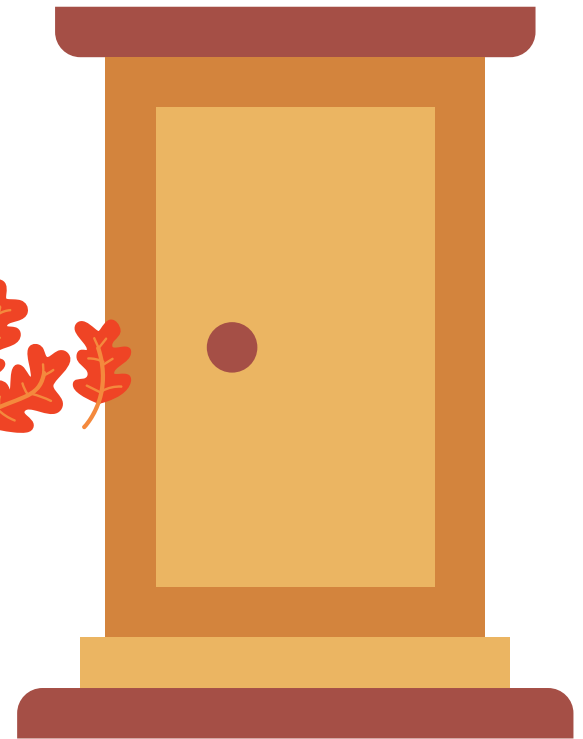


Quarter 3 Report

October–December 2020



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From the CEO

Quarter 3 felt like the coming to terms with the “new normal”. Things that seemed very strange earlier in the year - tiers, Zoom, furlough, restrictions - became commonplace. Plans were made, plans were cancelled and we all sought out ways of keeping going. Our new client numbers were almost 70% higher than the same period last year so we were very busy all of the time. The housing world slowly opened up and many of our clients were able to move to their “Right Home, in the Right Place”.

The most significant thing for me was the level of enthusiasm, commitment and thirst for innovation and improvement that the entire “HOS family” displayed during this period. They really are a remarkable bunch of folk as you will see from this report.

Moir Bayne, CEO



Headline figures

It has been another busy quarter at Housing Options Scotland. Though not reaching the record breaking heights of Q2, we have seen a large increase in casework from this time last year (**+68%** in total cases vs Q3 2019/20, **+119%** in Military Matters casework vs Q3 2019/20). The team have also closed more cases this quarter than in the previous (142 (Q3) vs 118 (Q2)) and we have seen a modest increase in the total number of open cases on the books at the end of the quarter too (316 (end Q3) vs 302 (end Q2)).

We have seen a greater geographical spread of applicants with people getting in touch from 29/32 local authorities (vs 28/32, Q2). As usual, Edinburgh and Glasgow saw the highest numbers of clients but there have been large increases from other parts of Scotland this quarter, most notably in West Lothian. The distribution of cases is much more evenly spread across the country.

In terms of presenting disability, client demographics are very similar this quarter to the previous. However, there have been some changes in how clients have accessed our service. We have seen more clients make contact with us via other organisations (+7.4% increase in applicants from other organisations, +10.6% increase in applicants from Armed Forces organisations vs Q2). This was offset (primarily) by a decrease in the number of clients who accessed the service "Online" (-13.3% of total applicants).

Total

New clients

Oct - Dec 2020

168

Cases closed

Oct - Dec 2020

142

Cases open

as of January 2021

316

which includes

Military Matters

New clients

Oct - Dec 2020

68

Cases closed

Oct - Dec 2020

44

Cases open

as of January 2021

115

vs Q3 2019 - 2020

Total new clients: +68 / +68%

Military Matters new clients: +37 / +119%

Geography



29/32

Local Authority areas

-  **1** **Edinburgh (25)**
-  **2** **Glasgow (22)**
-  **3** **West Lothian (16)**









- Aberdeen (1)
- Aberdeenshire (3)
- Angus (2)
- Argyll & Bute (3)
- Dumfries & Galloway (1)
- Dundee (9)
- East Ayrshire (1)
- East Dunbartonshire (1)
- East Lothian (2)
- East Renfrewshire (1)
- Edinburgh (25)
- Falkirk (4)
- Fife (9)
- Glasgow (22)
- Highland (9)
- Inverclyde (2)
- Midlothian (9)
- Moray (4)
- North Ayrshire (6)
- North Lanarkshire (10)
- Perth & Kinross (5)
- Renfrewshire (6)
- Scottish Borders (4)
- South Lanarkshire (2)
- Stirling (2)
- West Dunbartonshire (2)
- Western Isles (1)
- West Lothian (16)

