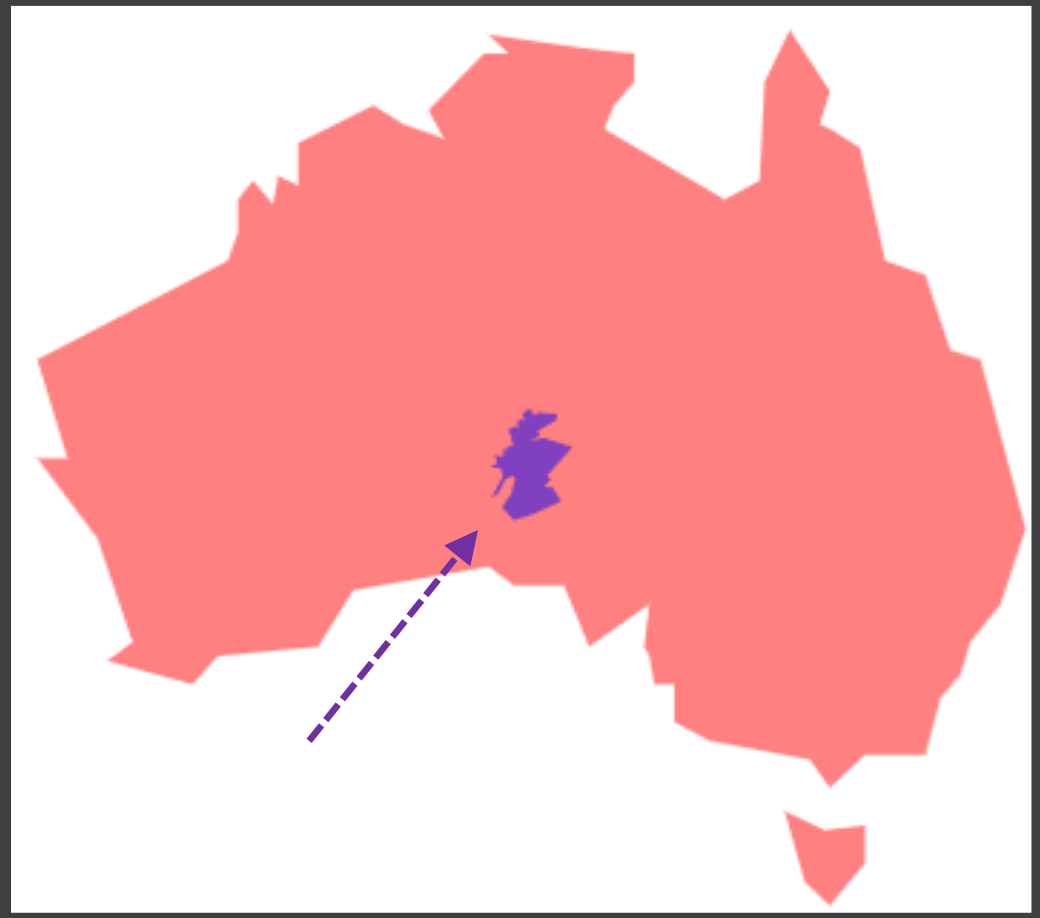


Scotland's Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan

Marion Gibbs Scottish Government

Maggie Brunjes Homeless Network Scotland

Most of us, with the right support, can build and live our lives in an ordinary home as part of an ordinary community

”

45-mins

1. **Homelessness in Scotland today**

Maggie: our context. Snapshot on the scale of homelessness in Scotland, how we define it - and what drives it.

2. **Firm foundations: rights and options**

Marion: 2000-16 timeline of increased rights and a national target. Strong initial impact, then a halt in progress. What did we learn?

3. **Correcting course: prevention and pace**

Maggie: 2017-22 timeline of key policy and practice changes. What is the assumption and intention of this correcting action?

4. **Some reasons to be cheerful…**

Marion: What's working or promising – the enablers that are helping us to move forward.

1/4

Homelessness in Scotland

Forth Bridges

Scotland has a population of around **5.5 million** people.

At least **8% of the population** (1 in 12) **has experienced homelessness** at some point in their lives.

