



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE

Rapid Rehousing: guidance

How we will help those who experience homelessness find settled housing faster.

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We recently published the [Ending Homelessness Action Plan](#), which commits to making homelessness rare, brief and non-repeated:

- **Rare:** People are prevented from becoming homeless in the first place
- **Brief:** People get a quick and effective response if they become homeless
- **Non-repeated:** People do not experience multiple episodes of homelessness

While the priority is preventing homelessness for as many people as possible, we want Rapid Rehousing to become the default approach when people do become homeless.

What is Rapid Rehousing?

Rapid Rehousing is an internationally recognised approach which ensures that anyone experiencing homelessness can move into a settled home as quickly as possible, rather than staying in temporary accommodation for long periods of time.

What are the main elements of Rapid Rehousing?

- Everyone is assumed to be 'housing ready' with the right support
- People spend as little time as possible in temporary accommodation
- When people do need temporary accommodation, it is of a high standard
- People are able to access the right home in the right place for them
- For most people, an independent, mainstream home will be the default approach, but others may choose supported accommodation
- People are able to access high quality, multi-agency support, tailored to individual needs, where this is required

Who can benefit from Rapid Rehousing?

Everyone experiencing or at risk of homelessness should benefit from rapid rehousing and be helped to find a settled home as quickly as possible. Each person will require different levels of support to maintain their tenancy. This includes people with special support needs, for example victims of domestic violence, young people etc. Some people will need no additional support, others might need short-term support, and a small proportion will need higher intensity, multi-agency support (such as Housing First).

What do we mean by a ‘settled home’?

This means accommodation in both the social and private sectors that is expected to last at least six months, but has the potential to be available for as long as the tenant wishes.

What is the role of supported accommodation within Rapid Rehousing?

For most people, an independent, mainstream home will be the default approach, but others may choose supported accommodation on a medium or long-term basis. Where supported accommodation is used on a transitional or medium-term basis, this should be kept under continual review and should not be considered settled housing. The move to rapid rehousing may result in less reliance on supported accommodation in the future but we are working with stakeholders to consider the impact and develop this policy position.

What about people who don't choose to live independently?

Rapid Rehousing is an approach that works for everyone. In this context, it will just mean that they will be moved into the appropriate supported housing as quickly as possible, but a focus remains on independent living in the future.

Why are we introducing the approach in Wales?

Homelessness is untenable and a symptom of a dysfunctional housing market.

Ending Homelessness in Wales: A high level action plan 2021-2026 outlines that to achieve our goal of ending homelessness in Wales, we must make a radical shift.

The pandemic has enabled us to gain a much more accurate picture of **the true scale of homelessness across Wales**. Whilst the emergency response has helped many individuals to engage with services for the first time, it has demonstrated the level of hidden need that the housing, health and wider support system is not ordinarily addressing and the need to respond to these over the longer term.

The Welsh Government is clear that those who have been supported into temporary accommodation have not had their homelessness resolved. Rapid Rehousing provides a solution to this challenge. The evidence is clear that the vast majority of people who have experienced homelessness, even those who have been severely marginalised and homeless for a long time, are able to maintain their tenancies in self-contained housing, with the right level of support where they need it.

Our approach is evidence based and builds on the reports and recommendations of the expert **Homelessness Action Group**, which has worked with the sector, service providers and, most importantly, with service users.

Rapid Rehousing has a number of benefits:

- reduces rough sleeping
- reduces repeat homelessness
- reduces public spending on expensive temporary accommodation
- reduces the destabilising and marginalising effects of prolonged homelessness or prolonged stays in emergency or temporary settings
- improves people's quality of life and health outcomes, resulting in savings for public services

What's the evidence for Rapid Rehousing?

- Chapter 7 of Crisis' 50th anniversary report: **Everybody In: How to End Homelessness in Great Britain (2018)** contains a summary of the evidence for Rapid Rehousing.
- Perth and Kinross Council in Scotland have been implementing Rapid Rehousing for a number of years. Their **2019-2024 Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan** details their successes in delivering savings, reducing the amount of temporary accommodation needed, reducing the average time spent in temporary accommodation and the reduction in the number of days spent waiting for an offer of settled housing.

What are the timescales for Rapid Rehousing?

