



BEYOND HOMELESSNESS

Developing Positive Social Networks:

Research into the Application and Effects of
Positive Social Networks in Tackling Homelessness

OVERVIEW OF 2010 SURVEY FINDINGS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would like to acknowledge the advice, expertise and assistance of the following;

Council for Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)

Glasgow Homelessness Network (GHN)

Department of Homelessness, Housing Support, Advice and Standards, Scottish Government

Housing Support and Enabling Unit (HSEU)

North Lanarkshire Council

Professor Isobel Anderson, Housing Policy and Practice Unit, Stirling University

Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick, School of the Built Environment, Herriot Watt University

Scottish Association for Mental Health

Scottish Council for Single Homelessness

Scottish Housing Best Value Network

Shelter Scotland

First published January 2010 by the Rock Trust Edinburgh, written by Katey Tabner, Research Fellow, Beyond Homelessness project. The Beyond Homelessness project is a partnership venture between The Rock Trust, The Scottish Social Networks Forum, and Glasgow School of Social Work, Strathclyde University.



This research was made possible through funding received from the BIG Lottery Fund.



LOTTERY FUNDED

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Executive Summary

- The following report details findings from a national survey undertaken as part of the Beyond Homelessness research project, August-October 2010. The results presented here indicate the findings from our national survey and highlight the issues currently faced by support providers. Whilst the results are not intended to act as conclusive recommendations for service provision, they do highlight areas for future service development.
- The Beyond Homelessness project is a four year research and dissemination study (2010-2014) into the impact of social networks based support services in preventing homelessness and securing routes out of homelessness.
- The project will provide an overview of homelessness services currently available across Scotland, the impact of these services for service users and how these services contribute towards sustainable housing solutions.
- It should be noted that this survey was conducted before the introduction of the Housing (Scotland) Bill in November 2010, which places a duty of care on local authorities (LA's) for assessing the housing support needs of those facing homelessness.

Survey Sample

- Questions for the survey were informed by a comprehensive literature review of existing policy and research around homelessness within the Scottish context. Key areas identified included definitions of social networks, content and quality of individual social networks, impact of social capital upon social networks, and challenges in meeting the Homelessness 2012 Target.
- The survey obtained a 43% response rate on initial contacts, and acquired an additional 34 responses through promoting the survey and accessing partner organisation mailing lists. In total 129 valid responses were obtained.
- The majority of responses were from the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), 56.6%. The findings which follow demonstrate the views of those working within housing support, housing advice, commissioning and management of homelessness services and the direct delivery of homelessness services.
- Response rates by job title indicated management responses were the most common, 48.8%, followed by Support Workers, 20.6%, Housing Officers 14.7%, Senior Management, 10.1% and Homelessness Officers, 6.2%. Response rates by department further indicate that those involved in delivering support services, 31.8%, and housing support, 29.5%, occurred most.

Social Networks

- Social networks were seen to have a positive impact in both offering services which promoted best value and in providing services which aimed to ensure meeting the 2012 Homelessness Target and long term tenancy sustainment.
- Factors to be considered in defining social networks included; informal and formal networks of support, positive and negative types of network, the reciprocal nature of social networks, the potential of social networks in efforts to overcome isolation, building awareness of the negative and positive impacts of social networks and acknowledging the impact of social capital as it relates to social networks
- Social networks were seen to be supported by both LA's and the VCS throughout the research. For LA's, the emphasis was upon utilising social networks to ensure support for the service user outside formal models of support, however it was felt that more could be done to promote social networks in the provision of services. For VCS social networks were important in the majority of support work from service users organising social events to the choices service user made in managing properties or relationships with neighbours.
- For both LA's and VCS social networks, with the focus on informal support, were seen as invaluable in ensuring that adequate supportive relationships were in place when formal provision of support was removed thus reducing the likelihood of further periods of homelessness.

Social Networks and the Assessment Process

- Findings concerning the acknowledgement of social networks during the assessment process indicate that whilst social networks are viewed as important in achieving successful outcomes and best value, they are often given reduced priority during initial assessments in favour of practical issues such as finding temporary/permanent accommodation, securing access to benefits or other services and reducing risk in current environment.
- Findings suggest that a distinction exists in the types of support offered by LA's and the VCS resulting in different priority care issues. At a LA level focus was on meeting the statutory duty of assessing for homelessness, providing temporary/permanent accommodation and in supporting the individual out of homelessness. Within the VCS there was a distinct focus around personal development and ensuring life skills were in place for when housing support was withdrawn

Available Services

- Independent living skills (ILS) was the most provided service followed by mediation, befriending and mentoring. Cross analysis of results indicated that levels of tenancy sustainment remained high amongst users of all four services.

Meeting 2012 Homelessness Target

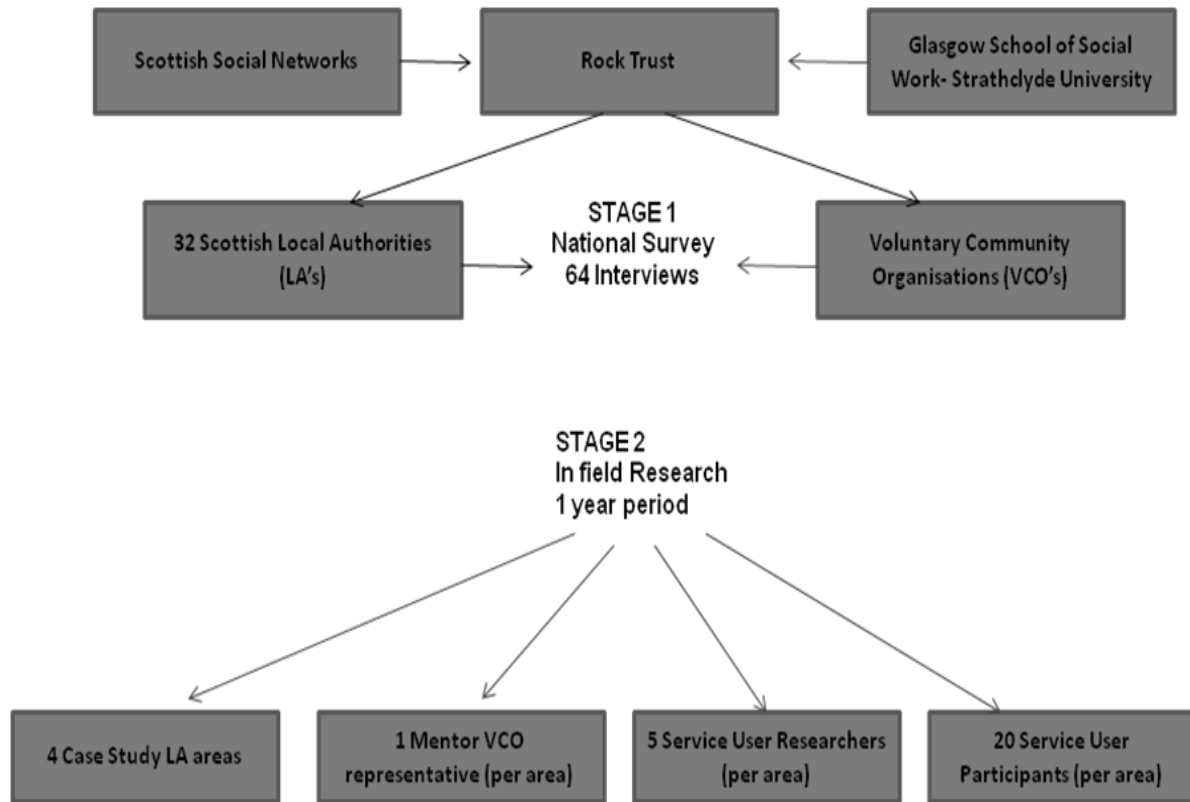
- Overall confidence levels in meeting the Homelessness 2012 Target indicate that around one third of local authorities are in line to meet the outcomes by 2012. However these results represent aspirations expressed before efficiency measures as a consequent of the 2010/11 budget reforms and consequently meeting the Target may be seen as increasingly difficult in the current economic climate.
- Central issues identified in meeting the Target were lack of housing stock, unrealistic expectations of national government, and cuts to funding and resources. Improvements to performance were seen to be possible through actions to improve interagency working, improving awareness of housing issues at a local policy level, and increasing the available housing stock.

About the Research

- i) The Beyond Homelessness research is a partnership venture combining the skills and expertise of the Glasgow School of Social Work, The Rock Trust, and Scottish Social Networks Forum to increase awareness and raise the profile of social networks based support services¹. The research applies specifically to the Scottish Housing and Homelessness agenda, drawing experience and knowledge from current practitioners across Scotland and further afield in promoting social networks based support.
- ii) Funding has been secured from the Big Lottery Fund (£317,000) for a four year research and dissemination project exploring the role of housing support services in assisting homeless people, and those at risk of homelessness in (re)building positive social networks, enabling routes back into housing. This will involve examining the role of housing support services in assisting individuals who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness to build positive social networks, supporting moves back into housing.
- iii) The research aims to provide robust evidence to develop both local and national policy, highlighting the long term benefits of social networks based support. By presenting support providers with best practice models and enhanced understanding of social networks, the research hopes to develop practice within the field, bringing direct benefit to service users. Ultimately the research aims to assist in the prevention of homelessness through developing ways of reducing isolation, increasing personal independence, and promoting interdependence through the use of positive social networks.
- iv) Both service providers and service users have been directly involved in the design, delivery and dissemination of the research. The research will use participatory research developing service user skills and employability alongside involving the third sector with the research process.
- v) A two phase approach will be taken during the research (Figure 1)
 - Literature review, internet survey of all 32 Scottish local authorities and their housing support services and a series of interview with local authorities and their partner providers.
 - In depth investigation of service user experiences in 4 case study areas

¹ Here social networks based services refer to mediation, mentoring and befriending as recommended by the Scottish Homelessness Taskforce Final Report (Para 116:2002) "We recommend that local authorities, through their homelessness strategies should develop practical means of enabling people affected by social networks to (re)build their social networks."

