



CHANGeworks

Changeworks' Affordable Warmth Services Our impact 2020–21

Empowering people to be affordably warm in their homes

Changeworks is Scotland's leading environmental charity delivering solutions for low carbon living. Our vision is for a world where everyone is able to live, work and enjoy life with a low carbon impact.



We achieve life changing outcomes

Changeworks' Affordable Warmth Services team relies on collaborations with our partners and funders to tackle fuel poverty and bring positive change in people's lives. Together we empower people to be affordably warm in their homes.

2,276 people
our affordable warmth
services supported

£531,100
income and cost savings achieved
for people we supported

41%
people told us they were warmer
after our support

123 organisations
referred people to us
covering 7 Local Authority areas

92%
service users were
happy with our support

74%
increase in service user confidence
managing their energy issues

66.4 tonnes
of carbon savings achieved

2 hours
support received on average
by each service user across
14 individual interactions

65%
service users lived in areas with
high income deprivation and
50% had at least one vulnerability

About us

We empower people to be affordably warm

Our team of 15 Affordable Warmth Advisors and 11 volunteers is skilled in working with people on low incomes and in vulnerable situations. We provide tailored in-depth support to improve energy efficiency, reduce energy costs and are specialists in resolving billing and debt issues.

In 2020–21 we supported over **2,270** people and achieved **£531,100** financial savings, helping people be warmer and more confident managing their energy.

Tailored approach

We put people at the heart of our approach, and we work closely with partners and funders to find the right solutions. Advisors are approachable and explain complex information in relatable ways.

Quality and value

With over thirty years' experience delivering energy advice, our dedicated Advisors have detailed energy sector knowledge and more:

- Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice accreditation
- City & Guilds Energy Awareness and Renewable Energy certification
- Disclosure Scotland checks, and vulnerability and equalities training
- Access to Changeworks' experts in behaviour change, future energy systems, monitoring and evaluation and Scottish Government funded energy schemes

“Changeworks provides vital energy advice and advocacy to hundreds of Council tenants annually. The team performs fantastically well, actively overcoming Covid-related challenges, and demonstrating huge positive impacts for our tenants including significant financial energy related savings. It’s a pleasure to work with such a committed team and we have been delighted to partner with Changeworks to deliver the Energy Advice Service contract for our tenants.”

Michael Kellett, City of Edinburgh Council



We deliver a uniquely comprehensive package of support

Organisations refer people needing support

Charities
and third sector
support services

Local Authorities
and Housing
Associations

Energy advice
services like Home
Energy Scotland

We reach people via
our community activity,
delivering advice surgeries,
energy cafés, workshops

People access our support
directly through email,
freephone or self
referral form

Changeworks Affordable Warmth Services

We provide tailored support so householders can afford to heat their homes

Energy efficient
behaviour advice

Warm Home
Discount

Switching and
tariff advice

Priority
Service Register

Energy billing
and debt issues resolved

Accessing grants
for energy saving
measures

Individual grants
and energy credit
vouchers

Referrals for further
support e.g. income
maximisation

Preventing
damp and
condensation

Understanding
heating systems
including renewables

People have warmer homes, better finances and skills to negotiate choices

A year like no other

Fuel poverty is already high in Scotland with 25% of people unable to afford to live in a warm home, resulting in misery, ill health and debt. COVID-19 has amplified issues: with more people at home more energy is used, and incomes have been affected by furlough and job losses.

Continual improvement

Changeworks moved its entire operation to home-based working without disrupting access to support for our services users. Our Affordable Warmth Services embraced new ways of working and built on positive learnings to improve services, user access and value for money.

Increased in-depth support

Demand to support crisis energy issues increased 900% in 2020-21. Advisors spent more time resolving complex energy issues. We helped people access emergency energy credit vouchers, avoid disconnection from their energy supply, and experienced an 85% increase in energy debt cases.

“We’ve seen a huge increase in people in need, people going into debt and being unable to afford their fuel... It’s kind of spiralling I’d say.”

