Local Housing Strategy

2025 -2030



Foreword

I am delighted to introduce Aberdeen City Council's refreshed Local Housing Strategy (LHS) which covers the five-year period from 2025 to 2030.

Living in poverty is known to be damaging for health and is one of the main causes of health inequalities. Housing affordability is a key driver of poverty and inequality in Scotland. Increasing the supply of affordable housing is key to addressing housing need and tackling child poverty. Low-income households are more likely to be impacted by fuel poverty and living in cold and damp homes is associated with higher mortality rates and cold-related ill health, illustrating the importance of this Local Housing Strategy.

The Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy 2025-2030 is based on what is known about the housing and health needs of the people of Aberdeen and has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders including registered social landlords (RSL), service providers, private sector, statutory bodies as well as tenants and residents. This Local Housing Strategy takes full account of the changing needs of our citizens and sets out of how these challenges might be overcome.

This Local Housing Strategy builds on our previous success in increasing the number of affordable homes by Aberdeen City Council and our RSL partners. Aberdeen has also become one of the six flagship locations for Homewards which is part of HRH Prince and Princess of Wales Royal Foundation to end homelessness, and we can see some homelessness measures improving. The supply of specialist provision homes has increased through the affordable housing supply programme, in response to the high level of demand in the city, as identified in the Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership's Market Position Statements.

Progress towards delivery of this Local Housing Strategy will be monitored and regularly reported over the next five years to ensure that targets are being met, outcomes are being delivered and responses to further changes are made, as appropriate. This will help us to continue to deliver positive housing outcomes, across all tenures for all citizens in Aberdeen.

Miranda Radley

Housing Spokesperson and Convener of Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee.

Introduction

Aberdeen Context

Our ambition is for Aberdeen to be “a place where all people can prosper regardless of their background.” At the heart of this, is a commitment to tackling poverty and inequality and supporting the city’s people to live healthy lives.

Through an understanding of the needs of the city and its people, as well as the services and interventions that are provided, the Council’s suite of strategies aims to identify the things that will bring benefit to people and commit to evidence based and effective future actions.

The focus for our strategies and actions is on improving outcomes across five themes of the social determinants of health:

- Education & Lifelong Learning
- Economic Stability
- Communities & Housing
- Neighbourhood & Environment
- Health & Social Care

The Population of Aberdeen

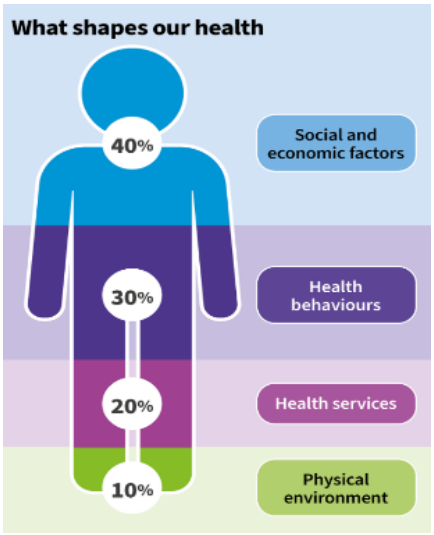
The population of Aberdeen City is estimated to be 227,750. The overall population had been declining from 2015 to 2023, primarily due to a falling birth rate and fluctuating net migration. In the coming years, Aberdeen is projected to have fewer people of working age and will see a rise in the number of older people, particularly those over 75.

A falling and ageing population pose a number of challenges to an area and can lead to a cycle of economic decline. It can also increase pressure on public services by reducing the overall tax base, whilst increasing the need to provide services and care, specifically for children and older people. Given that the falling birth rate has been a reality for a number of years, if the city’s population is to be sustained, or grow in the short and medium term, this must be driven by migration; by attracting people to and keeping them in the city. Like many other areas, a growing number of people in the city are recorded as having a limitation to work, exacerbating the balance between those in work, and those who are not.

Our focus, therefore, must be to ensure Aberdeen is a place where people want to come to live and work, and to support the people who do live here to play a full social and economic part in the city’s future.



The Social Determinants of Health



The social determinants of health contribute to the unfair and avoidable differences in outcomes seen across our city.

To ensure that this Local Housing Strategy helps to address health inequalities, we have taken the time to reflect on what we know from published research and what we know about our citizens. Taking this approach has helped us identify areas of focus for this Local Housing Strategy to ensure that it is focussed on tackling inequality.

Children, Families and Lifelong Learning



It is clear that the life circumstances of children affect their educational attainment, and that educational inequality can lead to inequalities of health and wellbeing in early adulthood and beyond. We also know that the circumstances of parents and carers directly impacts on children and young people.

In Aberdeen there is evidence of increased numbers of children living in poverty; having a disability; with additional support needs; and entering school with at least one developmental concern. One in three school pupils are of ethnic minority background. Whilst across a range of measures, attainment shows a positive trend, the most striking feature is the impact of family affluence/deprivation on children's experiences and outcomes, including educational attainment and positive destinations.

The city has a large student population based over several university and college campuses. An increase in the number of students studying online may have contributed to an overprovision of purpose-built student accommodation. A recent report also suggested 35% of full-time students were owner occupiers in Aberdeen which is significantly higher than in Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh.

Consistent youth homelessness presentations suggests that we need to take a more holistic approach to supporting families facing adversity. This will be progressed through our Family Support Model which is being developed.

Schools and further/higher education partners must be alert to the signs of homelessness so that they can take early preventative action to prevent and end youth homelessness. It is important that young people understand their rights and know how to sustain a tenancy.

Aberdeen continues to welcome many displaced families and young people from around the world and those seeking refuge in the city will continue to require essential support, including accommodation, and help into training and employment to enable them to join the labour market.

The **Local Housing Strategy** has a key role in helping ensure that:

- Families with children can access housing and support that meets their housing and wider needs.
- Those supporting young people understand how to identify and support those at risk of homelessness.
- Accessible information is available to help young people to sustain their tenancy.
- The housing needs of those seeking refuge in the city are planned for.
- Our Local Development Plan takes account of the shifting trends in student behaviour and student numbers.



Economic Stability

A healthy economy is inextricably linked to the health and wellbeing of a population. Simply put, people who experience economic inequalities have poorer health and wellbeing. People who are economically secure have better health and wellbeing.

Aberdeen is experiencing an economic transition toward a low-carbon economy, with a clear focus on developing greater diversity across business sectors. Energy remains a key component in this, though more is needed on developing the renewables sector, with tourism, and financial and business services sectors also being important in the mix. Even if the wealth gap between the region and Scotland as a whole is narrowing, in 2023 people in Aberdeen were still wealthier per head of the population than Scotland.

The estimated unemployment rate in the city in June 2024 was 4.4%, which is above the Scottish level of 3.5%, whilst the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits matched the Scotland figure. In 2023, it was estimated that almost 1 in 6 households had no-one within the household working, but households with low income, or likely to be experiencing financial instability, are also important. It is estimated that 3 out of 5 (57%) households experiencing relative poverty will be within working households.

The ability for the local economy to help create and maintain health and wellbeing is important from a population health perspective. This means that it can sustain high quality employment that helps people to live in homes suitable to their needs, and which can be kept warm and dry. It is essential that there is a local economy that can help people and families maintain the types of financial security to put food on the table, pay their housing costs, and to afford the other necessities of everyday life. To prevent loss of health and wellbeing we must continue to address the economic inequalities and support financial security. The accessibility of financial inclusion services will continue to be important, as will the utilisation of initiatives such as Aberdeen City Council's Rent Assistance Fund.

The **Local Housing Strategy** has a key role in:

- Ensuring that the availability, quality, and affordability of housing is a key element in positively attracting people to live and remain in the city.
- Ensuring that those who suffer from economic inequalities are supported to find a good quality, affordable and sustainable home as quickly as possible.
- Ensuring that citizens know where and how to access financial inclusion services and benefit from targeted initiatives, such as the Rent Assistance Fund.



Communities & Housing

Having somewhere to live which is affordable, warm, and secure is an essential part of wellbeing. The availability, location, type, and quality of housing is also important. So too are the housing challenges that many people face, including households that are experiencing fuel poverty; those who require specialist provision housing as a result of ill-health or disability; and those who, for a range of reasons, are without a secure place to live.

Feeling safe within your home, your place and your community are important factors in wellbeing too, so crime and anti-social behaviour, risk of house fires and being safe when using roads are also important. An ability to participate within one's community is a key element in creating and maintaining wellbeing.