Figure 1: Research Project Map



- vi) This will be followed by dissemination of the results across Scotland and promoting best practice models with a range of recommendations to the Scottish Government. The Rock Trust will manage the research supported by the experience of Glasgow School of Social Work and the Scottish Social Networks Forum. The research will be informed by a Steering Group comprising of representatives from those involved with the research including third sector organisations, Scottish Government representative and service user involvement throughout the project.
- vii) The structure of the research (Figure 1) allows for informed development of the research instruments as data is collected and key themes emerge. Stage one has involved an initial literature review of existing policy and the academic literature around social networks and homelessness policy within the Scottish context, a national survey which this report presents the findings of, and a national round of 64 interviews with all local authorities in Scotland and their support providers (where appropriate). Stage two of the research will be informed by findings from stage one, selecting four local authority case study areas and working with service users, exploring their expectations and experiences of receiving support.

- viii) As the research is layered, with each stage of work informing the next, the initial literature review shaped the focus of the survey and the findings from the survey determined the interview schedule for the key informant interviews. Similarly the cumulative findings from literature review, survey and interviews (stage one) will inform the selection of case study areas and focus of research instruments when working with service users (stage two).
- ix) The initial literature review for the research identified several key themes which will be expanded upon to provide clarity on the survey results. It was established through the literature review that homelessness was very rarely the result of one catastrophic event propelling an individual to be without a home. Instead it could be considered, to be a process, with an individual often reaching crisis point when key 'anchor' relationships breakdown.² Viewing homelessness as a process, by which one can find themselves in a vulnerable position, is also aided by viewing the life circumstances, personal history and social networks of the individual as all impacting upon their likelihood of becoming homeless, these are also known as homelessness triggers.³
- x) The available literature also indicated that, the chosen routes out of homelessness⁴ were often dictated by the social networks available to offer support. Commonly these relationships are exhausted or broken down during the period leading up to becoming homeless and as a result routes out of homelessness are reduced. For many, these support networks often provide vital access to social capital⁵, or the economic, cultural or social skills/tools employed to get by, as a result (re)building social networks increases access to social capital and subsequently routes out of homelessness.
- xi) The literature review also highlighted several key elements to be considered when defining social networks as they occur naturally, including the importance of having a mix of bonding and bridging and linking relationships⁶ to assist with social mobility. The effects of these bonding relationships (close family and friends) and bridging relationships (work colleagues or the wider networks of friends) can be seen to impact both positively and negatively upon an individual, however, a good mix of these relationships can provide both opportunities and support for an individual.
- xii) This brief overview of literature concerning social networks highlights that the quality and proximity of individual social networks have a significant impact upon a person's likelihood of becoming homeless, but these social networks also have the potential to create a stable base in routes out of homelessness. Central to understanding this is acknowledging the importance of individual circumstances leading up to becoming homeless. Also when considering social networks taking into account the quality and proximity of existing relationships as a way of understanding where support needs stem from.

² Murray, A (2010)

³ Fitzpatrick, S, Kemp, P, and Klinker, S (2000)

⁴ Anderson, I, Tulloch, D. (2000) & Rosenguard Associates (2001)

⁵ Bourdieu, P (1984)

⁶ Putnam, R (2000) Woolcock, M (2001)

1. Introduction to Survey

- 1.1. Throughout the months of August and September 2010, a national survey was distributed to local authorities (LA's) and their third sector providers within the voluntary and community sector (VCS) across Scotland, obtaining responses from all 32 LA's and their preferred VCS providers. Those targeted during the survey were typically involved in the commissioning, management or delivery of support services to those affected by homelessness.
- 1.2. Key areas that emerged from the literature review that the survey addressed included;⁷
- What are social networks- How are social networks defined by local authorities and their providers?
 - Gaps in social networks- Addressing what gaps exist in a person's social network, who is missing, where and why?
 - Impact of resilience- What measures are being taken to build personal skills and resilience in those accessing support services?
 - The interplay of social capital and social networks - is there value seen in acknowledging the effects of social capital by local authorities and providers?
 - Economic aspects of the social - are the long term benefits of social networks acknowledged for their long term impact and as viewed value for money?
 - Homelessness 2012 Target- is this realistic and seen as achievable in the current economic climate, what are the primary challenges?
 - How are recent policy developments and efficiency measures impacting upon social network support services?
- 1.3. The survey was initially distributed to 221 contacts, these included contacts within local government and the VCS delivering homelessness/ related services. The survey aimed to secure at least one response from each LA and two responses from each VCS organisation to represent the wide range of experiences and viewpoints within the field.
- 1.4. It was agreed with the steering group that the method of distribution for the survey would be through Survey Monkey, an online service which allowed respondents to complete the survey remotely and for responses to be available instantly, useful for monitoring purposes. Tracking of responses was more manageable and introductory/follow up correspondence, often

⁷ Full copy of questions can be found in Appendix A

targeted to ensure take up in particular areas, was sent out to ensure that response rates remained high. The survey was also advertised on various websites, in newsletters and through articles in the third sector press. Access to mailing lists was also possible through assistance from steering group members and organisations such as COSLA which helped broaden the range of the sample.

- 1.5. From the initial 221 organisations directly contacted a return rate of 43% (approx 95 responses) was achieved. The total number of responses was approximately 185 however as not all responses were complete, the final number of complete surveys available for analysis was 129. The additional 34 responses were generated through promoting the survey to a wider selection of participants.

2. Sample profile

- 2.1. From the 129 valid responses received, an average of 1.75 responses per LA was obtained alongside an average of 2.3 responses per VCS organisation in each area^{8, 9}.

Table 1. Response Rate by Organisation Type and Role						
	Senior Manager	Management	Support Worker	Housing Officer	Homelessness Officer	Total Org Type
Local Authority	3 (5.4%)	23 (41.1%)	5 (8.9%)	17 (30.4%)	8 (14.3%)	56 (43.4%)
VCS	10 (13.7%)	40 (54.8%)	21 (28.8%)	2 (2.7%)	-	73 (56.6%)
Total	13 (10.1%)	63 (48.8%)	26 (20.6%)	19 (14.7%)	8 (6.2%)	129 (100%)

- 2.2. Responses comprised a higher volume from VCS organisations which reflects the higher rate of VCS organisations approached in initially distributing the survey. Overall 43.4% of responses were from LA's and 56.6% of responses were from within the VCS (Table 1).¹⁰
- 2.3. The majority of responses, 48.8%, were submitted from those categorised as in management positions, these included team leaders, support service managers and departmental/area managers. Support workers made up the second largest percentile of the sample with 20.6% of responses coming from those involved in the direct delivery and support of services. Homelessness Officers within LA's made up the smallest percentage (14.3%). Overall it was felt that a good representation of senior managers, support workers, and housing officers at both LA's and VCS was present ensuring a wide range of experiences and expertise were included in the research (Table 1).

⁸ Whilst a total of 129 responses were received for the whole survey, 129 responses were not received for all questions and as a result response numbers may fluctuate, in this instance % should be used as a representative gauge.

⁹ Whilst every effort was made to secure a response from at least one VCS organisation in each LA area, in some areas we were unable to ascertain which LA area some organisations were based in e.g. Shelter, Crisis, Barnardos or Turning Point Scotland due to their national scope. As a result we cannot provide results representative of all VCS organisations across Scotland instead we present an overview. It is hoped that during interviews further investigations will be made into the any specific issues VCS organisations face in each area.

¹⁰ In targeting participants there was a focus of one local authority and up to five VCS contacts to gain a broad picture of the various support providers commissioned by different LA's

2.4. Examining the results according to organisational type and department, (Table 2), indicated that, an overwhelming majority of support services within our sample were delivered by third sector organisations, 87.8%. Whilst LA's were more prevalent in the areas of Housing services, 88.2%, and 70.4% of Homelessness Services, providing advice and assistance along with meeting housing need

Table 2 Response Rate by Department

	Housing	Support Services	Housing Support	Mediation	Homelessness Services	Policy and development	N/A	Total
Local Authority	15 (26.8%)	5 (8.9%)	16 (28.6%)	-	19 (34%)	1 (1.8%)	-	56 (43.4%)
VCS	2 (1.6%)	36 (49.3%)	22 (30.2%)	3 (4.1%)	8 (10.9%)	-	2 (1.6%)	73 (56.6%)
Total	17 (13.8%)	41 (31.8%)	38 (29.5%)	3 (2.3%)	27 (20.9%)	1 (0.8%)	2 (1.5%)	129 (100%)

2.5. These results also indicate that whilst LA's had a duty to provide advice and support in securing accommodation using housing or homelessness services (34% of LA's provided this service compared to 10.9% of VCS), VCS were more prevalent in delivering general support services, 49.3% of VCS provided general support services compared to 8.9% of LA's.

3. Social Networks:

- 3.1. Initial investigations through the study's literature review and in discussions with steering group members outlined the importance of establishing an accessible definition of social networks. This was felt to be particularly important for continuity given that the project will be working across a wide range of organisations, services and audiences. In an attempt to gauge the breadth of understanding around social networks, survey participants were asked to describe, in their own words, what social networks were¹¹. The following excerpts demonstrate the diverse range of definitions to explain social networks;

Local Authority

"Others from whom an individual receives a 'softer' form of support- family, relations and friends"

"I would regard social networks as positive relationships chosen by the client where people are not paid to be in their life in a professional way"

"Links with local resources, community rehab, healthy living centres, AA, volunteering, befriending, good and safe family supports, service user networks, work and educational opportunities, fitness, gym, walking, reading, travel, bikes etc."

