



Shelter  
Scotland  
stillfighting

# Our Plan 2019–22

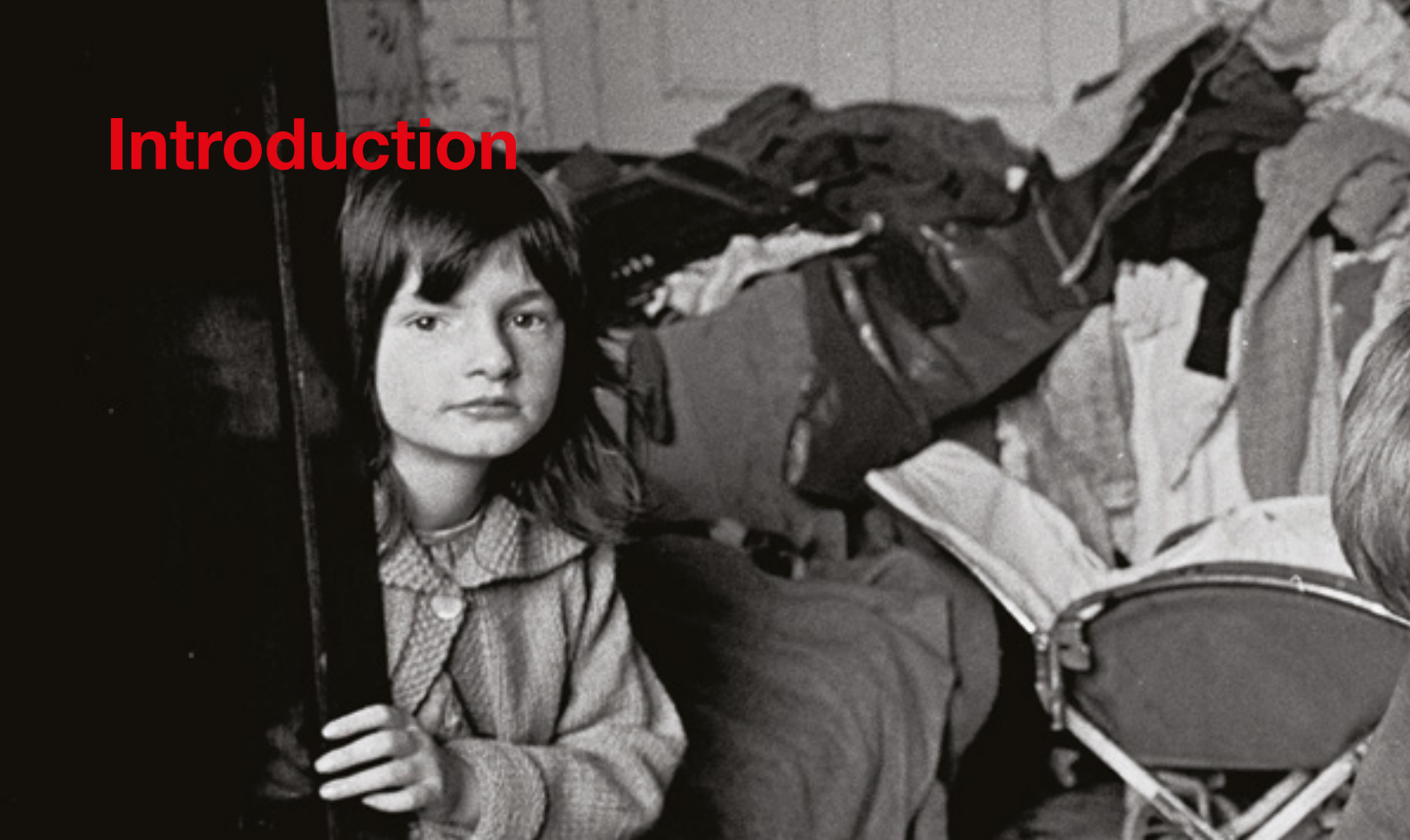
Shelter  
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# Introduction



Shelter Scotland was founded fifty years ago to tackle homelessness and the scourge of slum housing where overcrowding and poor health were rife in Scotland's major cities. Fifty years on the slums have mostly gone, but the lack of affordable, decent homes still affects many thousands of people and families across Scotland.

