

FLIGHT FOR HOME

The logo for Shelter Scotland, featuring a stylized house icon above the words "SHELTER" and "SCOTLAND" in a bold, sans-serif font.

SHELTER
SCOTLAND

ABERDEEN MANIFESTO FOR HOUSING 2022

Reflecting the priorities of individuals with lived experience, housing rights activists, local communities and constituents, this co-produced manifesto for housing sets out what must happen to tackle the housing emergency in Aberdeen.



TACKLE ABERDEEN'S HOUSING SUPPLY CRISIS

The supply of good quality and affordable social housing remains inadequate in Aberdeen, forcing people into expensive and poor-quality homes that don't meet their needs.

- All political parties should commit to delivering the social housing required to reduce housing need in Aberdeen, including through maximising the use of empty and vacant properties throughout the city.
- New housing developments should be part of sustainable and vibrant communities with access to schools, GPs, public transport and other vital services.
- Further investment should be made in existing housing stock to bring it up to a suitable standard. Long lasting repairs should be carried out to address cold and damp housing rather than short-term fixes, including prioritising improvements to energy efficiency, and adaptations should be carried out to ensure homes meet the needs of all residents.



STRENGTHEN AND ENFORCE HOUSING RIGHTS

Aberdeen City Council should be doing more to raise awareness of and uphold housing rights for those using their services.

- Aberdeen City Council should undertake a large-scale rights awareness campaign to ensure that people across the city know their housing rights. This includes ensuring staff work with a rights-based approach, are aware of what people are entitled to, and have the resource and capacity to enforce people's housing rights.
- Local authority staff should be given the resource and training to deliver a social housing service that works effectively for the people of Aberdeen. This includes developing a more streamlined and easier-to-use application process across housing providers and offering support throughout for those who need it to ensure their right to housing is upheld.
- The local authority should work with partners to ensure that people with No Recourse to Public Funds are able to avoid destitution and access support they are entitled to, including provision of immigration and housing advice and access to funds where appropriate.

3 **END THE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION EMERGENCY**

The supply of temporary accommodation in Aberdeen needs to be improved in order to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

- Further investment should be made to improve the quality of temporary accommodation in the city so that accommodation can always be offered which meets the needs of the household. This includes enabling individuals and families to remain close to their support networks and local services when required.
- People should be given a needs assessment when entering temporary accommodation and regularly throughout their journey, so that appropriate support is being provided at all stages and people are able to avoid dangerous or frightening situations.



SOLVE THE VICIOUS RENT ARREARS CYCLE

Aberdeen City Council's approach to recovering rent arrears through the court system is extremely costly to the council and detrimental to people's wellbeing as the focus is on debt recovery and is not person-centred – keeping people in debt and forcing them into the homelessness system. It costs an estimated £24,000 to evict a single person with low support needs from the social sector into homelessness, if they spend nine months in temporary accommodation.

- The council should only raise eviction actions as a last resort, when all other interventions have failed and there is a clear intention to recover the property. This means ensuring that eviction proceedings are not used in an attempt to recover debt and rent arrears.
- The local authority should prioritise the model of early intervention and engagement where rent arrears arise and signpost towards sources of support for those who need it. This early intervention should be done with fully trained and resourced debt advice practices and with realistic and tailored repayment plans.
- There should be a policy of no evictions into homelessness.



I am new to this city as a staff member and I am struck by the abhorrent state of housing that many people have to live with in Aberdeen.



Because it's emergency accommodation you can be put anywhere in the city. Then with the disconnection and no income to get buses to see your family and community or the services you were using, you can end up feeling somewhat abandoned.



We exist to defend the right to a safe home and fight the devastating impact the housing emergency has on people and society.

**For more information visit
shelterscotland.org**

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