Voluntary and Community Sector

"This relates to social interaction with others. This could involve a close family member or simply social interaction that takes place with a local shop keeper. Social networks can be positive for the person or negative."

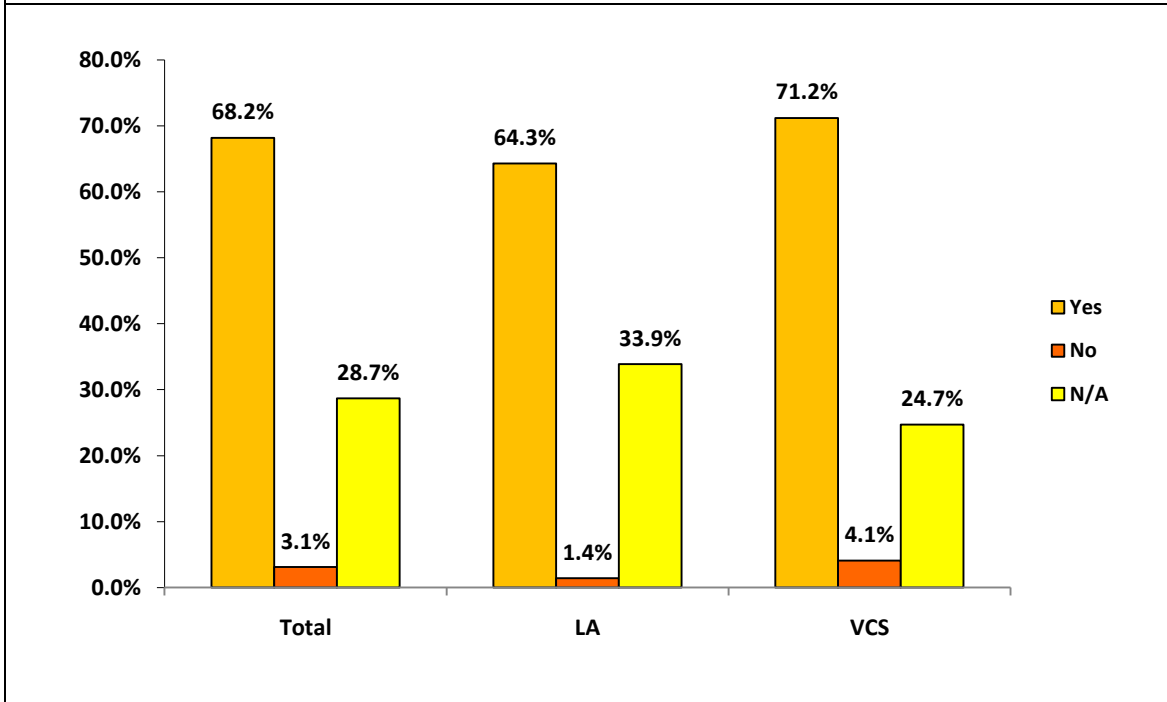
"Social networks are the relationships built by an individual within their own area; these can have both positive and negative affects on that individual. They can include personal and professional contacts."

"The relationships which support and promote a persons mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, assisting and promoting a sense of belonging, self worth and therefore promoting security and roots."

11 Q8. "In your own words please describe what social networks are"

- 3.2. These responses demonstrate that social network can be viewed as operating in two distinct ways; **formal social networks** (seen to stem from networks made up of agencies, support services, education, training, community activities or shared interest groups such as churches or local interest groups) and **informal social networks** (made up of unstructured relationships with family, friends, local community members, neighbours or people at the local pubs/shops). Formal networks of support can be viewed as having a more defined structure in terms of the social capital an individual can expect to derive from participation with the network. Whilst informal networks of support are often more unregulated and the social capital derived can be harder to define.
- 3.3. Responses also indicated a low awareness of the multidimensional nature of social networks; they were commonly cited in a positive sense, or as something one should be striving to achieve. However, few responses acknowledged that along with being a positive aspect in an individual's life, social networks also had the potential to impact negatively by exposing the individual to negative factors such as drugs, violence or crime. Similarly, very few responses appeared to acknowledge the reciprocal nature of social networks, and that in maintaining relationships a concerted effort and contribution is often required to maintain social networks.
- 3.4. The impact of social networks upon social capital was acknowledged in the responses through accounting for the positive effects upon wellbeing, health, self esteem, sense of security and financial/emotional/social support social networks could have upon an individual. Whilst many responses acknowledged the outcomes of healthy social networks, there was less acknowledgement/awareness of social capital as a term and how it could impact beyond personal wellbeing or individual efficacy.
- 3.5. When asked about the value of promoting social networks through support services such as mediation, mentoring, befriending and independent living skills (ILS), (Figure 2), responses indicated that there was a strong link between these services and best value. Overall 68.2% of respondents saw such services as delivering best value, whilst only 3.1% did not view these support services as delivering best value. When analysed according to organisational type, results show that whilst there was a high level of support for social networks based services amongst third sector organisations, 71.2%, there was also a slightly higher level of scepticism concerning their effectiveness and value, 4.1%, compared to 1.4% within LA's.

Fig 2. In the experience of your authority/organisation do you feel that supporting social networks through services such as mentoring, building life skills, befriending or mediation offer best value in the delivery of housing support services?



3.6. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 further demonstrate the confidence in social networks services amongst practitioners through enquiring into the impact of positive social networks towards meeting the 2012 Homelessness Target. Results indicate that within the VCS and at LA's those working in frontline services (housing/homelessness officers and support workers), were less likely to see social networks services supporting routes out of homelessness: 1.6% of LA's and 4.1% of VCS believed that social networks did not offer best value. However, compared to the overwhelming majority of LA's and VCS who saw social networks as helping to meet the 2012 Target those failing to see the impact of social networks services is minor. Overall, 83.9% of LA respondents and 80.8% of VCS respondents identified social networks services as linked to meeting the 2012 Target.

Table 3.1

**Q13. Do you see a link between promoting positive social networks and overcoming homelessness, especially in relation to meeting the 2012 Homelessness Target?
LA**

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Senior Manager	3 (5.4%)	-	-	3 (5.4%)
Management	20 (35.7%)	-	3 (5.4%)	23 (41.1%)
Support Worker	4 (7.1%)	-	1 (1.8%)	5 (8.9%)
Housing Officer	14 (25%)	1 (1.8%)	2 (3.6%)	17 (30.4%)
Homelessness Officer	6 (10.7%)	1 (1.8%)	1 (1.8%)	8 (14.3%)
Total	47 (83.9%)	2 (1.6%)	7 (12.5%)	56 (100%)

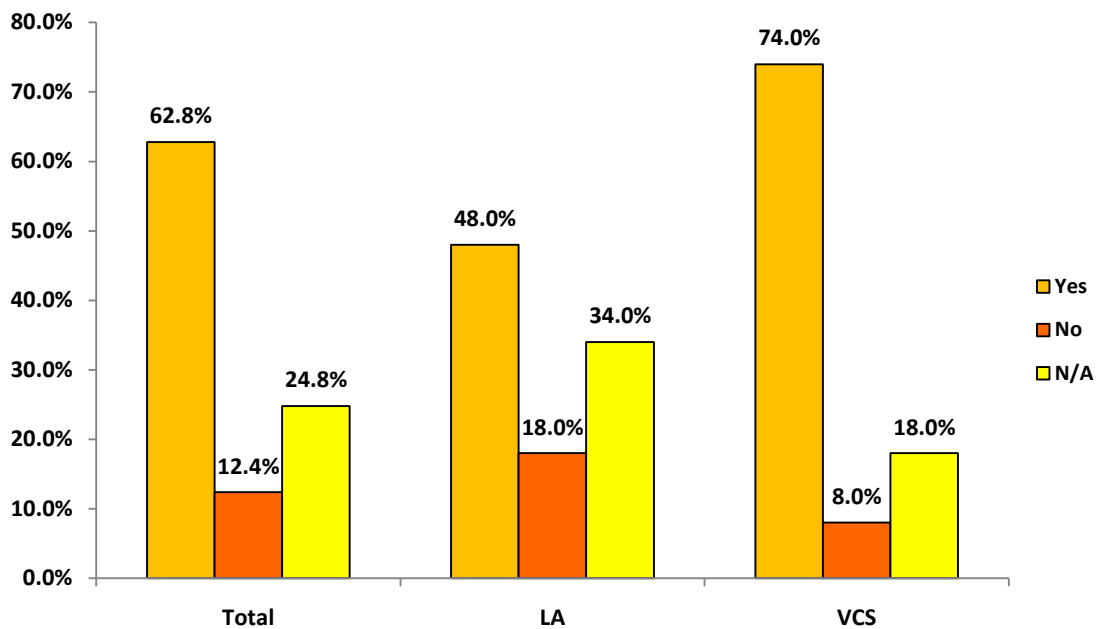
Table 3.2

**Q13. Do you see a link between promoting positive social networks and overcoming homelessness, especially in relation to meeting the 2012 Homelessness Target?
VCS**

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
Senior Manager	10 (13.7%)	-	-	10 (13.7%)
Management	33 (45.2%)	-	7 (9.6%)	40 (54.8%)
Support Worker	14 (19.2%)	3 (4.1%)	4 (5.5%)	21 (28.8%)
Housing Officer	2 (2.7%)	-	-	2 (2.7%)
Homelessness Officer	-	-	-	-
Total	59 (80.8%)	3 (4.1%)	11 (15.1%)	73 (100%)

- 3.7. Responses similar to those presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 were achieved by asking if in the experience of the respondent's organisation, services such as mediation, mentoring, befriending and ILS resulted in service users being more likely to maintain a tenancy (Figure 3).
- 3.8. Figure 3 demonstrates that social networks services were seen to have a considerable impact on tenancy sustainment within the VCS 74% however there was less so for those working at LA's 48.8%. Comparing the results of Figure 3 to Table 3.1 and 3.2 it is clear to see that whilst social networks were acknowledged as playing an important part in meeting the 2012 target, the direct application of social networks based services had less impact in directly affecting tenancy sustainment.