Advice organisation responding to our research: Consumer Energy Debt in Scotland

Strong partner and funder connections

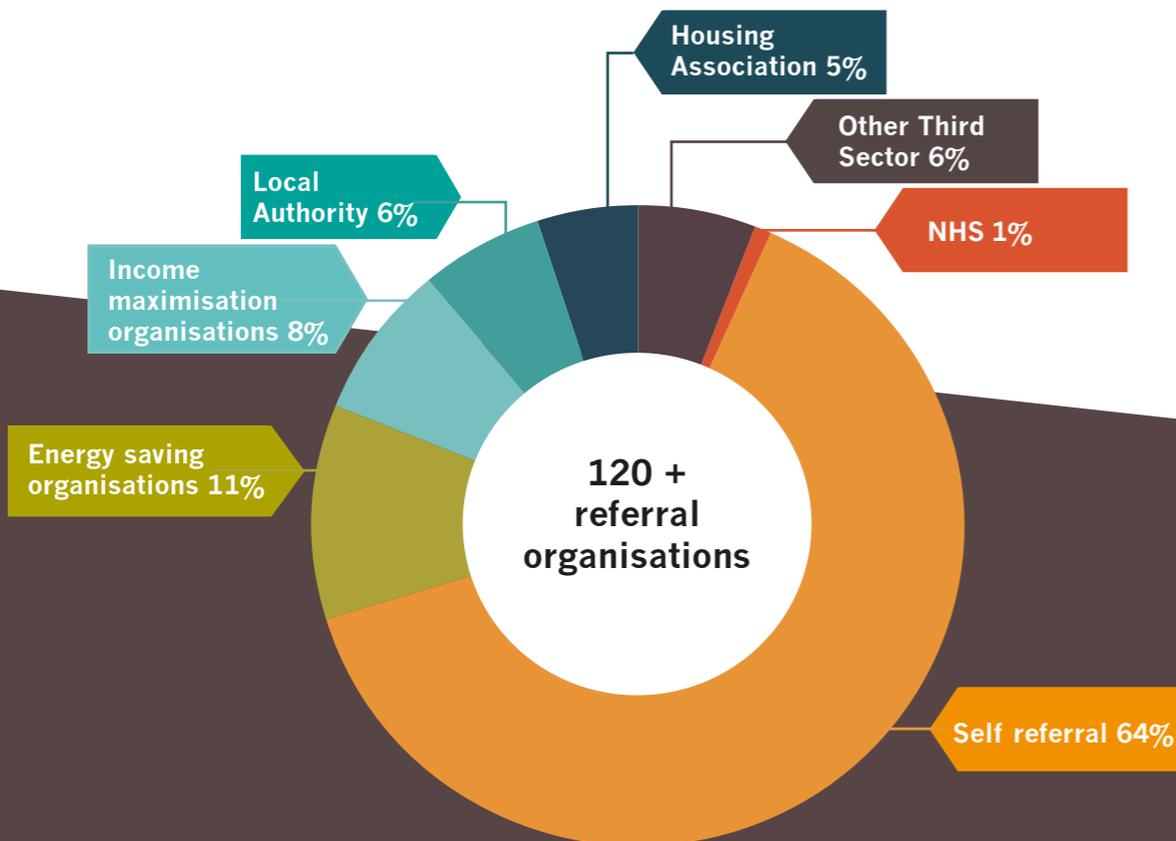
- We became Fuel Bank Foundation partners to access energy credit vouchers for service users
- We helped Housing Associations administer £18,100 through Social Housing Support Funds to help reduce fuel debts
- We worked with our existing funders and partners to ensure support continued seamlessly
- We launched a new region-wide service across South-East Scotland targeting people likely to be affected by COVID-19 impacts.