That means Shelter Scotland is needed now more than ever. Without a home, no-one can achieve their full potential.

In developing our outlook for 2019–22, we have considered where we can best invest our resources and energy to achieve maximum impact. Our starting point and cornerstone is Shelter's ambitious strategic plan<sup>1</sup> to respond to Britain's housing emergency. This sets out our ten-year ambitions to ensure that:

- People have housing rights and understand them
- People get support to assert their rights and are not stigmatised or marginalised
- All those in greatest need have access to social housing.



<sup>1</sup> [https://england.shelter.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/our\\_strategy](https://england.shelter.org.uk/what_we_do/our_strategy)



This will require us to support those who struggle to find the best solution for them and their children, to use the law to strengthen rights and fight discrimination, and to grow a movement to build more social housing.

Twenty years after devolution and the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament, social policy — including housing — is largely the responsibility of the Scottish Government. Our plan for the coming years recognises the increasingly divergent policy environment in Scotland, and sets out how we will deliver the Outcomes defined in Shelter’s strategy in a way that responds to the most urgent housing needs across the communities we serve.

Achieving our ambitions will also require us to make changes to the way we work, as well as ensuring that every Shelter hub is a base for change in its community, with a focus on developing relationships, building trust and helping to focus local energy to bring about change at a local and national level.

In preparing this plan, we have listened to those who rely on our services, to our volunteers and to our employees and partners. But this is not a one-off exercise. We will ensure that the voice and experience of people who use our services is brought to the fore throughout the delivery of this plan, and that local communities have a real say in how our services and campaigns are designed and delivered.

Shelter: it’s a fundamental need and a basic moral right. **Please join us to defend it.**

**Rob Hayward**  
**Chair, on behalf of the Shelter Scotland Committee**

**Linda Bendle, Tony Cain, Ewen Fleming,  
Ros Micklem, Douglas White – Vice Chair**

# Scotland's housing emergency

A home is a fundamental human need, the foundation on which we can all build our lives and the basis for strong communities and a good society. The right to a safe home isn't just the right to a roof over your head. A home means much more than that. It's the right to somewhere safe, secure and affordable and which contributes to people's wellbeing.

It is an indictment of many years of failure that across Scotland more than 800,000 households are either denied this right or are threatened with losing it.

In Scotland today:

## Homelessness

- Every 18 minutes a household loses their home<sup>2</sup>
- Last year more than 14,000 children were made homeless<sup>3</sup>
- More than 6,000 children will wake up tomorrow in temporary accommodation without a home of their own<sup>4</sup>

## Inadequate housing

- 131,000 households are on the waiting list for local authority housing<sup>5</sup>
- 34% of people in Scotland live in homes that do not meet the Living Home Standard<sup>6</sup>
- 613,000 households are in fuel poverty in Scotland<sup>7</sup>
- 66,000 households are overcrowded in Scotland<sup>8</sup>

2 Shelter Scotland, Housing and homelessness statistics, based on 28,792 homeless assessments in 2017-18,

3 Shelter Scotland, Housing and homelessness statistics,

4 Scottish Government, Homelessness in Scotland: Bi-annual update 1 April to 30 September 2018, 6,826 children were in homeless households in temporary accommodation on 30th September 2018.

5 Scottish Government, Housing Statistics for Scotland - Housing lists,

6 Shelter Scotland (August 2018), Living Home Standard

7 Scottish Government (December 2018), Scottish House Condition Survey Key Findings 2017,

8 Scottish Government (December 2018), Scottish House Condition Survey Key Findings 2017,

## Unaffordability

- 1 million people live in poverty after housing costs, the equivalent of 19% of our population, and a quarter of Scotland's children live in poverty after housing costs<sup>9</sup>
- The average house price in Scotland has increased 61% since 2004. Over the same period inflation rose by 38%.
- The average weekly Local Authority rent in Scotland rose 65% between 2004 and 2015.
- Rents in Scotland's private rented sector are rising well beyond inflation<sup>10</sup>
- In real terms, the average Scottish wage is currently around 95% of 2009 levels<sup>11</sup>, and Universal Credit is less generous than the legacy benefits it replaces,<sup>12</sup> creating issues for affordability.
- More than a third of people in the poorest fifth of the population now spend more than a third of their income on housing – a figure which has risen from 24% over the last 20 years.<sup>13</sup>

