



Healthcare  
Improvement  
Scotland

|ihub

# Housing Solutions Change Programme

Training modules evaluation report from the ihub Place, Home and Housing portfolio

September 2019

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# Introduction

Following on from the Scottish Government's Adapting for Change (AfC) improvement programme, which sought to improve practice in housing adaptations, Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Improvement Hub (ihub) commissioned the development of the Housing Solutions change programme, to embed the learning, and ensure practitioners involved in the housing adaptations process had the skills they need to help people make informed decisions about their homes. Housing Solutions is a preventative tool that helps anticipate housing needs, and assists with early planning, to avoid crisis which fits in with strategic objectives around early intervention, prevention and integration.

This report focuses on the work carried out between March 2018 and March 2019 to jointly train practitioner trainers from health and social care partnerships (HSCPs) and housing partners, to equip them with the skills and knowledge, to then deliver this training programme within their own locations, and evidence the benefits this has delivered.

## Background

Housing Solutions training modules were first developed in June 2017 as part of the wider Adapting for Change (AfC) improvement programme.<sup>1</sup> Practitioners were identified within each of the five AfC pilot test sites to deliver the core foundation half-day module 1, across the locations they covered. This module sets the tone for the overall approach in terms of acting early and having the right housing conversations. It was designed to target all relevant staff/professionals across the spectrum of health and social care, recognising the wide range of engagement within the community that many front-line staff will have with people who need simple, timely, and effective advice about the range of potential housing-based solutions.

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*"The Housing Solutions programme has been incredibly valuable to health staff. It has really highlighted that housing solutions and adaptations is everyone's business and not an issue to be referred or signposted on."*

**Heather Fraser, AHP Co-ordinator, NHS Forth Valley**

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Of the five AfC sites, Falkirk led on the widest roll-out of module 1, using this to support the test of a new joint assessment tool within a locality. Evaluation feedback from all staff and managers was very positive and it was acknowledged that this programme had significant traction in terms of connecting a wider range of health, social care and housing agendas, and

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<sup>1</sup> Evaluation of Adapting for Change, Scottish Government, 2017 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-adapting-change/>

had the ability to achieve considerable spread across all sectors, and in all agencies, across Scotland.

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*"I am delighted to be supporting the delivery of Housing Solutions training locally. ...everyone appears to really take on board the fact that conversations initiated at an early stage give people the best chance of considering real options early enough to implement their preferences. Feedback has shown that people moving house can also impact positively on other agendas including fuel poverty and the demands on the housing stock from other sectors of the population"*

**Lynette Denovan, Team Manager, Falkirk Council Social Work Adult Services**

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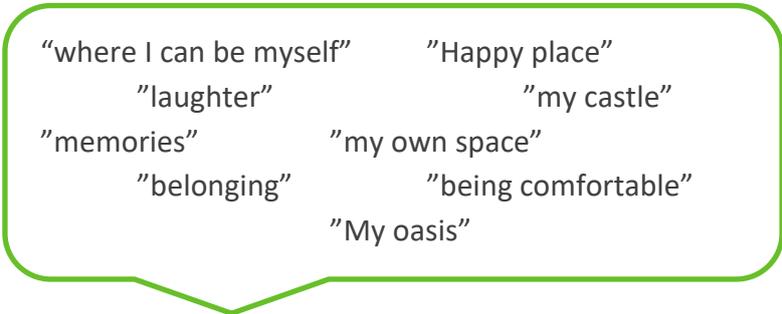
## Purpose

As indicated above, the main purpose of the Housing Solutions change programme is to effect change at front line service level, in terms of the way in which wider housing needs are recognised and responded to. The Housing Solutions programme focuses on early intervention and effective 'housing conversations', and encourages staff, irrespective of professional background or agency, to engage in a simple way with people about their housing situation. Housing Solutions is underpinned by the values of choice and control, by empowering people to explore at a much earlier stage the types of solutions that may be best for them and tries to avoid the crisis situations and service responses, which are all too prevalent.

It was evident from the AfC work that, in some of the case studies collected, housing, health and social care services have missed opportunities to engage with people about the things that are most important to them. The 'right housing conversation' is the central focus of the training, encouraging staff to reflect on 'what home means to them', and, in turn, acknowledge that for them, and the people they work with, it will infrequently be about the physical structure of the property. Key themes are often more about memories, association, and how their home makes them feel. These are rarely the starting point for a formal agency assessment, but can offer us a clue as to why services will often face situations where service users will decline offers of, what appears on paper, to the perfect, accessible, home, when the suitability of the environment may not be the person's immediate priority.

The training therefore helps staff to identify **how** to engage with people, and **what** to say, to explore the feelings that people will have about where they live. It is notable that even experienced practitioners (for example occupational therapists) have acknowledged the benefits of taking this different approach, and welcomed this training as a refresh for their own practice.

