

ANNUAL REVIEW

2019-2020



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FOREWORD

At the time of writing we are a few weeks into lock-down and looking back on last year has a surreal quality to it. It's almost like looking into a different life altogether. There is a great comfort, therefore, in knowing that whatever the future brings, the HOS team will maintain the high level of service and client support that we all know and appreciate.

Last year was a very good one for the organisation and the new strategic partner status that we have forged with the Scottish Government will afford some stability in a sometimes unsettled landscape. Like Moira, I really enjoyed meeting many clients and volunteers at our AGM which is always a welcome reminder of not only who HOS is in business to support, but of the people who give that support freely. It was also a great opportunity to meet Aileen Campbell, the Cabinet Secretary, who is an enthusiastic supporter of our work.



I hope everyone is able to keep safe and healthy over the weeks and months to come and that our next AGM and the review of 2020/21 are held under more settled circumstances.

Margaret Follon

Chair

OUR SUPPORTERS

We would like to thank all of our supporters for making our work possible.



OUR CLIENTS

Trends and comparisons from the year

We have seen the number of clients increase on last year with us helping **+50** more clients than in 2018-19, including **+35** new referrals. This is particularly pleasing given that we did not run our tour across Scotland this year as we have done previously. The Military Matters programme has also seen growth with us helping **+42** more new clients this year than last.

We continue to see referrals from the central belt dominate our client lists. We are pleased to see another year where we take referrals from over 90% of local authority areas in Scotland.

About presenting disability, our clients report having a physical disability most, with a large proportion of our clients reporting 2+ disabilities too. This year we have seen a slight decline in the number of clients who report having a learning disability (alone).

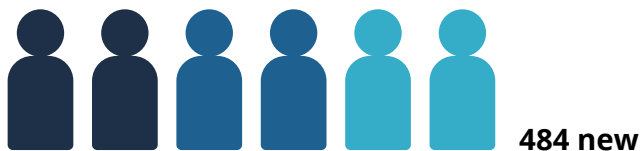
Referral pathways are consistent with previous years, though we have seen a slight increase in the number of referrals from military organisations, in line with our increase in Military Matters clients.



Overall Client numbers

690 clients

comprising



Representing:

- An increase of **+35** new clients vs 18-19
- A increase of **+15** continuing clients vs 18-19
- An increase of **+50** clients in total vs 18-19

Military Matters Client numbers

142 clients

comprising



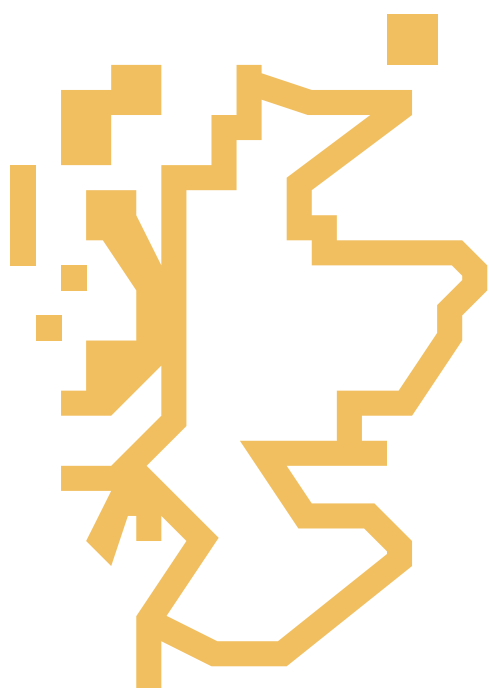
Representing:

- An increase of **+42** new clients vs 18-19

Geography

This year we have had referrals from **30/32 local authorities** in Scotland, with the broker team taking on clients everywhere but Shetland and the Western Isles. Consistent with previous years, we see a higher number of cases in the central belt but with many clients contacting us from more rural areas too.