Along with other local authorities across the UK, Aberdeen has strived to meet the challenges presented by the rapid influx of displaced people seeking support and refuge, and is currently home to around 2,000 displaced people, which is a ten-fold increase in arrivals over the last 3 years. Resettled families can face isolation on arrival to the UK. Such isolation can be reinforced by language barriers and varying cultural perceptions of appropriate interactions. The opportunity to build social connections is critical to support integration into local communities but there can be comfort in engaging mainly with others who share the same language and culture. This can restrict chances to make friends and to benefit from the exchange of regular information which generally supports assimilation to UK culture. Equally, host communities and services should be actively supported to foster integration through shared community events, the celebration of cultures and positive neighbourliness.

Having a safe and suitable place to live is at the core of integration of housing, health, and social care. Being able to provide this within the context of a housing shortage has led to a range of housing options being utilised for settled accommodation beyond initial transitional arrangements, including host sponsorship, procured Ministry of Defence properties, private-sector tenancies, Aberdeen City Council and other social rented sector housing providers, and procured Home Office properties. The mismatch between available housing stock and the size of accommodation affects the resettled population, along with others on the mainstream waiting list. There is a shortage of single person accommodation as well as a need for larger properties to house UK Refugee Scheme and Afghan families.

Through our use of the Scottish Place Standard Tool (SPST), we know that housing and community is viewed positively across the city. However, 10% of those living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1 and 22% of those living in SIMD 2 identify housing and community as an issue. Of particular concern is that those living in SIMD 1 raise concerns about their sense of influence and control, and also express concerns about feeling unsafe. Housing and community is of particular concern in the North and South Priority Neighbourhoods. Those aged under 24 had most concerns about housing and community. Mean scores by ethnicity showed little variation from the city averages.

We know that a good landlord-tenant relationship helps tenancy sustainment. We also know that tenants who can make their house a home have more positive mental health. Given the different views held across communities and groups, it will be important to refresh our tenant participation groups to ensure that we can hear and address the concerns of our younger tenants and those living in priority neighbourhoods. Strengthening participation and agency will be essential to building better, healthier places and communities across Aberdeen and this should be considered as we develop our Future Libraries Model.

Many citizens of Aberdeen face barriers accessing good quality, safe, sustainable, and affordable homes. Housing providers are facing increased demand for affordable housing alongside the rising costs of repairs and delivery of new build homes. To compound the challenges, the mental health needs of some citizens result in expensive repairs being necessary when tenancies are ended, lengthening the time and resource required to re-let a property. New properties attract significant interest from prospective tenants, with some older homes proving harder to let.

We understand that there are multiple factors that can cause a household to experience homelessness. We also understand that in becoming homeless the risk of disruption, destabilisation and harm can increase. A high proportion of households experiencing homelessness in Aberdeen have experienced a mental health support need (13%), and 3.7% have difficulties with substance use which is very often combined with poor mental health, a physical disability or a learning disability. These factors can contribute to the loss of a person's home particularly when combined with financial difficulties or perhaps already being in a place of housing insecurity, such as staying with friends or relatives.

In Aberdeen we know that the main reason for homeless presentations is due to the person or household being asked to leave their current accommodation, and this accommodation is often either the parental or another relative's home, or a friend or partner's home. As of December 2024, we also know that 11.8% of people presenting as homeless in the city gave a reason of there being a violent or abusive dispute within the household, and a further 15.4% stated that there was a non-violent conflict within the household or a relationship breakdown. Households presenting as homeless in the city identify a lack of support as an issue, either from family or more widely, and difficulties managing on their own. We need to continue working with the Homewards Coalition to help make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring.

Aberdeen City Council works closely with the Scottish Prison Service to prevent homelessness and provide support to prisoners on their release. The SHORE standard is followed to prevent prisoners from becoming homeless on release.

Aberdeen City Council and its partner organisations must maximise the delivery of affordable housing to ensure a sufficient supply of housing in the city, including wheelchair accessible homes and homes for those living with complex care needs. There is also a need to ensure sufficient investment in older properties. The varying and evolving needs of the citizens of Aberdeen need to be met through the delivery of person-centred approach which promotes independent living.

We also know that there are a range of ways in which housing can be modified to improve health outcomes for households, including improved energy efficiency and increasing the provision of affordable housing. Several factors make homes less comfortable, including limited indoor space and no access to private or shared outdoor space. Knowledge of these factors will directly inform our plans.

The **Local Housing Strategy** has a key role in:

- Ensuring that our tenant participation arrangements are representative of our population and take account of what is known about more vulnerable groups.
- Working more closely with other services and agencies to offer more preventative support, and early help with complex issues through our emerging model of Family Support.
- Ensuring that homes are of good quality and are energy efficient.
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing that has sufficient indoor and external space.
- Aligning the work of the Housing Service with our Future Libraries Model.



Neighbourhood & Environment

We know that where we live, where we work, and where we spend our time has an important influence on our health and wellbeing. The design, development and maintenance of a place is important in promoting good health and sustaining wellbeing for individuals, families, and communities.

For good health and wellbeing, people need to be able to access a green space within 300m of their home, and Aberdeen City Council has a key role in ensuring access to greenspaces and woodland, and in protecting the quality of local blue spaces (water and river sides).

The natural environment, sustainability and climate change also do, and increasingly will, impact on life in the city. Direct effects associated with climate change include increased mortality and ill-health associated with excess heat and cold, and loss associated with flooding and damage to properties. Climate change is also likely to exacerbate inequalities associated with air pollution, access to greenspaces, fuel, and food poverty. We know, for example, that the number of children hospitalised due to asthma is increasing locally and is at odds with a declining national trend.

A survey of children and young people, aligned to the Place Standard Tool indicators, asked about the same 14 themes included in the Scottish Place Standard Tool. The themes with the highest proportion of 'Not Good' responses were facilities and services (35.2%), play and recreation (34.7%) and care and maintenance (33.7%) which shows that over a third of respondents chose these options as areas for improvement.

We know that place-based approaches can improve the quality of homes and neighbourhoods and support the health and wellbeing of communities. Quality placemaking has been at the core of planning in Aberdeen for a number of years. All developments must ensure high standards of design, with biodiverse open space, sustainable transport options and a distinctive sense of place. We will involve local people in decision making about the places that they live in to allow us to shape communities in a way that people want.

The **Local Housing Strategy** has a key role in:

- Ensuring that housing forms part of a diverse and enriching local environment which helps people to enjoy their neighbourhood; and
- Working towards net zero targets to address climate change
- Helping to reduce fuel poverty.



Health & Social Care (Children and Young People)

Giving every child the best start in life and ensuring they are supported as they grow into adults is essential in creating good population health and wellbeing throughout life. Children who are born into families impacted by deprivation may be at a higher risk of suffering from health inequalities.

Challenges exist during the period from before birth to the start of school, including maternal drug and alcohol use, and smoking at the beginning of pregnancy which remains around 1 in 8 pregnancies. Premature births in Aberdeen are similar to the levels seen in Scotland and overall, 85% of children are born at a healthy weight. Rates of pre-school immunisation by 24 months remain below the national target.

As for many other issues, the physical health of school age children, including healthy weight, physical activity, oral health, and early pregnancies varies across communities. Outcomes are largely determined by levels of deprivation.

Variation is also clear in the self-reported mental health and wellbeing of school-age children. Of primary 6 & 7 pupils surveyed, whilst, on the whole they feel that they are healthy and that this is improving, affluence within the family is clearly a factor, as the more affluent the family, the more likely the child reported being healthy and self-confident.

A growing number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are making Aberdeen their home. There is a need to now consider our provision of homes for those who are in our care to ensure adequate and appropriate provision.

We know that some groups are more likely to experience childhood adversity including those from ethnic minorities, those with a disability, and those who are care experienced. The health outcomes for these groups remain persistently below those of their peers.

Health & Social Care (Adults)

For both women and men, healthy life expectancy is declining in the city. People living in more deprived areas have shorter lives and are more likely to live with poorer health for longer. 1 in 4 adults describe themselves as having a limiting, long-term illness.

As we get older, we tend to need more health and social care support, and the support of dependants to help us manage long-term conditions or diseases. There is a rising number of adults choosing not to have children, and this is likely to require very different housing models in the longer term. Preventing disease progression and encouraging the adoption of healthier behaviours are important elements for improving health outcomes.

