

Homelessness Prevention Fund and Tenant Hardship Fund



How-to Guide

This guide offers more detailed information and advice for those who may be interested in adopting or adapting the initiative in their local area.

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Homelessness Prevention Fund and Tenant Hardship Fund



Title	Homelessness Prevention Fund and Tenant Hardship Fund
Organisation	Angus Council, Common Housing Register Partners, Housing Associations, Welfare Rights Team, Health and Social Care Partnership
Category	Fully Validated
Poverty Impact	Mitigation
Introduction to the Project	
<p>The Tenant Hardship Fund is offered specifically to those suffering with housing-related financial difficulties because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Homelessness Prevention Fund was a local extension of the Scottish Government funded Tenant Hardship Fund, which aimed to assist households and individuals who are at risk of homelessness due to housing-related debt. Both Funds aim to help these individuals by reducing rent arrears where other means of support are not available. Those who meet eligibility criteria are assisted by support workers who fill out the application on their behalf. A decision is then made by a multi-agency panel regarding each applicant's suitability for the funding.</p>	

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Initial Idea

Who had the initial idea?	
The Tenant Hardship fund was introduced by the Scottish Government. Lynsey Dey proposed extending the scheme locally.	
Were those with lived experience of poverty involved in developing the initial idea of the project?	
	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

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Early Development – Pilot Project or Feasibility Study

Was there a pilot project or feasibility study?	
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, a pilot project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes, a feasibility study	<input type="checkbox"/>
What did the pilot study or feasibility study involve?	
Lynne Warburton and Emma Rodger describe the Tenant Hardship Fund as acting like a pilot to the Homelessness Prevention Fund.	
Was there evidence from the pilot project or feasibility study that confirmed that it was working / it would work?	
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Accessing the Service and Engaging with Service Users

Is there a referral process?		
	No	
	Yes	✓
<p>Those who meet eligibility criteria are referred by support workers, who fill out the application on their behalf to ensure it is correct. The fund is open to both social housing and private sector tenants and allows one application per household per year and will consider applications on a case-by-case basis, the focus being on those at greatest risk of homelessness. Tenants must show that they have not intentionally withheld rent payments. To be eligible tenants must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be in arrears of at least 3 consecutive months and total arrears must be more than 3 months' rent • Currently be making some contribution towards rent or arrears • Show how a payment from the fund would help prevent homelessness • Show that they have no other means of support. 		
Is referral the only way that potential clients are made aware of the project?		
	Yes	
	No	✓
Other than referral, how do potential clients come to know about the project?		
Potential clients were made aware with a launch of the fund at the Angus Cost of Living Roadshows and ongoing through their website, worker links, blog posts and social media.		

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Do you take steps to keep in touch / reach out to service users?	
No	
Yes	✓
Usually via support workers, landlords or arrears officers. If applicants get in touch directly it tends to be via email. However, they may be contacted via telephone if it is difficult for them to email.	

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Working with People with Lived Experience of Poverty

Are those with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>delivering</u> the project?	
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are people with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>managing</u> the project or project governance?	
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are people with lived experience of poverty involved <u>in any other aspect</u> of the project? <i>If so, please describe below.</i>	
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Leadership, Governance and Partnership Working

Who is responsible for managing the project?	
Lynne Warburton.	
Is this the only responsibility of the person managing the project?	
Yes	
No	✓
Lynne is also the Team Leader for Sustainable Communities, which involves delivering the Rapid Housing Transition Plan and overseeing public protection.	
What proportion of the manager's overall workload is given over to this project?	
Most of it	
About half of it	
Just a small proportion of it	
Is there a Project Steering or Advisory Group?	
No	✓
Yes	
No, but there is a decision-making panel.	
Are any other governance arrangements in place to review strategy and performance?	
No	
Yes	✓
The Homelessness Prevention Fund is managed by Angus Council via existing housing service governance structures and the Tenant Hardship Fund is managed by the Scottish Government.	

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Links to Wider Policies, Strategies and Statutory Requirements

In your opinion, is the project aligned with national and/or local anti-poverty strategies and priorities (e.g., local authority or health board priorities)?		
	Don't know	
	No	
	Yes	✓
The fund is part of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and feeds into Angus Council's Child Poverty, Bright Futures Action Plan.		
Is the project part of any other strategy?		
	Don't know	
	No	✓
	Yes	
Is the project delivering a service that is a statutory commitment?		
	No	✓
	Yes	

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Funding

Has external funding been secured to support the work?	
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please provide details of the external funding that was used secured to support this work?	
Which organisation provided funding?	The Scottish Government fund the Tenant Fund.
What was the specific funding stream/source/scheme?	
How much funding was secured?	£160,000.
For how long has funding been secured?	
Is future funding from the same external source based on pre-agreed outcomes or outputs being delivered from this work?	
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a specific sum been secured from the host organisation to support this work?	
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please provide details of the funding that was used secured from the host organisation to support this work?	
How much funding was secured?	£50,000 has been secured for the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.
For how long has funding been secured?	N/A

