

Appendix 4 – Workshop sessions



Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2021-2026

Specialist Provision – Minority Communities sub-group, 25 November 2020

Attendees

David Anderson (Co-ordinator, Estates)
Colin Clark (Watch Commander/Local Authority Liaison Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)
Shirley Curran (Supervisory Planner – Development, Planning and Customers, Planning)
Fiona Docherty (Authorised Officer, Trading Standards)
Pauline Draper (Co-ordinator, Housing Services)
Neil Feggans (Co-ordinator, Planning)
John Hodge (Co-ordinator, Housing Services)
Christine McMenamin (Co-ordinator, Legal Services Litigation)
Ross Morris (Co-ordinator, Corporate and Housing Policy)
John Morrison (Co-ordinator, Waste Management)
Gayle Ridge (Homeless Charge Nurse, Adult Community Mental Health team)
Liza Wilson (Liaison Officer – Minority Groups, Housing Services)

Apologies

Laura Penman (Co-ordinator, Housing New Build)
Hamid Gazem (Team Leader, Trading Standards)

Proceedings

Ross Morris from the Corporate and Housing Policy team began the meeting by welcoming participants, before giving an overview of the purpose of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), and the core outputs expected from this process. From here, Ross Morris went on to discuss the purpose of the Specialist Provision chapter of the HNDA, and particularly the need to consider the needs of Gypsy/Travellers, Travelling Show People, and people fleeing conflict.

Gypsy/Travellers

Ross Morris provided a brief presentation on the various locational and land needs of the Gypsy/Traveller community, highlighting particularly guidance from Planning Aid for Scotland (PAS) recognising the broad spectrum of lifestyles and housing needs of Gypsy/Traveller households. While research shows that most Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland live in mainstream house types, there remains a need to consider the housing, land and locational needs of households who require specialist provision, such as permanent sites for Gypsy/Travellers or transit sites.

The presentation noted that South Ayrshire Council has provided a permanent site for the Gypsy/Traveller community since 1987, but that 'Storm Frank' in 2015 had led to this site being flooded despite work to prevent this in preceding years. The presentation discussed the development

of the new Houdston Reid-Lea site in Girvan, and the considerable consultation work carried out with our Gypsy/Traveller community between 2016 and 2019 to ensure the accommodation provided met both their cultural and practical needs. In terms of existing need for this type of accommodation, one property is currently empty on the existing site. This is to be divided into two units given the size and design of the accommodation, however it is anticipated that these will be difficult to allocate as there is currently no interest from our waiting list, despite Housing Service colleagues making contact with everyone who had initially expressed an interest. It was queried whether the location of this site would have an impact on demand, however Housing Service colleagues noted that the majority of demand from this community for accommodation over the years has been in the Carrick area. In addition, Housing Service colleagues noted a belief that the high quality of this site would attract anyone looking for this type of accommodation. In terms of future provision, it was felt that this was difficult to estimate, but that demand had stayed relatively consistent over a number of years from a small number of families. It was queried whether future generations of families already accommodated could result in greater need, but this was again considered difficult to predict, particularly in the context of a reducing trend in site-based living across Scotland.

The session then went on to look at the need for a transit site in South Ayrshire. The presentation noted that previous HNDAs had highlighted a need for 4-6 pitches to fulfil this need, as identified in the Craigforth review carried out in 2006. Guidance from PAS was again quoted, noting that the prevalence of unauthorised encampments is directly related to the availability of permanent sites, transit sites and the blocking of traditional stopping spaces. Recent research on unauthorised encampments was presented, showing a relatively small number of unauthorised encampments in South Ayrshire during the period 2016 to 2019 compared to other neighbouring authorities. While it was noted that encampment activity in South Ayrshire typically comes from the same small number of families, Housing Service colleagues noted an increase in the number of unauthorised encampments in the last year from a larger number of families. Unauthorised encampment activity tends to be focussed in Ayr, Prestwick and Girvan. It was queried whether these families were accessing education services, but Housing colleagues noted this wasn't the case, primarily due to activity being focussed around the summer months. The group agreed that unauthorised encampment activity indicated a need for transit provision, however Housing colleagues noted that a single transit site of 4-6 pitches may not be appropriate as discussion with families had highlighted disagreements between families. Instead it was felt that two small sites would be a preferable option to pursue. Given the location of recent encampment activity, it was felt that demand appears to be greatest around Ayr and Prestwick. The option of 'negotiated stopping' was briefly discussed. While this was felt by some to be difficult to operate in practice - particularly given difficulties in accessing appropriate sites - others recognised that this option may be worth exploring pending the findings of the currently ongoing pilot, and that there were some benefits to this approach. The joint Scottish Government/COSLA/ALACHO return on delivering 'more and better' site provision for Gypsy/Travellers was discussed, but the group felt that agreement on approach should be achieved prior to completing any such funding request.