Over half of the deaths in Aberdeen City in 2022 were associated with cancers and circulatory diseases, for which smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity are risks. It is clear that there is still work to be done promoting healthier lifestyles and this will be progressed through our Future Libraries Model.

Whilst the rates at which people are being admitted to hospital due to alcohol and the rate of alcohol-related deaths has been declining or has been relatively stable over the last few years, the drug-related death rate has increased substantially. Continuing to reduce the serious consequences of alcohol and drug use remains a priority which will result in improved health outcomes for those affected, meaning that we now need to look far more holistically at how best to support our citizens to overcome the many different challenges they face by taking a family centric approach to the delivery of services.

Data suggests that more people are being prescribed drugs for anxiety and depression than ten years ago, though the rate of people being in hospital for mental illness has fallen. Deaths from suicides have risen and the effects of the cost-of-living crisis suggest that mental health and wellbeing may further deteriorate in the near future. Early intervention should be a focus, addressing, for example, the number of people feeling socially isolated in our communities. It will be important to integrate our Future Libraries Model with our Local Housing Strategy.

As part of their focus on prevention and early intervention Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership's Public Health and Wellbeing Teams promote healthy lifestyles and deliver a Stay Well Stay Connected programme of events designed to encourage physical activity and better dietary choices as well as improving digital skills and social connections.

We know that financial, spatial and relational factors are associated with housing insecurity and mental health. We also know that overcrowded homes can be associated with stress, anxiety and the spread of respiratory illness and we will seek to address these areas in our Local Housing Strategy.

The **Local Housing Strategy** has a key role in:

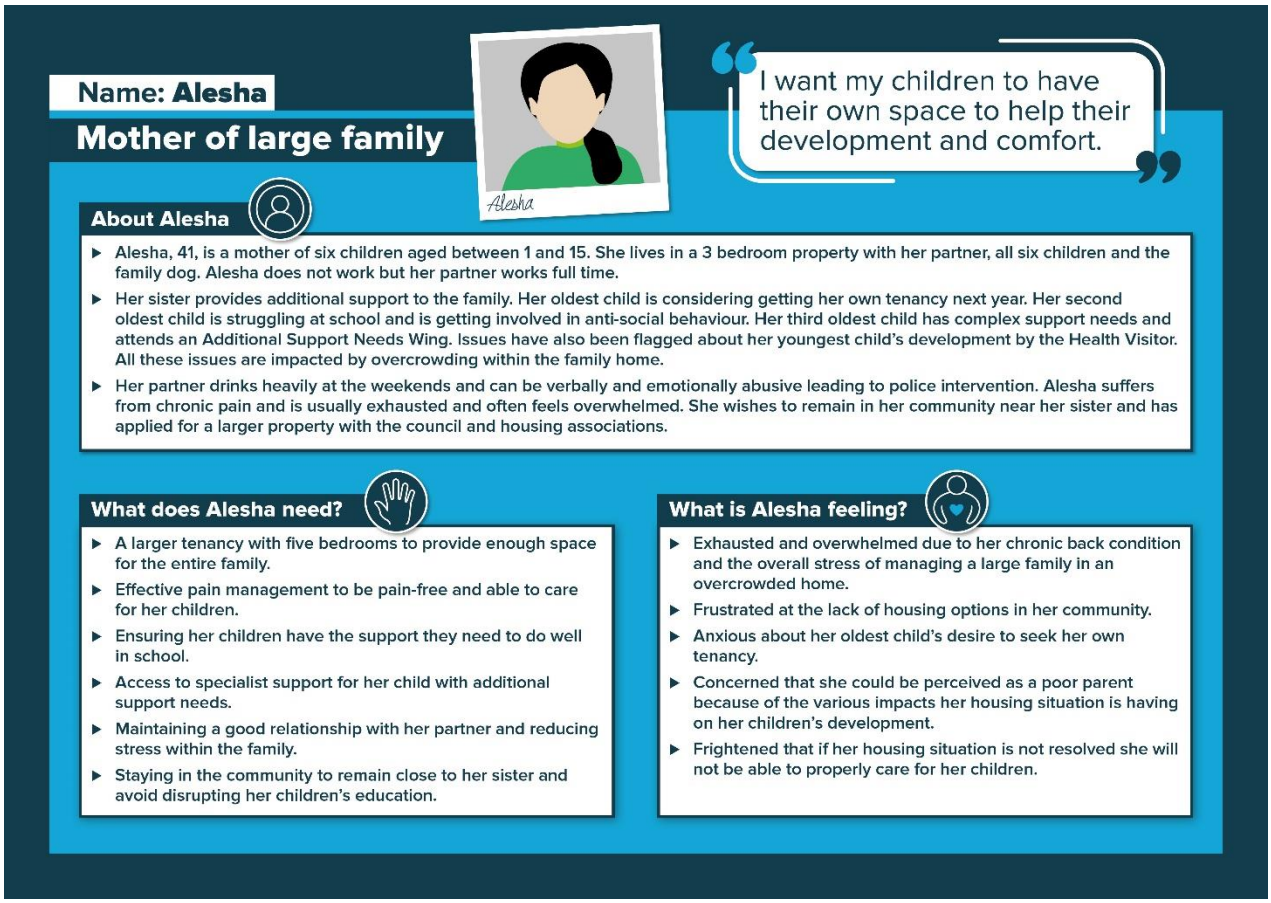
- Ensuring that everyone in Aberdeen, particularly those with mental or physical health needs, receive housing and support which meets their housing and wider needs to support them to live a healthy life;
- Providing good quality, affordable and energy efficient homes which lead to improved health outcomes for the people of Aberdeen;
- Aligning work to support healthy behaviours and a sense of community and belonging through our Future Libraries Model;
- Ensuring that our housing policies allow our citizens to have sufficient space in their home and are not overcrowded;
- Planning for longer term changes, such as our knowledge about the increasing number of citizens who choose not to have children and the implications of this on meeting care needs in the future;
- Continuing to work with partners to ensure access to education and employment, and opportunities for connection are available for New Aberdonians.



The problems facing our citizens

Those who experience the most disadvantage, tend to experience challenges across a range of social determinants. It is important that our Local Housing Strategy takes account of the complexity faced by some individuals and families across the city, as increasing complexity of needs tends to result in even poorer health outcomes.

To support the development of the Local Housing Strategy, a range of personas, based on the known needs of some of the more complex needs of our citizens, have been considered.



Name: Amara

Frail person



> I want to live as independently as I can.

About Amara

- Amara, 83, is a retired widow who lives in sheltered housing and relies on her state pension and benefits for income.
- Her three children and two grandchildren live nearby and help her with transport and shopping now that she is too frail to use public transport.
- She lives independently within sheltered housing, socialising with neighbours, and has no need of any social care. She has a tablet and smartphone but relies on her family to help her with these technologies.
- She would like to be able to use them independently to find out what other benefits she may be entitled to and to interact with services but is underconfident.

What does Amara need?

- Support to use and understand digital technology.
- Access to groups of likeminded people with similar aspirations.
- Proactive communication from authorities on what support is available to her.

What is Amara feeling?

- Like a burden to her family because she relies on their help.
- Underconfident about her abilities to navigate digital services.
- Concern about being a victim of online fraud.
- Hopeful of being able to enhance her skills and to live as independently as she can for as long as possible.

Name: Baran

Asylum refugee



> I am determined to build a better life for my family and myself in Aberdeen.

About Baran

- Baran, 24, is an asylum seeker from Sudan living alone in a council bedsit, having spent a year in an asylum hotel.
- His wife is still in Sudan and due to communication problems there, they only manage to talk once a month. His parents and two siblings are also still in Sudan.
- He previously worked as a mechanic and wishes to explore opportunities to do the same in Aberdeen. He is taking online English classes while he waits for a place on a language course at an Aberdeen College.
- He is currently still learning about his rights and responsibilities and needs support to manage his tenancy, finances and understanding the laws to keep himself safe and protected.

What does Baran need?

- To reunite with his wife and his family and build a positive life together in the UK.
- Continued support in studying English.
- Opportunities to pursue a career as a car mechanic in Aberdeen.
- Assistance in becoming independent and confident in living in the UK.

What is Baran feeling?

- Frustration at the long waiting times for English classes, which are essential for his integration and career aspirations.
- Longing and sadness as he is separated from his wife and family, with limited communication opportunities.
- Loneliness and isolation as he navigates his new life in Aberdeen on his own.