Fig 3. Q12 In the experience of your organisation can you evidence how through providing support services such as mentoring, building life skills, befriending or mediation individuals are more likely to maintain successful tenancies?



- 3.9. Respondents were asked to provide examples of how social networks were promoted or supported within their organisation¹², responses from local authorities suggested a focus upon joint working between departments and linking up potentially isolated individuals to improve the quality of service user's social networks.

Local Authorities

“Through joint working and providing crucial services, help to encourage and facilitate parent, peer and sibling relations”

“We will seek to provide permanent housing in areas where there are existing social networks, particularly when there are children. We will also seek to do so in temporary accommodation provision.”

“We talk to people about the support they are getting from people regarding informal support, equally as important as formal support.”

“Through engagement and encouragement of positive life choices”

- 3.10. However there were several instances where it was felt improvements were needed, especially in supporting social networks as a key part of service delivery. It was indicated that at several LA's, social networks were overlooked as something naturally occurring and not necessarily requiring additional time and resources.

“Poorly, often seen as tertiary and almost incidental. Focus is on securing accommodation and stabilisation if needed”

“The talk is there but a real understanding of its importance is diluted at the coal face”

- 3.11. Initial findings presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 indicated that much of the support work was delivered by third sector organisations commissioned by local authorities. This was reflected through the diverse range of approaches and circumstances cited when demonstrating how social networks were promoted. The importance of social networks in delivering support was clear, and often they were seen as a core part in overcoming isolation, dependency and low self esteem and the potential impact of negative social networks was accounted for in the process of support provision.

¹²Q9. In your opinion how are social networks promoted and/or supported in your organisation?”

Voluntary and Community Sector

“Service users choose who to involve in their support plan at any given stage but we emphasise the importance of social networks in gaining independence. Friends and family are hugely important in anyone’s life”

“Positive social engagement is beneficial in so many levels, simply for someone to have a chat with or to receive assistance from. But social networks can also negatively affect people e.g. people being financially abused or ‘friends’ becoming a nuisance to neighbours. Some of our SU’s believe that some company is better than no company. Our company certainly views positive social networks as a key part of support. We would encourage SU’s to have/reform positive relations with their families, use local social groups, be able to use Citizens advice or housing officers should problems arise, and we have a SU’s group, Befriending Project, Gardening Project and Peer Support Group.”

- 3.12. However, there were comments indicating that whilst there is understanding into how social networks work in the everyday lives of service users, there is considerable scope to broaden this understanding to include the subtle ways social networks can impact upon the lives of service users. Responses indicate that some examples of support may not be fulfilling their potential due to limited understanding of what social networks are and the multifaceted nature of social network within support provision.

“It depends on individual support officers, some of whom have recognised how important this is for the individuals they are working with. Others may not yet recognise this as being an important part of the work they do.”

“The social networks that are well promoted (we don’t support one over the other) tend to be agencies/ self help groups rather than family/ friends.”

- 3.13. Respondents were then asked to give more specific examples of how social networks were important in their practice¹³. Responses highlighted the subtle and intricate ways in which social networks were present in the everyday provision of support. LA’s saw the value of social networks as stemming from their ability to help individuals overcome social exclusion, filling the gap left behind once formal support had finished, assisting service users during the resettlement into permanent accommodation, building and sustaining resilience, promoting wellbeing and mental health, and maintaining family relations.

13 “Q10. Can you give an example of how social networks are important in your practice”

Local Authorities

“Encouraging social networks can prevent homelessness by providing support to an individual who has been socially excluded in the past”

“After a resettlement plan is achieved and all outcomes met, our work would end, so important that family/friends/agencies available to pick up on any future issues the client may have.”

“We support people around relationship breakdown, therefore the other relationships that individuals have are key in their resilience to that crisis situation.”

- 3.14. For third sector organisations, social networks were an important part of the services they offered, by working to develop service users networks it was possible to use them as an area for self improvement. Raising awareness of healthy and unhealthy relationships responses indicated that social networks offered a way for service users to improve various aspects of their personal lives.

Voluntary and Community Sector

“we endeavour to ensure that our service users move on to successful tenancies and we do not believe that they are likely to achieve this in isolation. Thus we encourage links with friends, relatives and other agencies to provide a long term supportive environment”

“Individuals may have been associating with people who may have been a negative influence in their life. It is important for the individual to explore the detriment of this association and how this may have impacted on their life. In order to achieve a life free of substance misuse the individual needs to identify people who are positive influences such as family, friends, relationships, significant others, people who have recovered from addiction issues to build up a network of positive support.”

“Many of our vulnerable tenants have networks that they can tap into but have no recognised the benefit of doing so or are reluctant to do so.”

- 3.15. Social networks were seen to have a positive impact in both offering services which promoted best value and in providing services which aimed to ensure meeting the 2012 Homelessness Target and long term tenancy sustainment. These findings indicate that there is acknowledgement amongst support providers into the benefits of social networks.

3.16. In proposing a definition of social networks this study will take into account;

- the informal and formal nature of social networks
- the positive and negative effects of social relationships
- the reciprocal nature of social networks
- the value of social networks in overcoming isolation
- linking social capital as it is derived from social networks and the various forms of social capital which contribute towards wellbeing

3.17. For both LA's and VCS social networks, informal relationships and the support they provided were viewed as invaluable in ensuring that adequate supportive relationships were in place when formal provision of support was removed. This is something expected to increase in importance as future efficiency measures are put in motion at a local government level.

4. Social Networks and the Assessment Process

- 4.1. Whilst social networks were seen as important in promoting best value to overcome homelessness, when asked to place social networks in order of priority to other factors during the initial assessment process, gauging social networks was often a low priority. It should also be noted that while the responses in Figures 2 and 3 indicate that social network support was viewed as promoting best value and helping to sustain tenancies, there was considerably less emphasis on examining social networks during the initial assessment process in comparison to assessing other needs defined by local authority duties of care (Figures 4 & 5).
- 4.2. It is important to note that the findings presented here are representative of the assessment process before the amendment to the Housing (Scotland) Bill in November 2010. As a result assessment of the support needs of those at risk of homelessness was not a statutory duty for LA's and this assists understanding into the low priority of social networks assessment during the homelessness and housing needs assessments.
- 4.3. Whilst it is acknowledged that securing temporary accommodation, accessing benefits and removing potential risks is vitally important when assessing housing need; this research would also stress the importance of outlining the social networks and support available to an individual in the process of allocating resources and assistance.

<i>Table 4. Please rank the following stages in order of priority to be addressed during initial assessment LA's</i>				
	High	Medium	Low	% of LA's 14
Securing Temporary Accommodation	72.2%	13%	14.8%	96.4%
Risk in Current Environment	74.5%	20%	5.5%	98.2%
Identifying a Local Connection	27.5%	21.5%	51%	91.1%
Establishing Individual Care Plans	35.2%	46.3%	18.5%	96.4%
Sourcing medical/mental health support	23.5%	71%	5.5%	98.2%
Securing Permanent Accommodation	48.1%	25%	26.9%	92.9%
Assessing for benefits/financial assistance	42%	49%	9%	98.2%
Outlining networks of support	13%	68.5%	18.5%	96.4%

14 Figure here represent total percentage of LA responses to question for each factor.

- 4.4. The responses provided by LA's (Table 4) were of particular importance as they frequently were the first point of contact for someone presenting as homeless and as a result homelessness assessments and housing needs assessments, dictating the level of support to be allocated, are conducted by LA's.
- 4.5. Results indicate that the top priority during assessments at local authorities was in securing an immediate form of temporary accommodation, 72.2%, and gauging the risk posed in the current environment, 74.5%. Securing permanent accommodation was also of high importance with almost half (48.1%) of all respondents placing it in the high priority category. Identifying existing networks of support was of medium importance with over half of all respondents, 68.5%, identifying this as a high priority, alongside securing financial assistance, 49.1%, medical/mental health support, 71%, and establishing an overall care plan, 46.3%. Identifying a local connection was seen to take low priority, 51%, however this could have a significant impact in maintaining existing social networks.

Table 5. Please rank the following stages in order of priority to be addressed during initial assessment				
VCS				
	High	Medium	Low	% of VCS¹⁵
Securing Temporary Accommodation	56.3%	17.2%	26.5%	87.7%
Risk in Current Environment	62%	29.6%	8.4%	97.3%
Identifying a Local Connection	16.7%	31.8%	51.5%	90.4%
Establishing Individual Care Plans	51.4%	37.5%	11.1%	98.6%
Sourcing medical/mental health support	40.3%	45.8%	13.9%	98.6%
Securing Permanent Accommodation	37.8%	37.8%	24.4%	90.4%
Assessing for benefits/financial assistance	47.2%	38.9%	13.9%	98.6%
Outlining networks of support	19.7%	59.2%	21.1%	97.3%

- 4.6. Responses from third sector organisations (Table 5) echoed a similar pattern, with securing temporary accommodation a priority, 56.3%, assessing risk in the current environment 62% saw this as a top priority, and securing permanent accommodation, 37.8% of respondents categorising this as high priority. However for those working in VCS organisations establishing individual care plans, 51.4%, and conducting assessments to gauge benefit eligibility, 47.2%, were also classified high priority. This is presumably related to the fact that assessments conducted by third sector organisations occur after initial homelessness assessments, and are more focused on supporting the individual to overcome personal issues through independent

¹⁵ Figure here represent total percentage of VCS responses to question for each factor.

living skills and packages of support. Outlining a network of support was prioritised within the third sector organisations as being of only medium priority, 59.2%, along with medical/mental health support, 45.8%, and identifying a local connection was once again defined as low priority, 51.5%.

