



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
Centre for Homelessness and  
Inclusion Health

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# **Gaining and Preserving Pioneer Status: Key Lessons from the Housing First Pathfinder Programme in Scotland**

*Professor Sarah Johnsen*

*(Director, Centre for Homelessness and Inclusion Health)*

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## Pathfinder Context and Overview

- Significant **political endorsement** of HF at national level from 2018
  - **Five projects:** Aberdeen/shire, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling
  - **Funded by** Social Bite, Merchants House of Glasgow, and Scottish Government
  - **579 people** with 'complex needs' housed April 2019-March 2022
  - **Demographically**, tenants predominantly White British (99%), middle aged, men (68%)
  - Variation in consortium composition and mode of delivery, but all '**broker**' model of support, intended **caseloads** 1:7, almost all **secure social housing** tenancies
  - **Independently evaluated** by Heriot-Watt University and Rayment Consulting
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## Research Questions

1. To what extent did projects maintain **fidelity to the core principles** of HF?
  2. What factors **facilitated or hindered** HF development and delivery?
  3. What were the main **outcomes** for service users?
  4. How much did the projects **cost** to deliver?
  5. What **lessons** might be drawn as Scotland moves toward 'HF by default' for homeless people with complex needs?
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# Research Methods

## **1. Interviews and focus groups** (3 time-points, total n=200)

- support provider leads/partners
- frontline support workers
- local stakeholders
- national stakeholders
- service users

## **2. ‘Tracker’ monitoring data** (n=579)

## **3. New Directions Team (NDT) assessments** (n=104)

## **4. Service user questionnaires** (n=101)

## **5. Financial returns**

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# No. 1

Housing First is just as effective in Scotland as elsewhere ... even in the context of a pandemic

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## No. 2

Stakeholder attitudes are changing for the better ...  
but there is still a long way to go

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## No. 3

Housing First is effective in preventing repeat homelessness ... but other benefits won't be realised fully until barriers to healthcare are addressed

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## No. 4

Housing First improves lives ... but does not vitiate  
disproportionate risk of early mortality

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## No. 5

Implementational ‘sticking points’ are to be expected ... and will shift over time

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## No. 6

Joint working goes a long way ... but is too often  
reliant on personal relationships and goodwill

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## No. 7

Fidelity to the core principles of Housing First is  
achievable ... but also fragile

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## No. 8

Housing First staff have a tough gig ... and should  
be supported and paid accordingly

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## No. 9

Housing First works for most people it targets ...  
but we still need solutions for others

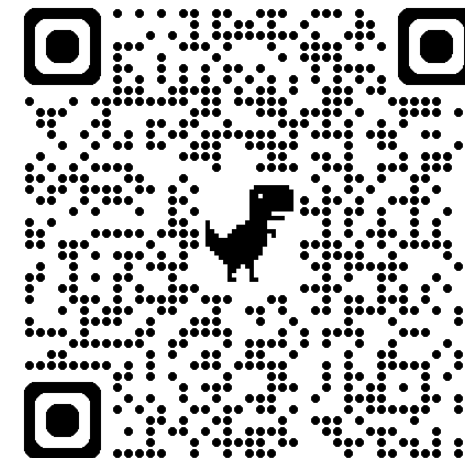
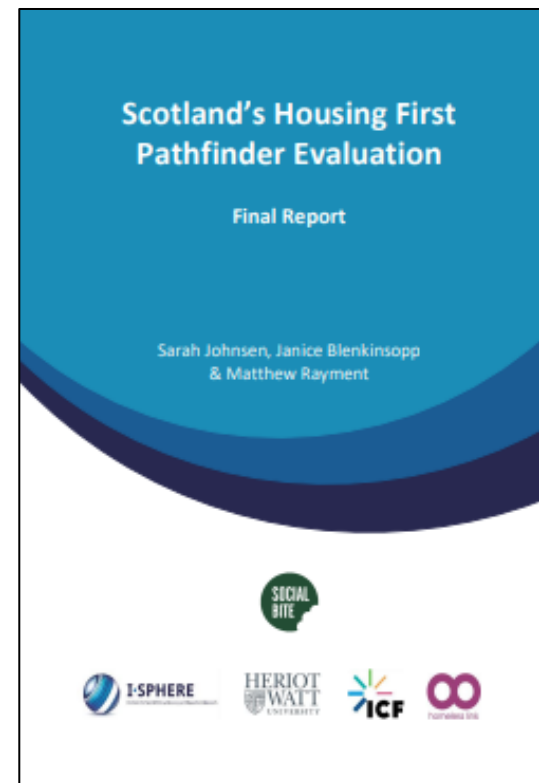
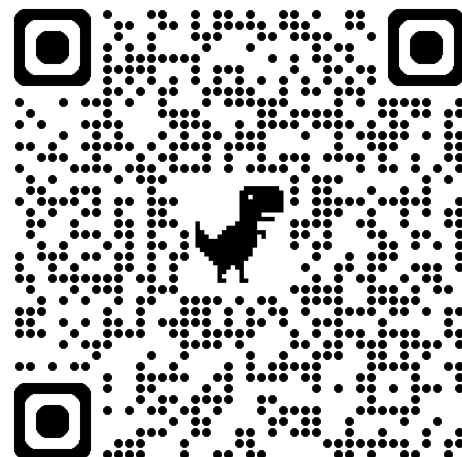
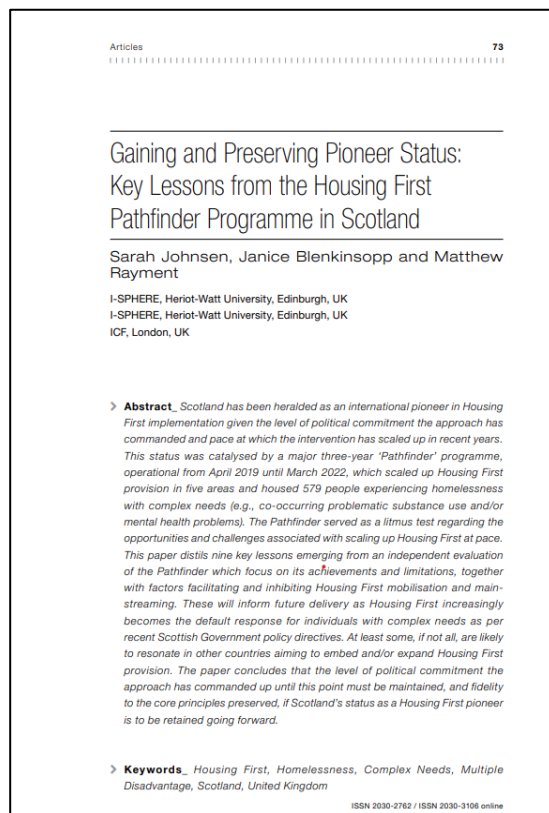
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## Conclusion

- HF delivery in Scotland is difficult, but achievable, and indisputably worth pursuing
  - If Scotland is to retain its status as an international pioneer in HF implementation:
    - political commitment commanded in early years must be maintained
    - fidelity to principles must be preserved given their centrality to effectiveness
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## Further detail



sarah.johnsen@ed.ac.uk