Name: Dave

Substance user



> I want to live somewhere I feel safe in my home and in the community.

About Dave

- Dave, 52, has used substances for a long time and is unemployed and lives in a flat. People regularly come into his flat to steal money and food and he doesn't sleep well due to being scared.
- He was in care when younger because his parents had alcohol problems, and his father was violent.
- Dave used substances from a young age, but things escalated when he left a short spell in the army with a back injury. A recent leg amputation has meant Dave is confined to a wheelchair.
- He is having treatment for his substance use but still uses substances and has overdosed in the past. His lack of mobility has increased his social isolation and his interest and ability in his self-care is declining.
- He has difficulty reading and understanding technology. He has a sister and nephew who he would like to reconnect with.

What does Dave need?

- Support to move around his flat more easily.
- A safe living environment and access to some outdoor space where he can feel secure and comfortable.
- Support to feel more confident and less scared when he is outside.
- To engage in recreational activities that he enjoys and can help improve his quality of life.
- To establish social connections and reconnect with his family. Assistance with managing his money.
- To improve his physical fitness. To continue his treatment for substance abuse.

What is Dave feeling?

- Isolation and loneliness due to his lack of mobility.
- Fear and anxiety because people come into his flat to steal.
- Frustration due to his lack of reading ability and understanding of technology.
- Lack of self-worth due to mobility issues and substance abuse.

Name: Frank

Complex Mental Health



> I don't want to live in this service. I want to be supported in the community.

About Frank

- Frank, 35, has lived in a residential facility to support him with his long-term complex mental health problems, having previously spent time as a hospital inpatient.
- The shared housing, living with others with mental health problems is causing Frank difficulties. He finds the home noisy and is unhappy at sharing his living space with people he doesn't like.
- His parents have seen a deterioration in his presentation and wellbeing as a result of his living conditions.
- The staff at the facility have also expressed concerns and, although they provide support for his health and independence, this support is not consistently applied due to frequent changes in staff.
- His parents fear he will be admitted to hospital again if his living conditions do not change.

What does Frank need?

- A living space that is quieter and feels like home, where he can choose his housemates and be closer to his family.
- Access to support within the community rather than hospital-based care.
- Consistency of support from healthcare team.
- Opportunities to make more friends to enhance his social life.
- Access to hobbies and interests that support his mental health.
- An effective and clear recovery plan is essential for Frank to manage his condition.

What is Frank feeling?

- Frustration and anger due to the lack of suitable accommodation and services that meet his needs locally and the long wait time for a more suitable environment.
- Anxiety and worry about the possibility of being detained in the hospital if his situation reaches a crisis point.
- Unhappiness with his current noisy living environment and sharing space with people he wouldn't choose to live with.
- Fear that the frequent staff changes, and inconsistent support may lead to his behaviour making the placement unsustainable, potentially resulting in another hospital admission.
- Desire for independence and connection to live independently in a quieter, homely environment close to his family, where he can access community support and engage in hobbies that support his mental health.

Name: Nicola

Recovering substance user/unemployed



> I just want a safe and secure home so I can care for my children again and get my life back on track.

About Nicola

- Nicola, 42, is an unemployed mother of three in receipt of benefits. She and her children's father have a history of substance use and domestic violence. Her children were placed in kinship care after her imprisonment. She was given temporary accommodation on her release from prison but found it unsuitable because of the presence of substance users nearby.
- She has been living off and on with her partner but has reported being a victim of domestic violence five times. Efforts to support her are difficult because she doesn't stay in touch regularly and doesn't trust the authorities.
- After she was released from prison, she found the temporary accommodation was not suitable for her because of those around her using substances. Since then, she has lived with her partner but has reported domestic violence five times. She does not trust those in authority which is hindering the support that is offered to her.

What does Nicola need?

- Assistance in understanding her housing options and accessing available support to build a home for herself and her children.
- Someone reliable to help her navigate her housing options and support systems.
- Regular contact with her children.
- A safe and secure place to live away from her ex-partner.
- Support to reduce her substance use and the risk of reoffending.
- Support to ensure she is no longer a victim of domestic violence.

What is Nicola feeling?

- Distrustful of the authorities due to her children being placed in care and being provided with accommodation that she felt was unsuitable for recovering substance users.
- Threatened by her abusive ex-partner who is always able to find her due to shared acquaintances.
- Hopeful that securing a 3-bedroom house will improve her chances of having her children returned to her care.

Name: Lena

Expectant first-time mother



> I want to give my baby the safe and comfortable childhood I never had.

About Lena

- Lena, 19, is a part-time shop assistant who is expecting her first child. The father of her child is in prison, and she doesn't plan to get back together with him when is released.
- She currently lives with her cat in a privately rented bedsit in an area plagued by anti-social behaviour and drug supply and use.
- Her accommodation is small and damp with no access to an outside area to enjoy.
- She was neglected as a child, spent most of her childhood in foster care and didn't do well in school. Her foster carers are a big support for her. She suffers from bouts of anxiety and depression.
- She has applied for a council house because her current accommodation is not a safe or comfortable environment for a mother and baby.

What does Lena need?

- A stable and safe living environment, with access to an outside space for her child and ideally near to her foster carers.
- To give her baby the happy childhood she didn't experience.
- Advice on childcare and benefits.
- To live in a community with other young mothers.
- To develop her employment opportunities.

What is Lena feeling?

- Anxiety and uncertainty about her current living situation not being resolved before the birth of her child.
- Frustration and helplessness because she feels her housing application is not being taken seriously.
- Desire to provide a safe and loving home for her child.
- Desire to develop herself socially and professionally.

Name: Lillia

Refugee mother with large extended family



> I need help caring for all my relatives.

About Lillia

- Lillia, 32, she is a stay-at-home single mother living in a 2-bedroom council flat with her two sons. Nearby, her parents live in another 2-bedroom council house with her younger sister, while her grandfather lives in a 1-bedroom adapted bungalow.
- The family all arrived in Aberdeen in 2022 as refugees from Ukraine and were homed in temporary accommodation before getting secure tenancies.
- Lillia is estranged from the fathers of her children and receives no financial contribution from them. She used to work part-time but gave that up on the birth of her youngest child.
- Her father is being treated for a terminal illness and is in poor mental and physical health and cannot work. Her mother works part-time, and her sister is a student. Her grandfather is in poor physical health and socially isolated due to mobility and lack of English, requiring round the clock company from the family for her wellbeing.
- Her parents' home has a mould issue affecting their physical and mental health. Lillia is the only member of her family who speaks English, which adds to her feelings of stress and responsibility for her extended family.

What does Lillia need?

- Access to timely and effective healthcare for her father.
- Support to ensure her grandfather, can live pain-free and maintain as much independence as possible.
- A safe and healthy living environment for all her family members in close proximity to each other.
- Access to opportunities for her children to prosper and live a normal life.
- Emotional and practical support, including assistance with caregiving duties and help with managing the household.

What is Lillia feeling?

- Stress and anxiety due to her multiple caregiving responsibilities and the health issues affecting her family.
- Determination and resilience to do everything she can for her family.
- Frustration with the healthcare system in the UK, particularly the long waiting times for her father's treatment.
- Frustration with the unresolved mould issues in her parents' home, which are affecting their physical and mental health.
- Overwhelmed with her role as the primary caregiver and the only English speaker in the family.

Name: Margaret

Elderly person who will soon need care



> I love my home because it's full of memories, but I'm finding it harder to keep it clean and tidy.

About Margaret

- Margaret, 78, lives alone in a bungalow. Her husband died seven years ago. She has a son and grandson who live in England.
- Margaret struggles with household chores because of her mobility issues, frequent infections, and weight problems.
- She needs to visit her GP regularly. Her friends have noticed she is not coping well at home.
- Her kitchen is often untidy, and there is an unpleasant smell because she has trouble getting to the toilet on time.
- This discourages visitors, and she feels lonely. She orders groceries online and buys easy-to-make ready meals.

What does Margaret need?

- Support to lose weight, which would help her become more mobile and better able to manage her household chores and personal hygiene.
- To improve her knowledge about nutritious foods to make healthier choices and reduce the frequency of infections.
- To Increase her levels of physical activity to enhance her overall health and mobility.
- To be part of a community group to reduce her loneliness and provide social interaction.
- Assistance with household chores.
- To be able to get on the train to visit her family, which would require improved mobility and confidence in traveling.