## Lack of security

- Social sector evictions are on the rise, increasing by 44% since 2013/14. Last year 2,267 households were evicted from their socially rented home.<sup>14</sup>
- 18% of homeless applications come from Scotland's private rented sector<sup>15</sup>
- 46% of all those that came to Shelter Scotland for help last year needed support to keep their home<sup>16</sup>

9 Scottish Government (March 2018) Poverty and income inequality in Scotland: 2014-2017, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/poverty-income-inequality-scotland-2014-17/>

10 Scottish Government (November 2017), Private sector rent statistics: 2010 – 2017,

11 SPICe (2018), 'Earnings in Scotland 2017'

12 Scottish Government's Annual Report on Welfare Reform (Oct 2018)

13 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Poverty in Scotland 2017

14 Scottish Housing Regulator (2018)

15 Scottish Government (June 2018), Homelessness in Scotland: 2017 to 2018,

16 Shelter Scotland (September 2018) Shelter Scotland Impact Report 2017/18,



## Helping people across Scotland

Our services are under unprecedented pressure. Last year in Scotland we helped more people than ever before, with over 21,000 clients coming to us for help. Our online housing advice pages received more than 900,000 unique visits over the year from people seeking help. Because of this increased demand our free national helpline was only able to answer 53% of calls from people seeking our support in the year to date.

Our frontline services are also seeing more people who are struggling with complex difficulties in their lives, such as

a combination of homelessness, debt, mental health issues, addictions, or people with convictions. We can only ensure these people can find and keep a good home, rather than being trapped in a revolving door of homelessness, if we are truly close to them. This requires working flexibly and in partnership with other local organisations whose expertise complements our own – always with the fundamental needs of the individual at the centre of our work, for example those fleeing domestic violence. A safe home is a right and our purpose is to defend that right.



## Our response

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We will provide housing and homelessness advice online for all those who need it in Scotland. We will invest in developing new tools and online innovations to ensure people can get the right type and quality of advice 24 hours a day. This will serve the entire country both urban and rural, north, south, east and west.



We will deliver our free national helpline across Scotland providing emergency support for those who face an urgent housing or homelessness crisis whose problems cannot be resolved through online advice.



We will provide advice and support on housing, homelessness, money and debt and welfare issues where people need more intensive one-to-one help, at our four Community Hubs in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow and through our outreach programmes.



We will seek to better resource our legal team to take forward legal cases that establish points of law to deliver wider benefit for badly housed or homeless households across Scotland.



We will seek to develop services in each of our Community Hubs which provide a dedicated service to homeless and badly housed families and ensure this work is linked to our campaigning and community engagement activities.



We want those who seek our help to shape the way we help them. We already have flagship projects in Glasgow and Dundee where services are informed and shaped by the people who need them and where peer advocacy is proving highly effective. We will replicate this approach across our Community Hubs in Scotland.

# Tenants in the **social** **and private sectors**

Social and private renters account for 37% of all households in Scotland. The private rented sector (PRS) is the fastest growing tenure type in the country, having doubled in size in the last decade. While Scotland has recently passed significant reforms to private renting there are still far too many people in the PRS being denied their right to a good, safe home. There are still landlords and letting agents not conforming to the new requirements and last year, private renters accounted for 36% of all those that came to Shelter Scotland

for help, despite making up only 15% of all households. Private renters also accounted for 18% of all homeless applications in Scotland last year, and the PRS is home to a growing number of households living with in-work poverty. In the social rented sector, after several years of good progress, household evictions are on the rise again, driven in part by the harsh realities of welfare reform and Universal Credit-linked rent arrears and in part by the actions of local social landlords.

