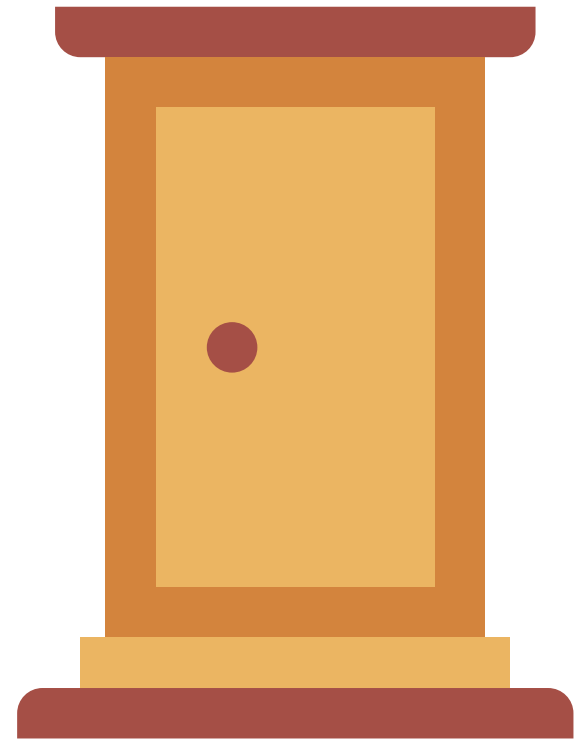


Quarter 1 Report

2020-2021



Contents

From the CEO	1
The headline figures	2-3
Responding to COVID-19	4-5
Case Study - a Q&A with Military Matters broker, Karen	6-7
Volunteer Update	8-9
Other updates	10

From the CEO

Moira Bayne

This report reflects the work of the HOS team during lockdown. The numbers alone don't tell the full story of what has been achieved during these difficult times. Everyone on the team has been affected in some way by lockdown and we are acutely aware that for our new and current clients the impacts will have been severe.

Despite all the worries of COVID-19 the casework service has continued. We have increased our presence on social media and our volunteers - the Housing Buddies- have done us proud getting involved with clients, with research and in producing our Area Guides. I am very proud of the team for keeping the service open and accessible to our clients throughout lockdown. We have been able to operate pretty much "business as usual" but are all well aware of the challenges ahead.

Already we are seeing an increase in clients who are experiencing relationship breakdown. Unsurprisingly, anxiety levels are high and we know the economic pressures are likely to worsen over the coming months. Whatever the future may hold, everyone at HOS is up for the challenge - helping our clients to find "The Right Home, in the Right Place".



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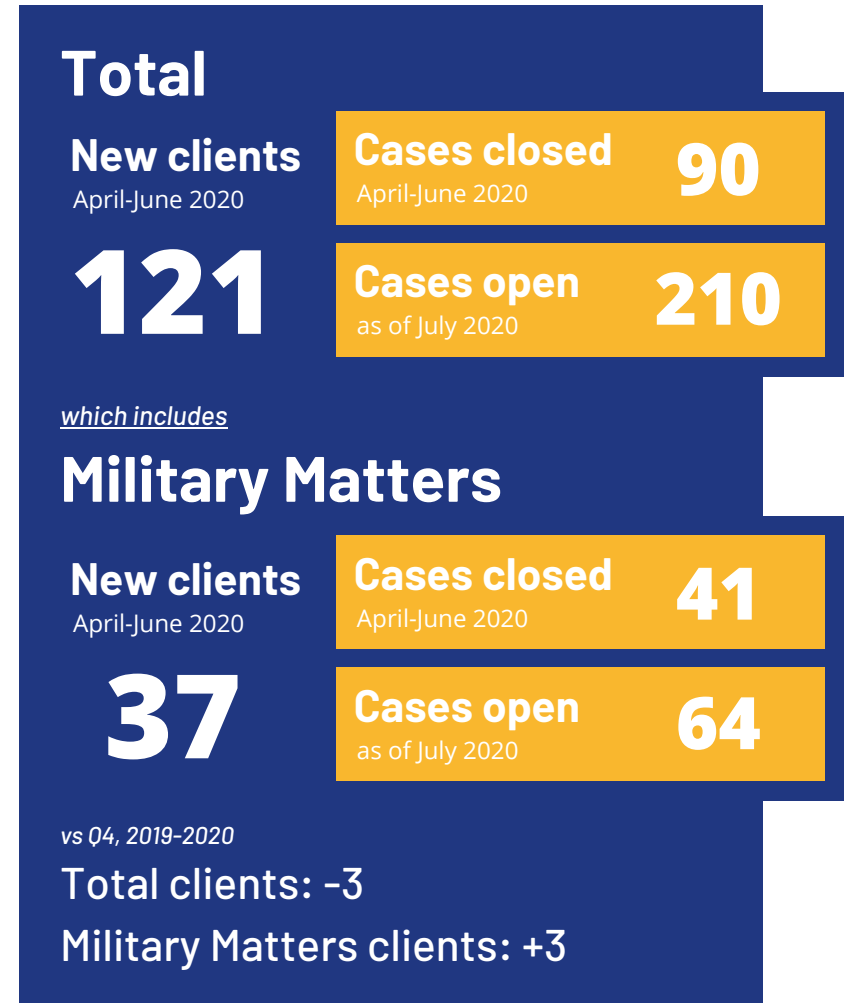
The headline figures

