

RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

Monitoring Report - activity and funding
(RRTP funding - part of the Ending
Homelessness Together Fund)



Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Fund Monitoring of Implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans

As part of the Scottish Government's Ending Homelessness Together Fund, funding of £8m was agreed with COSLA for 2020/21 and additional funding of £5m was provided to local authorities from the Winter Support for Social Protection fund to all local authorities to support the implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs). We are asking all local authorities to provide a written report on how they have spent their allocation of funding and progress to date. We would ask local authorities to remember to include funding carried over from 2019/20.

We would ask that all local authorities complete this report and include it with their amended RRTP for 2021/22 or latest version available which should be submitted to the Scottish Government by **30 June 2021**. We realise this may be subject to final accounts being cleared by Audit.

Included is a template to provide detail on specific activities which should be replicated for each activity you have taken forward in implementing your Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. For example we are looking for information on specific activities such as prevention; recruitment of staff; temporary accommodation; shared tenancies; Housing First; or mediation.

We have also included a template for reporting on RRTP funding which has not been spent during 2020/21 and how local authorities plan to spend it during 2021/22.

Please submit this report, RRTP, an updated EQIA and any accompanying documents to: RapidRehousingTransitionPlansMailbox@gov.scot

If there are any questions then please send them to the mailbox and a member of the team will contact you to discuss.

Local Engagement and Rapid Rehousing Team

Details of funding recipient

Local Authority	Argyll and Bute Council		
Reporting Period	01/04/2020 <small>DD/MM/YYYY</small>	to	31/03/2021 <small>DD/MM/YYYY</small>
Reporting Officer	Iona MacPhail		
Position	Housing Team Lead - Operations		
Date Completed	02/06/21		
RRTP Funding carried over from 2019/20	£76,438		
RRTP Funding received for 2020/21 <small>£8m RRTP Funding confirmed 17/08/20</small>	£170,000		
Winter Support Fund received for 2020/21 <small>£5m Funding confirmed on 18/12/20</small>	N/A		

2020/21 Activity

Activity Name:	Rent Arrears Prevention Fund			
Activity Description: Provide a short overview of the aims and the transformative nature of this activity.	<p>The aim of the project is to prevent homelessness by taking preventative action to allow people to maintain their current tenancy. This fund assists households who are at risk of homelessness due to rent arrears. Claims are assessed based on the household's entitlement to Housing Benefit over the previous 12 months. If there was a good reason for the household not to have claimed their entitlement e.g. mental health issues, then the fund will pay the entitlement.</p> <p>As at 31st March 2021 the Rent Arrears Prevention Fund has assisted 36 households at a cost of £60,945.</p>			
Allocation Spent on activity:	£	SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding	Other
	£60,945	£0.00	£0.00	
Overview of progress made to date: Provide a short summary of the work undertaken in the past year, progress made and challenges.	<p>The Rent Arrears Prevention Fund was reviewed in 2021 in conjunction with our RSL partners to realign it to emerging Covid issues. Due to Covid, it had become clear that people were facing issues of reduced income and increased household costs due to lockdown. As Argyll and Bute is predominately off gas grid, lockdown meant that household utility bills increased as people spent significantly more time at home, and this was identified as putting pressure on rent payments.</p> <p>Landlords are asked to explore alternative payment options before applying to the Rent Arrears Prevention Project. They should have explored welfare rights advice to claim all benefits due. Additionally, the Tenant Loan Fund should have been explored as a method of payment. However, we have found that in the majority of these cases, the Tenant Loan Fund wasn't a realistic option due to multiple debts.</p> <p>It was also identified that the Rent Arrears Prevention Project could be used to provide positive interventions for rapid rehousing for Home Argyll Direct list applicants, prior to point of crisis and a homeless application being required. The main barrier was with regards to payments for previous debts. In terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, in cases where the rent arrears amount is no more than one twelfth of the annual rent, or where an arrangement is in place for paying the arrears and has been kept to for at</p>			

