

Overview of the Experience of Developing Housing Options across Scotland

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Scottish Government



2012 Homelessness Target

- Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003
- By 31 December 2012 the priority need test to be abolished
- So intention was from December 2012 (or before) all unintentionally homeless households entitled to settled accommodation



SG/COSLA Joint 2012 Steering Group

- High-level group needed to lead and influence progress towards the target
- Minister attended, COSLA Spokesperson, SOLACE, ALACHO, and SFHA
- Met from late 2009 – more frequent meetings than originally intended

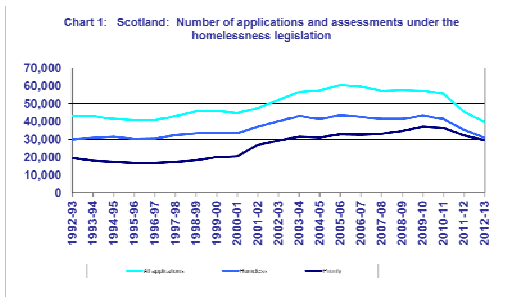


2012 Group

- 4 key objectives
 - Corporate buy-in/joint work
 - Prevention of homelessness
 - Access to PRS and RSL stock
 - Investing in appropriate areas
- Key areas for discussion:
 - Demographics of homelessness (young people)
 - Housing options/prevention



Homelessness statistics



Housing Options

- High profile national seminar June 2010
- Raised awareness on housing options/prevention happening in Scotland and England
- Scottish Housing Minister launched the funding - £500,000 from then until March 2012



Engaging on housing options

- Five local seminars held – SG talk, host/lead LA, partner RSL and opportunity to see how they could work together to use money effectively and jointly
- Lots of good prevention work – needed “space” to share and take forward
- Only stipulations on money - not allocated between LAs – had to agree priorities; and that no-one could be employed directly

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What are Housing Options?

- Good quality housing advice – focus on prevention
- Person/household centred
- Looking for best outcome – not “just” a homelessness application (although still a critical safety net)
- Looking at social networks/support, employment, anything that would lead to most sustainable outcome

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What did this mean?

- Change of culture – from process driven (homelessness tests) to being outcome focused
- Potentially better outcomes for the person eg homelessness prevented, use of PRS
- Better for staff – trying to help rather than turning away or giving something that was not going to last

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SG role

- 2012 Group
- Attendance at hub meetings
- Quarterly cross hub events
- Annual national seminar

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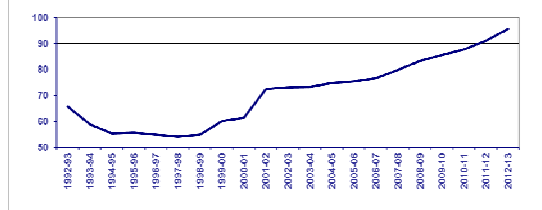
Parliamentary activity

- Some concern that 2012 target would not be met
- Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee inquiry into progress to meet the target and the development of housing options more generally
- Scottish Statutory Instrument removing the PN test required the positive resolution of the Parliament (21 November 2012)

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Progress to meeting the target

Chart 11: Scotland: Percentage of homeless applicants assessed as priority homeless



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Current position

- Prevention of homelessness showing in the statistics (recent shows down 13%)
- Five hubs are still meeting – all 32 LAs are members
- Continued funding – until March 2014 (£150k pa)
- Hubs sharing practice, commissioning research, looking at IT, developing joint training, benchmarking



2012 Group?

- Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group
- Similar objectives (no supply one) continued focus on prevention
- Workplan – temporary accommodation, supported accommodation and young people, ex-offenders



Hubs and housing options model

- Welfare reform
 - Mitigation
 - Training
 - Sharing practice/thinking
- Used by other policy areas:
 - Refugees
 - Ex-offenders



Learning

- High level political buy-in essential
- Need energy and commitment
- Need focus
- “Champions”
- Work-shadowing showing how it works in practice
- Being strong against the critics



Learning

- It takes time to build trusting and open relationships
- Don't need formal guidance
- Don't try to do too much too quickly
- Hubs haven't all developed at the same speed - local challenges and contexts
- It's worth it...



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