- 4.7. When asked about the process of conducting initial homelessness/support needs assessments; responses at a LA level indicated a split of responses between employing an informal person centred approach, focusing upon the individual needs and circumstances of applicants at the time of presentation and the more structured use of in house assessment matrices and assessment tools.

Local Authorities

“Identify individual needs and identify most appropriate options and housing types”

“First and foremost individual needs, individual case by case, through discussions with client- if they mention that they work with a social worker or external organisation probe further depending on what the client fills out. Half the people currently access support, small authority- we know who these people are.”

“very limited information is gathered by the local authority around needs when an individual initially presents as homeless, however, work is currently being undertaken to change/improve this”

- 4.8. VCS responses indicated that, in general, assessments were focused around service user led responses, due to the person centred nature of support services. The focus appeared to be upon meeting goals established between service users and staff and assessing how it was possible to work towards these goals.

Voluntary and Community Sector

“Our agency does our own initial assessment based on what the service user deems as their support needs”

“Initial assessment is carried out which assesses client’s needs and wishes and the clients opinions about levels of risk. A motivational interview also takes place.”

“Key worker works collaboratively with young person to draw up an individual support plan which is jointly implemented and evaluated.”

- 4.9. Respondents were also asked to detail the process of securing permanent accommodation for service users. These responses indicated that at a local authority level, the emphasis was upon providing accommodation according to priority need, as and where available, depending upon the availability of housing stock from registered social landlords (RSL), housing associations (HA) and the LA. There was also a focus upon housing needs assessments and examining individual housing options for possible housing solutions, often allocated through choice based lettings (CBL), Housing Options or supported accommodation.

Local Authorities

“Support to make housing applications using local knowledge and existing partnership arrangements. Support to access homeless services where urgent housing need identified.”

“discussion on all relevant options, completing relevant application forms, ongoing advice and support, awarding priority where appropriate”

“Housing options interviews are offered to assist people in looking at their housing options and bidding for properties through LA’s choice based lets policy”

- 4.10. Responses from third sector organisations outlined that, commonly, their role in securing permanent accommodation was to assist the service user in completing paperwork and navigating the allocations process. This was also followed up in some cases by ensuring that the accommodation met the needs of the service user.

Voluntary and Community Sector

“Assistance is given when completing forms, attending interviews and talking to housing associations and LA’s”

“Liaise with housing providers in the area to identify suitable accommodation and advocate on clients behalf”

“Working in partnership HMO’s from the local authority and RSL’s to ensure accommodation offered meets the appropriate needs of the client and that they have sufficient support in place to maintain this tenancy.”

- 4.11. In assisting with tenancy maintenance, independent living skills and meeting other support needs the focus was centrally around building life skills, ensuring that the service user was

able to successfully manage bills, negotiate with their landlord, and continue independent living when formal support was withdrawn. However there was little emphasis placed upon repairing relationships with existing networks or building new social networks apart from through formal networks of educational/skills building.

Local Authorities

“Support up to 14 hours per week to prepare for being a good neighbour, missive signing, setting up utility accounts and accessing benefits. Support to shop and prepare meals on a budget. Group work support in areas of cooking and basic DIY/decorating skills. Financial assistance to buy essential household items [£250 per service user]; support to register with and use primary health services

“Assisting and providing life skills to maintain tenancy and to engage with other professional bodies in the interest of the service user”

“Identifying skills gaps and signposting to appropriate services”

4.12. Reducing the risk of repeat homelessness was a focus for third sector organisations in their delivery of support to service users, and in achieving this there was seen to be more focus around building supportive networks and forging links into the community. Again this appeared to stem from accessing employment or training and there were few examples of mediation, mentoring or befriending given. The focus for both types of organisations seemed to be in developing ILS, which fits with the findings presented in Section 5.

Voluntary and Community Sector

“Supporting individuals to develop maintain and gain skills, and confidence to develop themselves, maintain a happy productive valued lifestyle and therefore their own tenancy. If someone can not look after themselves then they are unlikely to maintain a home”

“The individual is always offered ongoing support once a permanent accommodation is achieved. The package is reviewed on a 3 monthly basis to ensure support meets individual’s needs and the support can be reduced when required until the support is no longer required. Support heavily relies on building good community and social networks to ensure the individual has a good support network. Referral to other specialised agencies is common to assist with more specific needs.”

“Support agencies carry out surgeries across all temporary accommodation and provide one to one support as required by the support assessment.”

4.13. At a local authority level there is currently no standardised procedure for assessing homelessness apart from the completion of the HL1 form, used as part of Scottish Government monitoring. The HL1 lists several categories of action or areas of support to overcome homelessness which include;

- assessment of support needs, basic housing support (finances of independent living)
- provision of independent advice (legal/financial/housing)
- assistance in dealing with landlords/mortgage providers
- assistance in claiming benefits
- assistance in maintaining or finding employment
- education or training, direct financial assistance
- use of rent deposit scheme
- assistance with costs for 'essential goods'
- assistance with any addictions
- involvement of social work or health/community care services
- other services such as counselling, mediation, befriending or mentoring
- assistance in finding alternative accommodation.¹⁶

4.14. By considering these categories as a baseline it was hoped that the research could assess how support services focused upon promoting positive social networks were allocated by both LA's and VCS. These categories have also been used to inform categories used in Figures 4 and 5.

4.15. Figures 4 and 5 provides a list of factors which may be taken into account when conducting initial homelessness assessments/housing needs assessments as informed by our initial literature review. These factors have been selected as they have the potential to gauge social networks within the parameters of a homelessness/ housing needs assessment. It is felt that if examined these factors could provide valuable information into the quality and proximity of social networks available to the service user within their existing relationships;

- Previous Tenancy Issues: Indicates potential areas of difficulty in managing relations with landlords, neighbours, family or in handling the day to day running of a home. Can also be used to identify from the outset potential problem areas in maintaining a tenancy.

¹⁶ Taken from HL1 Form, Revised April 2007, Section 21b, Scottish Government, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/15257/RevisedHL1>

- Previously Homeless: Flag up any history of homelessness as this can indicate likelihood of repeat homelessness or the existence of street networks which may have the potential to affect tenancy sustainment, gate keeping and integration within the wider community.
- Awareness of Information Services: Is the service user aware of what services are available to help them and do they have the capacity to ask for help before a situation comes to crisis?
- Assessing financial/medical support: What provisions need to be made, services to be secured to alleviate additional stress?
- Involvement in education/training: Steps to be taken to maintain involvement and in what ways can such involvement be seen as adding social capital by accessing available social networks.
- Previous history of care: As a result of this, what key anchor relationships are missing/cannot be presumed to be available, which ones are positive/safe?
- Relationship status: How can this be accommodated in accommodation solution to avoid further isolation
- Current employment status: What networks already exist and can be (re)built within the workplace and what measures should be taken to ensure these are maintained. Is the added social capital these relationships accrue acknowledged?
- Financial support from family/friends: Method for gauging the quality and proximity of relationships between family and friends
- Family/friends accessing support: How many members of the service user's network are involved in receiving support, the limitations of network members in supporting the service user and the potential of the service user of becoming entrenched in services/culture of dependency?
- Geographic proximity to family/friends: If relationships exist is accessing them a realistic option for the service user (distance, costs, telephone)
- Frequency of contact with family/friends: Attempt to gauge the quality of relationships where they exist
- Contact with family/friends: Do they exist, how many, what issues, if any, currently exist?

Fig 4 Q7 a) As part of your homelessness assessment or in your work to overcome homelessness with service users what, if any, of the following factors are taken into account when conducting initial assessments with individuals presenting as homeless/being referred to your service

