

New Initiatives to Identify Housing Options for Homeless People

The City of Edinburgh Council will be carrying out innovative new studies to explore alternative routes of providing temporary accommodation for homeless people and funding for two feasibility studies is to be provided.

The first study will look at how individuals currently living in bed and breakfast accommodation could be matched to share a tenancy. The second study will look at how a homelessness person could be supported while renting a room in a private house.

These initiatives are both part of the wider Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, submitted to the Scottish Government, which sets out the actions the Council needs to take to end the use of temporary accommodation.

The first feasibility study will be commissioned to consider the mechanisms required to set up a shared tenancy scheme as well as the potential benefits and risks. The study will consider the resources required to ensure any matching and sharing service is safe and sustainable and what the potential outcomes would be. The Council would also draw on research previously carried out by The Chartered Institute of Housing and the Scottish Government as well as engagement with other local authorities who have begun to use sharing as a means of accommodation provision.

Cllr Kate Campbell, Housing and Economy Convener, said: "Everyone has the right to live somewhere they can call home. To help us take people out of bed and breakfast accommodation

we need to be prepared to embrace lots of different, innovative solutions.

“We’ve been prioritising families but we’ve always said that ending B&B use altogether is our absolute goal. This will take time and we have to look at different models and approaches to providing temporary accommodation. And we must acknowledge that every individual is different and will have different needs.

“Matching people to a shared tenancy would have to be done carefully, and it would have to be something people wanted, not something we would impose. But for lots of people it could have significant benefits – not just cheaper rent and bills, but also having a flat mate can be a positive experience. And, of course, it could really speed up the process of single people moving into settled tenancies.

“Supported lodgings is another model that we think could work. People would provide a room in their own home, and a commitment to help support that person towards more positive outcomes. This is a model that has traditionally been used for young people but we want to explore how it could work for other vulnerable groups. Again, it wouldn’t be right for everyone but for some people it could be exactly the type of support they need.

“The vision for Edinburgh is to have at least 100 supported lodgings in place over the next five years.”