A **broad legal definition** that goes beyond rough sleeping and includes while in **temporary accommodation** while waiting for a settled accommodation offer.

Definition of Homelessness

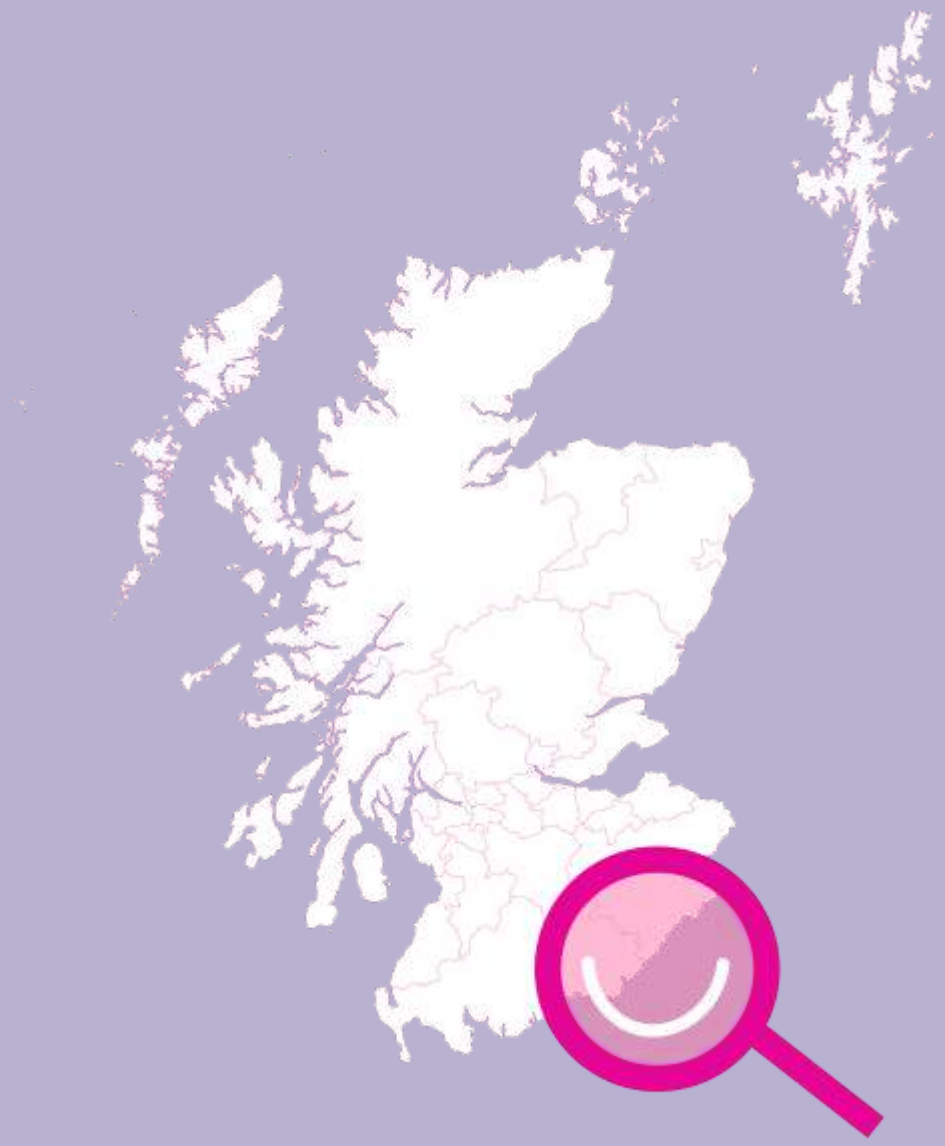
You are considered homeless in Scotland if you:

- Have **no accommodation** that you are legally entitled to occupy with other members of your household.

Or - you have accommodation, but:

- It is not reasonable to continue to occupy it.
- You cannot secure entry to it.
- Occupation of it will lead to abuse or threats.
- It is moveable (such as a caravan or houseboat) and there is nowhere for you to put it.
- It is overcrowded and may endanger the health of you or other members of your household.