## What does Home mean to you?



"where I can be myself"      "Happy place"  
"laughter"      "my castle"  
"memories"      "my own space"  
"belonging"      "being comfortable"  
"My oasis"

The other critical aspect of 'the right housing conversation' is about **when** it should take place. Through the AfC work a review of case studies from across the five sites, highlighted common issues related to re-housing and adaptation opportunities being discussed far too late, and often as part of a crisis response. A stage at which people are at their most vulnerable and least likely to be able to cope with big decisions.

The Housing Solutions change programme therefore, encourages staff and agencies to avoid this situation as much as possible by supporting a wider range of staff to engage with people much sooner about the likely impact of changes in their health and well-being on their housing needs, and to sow the seeds about potential alternatives and different housing solutions to consider. There are many agencies and professions who are visiting or working with people in their own homes and are well-placed to identify step-changes in an individual's ability to cope with their environment, or anticipate how they may be affected in the future. The need to pick up on changes at a much earlier stage and provide people with good, clear, and consistent advice on potential options, is essential, if we are to properly support people to make effective and informed decisions about what is best for them for the longer term.

Therefore, to be effective, this programme relies on targeting a wide range of staff across housing, HSCPs and third sector partners and requires them to acknowledge that housing is their business. The programme tackles existing attitudes and behaviours related to ownership of the housing agenda, as well as providing staff with the relevant skills and knowledge to deliver this 'housing solutions' role.

## Approach

Following the initial work with the AfC sites, a programme of Training for Trainers for the foundation module 1 was developed for roll-out across Scotland starting in March 2018 and concluding in March 2019. Many HSCPs had already expressed an interest in the training, and

a programme was compiled which grouped partnerships in regional areas in order to deliver sessions which would bring different partnerships together in geographical patches.

Partners were asked to complete applications identifying their nominated housing and HSCP trainers. It was a prerequisite that trainers would be trained in mixed agency (housing, health and social care) training pairs to deliver the training, helping relay the overarching joint working message, and bringing a more rounded, inter-agency perspective to the delivery of the training.



*Figure 1 Jill Pritchard and Alison Doherty, Housing Associates with the ihub's Place, Home and Housing Portfolio*

Executive sponsors, and local leads were identified to help with the co-ordination of the delivery of the local Training for Trainers session, and provided overall governance for the support and strategic roll-out of the programme within their own localities. Overall objectives were identified by each partnership, articulating their immediate issues and outcomes for the programme.



*Figure 2 a Train the Trainers session within a health and social care partnership*

# Feedback

- As at March 2019, 75 housing and HSCP based staff have been trained as Housing Solutions trainers from across 22 HSCP localities.
- These joint trainers have gone on to train 885 staff within their services and have ongoing, rolling programmes arranged to target key staff and stakeholders across all sectors.

The feedback from those who have benefited from the Housing Solutions change programme has been significant and comprehensive in its enthusiasm for the modules and Training for Trainers offer. The module is deceptively simple and, as it is a half-day programme, is attractive in encouraging staff from busy services to attend. The opportunity this provides to bring housing staff, third sector partners, and health and social care staff together in localities, has been particularly welcomed, and recognised as being unique in terms of the extent of the engagement this module offers. Housing Solutions training has given staff and their managers, the opportunity to identify local solutions to improving the housing pathway, and has encouraged a broader range of staff to acknowledge, categorically, that “housing is everyone’s business”.

Partnerships and participants have also identified additional spin-off benefits through the multi-agency relationships established during training sessions and then on-going networking and joint working producing improved outcomes for people.

With the help of the ihub, many partnerships have also been able to develop their own Housing Solutions booklet, modelled on an original leaflet created by Falkirk partners. A version of this leaflet [is available on the ihub website](#).

The information below provides seven examples and an overview of feedback to date, from some of the partnerships across Scotland who have implemented the Housing Solutions programme within their own areas.



## 1. Falkirk

In October 2018 Falkirk HSCP carried out an evaluation of outcomes from the training to date, to establish the impact this has had on front line service and outcomes for people in the community:

Staff highlighted the following:

- *“I have used the training to be more assertive and initiate the conversation around re-housing; which is a tough conversation for some service users to have.”*
- *“I feel more able to have an open and honest conversation around the fact that adaptations in a house which is not meeting their overall need will not solve all problems they are encountering.”*
- *“Many people are more receptive to the idea of rehousing than I had thought.”*
- *“Following a Housing Solutions conversation, one of my patients successfully moved to sheltered housing. He previously lived in a three-bed two-storey LA owned house, with no potential to get out and about. This in turn freed up the larger home for a family to inhabit.”*
- *“I have supported two elderly clients to be rehoused by engaging in a Housing Solutions conversation. In both cases neither of these clients had considered rehousing but were starting to struggle with their environment. This avoided a crisis situation and has helped these 2 people regain their independence. I feel the Housing Solutions approach is empowering for staff.”*
- *“A woman I am working with has returned home from hospital with a change in her functional ability which has impacted ability to access upstairs. At present, she and her partner are being supported to live downstairs however have placed themselves on the waiting list for housing with care. Her partner acknowledges that they would not have considered this without the information I provided them regarding the options for the future.”*

## 2. Angus

Angus HSCP embarked on a combination of public and staff engagement.