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Is future funding from the host organisation based on pre-agreed outcomes or outputs being delivered?	
No	✓
Yes	

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Staffing and Resources

Do existing staff from the host organisation contribute toward the work of this project as part of their broader work for the organisation?			
			No
			Yes
<p>The administration of the fund sits with a Housing Policy Officer, overseen by Team Leader, Sustainable Communities. A multi-agency panel has responsibility for making decisions on individual cases. The panel is chaired by the Housing Policy Officer and membership includes – Team Leader (Sustainable Communities), Manager Welfare Rights, Team Leader (Community Housing Team) and Manager Homelessness Support Service. Referrers are invited to panel to present their referral.</p>			
Are volunteers involved in delivering the project?			
			No
			Yes
Are specific resources – other than staff/volunteer time and money - needed to support the delivery of the project?			
No		Yes	
Please provide details of the resources that are required to deliver the project?			
Facilities / Workspace	N/A		
Equipment	Computers, telephones, Wi-Fi, Microsoft Teams		
Local Knowledge	N/A		
Food and Drink	N/A		

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Were new IT systems, additional software, or upgrades existing software (databases, Apps) required to deliver this project?	
No	
Yes	✓
The project makes use of existing systems which have been modified for their use.	
Was additional training – for staff or volunteers - required to deliver this project?	
No	✓
Yes	

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Monitoring and Evaluation

Is there baseline data to describe what things were like before the start of the project?				
	No			✓
	Yes			
Is the difference that the project is making measured or monitored by the host organisation?				
	Yes			✓
	No			
How often is the impact of the project monitored or measured by the host organisation?				
Data for the Homelessness Prevention Fund is collected on a monitoring sheet at the point of application, decision and point of award. Those assisted by the Tenant Hardship Fund were followed up with within the first 6 months to find out if tenancies were sustained. Quarterly returns are required along with case studies for the Tenant Hardship Fund.				
What information is collected by the host organisation about the project?				
Number of users	Yes	✓	No	
Profile of users	Yes	✓	No	
Experience of users	Yes		No	✓
Outcomes for users	Yes		No	
Anything else	Yes	✓	No	
Amount of funding awarded, date of decision and date awarded.				

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Has the data that has been collected by the host organisation been used to adapt the way the project works?		
	No	✓
	Yes	
N/A		
Has an external organisation been employed to formally evaluate the project?		
	No	
	Yes	✓
The Tenant Hardship Fund is evaluated by the Scottish Government. The Homelessness Prevention Fund is not externally evaluated.		
Has the insight from the external organisation's evaluation been used to adapt the way the project works?		
	No	✓
	Yes	
Is there an intention to undertake your own formal evaluation in the future to estimate the impact of the project?		
	Don't know / no current plans	
	No	✓
	Yes	

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Impact

To what extent have the aims of the project been achieved?	
Fully met	✓
Making progress toward meeting Aims	
Not making progress	
<p>To a great extent. The Homelessness Prevention Fund has paid off rent arrears and alleviated financial difficulty for 8 households to date, residing in the Angus Council area who were at risk of homelessness. Within the first 6 months of the Tenant Hardship Fund, 60 out of 62 tenancies were sustained because of the project.</p>	
What difference has the project made?	
<p>The project has allowed tenants to sustain tenancies and avoid homelessness. Tenants reported stress relief as the project allowed them more breathing space with their finances.</p>	
Have conditions or demand changed since the project was introduced	
No	
Yes	✓
<p>They expect demand for the Prevention Fund to increase now that the Tenant Hardship Fund has been fully committed.</p>	
Has the project had the capacity to meet these changing conditions and demand?	
Yes	✓
No	
<p>Yes, though it was difficult at first to cope with a rise in demand when funding was opened to a wider range of applicants. This issue has been amended by re-evaluating the application process.</p>	

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Has the project changed through time?		
	No	✓
	Yes	
What changed		
Why has it changed		
Has the project had any unexpected or unintended outcomes?		
	No	
	Yes	✓
This project has opened communication between council workers and the public as tenants have had to apply via various support workers. This has enabled individuals who are struggling to reach out for support more willingly.		
In your opinion, is the project having an impact on tackling poverty?		
	No	
	Yes	✓
The project tackles child poverty as families apply for this funding.		

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Learning from Experience

What is working well?	
Communication between partnerships.	
What, if anything, is working less well?	
Everything is working well with the Homelessness Prevention Fund. Initially when tenants self-referred and applied for the Tenant Hardship Fund, there were many incomplete applications coming through. This issue has now been resolved with applications being supported by workers.	
What are the key learning points that you'd like to share with other practitioners?	
Create an application process which ensures all necessary information is coming through in the first instance to save time. Allow excellent communication between partnerships.	
Are there plans to develop or expand the project in the future?	
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
How easily do you think this project could be replicated in another setting?	
Very easily as the Homelessness Prevention Fund is similar to the Tenant Hardship Fund, which was implemented across Scotland.	

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