Quarterly trends and comparisons

Overall (new) client figures have remained steady through this quarter compared to the last (121 Q1 vs 124 Q4 (19-20)), though we have seen another modest period of growth in our Military Matters programme (37 Q1 vs 34 (Q4, 19-20)). Despite the consistency in overall numbers over the quarter, we did see a large disparity in applicants throughout; April saw just 13 clients get in touch, May saw 48 and June, 60. This is likely due to the UK-wide lockdown which came into force in late March.

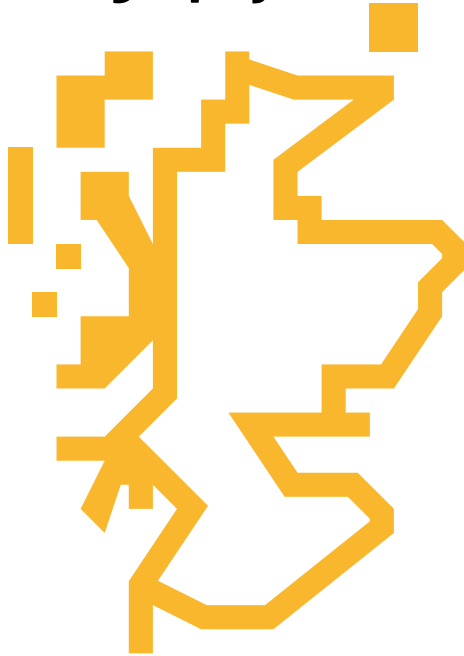
Geographically speaking, we received requests for help from 75% of local authority areas in Scotland. As usual, most of these came from Edinburgh and Glasgow. Further details are found on the next page.

Client demographics are largely similar this quarter to the previous, though there is a slight increase in the number of clients getting in touch reporting mental health issues (+7%). Clients continue to access our service in similar ways - from online and other organisations primarily. This quarter we saw a spike in individuals get in touch via Facebook. Further details are found on the next page.



The headline figures

Geography



- Aberdeen (1)
- Aberdeenshire (2)
- Argyll & Bute (3)
- Clackmannanshire (1)
- Dumfries & Galloway (3)
- East Ayrshire (1)
- East Lothian (3)
- East Renfrewshire (1)
- Edinburgh (24)
- Falkirk (1)
- Fife (9)
- Glasgow (15)
- Highland (7)
- Inverclyde (3)
- Midlothian (2)
- North Ayrshire (1)
- North Lanarkshire (5)
- Perth & Kinross (3)
- Renfrewshire (4)
- Scottish Borders (1)
- South Lanarkshire (6)
- Stirling (1)
- West Dunbartonshire (2)
- West Lothian (4)

*In Q1, we also helped 17 clients outside of Scotland

24/32








Local Authority areas

- 1** Edinburgh (24)
- 2** Glasgow (15)
- 3** Fife (9)

Presenting disability

Physical disability	32.4%
Mental health	22.9%
Learning disability	1.9%
2 disabilities	31.4%
3+ disabilities	8.6%

Referral pathways

-  Online - **41%**
-  Other organisations - **20.5%**
-  Armed Forces organisations - **20.5%**
-  Word of Mouth - **9.2%**
-  Medical / Social Care staff - **4.46%**
-  Council / Government - **1.78%**
-  Other - **1.67%**
-  Events - **0.89%**

Responding to COVID-19

This quarterly report sits firmly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. That situation presented a unique set of challenging circumstances to navigate. What's below explains some more about what we did to support our clients throughout lockdown.

