



**Scottish Housing
Regulator**

**Report on inquiry into
Glasgow City Council's services
for people who are experiencing
homelessness**

November 2020

About us

We are the independent regulator of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and local authority housing services in Scotland. We regulate to safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by RSLs and local authorities. You can find out more about us and what we do on our website www.housingregulator.gov.scot



Report on inquiry into Glasgow City Council's services for people who are experiencing homeless

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1. About this inquiry

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings from our inquiry into Glasgow City Council's work to improve its delivery of outcomes for people who are experiencing homelessness, or are threatened with homelessness. In the inquiry we:
- tested some of the improvements reported by the Council to address the recommendations we made in March 2018 when we [reported](#) on how effectively the Council and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) house people who are homeless; and
 - examined the Council's compliance with its statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation.

The Council has undertaken and continues to undertake a wider programme of improvement and transformation activity as part of its [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan \(RRTP\)](#), which we did not examine in this inquiry.

- 1.2 We planned to carry out the inquiry between December 2019 and May 2020. We paused the inquiry in March 2020 due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. As a result of the measures implemented by the Government to counter the spread of the virus we have been unable to complete the full range of the work we planned for this inquiry in relation to how the Council provides access to its service and to settled accommodation. However, the work we have done (summarised in Annex 1) has given us sufficient evidence to reach firm conclusions in relation to the areas set out above at paragraph 1.1. We have taken account of the Council's representations in finalising this report.
- 1.3 We describe how the Council has responded to the demand for temporary accommodation during the pandemic and the impact on its ability to provide settled accommodation.
- 1.4 The Council has reported improvements in its performance in providing temporary accommodation since April 2020 and in response to the pandemic. Our findings are relevant to how the Council builds on and sustains its compliance with its statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation and its work towards compliance with the [Unsuitable Accommodation Order](#). Our findings and recommendations are to assist the Council's work to respond to, and recover from, the impact of the pandemic.

2. Context for this inquiry

- 2.1 The population of Glasgow is around 625,000, 11.5% of the population of Scotland. Approximately 43% of all people in Glasgow live in areas that are among the 20% of the most deprived in Scotland.
- 2.2 The Council faces a number of challenges in delivering an effective service for people who are experiencing homelessness. In particular the scale of homelessness presentations in Glasgow is significant. In 2019/20, the Council took 6,054 applications for assistance from people who were homeless, an average of 504 each

month. This was 370 (7%) more than the previous year. Glasgow received 16.4% of all homelessness applications taken by councils in Scotland. During 2019/20 the Council assessed 5,262 people as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness, and 2,488 (47%) of these households said they had one or more support needs (such as mental health problems, drug or alcohol dependency, physical or learning disability, or basic housing management/independent living skills). This was 380 (18%) more than the previous year and 16% of all households assessed as having one or more support need by local authorities in Scotland.

- 2.3 In 2019/20, the Council assessed that it had a duty to provide settled accommodation for around 5,150 households, an increase of 467 on the previous year. During 2019/20 the Council reported known outcomes (i.e. where the Council maintained contact with the household and the outcome was known) for 4,010 households where it had a duty to secure settled accommodation. Of these 2,965 (75%) secured settled accommodation; the Scottish average is 82%. It provided 2,800 (70%) households with a tenancy with an RSL. For cases the Council closed during 2019/20, it took an average of 261 days from assessment to closure; the Scottish average is 224.
- 2.4 Prior to the pandemic the Council and its partners reported between 15 and 27 people rough sleeping in the city centre on any given day. During 2019/20, the Council reported receiving around 510 (8%) homeless applications where at least one member of the household experienced rough sleeping in the three months prior to their application; the Scottish percentage figure is also 8%. It received 430 (7%) applications where at least one member of the household experienced rough sleeping the night before their application; the Scottish figure is 4%.
- 2.5 Glasgow is the only asylum seeker dispersal zone in Scotland. The Council estimates that it supports around 3,000 people seeking asylum each year. The Council has acknowledged that this brings challenges for the provision of homelessness assistance, particularly around the low availability of larger properties which, in the main, affects families from ethnic minority communities.
- 2.6 The Council delivers homelessness services through Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) with oversight from Glasgow City Integration Joint Board (IJB). The Council's Community Homelessness Teams are based within three public access offices in the south, north east, and north west of the city. It has a dedicated Asylum and Refugee Support Team based at South Portland Street. Public access to the Council's Out Of Hours Service is by phone or at its base within the Glasgow City Mission premises in Crimea Street. The Council's Prison Casework Team is located in HMP Barlinnie.
- 2.7 The Council has no housing stock and relies on 68 RSL partners and the private sector to provide both temporary accommodation and settled accommodation for people who are homeless. Co-ordinating and managing the contribution from such a large number of landlords brings challenges. In 2015 the Council and its partners established the Housing Access Board (HAB) to help co-ordinate work to house people who are experiencing homelessness. The HAB comprises the Council, the Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations, the Wheatley Housing Group and Homeless Network Scotland (formerly called Glasgow Homelessness Network). It established 10 Local Letting Communities (LLCs) across the city to help collaboration at local level and local lettings plans setting out the numbers of lets required from each LLC and has established a city-wide LLC monitoring group.