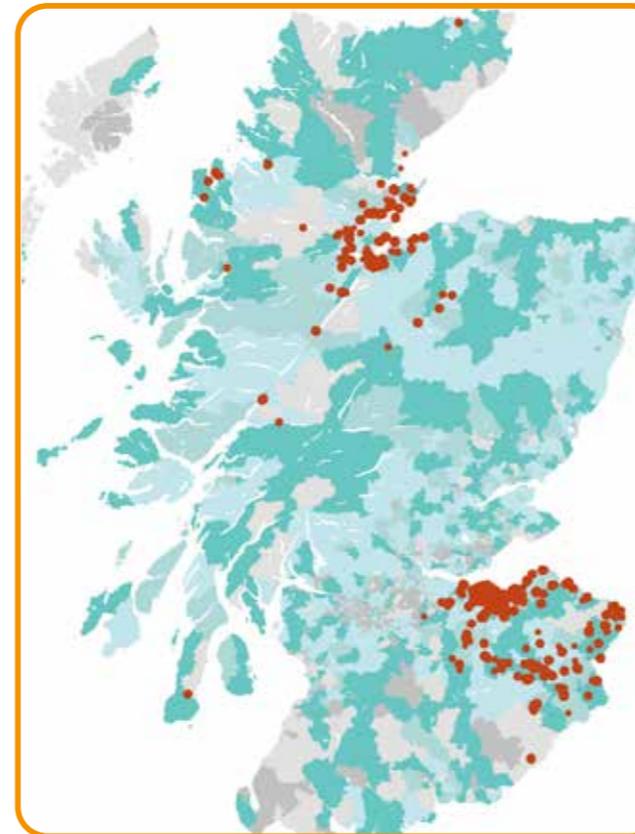
We reach those who need us most

Strong local networks and word of mouth

64% of referrals came directly from our service users in 2020-21 – many requiring emergency support. Winter months saw communities spread the word: people came to us after hearing we'd supported their friends or family in need. Organisation referrals are low in comparison to previous years: the pandemic disrupted community services or forced them to close. This is now starting to change.



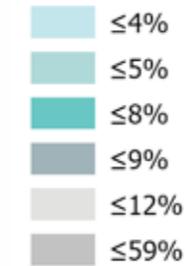
Targeting fuel poverty hot spots



62% of service users lived in areas with high income deprivation.

- People supported by our Advisors

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020



Supporting the most vulnerable

Half of the people we supported had at least one vulnerability, such as low income, disability or long-term illness, were elderly, or had young children.



Delivering early intervention support

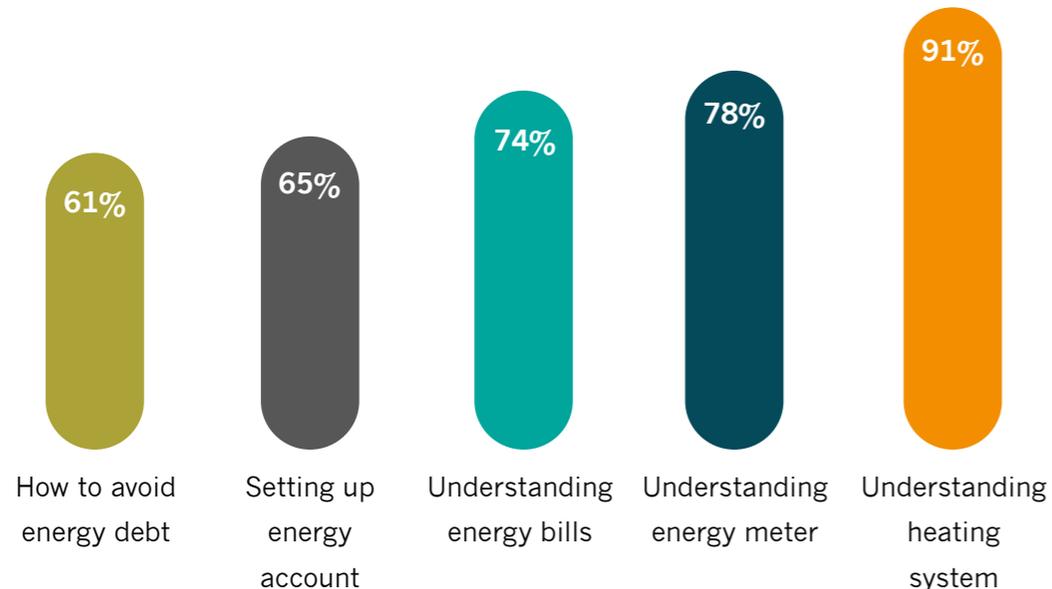
Most people come to us for support with their energy issues. We have started engaging with people earlier when our support can help prevent these energy issues occurring.

New tenants

We consulted 400 social housing tenants who had moved into their property within the year. 80% told us they were concerned about energy prices.

In 2020–21 we evaluated our work supporting new tenants with partners Melville and Eildon Housing Associations and Midlothian Council. We gained valuable insight about integrating energy support into partners' new tenant arrangements. We will build on these learnings in 2021–22.

Advice new tenants want



"I do think that someone should come to your new home and run over what you need to know... I honestly felt I'd been given a house but not shown how to run it. It's a bit like giving someone a car without teaching them how to drive!"