What is Margaret feeling?

- Lonely and isolated.
- Frustrated and overwhelmed because she is aware that she is not coping as well as she used to.
- Embarrassed that the state of her home is discouraging visitors.
- Frustrated by her financial constraints, as she relies on a state pension and has little savings, making it challenging to buy nutritious food.
- Motivated to improve her health so she can be more mobile and better able to cope on her own.

Name: Sarah

Unpaid carer



> I need an accessible home that can accommodate my daughter's needs, within a community that has support for people with learning disabilities.

About Sarah

- Sarah, 41, is a single parent working 30 hours a week as a supervisor in a supermarket.
- She has a 16-year-old daughter with a learning disability who needs support with communication, mobility, personal care, and eating. Sarah receives help from paid carers and her sister and mother.
- Her sister's availability will soon decrease, and her mother is being assessed for dementia, meaning she may no longer be able to support Sarah, and may need support herself at some point in the future.
- Sarah relies on her smartphone for communication. She has a driving licence but relies on public transport to get around the city.

What does Sarah need?

- To maintain her flexible working hours and income.
- To ensure her daughter's health and wellbeing and develop her independent living skills.
- To undertake the guardianship process for her daughter and make decisions on her behalf as she transitions to adulthood.
- To find supportive groups for her daughter and improve her daughter's communication abilities.
- To secure alternative care for her daughter and develop a contingency plan for emergencies.
- To increase her savings for a suitable vehicle.

What is Sarah feeling?

- Concern that the support network provided by her mother and sister will be reduced.
- Concern that she may now be required to support her mother should she be diagnosed with dementia.
- Frustration at the lack of support for single parents whose children have additional support needs.
- Frustration that there is a lack of groups and activities that could support her daughter's wellbeing.
- Frustration at the lack of continuity in the people providing paid-for care.
- Frustration at the complex nature of healthcare and guardianship processes.
- Anxiety about everything she must have in place for the care of her daughter.

It is clear that there are key and recurring vulnerabilities that our policies need to take account of. These include those who are:

- Care experienced.
- Living with a disability.
- Older and frail.
- Living in single parent households.
- Socially isolated, particularly as a result of a long-term health condition.
- Experiencing, or have experienced domestic violence.
- Substance users.
- In need of long-term support for their mental health.
- Fearful as a result of repeated anti-social behaviour.
- Released from prison.
- Fleeing conflict.
- Living with trauma, particularly those who seek refuge in the city.
- Experiencing financial vulnerability.

The **Local Housing Strategy** has a key role in:

- Ensuring that those most at risk of poorer outcomes (the groups identified above) are prioritised for housing and the wider support they need to be well, and checking the adequacy of our current arrangements.
- Working with others to safely share data so that the likes of Sarah and Margaret do not have to repeatedly tell their story, and are supported to maximise their benefit entitlements.
- Making sure that the Future Libraries Model helps address the social isolation felt by Amara, Dave and Frank, and encourages the healthy behaviours they are keen to realise, along with the development of their digital skills.
- Ensuring that our staff and systems recognise that a lack of engagement can be an indication of a lack of trust, as in Nicola's case, and not a lack of need.
- Commit to changing our relationships with the most vulnerable people to be more person centred to reduce the risk of disengagement.
- Improving our response to domestic violence by reviewing our arrangements and working on the Homewards Innovative Housing Project to help those like Nicola.
- Carefully placing and supporting the care experienced young people, like Sarah, so that they can be the Mum they want to be.
- Ensuring that there are progression pathways for those who need long term mental health support like Frank.
- Working to reduce the prevalence and impact of anti-social behaviour.
- Working with families to fully understand the needs of those supporting disabled children and adults in order to better plan for their long term needs.
- Fully understanding the implications of the SHORE Standards on our Health and Social Care delivery models and the implications of any 'secure' models in the future.
- Working to increase the provision of larger homes for families like the Mansons.

Vision

This Local Housing Strategy sets out a vision and priorities for the future delivery of housing and housing related services.

The vision for this Local Housing Strategy is that:

The people of Aberdeen live in good quality, safe, sustainable and affordable homes, and in thriving communities that meet their needs.

Recognising the Challenges

Consideration of the evidence papers in Appendix A, and exploration of the social determinants of health have helped identify the key challenge and action needed to deliver our vision.

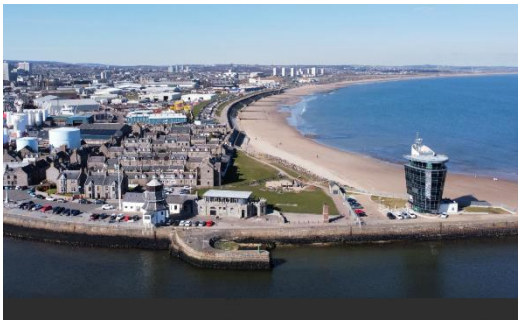
Our Key Challenge – Many citizens of Aberdeen face barriers accessing good quality, secure and affordable homes with support services which meet their needs, and are in locations they want to live in. This can contribute to poor health outcomes, particularly for those who are more vulnerable.

Our Response – We must ensure that there is a sufficient supply of good quality and affordable housing, and more integrated services that provide appropriate support to meet the evolving and varying needs of Aberdeen's citizens, and to promote better, healthier places and communities.

Based on the evidence base we have identified 7 priorities for action:

- Adequate supply of housing - We will support a sufficient supply of housing to meet the varying needs of the people of Aberdeen.
- Placemaking with communities - We will use a place-based approach to encourage lesser heard voices to shape their communities and the community offering, focusing on the unique circumstances of a particular place and involving local people in decision making.
- Homelessness - We will support a proactive housing options approach and will work collaboratively to provide a person-centred service to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.
- Promote independent living in communities - We will use a multi-agency approach, technology and other innovations to enable the people of Aberdeen to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible in their community.
- Promote health through housing - We are committed to reducing health inequalities by providing affordable, accessible, high quality and energy efficient homes that enhance people's health and wellbeing.
- Housing quality and energy efficiency - We will improve the condition of existing homes across all tenures and improve their energy efficiency to help to alleviate fuel poverty and address climate change and support a just transition to net zero.
- Private rented sector – We will support a well managed private rented sector.

Each priority is supported by a number of key actions that Aberdeen City Council and our partners will take to ensure that our vision is realised. Each priority is also accompanied by targets and outcomes that will help us to monitor change and measure success.



Adequate supply of housing

Why is this a Priority?

Despite the recent downturn in the housing market, demand for social housing remains high. Increasing the supply of affordable housing is key to addressing housing need and tackling child poverty. We need to make sure that we have sufficient homes to attract people to come and stay in the city which means that we need the new affordable homes that are provided to meet housing need and demand. The Housing Need and Demand Assessment is the evidence base and shows that one-bedroom homes and larger family homes are required.

What does the evidence say?

There has been an increase in the level of homelessness in the city, as well as increased arrivals from refugee, asylum seeking and resettlement groups, some of whom are placed in restrictive hotel accommodation on a temporary basis, which negatively impacts on mental wellbeing.

There is evidence to suggest there is an over supply of purpose-built student accommodation. We will enhance partnerships with the local universities and colleges to ensure the supply of purpose-built student accommodation meets current levels of need and consider this issue as part of the production of the next Local Development Plan.

Population projections for older people show that by 2028, the number of people in the 65-74 age group is expected to rise by over 10%, reaching 14.4%. The number of those aged 75 and older is projected to increase to 16.1%. This means that we need to ensure that we have housing that is suitable for older people.

New homes have that have been built by Aberdeen City Council are designed to Gold Standard, meaning that they meet all building regulations, are spacious and well equipped. As a result, Aberdeen City Council's new homes are more energy efficient and more accessible than older homes and are in high demand. We have an ongoing commitment to increase the supply of accessible new homes, but we also recognise the need for investment in older properties that are more difficult to relet.

3,097 affordable homes were delivered over the course of the previous Local Housing Strategy. Current proposals suggest that 2,427 affordable homes could be delivered during the lifetime of this Local Housing Strategy if sufficient resources are available.

Almost 800 properties have been brought back into use by the Empty Homes Officers since 2020 but there is still a high level of empty private sector properties in the city, which, if brought back into use, would greatly increase the number and variety of homes available across the city. The work of the Empty Homes Officers relies on engagement with the owners of long-term empty properties and strong working relationships with internal departments and our partners such as Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue. The strong working

What will we do? relationships allows the Empty Homes Officers to utilise as many enforcement powers as possible to ensure long-term empty properties are brought back into use. The Scottish Government are planning to introduce Compulsory Sales Orders which may assist with bringing further long-term empty properties back into use, however there is no clear indication when this will take place.