- 2.8 As part of its Affordable Housing Supply Programme the Council has committed to fund the building of 80 new larger properties to deal with homelessness demand. During 2019 the Council reported that it had secured 30 properties for use as temporary furnished accommodation as part of its Acquisition Strategy Programme.
- 2.9 Glasgow was the first local authority in the UK to pilot the Housing First¹ model for supporting people with complex case histories to sustain settled tenancies. It has been working to embed this approach and is currently participating in Scotland's [Housing First Pathfinder](#). By August 2020 the Council achieved 127 Housing First tenancies towards its target of 325 by 2021, 42% of the 306 tenancies achieved through the Pathfinder². Around 82% of those the Council housed through Housing First had sustained their tenancies at 31 August 2020; the average percentage of people sustaining all tenancies across the Pathfinder as at 31 August 2020 was 87%. The Council told us that there have been positive outcomes for some people who did not sustain their tenancy. The Council has committed to housing 600 people through Housing First over the lifetime of its [RRTP](#).
- 2.10 The Council has consistently stated its commitment to improving outcomes for people who are experiencing homelessness in Glasgow. In February 2019, Glasgow City IJB approved the GCHSCP's [RRTP](#) for 2019-2024. This sets out how the City partners will work together to deliver a housing-led approach to tackling and ending homelessness in Glasgow.
- 2.11 In February 2020, the Council identified Aspire, Crossreach, Loretto Care, Mungo Foundation, SACRO, the Salvation Army and Ypeople as its partners to form Glasgow's Alliance to End Homelessness. The first of its kind in the UK, the Alliance partners will jointly make financial and operations decisions on the provision of purchased services. The Council will retain its responsibility for the statutory homeless service. Glasgow Homelessness Involvement and Feedback Team (GHIFT)³ was involved in the strategic review of homelessness services, co-designing outcomes the Alliance will work towards, and the selection process. It will continue as a partner in the Alliance. The Council has invested an initial budget of £23.3 million during 2020/21 to facilitate the work of the Alliance.

Our engagement with the Council

- 2.12 This inquiry is part of our wider engagement with the Council on the services it provides to people who are experiencing homelessness and builds on our 2018 report [Housing People who are Homeless in Glasgow](#) on how effectively the Council and its RSL partners house people who are homeless. In March 2018 we recommended that the Council:
- set a clear primary objective to move people who are homeless quickly into settled accommodation;
 - review the targets it sets for housing people who are homeless to ensure they are consistent with the number of people it has a duty to secure a home for;
 - streamline its approach to assessment and referral, especially for those who need only limited or no assistance beyond getting a home;

¹ Housing First is an approach which prioritises access to housing as quickly as possible. Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder is led by cross-sector partnerships in Aberdeen/shire, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling. The Pathfinders are leading on scaling up Housing First on a local authority-wide basis.

² The Housing First Pathfinder [tracker](#) showed that at 31 August 2020 Aberdeen Council achieved 55 Housing First tenancies with 93% sustainment, Dundee achieved 49 tenancies with 90% sustainment, Edinburgh achieved 65 with 89% sustainment and Stirling achieved 10 with 80% sustainment.

³ GHIFT is made up of people with lived experience, supported by Homeless Network Scotland.