What causes homelessness in Scotland?



27,571

Number of households assessed as homeless in Scotland by their local council during **2020-21**

- 13%

Pre-Covid **2019-20**

+ 9%

Increase over 3 year period between **2017-18** and **2019-20.** Follows year-on-year reduction over 8 year period from **2008-09 peak** (by around 40%)

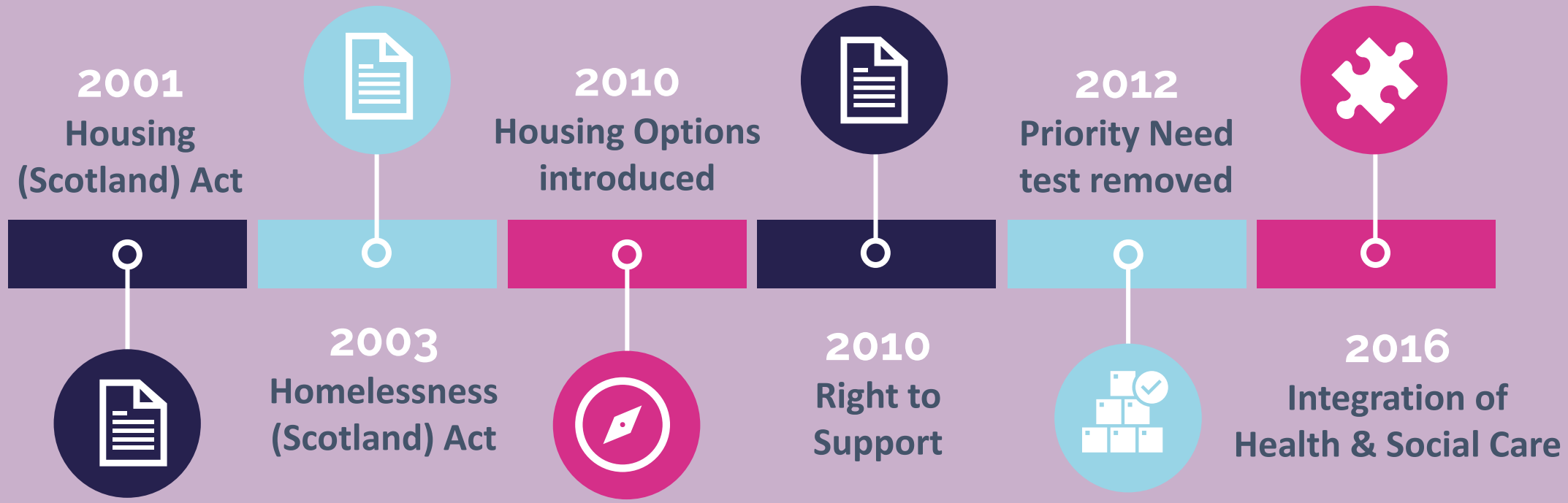
2/4

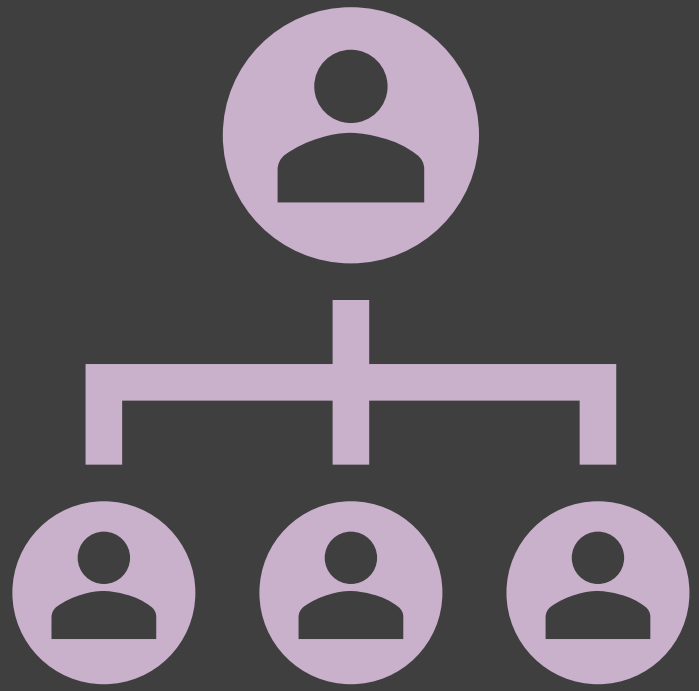
Firm Foundations: Rights & Options

Edinburgh Castle

2000-16:

