



Fife Private Rental Solutions

SUSTAINABILITY STUDY 2023



In April 2021 Fife Keyfund underwent a service redesign and became Fife Private Rental Solutions (FPRS). This sustainability study was conducted by FPRS using FPRS client information and historical information gathered by Fife Keyfund.

As part of an ongoing commitment to inform on the viability of the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in the housing market, Trust in Fife have completed their annual Sustainability Study. This study captures statistics from clients who were accommodated, in the PRS.

Previously the study focused on cases that were closed in a financial year and where they were two years later. To assist in providing accurate information it was agreed with Fife Council that the process would be changed. It was felt that further insights could be gained if clients were to be considered both 12 months and 24 months since their case was closed and the considered period would be changed from financial year to calendar year.

Due to the change in the reporting period of this report, FPRS are unable to provide a 24 month report. To ensure the consistency of information, clients in the nine months where no sustainability has been conducted were also contacted. Therefore this report will cover April to December 2020 and January – December 2021.

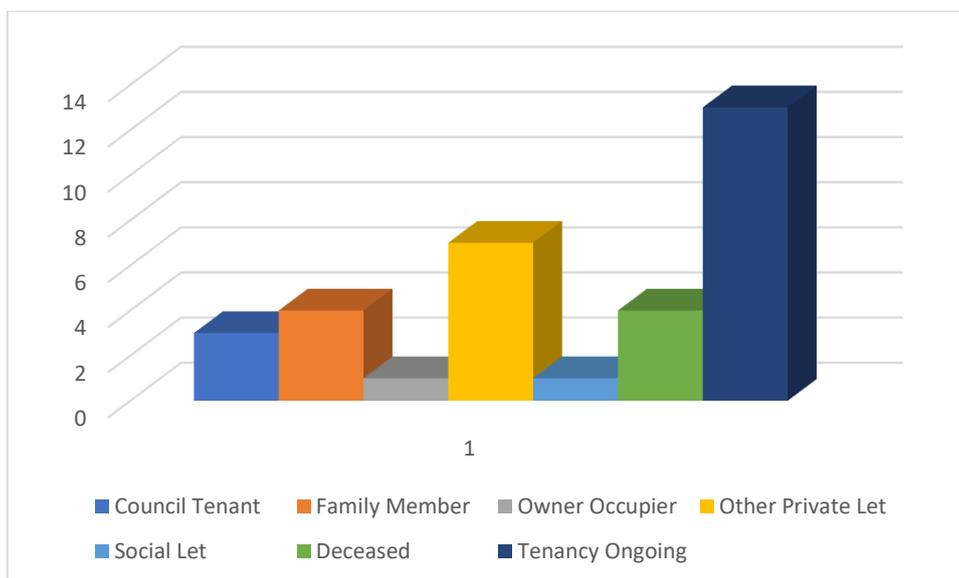
April – December 2020

This year the FPRS team contacted clients, landlords and agents of the 45 tenancies closed by Fife Keyfund within the study’s timeframe; acknowledging that a period of, at least, two years had passed from the date these clients would have signed a Private Residential Tenancy Agreement.

The FPRS team looked to ascertain how many clients were still accommodated within the same property, or if not, the type of tenure they were now living in. This information was then used as evidence to demonstrate that the PRS continues to offer a sustainable long-term, housing option.

	At Close of Case	At point of contact
Council Tenant	0	3
Family Member	3	4
Not Known	0	12
Owner Occupier	0	1
Other Private Let	5	7
Social Let	0	1
Tenancy Abandoned	7	0
Deceased	1	4
Tenancy Ongoing	29	13
	45	45

Despite the teams best efforts, FPRS were unable to contact 12 clients. The relevant landlords confirmed these clients were no longer in the tenancy that FPRS assisted them into. The remaining 33 clients are represented in the table below.