- ensure that it keeps in contact with people who are homeless while they wait for a home to help minimise the number of people with whom it loses contact; and
- work with RSLs to build its knowledge and understanding of the type and location of homes in the city to ensure that referrals are targeted to appropriate RSLs.

2.13 The Council accepted our findings, agreed to implement the recommendations and developed an action plan in May 2018. Between May and August 2018 we engaged with the Council about its action plan. We advised the Council that the plan was unclear on the range of actions which would enable it to achieve compliance and so it did not give us the assurance we required. In August 2018, the Council told us that it aimed to complete its improvements to address our recommendations by October 2018, and that there would be demonstrable improvement in the outcomes for people who are experiencing homelessness from then. We started monthly monitoring of the Council's performance on important outcome areas and we committed to directly test the improvements reported by the Council.

2.14 Throughout 2019 we engaged with the Council about its progress with the improvement work. We started our inquiry in December 2019. Since March 2020 we have been monitoring the impact of the pandemic on the Council's homelessness service and continue to engage with the Council to understand the risks and challenges it faces and how it is responding.

3. Findings

The Council's improvement actions to address our 2018 recommendations

- 3.1 The Council has carried out, and continues to progress, a wide range of improvement actions in its service for people who are homeless. We report here on the actions to address our 2018 recommendations (paragraph 2.11) which we were able to examine prior to the pandemic.
- 3.2 Through its [RRTP](#) the Council has set a clear primary objective to move people who are homeless quickly into settled accommodation. It has established an [RRTP](#) performance monitoring and reporting framework and a delivery group to oversee this.
- 3.3 In 2019, in partnership with the Wheatley Group, the Council commissioned consultants to support its improvement work and help it to redesign important elements of its homelessness service. In part as a result of this work, and before the onset of the pandemic, there were indicators of some improvements in the Council's performance. It is making quicker decisions on applications from people who are homeless: in 2019/20 the Council took on average 14 days from application to assessment, down from 20 days in 2017/18. We also saw improvement in how quickly the Council secures settled accommodation for people who are homeless and the Council reported a 4% increase in the number of lets made by RSLs to homeless households during 2019/20.



Positive practice

Following the Council's introduction of a new approach to managing applications, we observed interviews with people presenting as homeless in which the Council's caseworkers took a homelessness application, made necessary inquiries, told the person the outcome, and completed a resettlement plan, all in the same day. Both the people applying for help and the Council's staff were positive about the new approach.

The Council is continuing to work with the consultants to review the management of temporary accommodation and the process for referring people to RSLs for settled accommodation.

- 3.4 The Council completed a review of how it records instances where it did not make an offer of temporary accommodation and has implemented a data improvement plan. It told us it is confident that the information it provided to us in this inquiry is accurate. The Council is implementing new case management quality assurance processes to review cases where it had lost contact with individuals prior to closing the case.
- 3.5 The Council has increased, and continues to increase, its capacity in the homelessness service by recruiting and training staff across a range of roles to support its work in Housing Options, RSL liaison and section 5 referrals, delivering the RRTP, and additional social care workers to work directly with people who are experiencing homelessness. The Council is also implementing a revised performance management framework.
- 3.6 Some of the Council's partners who replied to our questionnaire told us that it had become easier to engage with the Council's homelessness teams and that there was improved collaboration at local level. However, other partners told us that they, and people who are experiencing homelessness, still experience difficulties engaging with the Council's teams, and we observed this in our review of cases.
- 3.7 These improvements are important building blocks to help the Council tackle the weaknesses in its service, but the pace of change since March 2018 has been slow, which the GCHSCP acknowledged in its [RRTP](#).

Temporary accommodation

- 3.8 The Council faces challenges in responding to the demand for temporary accommodation. In 2019/20, the Council offered people who were homeless 9,096 placements in temporary accommodation, of which 7,190 were accepted and 1,906 were refused. This means that the Council provided nearly 1 in 5 of all temporary accommodation placements by councils in Scotland. A household can have more than one offer of temporary accommodation.
- 3.9 During 2019/20, the Council told us that it failed to offer temporary accommodation on 3,786 instances when households required it, which was lower than the 3,835 it reported to the Scottish Government and which was an increase of 445 on the previous year. This means the Council failed to comply with its statutory duty to offer temporary accommodation in nearly 1 in 3 occasions when people required it. The Council told us that this related to 1,471 households. From our review of a sample of cases we found that single people were disproportionately affected by this; they accounted for 66% of homeless applications but for 83% of those not offered temporary accommodation. Many of those not accommodated were vulnerable and approached the Council for help on multiple occasions.
- 3.10 During 2019/20, the Council reported breaching the [Unsuitable Accommodation Order](#)⁴ with 80 of its placements in temporary accommodation. The Council told us that it has identified that a number of these reported breaches were the result of recording

