



Annual Report

2024-2025



We are Scotland's housing information and advice charity for disabled people, older adults and members of the Armed Forces community.

Our purpose is to help people make informed decisions about their housing.



Contents

2-3	Introductions
4	Highlights
5	Casework figures
6	Service update: Homeless Housing Options Scotland
7	Service update: Making Moves
7	Service update: Military Matters
8-9	Stories from our clients
10	Engagement
11	Scottish Housing Day 2024
12	Acknowledgements

Introductions

This year has been as challenging as ever, but the HOS team have dealt with all these challenges with their usual mix of professionalism and empathy. The HOS ethos of putting clients at the forefront of any decision making is always central to their work practice.

Every year when I come to write this short report, I am struck by how quickly things change both here in Scotland and, further afield these changes. These changes affect us all quite considerably and if I didn't have my small, quiet home to come back to, I know I'd be much less content than I am now. My house is something of a sanctuary for me and has been for the last 15 years since the HOS team came to rescue and helped me through the challenges of getting the right house for me. Things were more straightforward then, and I can only imagine how some of our clients feel when faced with the minefield of today's social housing situation.

I would encourage any reader of this report to take some time over the individual stories, as that is where you will find the real essence of the work the team undertake. The figures of a 4.3% increase in client numbers and the fact that we have worked across 30 of the 32 local authorities is very impressive, but it is in the individual accounts of the way clients' lives have been changed for the better that you can see how impressive the work of the HOS team really is.

Finally, this will be the last Chair's report that I will write, as I am happy to be handing the reins over to Ryan McDonald, who is very experienced and knowledgeable about housing matters. He is also critically much younger! I have really enjoyed my time as Chair, and it has taught me a lot, but I will be continuing my association with HOS as a board member.



Margaret Follon

Chair of the Board, Housing
Options Scotland

Introductions



Moira Bayne

CEO, Housing Options
Scotland

24/25. That was the year that was. I am writing this almost halfway through 25/26, but I can well remember the challenges we faced back in spring 2024. We had to lose some very valued members of our team, and for a small organisation, this was particularly traumatic.

I am particularly grateful to our funders and most especially to everyone in the HOS family for supporting us through troubled times. I am very conscious of the fact that our troubles are as nothing compared to the difficulties faced by HOS clients.

Understood; supported; listened to; are all terms used by our clients to describe how HOS made them feel.

Professional; friendly; knowledgeable; helpful; good listeners are words used to describe the team. Who could ask for anything more?

Highlights

1145 total new clients

+4.3% increase vs 2023-24, +59.8% increase vs 2020-21



189 clients
16.5% of total clients



339 clients
29.6% of total clients



79 clients
6.9% of total clients



We helped clients from
30/32
Local Authority areas

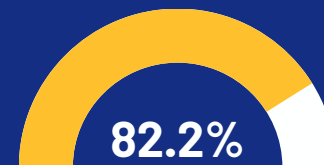


New client stories told

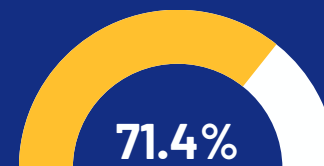


[Read stories from our clients on our website](#)

Client survey results
(from 84 returned surveys)



Found it "easy" or "very easy" to get in touch with us.



Were "happy" or "very happy" with the support they received.



In February, HOS became an accredited Living Wage Employer

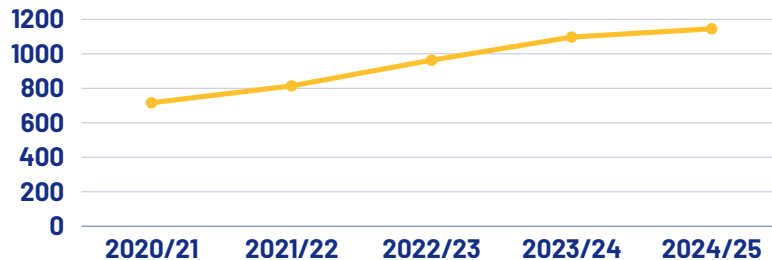
Casework figures

1145 total new clients

which represents

+4.3% increase vs 23-24; +59.8% increase vs 20-21

Annual client numbers 2020 - 2025



"This year, we were proud to support over 1,100 new clients, a 60% increase compared to just a few years ago. The dedication of our team has been outstanding, ensuring that people across almost every Local Authority in Scotland received the housing advice and support they needed.