Casework

When lockdown began, we contacted our most vulnerable clients. We checked they were well supported and shared links to local groups and charities who could help. We kept aware of restrictions or changes which would affect our clients and communicated these to them - for example, explaining what the suspension of allocations in the social rented sector would mean for applications.

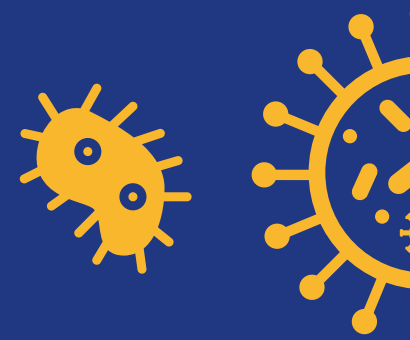
Through April client numbers were lower, so we took time to go through older cases and re-contact clients who had last been in touch some time ago. The broker team also spent time undertaking online training, learning more about different topics useful for their work.

In late May, the casework picked back up, and the brokers are now supporting a bumper number of clients, some of whose circumstances have been severely affected by the pandemic.



As an agile organisation, we were well set up to stay home and safe during the pandemic. However, we did see an end to all in person meetings so I'm extremely proud of the HOS team for staying engaged and motivated, despite having not had any physical contact with other team members or clients for four months.

Olivia Lindsay, Head of Casework Services



Responding to COVID-19



Volunteers

Understandably, some volunteers needed to take time off throughout lockdown and we were happy to offer support to those individuals. Other volunteers found themselves with more time on their hands. We asked those who were able to call clients who were feeling isolated, as identified by the broker team. As our usual plans for client visits and events were cancelled, we then focused heavily on the online volunteering opportunities we offer and made plans to further enhance these. You can read more about this progress in the Volunteering Update (p6).

Online

We shared information about the pandemic regularly on social media. We also embraced new technologies and have been getting used to hosting different events and activities online, including our team and board meetings, and Housing Buddies support sessions.



At our first virtual triage meeting

Other work

Given our experience in working remotely, we were happy to offer advice and support to others learning to work from home for the first time. Our CEO, Moira, featured in a webinar with other 3rd sector organisations and we produced a set of online videos from the team, offering tips for home working.

Case Study

Ben Parker, our Volunteer & Engagement manager, spoke to Karen Campbell, our Military Matters broker, about a recent case



When did your client first get in touch?

The client filled out our 'Get Help' form at the end of March and was allocated to me in mid-April. He'd heard about HOS from another military organisation.

Tell me more about their case.

The client was renting from a housing association in Glasgow. He had a history of homelessness and had moved into his current property from the streets. The flat was a bedsit in a large tower-block and was exacerbating his mental health issues; anxiety, depression and PTSD. He was looking for a fresh start.

What was the first thing you did to help?

I called the client and it was clear he was distressed. He felt abandoned and was finding it very difficult to live all in one room. He told me that he was feeling suicidal so I listened and passed him contact details for the Samaritans who I knew could help. Next, I contacted Shelter Scotland to see if they could offer any advice about regulations surrounding housing people in bedsits. They advised that my client would be classed as suitably housed so I knew I had to explore other avenues to help. I spoke with the housing association to see about rehousing the client within their housing stock but that wasn't possible.



I really enjoyed working with this client – it's another example of why I enjoy my job so much! It feels great to know you've made a difference to someone's life. In this case, I didn't come up with a rocket science solution, I just took the time to listen to what the problem was and connect the dots. Sometimes there is a simple solution out there if you listen fully to a client's problem and stick with them throughout.

Karen Campbell
Military Matters Broker



Case Study

What happened next?

I discussed different options with the client. We spoke about “Homes for Good” - a scheme which offers properties with additional support in the private rental sector. The client was interested, but anxious about moving area. After talking it through, he said he would consider moving to Stirling where he studied previously. I got in touch with one of our volunteer Housing Buddies, Fiona. She told me more about the local housing market which I shared with the client.

At the same time, I also explored options with Scottish Veterans Residences. They also offer support to tenants, especially for those with mental health issues. I spoke with Ryan at SSAFA, and he helped me put in a referral for the client. At first it looked like the only flats available would be in Edinburgh. My client was nervous about this, so I agreed to liaise with his current housing association to see if a move back with them would be possible, should a move not work out. The housing association were happy to help with this and that eased my client's concerns.