Travelling Show People

The presentation went on to discuss the Travelling Show People community, highlighting this group's distinct cultural and historic identity and what permanent sites for this group would require to deliver. Ongoing contact between the Showman's Guild and Estates colleagues suggested that this group were

not currently seeking sites to live on in South Ayrshire, but that it would be worth consulting with the Guild on this point. Ross Morris will link in with David Anderson to do this.

People Fleeing Conflict

Ross Morris gave an overview of South Ayrshire Council's involvement in accommodating 21 Afghan families and 42 people from Syria in recent years. These households have been accommodated across South Ayrshire Council's existing housing stock, with Housing Support provided through amendments to existing contracts.

In September 2020, the Council made a further commitment to support the decongestion of the Aegean Refugee Camps, agreeing to accommodate 42 individuals. Housing Service colleagues confirmed that this need would be met from within existing housing stock. In terms of consultation with families about their needs, Pauline Draper noted that this takes place ahead of their arrival in South Ayrshire, and that a multi-agency task force meets prior to the person's arrival to ensure their needs can be fully addressed.

Further consultation

Following on from this, the group discussed further options for consultation. Options discussed included:

- Following up with households who expressed an interest in Gypsy/Traveller accommodation but did not apply
- Seeking the views of households on unauthorised encampments
- Making contact with the Showman's Guild



Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2021-2026

Specialist Provision – Young People with experience of care sub-group, 3 December 2020

Attendees

Claire Bradbury (Programme Officer, Employability and Skills)
Chloe McFadyen (Social Worker, Children and Families)
Colette McPherson (Programme Lead, Employability and Skills)
Ross Morris (Co-ordinator, Corporate and Housing Policy)
Dawn Parker (Corporate Parenting Lead Officer, Community Engagement)
Lizette Van Zyl (Team Leader, Children and Families)
Nikki Hardie
Faith Young
Taylor Howie

Proceedings

Dawn Parker welcomed everyone, and led introductions before splitting the session into two workshops, for practitioners and young people both with the same remit for discussion. Ross Morris led the discussion with young people while Dawn Parker led the discussion with practitioners.

Young people's workshop

This workshop began with discussion on the topic of challenges that young people can face when leaving care. A wide range of issues were highlighted, including:

- Knowing processes for accessing services, including housing
- Finding housing in an area that's both appropriate for you and is somewhere you'd want to live
- Finding housing that allows transport to work opportunities
- Financial considerations, including access to benefits
- Overcoming the stigma that young people with care experience can sometimes face
- Access to further education, employment and apprenticeships - there are a number of particular challenges that young people with experience of care can face
- Access to technology – young people with experience of care tend to have less money, so are often less able to access technology that others take for granted, including phones, tablets and broadband.

Housing

In terms of young people's experience of housing, two young people discussed their experience of homelessness. One young person mentioned having been homeless twice, once when she was a child.

Paperwork was highlighted as one challenge that can be a barrier for some young people, particularly for those with dyslexia or literacy issues.

The process of applying for accommodation was discussed, and one young person described the process as feeling “violating”. This was because they felt they needed to go over the things that had happened to them multiple times in order to access accommodation they needed, and in order to avoid areas they didn’t want to live in for personal reasons relating to their past. The young person felt that it was difficult to have to explain these reasons, summarising the exchange by saying – “Unless you dig up your past and give a serious reason [for not wanting to be in a particular area], we’ll offer you something there”.

Homelessness

Moving on to discuss repeat homelessness, Ross Morris asked what we could do to help young people in their tenancies and prevent them from experiencing homelessness in the first place. One young person noted that it really “depends on each person’s situation” and that there is no single right answer. One particular issue raised was the length of time some people spend in temporary accommodation. One young person talked about their experience of living in temporary accommodation with their family for a year, and the difficulties such long stays can cause people. This is challenging because, although they know it’s temporary, families in that situation often begin to put down roots within that community - “getting to know the area and then being uprooted to go into permanent”. The young person noted that this process needs to be more planned out, with a focus on getting people moved into permanent accommodation quicker. The same young person acknowledged that this isn’t always going to be possible, given the need to find accommodation to meet people’s particular needs, but in any event there should be clearer indications of timescales for rehousing so that people can plan ahead.

