



Homelessness and Emergency Housing

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RESEARCH PAPER

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1. Summary

The extent of homelessness in the Isle of Man is not well understood. Rather than living openly on the streets, many homeless people live in temporary, sometimes substandard accommodation. According to charities working with those facing the issue, hidden homelessness appears to be growing.

The 'Our Island Plan', approved by Tynwald in 2022, includes an aim to tackle homelessness and provide tenancy protection to all residents on the Island. To do this, the root causes of homelessness, including lack of affordable housing and targeted legislation to protect the housing of vulnerable groups, are to be addressed.

There is no legislation on the Isle of Man which specifically addresses the issue of homelessness. The [Public Sector Housing \(General Needs\) \(Allocation\) Policy 2019](#) allows for those using emergency housing to gain additional points towards public sector housing, including minor provision for the already homeless. However, this legislation does not tackle the issue at its origins or provide specialised support.

The lack of statutory definition of the term 'homelessness' is another issue which has been raised within various Tynwald reports in recent years, such as the Tynwald Select Committee on Poverty's 2019 report on ['Poverty Definitions and Data'](#). It has been argued that the lack of a statutory definition limits the collection of data on homelessness as there is no official way to categorise people facing issues with housing, and also means that statistics on Island are extremely limited.

Despite the lack of a statutory definition, there have been a number of plans put in place to tackle homelessness on the Isle of Man. A Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan [[GD 2019/0065](#)], Report of the Select Committee on Accommodation for Vulnerable Young People [[PP 2019/0088](#)], and the Housing and Communities Board Action Plan [[GD 2022/0039](#)] all call for cross-departmental working to create targeted primary legislation and secure emergency accommodations for those facing homelessness. These interlink with plans to increase availability of affordable housing and renovate vacant properties across the Island.

Emergency accommodation is provided by a wide range of third-sector organisations, such as Housing Matters, the Women's Refuge, or the Manx Housing Trust. It is not supplied directly through Social Services or any other Government Department, although Government may support charities through grants or referrals. However, these organisations are struggling with demand for their services, with Housing Matters stating that two fifths of its clients are categorised as homeless, but that they are struggling to cut down waitlists due to lack of properties available on Island.

With the closure of Graih in September 2022, the charity which had provided the Island's emergency night shelter since 2008, the Housing and Communities Board took on the role of securing alternative provision by January 2023. However, with no interim provision available for those facing homelessness, emergency accommodation had become a priority concern once again.

In the UK, targeted legislation and organisations on homelessness are in place to assist Local Authorities with placing and supporting those without homes. Local Authority reporting of cases of homelessness within their jurisdiction allows for the creation of Government national statistics.

Terminology

Homeless – Not having a home; having no accommodation in which to live. This does not just include those sleeping rough on the street, but also those squatting, staying in the home of others, or living in a hostel/shelter/hotel.¹

¹ Shelter, 'What is homelessness?', https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness/what_is_homelessness (accessed 3 October 2022)

Hidden homelessness – People who are not reported in official homelessness statistics, nor receiving support, but are without a place to call home.²

Emergency housing– Temporary accommodation for those who are in crisis, homeless, or in imminent danger of becoming homeless. Used whilst a longer term solution is found and safety is secured.³

Rough sleeping – The most visible form of homelessness where someone lives in a place not designed for sleeping or living. This can include on the streets, in an abandoned building, or in a car.⁴

Sofa surfing– To stay overnight with hosts who provide basic accommodations (such as a couch to sleep on) at no cost.⁵

2. Introduction

The Isle of Man has the 8th highest GDP per capita according to the [World Bank](#). However, despite this wealth, charity Housing Matters says that homelessness is still a growing, but hidden problem in the Manx population.⁶

According to a 2016 audit on the health of homeless people on the Island, rather than living openly on the streets, many homeless people live in substandard accommodation with severe issues which render them unsafe. Others were living in boarding houses, charity-provided accommodation, or sofa-surfing.⁷

Within 'Our Island Plan' 2022 [\[GD2022/0004\]](#), approved by Tynwald on [1st February 2022](#), the Isle of Man Government sets out ways in which it aims to achieve a vision of 'building great communities'. Incorporated within this, is a goal to tackle issues of homelessness and security of tenancy, to ensure every resident of the Island has access to a "safe and secure home". This includes those living within temporary accommodation.

Causes of Homelessness

Homelessness has many causes, including but not limited to:⁸

- A lack of affordable housing;
- Poverty and unemployment;
- Leaving prison, care, or the armed forces;
- Escaping domestic violence;
- Substance misuse;
- Mental health issues;
- Loss of job.

In 2013, Housing Matters attributed the lack of housing associations or homeless legislation on Island as a reason for those slipping through the 'safety nets' already in place.⁹

² London Assembly Housing Committee, 'Hidden Homelessness in London', September 2017, https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_assembly_-_hidden_homelessness_report.pdf

³ Law Insider, 'Emergency Housing', <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/emergency-housing> (accessed 3 Oct 2022)

⁴ MENDIP District Council, 'What is rough sleeping?', <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/7983/What-is-Rough-Sleeping> (accessed 28 Nov 2022).