We recognise that the transition to Rapid Rehousing will not be straightforward and is dependent upon several important factors, particularly increasing the supply of housing, which is in turn dependent on other factors such as availability of materials, labour, land and wider environmental issues.

We therefore recommend a 5-year timescale for the transformation to Rapid Rehousing. Local authorities in Wales will be publishing their Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans in September 2022.

What are the main stages to moving towards a system of Rapid Rehousing?

The [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan guidance](#) lays out the main steps to take for the local authority and partners to move from the current position to the future vision. This will be different for each local authority and depend on what the main challenges are.

Some of the crucial elements to have are:

- an understanding of the level housing and support needs, including how many households are moving or waiting to move into temporary settings; how much and what type of housing is required to permanently house people; and who needs support, and at what level, to maintain their tenancy
- a coordinated and strategic approach to identify sources of housing from local authorities, Registered Social Landlords and within the Private Rented Sector
- house-building programmes that factor in housing need, for example through Local Housing Market Assessments;

- landlord and local authority allocation policies that prioritise households with no permanent home
- a multi-agency commitment to providing support, particularly by mental health and substance misuse services
- a comprehensive range of prevention activities, such as mediation and advice services
- people with lived experience of homelessness having a role in informing and co-producing plans and services within the transition to RRH.

It is fundamentally important that public services and housing organisations take all opportunities to prevent homelessness. If rapid rehousing is done effectively, with the right support, then we will prevent future repeated homelessness.

How is this going to be resourced?

A significant amount of funding has already been made available to local authorities, and landlords for both housing and homelessness support:

- in 2022-23, £60 million has been made available to Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords to rapidly increase permanent accommodation capacity across Wales as part of the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme
- in 2021-22, £50 million was allocated to begin the transformation of services and create over 500 units of new long-term sustainable housing
- in 2021-22, the Housing Support Grant received an increase of £40 million (30%), taking total funding to £166.763 million. This increase will be sustained up until at least 2025
- in 2021-22, a record £250 million was invested in social housing, with the figure increasing to £310 million in 2022-23
- core revenue funding for local government has increased by 9.4% in 2022-23 which is for local authorities to prioritise where it will be allocated

- between 2021 and 2024, local authorities will be able to use 2% (up to a maximum of £100,000) of their Housing Support Grant allocation to fund short term project management and/or strategic planning resource to support the delivery of Rapid Rehousing
- in 2021-22, £1 million funding was provided via Area Planning Boards to support individuals with complex needs, delivered through substance misuse, mental health and housing services. Additional funding has been allocated for 2022-23.

How are we going to ensure there are enough homes for everyone?

There are a number of urgent actions that we are taking and need to take in the future to ensure that housing supply matches housing demand:

- we have committed to developing 20,000 new low carbon homes for rent in the social sector between 2021-2026
- housing development teams and planners need to work with homelessness teams so that housing needs are reflected in the Local Housing Market Assessment. These needs should be reflected in local authorities' housing Prospectuses and Programme Development Plans
- the Private Rented Sector Leasing Scheme Wales is a Welsh Government-backed scheme launched in 2021 which offers incentives for property owners who lease their properties to the local authority. Tenants housed under the scheme will have longer term, secure and affordable accommodation as well as access to a high-level of support to help maintain their tenancy
- A review of homelessness and housing allocation legislation to ensure we do not exclude people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness by ensuring 'reasonable preference' for people in this situation

- Innovative solutions such as seeking out opportunities to work with the growing number of institutional landlords such as pension funds and investment trusts or promoting models to share existing multiple room housing.

Who are our partners in this work?

Homelessness is not simply a housing issue and requires a degree of political and corporate ownership and oversight. Rapid Rehousing will not succeed unless there is full operational alignment between an authority's strategic housing function, capital build programme, Housing Support Grant commissioning and the statutory homelessness services. It will also require strategic and operational support from a range of different partners including primary care, mental health, substance misuse, criminal justice and social care services.

Third sector homelessness and housing support providers will be critical partners during the transition to rapid rehousing. Their ability to build trusting relationships with people who have previously received a negative experience, perhaps even been failed by the system, will be vital to service delivery, and their experience and expertise should be utilised when making decisions about adapting services.

