

# **DUNDEE HOUSING EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

**A Community-Led Action  
Plan Aimed At Ending Dundee's  
Housing Emergency**

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## Lived experience of Dundee's housing emergency

"I believe Dundee City Council is in a housing emergency. I'm a mum of two from Dundee, and I've been on the council housing waiting list for 14 years, moving from one private let to another. It's financially crippling.

Last year, after experiencing domestic abuse, I faced homelessness. In December 2024, I approached the council for temporary accommodation.

Then a few months later I was told I had to accept the temporary property on the spot just to make a homeless application, then after 28 days I would be put back into my home, before being moved again.

I was in floods of tears. One of my children is autistic and uprooting them so many times would have been upsetting. But the area isn't safe, they don't leave the house. This is why we needed to be moved.

I was also told I'd have to pay both my private rent and the temporary accommodation rent. I just couldn't do that."

**If you met a Dundee City Council decision maker, what would you want them to hear?**

"They need to build more social housing."

"There is a crisis and you need to admit it, because it is the truth and we are living it"

"Lilly Walker centre was really intimidating. A google search shows lots of bad comments, 'it left me scared to attend. What I read online is what happened"

"They should listen to what you have to say not find reasons to not help you."

"What barriers have you encountered in resolving your or others you know's situation? "

"Online systems, you can't speak to anyone there are no offices to go to"

**What could have made a difference or helped your or others situation?**

"Be more co-operative, better listening - not having to repeat the story over and over, take it in full the first time."

"Very difficult form, tricky to fill in and didn't know my rights"

"Having someone face to face who could listen and say 'I have your back, let us think about how we can help, these are your options"

"Regular communication from staff to keep people hopeful and supported."

**What challenges have you, or people you know, faced in relation to housing?**

"Don't understand what they are saying, it is like they don't want to listen."

"No communication to keep you informed, they didn't take the application initially."

"Don't understand the (common) housing register, what are the procedures, what are the rights, what else do I need to complete."

**Would you feel comfortable describing your own housing situation, or that of people you know, and your/their experience of the current housing emergency?**

"Moved to Dundee as an asylum seeker as family disowned me, was previously an international student in Glasgow. Couldn't continue studies or stay with family had to come stay with a friend."

"I've been sofa surfing on friend's couch in her one-bedroom flat. Landlord doesn't know I am there, I could be asked to leave at any time. I have no work."

"When got refugee decision, applied for UC and applied for homelessness. Initially told by DCC staff at Lilly Walker that it would take 3-4 years to get a house. (no homeless application taken) no housing options discussion. Eventually explained was homeless couldn't wait 3-4 years and was homeless. Advised temp would be very expensive and not affordable on UC. Did not hear back, had to call back 3 months later and was advised was given stat homeless decision but no discussion around what next."

**In what ways has homelessness or insecure housing affected you or people you know?**

"Left unable to move on with life, constantly stressed about insecurity."

## **Dundee is in the grip of a housing emergency.**

Every day, people across the city are being failed by a housing system that should protect them: people's rights to suitable temporary accommodation being left unmet, tenants left powerless in the face of unaffordable rents and declining conditions, and families left with little hope of securing a social home that meets their needs.

These experiences are symptoms of a housing system that has been stretched to breaking point by years of austerity, decades of underinvestment, and political choices that have left too many people without a safe, secure and affordable home.

The Dundee Housing Emergency Coalition brings together experts by experience, frontline workers, community and civic organisations, trade unions, and students to understand what is happening on the ground.

Through two in-person engagement sessions and a survey, those living and working closest to Dundee's housing emergency outlined what is wrong with housing in Dundee today, and how we move to a better future. The experiences of communities in Dundee form the backbone of this document, which is a call to action for all of us.

The reality is that housing in Dundee does not meet people's needs, services are overwhelmed, rights are not being realised, and too many people are being left to navigate impossible situations alone.

Our goal is not just to highlight problems, but to advocate for change, work alongside and support Dundee City Council and partners in taking coordinated, effective action that will end Dundee's housing emergency. We see this as a partnership that will ultimately combine the expertise of people with lived experience, frontline services, and community organisations with the Council's powers, resources and influence to make real change happen.

We recognise that Dundee City Council already has plans and strategies in place, and that there is good work underway. But a systemic failure requires a systemic response. We believe that declaring a housing emergency is a commitment to responding with the urgency and scale that an emergency requires.