⁵ Merriam Webster, 'couch surf', <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/couch%20surf#:~:text=1a%20%3A%20to%20stay%20overnight,of%20homelessness%20in%20their%20lifetime>. (accessed 3 Oct 2022)

⁶ BBC News, 'Isle of Man's 'hidden homeless'', published 24 December 2013, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-isle-of-man-25462922> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

⁷ Isle of Man Government, 'The Unhealthy State of Homelessness', 2015/16, <https://www.gov.im/media/1353292/audit-powerpoint-2016.pptx> (accessed 3 Oct 2022)

⁸ Crisis, 'About homelessness', <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/about-homelessness/> (accessed 3 Oct 2022)

⁹ BBC News, 'Isle of Man's 'hidden homeless'', published 24 December 2013.

In a 2016 audit on the health of homeless people conducted by Adult Community Nursing Services and Graih, it was identified that 94% of homeless people on the Island that were interviewed reported having mental health issues. Compared to the general UK population at 25% of people, there is a discrepancy in mental health for those facing homelessness.¹⁰ Furthermore, 47% of the homeless interviewed had been admitted to hospital in the past six months, with 25% having or recovering from a drug and/or alcohol problem.¹¹

The Extent of the Issue

Official data on homelessness in the Isle of Man is not consistently collected.

During six months of [data collection](#) on the usage of the Island's homeless night shelter (28/01/19 to 30/08/19), it was found that:

- The shelter had been open every night, with between zero and five users a night.
- A total of 331 bed spaces had been provided to 46 different individuals, 36 men and 10 women
- 2/3 of the users were new when they first used the service. A dozen or so of the people were referrals from the police, but many people referred themselves.
- There had been no pattern determined regarding the demand.

In order to enhance data collection in this area, there have been calls to introduce a statutory definition of homelessness (see section 3 below).

3. Legislation

There is no legislation in the Isle of Man which exclusively targets the issues of homelessness or emergency housing.

Under the [Public Sector Housing \(General Needs\) \(Allocation\) Policy 2019](#), those in emergency accommodation are not automatically entered onto the social housing waiting list, but can choose to apply if they meet the general eligibility criteria.¹² Under Section 6 of the policy (health and welfare circumstances), those who meet the requirements are afforded up to fifty additional points and prioritised due to use of emergency accommodation.¹³

In [November 2022](#), the Chair of the Housing and Communities Board clarified that there were no plans to adjust the housing allocation criteria in place for homeless people as there is a difference between the provision of emergency and public sector housing through the time taken to be allocated. Pre-existing allocation of emergency housing was also said to provide further points to applicants in unsuitable accommodations. The Chair suggested that further supported housing would provide a healthier landlord and tenant relationship for those facing homelessness, with accommodation tailored towards the tenant.

Within the [Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2019](#), homes which are rented by a charity on behalf of a homeless person, are protected in terms of consumer's rights to redress.

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, emergency legislation was introduced which legislated for the continuation of services for homeless people, as well as the vulnerable. The [Emergency Powers \(Coronavirus\) \(Closure of Businesses and Other Premises\) Regulations 2020](#) listed essential services to stay open during lockdowns, including those which supplied food, drink, and other services to the homeless.

¹⁰ Isle of Man Government, 'The Unhealthy State of Homelessness', 2015/16, <https://www.gov.im/media/1353292/audit-powerpoint-2016.pptx> (accessed 3 October 2022)

¹¹ Isle of Man Government, 'The Unhealthy State of Homelessness', 2015/16, <https://www.gov.im/media/1353292/audit-powerpoint-2016.pptx> (accessed 3 October 2022)

¹² [House of Keys, 14 May 2019, Item 1.7](#)

¹³ [Tynwald Court, 9 April 2019, Item 5](#)

Calls for a Statutory Definition of Homelessness

The Report of the Select Committee on Accommodation for Vulnerable Young People [\[PP 2019/0088\]](#) was [moved in Tynwald](#) on 17th October 2019. Recommendation 3 of the report was approved by Tynwald Court as follows:

That legislation be introduced into the Branches containing a statutory definition of homelessness and a duty to support and accommodate people who become homeless unintentionally.

The COVID-19 pandemic delayed implementation of this recommendation, but in [August 2022](#), the Housing and Communities Board was set to undertake a strategic review and needs analysis of homelessness, enabling the formation of a definition for homelessness.

In October 2020, the Tynwald Select Committee on Poverty published its first report on '[Poverty Definitions and Data](#)'. After amendment, recommendation 4 in the report carried as follows:¹⁴

That the Isle of Man Government, in partnership with the Third Sector, defines homelessness, which includes 'rough sleeping' and produces data on the number of homeless people in the Isle of Man.

Within the Committee's first 2020-21 session report [\[PP 2020-21\]](#) on 'Income and Benefits', this recommendation was noted as ongoing, being taken forward under recommendation 3 of the Report of the Select Committee on the Accommodation for Vulnerable Young People 2018-2019 [\[PP 2019/0088\]](#). According to the Tynwald Policy Decisions Report 2021 [\[GD 2021/0088\]](#), the Social Policy and Children's Committee of the Council of Ministers was undertaking this role.