- Subject to available resources, we will increase the supply of affordable housing, including homes for those with particular needs to meet the requirements of our ageing population and for larger families.
- Reduce the level of Aberdeen City Council voids.
- Balance our investment in new homes with investment in older homes to improve the demand of our older stock.

Outcome to be achieved

We will support a sufficient supply of housing to meet the varying needs of the people of Aberdeen.

Targets for the Delivery Plan

- At least 15% of the new affordable housing development homes built by the Council and RSL partners will be wheelchair accessible by 2030.
- A housing supply target has been set at 700 homes per year, with 25% (175) affordable and 75% (525) market.
- Invest a minimum of 30% of available resource in older homes by 2030.
- Reduce void rent loss to 4.6% by 2030.
- Work with homeowners of empty homes to bring 500 empty homes back into use by 2030.



Placemaking with Communities

Why is this a Priority?

We need to engage with the groups and communities we have identified as being more vulnerable and help support them to make sure they have the opportunity to participate in decision making to ensure that new developments are tailored to their specific circumstances.

What does the evidence say?

Housing Services, the Community Safety Hub, Community Learning and Development and Criminal Justice teams play a critical role in responding to incidents of antisocial behaviour. This supports those living in communities to feel safe and minimises the community impacts of anti-social behaviour and maximises community cohesion. The total number of anti-social behaviour complaints reported to Aberdeen City Council was 3,462 in 2023/24, slightly down from 3,685 in 2022/23. There were 1,956 anti-social offences that led to a police charge in Aberdeen in 2023/24. This is slightly down from 1,986 in 2022/23. The rate per population is the same as the national figure.

Diverse communities are vibrant communities. The housing sector has an important role in promoting diversity and inclusion by supporting minority communities, including asylum seekers and refugees, and minimising community tensions.

Currently information for those who are more vulnerable can sit across a range of different data management systems, resulting in delays in sharing some important information. It is therefore important to strengthen integration between services further to ensure as much efficiency as possible in order to provide more timely support, and work towards more consistently aligned data sets and systems wherever possible.

Use of the Place Standard Tool with communities has evidenced that local people are generally happy with the range and mix of housing, availability of local facilities and the sense of community spirit. However, those aged under 26 and those living in areas of deprivation were less positive and we need to better understand this. We will ensure that our tenancy engagement groups are reflective of those we support.

Engagement through the Place Standard tool highlighted a number of areas for improvement, including increasing the availability of affordable housing, enhancing housing quality, a desire for more green and community spaces and a need to improve the appearance of some neighbourhoods.

What will we do?

- Use technology to support improved information sharing with our citizens and across a more integrated workforce.
- Target engagement activity and participation opportunities with identified vulnerable groups and utilise the Place Standard tool to track progress. Explore what it takes to make a house a home.
- Continue to support the delivery of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan.
- Have community-led resilience plans in place for areas of the city that are vulnerable to severe weather events such as flooding.

- Support the development of our Future Libraries Model to help build the agency of those whose voices are often unheard and ensure that information on housing options is accessible.
- Work with Friends Groups and partners to help maximise the benefits of local green space.
- Continue to focus on the provision of holistic support for New Aberdonians.
- Support the establishment of Scottish Government funded drug and alcohol residential/day services.
- Support SAMH to establish their upstream mental health hubs based within localities.

Outcome to be achieved

We will use a place-based approach to encourage lesser heard voices to shape their communities and the community offering, focusing on the unique circumstances of a particular place and involving local people in decision making.

Targets for the Delivery Plan

- Reduce the number of separate data managements systems by 50% by 2030.
- Improve the scoring of housing and community in the Place Standard tool from 4.0 to 5.0 by 2030. (Maximum score 7)
- Increase mean scores for natural space (Place Standard tool) from 4.7 to 5.5 by 2030. (Maximum score 7)
- Improvement in wellbeing (to be agreed with SAMH)



Make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring

Why is this a Priority?

People at risk of homelessness are significantly more likely to have poor health outcomes. To make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring we need identify and ensure that those at risk of homelessness are provided the support they need to find a settled home.

What does the evidence say?

Since 2020, there has been an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in Aberdeen. This means that there is a higher demand on support services, social housing supply and the provision of temporary accommodation.

Housing and financial insecurity, domestic violence, declining mental health, substance use, and physical or learning disability may all contribute to local homelessness. Households presenting in the city as homeless tell us they feel unsupported, either by family or more widely, and experience difficulties managing on their own. This priority recognises that eradicating homelessness, and specifically rough sleeping, is not only about a lack of accommodation. Offering accommodation without addressing someone's health and wellbeing needs can lead to tenancy breakdown, repeat homelessness and an already disadvantaged client becoming more disadvantaged. We need to review our current provision of health and wellbeing support and work with partners to further integrate our arrangements through our developing model of Family Support.

Domestic violence and abuse require a co-ordinated and pragmatic partnership response. Housing organisations have an important role in identifying suspected abuse and ensuring that homes are available and accessible to victims-survivors, to support them and their children to access appropriate housing and support options and work to support and challenge individuals that cause harm. There are signs that our approach is not yet reducing the number of victims/survivors presenting as homeless.

As part of our commitment to delivering on the Scottish Government SHORE standards, a project is being developed with the aim of reducing, by 90%, the number of people released from prison into Aberdeen City without suitable accommodation by 2026. This builds on the existing process which aims to reduce use of temporary accommodation stock and have persons released from custody signing for a mainstream tenancy once their sentence ends.

Poverty is a significant issue for many. Aberdeen City Council and our Registered Social Landlords partners have an important role in working with local residents and tenants to support communities to improve housing quality and affordability, reduce fuel poverty, and to maximise financial and digital inclusion to help to reduce deprivation.

There is limited availability of social homes, particularly 1-bed properties. Uncertainty around the future of affordable housing funding has impacted on our ability to plan for further increases of the supply of new affordable homes.

What will we do?

- Increase our supply of good quality temporary accommodation.
- Use a Housing First approach to support people in secure tenancies rather than unsecure accommodation and a Housing Options approach focussed on early intervention to prevent homelessness from occurring.
- Explore funding opportunities for the building of more affordable homes to help meet this demand and reduce the homeless journey.

- Offer learning and development opportunities to Aberdeen City Council and partner staff to ensure they can identify those at risk of homelessness and know how to take action to prevent homelessness.
- Deliver against our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.
- Continue to collaborate as part of the Royal Foundation's Homewards programme in order to reduce the level of homelessness in the city and understand the underlying causes of homelessness.
- Work with partners such as NHS Grampian and the Scottish Prison Service to implement agreed SHORE standards to ensure there is suitable accommodation and support for prison leavers.
- Monitor the implications of the 'ask and act' duty that forms part of the Housing (Scotland) Bill currently progressing through parliament.
- Work with partners to ensure a wide range of facilities and services are easy to access locally to support people to live independent, health and fulfilling lives. This could include schools, shops, doctors, libraries , support services, food banks and pantries.
- Move to a more integrated model of Family Support to help reduce the level of family breakdowns which can lead to homelessness presentations.

Outcome to be achieved

We will support a proactive housing options approach and will work collaboratively to provide a person-centred service to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Targets for the Delivery Plan

- Reduce the proportion of homeless applications by 16/17-year-olds to below national levels by 2030.
- Reduce the number of people reporting rough sleeping as part of their homeless assessment by 20% by 2030.
- Increase the percentage of people affected by homelessness into permanent accommodation by 20% by 2030.
- Increase the percentage of those at risk of homelessness from the private rented sector sustaining their tenancy.
- Reduce the number of people released from prison into Aberdeen without suitable accommodation by 90% by 2026.
- No breaches of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order will take place.
- Reduce the average homeless journey time to 100 days by 2026/27.
- Reduce the number of homeless presentations who report family breakdown as the key factor.



Promote Independent Living in Communities

Why is this a Priority?

We need to provide the right type of housing and support to enable people to live independently in their community for as long as possible. We also know that digital technology has an important role in supporting people to be healthy and independent in their home.

What does the evidence say?