	<p>least three months, arrears can't be taken into account. However, it was recognised that sums may be owed that are outwith the clients means to pay either in totality or by a payment plan and this did create a significant barrier to rehousing. In these cases, the Rent Arrears Prevention Project assists landlords in working with the client to put a suitable payment plan in place, and can pay three months payment in advance to allow access to the housing list. Where necessary, an additional lump sum payment can be made to allow a realistic sum for a payment arrangement to be made with the client that will be affordable for them in the new tenancy.</p> <p>As a result of Covid it is recognised that there have been substantial changes to legal actions processes for rent arrears, which may delay decrees being awarded. However, it is in all parties' best interests to implement early intervention strategies to assist clients before crisis point and to reduce a potential large scale number of decrees when legal actions resume. Likewise, as a result of COVID many tenants have been furloughed or are experiencing reduced incomes and applications can be made to effectively assist those who have experienced these circumstances to protect their tenancies in the short term until their incomes return to previous levels. To that end applications are now welcomed which intervene at an early stage to stabilise rent payments and therefore secure tenancies. A housing support assessment is carried out and an appropriate support package is put in place if required.</p> <p>In the cases where payments have been made, outcomes have been very positive with tenancies being sustained successfully in the majority of cases. Just one case has experienced further difficulties. No evictions have taken place where interventions were made using the Rent Arrears Prevention Fund.</p>			
<p>Future spend planned on this activity in 2021/22:</p>	£	SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other
<p>Implementation in 2021/22:</p> <p>Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2021/22.</p>		£110,000	£0.00	£0.00
	<p>We recognise that as lockdown eases, rent arrears actions may resume at higher levels than during 2020/21. Therefore the focus will be on working with our RSL partners to take preventative action to stabilise rent accounts in order that legal actions aren't raised and homelessness is prevented. Similarly, the Rent Arrears Prevention Fund is open to private sector landlords and we will work with them to prevent legal actions leading to</p>			

	homelessness. We will continue to intervene where payments will enable access to the Home Argyll Direct List thereby enabling rapid rehousing and planned moves.
<p>Plans for mainstreaming this activity:</p> <p>Provide detail of the timescale and plans to mainstream / when this activity will end:</p>	<p>Given that this fund has been available during the extraordinary period of Covid lockdown and attendant suspension of eviction action, it is difficult to determine with certainty the effectiveness of the fund under “normal circumstances”. However, we will seek to review the effectiveness of the fund as the situation returns to normal during 2020/21.</p> <p>We note that The Scottish Government has announced a £10 million grant fund to support tenants who have fallen into rent arrears as a direct result of the coronavirus pandemic, to be made available later in this year. We will review our Rent Arrears Prevention Fund to ensure that it works alongside that fund when it becomes available, in order that as many cases as possible in Argyll and Bute receive assistance.</p>

2020/21 Activity

<p>Activity Name:</p>	<p>Decoration Project</p>
<p>Activity Description:</p> <p>Provide a short overview of the aims and the transformative nature of this activity.</p>	<p>The aim of the project is to assist households on low incomes to sustain an RSL tenancy provided to them through the statutory homeless process. Many homeless households cannot afford to decorate their properties or bring them up to a standard where they take ownership of their house and see it as their home. The decoration project aims to assist households to make a house a home and have a greater chance of sustaining that home.</p> <p>Principally, the project aims to ensure that properties are decorated to a good standard and ready for occupation. Whilst it is recognised that decoration is often a barrier to new tenants, it is also the case that other items can be crucial to providing the homely environment that is essential for tenancy sustainment.</p> <p>Therefore, the decoration project provides a number of opportunities and solutions to try to offer the best range of options for new tenants to make a home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decoration of the property by RSL • Match funds provided by RSL for tenant to decorate themselves - (The RSL makes the enhanced payment to the new tenant and invoices