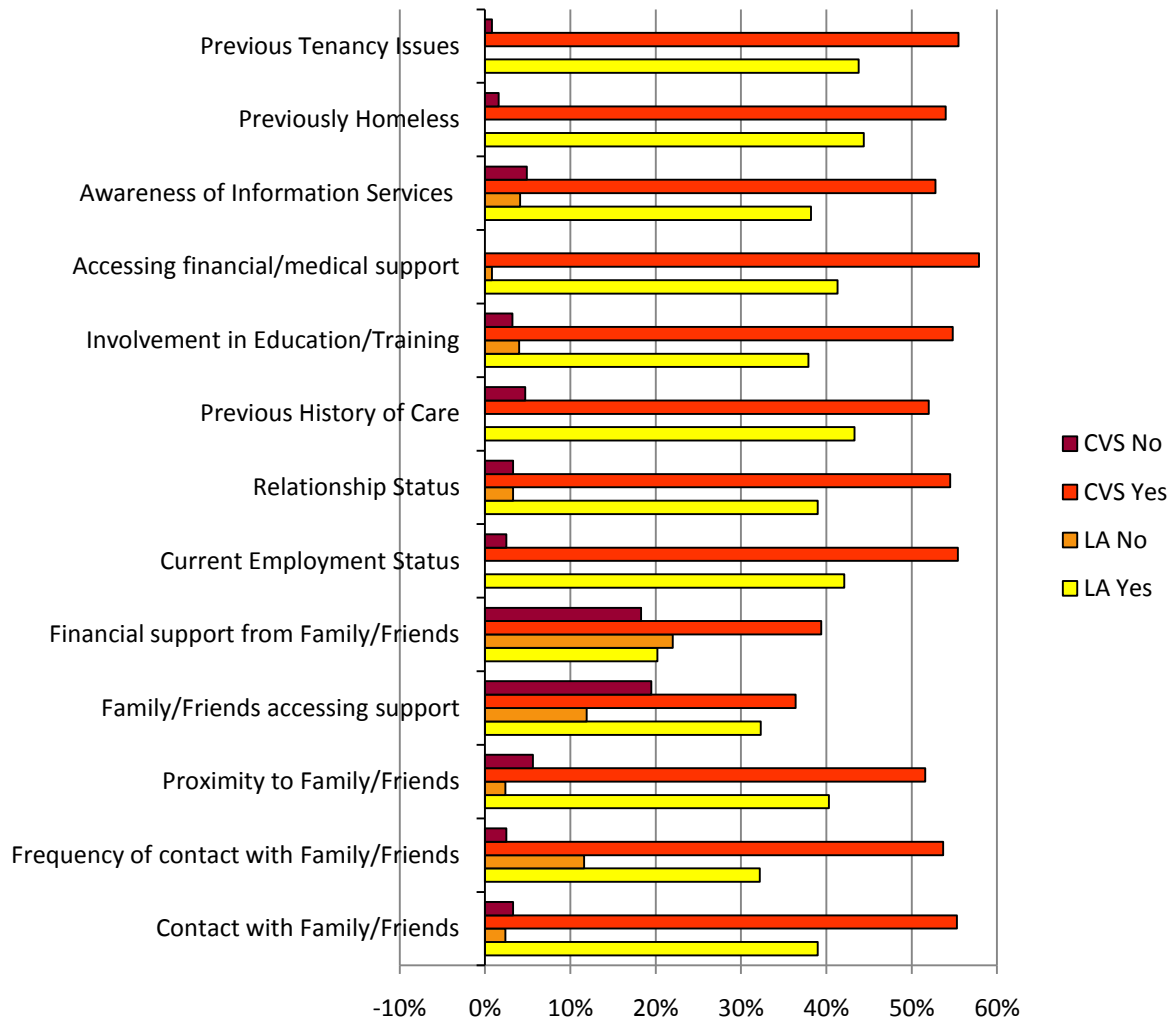
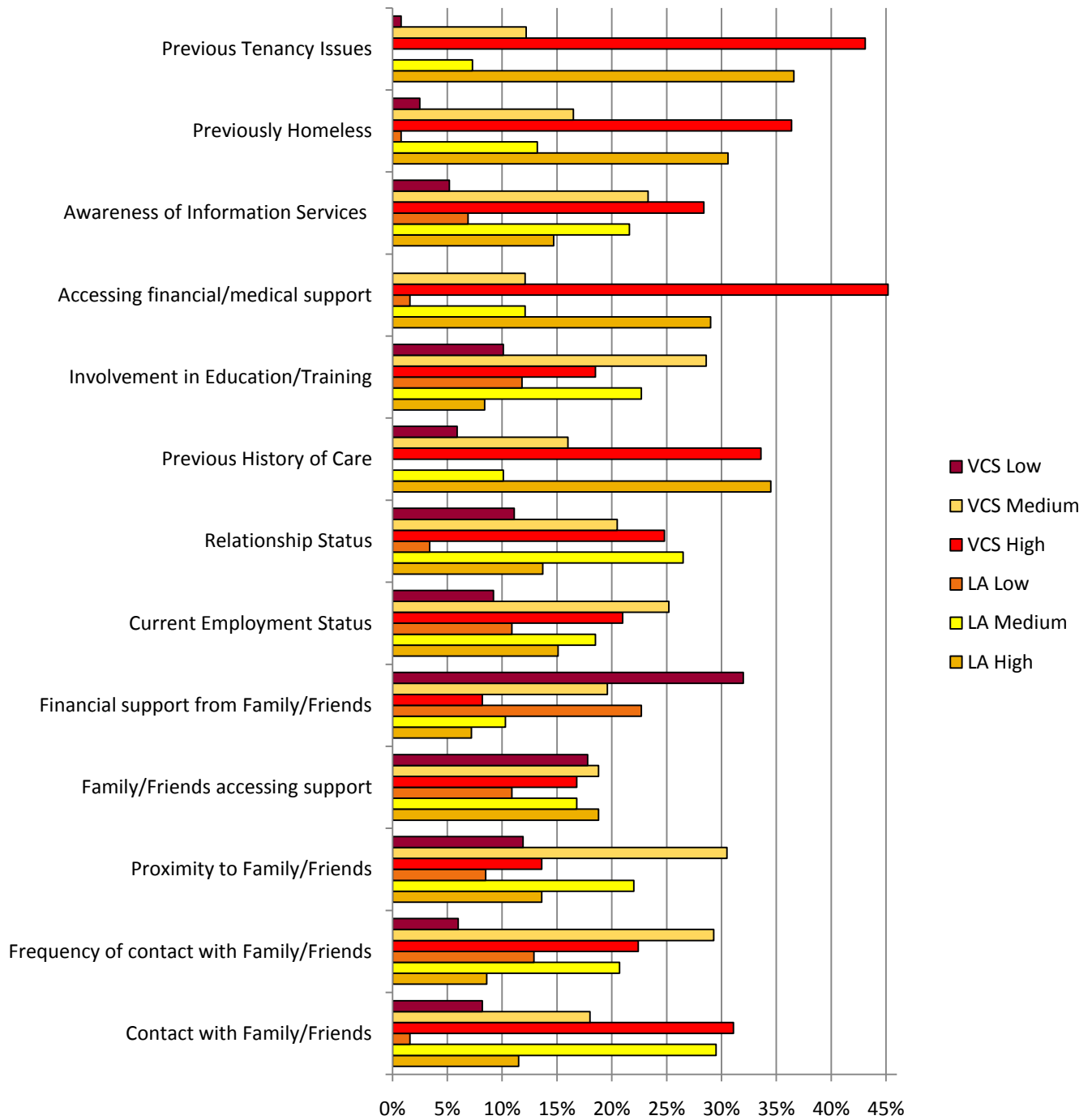


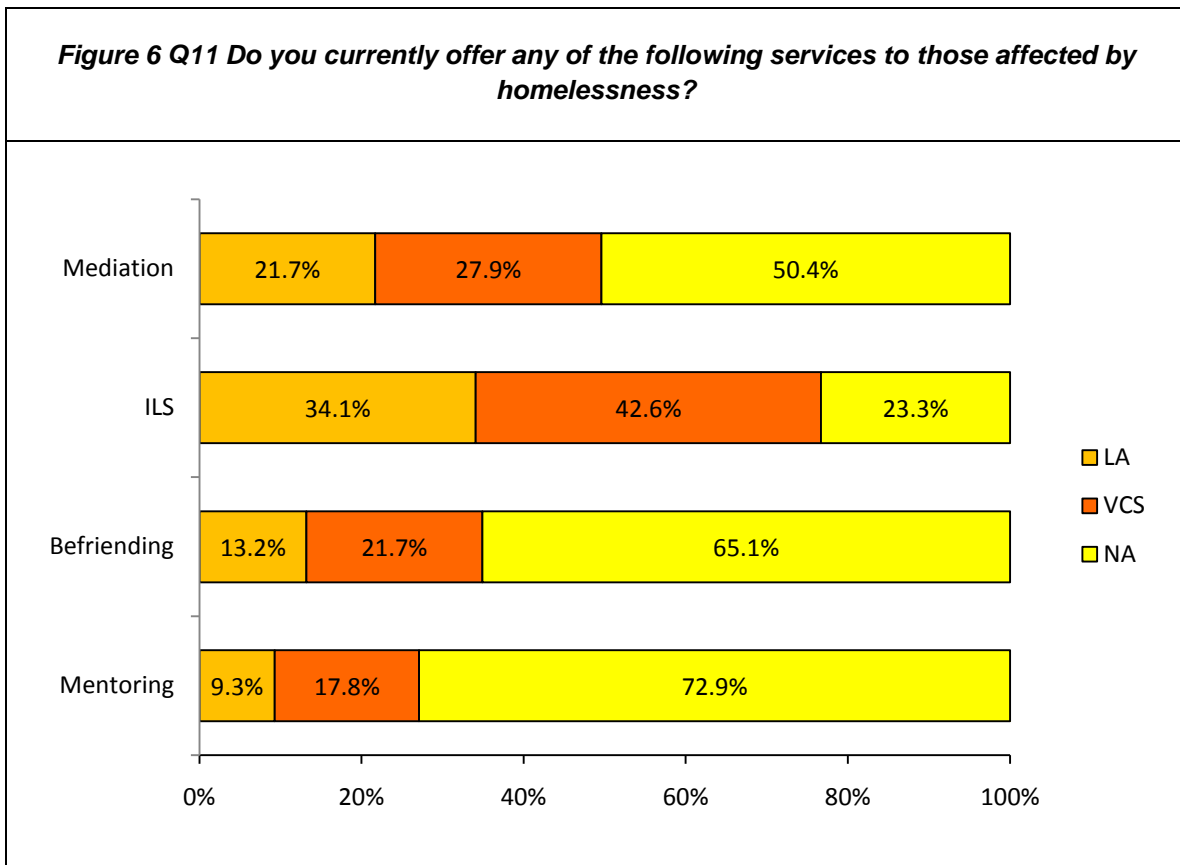
Fig 5 Q7 b) If taken into account please state the level of priority placed on