- They developed Housing Solutions leaflets and created a Housing Solution banner for use at public and staff event.
- They held awareness sessions in public libraries, a Health Fayre, planning to use social media, and have held a session for elected members.
- They carried out some initial staff training sessions with good attendance from housing and allied health professional colleagues, and are now rolling this out to target wider health based staff, service managers, and GP surgeries.
- They arranged a stakeholder session with Angus Health, Housing, and Social Care Group, and included their technology-enabled care leader in the training programme.

### 3. Aberdeenshire

Aberdeenshire HSCP engaged with strategic management at the outset and had approval and support to roll-out the training across all sectors.

- They involved their Disabled persons Housing Service (Housability) in all their training sessions which helped make good links with staff who might not been aware of this resource.
- Staff asked for more information on local resources and information for signposting and the partnership leads are developing their own Housing Solutions leaflet.
- They rolled out a programme arranged for 2019 to target staff across all sectors.

### 4. Glasgow

Glasgow HSCP engaged with the Housing Solutions programme as way of strategically working with senior stakeholders across housing and the HSCP as part of the wider integration agenda.

- They developed a draft Housing Solutions protocol which aims to support all housing, health and social care partners in Glasgow to jointly take forward service improvement. This will be consulted upon in spring 2019.
- They trained over 300 staff across a very wide professional and agency base including children's services staff, homelessness and mental health services, third sector agencies (such as Alzheimer Scotland), the wide range of housing associations in Glasgow, rehab, hospital based, and nursing services. They have an ongoing training programme arranged for 2019.
- They developed useful contacts leaflets for staff and developed a Glasgow version of the Housing Solutions leaflet.

### 5. Argyll and Bute

Argyll and Bute HSCP engaged quickly following their Training for Trainers session in December 2018.

- They delivered two initial inter-agency courses which were very well received and now implemented the programme to deliver the training across all areas of Argyll and Bute in spring/early summer 2019.
- They had staff attending from council housing, housing associations, advocacy services, telecare, family link workers, home care services, social work, Occupational Therapy and Care and Repair, and plan to target other key staff groups in the different geographical locations including Mull and Islay.

## 6. East Lothian



East Lothian engaged well with the approach at strategic and operational level. The comments above are from a short evaluation report that they produced and illustrate the key messages in the feedback from staff attending the training sessions.

- They trained 60 staff to date and have 13 sessions planned throughout 2019.
- Management and staff reported improvements in joint working across housing and HSCP and a recent local housing conference highlighted how beneficial the Housing Solutions training is for housing.
- They linked the Housing Solutions work to other local initiatives including a new local joint housing and HSCP resourced hub (Wellwynd Hub) which supports early-intervention, prevention, and self-management.

## 7. Midlothian

Midlothian HSCP also engaged quickly with the programme with good support from joint management.

- They produced their own version of the Housing Solution leaflet which comprehensively lists local resources.
- They delivered an initial programme of training to 60 staff over November and December 2018. In January 2019, they received approval from joint management to roll this out to wider NHS staff (including targeting GP practices), third sector and wider housing associations.
- They were also asked to present to a strategic planning forum later in 2019.
- They are also linking with East Lothian to learn from each other and share ideas which is a very positive cross-HSCP approach.



**SUPPORT TO MOVE**  
**A guide for people**  
**in Midlothian**

# Summary and further information

The Housing Solutions programme delivered a significant resource across Scotland which is helping to drive forward meaningful engagement amongst housing and HSCP partners at both strategic and operational levels.

There is emerging evidence that it is effecting change in terms of inter-agency staff attitudes and behaviours around the housing agenda, and delivering effective outcomes for people in our communities who are making informed choices at the earliest stage, around their longer term housing needs.

This approach supports wider strategic objectives around early intervention, prevention, integration and is a simple and cost-effective resource which is improving joint working between housing, and health and social care agencies.

For more information on the Housing Solutions change, please email the ihub's Place, Home and Housing portfolio or visit the portfolio's website:

Email: [hcis.phh@nhs.net](mailto:hcis.phh@nhs.net)

Website: <https://ihub.scot/improvement-programmes/place-home-and-housing/>

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