

Making housing healthy for Scotland

The Healthy Homes Working Group (HHWG) welcomes the publication of [Housing to 2040](#), Scotland's first ever long-term national housing strategy. It sets out a route map for how, by 2040, everyone will have a safe, high-quality home that is affordable and meets their needs in the place they want to be.

In November 2019 we were delighted to host the Healthy Homes in Scotland event. A wide range of partners came together to explore opportunities to influence and support the health and housing agenda, locally and nationally. We explored topics such as affordability, accessibility, decarbonisation and climate resilience, mental health and place making. Now, we are encouraged to see these themes reflected in this new strategic direction for Scotland.

Housing is not only a social determinant of health, it is also a human right. However, access to high-quality, affordable housing in neighbourhoods and communities which promote health and wellbeing is not the reality for everyone. The Housing to 2040 focus on realising the right to **safe, high-quality and affordable** housing is particularly welcome. We know that too many households are living in poor conditions, that housing insecurity impacts on mental health and wellbeing and that our choice and satisfaction with housing is significantly influenced by the wider neighbourhood and communities within which people live.

The right to housing which provides a safe, secure and warm home for communities across Scotland needs to become a reality; it is inextricably linked to realising the right to health. The last year has made it clear **the** need to do more to meet the housing needs of our communities; we need to do this in order to recover and build back fairer.

Our child poverty, fuel poverty and climate change targets are all intertwined with action to deliver safe, quality and affordable homes. Families should have homes which enable them to grow and flourish and everyone should be warm and dry at home. We need this today. Looking ahead, we need to address the climate change emergency for generations to come.

The HHWG has already delivered many activities that promote the right to adequate housing. We have:

- Delivered a seminar on mental health, social isolation and housing to understand opportunities to contribute to this agenda.
- Worked with the Social and Systems Recovery Environment and Spaces Group to carry out research **in to** households' visits to public green space and access households have to private/ shared outdoor space of their own.
- Participated in rapid scoping of three local authority's plans including Edinburgh's Local Development Plan, North Ayrshire's Ardrossen Masterplan, and a Spacial Plan for Argyll and Bute. This involved providing evidence from a housing and health perspective in the scoping which identified impacts for communities and for place, using the national Place and Wellbeing Outcomes.

The positive contribution that Housing to 2040 will have on improving health and tackling health inequalities in Scotland must not be underestimated. Public Health Scotland has now published Healthy Housing for Scotland, a briefing paper setting out evidence on how housing can influence health and wellbeing. It offers an overview of available evidence which is relevant to the breadth of Housing to 2040 and focuses on priority themes such as housing affordability and accessibility.

The resource is available to download here:

https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/downloads/healthy-housing-for-scotland/?utm_source=ScotPHN&utm_medium=Blog&utm_campaign=healthyhousing

The aim of this publication is to assist with impact assessing intended policy developments related to the Housing to 2040 strategy, locally and nationally. The publication aims to support public health colleagues who are working locally, regionally and nationally with housing colleagues in the process of designing, implementing and evaluating policy decisions.

Housing to 2040 will influence local policy and planning and we look forward to working with partners to support implementation of this essential plan which is key to achieving healthy housing and the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

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