## Health Impact Assessment Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028

**Background**

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) provides a recognised, structured way to identify health impacts in order to inform decisions. The purpose of an HIA is to inform decision making about a specific, defined proposal.

It is widely accepted that health is largely shaped by factors beyond access to health care. The factors that influence health include housing, employment, education, and income. Poor housing conditions can have an impact on health inequality, which further affects quality of life and wellbeing. Housing can influence health directly through condition, security of tenure, overcrowding and suitability for inhabitants’ needs. Wider aspects of housing that influence health indirectly include affordability and poverty, housing satisfaction, choice and control, social isolation, access to key services such as health care, and environmental sustainability1.

## Introduction

Covering all housing tenures and types of accommodation, the Local Housing Strategy outlines Falkirk's strategic vision and priorities for the delivery of housing and housing-related services over the next five years.

A desktop exercise was undertaken initially to identify the population groups that would be impacted by the LHS and how they would be impacted.

# LHS Vision

Partnership working to ensure access to good quality housing and support in safe sustainable connected communities.

# LHS Priorities

* Priority 1 - Increasing housing supply
* Priority 2 - Creating sustainable communities
* Priority 3 - Improving access to housing
* Priority 4 - Providing housing and support to vulnerable groups
* Priority 5 - Tackling Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty
* Priority 6 - Improving housing conditions.
* Priority 7 - Improving the private rented sector

## LHS Outcomes

* We will increase the supply of housing across tenures
* We will increase the supply of affordable housing
* We will regenerate and support local communities
* We make the best use of our existing housing supply
* We will prevent and address homelessness

1 Public Health Scotland, Healthy housing for Scotland, 2021

* We have a range of housing and support options promoting independence for vulnerable people
* We will focus on tackling climate change
* We will work to improve energy efficiency
* We will work to assist those experiencing fuel poverty
* We will work to improve property conditions
* We have a sustainable private rented sector

## Population groups and factors contributing to poorer health

Housing has an important influence on health inequalities in Scotland. This is through the effects of housing costs, housing quality, fuel poverty and the role of housing in community life.

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| **Population Groups** | **How could these groups be affected differentially by the proposal** |
| Older People | People over 65 make up 19% of the population in Falkirk and this age group is projected to increase substantially in the future and with that an increase in the number of adaptations needed to ensure their existing property meets their needs as well as the need for specialist housing and advice.  The LHS should have positive impacts on older people’s health:   * Providing guides to help older people access specialist housing and mainstream housing * Having a downsizing scheme in operation and promoting with community groups annually * Providing services which help older people improve the condition of their property * Providing easily accessible information on how to access equipment and adaptations |
| Children and young people | The LHS will have a positive impact by:   * Increasing the amount of affordable housing to ensure that children move out of temporary accommodation as quickly as possible. * Increasing the amount of larger family homes so children don’t live in overcrowded households * Ensuring that looked after children are provided with accommodation and support |
| Women, men and transgender people (include issues relating to pregnancy and maternity) | The LHS will have a positive impact by:   * Developing a policy to tackle domestic abuse and reduce the impact of homelessness with stakeholders and partners. * Collecting data on all equalities strands to improve understanding and promote services to those who need them |
| Disabled people (includes physical disability, learning disability, Sensory impairment, long term medical conditions, mental health problems) | It is difficult to identify the number of people in the area with a physical disability but as people age this leads to issues with mobility. The LHS will have a positive impact by:   * Increasing the provision of wheelchair housing * Co-produce with people who have a physical disability tenure neutral advice on disabled adaptations * Providing housing support to sustain people in their tenancies   According to the 2011 census there were 744 people in Falkirk with a learning disability. In 2019, according to the Learning Disability Statistics Scotland there were 691 adults with a learning disability know to local authorities, with the |

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|  | majority living in mainstream accommodation. There are though a number of people with a learning disability living in out of area placements.  This LHS will have a positive impact by:   * Working in partnership to provide accommodation and support for people with complex needs, particularly those living outwith the area. |
| Minority ethnic people (includes Gypsy/Travellers, non-English speakers) | The LHS will have a positive impact by:   * Reconfigure the existing Falkirk Council gypsy travel site to comply with fire regulations and meet needs identified through the Place Standard consultation e.g., facilities for older & physically disabled residents |
| Refugees and asylum seekers | Work with partners to support those coming to the Falkirk area through the refugee re-settlement Schemes |
| People with different religions or beliefs | * Collecting data on all equalities strands to improve our understanding of hard-to-reach groups * Routinely advising customers how we store and safeguard their information * Actively promoting services to hard-to-reach groups * Actively progressing complaints from hard-to-reach groups * Carrying out regular equalities training |
| Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people | * Collecting data on all equalities strands to improve our understanding of hard-to-reach groups * Routinely advising customers how we store and safeguard their information * Actively promoting services to hard-to-reach groups * Actively progressing complaints from hard-to-reach groups * Carrying out regular equalities training |
| People living in poverty/people of low income | The LHS will have a positive impact by:   * Carrying out regeneration * Working in partnership to promote events that improve well-being * Working to tackle fuel poverty by improving the energy efficiency of homes * Building new affordable homes that meet bronze active standard as a minimum but many are built to silver standard which makes them more energy efficient and reduces fuel bills. |