The lack of any statutory obligation regarding homelessness was also addressed in the 2021 [Interim Housing Strategy](#) [\[GD 2021/0063\]](#). A suggested solution was to implement targeted primary legislation, with clear policy direction that addresses who is responsible for assisting homeless persons within Government.

4. Plans to Tackle Homelessness

Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan

In the 2016-2021 [Programme for Government](#), a commitment was made to create and publish an action plan to tackle cold, hunger and homelessness. In 2018 a senior officer and a Stakeholder Group, comprised of [Grai](#), Housing Matters, Foodbank and the Salvation Army, worked together to identify where Government action could be implemented to support existing third sector organisations and determine policy responses to the issues. This was to be published in a plan after review by the Social Policy and Children's Committee.¹⁵

The Minister for Policy and Reform, Mr Thomas MHK, made a [statement in Tynwald](#) in July 2019 regarding the formation of an action plan. Mr Thomas reiterated the urgent need for an anti-homeless strategy on the Island, potentially alongside the introduction of relevant legislation.

In September 2019, the Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan [\[GD 2019/0065\]](#) was published by the Cabinet Office, and laid before Tynwald in [October 2019](#). This highlighted both actions already underway, and those which would be carried out prior to the plan's publication.

¹⁴ [Tynwald Court, 10 December 2019, Item 7.](#)

¹⁵ [Tynwald Court, 11 December 2018, Item 26.](#)

Actions which had taken place regarding homelessness and emergency housing at the time of publication included:

- Funding provided to Housing Matters for a number of years to provide its services for anyone who was homeless, at risk of becoming homeless or experiencing difficulty in finding suitable accommodation.
- Piloting the Harris Terrace shelter night stop accommodation.
- Treasury provision of financial support to Graih for a trial Emergency Housing Shelter.

Actions yet to be undertaken, but which were planned for inclusion:

- A commitment to the development of a high level, all Island strategy for housing, with a five year action plan, as set out in the [Programme for Government 2019/20](#).
- Undertaking work related to recommendations in the Report of the Select Committee on Accommodation for Vulnerable Young People [\[PP 2019/0088\]](#), including:
 - Development of a youth homelessness strategy.
 - Commissioning of feasibility studies on the introduction of a night stop support scheme, and the need for relevant changes to legislation.

The All Island Strategy for Affordable Housing Strategic Policy Principles [\[GD 2020/0007\]](#) was published in February 2020, in which seven policy principles were listed as follows:

1. Government will continue to support and facilitate the provision of affordable housing for the wider benefit of all across the island.
2. Housing providers and stakeholders will work collaboratively to encourage the delivery of good quality affordable homes and services which meet the changing needs of the island's population.
3. The subsidy for affordable housing will be appropriately targeted to those with the least means and most in physical, social and financial need.
4. The changing needs of the individual should be at the heart of affordable housing services.
5. There is a continued commitment to cost effective, efficient and sustainable housing design capable of delivering quality energy efficient homes.
6. Affordable housing development and refurbishment should support a mix of types of home to help deliver diverse and sustainable local communities.
7. There should be an appropriate legislative and regulatory framework to underpin the affordable housing sector and support the principles of social provision.

Accommodation for Vulnerable Young People

In 2018, a Combined Action Plan for Children and Young People (CAPCY) [\[GD 2018/0045\]](#) was published by the Council of Ministers Social Policy and Children's Sub-Committee. Within this plan, recommendation 3f stated that services across all Government Departments should become 'more focused on meeting the specific needs of families experiencing issues relating to poverty on the IOM'. The report highlighted a lack of national definition for poverty, lack of a housing or homelessness strategy, and a reliance on charities to support those in financial need.

In order to tackle these issues, the plan aimed to:

- Establish policy and legislative arrangements for key areas relevant to future service development for housing/homelessness and Poverty.
- Develop a co-ordinated strategy between government and third sector agencies for integrated partnership working in the area of vulnerable families experiencing child poverty, housing issues and homelessness.

As of the publication of the CAPCY plan in 2018, a Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Group had been set up, and a lead was identified; all other aims were in progress.

The Report of the Select Committee on Accommodation for Vulnerable Young People [[PP 2019/0088](#)] was [moved in Tynwald](#) on 17th October 2019. Recommendation 4, which was approved by Tynwald, stated:

That a youth homelessness strategy with a focus on the prevention of housing crises be developed; and that this sit within the overarching accommodation for vulnerable young people strategy.

The Department of Infrastructure, alongside other stakeholders, was to create a strategy and delivery plan to assist those of no fixed abode who may otherwise be categorised as vulnerable, including youth homelessness. The Council of Ministers' Social Policy and Children's Sub-Committee (SPCC) agreed upon the need for an overarching Housing Strategy for the Island, and that a call for expressions of interest should be launched (see 'Housing First Model').

Recommendations 5, 9, 10 and 13 of the Vulnerable Young People report were closed, being amalgamated into the development of a Homeless Strategy by Cabinet Office. These focused around the creation of a night stop service, Government assessments of accommodation suitability, and legislation to give power to estranged young people.¹⁶ Similarly, [recommendation 3 and 4 are ongoing](#), but are now the responsibility of the Housing and Communities Board when developing a Housing Strategy.