Another young person talked about being homeless before the birth of their child, but they felt they had to “just get on with it”. They talked about the previous homeless accommodation at Landsborough House, and how this has since been upgraded (as Viewfield Gate) into standalone rooms that are much better. This person noted the experience of being accommodated in an upper flat and seeking a transfer to accommodation that would meet their child’s needs. One young person felt that housing could do more to consider the needs of people with disabilities, particularly children with disabilities, when allocating properties. The quality of temporary furnished flats was discussed, with one young person noting that the flat they had been in suffered from dampness, and that this was particularly bad because “it’s always the most vulnerable people that end up” in these properties.

The group went on to discuss the amount of choice and control they felt when being offered their property. They felt that sometimes social work can place pressure on young people to take on a property when it’s not necessarily the right option for that young person at the time. One young person felt that care experienced young people don’t often get offered the best quality housing, and they felt it was unlikely they would be offered a new build for instance. Rather they get houses and flats that require done up.

Starter flats and making a house a home

Following on from this topic, the group discussed the Council’s Starter Flats model – whereby a decorated flat is offered along with support as a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy, with the intention of making the tenancy permanent if all goes well. The young people felt this was a great idea, with one

saying they “wish we could have started with that”. One young person went on to talk about the Council’s scheme of offering Decorating Grants, saying that these “don’t happen if you’ve got rent arrears”, highlighting their experience of moving from temporary accommodation into permanent housing. In this person’s experience, on moving into permanent housing their benefits stopped on the temporary accommodation property, and because of the high rent charged for this type of accommodation this resulted in significant rent arrears that they are still trying to pay off years later. As a result of these arrears, this person didn’t get their decoration allowance, and the young person believed this was a common occurrence. The group felt there should be a period of grace where rent isn’t charged to again help people not fall into rent arrears, as this move from temporary furnished into mainstream housing isn’t always quick – particularly where a person has been in that accommodation for a while.

One of the young people noted that even if people were able to access the decoration allowance, many young people – and particularly care leavers – do not have the funds, skills or abilities to decorate their home. The design of houses can compound this, with high ceilings being noted as an issue for some. While some young people have access to friends and relatives that can help them with these kind of tasks, this isn’t always the case and this can be particularly difficult for young people leaving care. One of the young people talked about the experience of their friend in Irvine, where North Ayrshire Council provide a scheme where you can apply for litres of paint, offering choice in colours and so on. This was felt to be better than providing cash given that some young people might be in a position where other necessities – like food or Christmas gifts – take priority. An option should be available where the Council could offer decoration services to all young people with experience of care to help them get settled into their tenancy and make it feel like home.

Support needs

In terms of the kind of support young people would benefit from, one of the key themes was again about teaching young people skills that they wouldn’t have learned growing up. One young person noted that as a child their home and they personally had been “very badly neglected”, and had never given the opportunity to learn to clean, fix things or cook. “General life skills are really important. Classes should at least be offered”. The young person said that barriers to maintaining a tenancy existed beyond resources, for example not knowing how to get in touch with a gardener or window cleaner, or how you would go about getting a suitable lawnmower. In addition, the young person said that not knowing when to take the bins out was another important issue, and one they hadn’t been informed about at sign up. A further issue highlighted was around knowing how to do tasks that others would pay for, but that might be financially out of reach to a young person on a limited income – including how to plumb in a washing machine, given that they may buy one second hand rather than going to a store where fitting is included.

Another young person talked about their “experience of growing up in filth”, and that they too had missed out on many practical learning experience. This was seen as a key issue of importance to the group.

Other support young people felt would benefit them included better information about financial matters, including advice on benefits. One young person noted that when they sought Universal Credit for the first time following a bereavement they were provided with an advance, but it was never explained to that young person that they would have to pay this back. In addition, that young person

said they would have benefited from information about how other benefits can impact on Universal Credit. This lack of information led to the young person being left without enough money to get by on and having to ask relatives to help cover necessities.

The group went on to discuss accessing employment, and their experience of working with Employability and Skills. Experiences were mixed, with some young people noting that it often depended on who they were working with. Some workers were excellent whereas others were said to be disinterested and offered poor advice.