- Aberdeen (6)
- Aberdeenshire (7)
- Angus (10)
- Argyll & Bute (6)
- Clackmannanshire (4)
- Dumfries & Galloway (10)
- Dundee (7)
- East Ayrshire (7)
- East Dunbartonshire (12)
- East Lothian (10)
- East Renfrewshire (5)
- Edinburgh (76)
- Falkirk (9)
- Fife (19)
- Glasgow (78)
- Highland (18)
- Inverclyde (6)
- Midlothian (14)
- Moray (2)
- North Ayrshire (9)
- North Lanarkshire (25)
- Orkney (1)
- Perth & Kinross (9)
- Renfrewshire (19)
- Scottish Borders (9)
- Shetland (0)
- South Ayrshire (4)
- South Lanarkshire (19)
- Stirling (7)
- West Dunbartonshire (8)
- Western Isles (0)
- West Lothian (22)

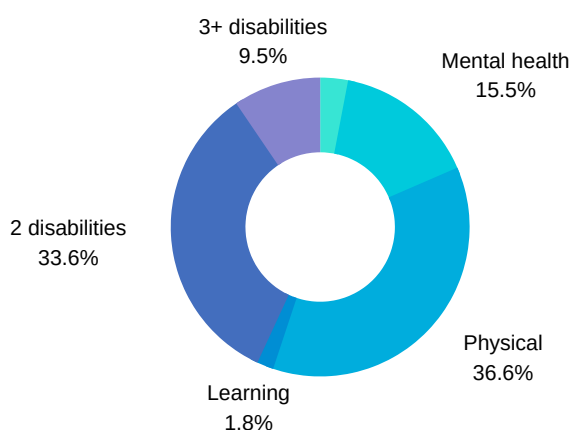


1 Glasgow (78)

2 Edinburgh (76)

3 North Lanarkshire (25)

Presenting disability



This year we have seen the number of clients reporting having 3+ disabilities increasing slightly (+3.5%) on the year previous. This is matched by a decrease in the number of clients reporting having just a learning disability (-1.2%) compared to last year, and smaller decreases in other categories too.

Referral pathways

Referral pathways are mostly consistent this year with last. The only exception concerns referrals from Armed Forces organisations which have increased (significantly so in later quarters of the year). The largest decrease in referral pathways comes from Events, likely due to us not holding a HOS tour this year.

- Online - **29.5%** (-1.88%)
- Other organisations/charities - **26.2%** (-1.3%)
- Armed Forces organisations - **11.1%** (+5.65%)
- Local Authority / Government - **7.4%** (+2.18%)
- Word of Mouth - **9.2%** (-1.93%)
- Medical / Social Care staff - **7.5%** (-1.13%)
- Other - **8.2%** (+2.07%)
- Events - **1.4%** (-3.14%)

OUR TEAM

It's been a busy year for the team at HOS! We were happy to welcome Karen Campbell back into the team as our dedicated Military Matters broker in April 2019, and Ben Parker joined as our Volunteer Coordinator in May 2019. In March 2020, we were sad to see our Head of Engagement and Development, Fraser Gilmore, leave HOS for pastures new. Among the staff comings and goings, we've kept plenty busy, attending more client visits and meetings than the previous year. You can read some of the team's highlights below.



62 client visits (+22)



345 engagements (+4)



across Scotland

Staff Highlights

The absolute highlight for me was our **AGM in Edinburgh** in November. It was lovely to see so many of our clients and volunteers at the one time. We were delighted to be joined by Aileen Campbell the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government. Ms Campbell was generous in her praise for the work of HOS. Following on from this we were thrilled to be given "**strategic partner**" status by the Scottish Government. This is such an honour for us. It is recognition of all the tremendous work done over the years by the board, the staff, our associates and our volunteers. Everyone in the organisation was delighted by this vote of confidence. We are proud to serve the people of Scotland and to work in partnership with so many fantastic stakeholders. We hope to be helping people to find "the right home, in the right place" for as long as we are needed.



Moira Bayne
CEO



Olivia Lindsay
Head of Casework Services

My highlight for this past year has to be **seeing a completed home adaptation for Aaron**, one of my younger clients. I had been involved with mum Stacey since I began with HOS in 2016. Aaron needed a bedroom and bathroom downstairs (which meant extending the property) and it was a long and difficult process to make it possible. Getting to visit Stacey and Aaron in their newly modified home, designed around Aaron's needs, was really special. Stacey had even hired a local graffiti artist to paint Aaron's bedroom wall so that it was the envy of every 10 year old!