Our aim is to help Dundee City Council move to a more coordinated emergency response that protects people now, strengthens services, and lays the foundations for long-term systemic change. Some of the solutions are outwith the gift of Dundee City Council: more capital funding, more funding for local services, and changes to Local Housing Allowance are vital in tackling the emergency. But the Council also has powerful levers it can pull today to improve housing conditions, strengthen support, enforce rights, and to rebuild trust.

The cost of inaction is paid for by the people who are already being pushed to the very edge by this emergency.

This document sets out the scale of the problem as people and organisations in Dundee experience it, and the steps that they believe are needed to address it.

It is time for the city – and for Dundee City Council – to make that change a reality.

Dundee cannot wait any longer.

## Context

Scotland is in the grip of a housing emergency.<sup>1</sup>

A household becomes homeless **every 15 minutes**.

In 2024/25 alone, **34,067 applications** were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Over the same year, **15,046 children experienced homelessness**, meaning that on average 41 children lost their home every single day.<sup>2</sup>

Over **10,000 children are stuck in temporary accommodation**, which we know can damage their safety, health and education, and has lifelong impacts.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, **110,000 households** remain on waiting lists for a social home.



Among Scotland's four largest cities, Dundee is the only one that has not declared a housing emergency. As a result, Dundee City Council does not yet have a co-ordinated action plan that they can unite the community behind to demand from the UK and Scottish governments what the city needs to address the situation with seriousness that the Coalition believes is required.

According to Scottish Government figures, the pressures in Dundee are stark:<sup>4</sup>

- In 2024/25 there were 1,377 applications assessed as homeless or at risk of homelessness, a 24% increase on the previous year.
- As of 31 March 2025, 431 households were living in temporary accommodation, including 225 children.
- Dundee recorded 270 breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order in the year to March 2025 – failing to provide people with the suitable temporary accommodation they are entitled to by law.
- Private rent for an average 3-bedroom property in Dundee and Angus has risen 64.3% since 2010 – 10% above CPI for this period. Local Housing Allowance has failed to keep pace and is currently just £810 per month, leaving families facing a monthly shortfall of around £230 to access a typical three-bedroom home in the private rented sector.<sup>5</sup>

We already know that these issues affect minoritised groups in our society more acutely than they might others, including

disabled people, families with children, care leavers and Black People and People of Colour (BPoC). Nationally, we know that BPoC are often further from their housing rights than their white counterparts, reflecting a housing system and society that continues to deepen racial inequality rather than work to alleviate it.<sup>6</sup>

It is not only organisations campaigning on behalf of those impacted by the housing emergency who are raising concerns. In the ALACHO 'RAG' survey, Dundee City Council's own housing staff consistently self-assessed their own service as 'Red' ("struggling to cope – frequent statutory breaches").<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, the Scottish Housing Regulator has stated that Dundee City Council's homelessness service is one of seven authorities "at heightened risk of systemic failure", meaning that they believe there is "a risk that the demands on [Dundee City Council] could shortly exceed their capacity to respond".<sup>8</sup>

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1. Shelter Scotland (2025) Homelessness in Scotland

2. Scottish Government (2025) Homelessness in Scotland: 2024-25

3. Svirydzenka, Prof N. (De Montfort University), Lakhanpaul, Prof M. (University College London), and Williams, Dr J. (De Montfort University) (2025) In Their Own Words: Children's Experiences in Temporary Accommodation. Shelter Scotland.

4. Scottish Government (2025) Homelessness in Scotland: 2024-25

5. The Scottish Government, 2025 Private Sector Rent Statistics, Scotland, 2010 to 2024

6. Shelter Scotland and the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (2025) Systemic Racism and Scotland's Housing Emergency.

7. ALACHO (2025) Senior Officers RAG Survey November 2025, Homelessness Services (not available online)

8. Scottish Housing Regulator (2025) Dundee City Council Engagement Plan

Current action on delivering the homes Dundee needs is unfortunately not meeting the scale of the challenge in the city. While the legacy of national budget cuts continues to have an impact, it is troubling to note that there have been zero starts of new social sector properties in Dundee in the year to September 2025<sup>9</sup>, while figures recently published by the Scottish Government indicate the city has only been able to purchase 50 new properties since 2023 via acquisitions.<sup>10</sup>

## Existing strategies

The Local Housing Strategy 2025–2030 Consultation<sup>11</sup> and the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2026–2031<sup>12</sup> set out a coherent and evidence-based framework for improving housing supply, housing quality, energy efficiency, homelessness prevention, and support for people with specific needs. These documents reflect a strong understanding of Dundee’s housing pressures, informed by robust analysis through the Housing Need and Demand Assessment and sustained engagement with statutory and third-sector partners.