We know that people want to stay at home for as long as they can but often don't plan for their future housing needs until into old age. We know there is a shortage of adapted and wheelchair accessible homes for older people and for those who have particular needs, and that the current provision will not meet our needs in the future.

We also know that some people are unable to go back home after a stay in hospital, which can result in a 'delayed discharge'. An increasing number of adults do not have children which has the potential to impact on arrangements for care in the longer term as the population of the city ages. Technology Enabled Care (TEC) can play a significant role in help in maintaining a person's safety and independence.

The housing sector has an important corporate parenting role in supporting children and young people in care and helping to support care leavers.

The wider needs of families can result in family breakdown and in the most challenging of cases, a child being accommodated out with the family home. Housing services, in collaboration with other key partners, now need to explore more family centric and integrated arrangements to help ensure that families are living in suitable homes with sustainable tenancies which enable a family to thrive to prevent any risk of out of authority placements.

What will we do?

- We will work in partnership to monitor and review the need for specialist and support accommodation in keeping with the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership's Independent Living and Specialist Housing Provision, Market Position Statement 2024 – 2034.
- We will increase provision of interim/temporary housing options for those at risk of delayed discharge.
- We will make sure that TEC is considered in the design of specialist housing and monitor the implications of the analogue to digital switchover.
- We will work with partners to understand the needs of minority groups, key workers and members of the armed forces to ensure that a range of housing options and support services are available to meet their needs.
- We will work with partners to improve data sharing and referral pathways across the sectors.
- We will consider the implication of the increasing number of adults do not have dependents to inform longer term planning.
- We will review the adequacy of the arrangements in place to support those who have experienced care.
- Monitor the demand for adaptations and work with partners to ensure they are available to support people to live independently.

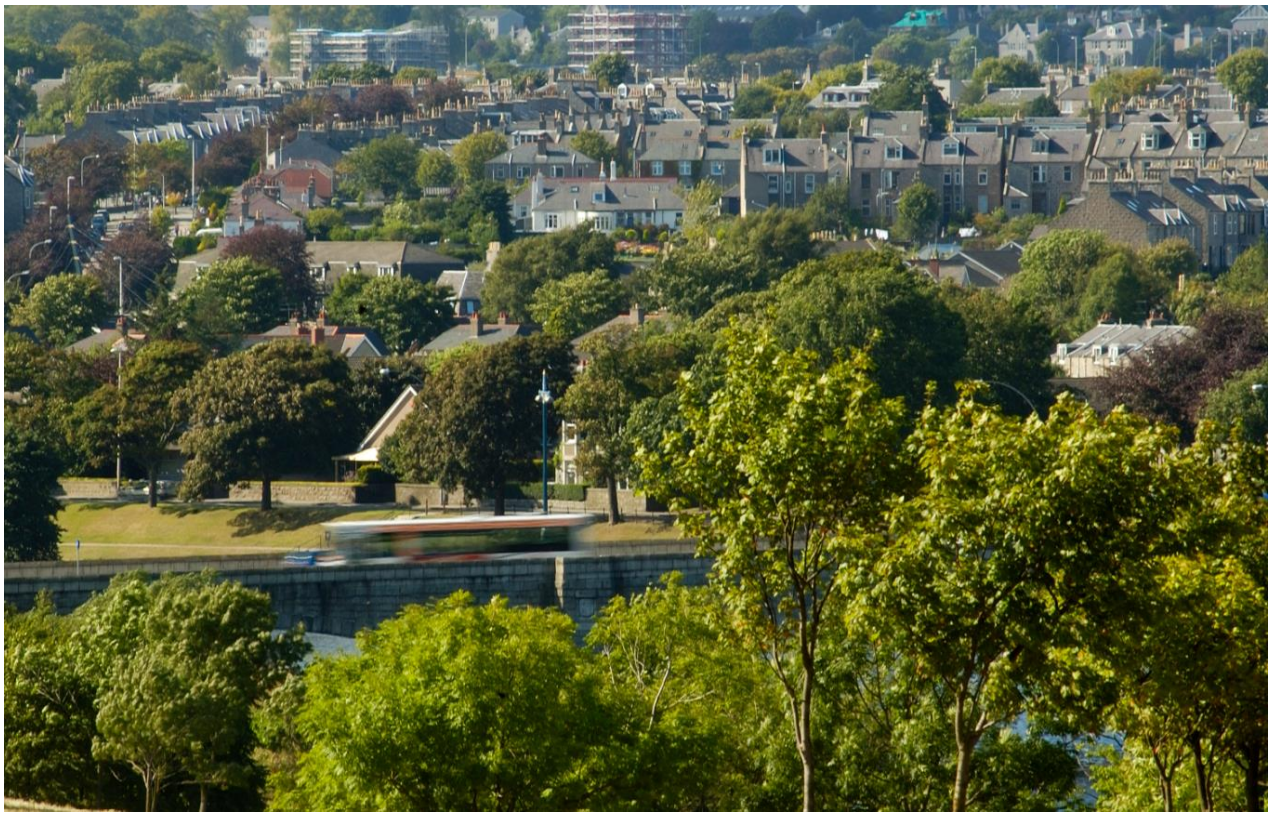
- We will explore opportunities to implement a partnership model that seeks to expand preparations by households to support them remaining in their homes.

Outcome to be achieved

We will use a multi-agency approach, technology and other innovations to enable the people of Aberdeen to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible in their community.

Targets for the Delivery Plan

- Increase the number wheelchair accessible properties delivered by implementing the 15% target for new build affordable housing by 2030.
- Increase the number wheelchair accessible properties delivered by introducing a 5% target for new build housing in the private sector by 2030.
- Deliver up to 30 units of specialist housing designed for people who need specialist housing or have complex care needs by 2030.
- Reduce the backlog for occupational therapy assessment for adaptations from 400 to 200 by 2030.



Promote health through housing

Why is this a Priority?

Aberdeen, as a Marmot city, has set out its commitment to addressing health inequalities and putting wider determinants of health at the centre of what we do. Housing is a key determinant of health, and as such the housing sector has a critical role in contributing towards the reduction of health inequalities in Aberdeen. The focus of this theme is on how housing and the health and social care sectors can work together to minimise health inequalities through housing.

What does the evidence say?

The housing sector has a key role in working with the health and social care sectors as part of the integrated care system to improve housing standards and ensure that the housing impacts on the physical and mental health of individuals are effectively managed.

We know that some health conditions can be directly impacted by housing, including respiratory diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma. Housing quality can impact the risk and severity through indoor air quality caused by poor ventilation, exposure to pollutants like smoke, mould, and dust. The type of housing along with the location and the structural conditions of homes are also important. Homes that lack proper insulation, have dampness, or are in poor repair can exacerbate respiratory conditions.

Whilst the rate of COPD in Aberdeen is just below the national average, there are evident differences in rates of hospitalisations across areas of the city, with those in the most deprived more likely to be hospitalised. The picture is similar for asthma.

With regards to mental health, the percentage of people prescribed drugs for anxiety, depression or psychosis both locally and nationally has been increasing over the last decade but has remained stable in each of the last two reporting periods. The rate in Aberdeen (17.4%) is lower than the Scottish average (20.9%). By contrast, rates of deaths by probable suicides have been falling over the last decade with the exception of the last two years, which have seen an increase from 11.6 per 100,000 population to 12.3.

It is important that the housing sector has proactive and preventative housing solutions in place to support people to live independently and minimise preventable health and social care interventions, and this extends to those who have a long-term mental health difficulties. This includes ensuring that adaptations are maximised to support people with mobility needs, sensory needs or cognitive impairments to live independently, minimising hospital admissions and streamlining hospital discharges linked to housing needs. It will also include ensuring that key referral pathways, for example, homelessness and mental health support are efficient and collaborative.

Effective operational collaboration will be achieved through the housing, health and social care sectors having a basic awareness of assessments and referral pathways of each other's sector and strong partnership links, and it is important that this is seen as a shared endeavour. As a service which routinely visits people in their homes, landlords and repairs operatives have a key role in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns relating to both children and adults.

It is a priority through this Local Housing Strategy for the housing sector to be closely aligned to our public protection arrangements. Self-neglect and hoarding are safeguarding issues which are often very visible in the home. The housing sector has an important role in working with partner agencies to ensure that people are supported in keeping with local guidance.

What will we do?