⁴ The [Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Order 2014](#) was amended by the [Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2017](#). This effectively reduced the time local authorities could provide households with children and pregnant women with temporary accommodation which does not meet the requirements of the Order, from 14 days to 7.

problems in its IT system, and that the correct figure was 46. The Council also told us that it has made improvements to its recording and governance processes.

- 3.11 The GCHSCP [Homelessness Strategy](#) (2015-2020), its [RRTP](#), and the Council's [Homelessness Policy](#) (2020) state the Council's statutory duties in relation to the provision of temporary accommodation and the Unsuitable Accommodation Order. The Council's strategy, as set out in its [RRTP](#), is to reduce the amount of temporary accommodation it requires over the next four years by effective prevention work and quicker resettlement where homelessness cannot be prevented. It plans to remodel its provision of temporary accommodation and redirect resources to its prevention and tenancy sustainment activity. The Council's plans to reduce the level of temporary accommodation are contingent on it increasing the number of settled lets it secures to resettle people who are homeless, thereby reducing lengths of stay in temporary accommodation.
- 3.12 Prior to the pandemic there was a disconnect between the Council's stated strategy and policy on homelessness and the practice in its service delivery about meeting its legal duties in relation to temporary accommodation. Notwithstanding its work to increase the pool of temporary furnished accommodation in previous years, the Council did not have enough suitable temporary accommodation to meet the need from people who approached it with nowhere to stay. The Council told us that it faces challenges in providing temporary accommodation and that it is working to address this through its [RRTP](#). However, we found an acceptance in the Council's management of presentations by people with nowhere to stay that it could not always comply with its duty to provide temporary accommodation. We saw evidence of the Council's staff working hard to accommodate people and meet their needs within this, although they were not always able to do so given the inadequate supply of suitable temporary accommodation. We report at paragraph 3.27 on the Council's performance in providing temporary accommodation during the pandemic.
- 3.13 In its [RRTP](#) the Council reported that it had "1,851 units of temporary accommodation providing 2,899 temporary tenancies ranging from flats and/or houses in the case of dispersed accommodation; to individual rooms in the case of emergency hostels and Bed and Breakfast (B&B) placements". Prior to the pandemic the Council recorded an increase in the use of B&Bs, with an average use of 196 beds per night between April 2019 and February 2020. The Council told us that it was unable to expand the use of emergency accommodation such as hotels and B&Bs to meet demand in the way it has since the pandemic, due to the nature of Glasgow's commercial and tourist market.
- 3.14 The Council did initial modelling in relation to increased settled lets and the potential reduction in temporary accommodation for its [RRTP](#), but it does not have an up to date analysis of need and demand for temporary accommodation which takes account of the diverse range of needs of people who present for assistance. The Council told us that during 2019 it had commissioned consultants to support its analysis of temporary accommodation in order to develop a Temporary Accommodation Strategy, but this has been delayed due to the pandemic and to allow it focus on the work needed to plan for moving people accommodated in hotels during the pandemic to settled accommodation. The Council told us it recognised that it will face a significant challenge to meet the requirements of the newly amended Unsuitable Accommodation Order, which extended the application of the Order to all homeless households. The Council will also need to plan its future provision of temporary accommodation to take account of the Scottish Government's [advisory standards for temporary accommodation](#).