	<p>Argyll and Bute Council for the sum due in order that payments are fast tracked to tenants).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent overlap - Where a new tenant effectively has rent due for two properties whilst they arrange décor of their new home. (RSL's invoice for the sum due to reduce admin tasks for new tenant so they can focus on moving into their new home). • Home Décor and White Goods - Clients should be assisted to make appropriate claims for assistance for household goods (e.g SWF). However, it is recognised that in some instances not all items will be made available and this can be crucial in creating a homely setting. • Ancillary Services - Where a client struggles to move into their newly decorated home, funds can be made available for van hire to ensure a timeous and positive move to the property for the client. 							
<p>Allocation Spent on activity:</p>	£	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="663 1048 935 1099">SG RRTP funding</th> <th data-bbox="938 1048 1209 1099">Local Authority funding</th> <th data-bbox="1212 1048 1482 1099">Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="663 1104 935 1211" style="text-align: center;">£25,172</td> <td data-bbox="938 1104 1209 1211" style="text-align: center;">£0.00</td> <td data-bbox="1212 1104 1482 1211" style="text-align: center;">£0.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding	Other	£25,172	£0.00	£0.00
SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding	Other						
£25,172	£0.00	£0.00						
<p>Overview of progress made to date:</p> <p>Provide a short summary of the work undertaken in the past year, progress made and challenges.</p>	<p>There has been good uptake of the decoration fund during 2020/21. 38 new tenants have been assisted at a spend of £25,172. It seems that the range of measures available within the scope of the project is suitable to the needs of new tenants. A Covid review was carried out and identified that closed Argyll and Bute Council offices meant that payment cards could not be issued for home décor and white goods. As a result, a system of paying direct to applicants was put in place and worked well. It was identified at that review that a supervised spend option may be required and would be facilitated if necessary, however that option was not required nor implemented.</p> <p>To date all tenancies that received funds from our Decoration Project have been sustained successfully.</p>							
<p>Future spend planned on this activity in 2021/22:</p>	£	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="663 1821 935 1872">SG RRTP Funding</th> <th data-bbox="938 1821 1209 1872">Local Authority funding</th> <th data-bbox="1212 1821 1482 1872">Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="663 1877 935 2000" style="text-align: center;">£35,000</td> <td data-bbox="938 1877 1209 2000" style="text-align: center;">£0.00</td> <td data-bbox="1212 1877 1482 2000" style="text-align: center;">£0.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other	£35,000	£0.00	£0.00
SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other						
£35,000	£0.00	£0.00						
<p>Implementation in 2021/22:</p>	<p>We will continue to operate the fund in 2021/22 under the same operating arrangements as were put in place after</p>							

Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2021/22.	the Covid review of the procedure, and monitor the tenancy sustainment data.
<p>Plans for mainstreaming this activity:</p> <p>Provide detail of the timescale and plans to mainstream / when this activity will end:</p>	It would appear that his project is producing high tenancy sustainment figures. However, we must consider these figures with some caution as 2020/21 has been an extraordinary year which may not provide suitable baseline data. We will monitor these figures with our RSL colleagues with a view to determining whether the activity should be mainstreamed.

2020/21 Activity				
Activity Name:	Flexible Emergency Fund			
<p>Activity Description:</p> <p>Provide a short overview of the aims and the transformative nature of this activity.</p>	The aim of the Flexible Emergency Fund is to ensure that funds are available at local locations to provide immediate solutions for clients. This can be funds being provided to facilitate gas or electricity top ups, or food or any range of crisis interventions that can be resolved simply by having funds available. The fund is held by local support providers and they administer it.			
<p>Allocation Spent on activity:</p>	£	SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding	Other
		£8,250	£0.00	£0.00
<p>Overview of progress made to date:</p> <p>Provide a short summary of the work undertaken in the past year, progress made and challenges.</p>	<p>In 2020/21 funds were provided to Blue Triangle Housing Association, which offers high level supported accommodation in Lorn; Carr Gorm, which offers housing support across all of Argyll and Bute; the HELP project, which provides support to young people in Bute and Cowal; and Womens Aid which provides support across Argyll and Bute to victims of Domestic Abuse. This worked well to ensure that funds were available locally across the rural and remote areas through well known and trusted locally operating services.</p> <p>This fund became invaluable during Covid Lockdown as it gave a means for support agencies to provide phones to clients, which were essential for people to be able to stay in touch with all services during that time.</p>			
<p>Future spend planned on this activity in 2021/22:</p>	£	SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other
		£5,000	£0.00	£0.00