Staff Highlights

My highlight from the year would be the **Plan It HOS meeting I attended with a client, Alex, and his family** in May 2019. The family were exploring options for Alex to live independently. We brought together all parties that would be involved with Alex moving out and discussed the best route forward for him - it was a great idea to bring everyone together! The family chose a local venue where they were comfortable and therefore able to discuss their ideas and concerns. It was great to plan and discuss what Alex wanted and needed, and how we could progress that, together, going forward.



Jil Dyson
HOS Broker

It's hard to pick a highlight from the past year of working at HOS because there have been so many! Our Celebration Event last November was fantastic because it allowed us to meet and network with a variety of people that contribute to HOS throughout the year. However, there is one event that really made me appreciate how valuable our service is to our clients. In February this year **I went to visit one of my long standing clients**. After a stroke, she was confined to living in a bedroom on the ground floor of a split-level three story house. For nearly a year she had no access to bathing or showering facilities. She had recently had a bathroom with shower installed by the council on the ground level of her house and was now able to have a proper shower with the assistance of carers. She was so happy with this new addition and said it made her feel 'human again!' I am looking forward to the day when I can visit again and see the finished extension which will give her access to the rest of her house.



Susan Mendelovitch
HOS Broker

Over the last year I've loved my new Military Matters role, working with clients and discovering the specific challenges veterans face. Although military clients approach us, it can be difficult to keep them engaged with casework support, perhaps due to mental health difficulties or a reluctance to accept help when it is offered. For that reason, two of the highlights for me this year were **sustaining contact with two veterans who were faced with homelessness**. One who felt his options were limited and another who had faced a lot of recent trauma. It's great knowing they are both in a home after the support we've provided.



Karen Campbell
Military Matters Broker

Staff Highlights



Pedro Cameron
Client Communications Manager

I'm entering my fifth year of working for HOS, and it's been great to see the organisation continue to grow and flourish. It was particularly enjoyable to be part of the **celebration event in November**, and to see the **growth of our volunteer programme**. I am looking forward to seeing this continue to progress and also to see the benefits our **new partner status** with the Scottish Government.

I joined the team in May 2019 and the year has flown by. I'm proud of all of the work we've done to get the volunteering programme up and running, but I'm particularly proud of our **Housing Buddies**. The AGM and celebration event in November - including the launch of the programme - was a great way to say thank you to our volunteers, and talk about our plans for the future. I've enjoyed getting to know our Housing Buddies and the feedback from our broker team has been really positive. Hearing about how the buddies have helped brokers with different aspects of their casework, and at client meetings has been great!



Ben Parker
Volunteer & Engagement Manager



Top (L-R): Group training with Shelter Scotland; November's AGM
Bottom (L-R): Responding to the Scottish Government's Housing 2040 consultation; Fraser and Lindsay (Housing Buddy) speaking at an event in Drumchapel



Stacey's story



Stacey approached Housing Options Scotland looking for support in securing adaptations to her home for Aaron, her 10 year-old son. Aaron is a wheelchair user and Stacey was finding it increasingly difficult carrying him up and down stairs. To make the house suitable, Stacey wanted help to build an extension for a downstairs bedroom and bathroom but was finding it difficult to get the support she needed. She was visited by an occupational therapist who recommended she contact Housing Options Scotland. Stacey said:

"It was like a glimmer of hope - as soon as I contacted Housing Options Scotland they were so welcoming and supportive. They explained how they were going to come out, talk to me in my own home and get to know the family and our needs. Then, straight away, the attitude was 'Let's get the ball rolling, let's get this done!'".

Stacey was thankful to have experienced housing professionals on her side throughout the process:

"It was especially useful that Moira and Olivia had dealt with other local authorities before. Having the support of those who know inside out what they are talking about was amazing - all these lifelines opened up!"