In addition to the key local partners, partnership groups should include front line workers as well as people with a lived experience.

What is the role for local authorities?

Local authorities are responsible for drafting and implementing the Rapid

Rehousing Transition Plans. It is critical that this initial Transition Plan is developed as a corporate document. In addition to ensuring that the other authority statutory functions, such as social care are involved, there must be co-operation between the strategy team, Social Housing Grant and Housing Support Grant teams and homelessness services in order to deliver a plan that meet the aims of the Rapid Rehousing transformation.

What is the role for local government?

Local government is a vital player in ensuring the right housing is built in the right place and that local needs are met through capital programmes. Elected members will be vital in showing leadership to address the needs of their local communities who do not have access to a safe and secure home. Other departments such as social services and early intervention services will also play important roles in supporting some people.

What is the role for housing associations and local authorities with housing stock?

Social landlords have a vital role to play in terms of building more social homeless and working with homelessness teams to allocate housing to those who are homeless. This may require changes to allocations policies. Housing associations will also be vital in ensuring that there are no evictions from social housing into homelessness.

What is the role for the private rented sector?

The private rented sector is another important player in terms of providing individuals with affordable housing. The Leasing Scheme Wales will improve access to affordable and good quality homes for those people who are at risk of homelessness and are in receipt of benefits, including universal credit.

What is the role for homelessness and housing support providers?

The success of rapid rehousing depends on the right support being in place at the right time. Homelessness and housing support providers will be crucial in delivering services such as floating support, assertive outreach, critical time interventions and Housing First. This is vital in helping individuals build confidence and a connection within a community. This support will be essential in supporting people to exit homelessness, but will also be critical to helping people to sustain their tenancies and avoid repeat homelessness.

What is the role for other services such as mental health and substance misuse support?

For any homelessness service to be effective, many homeless people will require robust assessment and pathways into appropriate support from a range of different partners including primary care, mental health, substance misuse and social care services. For rapid rehousing to be a success, there needs to be a strategic commitment from mental health and substance misuse services to provide timely access to support that enables people to exit homelessness and

avoid repeat homelessness in the future.

Will a move to Rapid Rehousing impact on other people in the housing system?

Wherever possible, we want to avoid households and individuals seeing homelessness as a route into housing. We are working to ensure there is an appropriate supply of housing in Wales to meet the needs of the population, and, when a household is in housing need they can approach their local authority who will support them to resolve their housing problems. For some people this will include assistance to access social or private rented sector housing.

If we get Rapid Rehousing right in Wales, we will be preventing repeat episodes of homelessness in the future, whether for people who are currently adults or for future generations who will be protected from experiencing homelessness at a young age.

Ultimately, homelessness should not be tolerated. We are committed to bringing it to an end. This means that we have to change our approach to working with households who are homeless or face homelessness.

Can we use shared housing as an option?

The default position should be to aim for an independent settled option. However, this should not discount the option of shared housing given the right circumstances and where this is the choice of the person. This may include instances where friendships have formed while homeless or where shared housing is a stated choice of the individual.

What are the standards for temporary accommodation/ settled homes?

The pandemic has highlighted the need to ensure people are able to access to suitable accommodation of a standard that maintains a sense of dignity and respect. We have been clear that temporary accommodation is self-contained and as a minimum has en-suite facilities. Floor space will continue to not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Chapter 19 of the [Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness](#) provides detailed guidance regarding what is considered suitable in relation to accommodation provided / sourced for the purposes of the prevention / interim / help to secure / duty to secure duties.

What is needed to make Rapid Rehousing a reality in Wales?

- Increased affordable housing – both social housing and private rented housing
- A good understanding of the support needs of people experiencing homelessness
- Improved access to multi-agency support (such as mental health or substance misuse services) for people who need it
- Partnership working and shared responsibility – Rapid Rehousing cannot be achieved through housing services alone

Further information

[Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans: a Scottish overview with practice examples and ideas to share \(on Crisis.org.uk\)](#)

[Aberdeenshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan \(RRTP\) Update \(2020\)](#)

[Perth and Kinross Council: Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan](#)

[Scotland's transition to rapid rehousing: guidance \(on Gov.Scot\)](#)

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