*In Q3, we also helped 4 clients outside of Scotland

Presenting disability

Physical disability	27.3%
Mental health	17.3%
Learning disability	1.8%
Other	3.6%
2 disabilities	35.1%
3+ disabilities	6.5%
Blank	8.3%

Referral pathways

 Online	19.0%
 Other organisations	20.8%
 Armed Forces organisations	25.0%
 Word of Mouth	4.2%
 Medical / Social Care staff	9.5%
 Council / Government	6.0%
 Other	10.1%
 Events	0.6%

From our clients

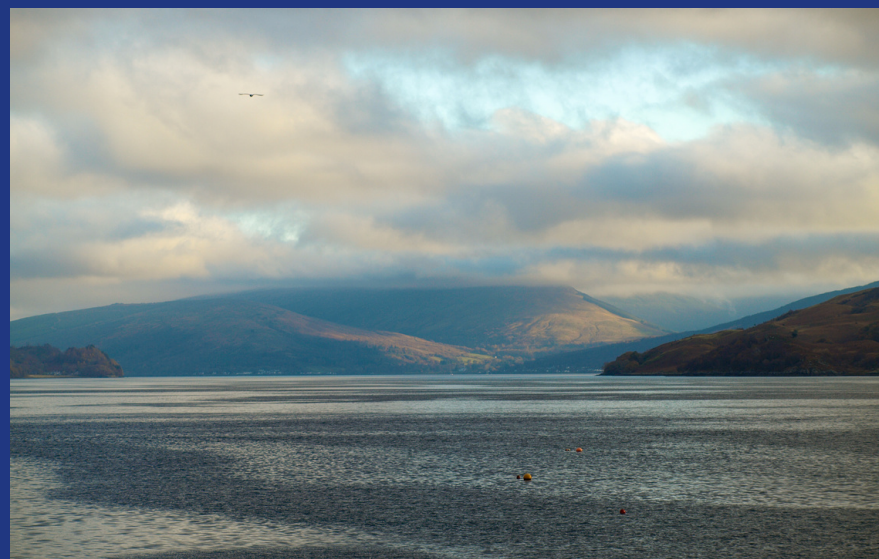
Feedback from our clients is key. This quarter, we've been gathering feedback by conducting case studies and sending out client surveys. Read the full case studies by [clicking the links](#) below, and find out more about the client surveys on the next page.

“ With other services all you got was a message saying ‘because of Covid, we’re all very busy, leave your number, we’ll get in touch with you’ and you were waiting days or hanging on the phone until someone answers, probably sitting there for a couple of hours. Whereas the other way, with you guys, a couple of emails and I was chatting straight away. I felt more involved. ”

Hugh's story - sheltered housing

“ Seriously, without your guys' help, I don't think we would be here right now. I would be struggling with the admin and the logistics of it, and all the hard work was done for me by someone who understands my abilities and my disabilities and takes that into account. It was just really easy and helped so much. ”

Michiel and Rose's story - first home fund



Client feedback

“ The HOS team explained what we were trying to achieve together and what steps we'd need to take to achieve it. Alex was very much the centre of the conversation and involved in everything.

Now Alex is moved, I feel he is safer – he can go outside now without us worrying and he has got some fantastic neighbours which money can't buy! The improvement in Alex's mental health has been brilliant– just to have his own space and to be able to go outside has been immense.

The house has also made Alex a bit more motivated - it's been easier to get him to look after things better by saying "it's your house, you need to keep it to a good standard" – it's a bit harder to do that when the flat is owned by someone else! ”

Alex's story – independent living

As well as completing case studies, we also launched a client feedback survey this quarter. The survey gives any client the opportunity to offer feedback to HOS - both in general terms, and about specific aspects of the service.