- 4.16. Figure 4 indicates that in most cases all of the above factors were taken into account; however VCS were more likely to explore these issues through the nature of their work in meeting support needs in any moves to stable housing. Questions relating to financial support from family and friends were less likely to be asked along with discussing the support received by family and friends. This research to date suggests that by omitting this information, valuable opportunities to understand the complexities of an individual's social network are lost, however it is acknowledged that this can often be a difficult area to discuss in preliminary meetings or assessments.
- 4.17. Figure 5 demonstrates the priority given to the aspects, seen by the research as indicative of the quality and proximity of social networks. Top priority for VCS was in understanding any previous tenancy issues, ensuring medical/financial support was secured, and identifying any previous history of homelessness. Financial support from family or friends was a low priority, along with identifying if friends or family were in receipt of support. For LA's previous tenancy issues, previous history of homelessness, a history of care, and accessing medical/financial support were all high priority. Whilst financial support from family/friends, involvement in education or training, frequency of contact with family and friends and family/friends accessing support were seen as low in priority.
- 4.18. Findings concerning social networks and the assessment process indicate that whilst social networks are viewed as important in achieving successful outcomes and in achieving best value, they are often given less priority during assessments in favour of practical issues such as finding temporary/permanent accommodation and meeting statutory duties.
- 4.19. Findings suggest that to a certain extent a distinction exists in the types of support offered by LA's and the VCS which subsequently results in the priorities of care being different for LA's and VCS. At a LA level focus appears to be in meeting the statutory duty of assessing for homelessness, providing temporary/permanent accommodation and in supporting the individual out of homelessness. For VCS there is more of a focus around personal development and ensuring life skills are in place for when support will be withdrawn.

5. Available Services:

5.1. Respondents to the survey were asked what social networks based support services they currently offered. Independent living skills were the most common service at both LA's and within the VCS. Figures here illustrate that on average services such as this were only provided in half of the organisations within the sample. Mediation was provided by only 21.7% of LA's and 27.9% of VCS. Similarly Befriending was offered by only 13.2% of LA's and 21.7% of VCS in the survey. Mentoring was provided by only 9.3% of LA's in our survey and 17.8% of VCS in our survey. However ILS had a much higher profile with 34.1% of LA's and 27.9% of VCS in the survey providing the service.



5.2. However despite these services having a relatively low profile in support available throughout Scotland (especially with mediation, mentoring and befriending), it was found (especially within the VCS) that these services had a proven record of promoting successful tenancies. Analysis of the findings indicates that over half of VCS could evidence successful tenancies as a result of these services whilst only 27.8% of local authorities felt they could do the same.

5.3. Examining responses according to evidencing successful tenancies by support service there appeared to be very little difference in success rates according to service, 89.9% of those who could evidence successful tenancies worked with independent living skills, 94.7% were using befriending services, 93.6% used mentoring services and 86.2% used mediation services.

6. Meeting the 2012 Homelessness Target

- 6.1. Since being set in motion in 2003 the 2012 Homelessness Target has placed an emphasis upon local authorities to remove the categorisation of priority need for unintentionally homeless people. Meeting this target has placed significant pressure on local authority housing departments to meet the housing needs of a much wider group of people, previously not seen to be of priority need such as single homeless people. At the 2009 interim target point 43.75% of local authorities were meeting (6.25% of LA's met the target) or exceeding their interim target (37.5% of LA's exceeded their interim target) whilst 56.25% failed to meet their interim target.¹⁷
- 6.2. As a way of gauging how prevalent the 2012 Homelessness Target was within each local authority, respondents were asked to detail the levels of awareness of the target within their organisation. Responses were mixed and confidence levels overall reflected the findings presented in Figure 7.
- 6.3. For local authorities there was a high level of awareness but several expressed concern as to whether the target were achievable in the current financial climate. For organisations within the third sector responses noted high levels of awareness but also increased scepticism in meeting the target as reflected in Figure 7.

Local Authorities

"We are very aware, but like all other authorities we are clear that we do not have the resources to meet the need. There must be more focus and there is real effort within our homelessness team that our practice must change to prevent homelessness occurring and identify triggers earlier"

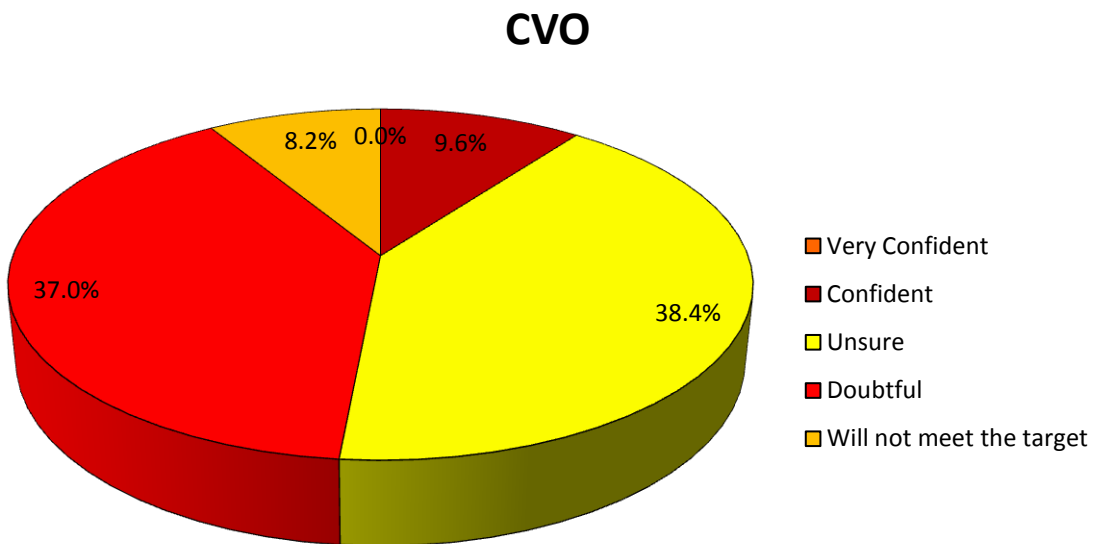
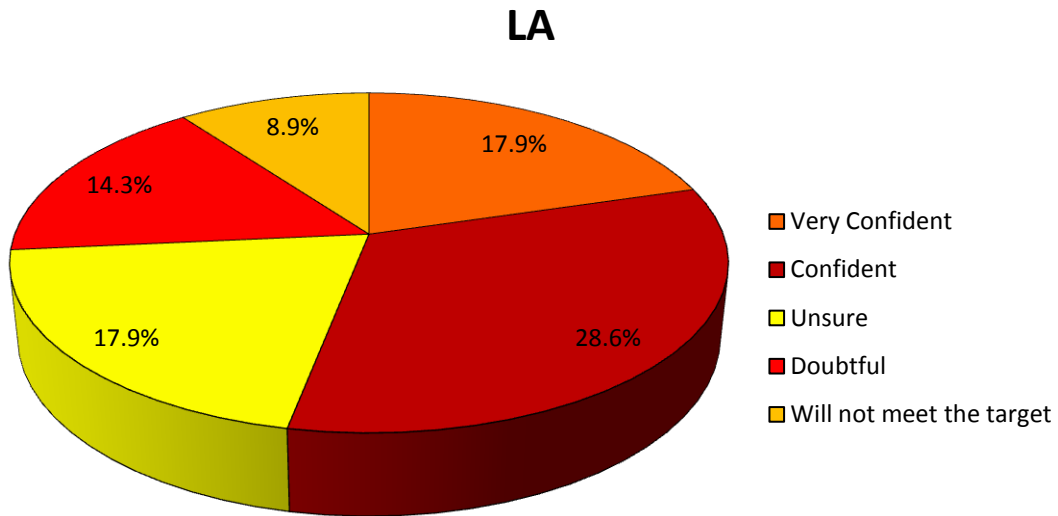
"I think most of our staff are aware of the target however are sceptical about meeting them and possibly are not fully aware of what is being done to work towards the target."

Voluntary and Community Sector

"Within our organisation the 2012 Target is discussed regularly in team meetings and our strategy always strives to meet the demands of the local authority needs for our area."

17 Scottish Government (2009) Operation of the Homeless Persons Legislation in Scotland: 2008-09, pg 13-4

Figure 7. Q16 How confident are you that your local authority area will successfully meet 2012 Homelessness Target?



- 6.4. Figure 7 demonstrates that there are significantly higher levels of scepticism towards meeting the 2012 Homelessness Target amongst the VCS compared to LA's. The results indicate that confidence levels about meeting the target were lowest amongst VCS with 8.2% of respondents failing to see how their local authority would meet the target and the majority believing that meeting the target was doubtful, 37%, or being unsure of meeting it, 38.4%, (there were no responses at all to indicate that they were very confident about meeting the target). There were notably higher levels of confidence amongst LA's with 17.9% of responses being very confident of meeting the target, 28.6% being confident and just less than half of those in the third sector, 17.9%, being unsure of meeting the Target. Significantly only 14.3% of respondents were doubtful of meeting the target compared to 37% of the CVS responses. Those who believed that their area would not meet the target were similar for both the CVS and LA's with 8.2% and 8.9% respectively.
- 6.5. Information was also collected on the reasons why each respondent felt there difficulties in meeting their target. The primary issues identified (Table 6) for both LA's and the CVS were lack of housing stock, unrealistic expectations of national government and cuts to funding/resources.