<p>Implementation in 2021/22:</p> <p>Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2021/22.</p>	<p>Argyll and Bute Council Housing Services is rolling out Near Me as a communication tool in 2021/22. Lockdown has shown us that using virtual methods to have face to face contact is possible, and can much enhance the customer experience. Many clients have engaged with us virtually successfully during lockdown, though we recognise that some will wish to use other methods. Near Me offers a new opportunity for parity of service to rural, remote and island communities and the provision of phones and data packages available at local locations will be crucial to enable that. A significant target for 2021/22 will be ensuring we enable our clients to be able to take up enhanced communication opportunities, and the flexible emergency fund will be key to ensuring they can get the necessary hardware at a local location to allow them to do that. In the wider context the flexible emergency fund will continue to offer immediate solutions for clients in need.</p>		
<p>Plans for mainstreaming this activity:</p> <p>Provide detail of the timescale and plans to mainstream / when this activity will end:</p>	<p>We will review the effectiveness of the fund in 2020/21 with a view to determining its effectiveness as a mainstream activity.</p>		

2020/21 Activity			
Activity Name:	Mental Health / Addictions Practitioner		
Activity Description:	<p>It is recognised that a patchwork of support services is available across a large rural and island area in Argyll and Bute. The Mental Health / Addictions Practitioner will seek to ensure that appropriate services can be accessed by clients at the appropriate location, and build contacts and service links. The role of the post will include awareness raising of housing options within HSCP so the HSCP can refer into housing services at an earlier stage to try and avoid/minimise any crisis situations. Additionally, the Mental Health / Addictions Practitioner will play a key role in the roll out of Housing First by being a key contact for clients and the service providers supporting them.</p>		
Allocation Spent on activity:		SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding
	£	£0.00	£0.00
		£0.00	£0.00

<p>Overview of progress made to date:</p> <p>Provide a short summary of the work undertaken in the past year, progress made and challenges.</p>	<p>The Mental Health / Addictions Practitioner work stream has been by far the most challenging part of the RRTP in 2020/21. Good joint work was done with the local HSCP which agreed to advertise the post and employ the post holder, and this is seen as the preferred route as we work in partnership with the HSCP with this post being crucial to creating and strengthening links. However, despite the post being advertised several times, we have been unable to recruit. It is impossible to determine the reason for this, particularly given the challenges of Covid. However, the post is temporary in line with the funding arrangements and it may be case that may be off putting to potential candidates, and equally may not give enough job security to make somebody consider moving to Argyll and Bute to take up the post. We intend to carry out one more round of recruitment advertising, and hope that the easing of lockdown may be beneficial at this time.</p> <p>As a result of the recruitment issues, we have not be able to make progress on this work stream in 2020/21.</p>			
<p>Future spend planned on this activity in 2021/22:</p>	<p>£</p>	<p>SG RRTP Funding</p>	<p>Local Authority funding</p>	<p>Other</p>
<p>Implementation in 2021/22:</p> <p>Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2021/22.</p>		<p>£50,000</p>	<p>£0.00</p>	<p>£0.00</p>
<p>Plans for mainstreaming this activity:</p> <p>Provide detail of the timescale and plans to mainstream / when this activity will end:</p>	<p>Once we have someone in place we will review the success of this work stream and liaise with the HSCP about future funding if appropriate.</p>			

<p>2020/21 Activity</p>				
<p>Activity Name:</p>	<p>Housing First</p>			
<p>Activity Description:</p> <p>Provide a short overview of the aims and the transformative nature of this activity.</p>	<p>The aim is provide a rural housing first solution, which provides rapid housing with holistic person centred support available across all mainland and island areas of Argyll and Bute.</p>			
		<p>SG RRTP funding</p>	<p>Local Authority funding</p>	<p>Other</p>