Dundee City Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2026–2031 sets out a programme for the delivery of 739 social rented homes and 46 mid-market rent homes, with potential for more should funding be made available.

Whilst long term strategy is vital, set against rising homelessness, sustained reliance on temporary accommodation, and increasing housing insecurity in the city, we need more homes, more quickly than what is currently being proposed.

The Plan also identifies persistent structural constraints on delivery, including high construction and labour costs, land availability, and infrastructure and drainage challenges, alongside broadly flat funding assumptions beyond 2025–26. While we acknowledge the need for other levels of government to deliver the additional funding to support the city's programme, the council must also mobilise all resources and tools at its disposal to deliver the homes the city needs. We believe acknowledging the emergency situation the city is in will give the council the political impetus to take those decisions.

We acknowledge that officers are operating within a housing system defined by long-term underinvestment, rising construction and land costs, constrained capital and revenue budgets, and additional statutory responsibilities. We acknowledge that some progress has been made in recent years, with affordable homes delivered, improvements in housing quality

and energy efficiency, reductions in voids, and the expansion of homelessness responses such as Housing First and rapid rehousing pathways.

At the same time, the evidence set out within the Council's own strategies demonstrates that demand continues to outstrip supply across multiple tenures; homelessness pressures are intensifying rather than easing, and too many people in Dundee remain trapped in temporary, insecure, or unsuitable accommodation. The scale of housing need identified in Dundee means that the current trajectory of delivery is not sufficient to prevent further escalation of harm. The first-hand accounts our Coalition has heard confirms what communities across Dundee have been experiencing for some time: that Dundee's housing system is no longer coping.

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9. The Scottish Government (2025) Housing Statistics for Scotland  
Quarterly Update: New Housebuilding and Affordable Housing  
Supply to end September 2025

10. Scottish Parliament (2025) Written Answer S6W-42254

11. Dundee City Council (2025) Dundee City Council's Consultation  
on the Draft Local Housing Strategy for 2025–2030

12. Dundee City Council (2025) Strategic Housing Investment Plan  
2026–2031

## The need for a community-led Housing Emergency Action Plan

It is in this context that we argue the city must now move beyond business-as-usual approaches and adopt an explicit emergency footing. Emergency action is an acknowledgement that current interventions cannot deliver the whole-system approach that the Coalition believes is needed. Incremental progress over five-year strategy cycles cannot, on its own, meet the immediate or future needs of households that are at risk of homelessness, children growing up in temporary accommodation, or communities experiencing the cumulative impacts of poverty, poor housing conditions, and insecurity.

The coalition has therefore developed a community-led Housing Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) which seeks to complement and strengthen existing Council strategies by calling for accelerated delivery, exceptional decision-making, and the removal of barriers that slow progress in non-emergency conditions. It emphasises the need for rapid, preventative interventions; the use of emergency powers and flexibilities where available; stronger coordination beyond housing and homelessness teams, across

the council as a whole; and the mobilisation of community capacity as a core part of the response.

This should be a shared starting point for action, building on and linking existing strategies. We believe that the oversight and co-ordination a HEAP brings is essential if the city is to meet its statutory duties, reduce harm, and uphold the right of everyone in Dundee to a safe, secure, and affordable home.

## **Dundee's Housing Emergency Action Plan**

The Dundee Housing Emergency Coalition was formed in mid-2025 to co-ordinate action to end Dundee's housing emergency. This coalition brought together organisations from every sector across Dundee to answer what the situation looked like right now, what ending the housing emergency in our city looked like, and identifying the action required to help us transition to that point.

Through a survey and in-person engagement sessions, participants and citizens identified multiple areas where action is needed if housing outcomes are to be improved and if the housing emergency is to be tackled in Dundee. The following section details the issues raised via that engagement and offers solutions that we believe the council should pursue to tackle these problems.