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| Homeless people | The number of applications (6.4%) and households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness (12.8%) increased in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21.  The LHS will have a positive impact by:   * Trying to prevent homelessness in the first place and having a homeless prevention in team in place to help with this * Increasing the number of affordable units through new builds and buying back ex council properties to reduce the time in temporary accommodation. * Providing a Housing First service for the most vulnerable homeless applicants to prevent them from becoming homeless again. * Providing a housing options service to prevent people from becoming homeless. * Working in partnership with RSLs to ensure applicants are rehouses as quickly as possible |
| People involved in the criminal justice system | The number of homeless applications by prison leavers fell in Falkirk up until the pandemic when it increased but is now on the decline again. The Council have a dedicated Housing Outreach Worker to assist individuals entering or leaving prison.  The LHS will have a positive impact by:   * Developing the Council’s approach to the SHORE standards * Ensuring as much as possible that anyone leaving an institution or care will have suitable housing option to return to. |
| People with low literacy/numeracy |  |
| People in remote, rural and/or island locations | Falkirk is a mainly urban area with 90% of the population living in other urban areas, 2% in small towns and 8% in accessible rural areas2.  Transport   * Ensuring any new developments meet the 20 minute neighbourhood criteria and have access to bus routes etc. |
| Carers (include parents, especially lone  parents; and elderly carers) |  |
| Staff (including people with different  work patterns e.g. part/full time, short term, job share, seasonal | Care workers, people wanting to live in own homes |

2 Scottish Government, 2016, Urban Rural Classification

Health Determinants

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| Health Related Behaviour   * Diet & Nutrition * Exercise & Physical Activity * Substance use: tobacco, alcohol, drugs * Sexual Health * Learning & skills | Area with poor transport links – difficult to eat properly as have to rely on small shops rather than a supermarket.   * Having 20 min neighbourhoods, means more likely to walk or cycle * Increasing affordable housing, people will pay less on rent and have more money for food. * Having a harm reduction hub in the area helps reduce significant health inequalities * The Housing First programme ensures homeless applicants get support for and alcohol or drug issues in their tenancy and there is a dedicated recovery peer mentor with lived experience for this * Ensuring staff within housing are trained on the use of naloxone * Ensuring families don’t live in overcrowded homes by increasing the number of 4+ homes ensures   children have space to do homework in peace. |
| What impact will the proposal have on the social environment?   * Social status * Employment * Income and income inequality * Crime & fear of crime * Family support & social networks * Stress, resilience & community Assets * Participation & social interaction * Influence and sense of control * Identity and belonging | * Providing opportunities for young people to get on the property ladder through discounted sale, shared equity homes * Providing community benefits when procuring new build contracts to provide jobs in the local area * Regenerating local areas which are usually in areas of multiple deprivation * Providing advice on fuel poverty and benefits to increase income * Falkirk Council has embraced the SHORE standards ethos and has a dedicated Housing Outreach Officer to ensure assistance is offered to any individuals entering or leaving a prison establishment to prevent homelessness on release. * RSLs supporting communities by bidding for funding that assist stheir tenants in food and fuel poverty. |
| What impact will the proposal have on the physical environment?   * Living conditions | * Ensuring social housing meets SHQS, EESSH improves living conditions * Providing advice and information to home owners to improve house conditions through scheme of assistance |

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| * Working conditions * Natural space * Pollution – air, water, soil * Climate change (waste, energy, resource use, transport patterns) * Unintentional injuries & public safety * Transmission of infectious disease | * Using renewable energy in new build developments * Making space for home working in new build affordable homes * 20 min neighbourhoods, ensuring new homes built are within easy reach of work. |
| How will the proposal impact on access to & quality of service?   * Healthcare * Transport and connections * Social services * Housing quality, mix, flexibility * Education provision * Culture, leisure and play provision | * Building new affordable homes that are built to housing for varying needs means homes they will be suitable for people as they age. * 20 min neighbourhood – close proximity to all amenities * Building houses to bronze active or silver standard * Building a mix of house types and sizes to meet need * Dedicated housing OT |
| What impact will the proposal have on equality?   * Discrimination against groups of people * Promoting equality of opportunity * Tackling harassment * Promoting positive attitudes * Promoting good relations between different groups * Community capacity building | * ​ |