- Maximise the role of housing as part of the health and social care system.
- Improve effective data collection and sharing across housing, health, and social care system.
- Increase the percentage of adaptations completed within a target timescale.
- Work to improve the quality of housing in both the private and social sector to contribute to better health outcomes.
- Strengthened housing and health pathways for hospital discharge, and those experiencing mental health difficulties, taking the learning from the adopted SHORE (Sustainable Housing On Release for Everyone) standards.
- Provide learning and development opportunities to ensure that the housing sector minimises safeguarding risks to residents.
- Ensure easy access to financial support to enable citizens to maximise their benefits entitlement and continue to evaluate the impact of the Rent Assistance Fund.
- Embed the provision of housing support in our Future Libraries Model to help encourage healthy behaviour, develop digital skills and enable access to reliable information.
- Review the adequacy of current prioritisation policies, to ensure that the groups identified as being most vulnerable are given due consideration.
- Review the adequacy of current arrangements in place to offer progressive support to those with long term mental health difficulties.

Outcome to be achieved

We are committed to reducing health inequalities by providing affordable, accessible, high quality and energy efficient homes that enhance people's health and wellbeing.

Targets for the Delivery Plan

- Complete an evaluation of the Rent Assistance Fund in 2025.
- Reduction in the number of housing related delayed hospital discharge cases to zero by 2030.
- Reduce the waiting time from referral to occupational therapy assessment for adaptations, baseline currently within 6 weeks for high priority and up to 6 months for medium priority to 4 weeks for high priority and 4 months for medium priority by 2030.



Improve housing quality and energy efficiency

Why is this a priority?

We need to improve the condition of existing homes and ensure new-build homes are built to a high standard. Living in good quality homes is linked to better health and life outcomes and helps people to feel a sense of pride in their home and communities. We need homes that are energy efficient to help alleviate fuel poverty and contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions. This will help to mitigate the impact of climate change and support the just transition to net zero.

What does the evidence say?

Aberdeen City Council and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in the city are expected to provide good quality, energy efficient homes. All social housing providers have a high level of compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH).

Most Aberdeen City Council homes were built before 1982 and may require higher levels of maintenance as they age. We also have a high percentage of multi-storey flats and numerous older tenement homes which can be more expensive to maintain. RSL stock tends to be more modern and is less likely to have the same maintenance issues. The Scottish Housing Quality Standard and Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing standards are expected to continue to change and are likely to promote even higher standards from social housing providers.

One challenge faced by all landlords in improving compliance with the standard is the resistance from some tenants to accept necessary upgrades that will improve fuel efficiency and reduce ongoing maintenance costs.

To help reduce fuel poverty and provide low-cost heating to citizens in the city, Aberdeen has a series of district heating systems to provide heating to domestic homes in the city. Since its launch in 2002, 3,977 properties have been connected to the district heating system, this includes 3,684 Aberdeen City Council homes and 293 owners.

The majority of homes in Aberdeen are in the private sector, where the standards for house condition are not as high. This can mean that private sector homes are more likely to be in poor condition than social housing stock.

What will we do?

- Monitor additions to Scottish Housing Quality Standard and Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing criteria to ensure our stock remains of a high standard and establish a procedure to follow when capital works are refused by tenants.
- Publish an Asset Management Plan to detail how we will invest resources in improving and maintaining our homes.
- Investigate and take action where issues with housing are found, for example, due to the presence of RAAC in some homes we are rehousing tenants who have been affected by this.
- Work with private owners to educate them on the required standard where properties are sub-standard and use enforcement options where engagement fails.
- Implement the recommendations of the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES)

- Support the delivery of Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts to assess and monitor climate-related risks to residential properties.
- Actively seek funding through Scottish and UK Government initiatives to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency and collaborate with external partners to ensure any funding is fully utilised.
- Continue to support the further expansion of district heating schemes across the city.

Outcome to be achieved

We will improve the condition of existing homes across all tenures and improve their energy efficiency to help to alleviate fuel poverty and address climate change and support a just transition to net zero.

Targets for the Delivery Plan

- Refresh Housing Revenue Account 30-year Business Plan by end August 2025.
- Support the implementation of the minimum energy efficiency standard for private landlords by the end of 2028, and for owner-occupiers by 2033.
- Reduce reliance on polluting heating systems including gas, oil and LPG and support the transition to clean energy in city homes by 2045.
- By 2030 no more than 15% of households in Scotland are in fuel poverty and no more than 5% are in extreme fuel poverty.
- Reduce city emissions from the domestic sector by 61% by 2026.
- Reduce the number of people who are seeking fuel poverty support by 10%.



Support a well-managed Private Rented Sector

Why is this a Priority?

We need to work with private landlords and tenants to support a well-managed private rented sector (PRS). The PRS has an important role to play in providing homes to the people of Aberdeen. It is a key housing option for those who are not in a position to purchase their own home, and for those who are not able to access social rented housing.

What does the evidence say?

Around 1 in 5 households in Aberdeen belong to the PRS, which is higher than the national trend. This means the PRS plays a more important role in Aberdeen than in other parts of Scotland.

Despite this, the number of PRS properties in the city has dropped by almost 20% since 2019, with evidence suggesting that landlords are reducing their property portfolios or exiting the sector entirely.

Rent levels in the city have fluctuated following the economic downturn in Aberdeen in 2015, meaning the sector is potentially less reliable for tenants and landlords alike.

The Scottish Government is proposing new legislation which could see the introduction of rent control measures as well as enhancing tenant rights. The property standards expected of landlords are also expected to be raised.

What will we do?

- We will support landlords to provide accommodation that meets the needs of the rented sector by providing educational training to landlords on latest developments in the sector and the standards expected of them.
- Where disputes arise between landlords and tenants, we will provide support by responding to tenant complaints and helping to find a solution.
- We will monitor the impact of any new rent control measures introduced nationally. We are participating in consultation regarding the proposed measures and where there are concerns, we have made the Scottish Government aware. Further information is needed as to how these measures would be implemented.

Outcome to be achieved

We will work with landlords and tenants to support a well-managed PRS that provides good quality homes for the people of Aberdeen.

Targets for the Delivery Plan

- Reduce the number of private rented properties in Aberdeen which are in disrepair, using the latest Scottish House Condition Survey data for evidence when available.
- Host annual information sessions for landlords with the aim of delivering training to landlords from key stakeholders within the private rented sector.
- Ensure 10% document sampling of every tenth Landlord Registration application in relation to privately rented property.
- Continue to target unregistered private landlords. This raises awareness within the sector of standards required to be met when letting private property.
- Continue to have high engagement rates with private tenants and landlords through tenant complaint forms and the Private Landlord Support Officer role.
- Continue to successfully mediate disputes between private landlords and tenants, evidenced by our low referral rate to the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland.



Delivering the Strategy

Who are our partners?

The strategy will be delivered in conjunction with our partners. The range of partners is wide ranging and include registered social landlords, service providers, statutory bodies, such as Aberdeen City Health Social Care Partnership, NHS Grampian, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Prison Service, Registered Social Landlords, Scottish Government, private landlords, developers, tenants, and citizens of Aberdeen.

The Local Housing Strategy has strong links to several other local strategies and delivery plans and can contribute to the achievement of their targets and objectives. For example:

Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Plan and Housing Contribution Statement –. Having somewhere to live that is affordable, warm, and secure is an essential part of wellbeing. The availability, location, type, and quality of housing is also important. So too are the housing challenges that many people face, including households that are experiencing fuel poverty; those who require specialist provision housing as a result of ill-health or disability; and those who, for a range of reasons, are without a secure place to live.

Aberdeen Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership – housing has an important role to play in improving outcomes for women and girls affected by violence, such as through the provision of safe and accessible emergency accommodation and support.

Aberdeen City Alcohol and Drugs Partnership – a key theme of the ADP delivery framework is ensuring those recovering from alcohol and drug use live in communities which support their recovery. We can contribute to this through the creation of vibrant, diverse and inclusive communities.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – one of the objectives of the SFRS strategy is to safeguard those who are vulnerable through preventative work. We have a role to play in this by ensuring that new and existing homes are good quality and safe, and that risk assessments are in place where necessary.

How will we monitor our progress and evaluate the impact of this strategy?

We will monitor progress using our Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan will be co-produced with our partners to ensure that we capture all of the key actions needed to help us deliver on our strategic priorities.

We will also set up groups of key stakeholders who will meet regularly throughout the life of the strategy to monitor, review, and evaluate the Local Housing Strategy to ensure the Local Housing Strategy is a fluid document that can respond to changes as required.