What was the resolution?

Happily, a property became available with Scottish Veterans Residences in Glasgow so the client handed in his notice on 2nd July. Once lockdown restrictions ease, he will be able to move into the new property.

How is your client doing now?

The client is feeling much more positive and supported. He is excited to move into the property and I'm super pleased – finding a home with Scottish Veterans' Residences in Glasgow is a great result for him.

Are these situations typical?

Lots of clients get in touch with mental health issues, and these are usually made worse by their housing situation. In that sense, yes this situation is a common one. Moreover, in this case, my client felt abandoned and not listened to – sadly, I find that to be a common theme among clients too. My job is regularly about taking the time to listen to people and help them communicate their problems better. Despite these similarities though, every case is different and it's important to take time to get to know every client and their circumstances.

Volunteering update

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, our volunteer programme has gone from strength to strength this quarter. Our volunteers have been working to support each other, our clients and the staff team.

Housing Buddies

In the immediate aftermath of the UK lockdown, our Housing Buddies helped the broker team with welfare calls and check-ins with vulnerable clients. They have also been in contact with the broker team throughout the quarter, offering local knowledge and advice to support with casework.

The team have also made plans to launch several new projects/initiatives:

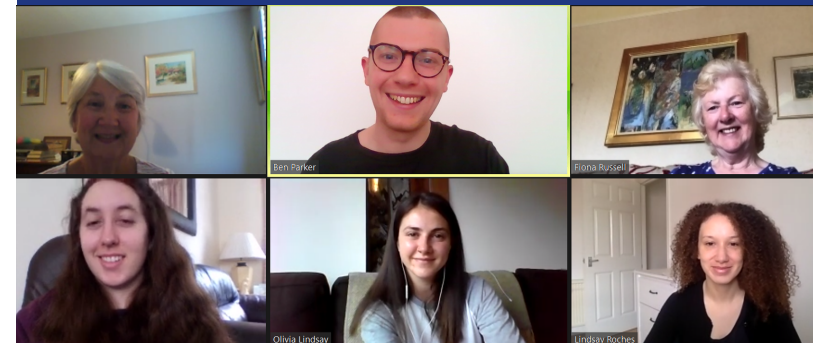
- In April, we hosted a group video call where the volunteers and brokers came together to share their experience in the world of housing. We are planning to schedule regular "Knowledge Exchange" calls between the staff team and volunteers to continue to grow our networks and build up our collective knowledge.
- In June, the team met to discuss launching different projects as lockdown restrictions ease. We plan to deliver talks about HOS/housing to groups across Scotland and to set up a 1-1 appointment system for clients to book time with our Housing Buddies to get help filling out social housing application forms.



May marked a year since I started working at HOS developing the volunteer programme. I'm super proud of everything that's been achieved in that time, and I'm excited to see where new projects take us. Thank you to all our volunteers for their work this past year.

Ben Parker

Volunteer & Engagement manager



Volunteering update

Online Researchers

This quarter we have seen another two “Your Area” guides completed – thank you to Paula for writing and researching guides for Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire. We were also pleased to see some of our volunteers work together more closely in this quarter, sharing tips/advice about the guides via email.

Research project

Two of our volunteers, Tessa and Lindsay, have begun to conduct some research about the allocation policies of housing associations across Scotland, and the provisions in place to support applicants with learning disabilities. After an initial review of different allocation policies, they are honing in on examples of good practice which we hope to be able to share in the future. Watch this space!

Other updates

Our Volunteer and Engagement manager Ben has written new induction processes for the different volunteer roles, based on feedback from the current volunteer team. The role descriptions, handbooks and support sites for the volunteering are now all updated. We have also put measures in place to integrate the volunteering with our internal processes more, and the volunteer team now have space to collaborate on projects together, using the HOS shared drive.



Paula (top), Lindsay (middle) and Tessa (bottom)

Other updates

Online

We have focused on producing more graphics and video content for social media this quarter. This has included sharing a weekly comment from the broker team on Facebook and Twitter. We have seen a spike in referrals come through via Facebook (+15 vs Q4 (19-20)) and also seen further growth in our likes/follows on Facebook (+67 followers, +34 likes) and Twitter (+24 followers).



Fundraising

This quarter, we were pleased to receive a donation from the Thistledown Trust of £1000 for capacity building. We wish to thank them, and our other donors, for their support.