The group were asked to consider what makes a great support worker. One young person noted that "someone who knows your story" and who is "aware of what's going on". A great support worker is someone who shows kindness, listens and has an understanding of the system. Someone who "knows how to fix it if a problem occurs" and who is "not a clock watcher" counting down the time to getting away. The type of person young people leaving care need is consistent and is someone who will stick with you. Young people noted frustration at sometimes calling up looking for a support worker and being told they have to speak to someone else because that person isn't available, with one young person asking "why should the full office know my story"?

Models of support

Ross Morris went on to ask the young people about proposals to provide 'satellite flats' within close distance of previous care settings to help young people in their transition. Young people were again positive about this model, saying it would be better, but that again it would be good to have an idea of how long you would be likely to spend in this type of accommodation. Ross Morris noted proposals to develop a "parallel path" for young people leaving care that would avoid them accessing the homeless system, and that was considered to be "a lot better – better to avoid that system altogether".

The group also discussed the Housing First project, and proposals to develop a 'Housing First for Youth' model to help young people with experience of care by providing furnished accommodation with intensive support. This was considered to be a really positive idea, with one young person noting how different one of their relative's lives would have been if something like this had been around before. The young person felt their relative "probably wouldn't have met such negative influences". "When you leave care at 16, 17, 18, you're still young, daft and impressionable... Everybody needs a bit of support to help them on their way".

Other housing options

In terms of accessing housing in the private rented sector, one participant said they "wouldn't know the first thing" about doing so, whereas another had experience of having been in a private let in the past. One young person spoke about renting an older property that was in a poor state of disrepair ("completely and utterly falling apart") and that repairs issues were reported but never dealt with. In this property there was serious mould and dampness issues. Another young person noted that landlords sometimes require no deposit on the understanding that you'll do the place up, and then commence to increase the rent once you've done this.

Sensitivity to people's experiences

One young person spoke about their experience of dealing with a bereavement, and the practical matters that needed to be dealt with in the immediate aftermath. They felt that “there really needs to be sensitivity training within housing around death”, as the young person felt they were being threatened by the Housing Service with eviction if this wasn’t dealt with quickly. The young person spoke about being told they would be asked to leave the office “if you continue to speak this way”, and that the person dealing with them could have been more sensitive to the fact that they had just suffered a bereavement of a close relative. A contrasting experience was provided by another young person where a private landlord did not charge rent for a month in a similar situation in order to allow the young person to get their relative’s affairs in order. “The difference with a private landlord is you’re dealing with a person. With the Council you’re dealing with policies and rules – it’s an emotionless system”.

Practitioners’ Workshop

The practitioners discussed the many aspects of securing a tenancy and how challenging the process can be for young people leaving care. Some of the challenges include

- Young person isn’t always ready to live in their own in their own house – however there are often no other local options available.
- Lack of housing stock means that young people who have left care often find that they are not able to get a house in some of South Ayrshire’s more desirable areas
- Young people often do not have the budgeting, cooking and practical skills required to run a home
- Lack of extended family and friend networks
- Lack of knowledge of the local community and all of the community supports available
- Lack of confidence to join groups and broaden friendship networks
- No clear and consistent knowledge of entitlements (both practitioners and young people)
- Local housing policies which do not reflect the spirit and guidance of corporate parenting such as young people ‘losing’ care leaver status in some housing situations - this is discriminatory practice which contravenes care leavers rights.

Some benefits also appear to ‘work against’ each other creating additional stress for young people at what can already be an incredibly stressful time. Other benefits (such as the care experience bursary) are not always applied consistently and this can have an impact on young people’s ability to keep up with rent payments and bills. While there are many pockets of support offered to young people, this support is often duplicated and is not consistent. This is far removed from the relationship-based practice model we aspire to.

Opportunities

The group saw opportunities in working more closely together for example;

The life skills that both Quarriers and Ayr housing Aid deliver could be delivered alongside employability and skills (who are also delivering similar sessions) and Young Peoples Support and Transition Team (YPSTT). The increased networking and co-location (pre-covid) between Employability and Skills and YPST was identified as a positive move which his aligned practice.

The group identified the importance of security and a sense of belonging in young people's lives, they also discussed how leaving care offers young people their

- own space, somewhere to call home to decorate and make their own
- independence- the chance to step out into the world
- own rules – no layers of sanctions and expectations from caregivers

This can then cause tensions for young people living in projects such as Quarriers Chalmers Rd where overnights are not permitted and room checks are common practice.