Allocation Spent on activity:	£	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Overview of progress made to date: Provide a short summary of the work undertaken in the past year, progress made and challenges.	<p>The roll out of housing first in Argyll and Bute was impacted by Covid lockdown. As a Stock Transfer Authority, Housing First requires significant partnership working with our four local housing providers. Despite the challenges of lockdown, a Housing First Delivery group has been established with our RSL partners. A Memorandum of Understanding detailing responsibilities has been produced and agreed by that group and we are currently arranging for that to be presented to the four RSL Board's of Management.</p> <p>The Argyll and Bute Housing First Delivery Group is a multi-agency partnership and is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing Scottish Secure Tenancy Housing First tenancies in Argyll and Bute; Determining and agreeing implementation plans for the range of services available for Housing First Tenants; Mutually agreeing exit strategies for complex cases from Housing First; Analysing outcome data; Reporting on the progress and impact of Housing First; Ensuring the effective operation of the Housing First process across Argyll and Bute; Ensuring Housing First is embedded in Argyll and Bute; Promoting the culture of Housing First; Ensuring that staff receive appropriate and sufficient training to enable them to implement Housing First; Connecting to Housing First work on a national level and playing a part in the promotion of Housing First. <p>The work of the group is collaborative and inclusive with the focus on mutual decision making. As a result the group agreed that as face to face support could not be provided during lockdown, and was believed to be crucial to success, Housing First tenancies would not start during lockdown and the focus has been on preparatory work. The group has also used this time to agree the services to</p>			

	be provided to Housing First tenancies e.g décor, tech provision, seven day support.			
Future spend planned on this activity in 2021/22:		SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other
	£	40,000	£0.00	£0.00
Implementation in 2021/22: Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2021/22.	In 2021/22 we will take forward our first 10 Housing First Tenancies through the Housing First Delivery Group process.			
Plans for mainstreaming this activity: Provide detail of the timescale and plans to mainstream / when this activity will end:	We intend to learn from our first ten tenancies with a view to reviewing mainstreaming the Housing First agenda in Argyll and Bute.			

2020/21 Activity				
Activity Name:	Housing First/RRTP Training			
Activity Description: Provide a short overview of the aims and the transformative nature of this activity.	As a stock transfer authority, the roll out of Housing First in Argyll and Bute will be facilitated through our RSL partners tenancies, with a network of support services to cover different locations. As such, it is essential that all organisations involved in Housing First receive training. Housing First For Managers training was previously facilitated.			
Allocation Spent on activity:		SG RRTP funding	Local Authority funding	Other
	£	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Overview of progress made to date: Provide a short summary of the work undertaken in the past year, progress made and challenges.	Housing First For Managers training was facilitated previously.			
Future spend planned on this activity in 2021/22:		SG RRTP Funding	Local Authority funding	Other
	£	5,066		

<p>Implementation in 2021/22:</p> <p>Provide a short summary of the aims and targets for this activity during 2021/22.</p>	<p>This year we will be carrying out practitioner training with RSL front line staff, Support provider front line staff and HSCP colleagues. We are also running a training session for RSL Board members in order that they have a clear understanding of the principles of Housing First. All training will be carried out virtually, and we have found that offering virtual training has increased the numbers wishing to attend. We believe this is because of the long distances which people often have to travel in Argyll and Bute to attend training.</p>
<p>Plans for mainstreaming this activity:</p> <p>Provide detail of the timescale and plans to mainstream / when this activity will end:</p>	<p>This is not an activity we intend to mainstream. We believe that as we roll out housing First in Argyll and Bute we will develop expertise that will mean that we will have enough local resilience to carry out training rather than buying in this service.</p>

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Unspent 2020/21 RRTP Funding</h2>		
<p>Please provide the total of 2020/21 funding provided by the Scottish Government for the implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in your area that has <u>not</u> been spent in 2020/21.</p>	<p>£</p>	<p>152,066 (2019/20 & 2020/21 c/fwd)</p>
<p>Provide detail of how this funding will be spent on implementing the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in 2021/22 detailing the area that it will be used in. Please make clear the individual amounts</p>		
ACTIVITY	FUNDING TO BE CARRIED FORWARD	
<p>Decoration Project</p>	<p>£</p>	<p>35,000</p>
<p>Rent Arrears Prevention Fund</p>	<p>£</p>	<p>110,000</p>
<p>Flexible Emergency Fund</p>	<p>£</p>	<p>5,000</p>
<p>Housing 1st</p>	<p>£</p>	<p>40,000</p>

Mental Health Practitioner Post	£	50,000
Training	£	5,066
TOTAL	£	245,066**
** total of carry forward from 2021/20 & 2020/21 plus 2021/22 allocation	£	