- 3.15 Prior to the pandemic, as a result of a daily shortage of available suitable temporary accommodation, the Council was, in effect, rationing temporary accommodation by prioritising the people it accommodated based on its assessment of risk and vulnerability. The statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation is not based on priority need. The Council completes a risk assessment for people who need temporary accommodation which it uses to inform how it allocates the accommodation available. The Council does not provide its staff with clear policies and procedures to guide their decisions on providing temporary accommodation. The Council has told us that it plans to provide staff involved in the allocation of temporary accommodation with guidance.
- 3.16 While the Council has no documented procedure on how it prioritises, its staff told us they prioritise the most vulnerable households and always aim to accommodate households with children or pregnant women. However, in our review of a sample of 2,178 household presentations not offered accommodation, we found that the Council did not offer accommodation to 202 households with children. Most of those households told the Council they would stay with family or friends or return to their previous accommodation, although 1 in 4 were unable to specify where they intended to sleep that night. The Council told us that it will carry out further scrutiny of these cases.
- 3.17 We also found that the Council did not offer accommodation to many vulnerable people, particularly single males with complex needs, often on multiple occasions: 297 households, mostly single people, told the Council they would sleep rough and 1,031 households were unable to specify where they intended to sleep that night or said they would go to the Out of Hours Service. The Council often lost contact with people it did not offer temporary accommodation before it either completed a homelessness assessment or secured settled accommodation.
- 3.18 The Council was not managing effectively its pool of temporary furnished accommodation to bring the properties quickly back into use when they became vacant. This contributed to the Council not having enough suitable temporary accommodation available when it was needed. As part of its system re-design work the Council has reviewed with City Building (Glasgow) LLP and Royal Strathclyde Blindcraft Industries (RSBi) the management of the work needed to bring properties quickly back into use. It is implementing an improvement plan and had introduced a new contact protocol to more quickly identify temporary furnished accommodation that becomes vacant. As a result, and before the onset of the pandemic, the Council had started to bring vacant temporary furnished accommodation back into use more quickly.
- 3.19 During 2019/20, people spent an average of 228 days in temporary accommodation provided by the Council compared to the Scottish average of 184 days. The average is higher for families with children at 293 days, compared to a Scottish figure of 241. The long periods of time people spend in temporary accommodation are, at least in part, a consequence of the time it takes the Council to secure people settled accommodation. This delay contributes to the shortfall in temporary accommodation and so to the Council's failure to provide accommodation when people need it.
- 3.20 An inadequate supply of suitable temporary accommodation and the Council's approach to providing temporary accommodation, together with challenges in securing an adequate supply of settled accommodation, resulted in large numbers of people being left without appropriate and suitable accommodation. These factors also created significant additional demand on the service, resulting in the Council

expending considerable effort in managing the consequences of the daily shortfall in suitable temporary accommodation.

- 3.21 In our case reviews we saw incidences of households being excluded from temporary accommodation placements, particularly B&Bs and hotels, and often from accommodation that was not suitable for the individual's needs in the first place. This contributed to repeat presentations, sometimes on a daily basis, and to recurrences of people not being accommodated. Prior to the pandemic the Council was about to start a pilot of a new way to deal with exclusions from temporary accommodation.
- 3.22 The daily shortfall in available suitable temporary accommodation means that the Council cannot always provide temporary accommodation in a location that matches a person's needs and wishes, although we did see its staff try to do this. The Council regularly offers short-term placements, often in unsuitable and, based on stakeholder feedback and our case reviews, poor quality B&Bs. Some have restrictions on use, including no entry after a defined time at night. The [RRTP](#) acknowledges that some of the temporary accommodation it provides is not affordable for people who are working. All of this contributes to a high level of refusal for, and high turnover in, some types of temporary accommodation – principally hotels and B&Bs. This results in people presenting to the Council on multiple occasions.
- 3.23 The Council did not always communicate clearly with people when they presented about whether they would be accommodated that day and, if not, what would happen if they still needed accommodation. We saw this result in people being confused about what would happen to them and what action they needed to take. The Council did not proactively manage or consider alternative strategies for a number of vulnerable individuals who had not been accommodated on multiple occasions, resulting in missed opportunities to progress their resettlement. People the Council had placed in B&Bs and hotels for longer periods were subject to curfews, restrictions on use of facilities and required permission to stay overnight with friends or family; these restrictions did not apply to people the Council placed in temporary furnished accommodation.
- 3.24 The Council has recognised that the current models of emergency accommodation it uses are not appropriate for people with complex case histories and people who find it difficult to sustain communal living environments. It is committed to re-designing its emergency accommodation provision and ending the use of unsuitable accommodation, including bed and breakfast accommodation, over the lifetime of its [RRTP](#).

