another hospital or a care home.

Our broker found a two-bedroom flat through our vacancy list (we update a list of available vacancies with registered social landlords / housing associations), an accessible two-bedroom, ground-floor property, owned and managed by Blackwood Homes and Care. Ideally situated close to Annette's family, including her two grown-up sons, it was perfect for Annette and her daughter, Rebekah, 25, to move into.

Annette is now happily settled in her beautiful new home where she can continue her recovery with confidence and peace of mind.

She says of the support she received:

"The house I'm in now is like it was made for me and all my family are nearby. I'm very, very grateful. If this service wasn't here, I don't know where I'd be, or what I'd be."



Our asks:

- The Scottish government's public service reform agenda should recognise the housing sector as a key partner in prevention and providing value for money.
- The review of the National Performance Framework should reflect shared goals, encouraging partnership working and sharing of resources.

15

Summary of recommendations

This report demonstrates the crucial role of housing in supporting good health and wellbeing across all aspects of our lives. We have gathered examples of how housing providers and partners are delivering services that transform people's lives and provide added value across a wide range of indicators including better health outcomes, reduced inequalities and greater community capacity and resilience.

But we know that more can be done. In reviewing the existing evidence and inviting contributions from housing practitioners, tenants and residents, the Scottish Housing Day partners hope that the Scottish government, housing providers and partners can work better together to build on these successes.

Housing, health and inequality

- While the new Scottish government considers the future of Housing to 2040, we ask that the focus is on deliverability, setting out clear targets and regular transparent reporting on progress.

Designing healthy homes

- The Scottish government must prioritise the review of Housing for Varying Needs, taking on learning from projects like DesCHA and Envision.
- People with lived experience must be involved in developing accessibility standards.
- We understand that the new national housing agency, More Homes Scotland will have a research function. This should be used to improve data on accessible housing needs to inform housing supply targets.

Maintaining and improving existing homes

- The Scottish government must act swiftly to introduce a heat in buildings bill to help drive improvements in our existing homes, and put the right framework in place to deliver on statutory net-zero and fuel poverty targets.
- The Scottish government must progress the recommendations of the Parliamentary Working Group on Tenement Maintenance during this parliamentary term.

Adaptations, support and specialist housing

- The Scottish government should develop an Independent Living Strategy which sets out how people will be supported to live well in mainstream or specialist housing. This should identify housing need, demand for services and cover the roles of housing, health and social care and other partners.
- The Scottish government must complete the review of adaptations, streamlining the process and ensuring adequate funding to provide for identified needs.

Technology and innovation

- The Scottish government must improve digital connectivity and digital infrastructure across Scotland's social homes. It can do this by supporting investment in technology that enables prevention and independent living, and recognising digitally enabled housing as an important part of health and social care reform.

Preventing homelessness

- Homelessness prevention work will only be successful if it is provided consistently over the long term. The Scottish government must provide multi-year budgets to support commissioning of services and time for culture change to embed.
- As the Scottish government develops formal requirements on "ask and act" it must make roles and responsibilities of relevant bodies clear, transparent and accountable.

Supporting better health in the private rented sector

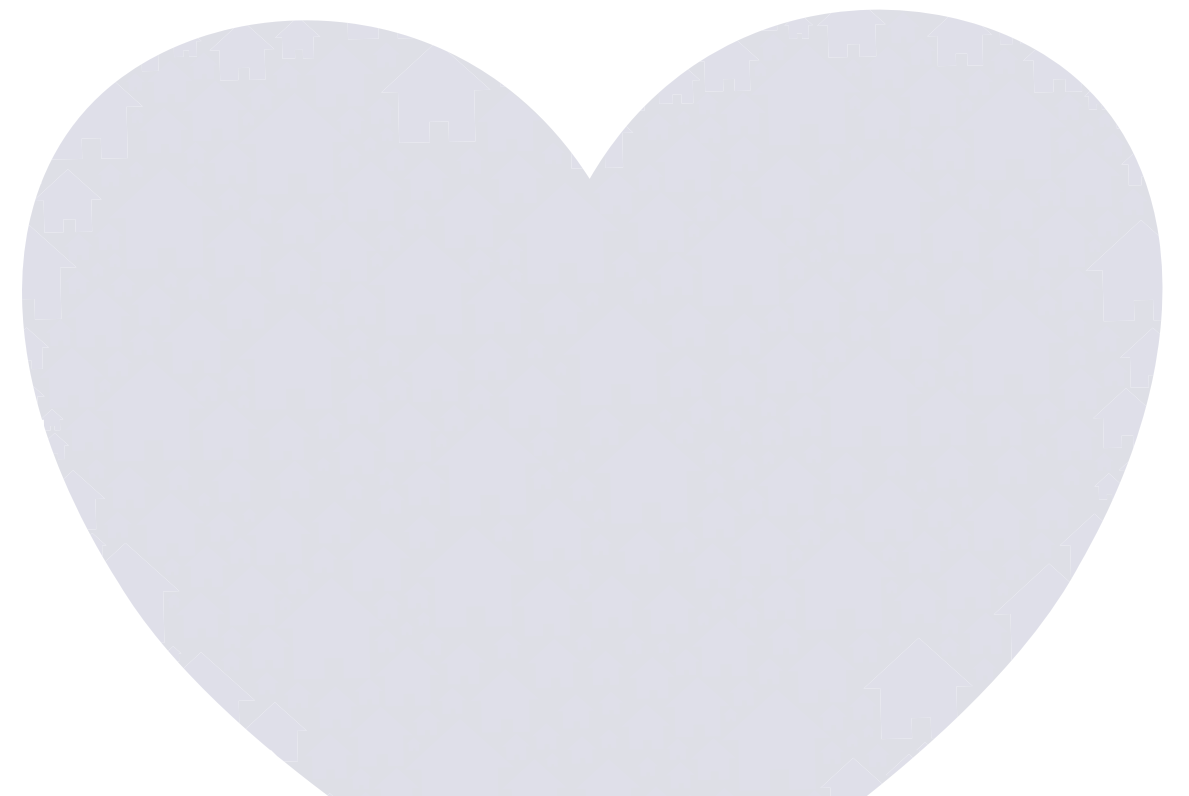
- The Scottish government should develop a new strategy for the PRS, recognising its role in supporting a wide range of people. It should set an expectation for accessibility to be embedded into the letting process with support for landlords and letting agencies.

Supporting a healthy housing workforce

- The Scottish government must do more to ensure that partner organisations like health and social care have the capacity to deliver the specialist services that are needed.
- The Scottish government should work with the housing sector to develop a workforce strategy, identifying skills gaps and planning for talent development.
- The upcoming review of the Scottish Social Housing Charter should include a new outcome on professional development, requiring social landlords to demonstrate how they are ensuring staff at all levels have the skills and knowledge required for their role.
- In the meantime, housing organisations should do more to embed a culture of wellbeing, including a clear professional development strategy ensuring that staff have the training and skills needed to do their job, and that they recognise the limits of their role where signposting would be appropriate.

Partnership working

- The Scottish government's public service reform agenda should recognise the housing sector as a key partner in prevention and providing value for money.
- The review of the National Performance Framework should reflect shared goals, encouraging partnership working and sharing of resources.



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