Scottish Parliament & Government – progressive legislation & policy





National Planning Structure, cross-sector:
Homelessness Prevention Strategy Group

5 regional delivery structures, cross local authority area:
Housing Options Hubs

Impact of stronger rights and options?

- **41% reduction** in the number of statutory homeless applicants:
  - **57,327** in **2007-08**
  - **34,100** by **2016-17**
- **32% reduction** in those applicants assessed as homeless:
  - **41,257** in **2007-08**
  - **28,247** by **2016-17**

BUT trend started to reverse, with more people staying longer in temporary accommodation.

DESPITE more rights and more focused housing options…

What undermined progress?

1. UK Government policy across the same period:

- Suite of **Welfare Reforms** since 2010; benefit caps, bedroom tax.
- Immigration Act and **Hostile Environment** policy.
- Fiscal policy of **austerity** instead of stimulus to respond to recession.

2. And in Scotland…

- **Supply of housing** not meeting current levels of need.
- Over-reliance on **temporary housing** an ‘unintended consequence’ of universal right to housing in 2012.
- Not enough focus on **prevention**.
- The **implementation gap**…

3/4

Correcting Course: Prevention & Pace

Glenfinnan Viaduct

homeless system

from this…

All homelessness starts in a community; poverty is the key driver. But instead of rapidly supporting people there, we built a **homeless system** around them – often with **different types of housing options** than other members of the public. This system has become too layered and difficult to navigate – and expensive for local councils to sustain. It **costs more to keep people homeless** than to resolve it.

to this:

We know which groups of people are **more at risk** of homelessness and we know which communities are more likely to be affected too. Communities with healthy housing and labour markets will **prevent homelessness earlier** - and closer to home. Community connections and relationships also provide a strong protecting factor from homelessness – this means **less time in temporary accommodation**.

community

2017-22:

New focus (1/2)

2017-22:

New focus (2/2)

2018
Scot Gov/COSLA Action Plan

2020
HARSAG reconvenes in light of COVID

2020
Scot Gov/ COSLA EHT Plan Update

2021
Prevention Review Group – new duties

2021
Housing to 2040 Strategy

2021
Housing First National Framework

4 new directions

A **Prioritise Prevention**

B **Settled Housing Options**

C **Equalities Competence**

D **Responsive Systems**

What's the intention?