There is also a tension between 'workers' identifying young people as ready to move into their own house and young people not wanting to move. Finding the balance between being 'capable' and being 'emotionally ready' can be difficult. A greater emphasis on a right to return in line with the 'staying put' agenda would allow young people to feel able to test out living themselves without the pressure of feeling that there's no going back. This is culture change which hasn't been fully tested in South Ayrshire. It may be easier for young people if there were more choices – there is a great need for supported carers and other nurturing opportunities that support young people towards living in their own house at a pace that suits them.

On getting their own house practitioners identified that if the young person could work along with South Ayrshire Council to have the house decorated to their preference before moving in. Many tenancies were seen by practitioners as sub- standard damp/ poorly finished. We should not accept a standard for our young people that we wouldn't accept for ourselves.

Housing Models

Practitioners were then asked to discuss various housing models. These included:

- a. Properties near previous care settings (where appropriate) to ensure continuity of support and help young people in transitioning into their own permanent place
- b. Housing First for Youth – a permanent decorated flat/house with intensive support to help them manage in their tenancy, that can be scaled up and scaled down based on the young person's needs. Enhanced choice of areas.
- c. Starter Flats – an initially temporary tenancy in a decorated flat with support that can be made permanent if things are going well. Enhanced choice of areas.
- d. Foyer model – shared accommodation offering both education and support to young people who sign-up for a period of usually 2 years

The group agreed that all of the options depend on the individual young person their investment and their hopes and aspirations and their context too (family supports etc). Consistent support is also very important for the success of any model, as is the young person living in an area of their choice.

In model C there were particular concerns around the temporary element which practitioners felt was too short and doesn't foster a sense of belonging or security.

Model D the Foyer model offers many positives and opportunities to work in partnership to support young people really well in an environment that is vibrant and not institutional.

South Ayrshire Council/South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)

Joint HSCP/Housing Workshop 1 – Older people, frailty and dementia

Thursday 25th February 2021

Services and Organisations represented:

- South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- HSCP Planning and Performance
- South Ayrshire Council Corporate and Housing Policy
- South Ayrshire Council Housing Service
- South Ayrshire Intermediate Care and Reablement Service
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran (Community Care - Mental Health)
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran (Addictions)
- South Ayrshire Council Housing (New Build)
- South Ayrshire Council Planning
- SeAscape
- South Ayrshire Council Community Care (OT)
- South Ayrshire Council Community Care (Mental Health)
- South Ayrshire Council (Service Hubs)
- South Ayrshire Council Learning Disability and Sensory Impairment Team

Introduction

This session was arranged to provide an opportunity for staff from the Housing Service, the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and our partners to discuss how we can work together more effectively to meet the various – often interlinked - needs of our communities – including patients, service users, tenants and residents.

The views gathered at this session will be used to inform the direction of travel in South Ayrshire over the next five years and beyond, including:

- South Ayrshire HSCP Strategic Plan 2021-2030, including the Housing Contribution Statement
- South Ayrshire Council Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) 2021-2025
- South Ayrshire Council Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023-2028
- Service delivery plans in both housing and HSCP

The central question being asked by this session was ‘How might we work together to respond to common challenges and meet common goals?’

Proceedings

Billy McClean and Kevin Anderson welcomed attendees, setting out the purpose of the meeting and how the information gathered would be used to inform strategic planning as well as service delivery plans. Kevin Anderson highlighted the substantial national and international evidence base that finds a clear link between people’s housing situations and their health, wellbeing and wider social inclusion. Kevin noted that recent years had seen a recognition locally that working together effectively is critical

to meeting the health, housing and social needs of our population, citing examples where joint working locally has led to positive outcomes for individuals.

Following on from this, Ross Morris from the Corporate and Housing Policy team highlighted findings from research carried out to inform the Council's forthcoming Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2021-2025. This data showed common challenges that Housing and HSCP partners will need to work together to plan for, including:

- A projected reduction in population, running counter to increases for Scotland as a whole
- Reducing household sizes, albeit at a slower rate than the Scottish average
- An ageing population, with an older population demographic than Scotland
- Demographic expected to see 27% increase in those aged 75+ to 2028, and a 12% reduction in those aged 45-64
- High proportion of people who are long-term sick or disabled, particularly impacting on older people – this will become more important as our population profile changes

Phil White highlighted some data in relation to South Ayrshire's dependency ratio, and the factors that might impact on this – particularly the longstanding pattern of outward migration for work and inward migration for retirement. Phil also noted that:

- The proportion of single person households is growing, and many of these are older people
- There are significant numbers of older people living in houses that are too large to manage (and sometimes to heat)
- South Ayrshire has 20% more dementia diagnoses than the Scottish average.

