

TRUST IN FIFE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

**Taking positive steps to assist vulnerable and
homeless people in Fife**



"What a difference Covid has made"

FOREWORD

I am delighted to provide the foreword for this years' Annual Report. However, although we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel, it remains tempered by some anxiety. Not least exemplified by recent unfortunate events which have placed both staff and clients under extreme pressure. Not surprisingly though everyone has risen to the challenges and navigated their way through the situation with fortitude and resilience.

As I write we have been in lockdown for the best part of 18 months with all the logistical difficulties that this situation presents to both staff and clients. I, like all of you, have never experienced such an unprecedented set of circumstances, which have created anxiety, stress, pressure, and procedural problems and that is to say nothing of the disease itself that we have all been exposed to. Needless to say, this has created incredible operational challenges and maintaining "business as usual" has proved to be extremely difficult.

In consequence we have faced as much upheaval in the last 18 months as I can remember in the whole of my working life. It is no surprise to report however that the Management Team of Trust in Fife has met all of these unprecedented challenges with their usual commitment, enthusiasm and professionalism and ensured that disruption would be kept to a minimum. Their main concern throughout has been to keep all staff and clients safe and well.

As far as possible in the current climate, The Management Team are in the process of planning for the future, and I have no doubt that they will produce a detailed, comprehensive, and coherent set of proposals that will take Trust in Fife into the next 5 years. In addition, the sector in which we operate is expected to be subjected to significant changes which will only add to these challenges.

Our extremely high reputation in the temporary homelessness sector continues unabated and it is imperative that we position ourselves accordingly to ensure this situation is sustained. I have absolutely no doubt that this will be the case and we will be totally prepared to face the operational and financial challenges which will surely present themselves. We operate currently in an environment of uncertainty and turmoil, but rest assured the Board and Management will do everything in their power to secure our future.

We continue to be grateful for the support we have received from Fife Council throughout the year, and I re-iterate again the comments from all previous Chairs that our work would be much diminished without their involvement. We continue to jealously guard our close relationship with them based on mutual trust, respect, and enduring sustainability.

Despite the obvious pressures created by the above Trust in Fife continued to be run in its usually efficient and effective manner with all operational and business objectives been met in full. The management team and support staff, as always, carried out their duties and responsibilities with diligence and vigour and faced the expected challenges and increased pressures full on.

My sincere hope is that in the not-too-distant future we will return to something like normality although who knows what that will look like. I do know though, whatever the future holds for us, the excellent personnel at Trust in Fife will face everything with their usual commitment and enthusiasm.

For all of the above, on behalf of The Board, I offer my sincerest thanks to all management, staff and volunteers for their continued efforts in making Trust in Fife the excellent organisation that it is. There are many others who also provide support to the company in various ways and our thanks are extended to them also.

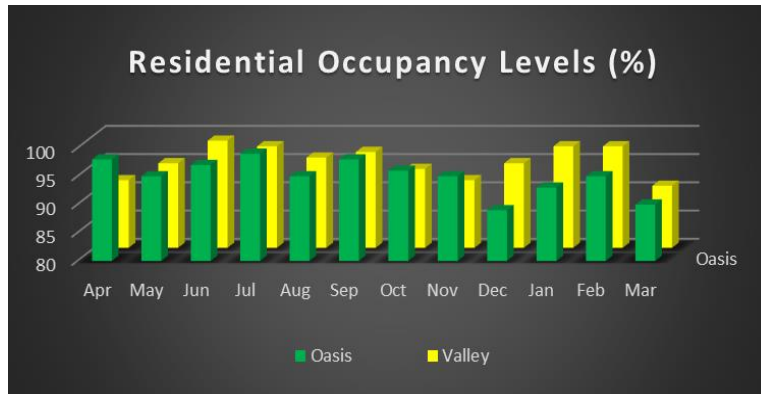
In the meantime, to you and all your families stay safe and well.

David Armitage – Chair

RESIDENTIAL

Since the introduction of a national lockdown in March 2020 the Residential team have worked hard over the past year; adapting to new processes implemented to safeguard all within the environment. This has seen face coverings worn and social distancing in place, alongside sanitising and hygiene measures. As an organisation we work hard to keep everyone updated and safe, and staff have played a pivotal role within the residential departments in achieving this.

