

Area: Housing & Homelessness

Strategic Plan Engagement 2021

The Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership is responsible for services that help people live well and get support when they need it. This includes all community health and social care services for adults in Midlothian and some acute hospital-based services.

To help us in developing our new strategic plan we spoke with stakeholders, volunteers and people with lived experiences about their views on the services we deliver and what could be improved.

We would like to thank over **170 people** (including staff) who took part.

- Pre application consultation in support of application for planning permission for extra care housing (website, newspaper, letters to neighbouring properties, community councils, social media, online events 16 people attended)
- Consultation with Staff – statutory and third sector – on draft action plan (30 people)
- Engagement for the Local Housing Strategy 2021-26 (tenants and residents, landlords, third sector organisations through online sessions – 120 people)
- Consultations with staff in housing and homelessness including statutory and third sector (4people)

Prevention

Improve advice & support to people at risk of homelessness

Key points



Some staff mentioned we should ensure all services support people – ‘**No Wrong Door**’

Many people mentioned the need to improve support to people **before they became homeless.**

“Various services need to work better together to help address the issues which may lead to homelessness: e.g. education, working with families; debt management; health care etc. - so a more joined-up approach rather than being seen as just a housing issue.”

“Focus on the youth, 90% of people who are homeless probably had a troubled childhood which has led to this. Stop the cycle”

“Why do people become homeless support with managing money , behaviours , prep for young people who need to live alone”



“Work to tackle the causes of homelessness and challenge the stigma and morality that surrounds homelessness. Make sure that supports work together with individuals and work with people as proactively as possible to prevent the things that cause homelessness. Ensure the workforce is compassionate and well supported and make sure people get a permanent home quickly and that the home decorated, comfortable and homely on the first day of moving in to help people establish a sense of home.... Work to increase social housing. Home ownership is not achievable, affordable or desirable to all and the private rental sector provides expensive and often inferior quality housing with reduced tenure security. Ensure allocation of housing is proportionately fair, prioritising people who are homeless, homelessness is higher in areas where more houses were sold under RTB.”

“More and better emergency accommodation. More support for people before they become homeless.”

Offer increased housing choice & options. Reduce unmet specialist housing demand and increase awareness of Extra Care housing

Key points

Some people had specific questions about the building of extra care housing but were in agreement with the need for a community facility:



“While I am very keen to have answers to the above concerns I have no argument with a project which will enhance the environment and serve a useful and much needed facility for the community.”

“Are there likely to be sirens and ambulances coming through the night for the intermediate care facility?”



Some staff mentioned that joint working was helping to accommodate people who need **adapted housing in a timely manner**.

Some people thought there was a **lack of choice of housing and a need for more social housing**.

“Please address the lack of affordable/ social housing in the area. Look at ways to prohibit private landlords from buying up large amounts of properties in an area.”

“Too many large family homes being built Local people not being able to afford homes within the community that they were brought up in and not enough local jobs.”



“I am currently stuck in private housing. I cannot afford to save to get a deposit for a mortgage. More needs done to support the likes of my family who just earn too much to qualify for benefits so are lost in the housing system”

“Greater provision of affordable housing. Midlothian like many places has fallen foul of private owners/ landlords pricing families out of the area. Breaking up the essence of a community by fragmenting families by displacing them to other areas. Help for those that need it, more help for working families that do their best but are struggling.”



Some staff mentioned **age was a barrier to accessing some housing** and suggested removing this criteria to accessing specialist accommodation, for example linking to the ‘Going Home Report’ for people with Learning Disability.

Some people felt that **housing providers should provide specialist housing**

“House builders should contribute a portion of their profits to building appropriate specialist housing”



“Private contractors should have to build some wheelchair housing on each site, not accessible housing as a basic building standard as this is not accessible for a wheelchair. Also more one level properties”

“Ask private housing companies to build a small number of specialised accommodation homes within each new estate that they wish to build. Stop them building 4&5 bedroom homes”

“Planning, Building Standards, Council Housing Department, RSLs and private housing developers need to work together to help address some of the issues. Private developers should

Key points

not dictate what gets built on the basis of optimal profit alone, and need to recognise the impact they potentially have on communities. This may not simply be about building a proportion of single storey homes in each development, but could perhaps be about partnership developments of more specialist housing. The location of Extra Care Housing as an integrated part of the community is particularly important. An appropriate location for mainstream housing however, may not be appropriate for Extra Care housing and so this should always be a consideration.”

A few people felt that the focus should **not be on providing adapted housing**

“We need to concentrate on housing that benefits the whole of Bonnyrigg, not for a few.”

“Consult waiting lists and see what needs/disabilities/support people require before building housing that’s unsuitable”



“The infrastructure needs to be in place before any type of housing is provided, especially where the people housed have specific needs. Our GP and social care services can hardly cope as it is”

“Midlothian Council have been facing a large deficit, yet seem intent on building more social housing. More expensive properties mean more council tax and higher spending. Which in turn means less deficit. It might sound harsh, but that’s the reality when you face a shortfall.”

Enable individuals & their families to make decisions regarding their long term care and support

Key points

Some people mentioned the importance of **long term planning and adaptations** to housing.

“You need more supported accommodation and wheelchair accessible housing is needed or help people adapt the house they are in or extend the house they are in so they don’t have the distress of moving again.”



“Adaptations – worried about the cost. Market housing providers should build with the later housing needs of residents in mind – homes which are easily adaptable.”

“This really needs a broad multi-agency approach working closely with representatives of local communities so that, as far as possible, a proactive, planned approach is taken to providing specialist housing. Ideally this would be based on assessment of future need but would have to take account of the need for a reactive response for unforeseen circumstances.”

Some people thought **choice should be limited**

“A clause in contract to stop elderly living in a huge house that a family needs”



“Thinking about older people perhaps more single person housing would allow people to downsize and free up family homes.”

“Move people who don't require special housing to accommodate people who do.”

Support & Treatment

Support for people in temporary accommodation, in recovery from substance misuse or who are homeless.

Key Points



Some staff mentioned the importance of **peer support and joint working** to support people – the Edinburgh Welcome Centre was given as an example of good practice.

Some people mentioned the need for **alternatives to temporary accommodation** “More permanent solutions need to be found as temporary arrangements such as B&Bs are unsatisfactory and expensive. Such temporary arrangements do not address the issue. Part of the solution is longer-term investment in suitable quality Council-owned accommodation on a longer-term temporary/permanent basis.”



“I believe that social housing is key. Using intermediate housing such as halfway houses with shared accommodation could start to help the homeless with issues while giving them safe spaces to successfully re-integrate into social aspects of life. Social housing has been known to me as quite convoluted and not easy to move into smaller accommodation. If this can be revamped so that a large house could accommodate 4/5 homeless people with access to community projects.”

“Can there be more social housing/ better use of existing vacant houses/ buildings”

“Unused building could be used for homeless rather than letting them fall into disrepair”

“Bring unused housing back into the housing stock”

Reduce avoidable hospital admissions/delayed discharge and enable people to live independently

Key Points



Some staff mentioned the need for a **wider range of accommodation options for people with Substance Misuse or Mental Health issues.**