46 sent. 11 returned
24% response rate

80%
happy or very happy

with support received from brokers
*10% neither happy/unhappy, 10% unhappy

90%
found it easy or very easy
to get in touch with the team
*10% neither easy/hard

73%
found it easy or very easy
to understand the Get Help form
*27% neither easy/hard

"[They] got back to me quickly with a very comprehensive amount of information"

"A huge thank you to HOS for their support and advice. I now have a little more hope so thank you so much"

"They were so friendly and helpful, I would not change a thing"

"I can't thank everyone enough for all the useful and helpful advice"

We will continue to send out surveys and analyze the responses. Thank you to our volunteer, Paula Cleary, who helped to develop the survey.

From the staff team

Welcome to HOS!

It's been a huge period of growth for the team at HOS. We've recruited new staff and board members, launched new services and even secured funding for more projects in 2021!

We are delighted to welcome Julia, Heather and Gina to the team. Julia will be working as our Volunteer & Engagement assistant; Heather as our HOS Helps development worker and Gina as our Client Communications manager. We have also welcomed Dan Blake and Lindsay Roches to the board.

In October, we hosted two student interns, Hannah and Amie, and launched the new HOS Helps service with Almond Housing Association in November. Read more on the next page.

Looking ahead, we have secured funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund to develop a volunteering programme for Military Matters, and Jil has put plans in place to launch a new "Making Moves" service to help young people who want to live independently. We are ready to launch in early 2021.

We asked our new staff members about what they've most enjoyed about their roles so far:



Julia

I love how much creative freedom I've been given! Working on our new communications strategy has been one of my highlights so far, and I've had a lot of fun playing around with the design for our Your Area guides as well.

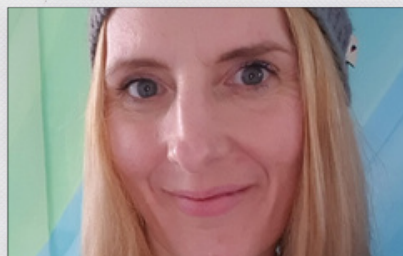
[Find out more about Julia](#)



Heather

I was talking with clients from my second day of the job, which I loved! The expertise and support of the rest of the HOS staff and the volunteers has been also been invaluable, and I've felt very welcomed, even if I'm yet to meet most people in person!

[Find out more about Heather](#)



Gina

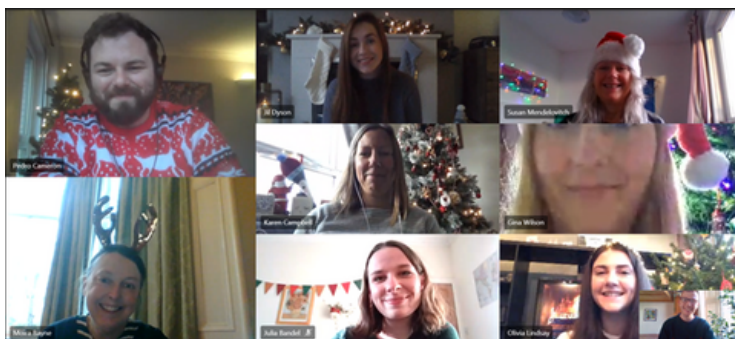
I am really enjoying being part of a fantastic and supportive team. Making a difference to clients in a small way when they first get in touch with us, as well as gaining awareness and learning of how HOS works have been two of my highlights so far!

[Find out more about Gina](#)



Student placement

We were excited to host two occupational therapy students in partnership with Queen Margaret University. The whole team learnt lots from Hannah and Amie who delivered a fantastic presentation at the end of their placement - we're looking forward to hosting more students in the future. [You can read more about the placement here.](#)



A very 2020 Christmas party!

It's been a difficult year and that meant it was all the more important that we found a way to celebrate at the (virtual) staff Christmas party. Pedro took on the role of quizmaster and took us through a Christmas themed quiz where Olivia was crowned the winner! To round off 2020, the team have all been thinking about what they are looking forward to most in 2021. [Find out on the website here.](#)

Introducing

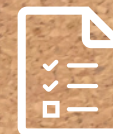


Earlier this year we were contacted by Almond Housing Association who were looking for a partner to deliver a new tenant support and wellbeing service. We were excited to take the contract on from 1st November. Though a departure from the usual support we offer clients, this is an opportunity for us to share our wealth of knowledge and experience. Heather, our HOS Helps development worker, is on hand to support tenants with a host of issues, including:

- Filling out application forms
- Assisting with appointments
- Providing details about the local area, including employment and volunteering opportunities
- Advising about benefits
- Liaising with other professionals and expert advisors to ensure tenants are suitably supported in their tenancy

As well as Heather, we have been happy to have the involvement of Hannah Burns, one of the occupational therapy students who joined us in October. Hannah now joins the team as an associate and has already helped with c.40% of cases.