Occupancy levels, despite the pandemic, have remained consistently high in residential; proven by our Residential Support Workers commitment to ensure their clients maintain and sustain their accommodation.



Staff have continued to provide both practical and emotional support through this time and recognise the challenges the pandemic has brought to the client group with strict rules in place to follow. Residential staff have managed this well; with being a listening ear to individuals. However, a major impact on the service was our ability to provide group activities due to the restrictions. Residential staff worked together with the client group to try to overcome these difficulties and Cheryl Allan explains this further in the 'OASIS SMASH UP' part of this report.

Trust in Fife worked hard to access both Flu and COVID-19 vaccines for all their frontline workers, with help from the NHS and Fife Council. Contractual staff and relief workers were aware of the protection this could bring, not only in the workplace but to their wider social circle.

As mentioned, the residential staff are frontline workers and so did not have the opportunity to work from home. All residential staff applied themselves 100% to maintain the high level of service provided in temporary accommodation and continue to adapt to a changing environment; with plans for a more inclusive service going forward.

The high quality of support provided has shone through some client testimonies at the Oasis Project and Valley Accommodation Unit.

staff are always helpful and approachable if we ever need help or information

Nice, friendly, informative staff

the staff help in every aspect needed. 10/10

Staff go above and beyond to help me even if it's explaining a letter I receive or filling out forms down to helping me through some of my darkest of days. They are a great support; I think they deserve more recognition for what they do

OASIS 'SMASH UP'

As a support worker in temporary accommodation the impact that COVID-19 restrictions had on our client groups mental well-being was evident. Their usual daily routine was disrupted, not being able to see their loved ones or friends for emotional support led to feelings of isolation and loneliness.

As a support worker I have a duty of care to ensure the well-being of everyone who accommodates and utilise external services available to us; liaising with health professionals from doctors, addiction workers to a community psychiatric nurse, to provide the best possible emotional support we can during their stay.

During one support session, I discussed coping strategies with a client who was feeling low, anxious, and exhausted at the time. Together we came up with a modern take on common approaches advised by health professionals. I discussed a plate smash method to use as a coping tool where clients write down their feelings on a plate, go for a walk and then smash the plate. This seemed to be of interest and when word got round, other clients were keen to take part in the activity.

The build up to this activity had mixed emotions as some clients found it difficult writing down their feelings, anxieties, and insecurities. Some clients shared their own experiences with others on the walk and although memories were raw, during the 'plate smash' a lot of anger and built-up emotion was released.



On the walk back moods appeared lifted and had a positive effect and clients were keen to try this again. I also must point out that no wildlife was harmed during this activity and all rubbish was disposed of accordingly.

Cheryl Allan
Residential Support Worker

LINKS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Homelessness Liaison Nurse Service has been set up to engage people with any mental health concerns who are currently considered to be homeless in Fife. They work with various agencies to reduce some of the barriers people come up against when trying to access support to manage their mental health issues.

Andrew Patterson is a Homelessness Liaison Nurse, and over several years has developed a good working relationship with individuals struggling with their mental health and support staff. He had this to say: -

Over my time working with staff from Trust in Fife I have developed positive working relationships with all support staff, they always make efforts to ensure the needs of their service users are met, supporting them to identify their needs and where required refer them on to myself or other appropriate services. They have had to deal with some significant issues from service users particularly relating to mental health, but they have worked together as a team to continue to deliver positive outcomes for everyone they work with.

Despite the difficult last 2 years with significant periods of time where face to face contact was not possible staff has always made sure to keep me up to date with service users who are involved with me and continued to utilise the Homeless Liaison Mental Health Service.

All the support staff have been friendly and helpful, finding new and innovative ways to continue to support people on their journeys through homelessness, often going above and beyond, to ensure that people get the best opportunities.