In an amended recommendation 7 from the Tynwald Select Committee on Poverty Report on '[Poverty Definitions and Data](#)', the Council of Ministers' Social Policy and Children's Committee (SPCC) was recommended to act as the lead for poverty (including homelessness) within Government.¹⁷

In [July 2020](#), the Minister for Infrastructure explained that the SPCC had agreed to take forward the lead in overseeing delivery and monitoring of the various actions contained in the Vulnerable Young People Report. The SPCC intended to report to Tynwald Court in November 2020 with a progress update.¹⁸

National Housing Strategy

In October 2020, the Minister for Policy and Reform formed a political board to develop the Terms of Reference for the establishment of a National Housing Programme: the National Housing Strategy Working Group (NHSWG). The [Terms of Reference](#) for development of a National Housing Strategy were laid before Tynwald in [January 2021](#), and the Board's Interim Housing Strategy [[GD 2021/0063](#)] published and laid before Tynwald in 2021.

Within the interim strategy, emergency housing provision was identified as an aspirational initiative across Government, and was listed under the Housing Strategy's terms of reference. As a way to address and solve 'immediate housing needs', emergency night shelter procurement (incorporating relevant recommendations from the Select Committee on Vulnerable Young People's report) and the delivery of a Manx Housing First Support Service were envisioned.

Housing First Model

Housing First is a housing and support approach which:

- Gives people who have experienced homelessness and chronic health and social care needs a stable home from which to rebuild their lives.
- Provides intensive, person-centred, holistic support that is open-ended.
- Places no conditions on individuals; however, they should desire to have a tenancy.

¹⁶ [Council of Ministers, Tynwald Policy Decisions Report 2021, GD 2021/0088, pp.13-16.](#)

¹⁷ [Tynwald Court, 10 December 2019, Item 7.](#)

¹⁸ [Tynwald Court, 22 July 2020, Item 96.](#)

- Has a 70-90% success rate.¹⁹

In October 2020, the Isle of Man Government launched a call for expressions of interest by organisations capable of providing emergency housing for those with no fixed abode. This was to include the commissioning of 'around 30 spaces in the Eastern area of the Island for short-term emergency housing', with daytime drop-in services providing shelter and food. A further 20 spaces of medium term emergency housing were also sought, with communal spaces and a Manx Housing First Support Service.²⁰

Following the call for expressions of interest, Housing Matters and the Manx Housing Trust recorded interest in providing emergency housing and daytime drop in/night stop facilities. Alongside these two organisations, Praxis Care, Quing and the Salvation Army also showed interest in the Manx Housing First Support Service.²¹

Within the Isle of Man's Housing and Communities Board 2021 action plan [[GD 2022/0039](#)], it aimed to introduce a Manx Housing First approach to tackle homelessness. Similar Housing First schemes had already been in action throughout many areas of England and Scotland since 2010.²²

Following the results of the 2020 call, in February 2022 the Housing and Communities Board held a workshop for those expressing an interest. A consensus was formed between groups that a single pathway should be formed with multiple provisions of different housing types.²³

Housing and Communities Board Action Plan

The Housing and Communities Board, an entity established by the Isle of Man Government in October 2021 to address a perceived housing crisis on Island, created a twelve-month action plan [[GD 2022/0039](#)] in order to "coordinate and integrate housing policies across government departments into a national strategy".²⁴

As a crucial early intervention, a Housing First approach was targeted within the plan, with emergency accommodation available to aid in tackling homelessness. The plan was to include:

- Funding for an emergency shelter;
- Development of a single pathway with multiple provisions to tackle homelessness;
- Delivering supported living;
- Creating homelessness law.

The Board created a Joint Commissioning Approach to fulfil its "Emergency Shelter and Housing First" plan (see Figure 1).

The Board had an aim to secure existing Emergency Night Shelter service for 12 months by June 2022, which it achieved. In May 2022, £118,000 was secured from the Housing and Communities Fund to support the continuation of the emergency night shelter operated by Graih for a year.²⁵ This did not reach the £250,000 which Graih requested from the Isle of Man Government to run both shelter and daytime services.²⁶ Further actions to be undertaken were:

¹⁹ Housing First England, 'About Housing First', <https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/about-housing-first> (accessed 3 October 2022).

²⁰ Isle of Man Government, 'Expressions of interest for providing emergency housing', published 5 October 2020, <https://www.gov.im/news/2020/oct/05/expressions-of-interest-for-providing-emergency-housing/> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

²¹ Isle of Man Today, 'Thomas attacks speed of homelessness action', published 25 June 2021, <https://www.iomtoday.co.im/news/politics/thomas-attacks-speed-of-homelessness-action-241441> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

²² Homeless Link, 'About Housing First', <https://homeless.org.uk/areas-of-expertise/housing-first/> (accessed 3 Oct 2022).