After many meetings, phone calls and letters, eventually the council agreed to help Stacey make the adaptations to the property for Aaron and the family. The difference the adaptations have made is huge. Stacey said:

"It's fabulous - even the simple things like having the door-frame widened makes things so much easier, especially as Aaron grows. There are probably a million scenarios where you think - 'that's so much easier, so much nicer now'. Aaron is massively changed too now he has his own space. To have the peace of mind that this is (potentially) Aaron's forever home and that he's going to be okay makes such a difference. It's been massively beneficial for Aaron's wellbeing, and mine too."

"If anyone was in a similar situation I would be jumping up and down to tell them about Housing Options Scotland. You went from no support and feeling like you had no options to just knowing it was going to happen because of the way Moira and Olivia were."

The fact that at every meeting someone from Housing Options Scotland was there was like gold dust. They were supporting me every step of the way. When you're fighting a losing battle and you have a brick wall in front of you in every direction, to have that support is immense.



Karen and Colin's story

Karen, Colin and their 3 children were living in Govan in their own three-bedroom house. The property was a new build and perfect for their situation at the time. However, as their youngest daughter, Alexandra, was growing up and requiring extra support, Karen and Colin were extremely concerned about the future. Lifting and carrying Alexandra up and down the stairs was becoming difficult and they were both fearful of a fall.

For several years, the couple had been raising their concerns with the council, social workers, occupational therapists and other relevant departments. Following multiple meetings with Glasgow City Council and city builders, some suggestions about how to extend or adapt the house to meet Alexandra's needs were given thorough consideration. Ultimately, however, these options were not financially viable. Glasgow City Council then referred the family to Housing Options Scotland (HOS) where Karen was introduced to Olivia, Head of Casework Services at HOS.

Olivia explained a range of different options available to the family, including the LIFT scheme. Karen said:

"Olivia knew a lot about the scheme, and we were given detailed information on how we could qualify, the application procedure and how long it would take. During the process Olivia communicated with us to check how we were getting along and it was nice to know that she was thinking of us."

Soon after applying, the family received the news that their application was successful. After looking at few houses, Karen and Colin found the right house for them in a new area. Karen noted:

"We were delighted to find the right accommodation at the right price with all the adaptations to suit Alexandra's needs fitted. This all happened within 9 months which was quite quick".

The family are delighted with their new home which has a downstairs en-suite bedroom for Alexandra and nicely caters for the rest of the family too. Although the couple were initially concerned about moving out of the area, the family are very happy now the children are well settled in and Alexandra's needs are better met in their new home.



“People in situations like ours should think outside of the box and take advantage of the help available such as Housing Options Scotland and the LIFT scheme. We would have never been able to afford the new house ourselves, alone.”



ONLINE

Our presence on social media has grown this year and we have gained likes and followers on Facebook and Twitter. We also launched our new website in November which is more user-friendly than the previous site. Given the change in website, analytics over the period Nov-Dec 19 are incomplete. That means it is difficult to draw comparisons between this year and last. Regardless, it is pleasing to see that the number of mobile users on the site has increased, as that was a key focus of the redesign process.

Facebook

We have seen growth in our presence on Facebook this year:

928 likes (+109 from last year)

The top organic and boosted posts from our feed are a **client case study** and **'Get in touch!'** post.



Organic: 693 reach



Boosted: 8.2k reach

Twitter

We have also seen growth in our follower count on Twitter:

1608 followers (+200 from last year)

Top Tweets from our feed include our **research with Stirling University** and the first post of our **CEO blog**.



2598 Impressions



2533 Impressions

Website

Visitors: 9340 (9160 new users; 180 returning)

Page views: 25119

Average time on website: 1 min 49 seconds

How did people find our site?