Andrew Paterson
Homeless Liaison Mental Health Service
NHS Fife

The pandemic has made the last year difficult for all in temporary accommodation and has changed a majority of people's life and working practices. The changes also contributed to the nature of homeless services with the aim of keeping everyone safe and having the opportunity to access accommodation rather than sofa surfing and sleeping on the streets. This resulted in a greater number of referrals received by Trust in Fife. These referrals include a higher number of young people who have experienced the care sector. However, it has also resulted in people being accommodated for longer periods of time than usual. This has allowed the client/support worker relationships to develop further mainly in a positive manner by sharing feelings surrounding the pandemic and discussions in relation to developing the support we provide in the short term for the benefit of people in their long-term goals.

Food insecurity increased for clients due to restricted opportunities for skill development and after discussion with resident's staff developed cooking groups throughout the period. Trust in Fife supported staff and clients by providing a budget to purchase the ingredients for group meals. We planned meals and discussed healthy eating to provide a menu for meals, prepared and cooked regular meals with clients learned a new skill, developing confidence in their choices of food and cooking, and their budgeting skills.

Homeless charities have risen to the challenge of the pandemic and continued to provide critical support and assistance to vulnerable people. The experiences of the pandemic have hopefully awakened us all to take more of an interest in emotional well-being and mental health. Let's make sure the world is more inclusive, more equal. Let's help each other to care and be positive about all our futures.

Personally, following this shift in culture within our country (albeit because of a terrible virus) I have experience getting to understand my local area better. From a housing standpoint I feel the pandemic has shone a spotlight on the gap in homelessness support in Scotland; a gap I feel very passionate about highlighting and bridging within our sector to develop better working practices to support our service users.

Eddie Nelson
Residential Support Worker

TENANCY SHARE



Tenancy Share saw a difficult time over the last year, COVID-19 having a major impact on service provision. Restrictions and social distancing, made for the promotion of our usual Drop-in, Match-up and Information sharing sessions almost impossible in the usual format.

We were able to use technology to impart knowledge to clients who wanted Tenancy Share as an option. However, it was difficult for those who didn't already have a sharer in mind to consider meeting like-minded people during the pandemic.

Despite these difficulties we had four Tenancy Share move-ins, a total of 8 clients, over the past year. Two of our Tenancy Share clients had this to say: -

"My time at Valley Accommodation Unit Kirkcaldy was made so much more bearable due to caring and understanding staff. As it was a difficult time for everyone in the accommodation. I believe Lana went beyond expectations to help me and Karan with finding and helping us move into a private let. Since then, Lana has kept in contact and made visits to ensure everything is well. The past year has went well with Fife Keyfund and the private let."

Karan and Shehraz

THE CAIRN CENTRE



It's been a challenging 12 months for the Cairn Centre in relation to COVID-19, where we have seen our shop closed for several months. We've managed to survive two further lockdowns, once again opening our doors, and welcoming everyone back.

Our volunteers are at the centre of everything we do in the shop and on the van. They have been so loyal and committed throughout the past year and we have supported one another through phone calls, texts and walks when the shop has been closed, so it's fantastic to all be back together working in the Cairn Centre.

The management team set up several protocols, in line with Government guidelines, creating a handbook for all staff and volunteers to work within when the shop opened its doors. Making sure all staff, volunteers and our customers felt safe when working and shopping with us.

When we have been open, trade has been good, with a constant flow of quality products donated daily. This helps people save money, shop sustainably and fund a fantastic charitable service.

Throughout COVID-19 staff and volunteers have been working behind the scenes to become Revolve certified, and we can now say we did it!! Which is a great achievement and demonstrates brilliant team effort. It promotes the importance of re-using, re-cycling, and buying pre-loved goods that have been thoroughly safety and quality checked, which confirms the ethos of the Cairn Centre.

Let's hope the next 12 months see the Cairn Centre go from strength to strength.

Message from a Volunteer



"Volunteers are grateful to management for their rigorous implementation of Covid protocols, ensuring that we felt confident to resume our work at the Cairn Centre. Involvement in the charity gives a purpose to life which I find essential. It is most rewarding to know that something you thoroughly enjoy doing is benefitting others. Every day is different. The occasional weird donations can give rise to lively humorous banter. Laughter is the best medicine, and we get a good many doses."