²³ [Housing and Communities Board, 'Action Plan 2022/23', GD 2022/0039, p.4.](#)

²⁴ BBC News, 'Proposals to tackle the Isle of Man's 'housing crisis' outlined', published 6 April 2022, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-isle-of-man-61009994> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

²⁵ [Tynwald Court, 17 May 2022, Item 7.](#)

²⁶ Manx Radio, 'Manx homeless shelter used more than 500 times in 12 months', published 10 February 2020, <https://www.manxradio.com/news/isle-of-man-news/hundreds-of-manx-residents-use-graihs-homeless-shelter/> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

- Strategic review and needs analysis of homelessness by July 2022;
- Design Emergency Shelter and Housing First pathway by August 2022;
- Settle policy to inform proposed Housing and Communities Bill by October 2022;
- Commission services aligned to Emergency Shelter pathway by March 2023;
- Commission Housing First pathway by March 2023.

In [November 2022](#), the Chair said that, following a strategic review in April 2022, the Housing and Communities Board was presented findings by the Strategic Review Team. A lack of a statutory definition for homelessness (see section 3), meant that there was no statutory duty to provide housing, and therefore third sector organisations had organically developed services in its absence. Furthermore, it was found that there was a lack of data to identify service user needs (see section 6), and a need for a cross-government approach, and strategic needs analysis, to tackle homelessness. It was recommended that a stepped approach may be more appropriate than Housing First, as needs on Island are wider than just those for complex support needs, which are more typically supported in Housing First.

The Chair for the Board also explained how the publication of the Board's Homelessness Strategy, anticipated around January 2023, was under pressure due to resource issues and the closure of Graih in September 2022 (see section 5). Following the resolution of this issue, the remaining actions were to be prioritised, commissioning a prioritised need service and housing strategy by March 2023.

In [November 2022](#), the Chair also announced that an Objective Assessment of Housing Need was to begin in February 2023, taking up to 12 months to complete.

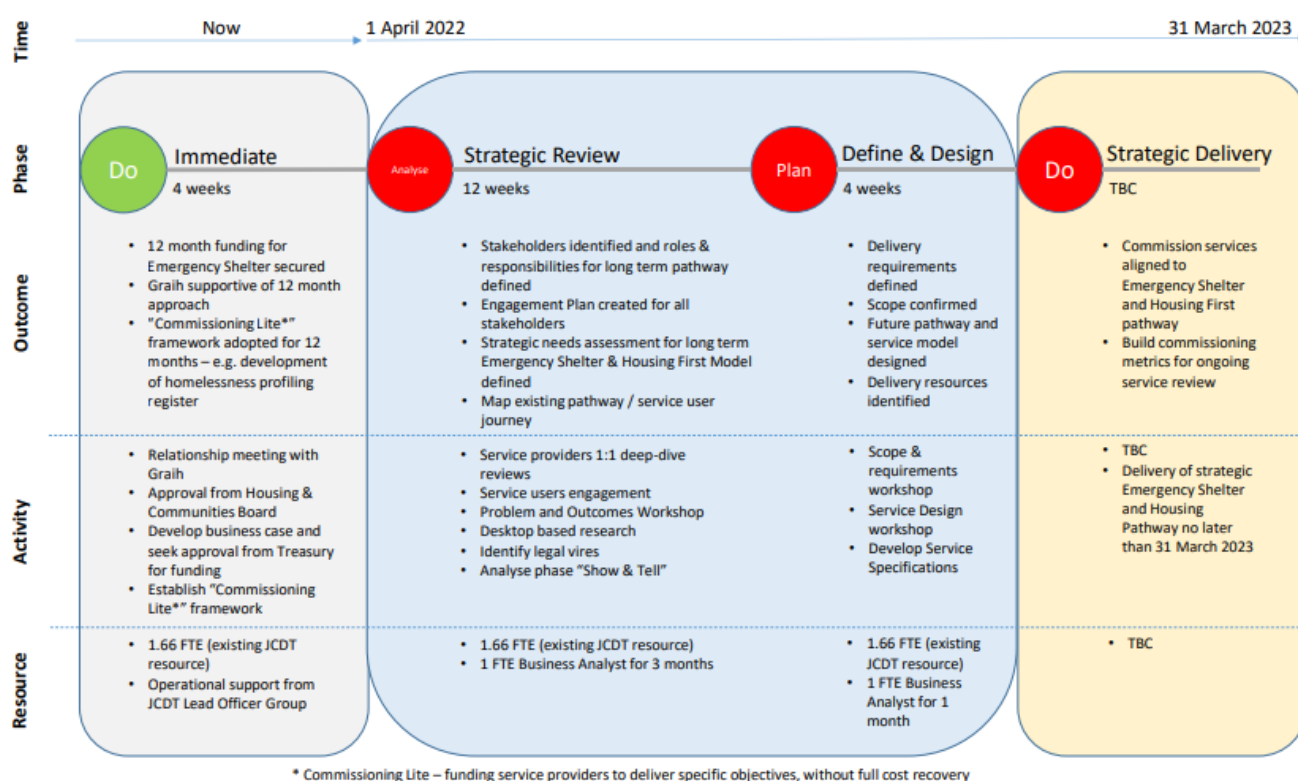


Figure 1: Joint Commissioning Approach

5. Temporary and Emergency Accommodation Provision

In the Isle of Man, emergency housing is provided by charities and third sector organisations.