Housing Association tenant

New installs

We supported over 100 social housing tenants to understand newly installed renewables – both solar photovoltaics and battery storage units, and air source heat pumps.

Impacts we achieved for people

We made people warmer at home

41% of service users said they were warm after our support compared to 16% saying this before receiving our support.

We reduced the worry of energy costs by 25%

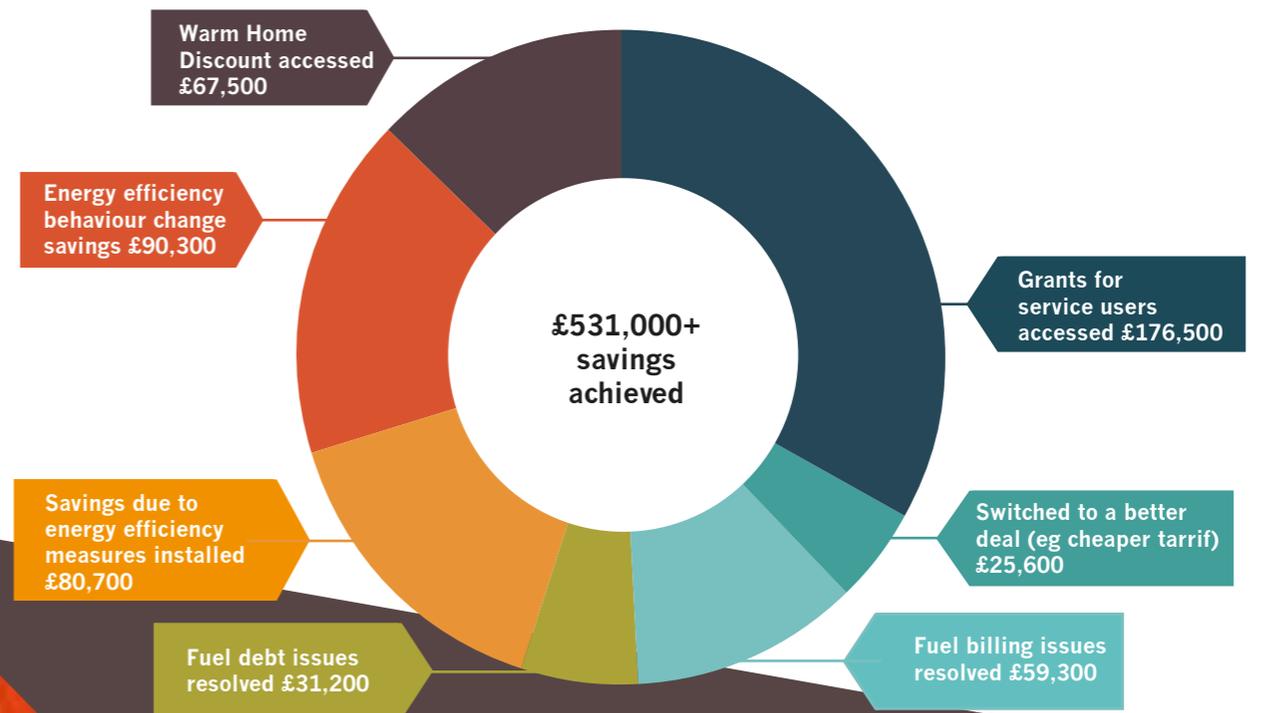
"I was very stressed. Very unstable at the time, very emotional. Changeworks' Advisor was very patient and supportive. I was impressed by his calmness. He worked relentlessly and we got the result I needed in the end. I am incredibly thankful."

Service user

"Changeworks helped me use my heating efficiently. I learned about my boiler controls and heating system timings. It was great to speak with the advisor, really helped my understanding."

Service user

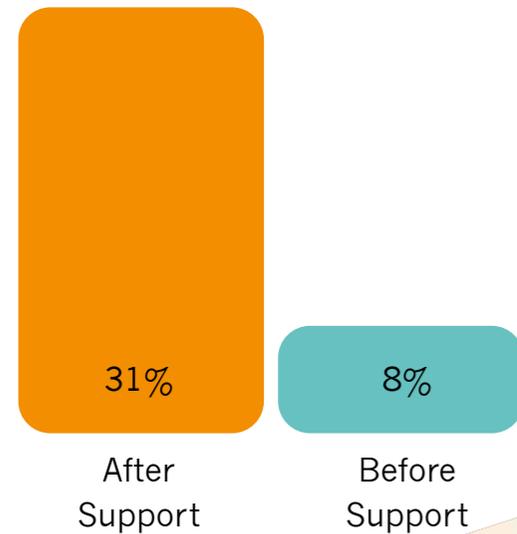
We achieved over £531,000 savings for service users



We empowered people to feel confident managing their energy issues

After support, we saw a 74% increase in service users rating their confidence as high.