- **Helen Lambert**



DRIVING UP STANDARDS IN RE-USE



Since April 2020, there has been a great deal of change to the Fife Keyfund team’s working environment, due to COVID-19, as we were all asked to work from home. This brought several challenges: -

- How to maintain a service to our clients
- How to overcome the technical difficulties
- How to keep the staff safe

The team was able to support the most vulnerable of our clients, and for some this meant helping with providing food and household items. For others this meant delivering affordable mobile phones to allow them to communicate with family and services; where possible, visits were still maintained to ensure the safety and wellbeing of clients.

This has been an unsettling time for landlords; with the introduction of new COVID-19 legislation. The lengthening of notice periods and additional eviction requirements added to the pressure that landlords were under. However, the team continued to email updates regarding changes and continued to provide up to date information regarding the management of properties.

During this period, we accepted 407 referrals from Fife Council’s Housing and Homeless Persons Officers, as well as individuals approaching themselves. There were also 396 occurrences of general advice given to both landlords and tenants.

We issued 40 new deposit guarantees, assisting clients into affordable sustainable private rented properties, and extended 23 cases beyond the initial year agreement. This ensured that the tenancies continued, and that the security of each tenancy was maintained.

With the introduction of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) recommendations and in line with Fife Council’s Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP), there was a continued expectation of private rented property being utilised as a sustainable housing option for the future. After discussions with Fife Council a redesign process was started. A new service was required to assist any person who is interested in, has a query about, or wishes to find a private let. The opportunity was given to evaluate the current service provision and to consider what services were needed. This would be a long process including consultations with other organisations as to what provisions were available or being considered in other local authority areas.

It was hoped that the service would not only assist anyone looking for a new property but also to assist any tenant or landlord experiencing difficulties with existing private lets. There were several opportunities considered and many additional services that we planned to research. A plan for a phased introduction of these services was laid out.

It was hoped that the service would be ready to launch at the beginning of April 2021. This new extended service would be known as Fife Private Rental Solutions.



FIFE KEYFUND TESTIMONIALS

Thank you so much I cannot begin to tell you how much I have appreciated your help over the past few months.

Going back to March when I was first made aware of this organisation due to becoming homeless and unemployed, I honestly didn't see a way forward in life, my mental health had plummeted and I had never felt so alone, I didn't think there was any help out there on any level and was just simply drowning.

Thankfully due to the outstanding help I received from you and Fife Keyfund I have not only managed to secure a deposit but move into a perfect place with beautiful views of the coast.

From my first meeting with you Alison I was made to feel at ease and suffering from extreme anxiety that doesn't come easy. You helped me fill in all my forms and made sure as much responsibility was taken from me as possible, the main one being the rent getting paid directly to the landlord then on top of that I was provided with all the essentials I needed to get me settled into my home from the simplest things such as forks and knives to the bedding on my bed. Then put in touch with cosy kingdom who came and made my home more energy efficient and not to mention the offer of food parcels if needed, it was mind-blowing I had never even heard of this organisation yet here you were saving my life.

You don't make me feel like you are just doing your job you make me feel like I have a true loyal friend but one that will keep me on the road I need to be on you have made me be able to breathe again.

There are not enough words that would come close to how much you and Fife Keyfund has made me feel human again and although I am still a working progress I definitely wouldn't be anywhere near where I am right now without you.

Every single person who plays a part in this very much needed service should be absolutely proud of their achievement.

Thank you again so much.

Brenda

The service has helped me in more ways than I could have imagined, from offering information to social and mental health help. I wouldn't have been able to get back on my feet if it wasn't for you guys and girls, especially you. – Ryan Phillips

Fife KeyFund and the staff literally saved my life after I was trying to get out of a 5-year abusive relationship. I needed to change towns so when I was brought to Kirkcaldy, I didn't know anyone I could turn to for help, I just knew I had to desperately get out of the situation I was in. I am also disabled so that just made everything even more complicated.

Lana from KeyFund helped me find the perfect flat in just a few weeks. Lana then helped me get registered with the deposit scheme, I couldn't have moved into a flat that quickly without help with the deposit scheme.

Lana and the staff at KeyFund also went above and beyond by helping me get registered to a new GP, a dentist and even found me a disability bus service called Dial-a-Ride.

After I moved into my newly decorated flat, KeyFund even helped me organise moving my furniture for a very reasonable price. I received visits from KeyFund every fortnight, just to check in to see how I was doing and to keep me informed on any new services that were available or changes that were coming up. Most of all it was just a lovely visit!

