



Fife Voices

Our Impact in 2021-2022



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A new service for Fife's Social Landlords

The Fife Housing Association Alliance is a group of Registered Social Landlords, collectively managing over 8300 properties in the Fife Local Authority Area.

The partners of the project, Kingdom Housing Association, Fife Housing Group, Ore Valley Housing Association and Glen Housing Association came together to form the Fife Voices Housing Advocacy Service, which has been funded by a three-year grant from the Scottish Governments Homelessness Prevention Fund.

Over the three-year duration of the project, the service aims to give a voice to customers at risk of homelessness by providing self-directed advocacy support to those who encounter barriers to accessing quality outcomes. The project is being delivered across the region and rapid interventions are available to customers referred to the project from partner housing associations.

With a strong social prescribing role, customers accessing the project have access to detailed knowledge of the range of support available- such as grants & entitlements, addiction support, social services and health.

Of particular importance are referrals from new customers who have come from a homeless background particularly, the vulnerable. For example, those with direct experience of domestic violence, care leavers, ex-offenders, ex-members of the armed forces and those with serious health conditions. The project also works to support children and low-income families. The Fife Voices Project will ensure they get off to the best possible start in their new home, accessing and understanding all of their rights, entitlements and responsibilities.

The story so far

7th November 2020

Award letter received by the Fife Housing Association Alliance

23rd November 2020

National press release from Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, announcing the funding of 11 projects across Scotland tackling homelessness.

14th January 2021

Recruitment for the 2 Housing Advocacy Posts commences. Vacancies are to be filled using Kingdom Housing Associations 'Naumann Initiative', which aims to break the cycle of homelessness by giving those experiencing homelessness a secure job and tenancy; along with the support to make a success of both.

22nd March 2021

The two new Housing Advocacy Workers begin their induction and training.

7th April 2021

The first meeting of the operational delivery group overseeing project development. The group has representatives from each of the four partners of the alliance.

13th May 2021

The first referral to the project is received for a new tenant of Fife Housing Group, who is experiencing Homelessness. The customer receives help to update their Universal Credit journal, register claims for Council Tax Reduction and obtain furniture through The Scottish Welfare Fund.

10th January 2022

£124,000 of funding was received from the National Lottery Supporting Communities Fund to provide 30 furnished social tenancies for those experiencing furniture poverty and who receive long term benefits.

22nd March 2022

100th referral for the service received.

19th April 2022

Annual Report released. 107 Customers referred to the service.

Improving outcomes

- The service formally launched on the 1st of June 2021 and so far we have received 107 referrals.
- We have worked with housing partners to ensure the service meets the needs of each association's customers. This has been reflected in the number of referrals received from each partner.

Provider	Number of referrals
Fife Housing Group	33
Glen Housing Association	4
Kingdom Housing Association	47
Ore Valley Housing Association	23

- £62,627.80 of estimated customer financial gains have been secured for customers. This includes £14,915 of Community Care Grant applications, £21,200 of disability benefits and £3947 of Council Tax and Discretionary Housing Benefits.
- The team have engaged with local services and groups including all the major food banks and the health & social care forum.
- Users scored their wellbeing as 4.7/5 after using the service. (based on 16 survey responses).
- Quality of support scored as 4.7/5 and all customers would recommend the service to others. (based on 16 survey responses).
- 907 Non Financial Outcomes reported. This includes 363 advocacy appointments, 107 instances of correspondence support, 66 forms completed, 20 repairs reported.
- The team have worked to deliver our Furnished Social Tenancy Pilot, providing 21 furnished tenancies to social customers in receipt of benefits. Breaking down the barriers posed by furniture poverty for those taking up tenancies.
- Both staff have received appropriate training and are going to be completing a Level 3 Chartered Institute of Housing Qualification in Social Housing in year 2 of the project.
- Staff have attended regular meetings with partners and Tenant Scrutiny Panels. The team also provided a presentation to the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations on the project so far.

Customer Testimonials:

- "The support i received was incredible so personally i wouldn't improve anything"
- "I can not think of anywhere the service could be improved. Thank you so much."
- "I feel the service was first class. You supported me when I was struggling with my anxiety."
- "You are doing a fantastic job and I'm so grateful to the team"

Case studies

Case Study 1: Improving outcomes

Mr B is a single parent of a son aged 11. He has been homeless for two years and was recently allocated a new property. Mr B suffers from dyslexia and struggles to complete paperwork and deal with correspondence. Mr B receives Universal Credit at present but was unsure what he needed to do to notify agencies when he moved into his new home.

Mr B was supported to update his Universal Credit journal with his new housing costs. He was assisted with an application for Council Tax Reduction and Discretionary Housing Payments and also received help to complete a community care grant application. Referrals were sent to Cosy Kingdom for a home energy assessment and Fife Council for a home safety assessment at the property.

Mr B received his community care grant which allowed him to fully move into his property. He has since had some health issues that he has been dealing with but was always happy to engage with the service. We assisted Mr B to deal with his council tax debt and put a repayment arrangement in place.

Case Study 2: The impact of a furnished tenancy & advocacy support

Miss A was referred to the service when she was allocated a property for herself and her son. She was told to leave her family home by her parents as they were not supportive of her pregnancy.

She was able to find temporary accommodation with a family friend who let her stay there until she could find somewhere more suitable. This living arrangement was very difficult for the young woman to deal with which greatly impacted her mental health.

When the young woman was allocated a property she was initially very excited but that was short-lived as she then realised that apart from her clothing she had nothing. The Furnished Tenancy Project was able to help with floor coverings, window coverings, washing machine, cooker, fridge/ freezer, bed and sofa. Since receiving these items she has been able to fully move into the property and her mental health has greatly improved.

This is the customers' first tenancy and she has since continued to engage with the service for assistance to ensure her income is in place and that she is aware of her rights, responsibilities and obligations.

Looking ahead

Working to address the many challenges facing customers has resulted in us providing some excellent solutions over the year. One of the highlights has been overcoming the waiting times of the Scottish Welfare Fund, by providing solutions with charitable grants and then through our Furnished Social Tenancy Pilot. The success of the project will continue to be dependent on mitigating this first barrier to homeless households accessing tenancies.

Fuel poverty has also proven to be a challenge as we have moved through year one and our Fuel Bank partnership, which has yielded 13 referrals for households so far, will be important going forwards.

Moving out of the pandemic, the team will be conducting more face-to-face appointments which will allow us to communicate with customers in a way that meets their needs. Whilst digital services will remain a key part of our offering, we welcome the opportunity to engage with customers in a way that works best for them. The Housing Advocacy Workers are also looking forward to spending more time engaging with stakeholders. They will be spending time working in partner offices and have already begun meeting up with key services to establish important links for customers.

The two staff have done well in adapting to a challenging role, having both come from a non-housing background. With their first year's service delivery now behind them, both staff will be completing a Chartered Institute of Housing Level 3 Course in Social Housing, which should supplement their previous training and set them up well for their future careers in housing.

As we have moved through this first year of service delivery it has been pleasing to see the number of referrals to the service increase month by month. One of the key successes of the service has been our ability to provide early interventions for customers and we must continue to pursue efficiencies to maintain capacity. We must also continue to develop the project by looking at new funding streams and initiatives to supplement our core services. Furniture poverty, fuel poverty and digital exclusion will continue to be the three key areas to explore.

Contact Us

Fife Voices



If you have found this report of interest and you have any questions, please get in touch.

Email: fifevoices@kha.scot

Telephone: 01592 630 922 & 01592 632 517