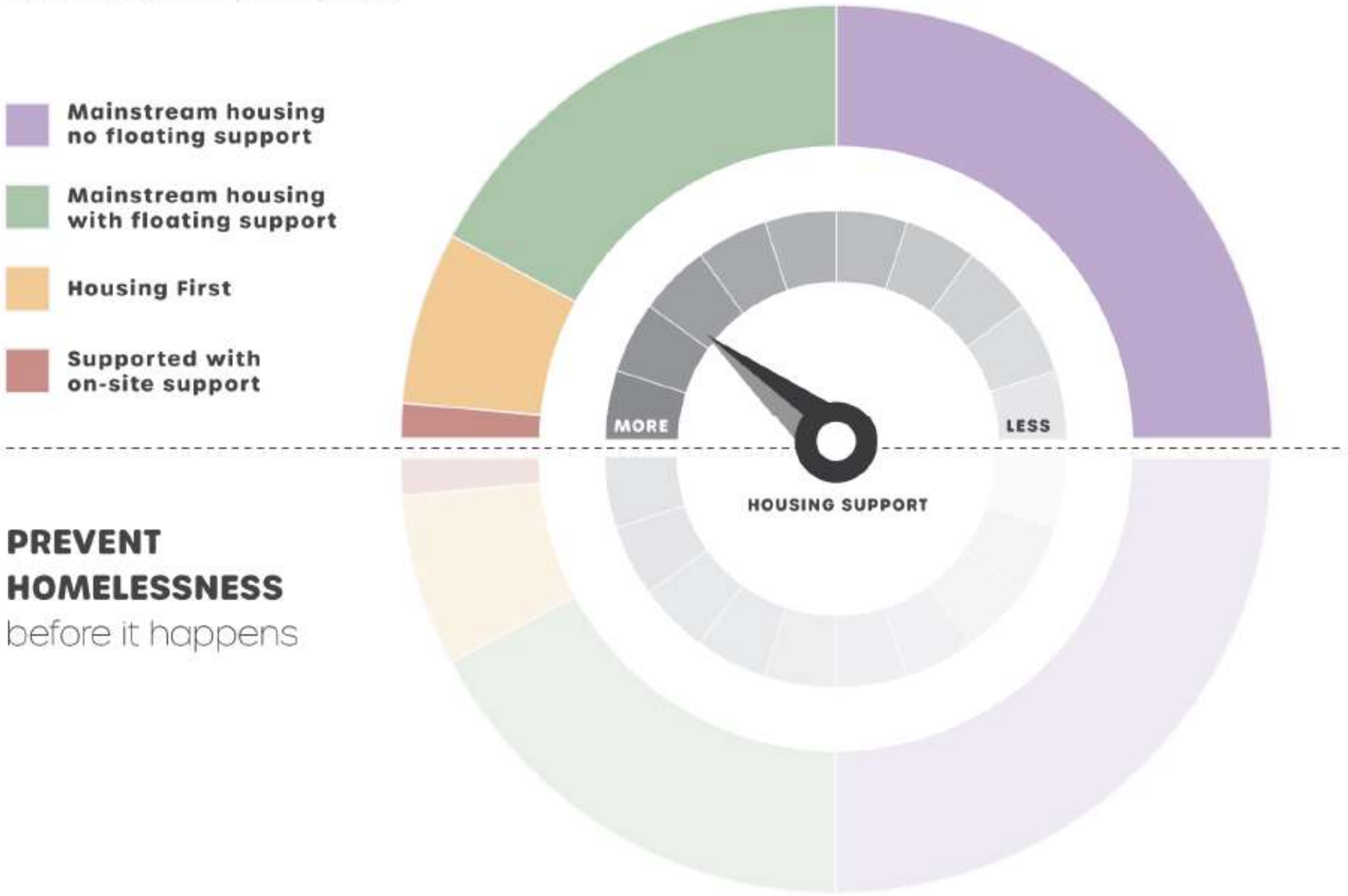
- First, **prevent** someone from becoming homeless.
- **Rapid rehousing** for most people into **ordinary, settled housing** as part of a community.
- Reduce time spent in all **temporary accommodation**.
- **Housing First** as an urgent measure to redress severe disadvantage.
- As much (or little) **support** that people need.

What's the assumption?

- **Less people** become and stay homeless.
- **Better outcomes** for people.
- **Less time** in temporary accommodation.
- **More tenancies** sustained.
- Better response for people whose homelessness is made harder by experiences with **trauma, addiction**.
- More **cost-effective** for national & local government.

Most of us, with the right support, can build and live our lives in an ordinary home as part of an ordinary community.

RAPID REHOUSING
when homelessness
has not been prevented



PREVENT HOMELESSNESS
before it happens

SCALE

Half of people assessed as homeless in Scotland have no support needs

Of those that do, a very small number (2-5%) want shared accommodation

4/4

Some reasons to be cheerful ☺

Glasgow

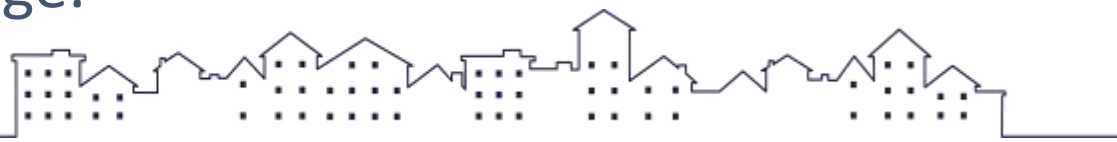
More shared ownership – and outcome monitoring