I'm so grateful for Fife KeyFund and the staff for helping me get my life back together, I couldn't have done it with you all!

*Kindest Regards,
Alisa*

SHORT-TERM HOUSING SUPPORT

Allocations of Short-Term Housing Support (STHS) are facilitated by Trust in Fife on behalf of Fife Council.

Short Term Housing Support is '*Tenancy-related support for the purpose of enabling service users, with short term housing support needs to maintain their tenancy and become independent in doing so.*'

The focus of support provision, as the name clearly states, is Housing Support. This support, doing **with** the client rather than **for** the client, is intended to assist the client to either establish, or re-establish, life skills and a routine of being able to manage and sustain their home.

Innovations & Milestones

Over the past year one of the main challenges within the Short-Term Housing service has been delivering the service within the constraints of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Service Providers innovated in various ways in order to deliver the STHS service. Some adopted 'walk-and-talk' models, some developed digital support, some continued with face-to-face visits, etc. The challenge that this created was that the base-line provision of service varied between Service Providers, meaning that Referrers started to ask for specific SP's, creating waiting lists within waiting lists. Primarily from an STHS Co-ordinator standpoint the main innovation revolved around fostering a collaborative approach to delivering the Short-Term Housing Support service, by encouraging the SP's to share information and leverage off each other to create efficiencies within the STHS service, i.e. playing to each SP's specialisms and strengths under difficult circumstances. The success of this approach is that it has now evolved into a 'blended support approach' model where STHS Service Providers are able to support service users in many different formats, (not just face-to-face) very much led by that Customer's preferences, requirements, and vulnerabilities, i.e., developed towards a more person-centred Short Term Housing support model.

There have also been a number of positive outcomes and key milestones reached in the past year (in terms of referral clients and numbers). STHS have continued to build on existing working relationships with the Service Providers and Referrers. Recently completed FORT CRMS 'refresher' training via MS Teams with Fife Council's Public Protection Team the feedback from these 'refresher' sessions was extremely positive.

Looking to the Future

It has been noted in recent months that there has been a considerable rise in referrals to STHS, from a wide variety of sources. During the year, decisions have also been taken to trial STHS engagement with clients in circumstances that may not previously had access to the service. These include clients with Dementia who would have been supported by Bield Care in the past, and clients who are subject to SSST, as well as an increase in younger tenants in first time tenancies. It is hoped that the outcomes of these trials will assist the Commissioners, Fife Council, in ensuring that the service continues to meet its goal of tenancy sustainment in line with the Fife RRTP and allow relevant adjustment to access criteria as appropriate. There is a clear demonstrable need for the service, and it is hoped that the Short-Term Housing support service access criteria can be adapted, as appropriate, to meet the increased need.



THANK YOU

Even through the most difficult of times, we have been fortunate for the generous donations Trust in Fife receive each year. From money to food and clothing, and home starter items.

Listed below are some of the companies that we would like to thank for their support.



Kindlink
Gift Aid



Amazon Smile

World's Big Sleep Out



Paypal Giving Fund



Marks and Spencer – St Andrew's Store

Standard Life



Charities Aid Foundation

Hoggs of Fife Ltd



Re-Tek UK Ltd



Fife Council

Sinclairtown Primary School



Natural Beautifulopolis



Trust in Fife would also like to make special thanks to all their employees, volunteers and students, whose hard work and dedication is appreciated and reflected in the testimonials we have received for this year's report.



INTRODUCTION

I have pleasure in presenting this, our fifth Annual Report, on behalf of the Fife Short-Term Housing Support and Homelessness Services Public Social Partnership (The PSP).

I am always impressed by the strength of the shared vision and commitment of all the partners to making a real difference to the lives of those who use our services. The challenging times have continued but clear focus remains on successful continuation of services and achieving the best possible outcomes for the service users. The past year has seen progress made on new RRTP projects and we are looking forward to further new developments in the coming year. I am confident that the necessary adjustments made to service delivery over the past 12 months will continue to inspire new and diverse ways of reaching those in need.