Taking this contextual information into account, it is clear that there are a number of challenges that we need to work together to address in the medium to long-term. In order to facilitate discussion into how this could happen in practice, Dr Vikki McCall from the University of Stirling was invited to present her research on planning ahead to meet these challenges. Dr McCall's research took as its starting point the question "What makes a good life in later years?" Responses from older people indicated that good quality, appropriate housing was a key component from which other needs and aspirations – such as health and wellbeing, travel, money, independence and communities - could then be met. Dr McCall highlighted a strategic planning tool developed to support local authorities, HSCPs and other stakeholders in planning for the needs of our ageing population in the longer-term. Some key themes to emerge from utilising this tool included:

- Decision-making and planning for change must involve older people
- Housing is about more than bricks and mortar - rather is a wider, holistic concept that takes into consideration place and belonging – especially in the rural context
- The housing sector has the most potential in the preventative agenda (yet none of the budget)
- Housing brings tangibility to the preventative agenda via specific things such as adaptations, housing with care, access to care and repair services and a warm energy efficient home.
- It is not just about ageing, but ageing well

Dr McCall highlighted some key recommendations from this research, including that:

- Housing should be at the heart of service integration
- We should increase consultation and collaboration through meaningful coproduction with older people
- Build suitable, accessible homes (including lifetime homes) and listen to the people who are going to use it across all tenures
- Ensure people can 'Age in Place' by helping people remain in environments they're familiar with and developing community-focussed services
- Create mixed communities and housing that supports intergenerational exchange

Dr McCall then presented information on a recent report entitled "Inclusive Living: A vision for the Housing Sector". This approach looked at all aspects of housing - including physical design, connections and relationships, and social inclusion and equality – before proposing ways that housing can become more inclusive in the years to come.

The concept of Inclusive Living highlights the importance of removing physical and social barriers to inclusion by developing intergenerational communities. Inclusive Living highlights the importance on access to wider environments, communities and opportunities for social connections.

Through good design that considers structural barriers, inclusive design and connections between people and places we can create a housing sector that is inclusive for everyone. This breaks down silos and assumptions and opens up options and accessibility for all groups.

Discussion

Following on from these presentations, the group split off into breakout rooms to discuss the key questions coming out of this discussion. While our initial question set was about the health and housing needs of older people, discussion was far broader given the services represented, and resulted in substantial consideration of the needs of people with disabilities.

Discussion on each question is summarised below.

Question 1 – What great work is currently taking place in South Ayrshire in relation to meeting the health and housing needs of older people?

- Housing and HSCP working together to deliver specialist new build housing with support to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities
- Recent collaboration between Housing and HSCP to identify opportunities to buy and redevelop existing stock to meet particular needs – including for people with learning disabilities and poor mental health
- The use of the Lifetime Homes/'Housing for Varying Needs' standards in new build development to ensure properties can be easily adapted to meet the changing needs of the community and individual households
- The Social Isolation Strategy and approaches to digital inclusion being rolled out in our sheltered housing units are examples of good practice in how we can support people to live fulfilling lives in later years.

But some participants identified room for improvement, noting that:

- Housing and HSCP work well together on individual cases however more needs to be done to make this approach more strategic. There is a shared agenda but need longer-term approaches to joint planning and more regular interactions between services.
- As well as the housing people are living in, we also need to give more consideration to our neighbourhoods making sure these are inclusive, safe spaces for people to live in.
- New build 2 storey housing should be future proofed as standard. This would involve working with planners and private developers to deliver this.
- While new build development presents opportunities for improvement in practice, we also need to ensure we consider the needs of people living in older housing stock that aren't so easy to adapt. Not always about adapting but about having realistic conversations about the longer-term viability of a property. This is a difficult conversation to have.
- With regard to Sheltered Housing and Care Homes, we need to think about who these resources are aimed at. Older people benefit from peer support, but are these models still the most appropriate for the future?
- In terms of the needs of people with learning disabilities, the Council's redevelopment of existing stock hasn't been as suitable as the purpose built options developed by Ayrshire Housing.

Question 2 – What lessons from local and national good practise in relation to older people's health & housing could we apply to our work in South Ayrshire?