Organic search*: 42.07%

Direct*: 38.44%

Social*: 9.82%

Referral*: 9.61%

*Organic search = via search engine; Direct = manually typing web address into browser; ; Social = through social media channels; Referral = via a link to site



Site visits:

1 Edinburgh

2 Glasgow

3 Livingston

Devices:

Desktop - 51.92%
(-0.79%)

Mobile - 38.59%
(+3.12%)

Tablet - 9.49%
(-2.33%)

VOLUNTEERING REVIEW

It's been a year since I came into post as the Volunteer Coordinator at Housing Options Scotland. In that time, I'm proud of the work we have done to build our volunteer programme. We have designed new opportunities for people to get involved with the charity and recruited a team of 23 volunteers right across Scotland. There are lots of things which I could highlight from the year so consider what's below as a snapshot of some of our activities. I've presented the information (somewhat) chronologically to show how the programme has grown and developed. Thank you to everyone for their involvement and the Bank of Scotland Foundation for funding the post.

Ben Parker, Volunteer & Engagement Manager

We began designing the volunteer programme by holding workshops with stakeholders to determine what kinds of projects we could involve volunteers with. We designed the Housing Buddies role for housing professionals, asking volunteers to support clients by buddying them at events and appointments. We also designed the Online Researcher role, asking volunteers to write informative guides about different local authority areas to share with clients when they moved. The idea was to design the volunteering around the needs of our clients. I also attended training with Volunteer Scotland about how to co-ordinate a volunteer programme and launched the Volunteer Blog to document our work over the year.



*Top: completing a workshop with volunteer, Danny (Edinburgh)
Bottom: Housing Buddies logo, workshop with volunteers Chris and Julie (Argyll and Bute)*



*Top: launching the Housing Buddies programme at the AGM
Bottom: Case Study with Stacey and Aaron*



Susan and Fiona on our first Housing Buddies case



In the Autumn, we began to recruit volunteers, advertising roles with different volunteer organisations and via Scottish Housing News. We recruited 3 Housing Buddies in Glasgow, Dundee and Stirling and saw them undertake their first cases with the broker team. We also completed several case studies and recruited our first Online Researcher in Edinburgh. In November, we had our AGM where we celebrated the work of our volunteers, and formally launched the Housing Buddies programme. At the end of the year we recruited two more Housing Buddies in Falkirk and Perth and met to evaluate the success of the programme to date. We also recruited several more Online Researchers and I began to re-write the volunteer role descriptions and induction processes. The Volunteer Blog was redesigned and continually updated.

VOLUNTEERING REVIEW

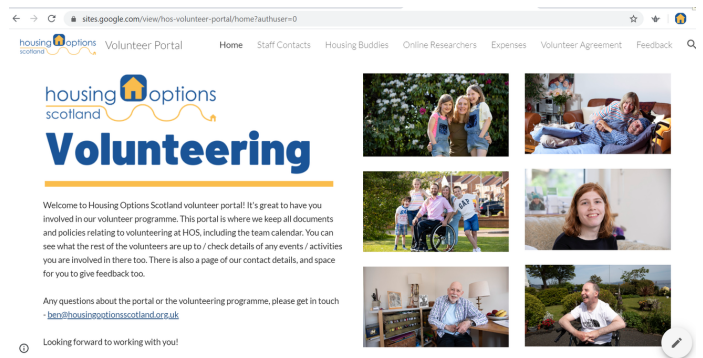
In the New Year we saw our first Your Area guide for Edinburgh finished, and recruited more researchers in Stirling, North Lanarkshire, Highlands, Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire, Dumfries and Galloway and Glasgow. We saw our Housing Buddies support our brokers further, with them helping at 18 different events/appointments. We also completed several more case studies with clients. I designed the HOS Volunteer Portal where we now keep all documents related to the volunteering. We also hosted peer support sessions both with the researcher volunteers, and Housing Buddies. Moving forward, we are excited to grow the volunteer programme further. We have plans for research projects which volunteers can be involved with and hope to link up with other organisations in the sector to expand the opportunities we offer our volunteers, and our clients and broker team.



Top: Fraser and Lindsay (Housing Buddy) at an event in Drumchapel
Bottom: the HOS Volunteer Portal site



Ben and Sarah discussing the researcher role



Tel: 0131 247 1400
Web: housingoptionsscotland.org.uk
info@housingoptionsscotland.org.uk

Produced by Ben Parker, Volunteer and Engagement Manager at Housing Options Scotland. Contact: ben@housingoptionsscotland.org.uk.