Olivia Lindsay

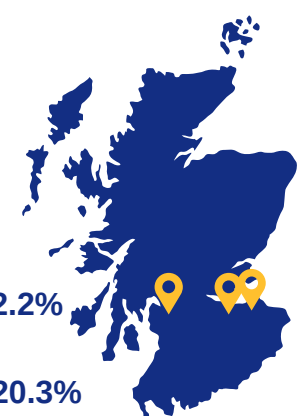
Depute CEO

housing  options
scotland

Geography

30/32

Local Authority areas

- 
- 1 Glasgow (313) +42.2%
 - 2 Edinburgh (137) -20.3%
 - 3 West Lothian (69) +68.3%

For the first time in a number of years, we have not received referrals from all Local Authorities, with no clients in Shetland or Orkney this year.

Elsewhere, we have seen increases and decreases in requests for support. We saw particular increases in Fife, Glasgow and Inverclyde and decreases in East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh and Falkirk.

Service updates

Making MOVES

79 new clients

which represents 6.9% of all 24-25 clients;
-21.0% of 23-24 Making Moves clients

“...the expertise of the Housing Options team and the dedicated Making Moves service has been, quite frankly, transformative for our family.

Feedback from a Making Moves client

In August, we were thrilled to receive a three-year grant from the Robertson Trust to enhance and improve our Making Moves service.

We started by revitalising the service by updating and creating a comprehensive package of resources. This includes our Guides for Housing Options and Planning for Independent Living.

Planning for living independently

A guide to help you plan for living independently for the first time

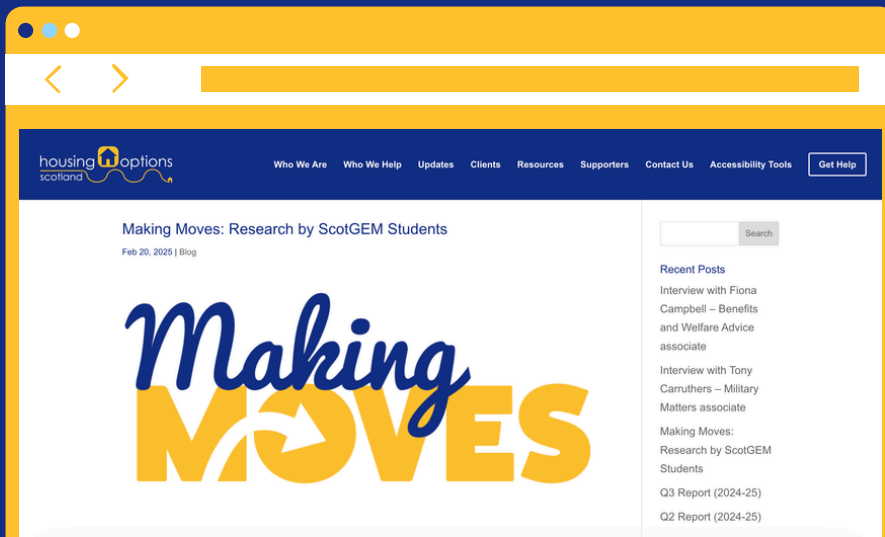


Research by ScotGEM Students

This year, we had the pleasure of hosting two ScotGEM students, Racheal and Shula, from St Andrews University. During their placement, they researched the importance of our Making Moves service, which provides housing options advice and guidance to disabled people looking to live independently for the first time.



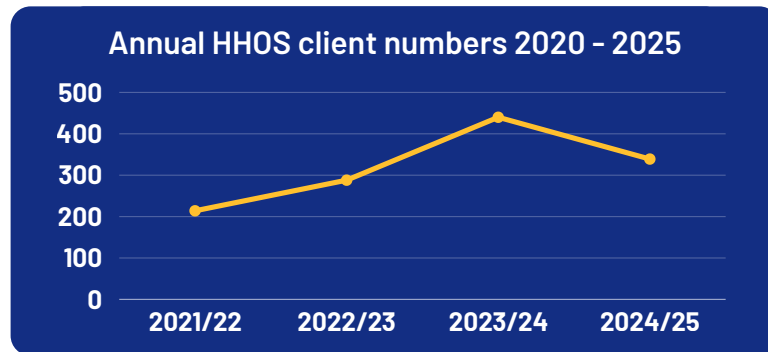
[Read Racheal & Shula's research on our website](#)



339 new clients

which represents 29.6% of all 24-25 clients;
-23.0% of 23-24 HHOS clients

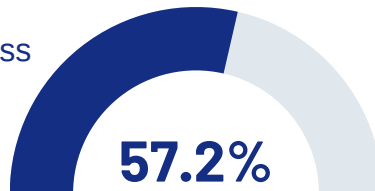
We saw a lower number of homeless clients this year compared to last. This year's figures are, however, still above those from 2022-23, as shown below.



Glasgow was the Local Authority area with the highest number of clients. Edinburgh was the second highest, and West Lothian was third.

194 of the 339 new homeless clients presented to us in crisis and required a **response in 24 hours.**

This represents 57.2% of total HHOS clients, or 16.9% of our total new clients.