January 2021 – December 2021

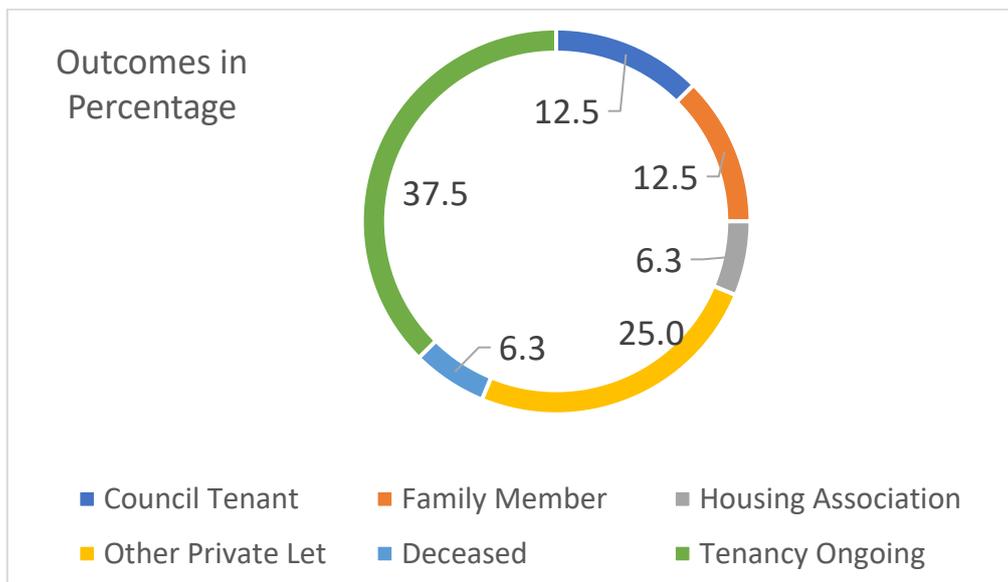
Due to the change and expansion in the service the type of cases assisted by FPRS changed. The service was no longer just providing assistance with a Deposit Guarantee. To evidence the outcomes for these cases they have been split into different groups.

Deposit Guarantee Cases.

During the period Jan- Dec period there were 42 cases. These were cases that received assistance with a deposit guarantee in 2021. The clients contacted had been closed for at least twelve months and the objective was to establish where they were currently staying. The following table provides the outcome of the tenancy at the point of closure and where those clients are now.

Jan - Dec 2021	At Close of Case	At point of contact
Council Tenant	3	4
Family Member	6	4
Housing Association	0	2
Not Known	0	10
Other Private Let	1	8
Social Let	1	0
Tenancy Abandoned	4	0
Deceased	0	2
Tenancy Ongoing	27	12
	42	42

Of the 42 cases that FPRS attempted to contact there were 10 people that could not be contacted. The team did establish that they were no longer in the private rented property that FPRS assisted them into. From the chart below it is evident that 62.5% that we spoke to continue in the private sector in either the property that they were assisted into or into another private let.



General Advice cases

These clients may have received short-term advice or a plan of action to help them sustain a private let, preventing homelessness by resolving a personal or housing related concern, or aided in their decision to move forward with the appropriate housing option.

As with other services, some contacts are lost or FPRS was not the appropriate service, in the latter cases, the client would have been signposted or referred to the most relevant service.

There were a total of 91 clients within the General Advice service, of those, FPRS were able to provide the advice that either led to a resolution of enquiry or referred to other agencies in the following way:

- 56 - provided with information enabling them to make decisions about the PRS, their current housing situation or think further about their options before moving from/into PRS.
- 11 - had their issues resolved, homelessness was prevented or negotiated the move back in with family to avoid homeless accommodation.
- 4 - moved into the PRS without the use of a deposit guarantee but after receiving specific advice.
- 9 - clients decided that PRS was not their preferred option after information presented, and subsequently accepted offers of social tenancies.
- 5 - individuals had specific needs that were not suited to the PRS, so decided to wait for an appropriate offer through social/care/residential housing, signposting and referrals were made for these clients.

Rent or Issue Resolution

Due to the impact of COVID 19 and subsequent impact on the health and wellbeing of clients in the PRS, there was a significant increase in rent arrears. This was caused by loss of employment, a decline in physical or mental health and the inability to administer or pay rent, or lack of additional financial support to allow rent to be paid.

With the support of Fife Council, FRPS set up a Rent Resolution and Issue Resolution service.

Rent Resolution - Where a payment of rent has been interrupted, payment negotiation between parties has failed, or there has been loss of employment or difficulties navigating the benefits system, FPRS will work to resolve the issue, this may include funding to go towards the arrears.

Issue Resolution - FPRS will endeavour to assist landlords and tenants in finding solutions to issues related to sustaining a tenancy. FPRS will broker an acceptable solution for both parties. We offer an enhanced service to help identify support needs, enabling tenants to sustain their accommodation and prevent homelessness.

Like the above cases, FPRS contacted clients that were assisted in 2021. Of the clients contacted:

- 4 cases still in original tenancy,
- 1 client who did have a positive outcome with debt cleared, has now become homeless for other reasons
- 1 client who the team lost contact with, FPRS provided landlord with advice, and they have been back in touch to say the tenant is still in the original tenancy.

Conclusion

The data shows that after receiving assistance to alleviate homelessness and access private rented accommodation, clients were either able to remain in the property they were assisted into or move positively into alternative tenures. This, once again, evidences the worth of the PRS as a sustainable tenancy source or a stepping stone to more appropriate long-term housing once a homeless situation has been alleviated.

It has to be noted that the rise in cost of rental property, the lack of increase in Local Housing Allowance and cost of living crisis has had an impact on the availability and suitability of PRS for all clients.

Our services are available to both landlords, letting agents and tenants, should you wish more information on any of the services in this report or if you or your tenant(s) require assistance please contact the team and we would be happy to discuss.