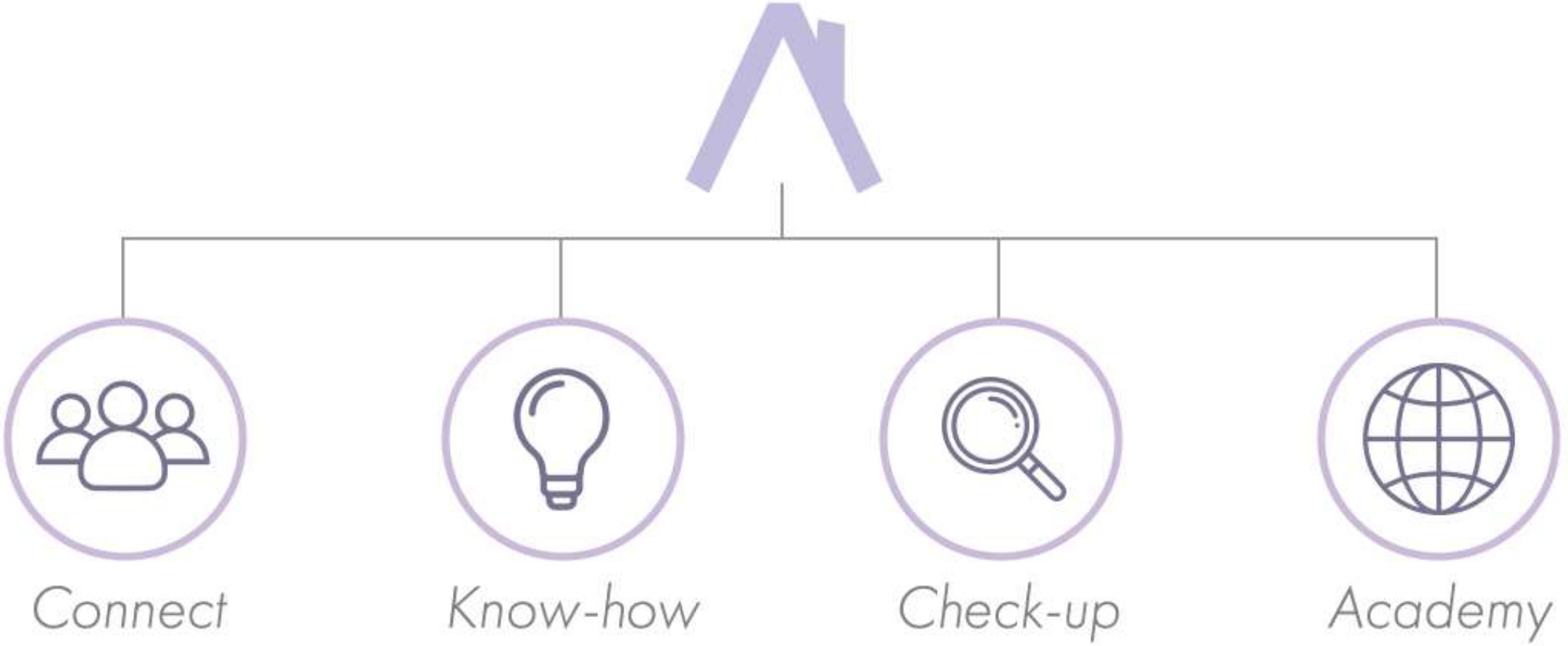
Collective Leadership, including lived experience

Collective Impact, with an Outcomes Framework

As things stand…

1. Lowest levels of **rough sleeping** on record.
2. End of **communal night shelter** provision in Scotland.
3. **High ambition** from national and local government, from housing and health.
4. A strong collective ‘Everyone Home’ formed across the **NGO and academic sector**.
5. New duties to **prevent homelessness,** across the wider public sector, in the pipeline.
6. **Housing First** at the helm to redress severe and multiple disadvantage.





Housing First Scotland

HOUSING
FIRST
SCOTLAND