## Dundee's Housing Emergency

This section reflects the lived experiences of residents from across Dundee, the professional insight of those who are supporting them, and the structural barriers that we believe must be addressed if we are to see any meaningful progress towards tackling the issues that are detrimental to our city and to its citizens.

Together, these themes provide what we believe are a constructive framework for coordinated and city-wide action to tackle Dundee's housing emergency. By firstly exploring the problems people have identified, we can then begin to focus on solutions. Not having enough affordable housing was identified as the top symptom of Dundee's housing emergency, with 89% of respondents selecting this as a description of the challenge.

This was followed by private rents being unaffordable (78%), long waiting lists for council housing (75%), and the poor condition of the available housing stock in the city (67%). The location of affordable housing was also a strong theme, identified by 60.3% of respondents. Importantly, the way respondents described the housing emergency points to a shared understanding that the crisis is systemic rather than confined to any single tenure or group. The prominence of affordability and supply issues indicates widespread concern that the current housing system is failing to meet need at multiple levels, while the emphasis on housing condition underlines that the problem is not simply one of numbers, but of quality, safety, and suitability. This reinforces the case for a holistic approach that addresses the full housing pathway, from prevention and affordability through to standards, security, and long-term sustainability.

## Social housing supply

Dundee is currently experiencing a chronic shortage of social housing that affects multiple groups across the city. Demand exceeds supply, leaving many households unable to access secure, affordable, and suitable accommodation. The overreliance on the private rented sector (PRS) is a direct consequence of this gap, placing households in housing that may be unaffordable, too temporary, or physically unsuitable for the needs of households. Families, single adults, care leavers, students, and individuals leaving institutions such as prisons or asylum accommodation are all disproportionately affected.

A central feature of this shortage is the mismatch between the homes available and the households requiring them. Properties of the right size and configuration are limited, meaning that families often remain in overcrowded or inadequate housing for extended periods. Smaller households may find themselves housed in larger properties with limited mobility, while larger families face the opposite problem: no available home of sufficient size.

The shortage of social housing also exacerbates pressures on temporary accommodation. As the number of households waiting for permanent homes rises, the

reliance on independently operated hostels, emergency placements, and unsuitable temporary accommodation increases.

Households with higher support needs, those experiencing poverty, BPoC and those already experiencing discrimination have this inequity further entrenched, while some are forced to enter the private rented sector at high cost, often in locations that separate them from employment, education, or support networks. Limited access to social housing creates conditions in which housing is weaponised and already marginalised groups are blamed, rather than the wider, systemic issues. This underscores the city-wide impact of social housing scarcity beyond individual housing outcomes



The council must increase the supply of social housing to reduce housing need, tackle homelessness and reduce the temporary accommodation backlog. To achieve this, the council must:

- Make use of all available capital resources to buy and build the social homes Dundee requires, with the explicit goal of reducing affordable housing need in the city.
- Increase the supply of new homes, ensuring they are well designed, of high quality, and rooted in a strong sense of place, with a mix of dwelling sizes that support residents at all stages of life.
- Expand existing work to acquire homes from the open market, prioritising the purchase of properties that can be used to reduce the number of families with children in temporary accommodation.
- Ensure new social housing is of the right size, in the right places, and is accessible and adaptable so that it meets the needs of Dundee's population.
- Continue working alongside Registered Social Landlords to maximise development of new social housing in Dundee.
- Invest in the council's planning department to ensure staff are better able to progress planning applications in a timely manner, helping to accelerate the delivery of social homes, and to support the department's ability to secure high quality design outcomes.
- Take action to address overcrowding and underoccupancy, such as through incentivising downsizing when in the interests of the household to free up larger housing.
- Explore options to utilise additional tax powers to boost delivery of new social and affordable homes, learning from best practice in other local authorities.
- Advocate with Scottish and UK Governments to deliver the long-term funding needed to deliver the scale of new housing that Dundee requires.

## Disrepair and existing housing stock

The quality of housing in the city is an urgent challenge. Too many homes, across all tenures, are in poor or deteriorating condition. This issue is not isolated, but systemic, long-standing, and worsening, with direct consequences for residents' health, wellbeing, and stability.