- Need to ensure more thorough consultation takes place when considering different models for new build and purchase/redevelopment. This includes making sure the people who will live in these homes and people who work with this client group are given the opportunity to have their say. Design should be bottom-up rather than top-down.
- We should build on the successes of developing housing for people with learning disabilities and poor mental health, and ensure we think about how we can create a community around these housing options.
- Location is critical. We need to ensure new specialist supply is in locations that are suitable for the client base.
- The Older Persons' Joint Action Group was highlighted as an example of good practice in multi-disciplinary planning. This involved a range of partners and was proactive rather than reactive to addressing needs.

Question 3 – What short, medium & long term actions could we take to radically improve older people's housing & health outcomes in South Ayrshire?

- Thinking about the difficult conversations about the long-term viability of a person's home, we need to think about how we get that information out and have those conversations. This would allow for more planned responses to people's needs rather than purely a crisis response approach ('anticipatory planning'). Could this involve the private sector, i.e. estate agents?
- Make greater use of 'risk trigger' models as a 'predictive' approach as has been rolled out successfully already in falls prevention activity in South Ayrshire.
- Need to ensure older people are given the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to the development of strategies

- Look at digital connectivity across our sheltered housing units
- Build technology or the potential for technology – such as Technology Enabled Care (TEC) - into properties at design stage again to enable homes to be easily adapted to meet changing needs of the individual and the community.

South Ayrshire Council/South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)

Joint HSCP/Housing Workshop 2 – Supporting people with complex needs and preventing homelessness

Thursday 25th March 2021

Services and Organisations represented:

- Ayr Housing Aid Centre
- Ayrshire Housing
- Circles Network
- Community Justice Ayrshire
- Irvine Housing Association
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran (Community Care - Mental Health)
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran (Addictions)
- SeAscape
- South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
- South Ayrshire Council Corporate and Housing Policy
- South Ayrshire Council Housing Service
- South Ayrshire Council Justice Service
- South Ayrshire Council Learning Disability and Sensory Impairment Team
- South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- West of Scotland Housing Association

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The views gathered at this session will be used to inform the direction of travel in South Ayrshire over the next five years and beyond, including:

- South Ayrshire HSCP Strategic Plan 2021-2030, including the Housing Contribution Statement
- South Ayrshire Council Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) 2021-2025
- South Ayrshire Council Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023-2028
- Service delivery plans in both housing and HSCP

The central question being asked by this session was ‘How might we work together to respond to common challenges and meet common goals?’

Proceedings

Billy McClean and Kevin Anderson welcomed attendees, setting out the purpose of the meeting and how the information gathered would be used to inform strategic planning as well as service delivery plans. Kevin Anderson highlighted the substantial national and international evidence base that finds

a clear link between people's housing situations and their health, wellbeing and wider social inclusion. Kevin noted that recent years had seen a recognition locally that working together effectively is critical to meeting the health, housing and social needs of our population, citing examples where joint working locally has led to positive outcomes for individuals.

Ross Morris delivered a presentation on homelessness research, policy and practice. This presentation highlighted the influential 'data linkages' report by Dr Andrew Waugh *et al.*, particularly highlighting the opportunities for early intervention and the benefits to people's housing and health outcomes. Following on from this, data on homelessness in South Ayrshire was presented. This highlighted a general upward trend in applications since 2014/15, the demographics of people seeking assistance under homelessness legislation, and provided a picture of the support needs of some of those experiencing homelessness. Ross Morris went on to describe the recent direction of travel in terms of national homelessness policy, particularly the Rapid Rehousing agenda¹ and how this is being implemented locally, as well as the recent recommendations of the Homelessness Prevention Review² Group and the potential implications of this to local practice in the coming years.

Following on from this, Faye Murfet presented information on findings from the Drug Death Review Group, highlighting case studies from within South Ayrshire where the person had experience of repeat homelessness or was in temporary accommodation. Reviewing this data suggested opportunities for more effective joint working and early intervention to improve people's outcomes and reduce the risk of drug death.

The session's guest speaker, Lawrence Pavia from NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland, then presented information on new ways of working together that came to the fore during the coronavirus pandemic. This presentation showed how collaborative working, empowered staff building trusted relationships and the use of technology could improve access to services for vulnerable clients and support improving health and housing outcomes for people with experience of homelessness.