Table 6. Q17 In your opinion what are the primary issues in meeting 2012 Target for your area?				
	LA		VCS	
	#	% of LA's	#	% of VCS
Lack of Housing Stock	43	76%	57	78.1%
Lack of Support Workers	19	33.9%	25	34.2%
Unable to manage caseloads	8	14.3%	17	23.3%
Poor Communication between departments/ management	7	12.5%	18	24.7%
Unrealistic expectations of national government	28	50%	30	41.1%
Poor support networks/packages established, long term tenancies unsustainable	7	12.5%	21	28.8%
Cuts to funding/resources	34	60.7%	55	75.3%

- 6.6. Table 6 shows that 76% of LA respondents and 78.1% of VCS respondents felt that meeting the 2012 Target was difficult due to a lack of housing stock, a vital component in meeting the needs of those affected by homelessness, despite concerted efforts by the Scottish Government to stimulate new building of housing stock. Cuts to funding and resources was the second biggest issue with 60.7% of LA's and 75.3% of VCS respondents citing this as an issue in meeting the 2012 Target. Unrealistic expectations of national government was the third factor felt to impact on meeting the 2012 Target 50% of LA's and 41.1% of respondents from the VCS. This correlates levels of scepticism in meeting the target, if examined in relation to poor resources/support/staff and low levels of housing stock.
- 6.7. Table 7 indicates the areas in which improvements could be made to assist in meeting the 2012 Target. Primarily for local authorities more housing stock, 75% of LA's respondents stated this as a key issue, and improved interagency working, 37.5%, was seen as key to overcoming issues in meeting the 2012 Target. Whilst for those in the CVS more housing stock, 71.2%, more funding, 56.2%, clearer understanding and awareness of 2012 amongst staff, 28.8%, improved interagency working, 60.3%, and more emphasis of housing issues and a local authority/policy level, 48%, were seen as key to meeting the target.

Table 7 Q18 How do you feel that your local authority/organisation could improve performance in line to meeting the 2012 Homelessness Target?				
	LA		VCS	
	#	% of LA's	#	% of VCS
No Improvements Needed	2	3.6%	-	-
More Staff	17	30.4%	16	21.9%
More Funding	26	46.4%	41	56.2%
More Housing Stock	42	75%	52	71.2%
Clearer understanding and awareness of 2012 Target amongst staff	5	8.9%	21	28.8%
Improved communications between management and frontline staff	4	7.1%	17	23.3%
Improved interagency working	21	37.5%	44	60.3%
More emphasis of housing issues at a local authority/policy level	15	26.8%	35	48%

6.8. Confidence levels in meeting the Homelessness 2012 Target indicate that around one third of local authorities are in line to meet the outcomes by 2012. However these results detail expectations before efficiency measures for the 2011/12 financial year are implemented. Further financial reform and subsequent cuts to resources will undoubtedly make meeting the 2012 Target increasingly difficult.

7. Findings and Conclusions

- 7.1. The findings from this survey are presented here to suggest the current climate amongst LA's and within the VCS, they are not presented as recommendations for service revision but do hope to highlight the potential impact investment in social networks support can have in meeting the 2012 Homelessness target.
- 7.2. Findings from the survey indicate that there is a positive understanding of the impact of social networks for those affected by homelessness. Social networks based services were seen to promote best value and to assist in sustaining tenancies. Results from the survey also indicated that for the majority of respondents social networks were seen to be important in meeting the 2012 Homelessness Target.
- 7.3. However, the assessment of personal relationships and support for (re)building social networks was of a much lower priority in practice. Whilst it is hoped that this will change through the introduction of the amended Housing (Scotland) Bill (2010) which places a duty on LA's to assess the support needs of those presenting as homeless, there is currently little guidance on how social networks impact upon and are important in meeting individual support needs.
- 7.4. It is hoped that the findings presented here provide encouraging evidence into both the impact of social networks based support on tenancy sustainment (section 5) and the ways in which the intricate nature of social networks can be assessed within the normal assessment process (Figures 4 and 5).
- 7.5. Section 6 highlighted that as of 2009 only 43.75% of LA's were meeting the interim target towards the 2012 Homelessness target. The central challenges in meeting the target and in removing the category of priority need were concerning housing stock and a lack of funding and subsequently resources. As the findings presented here indicate, through employing a social networks support approach many respondents report higher tenancy sustainment. As a result the research would suggest a reduction in repeat homelessness, thus reducing the demand upon support and resources is achievable through supporting social networks.

7.6. Sample

- The research presents a considered mix of organisational types and levels of management and staff need to represent the range of experiences in providing support to those affected by homelessness.

7.7. Social Networks

- Were seen to promote best value, tenancy sustainment and in helping to meet the 2012 Homelessness Target.
- Factors to be considered in defining social networks included
 - the informal and formal nature of social networks
 - the positive and negative effects of social relationships
 - the reciprocal nature of social networks
 - the value of social networks in overcoming isolation
 - linking social capital as it is derived from social networks and the various forms of social capital which contribute towards wellbeing

7.8. Assessment Process

- In looking at the assessment process the disparity between the importance of social networks during housing needs assessment and the impact they are understood to have is highlighted.
- The research acknowledges that as a result of the Housing (Scotland) Bill (2010) there is areas of potential improvement in meeting housing support needs.
- A person centred approach in meeting the housing and support needs of those presenting as homeless was seen to address social networks most, however this was found to be prominent mainly amongst the VCS.

7.9. Available Services

- ILS was the most prominent social networks service provided by both LA's and within the VCS. However tenancy sustainment rates of those receiving social networks based support was high for all forms of support with befriending and mentoring producing the highest level of tenancy sustainment.

7.10. Meeting 2012 Target

- Our findings indicate that confidence in meeting the 2012 Homelessness target was highest amongst LA's, but there were significantly lower levels of confidence amongst those working within the VCS.
- Low housing stock, cuts to funding/resources and unrealistic expectations of national government were the key obstacles in meeting the 2012 Homelessness target for both LA's and organisations within the VCS.

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Appendices

A) Survey Questions

Introductory Information

1. Organisation Click here to enter text.
2. Department Click here to enter text.
3. Job Title Click here to enter text.

Current support provision

4. In the housing support offered by your organisation/authority please rank the following stages in order of priority to be addressed (1-10 , 1 being the most important- please give each answer a different ranking)

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| Securing temporary accommodation | Choose an item. |
| Accessing training/employment | Choose an item. |
| Outlining a network of supportive family members/friends | Choose an item. |
| Access to benefits or financial assistance | Choose an item. |
| Securing permanent accommodation | Choose an item. |
| Securing medical/mental health support | Choose an item. |
| Working out individual care plans | Choose an item. |
| Assessing life skills for independent living | Choose an item. |
| Assessing risk in current environment | Choose an item. |
| Identifying a local connection | Choose an item. |

5. Can you briefly detail the processes of assisting those presenting as homeless within your area for the following stages
 - a. Initial needs assessment
 - b. Securing permanent accommodation solution
 - c. Tenancy maintenance, independent living skills and meeting other support needs

6. As part of your homelessness assessment or in your work to overcome homelessness with service users what, if any, of the following factors are taken into account when conducting initial assessments with individuals presenting as homeless/being referred to your service? If taken into account please state the level of priority placed on each aspect within the assessment/support process

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contact with family/friends | Choose an item. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequency of contact with family/friends | Choose an item. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geographical proximity to family member/ friends | Choose an item. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family members accessing support for medical, mental or substance related issues | Choose an item. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial support from family/friends | Choose an item. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current employment status/ Occupation | Choose an item. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship status | Choose an item. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previous history of care | Choose an item. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Involvement in education or training programmes | Choose an item. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Currently accessing any other forms of medical/social/financial support | Choose an item. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of information services for assistance | Choose an item. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previously homeless | Choose an item. |

- Previous tenancies and issues encountered Choose an item.

Social networks support

7. In your own words, please describe what social networks are
8. In your opinion how are social networks promoted and/or supported in your organisation?
9. Can you give an example of how social networks are important in your practice?
10. Do you currently offer any of the following to those affected by homelessness as part of your housing support services?

- Mentoring
- Mediation (through a third part organisation)
- Befriending
- Independent living skills/self care skills

11. In the experience of your authority/ organisation do you feel that supporting social networks through services such as mentoring, mediation, and befriending offers best value in the delivery of housing support services?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

12. In the experience of your organisation can you evidence how through providing support services such as mentoring, building life skills, befriending or mediation individuals are more likely to maintain successful tenancies?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Meeting future targets

13. Do you see a link between promoting positive social networks and overcoming homelessness, especially in relation to meeting the 2012 Homelessness Target?

14. What is your perception of awareness for the 2012 Target within your organisation?

15. How confident are you that your local authority area will successfully meet the 2012 Homelessness Target?

16. In your opinion what are the primary issues in meeting the 2012 Homelessness Target for your area

- Lack of housing stock
- Lack of support workers
- Unable to manage extra case loads generated
- Poor communication between departments/management
- Unrealistic expectations of national government
- Poor support networks/packages established, long term tenancies unsustainable
- Cuts to funding/resources
- Other- please state

17. How do you feel that your local authority could improve performance in line to meeting the 2012 homelessness Target?

- No improvements needed
- More staff
- More funding
- More housing stock
- Clearer understanding and awareness of the 2012 Target amongst staff
- Improved communication between management and front line staff
- Improved inter agency working
- More emphasis of housing issues at a local authority/policy level
- Other – please specify [Click here to enter text.](#)

About us;

“The Rock Trust aims to provide opportunities for young vulnerable people to develop personal, social and practical skills, as well as the sense of self worth necessary for an independent adult life.”



The Rock Trust: 55 Albany Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3QY

Telephone: 0131 557 4059. Fax: 01315249879. www.rocktrust.org

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