Up to 31st December 2020, we have supported **35 tenants** with a variety of problems, involving a wealth of HOS staff and associates in the cases. The target for the contract is to support 104 in the year - we are well on track to exceed this target.



It's been another busy quarter for the volunteer programme at Housing Options Scotland. We've recruited a new staff member to support the programme; welcomed several new volunteers to the team; started and completed many projects; and even managed a few (virtual) get togethers! Thank you to all of our volunteers for their hard work and time. You are appreciated!

Ben Parker

Volunteer & Engagement manager

Volunteer thank you

We hosted a volunteer thank you and social event in November. Our CEO, Moira, and Chair, Margaret, spoke to group to thank them for all their hard work. We also all got to know each other better at the event, and even took part in a quiz! [Read more here.](#)



Volunteer event (5th November)

Staff recruitment

We are delighted to have Julia Bandel join us as our Volunteer and Engagement assistant. Julia has been working on the Area Guides project with our volunteers, as well as developing a new communications strategy for HOS. You can [read more about Julia](#) on the website.

In Q3 we sent a feedback survey to volunteers. Here's what they had to say:

100% of respondents

feel that the volunteer programme has met their expectations

86% would recommend

volunteering at HOS

86% "very satisfied"

with the volunteer programme

14% "satisfied"

100% feel "very supported"

as volunteers at HOS

"I have only good things to say about being a HOS volunteer. I'm very proud to be part of the team - and I do very much feel part of the team."

"I've felt really welcome as part of the HOS team and made to feel that what I'm doing as a volunteer is appreciated - that's a nice feeling"

Your Area guides

Our Your Area guides have undergone a re-design and are being produced at pace. We were happy to see David, Shanice and Paula complete guides for Glasgow, Stirling and Fife this quarter, as well as to welcome Julia to the volunteer team. We now have guides being written for Perth, Aberdeen and Shetland.



More projects

Paula has been very busy, helping us to conduct various different evaluation projects:

Client surveys

Paula has worked with the staff team to design a new feedback process for HOS clients. The surveys are now being sent out and we are busy analysing the responses.

Student placement

Paula also helped us to conduct a review of the placement we hosted for two occupational therapy students from QMU. [Read more here.](#)

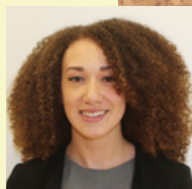
HOS Helps

Paula has designed a monitoring and evaluation process for the HOS Helps service we are delivering. We are excited to see how this develops over the year.



Research project

Tessa and Lindsay have done a brilliant job writing up their research into the provisions social housing providers have in place for applicants with a learning disability. We will be launching the research in early 2021. Great work!



Housing Buddies



Our Housing Buddies have been busy this quarter. We have recruited a new volunteer, Lynn, though Anne has decided to take a step back from the role. We want to thank Anne for all her hard work. We have 5 Housing Buddies in total.



[Read more about new Housing Buddy Lynn on the website](#)

The team have been helped with lots of casework:

Total cases: 20

Types of support: *filling out social housing applications, gathering extra information about clients; researching properties; advising on local services*

As well as this, our Housing Buddies have kept busy in other ways:

- Fiona spoke at a virtual event with the Edinburgh Community Fire Service promoting HOS (Nov)
- Attending a training session about HOS Helps (Dec)

Press and media

Our PR associate, Charlie, and Volunteer & Engagement manager, Ben, have continued to write and submit articles to different publications. You can read the different submissions below:

- [Social housing - a lifeline, even when you least expect it](#)
- [How to run a housing charity when options are limited](#)
- [HOS celebrates the success of its volunteer programme](#)
- [HOS welcomes students from Queen Margaret university](#)



Housing Options Scotland celebrates success of volunteer programme

Published 9 November 2020

Housing Options Scotland: How to run a housing charity when options are limited

Published 30 October 2020

Website

Julia has been working on a new communications strategy which includes ideas about making small changes to the website for the first time since its major overhaul last year.