The Department of Infrastructure's Housing Division works alongside these charities to ensure direct referrals for emergency accommodation, and provides a number of shorter term accommodations for families with children in these cases.²⁷

The Department of Health and Social Care also provides a grant to the [Manx Housing Trust](#), an organisation which provides shorter-term, affordable, decent accommodation for local families with at least one dependent child, who are in housing need and awaiting housing on the Island's public sector housing waiting lists.²⁸

[Housing Matters](#) provides advice, guidance and support to those facing homelessness, finding suitable emergency accommodation to prevent homelessness. It provides home starter packs, advice and meetings, tenant and landlord advice, and educates young people to reduce those becoming homeless in the future.²⁹

The lack of available properties to satisfy demand for emergency accommodation is an issue that service providers of emergency housing are struggling to resolve. The charity Housing Matters has faced unprecedented demand for its services, with the cost of living adding to the problem of homelessness.³⁰ Around two fifths of the charity's users are classified as homeless, and require help with finding suitable accommodation. However, the charity says that this accommodation can't be found on the Island at present, and that times on waitlists are at an all-time high.³¹

Accommodation for Victims of Domestic Abuse

The [Women's Refuge](#) Isle of Man provides a safe-house for women and children at threat of violence, intimidation or abuse in their homes. Those who do not feel safe in their domestic environment, can stay in the Refuge until they are able to move on, but this is a temporary solution.

During the [August 2019](#) sitting of Tynwald, the former Minister for the Treasury, Mr Cannan MHK, stated that the Department of Home Affairs was looking at providing additional emergency accommodation for male victims of domestic abuse, and others victims that may need short term accommodation. This would work alongside other protective measures to safeguard victims of domestic abuse and prevent them from ending up homeless when fleeing from perpetrators.

Housing First plans laid out by Government were criticised by Women's Aid in that the provisions would not be suitable for victims of abuse. The organisation noted that the emergency housing plans were 'well-meaning' but that they had the potential to be dangerous to victims because the location was not secret.³²

²⁷ [Tynwald Court, 19 June 2018, Item 21.](#)

²⁸ [House of Keys, 3 December 2013, Item 2.7.](#)

²⁹ Three FM, 'Children shown 'stark reality' of homelessness', published 3 September 2021, <https://www.three.fm/news/isle-of-man-news/children-shown-stark-reality-of-homelessness/> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

³⁰ Manx Radio, 'Housing Matters warns pressure on the charity hasn't eased', published 27 October 2021, <https://www.manxradio.com/news/isle-of-man-news/housing-matters-warns-pressure-on-the-charity-hasnt-eased/> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

³¹ Manx Radio, '"We have nowhere to put people"- Housing Matters', published 12 February 2020, <https://www.manxradio.com/news/isle-of-man-news/we-have-nowhere-to-put-people-housing-matters/> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

³² Gef, 'Emergency Housing Plans 'have the potential to be incredibly dangerous'', published 14 October 2020, <https://gef.im/2020/10/14/emergency-housing/> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

Kingswood House Shelter (2008-2009)

In November 2008, an overnight shelter for single, homeless males aged 18-25 was opened on Harris Terrace, Douglas. Two meals a day were provided, with the Kingswood House shelter working on a first come first served basis. It was run on a pilot basis by charity Kemmyrk (now called Housing Matters), with six months of planning permission granted. The then Department of Health and Social Security retained ownership of the premises, and ran a short-term lease with nominal rent.³³

The tenure of the Harris Terrace shelter was cut short in January 2009, with low usage and availability of private sector accommodation due to changing economic conditions cited as reasons for closure. Low usage was attributed to the 9pm opening time of the facility, as those who did not manage to secure a place would not be able to find alternative accommodation at such a late time, and therefore initially found alternative shelter. The DHSS spent £6,048.33 on the project in order to meet byelaw requirements, which was conducted with the aim of a revised but similar project being carried out in the building in future years.³⁴

A night-stop service was due to be launched in replacement of the Kingswood House shelter in April 2009, although this never came into existence. Instead, further attention was given to services provided by Graih.

Graih (2008-2022)

From 2008 to 2022, [Graih](#), a Christian charity, provided an emergency night shelter for those over 18 years of age. This service ran between the hours of 9pm and 7.30am, and worked on a drop-in system.³⁵ In 2020, Graih provided 524 bed spaces, and had contact with 291 individuals facing homelessness.³⁶ They ranged in ages between 18 and 88, with $\frac{3}{4}$ being men.³⁷ Facilities including food and drinks, clothing, bedding, showers, and safe social spaces were also available.

In 2019, in return for reporting data on service usage and the extent to which a night-stop service was needed on the Island, Graih was granted £15,000 by the Isle of Man Government. However, no annual statutory funding was provided by the Government to support night shelter provision. The results of the first six months of reporting (28/01/19 to 30/08/19) were listed in the 2019 Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan [[GD 2019/0065](#)].