Damp, mould, poor ventilation, inadequate insulation, persistent draughts, defective heating systems, electrical faults, and structural issues are frequent concerns, with certain issues deepened by fuel poverty and a consequence of decades of underinvestment. In many cases reported by the Coalition, these problems have been present for years and have been reported repeatedly without resolution. Families are forced to live with chronic mould that cannot be mitigated due to fundamental building defects, and older residents experience severe respiratory illness linked to damp and cold homes. Temporary accommodation includes units with broken appliances, outdated heating, or damp, while some placements are located far from essential services and the household's support networks.

In social housing, long-standing repairs backlogs are a major driver of poor living conditions. The process for reporting and escalating repairs can be burdensome and inaccessible, leaving residents feeling unheard or dismissed. At the extreme end, unresolved disrepair can be linked directly to hospital admissions, deteriorating mental health, and child health issues.

Multi-storey flats are a particular concern: the removal or reduction of concierge and on-site management services has left communal areas neglected, increasing safety risks, reducing resident satisfaction, and contributing to an overall sense of deterioration.

The private rented sector presents parallel pressure. Many properties, especially older stock, are reported to be in chronic disrepair with landlords failing to bring these up to standard. Tenants are living with unsafe or unhealthy conditions due to a combination of poor enforcement, limited inspection capacity, and fear of retaliation through rent rises or eviction.

Voids and empty homes add further challenges. Too many potentially usable properties sit empty due to slow refurbishment, disrepair, or underinvestment. This not only reduces overall supply but also contributes to neighbourhood decline, antisocial behaviour, and reduced confidence in local housing management.

Urgent investment is required to address disrepair across all tenures, with the city's housing stock suffering from decades of underinvestment and years of austerity from a national level. All of this has impacted on the council's ability to maintain stock to the levels that residents should be able to expect. To achieve change, the council must:

- Take the lead in delivering on Awaab's Law in relation to damp and mould in the social sector, in advance of stronger legal requirements being enforced nationally.
- Invest in frontline repairs teams so maintenance can be carried out swiftly and to the highest standard, meeting at least the Scottish average for repair times and for homes meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.
- Create a 'One Stop Shop' for repair and maintenance reporting structures, and to available welfare support, so that residents know what is available and how to access this.
- Lobby the Scottish Government to devolve powers to local authorities, allowing them to process compulsory repair orders here in Dundee
- Increase the capacity of the council's Private Rented Sector team to enable more landlord engagement work to improve practice, ensure properties in the PRS meet minimum standards and that private tenant rights are realised, including allowing PRS team to better respond to local concerns when necessary.
- Recognise that lack of enforcement leads to poor quality rental housing, and enforce safety and maintenance standards in the PRS, including through exploration of greater roles for factors in flats and tenements.
- Continue investment in the council's empty homes team to ensure more privately owned empty properties are brought back into productive use in the city, particularly in city centre locations above businesses as a tool to increase the number of people living in our city centre, as well as being more proactive in use of compulsory purchase powers, learning from best practice in other local authorities.
- Turn void properties around more quickly to effectively utilise existing social housing stock, bringing the average time to re-let homes in line with the Scottish average as a minimum.
- Invest in appropriate energy efficiency and retrofitting programmes as part of repairing strategies, to tackle fuel poverty, ensuring that installers are properly trained and fully accredited
- Providing the funding and support required to meet the accessibility needs of disabled residents via adaptations.

## Housing support and access to services

Access to housing support services in Dundee was described as inconsistent, fragmented, and increasingly difficult to navigate. People experiencing housing insecurity may encounter complex processes, limited face-to-face support, and delays that escalate rather than prevent crisis.

Housing services are often accessed only once a situation has reached emergency point, with limited early intervention and people unable to secure advice or practical support until they are at imminent risk of homelessness. This reactive approach can increase pressure on statutory services and results in worse outcomes for households who might otherwise have been able to sustain existing tenancies.

Application processes, assessments, and follow-up communication are heavily digitised, can be difficult to understand and signposting is often not in place. For many households, particularly for those with limited digital access, language barriers, or additional support needs, this creates an effective barrier to assistance. Reduced local, face-to-face provision undermines trust and prevents sustained engagement with services. Delays in responses and decision-making due to staff being overstretched further exacerbate insecurity, leaving people in prolonged periods of uncertainty.

There are gaps in housing support once people are within the system. Support to navigate housing options, understand eligibility, challenge decisions, or prepare for tenancy sustainment is uneven, so households can become stuck in unsuitable accommodation, temporary placements, or unsafe private rented sector tenancies with limited support to move forward. A perceived lack of transparency over allocations policies adds to these difficulties.