Despite a high caseload, this quarter we have seen a sharp reduction in the number of visitors to the site (640 (Q3) vs 1051 (Q2), 1070 (Q1)):

Quarter 2019/20	Site visitors
Q1	1070
Q2	1051
Q3	640

We will look into the data behind this and consider it when deciding about changes to make to the site in the New Year.

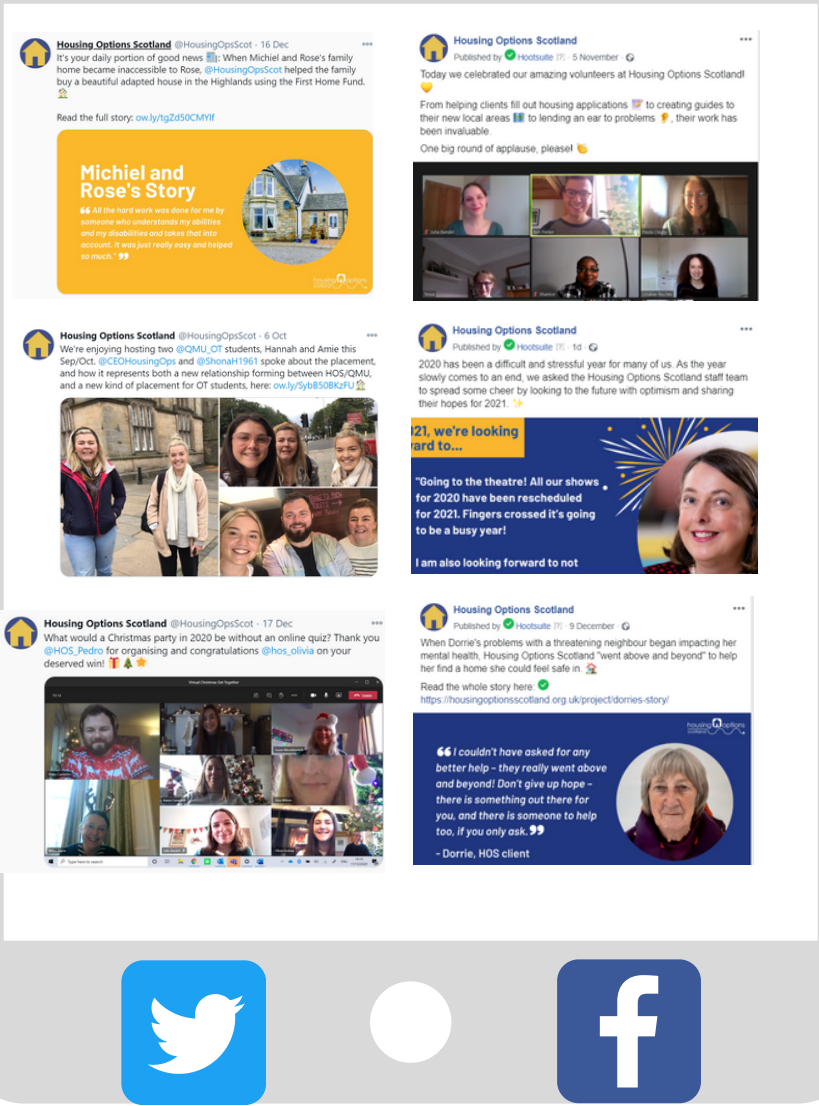
Visitors access the website equally between desktop and mobile devices (44.4% vs 43.4%). Last year, the website was redesigned to function equally well on mobile and desktop, so this is good to see. This trend has been consistent each quarter this year.

Device	Percentage
Desktop	44.4%
Mobile	43.4%
Tablet	12.2%

Social media

Our performance on social media has been steady throughout the quarter. We continue to grow the number of likes / followers on both Facebook and Twitter, and we have now developed a strong style / brand which is confidently reproduced across sites. We are in the process of writing up a brand guideline document as part of the communications strategy which will further improve our work.

Our aims for social media in the New Year are to produce high quality and attractive content, focusing on more informative posts and features with the staff team, as well as further engagement with some of our client stories. Watch this space!



Twitter

Followers: 1686 (+20)

Top performing posts:

1. Michiel and Rose's story
2. Welcoming Queen Margaret University students
3. A very 2020 Christmas party

Facebook

Likes: 987 (+17)

Followers: 1126 (+143)

Top performing posts:

1. Volunteer celebration event
2. Festive round up / looking ahead to 2021
3. Dorrie's story



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.