I am grateful for the continued professionalism and guidance provided by Trust in Fife as 'Lead Agency'; the support received from Fife Council as Commissioners; the ongoing commitment and support of all the partner organisations and, most importantly, the hard work and dedication of the frontline staff in supporting vulnerable clients in Fife.

Robert Aldridge

Chair of PSP Governance Group.

WORK OVER THE PAST YEAR

RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN (RRTP)

The RRTP for Fife began development in summer 2018 and, as part of last year's Annual Report, it was confirmed that the PSP would play an integral part in delivering innovative and transformative short-term support and homelessness services for Fife over the next 5 years. In the latter months of 2019/20, a number of projects were proposed in this respect. Progress against these is provided below:

Assertive Outreach

An agreement was reached between Kingdom Support & Care, Frontline Fife, The Richmond Fellowship Scotland and Fife Women's Aid to propose an Assertive Outreach Programme, intended to reduce the likelihood of repeat homelessness by reaching out to the most vulnerable. Over the past year, efforts have been dedicated toward drafting of necessary documentation and recruitment of a Lead Practitioner to head up the service.

PSP Skills Academy

Link Living proposed the implementation of a Skills Academy, intended to provide trauma informed practice training across the PSP, free of charge at point of delivery. Although the past year presented a challenge, resulting in face-to-face delivery quickly being adjusted to online delivery, training sessions began in June and have continued throughout the year. A slightly broadened programme of training is anticipated with some workshops on other aspects of good mental health being proposed for the coming year.

Hunter House Core & Cluster

Kingdom Housing Association acquired Hunter House in Kirkcaldy and proposed the creation of 5 core & cluster flats with on-site STHS provision for persons over the age of 50. The Lead Practitioner for Assertive Outreach would also be the Lead Practitioner, based within the accommodation and managing both services. The past year has seen the completion of building works to convert the accommodation into the 5 flats and common areas. As mentioned, active recruitment has also been carried out.

Fife Keyfund Evolution into Fife Private Rental Solutions

During the year, a proposal was brought forward by Trust in Fife that the Fife Keyfund Service be expanded to become the 'go to' service for Private Let in Fife. This followed an agreement that the service would no longer be restricted to clients who are homeless, or about to be. An implementation plan has been agreed, based on service expansion to be achieved by funded and non-funded means, and it is expected that the service will commence within the first month of the new financial year. The expanded service is expected to include assistance for clients who may be experiencing difficulty with their current tenancy, mediation between landlords and clients where communications may have broken down and rent resolution where clients may have fallen behind on their obligations. The service will also include general housing advice and additional services covering all areas of letting for landlords.

OTHER MATTERS AFFECTING THE PSP

Covid-19 impact

The Lead Agents would like to congratulate all Partners in their determination and innovation in continuing to deliver as full a service as it was possible to do across the board, in spite of Covid-19. Within residential units, restrictions were implemented along with protective measures to ensure that staff and clients alike were able to remain safe in their interactions. PPE was quickly sourced from Fife Council to supplement that already sourced by providers through other means, and lateral testing was introduced as soon as this became available, to give another layer of protection to staff and clients. STHS providers moved their service to digital and telephone means as quickly as possible, while maintaining distanced face-to-face contact with the most vulnerable clients, where necessary. Governance of the PSP remained in place with the Governance Group, Lead Agents and Commissioners moving to home working where possible and using Zoom for monthly and extraordinary meetings. Looking ahead to the future, it is anticipated that some of those digital measures will remain, reaching across geographical boundaries that may have restricted services in the past.

Arneil Johnston Review

A Review of PSP Service provision was commissioned by Fife Council toward the end of the 2019/20 financial year. Although the onset of Covid-19 impacted upon timescales for completion in terms of shifting priorities and availability of personnel, it is expected that Arneil Johnston will deliver their conclusions and recommendations in early 2021/22 for implementation through the coming year.

Change over from Barony Housing Association to Wheatley Care

On 1st April 2020, Barony Housing Association and Loretto Care, both of whom had been partner organisations to Wheatley Group, were formally brought together to form a single company. The resulting company, Loretto Care, trading as Wheatley Care, continued as a Partner within the PSP in provision of services.

PSP partner organisations in 2020/21



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