Access to housing support is particularly constrained for students and young people. University housing support services are inundated, while coordination between educational institutions, the council, and third-sector organisations is observed to be limited. This can lead to students and young people remaining in unsafe or unsuitable accommodation or exiting tenancies without adequate support.

Too often, people are unable to access housing support when they need it, with the council suffering from decades of underfunding and staff being expected to do more with less. At the sharp end of this, people are left feeling unsupported and unsure where to turn for help. To tackle these issues, Dundee City Council must:

- Restore face-to-face housing support including locally based housing officers and outreach services.
- Simplify access to housing services via a co-designed process including testing with people with lived experience to ensure accessibility, with clear and transparent processes that do not rely solely on digital engagement, recognising that many households face barriers to online systems
- Fully commit to early intervention by responding to warning signs such as council tax debt and rent arrears before these become full crises.
- Review and improve housing allocation processes to improve transparency and ensure homes meet the needs of households.
- Reintroduce on-site management and concierge services in multi-storey blocks to improve safety and support responsiveness.
- Work alongside RSLs, universities and the third sector to provide consistent pathways of support, so individuals receive the same quality of support and advice on their housing options.
- Improve the availability of supported housing for young adults with disabilities to enable independent living in their own neighbourhood.
- Consider the rezoning of brownfield sites within the city from commercial development to prioritise social housing development.

## Access to wider support services

Housing insecurity is closely connected to limited access to wider support services, including health, mental health, addiction services, education, and employment support. These gaps can significantly undermine people's ability to secure and sustain safe housing. With the consequences of the pandemic and cost of living crisis, and nearly two decades of UK-wide austerity policies continuing to impact on people's lives, accessing wider support services is more necessary, but unfortunately more strained, than ever.

There is reported to be limited access to timely mental health support which reduces people's capacity to engage with housing processes, maintain tenancies, or navigate complex systems – further impacted by poor housing outcomes. Physical health is similarly affected. Unsafe or unsuitable housing conditions contribute to worsening health outcomes, while difficulties accessing health services compound the impact.

There are gaps in access to addiction support and other specialist services. Where these services are unavailable, fragmented, or difficult to access, people are more likely to experience repeated housing instability. The lack of coordinated support across services increases the risk of people cycling between insecure housing and homelessness.

Education, employment, and skills support are also insufficiently connected to housing support. Economic hardship and employment barriers are consistent factors, and without accessible support to improve tenancy sustainment skills or employment prospects, households remain trapped in poverty and housing insecurity.

People report support systems operating in silos, requiring individuals to navigate multiple agencies during periods of crisis. This lack of coordination leaves people without the holistic support required to stabilise their lives and sustain housing over the longer term.

Dundee's Housing Emergency Action Plan reflects the need for a whole-council and whole-city approach to ensuring people have the support they need to maintain or begin tenancies. To achieve this, the council must:

- Put housing at the heart of strategies across the council that inform health, mental health, addiction, social care and education, acknowledging the impact that having a safe, secure home can have across these services.
- Ensure housing services work in a joined-up way with wider support services to ensure holistic, coordinated responses rather than fragmented interventions.
- Fully fund teams responsible for supporting people's transition from institutional settings such as prison, rehabilitation centres or asylum accommodation, and young care leavers, to ensure housing support is delivered from day one.
- Continue to advocate with Scottish Government for additional resources to support local services and make full use of all tax levers to maximise the council's budget.
- Develop a co-ordinated housing emergency workforce plan, to ensure the council can hire and retain apprentices and staff across the local authority to assist in the building, maintenance and wraparound support needed for a fully functioning housing system.

## Accessing housing rights

A core barrier for many people in Dundee is a lack of knowledge and practical support to access their housing rights. Coalition partners noted that residents are frequently unable to understand their legal entitlements in the private rented sector, student accommodation, social housing, or temporary accommodation. This lack of awareness leaves people vulnerable to exploitation, prevents them from challenging poor conditions, and contributes to entrenched cycles of housing insecurity.

Those overrepresented in the PRS, such as students and young people, are often unaware of rights relating to rent, deposit protection, repairs, or eviction procedures. In practice, this means tenants often accept substandard accommodation or are subject to unfair practices because they do not know how to challenge them.