The night shelter secured funding from private and third sector donations to remain open until the end of January 2020. An application was made to the Department of Health and Social Care for sustainable funding amounting to £200,000 per year for its night stop provision, and a further £50,000 for day time services.³⁸

In September 2022, Graih announced the closure of its night shelter service at the end of the month. Staffing difficulties and lack of sustainability were cited as reasons for closure. Daytime services such as food and showers were to be taken over by the Broadway Baptist Church where the charity was formerly based.³⁹ On 27th September 2022, the Isle of Man Government released a statement, whereby it announced that it was actively working with third sector organisations to continue the interim provision

³³ [House of Keys, 3 March 2009, Item 2.1](#)

³⁴ [House of Keys, 3 March 2009, Item 2.1](#)

³⁵ Graih, 'Home', <https://www.graih.org.im/home> (accessed July 2022).

³⁶ Graih, '2020 Newsletter', https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KtHzOIFYB_iVheBib40WTbd9Ud9IXopZ/view (accessed July 2022).

³⁷ Manx Radio, 'Manx homeless shelter used more than 500 times in 12 months', published 10 February 2020, <https://www.manxradio.com/news/isle-of-man-news/hundreds-of-manx-residents-use-graihs-homeless-shelter/> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

³⁸ [Council of Ministers, 'Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan', GD 2019/0065, p. 11.](#)

³⁹ ITV News, 'Only homeless night shelter on Isle of Man to close due to 'challenging circumstances'', published 28 September 2022, <https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2022-09-28/isle-of-mans-only-homeless-night-shelter-to-close> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

of an emergency shelter within weeks of the shelter's closure. Talks had also begun into the commissioning of a permanent service to commence in 2023.⁴⁰

In November 2022, in a [written answer](#) regarding provision of accommodation to the homeless, the Chair of the Housing and Communities Board reported that the DHSC had taken lead in supporting the Board to find immediate replacement for Emergency Overnight Shelter provision. It was aimed to be fully commissioned by 1st January 2023, and progress was moving positively towards this goal according to the Chair.

Provision of Accommodation during COVID Lockdowns

During the COVID-19 emergency period in 2020, a combination of Government Departments and third sector organisations worked in collaboration to provide accommodation for 26 people facing homelessness. Tromode House, the Island's Community Rehabilitation Centre Accommodation run by the Probation Service, also provided accommodation for people during this period. Those accessing accommodation were charged by way of welfare benefit deductions.⁴¹ Everyone accessing temporary housing was rehoused on their departure, once the lockdowns were lifted.⁴² This provision was commended in the National Housing Strategy Working Group's Interim Housing Strategy [[GD 2021/0063](#)]:

During the 2020 lockdown, when there was a clear goal of the preservation of life and Departmental boundaries were 'collapsed', a clear pathway and programme for persons of no fixed abode during the lockdown period was put in place.

6. Homelessness and Emergency Accommodation in the UK

England

According to Shelter, a homelessness charity in the UK, over 274,000 people were recorded as being homeless in England in 2021, with 126,000 of those being children. Of these people, 2,700 people were sleeping rough, 15,000 single people were staying in hostels, and 250,000 were housed in temporary accommodation.⁴³

In January to March 2022, 74,230 households were assessed by the UK Government as homeless or threatened with homelessness, up 5.4% from the same period in the previous year.⁴⁴

In 2020, there were 105 active Housing First services in England compared to 32 in 2017, with the service aiding the most people based in the North-West with 453 people. Of these, 81% of services used social housing for their residents, whilst the use of private rented sector housing had decreased.⁴⁵

In 2017, Westminster passed its new '[Homelessness Reduction Act](#)' (HRA). Coming into effect in April 2018, the HRA created new duties in which Local Authorities must adhere to in the reduction of homelessness, supplementing the pre-existing duties written in the [Housing Act 1996](#). These duties included helping all people facing homelessness (not just those of priority status), putting preventative

⁴⁰ Isle of Man Government, 'Statement following the closure of Graih' published 27 September 2022, <https://www.gov.im/news/2022/sep/27/statement-following-the-closure-of-graih/> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

⁴¹ [Select Committee of Tynwald on Poverty, 'First Report for the Session 2020-21 Income and Benefits', PP 2021/0105, para 70. Tynwald Court, 15 September 2020, Item 66.](#)

⁴² Shelter, '274,000 people in England are homeless, with thousands more likely to lose their homes', published 9 December 2021, https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/274000_people_in_england_are_homeless_with_thousands_more_likely_to_lose_their_homes (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

⁴⁴ Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 'Statutory Homelessness January to March (Q1) 2022: England', https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1094516/Statutory_Homelessness_Stats_Release_Jan-Mar_2022.pdf (accessed 3 October 2022).

⁴⁵ Housing First England, 'The Picture of Housing First', <https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/picture-housing-first> (accessed 3 October 2022)

measures in place to prevent homelessness (working with those likely to become homeless within 56 days), and trying to house families in local authority housing, with an increased 56 day period to secure accommodations.⁴⁶

Following the creation of the HRA, a new system for reporting of statutory homelessness figures followed. Local authorities began to report data from their homeless cases to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities using a system called Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC). The Department uses case data, as it has done since 1998, to formulate national homelessness statistics, before publishing them.⁴⁷

Scotland

In 2021, 27,571 households were classified as homeless in Scotland, including 11,804 children. Of these, 22% became homeless due to a dispute in their household or breakdown of a relationship, 27% were asked to leave accommodation, and 14% had violent or abusive experiences in their household.⁴⁸

From these households, 1,471 people were reported as sleeping rough, with 13,097 households housed in temporary accommodation.⁴⁹

In Scotland, Councils have a duty to organise and provide temporary accommodation to anyone who applies for help with homelessness, and is seen to fulfil the relevant characteristics. This housing is charged for at a reasonable fee, with those unable to afford it being able to seek Housing Benefits to cover costs.⁵⁰

As part of Housing First Scotland, a [Branching Out National Framework](#) was created to further expand on Housing First approaches.⁵¹ This explored the effectiveness and benefits which were present through the implementation of a Housing First approach to homelessness.