The Council's response to the pandemic

- 3.25 Since March 2020, the Council has focused on responding to the impact of the pandemic. The GCHSCP has revised its [RRTP](#) and is now implementing a recovery plan aligned to its [RRTP](#) objectives. It has recruited 17 additional staff during the pandemic and is realigning resources across the service to increase its capacity and enhance frontline operational delivery with a view to improving the pace at which people are moving into settled accommodation.
- 3.26 Between April and August 2020 the Council received 2,405 applications for help from people who were homeless, an average of 481 per month, slightly lower than the average monthly figure during 2019/20. This represents 17% of the total number of homelessness applications in Scotland during the same period.
- 3.27 The Council has reported that it has complied with its statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation in almost all instances where it is required since April. It

reported offering temporary accommodation to almost all people who approached it for assistance. Between April and August 2020, the Council made 5,337 offers of temporary accommodation to 4,138 households (households may require more than one offer). Of these, 4,069 offers were accepted and 1,268 were refused. Over that period the Council failed to offer temporary accommodation to 32 households that needed it on 39 occasions.

- 3.28 The Council told us that working with its third sector partners it has reduced the number of people who had been sleeping rough prior to the pandemic. The Council estimates that there were around 5 or 6 people sleeping rough at any given time in Glasgow during the period of the lockdown; the Council told us that it continues to work with its partners to provide support and offers of temporary accommodation to people sleeping rough. The Council told us it is also working with partners to provide a range of outreach health, support and harm reduction services to people placed in hotels and B&Bs and is working with its RSL and third sector partners to move people onto more suitable temporary, supported, or settled accommodation. It reported moving 157 people on during September. It has completed around 1,300 resettlement plans for people waiting on settled accommodation and is progressing work to identify people suitable for support through Housing First.
- 3.29 In responding to the pandemic the Council has worked with its RSL partners to increase the available supply of temporary accommodation. The Scottish Government has provided additional funding to third sector partners in Glasgow, working in partnership with the GCHSCP, to provide additional emergency accommodation during the pandemic, support people to self-isolate and comply with social distancing requirements. Much of the additional accommodation has been in vacant hotels and B&Bs. The Council told us that it recognises that hotel accommodation is not suitable beyond the period of the emergency response to the pandemic. It told us that in June 2020 it decided to increase the level of private rented sector tenancies for use as temporary accommodation by 300 units over the next twelve months to October 2021. As part of this expansion the Council will pilot a shared tenancy scheme and is examining models of rapid access to emergency accommodation.



Positive practice

Between April and August the Council reported that its RSL partners leased an additional 425 homes to the Council for use as temporary accommodation. The Council told us that during the lockdown period it worked with its partners in City Building (Glasgow) LLP and RSBi to bring 450 void properties contributed by RSLs into use.

- 3.30 As at 31 August 2020, the Council had 4,586 households waiting on settled accommodation. Of this, 3,311 households were in temporary accommodation, with around 600 in B&B and hotels.
- 3.31 Since April there has been a significant reduction in the number of homes being let by RSLs as a result of the restrictions they have had to operate within during the pandemic. During the period April to August the Council reported it secured 276 permanent tenancies with RSLs in the city; prior to the pandemic the Council and its RSL partners had aimed to secure permanent homes for 1,750 households who were homeless over that same period. Most RSLs in the city have now started to increase lettings. During the pandemic the Council completed further modelling on the number of lets it now requires as part of its RRTP recovery plan; this work will inform its future Temporary Accommodation Strategy.

3.32 The Council is engaging with its RSL partners to seek their support for a range of actions to help it to respond to the pandemic including maximising the offers of lets to homeless households, allowing households to live in a home which has more bedrooms than they would be entitled to under RSLs' allocation policies, and 'flipping' homes RSLs have leased to the Council for use as temporary furnished accommodation, into settled accommodation. The Council reported flipping 26 temporary tenancies into settled lets during 2019, and a further 20 between 1st June 2020 and 31st August 2020. It has carried out a review of all temporary tenancies and reported that it is in the process of flipping a further 63.



Positive practice

The Council is working with RSL partners to pilot a new approach of matching people to available accommodation in order to streamline the process and reduce the length of time it takes to move people into settled accommodation. The Council reported that this new approach has reduced the number of offers of accommodation which are refused by around 46%. It is now expanding this approach.

