

Emerging Practice Example: The Connect Hub

Organisation: Simon Community Scotland - Connect Hub

Key Rights Applied:

Right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;
Right to an adequate standard of living
Right to private and family life.

Background & Context

The Connect Hub was co-produced alongside women with lived and living experience of homelessness. Their voices shaped every aspect of the space, from the colours on the walls to the model of practice and support offered. Women identified a need for a gendered, safe, relational environment where they could access support without judgement or expectation. The Hub responds to gendered barriers in mainstream services and embeds a human rights-based approach consistent with the National Collaborative Charter of Rights.

Use of the Charter of Rights and Toolkit

The team applied key principles from the FAIR model and the AAAQ framework, ensuring services are Available, Accessible, Acceptable and of Quality.

Coproduction ensured participation and empowerment, with the Hub continually adapted in response to the women's experiences.

Results to Date

Over its first operational year, the Connect Hub has provided:

- **1,850 visits and 5,390 support interventions**
- **248 unique women supported**
- **393 toiletry packs, 547 clothing essentials, 1,008 community meals, 143 food parcels**
- **207 housing-related supports and 90 emergency accommodation referrals**
- Support for women to move from homelessness into permanent or supported accommodation
- Extensive healthcare access, including drop-in clinics and advocacy around MAT Standards

Women consistently describe the Hub as a lifeline, a safe space, and somewhere they **“feel wanted”** and **“finally get the help and support you need”**

Lessons Learned

- Coproduction creates spaces that women genuinely trust and use.
- A human-rights based approach must be practical - meeting basic needs, reducing barriers, and supporting dignity.
- Gender responsive environments are essential; without them, many women struggle to engage from mainstream services.

Recommendations for Others

- **Start with lived and living experience:** co-design every stage.
- Apply **FAIR** and **AAAQ** early, keep the approach simple and grounded in what people say they need.
- Create **non-transactional, gender-sensitive spaces** where women can connect without pressure.
- Embed rights-based practice across all partners involved in homelessness, health, and social care.