The [Homelessness etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#) was introduced to phase out distinctions made in the prior [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 1987](#), where homeless (or soon to be homeless) people making applications to local authorities for housing, were categorised as priority or non-priority.⁵² Under the Housing Act, Local Authorities hold statutory duties to assist those threatened or facing homelessness, including the provision of accommodation. Inquiries are required to be made into the living circumstances of applicants to verify whether they require assistance.⁵³

From 31st December 2012, every applicant who was deemed as unintentionally homeless was equally entitled to secure accommodations, following Scottish Parliament's approval of the [Homeless \(Abolition of Priority Need Test\) \(Scotland\) Order 2012](#).⁵⁴ Similarly to England, the statistics for homelessness in

⁴⁶ UK Government, 'Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities', updated 31 Jan 2023, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/overview-of-the-homelessness-legislation> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

⁴⁷ UK Statistics Authority, 'Statistics on Statutory Homelessness in England', December 2021, https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Assessment_Report_Statutory_Homelessness_England.pdf (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

⁴⁸ Shelter Scotland, 'Housing and homelessness statistics', https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/housing_policy/homelessness_in_scotland (accessed 3 Oct 2022).

⁴⁹ Scottish Government, 'Homelessness in Scotland: 2020 to 2021', published 29 June 2021, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2020-2021/> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

⁵⁰ Citizen's Advice Scotland, 'If you're homeless or at risk of homelessness', <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2020-2021/> (accessed 3 October 2022).

⁵¹ Homeless Network Scotland, 'Housing First Scotland', <https://homelessnetwork.scot/housing-first/> (accessed 3 Oct 2022).

⁵² Homeless Network Scotland, 'Changes to homelessness legislation in Scotland', 16th February 2021, <https://homelessnetwork.scot/2021/02/16/changes-to-homelessness-legislation-in-scotland/> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

⁵³ Shelter Scotland, 'Outline of the legislation', 18 November 2019, https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/legal/homelessness/introduction_to_homelessness/outline_of_the_legislation (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

⁵⁴ Scottish Government, 'Homelessness in Scotland: 2021/2022', 18 August 2022, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2021-22/pages/12/> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

Scotland are formulated using the number of applications made to Local Authorities, and reported by the Scottish Government.⁵⁵

Northern Ireland

In 2021, 23,634 people in Northern Ireland met the criteria to be categorised as homeless, with 6,800 of those being children.⁵⁶

The Housing Executive is the organisation which holds legal responsibility for preventing homelessness in Northern Ireland. It provides advice and assistance to people who are homeless and, in some cases, is legally required to provide temporary and permanent accommodation to people. It conducts four tests to ensure those applying meet the legal definition of homeless, one main test consolidating claims through physical and verbal evidence, and three others on eligibility, priority and intentionality.⁵⁷

Social services help vulnerable people and under-18s with paying for housing and aiding when the Housing Executive cannot.⁵⁸

[The Housing \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1988](#) is the primary piece of legislation which addresses helping those facing homelessness in Northern Ireland. This order explains the ways in which the statutory duties of the Housing Executive must be carried out.⁵⁹

Homelessness statistics in Northern Ireland are reported biannually by the Department for Communities. They are collated from a number of sources and reported as an official National Statistic.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Scottish Government, 'Homelessness in Scotland: 2021/2022', 18 August 2022, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2021-22/pages/2/> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

⁵⁶ VIVAT International, 'HRC49: Thousands of people in Northern Ireland are homeless', published 8 April 2022. <https://www.vivatinternational.org/blog/2022/04/08/hrc49-thousands-of-people-in-northern-ireland-are-homeless/#:~:text=A%20report%20launched%20on%20March,many%20vulnerable%20people%20into%20poverty> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

⁵⁷ Housing Rights, 'Homelessness and the Housing Executive', <https://www.housingadviceni.org/homelessness/homelessness-and-housing-executive> (accessed 5 Oct 2022).

⁵⁸ Housing Rights, 'Housing help from social services', <https://www.housingadviceni.org/homelessness/help-social-services> (accessed 3 Oct 2022).

⁵⁹ Housing Rights, 'Reasons for homelessness, the law and where you can get help', <https://www.housingadviceni.org/homelessness/reasons-homelessness> (accessed 5 Dec 2022).

⁶⁰ Department for Communities NI, 'Northern Ireland Housing Statistics 2020-21', 9 December 2021, <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/communities/ni-housing-stats-20-21-full-copy.pdf> (accessed 8 Feb 2023).

7. Further Reading

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