189 new clients

which represents 16.5% of all 24-25 clients;
-28.1% of 23-24 Military Matters clients

Our Military Matters service received the lowest number of clients over the past five years. Between 2020 and 2024, Military Matters clients represented an average of 28.6% of our total clients. This year, they represented 16.5%.

Despite these lower case numbers, it is important to emphasise that we never turn a client away, so this figure represents demand for the service.



Tony Carruthers
Military Matters Associate

You can read more about HOS's work with veterans and members of the Armed Forces Community in an interview with Tony Carruthers, our Military Matters Associate.

[Read the blog on our website](#)



Stories from our clients

Adrian's Story

Adrian has special educational needs. Adrian's family wanted to relocate to be closer to a school that better supports his needs. So, they came to Housing Options Scotland.

One of our brokers reached out to discuss the different housing options available to the family. One option they wanted to explore was purchasing a home on a benefits income. With savings already in place, they were ready to seek mortgage advice. Our broker put them in contact with an independent financial advisor. With their support, the family secured an agreement in principle and found a home they wanted to buy. The family are now in the final stages of completing the purchase. Without the guidance and expertise of our broker, it's unlikely the family would have received the crucial financial advice needed to achieve homeownership.

Jean's Story

Jean, a veteran, got in touch with us at the start of 2024 due to their accommodation being unsuitable for several reasons. After a conversation with one of our brokers, it became apparent that they wouldn't be able to stay in the home permanently. It also became evident that the client was feeling anxious about the homelessness process. Jean was particularly worried about where they might be placed within their local authority area, which meant they were reluctant to make a homelessness application.

Our broker, empathetic to Jean's concerns, took the time to explain that submitting a homelessness application would at least provide them with the opportunity to be rehoused in an area of their preference, as opposed to having no chance at all if they chose not to apply. Our broker reassured Jean by providing clear, supportive information and allowed them time to consider their options. With this guidance, Jean felt better able to make an informed decision.

"My life has changed in ways I never thought possible."



Richard's story

A new lease of life

"I am in my 90s and had to leave a situation I had lived with for a long time that made me feel useless and insecure. I felt my life was over and I had few friends. I found out about Housing Options Scotland and made contact – everything changed from the moment I spoke to them.

I had a new hope of a better life, and that's what happened. They found me a lovely flat, and when I moved in I felt secure and at home. I look out my window and the beautiful landscape of trees. The other thing that happened was I quickly made new friends and have helpful neighbours.

We look out for each other and everyone is very kind to me. I am a keen artist and go to a local art club every week. My life has changed in ways I never thought possible. I don't like to think about the past and how I would be if I hadn't found Housing Options Scotland. I am so grateful to them, particularly my broker who seemed to know just what I needed and had all the information and ideas to find me my special place."

[Read more stories from our clients on our website here](#) 

Engagement



RYAN @ HOUSING FESTIVAL

It was a busy year of engagement work!
The team gave **14 presentations**, attended **11 events**, exhibited at **3 conferences** and attended over **70 meetings** with various organisations.

Highlights included hosting Social Justice Secretary Shirley Anne Somerville at triage and celebrating our wonderful volunteers with an afternoon tea!



MINISTERIAL VISIT AT TRIAGE



VOLUNTEER AFTERNOON TEA



RADICAL VISIONS EVENT



THE HOS TEAM AT TRIAGE

Scottish Housing Day 2024

We were proud to be a partner organisation in the delivery of Scottish Housing Day in September 2024.

This year's theme was **Homes for Life**, designed to encourage people to think about how the housing sector can better support people in later life as needs and priorities change.

We exhibited at the launch event, which was hosted by Stirling University. It was a brilliant day with lots of important discussions about what the housing sector can do to support older adults.

Planning for your housing future

As part of this year's Scottish Housing Day, we launched our new 'Planning for your Housing Future' guide. This was designed as a handbook to help people start to think about their housing in the years ahead and how this might change.

The handbook will help people discuss this topic with a friend or family member and will help people identify what is important to them in their housing now and in the future.



[Read the guide on our website!](#)



Acknowledgements

We would not be able to do the work we do without our funders, who have supported us over the past year.

We want to take this opportunity to thank the Scottish Government, Veterans' Foundation, Agnes Hunter Trust, The Albert Hunt Trust, The Souter Charitable Trust, The Worshipful Company of Grocers, and the Rangers Charity Foundation for their support, as well as the many other organisations and groups who we work with.

Finally, a huge thank you to our board, staff team and volunteers for all they do to help our clients be informed about their housing options.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot





Tel: 0131 510 1567

Web: housingoptionsscotland.org.uk

info@housingoptionsscotland.org.uk

Produced by Alice Airey for HOS