Discussion

Following on from these presentations, the group held an open discussion session to consider the issues raised, and the following questions:

- How do we work better at an earlier stage to prevent crisis situations, such as homelessness, hospitalisation, exacerbation of poor mental health etc.
- What opportunities for early intervention do you see in your area of work? What triggers or warning signs of crisis might we be missing?

. A summary of key themes is presented below.

- The Housing First model currently being delivered by South Ayrshire Council is an example of good practice. This is a targeted intervention aimed at breaking the cycle of repeat homelessness by providing accommodation and intensive support. This project has at its

¹ HARSAG (2018) *Scotland's Transition to Rapid Rehousing*
https://social-bite.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Rapid_Rehousing_Guidance1.1.pdf

² Crisis (2021) *Preventing Homelessness in Scotland: Recommendations for legal duties to prevent homelessness*
<https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244558/preventing-homelessness-in-scotland.pdf>

centre a focus on care coordination, with Housing First workers helping clients to link in with a wide range of supports, including family, services and their community. While positive, Housing First is not for everyone and is resource intensive. Could not be rolled out to all current homeless households – but could lessons be learned from multi-agency working at the heart of it?

- Given the issues people are dealing with, it is clear that no one service will have all the solutions and as such coordination of the different ‘offers’ is essential to improving outcomes. In addition, there needs to be some degree of flexibility to the services being offered given the complexity of people’s lives - care must be person-centred and trauma-informed if we are to break these cycles.
- Digital approaches to supporting our clients, including improving digital access to services and offering virtual viewings where possible were discussed as areas where progress could be made. Despite this, there was a recognition that types of engagement must suit the needs of the particular client and again this must be person-centred.
- Lawrence Pavia noted that access to services during the coronavirus pandemic in some cases improved as ‘people were just doing stuff’ and were responding to immediate needs as best they could. Following on from this, authorities need to identify needs and develop local protocols.
- Co-ordination of care between services in South Ayrshire is currently in its infancy but where in place working well – examples include outreach projects with Housing Support providers, work involving local churches, Council services and the Alcohol and Drug Partnership.
- As part of care co-ordination we also need to consider the most effective ways of engaging with people – going to where people are rather than waiting for people to come to us. It was also noted that the aftermath of coronavirus may see an increase in the number of people impacted financially – this will in turn impact on the number of people in need of services and we should plan ahead for this.
- Critical to focus on relationships and building trust – this is the key to effective, long-lasting engagement.
- Where possible, approaches to service delivery should be simple rather than involving a labyrinth of planning.

The group moved on to discuss where we want to be and how we get there, considering the following questions:

- What lessons from local and national good practice in relation to homelessness and complex need could we apply to our work in South Ayrshire?
- What steps could we take in the short, medium and long-term to deliver early intervention in homelessness and healthcare in South Ayrshire?

A summary of discussion is presented below:

- A ‘one stop shop’ for people with multiple complex needs - a bid has been written for funding to support development of this approach. Currently working well at Care and Share events – providing services in one location and ‘going where people are/want to be’.

- Multi-agency working and care coordination are critical – no one service will meet everyone’s needs. By working together to resolve issues as they occur we can improve outcomes for people.
- Utilise the expertise of third sector providers, and ensure they are fully involved in pathway planning – likely to have an important role in care coordination
- Service user should have a say in choosing their lead officer so someone they trust can coordinate what is needed & assist to access with support – person who the service user connects with the most
- Digital inclusion – Get Digital Scotland Programme piloting with 6 clients in South Ayrshire who have applied for assistance under homelessness legislation
- Advocacy work to help people navigate the various systems.
- Workers from all services need to have an awareness of what services are available and how to refer in to these. Information needs to be widely available and accessible for staff at all levels across all services.
- Important that focus of work isn’t just on homeless people – lots of people with multiple complex needs in mainstream tenancies in the social and private sectors.
- Too many people fall through the cracks in terms of eligibility for services – need to work with partners to address this. Housing First approach as well as new Housing Support contracts focus on persistence and not closing the door on people even when not engaging. Other services need to support this by taking a similar approach.
- In order to take advantage of the opportunities for early intervention highlighted in the presentations, we need to have clear pathways of referral that are understood by all.
- One option may be to learn from the successes of the Youth Housing Support Group – a multi-agency group operating in South Ayrshire to help young people who are at risk of homelessness to meet their housing and health needs. A similar approach could be applied to people with multiple complex needs, with agencies meeting regularly to try to find solutions for people at the greatest risk of drug death and homelessness.