Confidence managing energy issues improved



"I learned how to speak to my supplier, how to explain the situation. Changeworks gave me a real boost. I also learned about switching comparison sites. And to check for other deals and the Warm Home Discount."

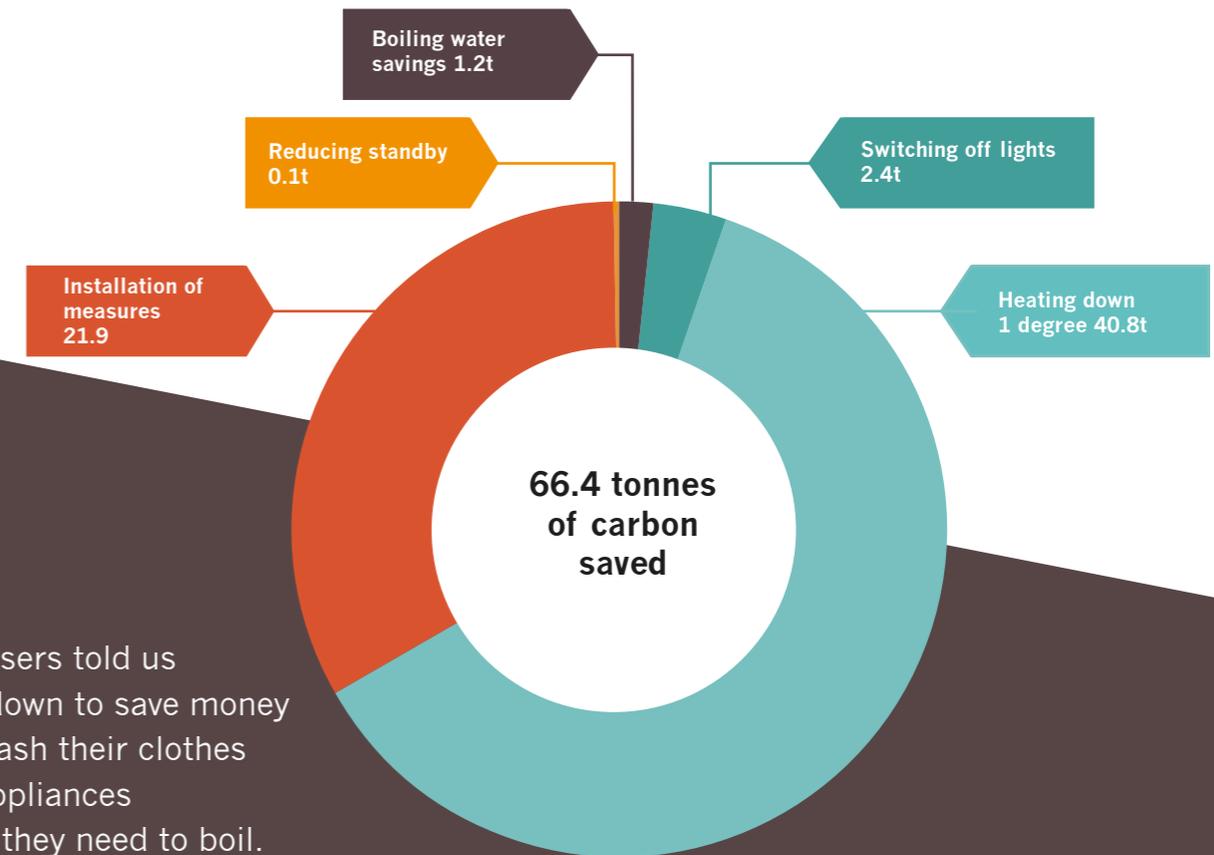
Service user

After receiving our support, service users told us

- 44% turn their room thermostat down to save money
- 25% reduce the temperature to wash their clothes
- 20% stopped using standby for appliances
- 10% fill the kettle only with water they need to boil.