3.33 The number of people in temporary accommodation, together with the reduction in the number of homes available to the Council to let to people who are homeless, means that the Council now has a major challenge to provide appropriate temporary and settled accommodation to those that need it, and to comply with the newly amended Unsuitable Accommodation Order. To meet this challenge effectively, the Council will need the support of its RSL partners and it will need to address the weaknesses in its provision of temporary and settled accommodation for people who are experiencing homelessness. The recommendation for RSLs in our 2018 inquiry that they maximise their contribution to housing people who are homeless remains relevant.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 We found weaknesses in the Council's approach to complying with its duty to provide temporary accommodation prior to the pandemic. However, we did see the Council was putting into place measures to address these weaknesses, although the pace of improvement had been slow. Since the pandemic the Council has reported almost full compliance with its statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation primarily because it has secured additional temporary furnished accommodation from RSLs and increased its use of hotels and B&B accommodation. The Council will need to act quickly to secure an adequate level of suitable temporary accommodation to meet the continuing demand and to sustain the level of compliance with its statutory duty it has achieved during the pandemic. It will need to ensure this is in place when the extension of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order comes into force.
- 4.2 As it comes out of the period of response to the public health emergency the Council should:
- ensure that it has an adequate level of suitable temporary accommodation to always meet its duty to provide temporary accommodation and to comply with the requirements of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order;
 - develop and implement a Temporary Accommodation Strategy based on an up to date analysis of the need and demand for temporary accommodation and the diverse needs of service users;

- provide staff with clear guidance and procedures and training to help them make appropriate decisions on providing temporary accommodation in accordance with the legislation; and
- ensure that it has sufficient capacity to sustain the improvements it has made and deliver its recovery plan.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 We now expect the Council to act on our recommendations and to ensure that its recovery plan addresses the weaknesses in its approach to temporary accommodation.
- 5.2 We will use the findings from this inquiry and the Council's response to our recommendations to inform our future regulatory strategy with the Council. We will set that out in our published Engagement Plan for the Council.

Annex 1

What we did in this inquiry

We examined some of the improvements the Council reported since March 2018 and the Council's compliance with its statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation to people who approach it for assistance. We:

- reviewed a range of strategy, policy and performance information provided by the Council and the Scottish Government's official statistics [Homelessness in Scotland 2019/20](#);
- analysed a sample of 8,584 households making 17,933 applications between April 2018 and Sept 2019;
- reviewed case information on the customer journeys of nearly 100 households who approached the Council for assistance between 1 April 2019 and February 2020 accounting for nearly 500 presentations for emergency/temporary accommodation in total;
- shadowed staff doing their work, including 16 of the Council's homeless interviews with households and we spoke with service users afterwards about their experience;
- spoke to Council staff and senior staff in the three Community Homelessness Teams, Out of Hours service, Temporary Accommodation Allocations Team, Temporary Accommodation Development Teams and the Finance Team;
- visited some of the Council's temporary furnished accommodation; and
- obtained feedback from 30 RSL partner and stakeholder bodies (Annex 2).

Annex 2: Organisations involved in homelessness in Glasgow who responded to our questionnaire

- Aspire Housing
- Blairtummock Housing Association
- Blue Triangle (Glasgow) Housing Association
- Cadder Housing Association
- Calvay Housing Association
- Cassiltoun Housing Association
- Cathcart & District Housing Association
- ERHA (Easterhouse Regeneration and Housing Alliance)
- Gardeen Housing Association
- Glasgow City Mission
- Govan/Govanhill Law Centre
- Homeless Action Scotland
- Home in Scotland
- Kingsridge Cleddans Housing Association
- Linthouse Housing Association
- Milnbank Housing Association
- Molendinar Park Housing Association
- Parkhead Housing Association
- Partick Housing Association
- Provanhall Housing Association
- Queens Cross Housing Association
- Rosehill Housing Co-Operative
- Scottish Tenants Organisation
- Shelter Scotland
- Shettleston Housing Association
- Spire View Housing Association
- Thenue Housing Association
- Tollcross Housing Association
- Wellhouse Housing Association
- West of Scotland Housing Association



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