For care leavers, prison leavers, asylum accommodation leavers, and survivors of trafficking, the situation is particularly acute. Many people are discharged from institutional settings without clear guidance, advocacy, or support, leaving them at immediate risk of homelessness or inappropriate housing – in the case of asylum accommodation, homelessness is the only guaranteed outcome



of that process. The complexity of housing and benefits systems, combined with limited support from statutory services, compounds the problem.

The cumulative effect is systemic: people who are unaware of their rights are less able to secure stable, suitable housing. Limited rights awareness contributes directly to housing insecurity, undermines trust in local services, and places additional pressure on third-sector partners. At the sharp end, people see their basic right to suitable temporary accommodation broken far too often. The council must:

- End breaches of its statutory duties as soon as possible, and no later than March 2027
- Work with partners to develop a rolling programme of rights awareness work, so people are more aware of what they are entitled to and have the knowledge to ensure their rights are enforced.
- Lead the way in developing an Anti-Racism policy that covers how the local authority will identify and tackle systemic racism in the city's housing system.
- Advocate with Scottish and UK Governments to ensure that funding is in place to support the enforcement of lifeline housing rights, and to ensure all new duties are fully funded.
- Work with partners including tenants' unions, landlord representatives and Police Scotland to ensure that private tenants are aware of their rights, landlords are aware of their responsibilities, and other bodies such as the police are aware of their enforcement duties and powers.

# Temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation in Dundee is under significant strain, creating instability and hardship for residents who rely on it. Hostels, network flats, and other forms of temporary accommodation often fail to meet the basic needs of those placed there, particularly vulnerable groups such as families, young people, care leavers, and people with complex needs.

High demand and insufficient supply mean that individuals are frequently placed in locations that do not meet their needs, sometimes far from their support networks, schools, or employment. This has a direct impact on mental health, education outcomes, and the ability to maintain employment. Cases were highlighted where families were forced to share flats or placed in multi-storey blocks with safety and accessibility challenges, contributing to stress, overcrowding, and social isolation.

The quality of temporary accommodation also remains a major concern. Reports of damp, mould, poor heating, and lack of basic furnishings are widespread. Residents often receive limited support to make TA feel like a home, with inadequate advice, life-skills support, and no continuity of service. Emergency placements in hotels or unsuitable private rented properties exacerbate trauma and instability, particularly for women and families escaping domestic abuse, survivors of trafficking, and young people leaving care.

The cumulative effect is clear: temporary accommodation, in its current form, does not always provide a safe, stable, or supportive environment for residents. Without targeted reforms, individuals remain trapped in precarious situations, undermining both immediate wellbeing and longer-term outcomes.

Temporary accommodation should be a vital, short-term safety net for those in crisis situations and facing homelessness. However, all too often it is anything but temporary, and people are forced to accept placements that do not meet their needs.

The council must do what it can to improve people's experiences of the temporary accommodation system, including:

- Increasing the supply of suitable temporary accommodation including reducing reliance on hotels and unsuitable private sector placements and improving the quality of existing stock with greater emphasis on placements that promote stability and recovery.

- At least maintaining council allocations to homeless households, and increasing RSL allocations to homeless households, for the duration of the housing emergency.
- Continuing to reduce the number of households with children in temporary accommodation in Dundee, maintaining the good progress made in 2024/25.
- Expanding face-to-face housing support within temporary accommodation with trauma-informed staff and clear points of contact for residents.
- Providing additional support for vulnerable groups such as families with children, care leavers, young people, and survivors of abuse or trafficking, to ensure their safety and rights are met.
- Ensuring residents have clear communication channels and accessible processes to raise concerns, report problems, and access independent advocacy.

## Proposed scrutiny

The success of Dundee's Housing Emergency Action Plan must be measured against these actions in a way that allows for transparent scrutiny from elected members and citizens alike. Benchmarks should also be used to drive continuous improvement, rather than simply accounting for activity.

To achieve this, councillors should commit to reviewing progress against the actions outlined in this plan on a bi-annual basis, by bringing a Housing Emergency Progress Report to the Neighbourhood, Housing and Communities Committee every 6 months that explores the actions taken and impact of these actions.

**This document was developed  
with input from over 30 different  
organisations from across Dundee,  
all united by a shared commitment to  
ending our city's housing emergency.**