We saved over 66 tonnes of carbon

To calculate the carbon savings we use feedback from service user surveys, and Energy Saving Trust methodology.



Lives turned around

Bob before our support

"I'm on my own and I struggled to pay the leccy. I get Universal Credit but it only goes so far. I had debt on the gas meter and was worried about using the central heating. It got really cold, but I daren't use the electric plug-in heater too much."

Bob's Housing Officer

"We became aware Bob was struggling during routine gas safety checks. With no credit on Bob's meter the engineer couldn't complete his check and had to cap (stop) the gas supply. We partner with Changeworks and knew their Advisor could help."

Liam, Affordable Warmth Advisor

"Talking to Bob I learned he hadn't used the gas for three years. I helped him understand his prepayment meter, explaining a daily standing charge had built up £480 debt over time. I liaised with the energy supplier who agreed to clear the debt as no gas was used. To make Bob's energy affordable, I accessed a £49 energy voucher from his supplier, provided advice on effective heating use and made sure he was on the best tariff."

Bob after our support

"Liam was fantastic. He worked with me and my Housing Association to get my gas uncapped. He also helped me apply for the Warm Home Discount which I hadn't heard about! I'm now comfortable topping my meter up and am properly warm for the first time in three years."

Bob's Housing Officer after our support

"Changeworks' assistance made an immediate impact. It is so encouraging working with organisations and staff like you who make such a difference to our tenants' lives."

Update: Changeworks checked with Bob to see if he was okay six months on. He has no energy issues, has continued to use his gas heating, and topped up during summer to build up credit for this winter.

Impacts achieved for Bob

- £480 standing charge debt cleared
- £140 Warm Home Discount
- £108 energy efficiency advice saving
- £49 energy credit voucher
- Gas supply uncapped; gas heating now in use
- Improved wellbeing living in a warm home
- Reduced anxiety after fuel debt cleared.



Looking to the future

The continuing impacts of COVID-19, rising energy prices, and supporting decarbonised energy in our homes will keep our Affordable Warmth Services team busy in the year ahead.

We will be looking for partners and funders to help maximise impact, focusing on:

- Delivering the right support for anyone struggling to pay their energy bills. We will be engaging people with experience of fuel poverty to help inform service improvements.
- Developing early intervention approaches to help prevent people experiencing fuel poverty. In particular, we want to develop services for vulnerable people moving into a new home.
- Delivering approaches to support a just transition to net zero carbon emissions. The ways in which we generate, store and use energy in the home is changing. Our priority is to support people to understand and engage with these changes, so this shift is inclusive and equitable. Our focus here is on empowering the more disadvantaged to realise benefits of new technologies and new tariffs.

Please get in touch to discuss any aspects of our work. We can support you to deliver low carbon solutions.

Amanda Palmer, Senior Development Officer. apalmer@changeworks.org.uk 07387 020 288

Our thanks

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported and worked with us to make our impacts possible in 2020–21. None of this can be achieved without you.

Funders

Almond Housing Association
Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association
City of Edinburgh Council
East Lothian Council
Edinburgh Integration Joint Board
Eildon Housing Association
Energy Redress Scheme
E.on
Melville Housing Association
Midlothian Council
The National Lottery
NHS Lothian
Port of Leith Housing Association
(via Investing in Communities)
Scotia Gas Network (SGN)
Scottish Borders Council (via Warm
Homes Fund)
Scottish Borders Housing Association
(via Investing in Communities)
ScottishPower
William Grant Foundation

Delivery partners

Citizens Advice Bureau – Central Borders
Citizens Advice Bureau – Dalkeith
Citizens Advice Bureau – Inverness, Badenoch and Strathspey
Citizens Advice Bureau – Peebles and District
Citizens Advice Bureau – Penicuik
Citizens Advice Bureau – Ross and Cromarty
Citizens Advice Bureau – Roxburgh and Berwickshire
Edinburgh Community Food
Eildon Housing Association
Home Energy Scotland
Manor Estates Housing Association
Melville Housing Association
Midlothian Council
NHS Borders, Healthy Living Network
Port of Leith Housing Association
Scottish Borders Council
Scottish Borders Housing Association
Stepping Stones North Edinburgh
Sure Start Midlothian



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