## Our response

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We will raise awareness about renters' rights in both the social and private rented sectors in Scotland ensuring that everyone understands their right to security of tenure and predictability of rent rises. Private renters and social renters must have the ability to put down roots and live in security and safety in their communities. We will continue to provide advice for renters online, on the phone and through our Community Hubs. We will continue to monitor both the rate and levels of social sector evictions in Scotland as well as the impact of the roll out of the new Private Residential Tenancy to understand how we can further improve security for private renters.



We shall press for the Scottish Government to invest in the creation of a Private Rented Sector (PRS) tenants' forum to empower tenants and inform future PRS policy across Scotland. This builds on our widespread consultation with PRS tenants over the last three years and is the beginning of a more effective consumer voice in the PRS.

# Campaigning for building more **social housing**

While there is now an established Scottish Government commitment to deliver a step change in its social and affordable house building in Scotland, it is still not enough to meet the backlog of demand and projected rising need that exists across the country. Independent analysis from Shelter Scotland, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and the Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland published in 2015 showed that Scotland needs to build 12,000 new houses a year to meet established need. The Scottish Government's pledge to deliver 50,000 affordable homes, 35,000 of them in

the social sector between 2016 and 2021, while a welcome move forward, falls well short of this target and runs the risk of the wrong type of homes being built in the wrong places if it is not backed up by rigorous analysis and data on local need. In addition, we need to ensure that there is cross-party support in Scotland to build on this housing supply commitment and ensure it continues and increases in the years beyond 2021. If we do not, then we will be condemning another generation to a housing system that is ill equipped to meet their needs and provide the social safety net that we all require.

## Our response

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We will continue to be at the forefront of the campaign for more social housing in Scotland building on the work of our landmark Commission on Housing and Wellbeing in 2015.



We will grow a movement which will demand more social housing.



We will deliver independent and robust research on the scale of social housing need in Scotland and how we can overcome the barriers to delivering a sustained and transformational programme of social house building across the country.



We will work in partnership with the public and other stakeholders and partner organisations across the sector to secure a broad and influential coalition for change to deliver the social house building programme Scotland needs.



We will continue our pioneering work in support of targeting empty homes which has already brought over 3,000 homes back into use. We shall build on the success of this work encouraging all local authorities to invest in a dedicated empty homes officer.

# A movement for **change**

Our homes are the foundation of our communities, which is why people care deeply when they see the right to a home denied to their friends, families or neighbours. Shelter Scotland was founded as a community movement 50 years ago and we believe our future lies in enabling and leading change both at a national policy level, but also and crucially, on the ground in local neighbourhoods.



## Our response

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We will empower people to challenge the failures of the market and where their rights under state interventions are not being upheld. We believe change is possible. We know that in every area where we work, people are deeply concerned about the housing emergency. At Shelter Scotland, our role is to empower and inform people so that together we achieve more than any of us could do alone.



We will expand the number of community organisers working with local groups and partners, using our hubs and shops as their base, helping to build a social movement with the power and influence to defend the right to a safe home.



We will grow this movement and develop ways for people to get involved – from concerned individuals to big organisations, from major donors to local community groups. There are many ways people can make a difference, including volunteering to work with those who need support, campaigning online, joining a community group or donating goods to one of our shops.



We will ensure that every Shelter Scotland Community Hub is a local base for change. We want our hubs and shops to be at the heart of their communities as local centres for activism as well as for help and support. Our Community Hubs will focus on developing relationships and partnerships, building trust and harnessing local energy to bring about the changes we all want to see.



We will continue to recruit and develop our volunteers recognising the major contribution they make to all our activities across Shelter Scotland.



## Shelter Scotland

### Changing the way we work

We recognise the scale of the challenges people across Scotland face in finding and keeping a home. We will not accept the continued housing injustice that too many people suffer. We recognise that we need to adapt and change in the face of continuing austerity to ensure that we achieve the greatest impact with the resources we have.

## Our response

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Every Shelter Scotland Hub will be a base from which to make change happen, with individuals, in communities and across Scotland.



We shall continue to speak out and campaign more vigorously on behalf and with those who face housing injustice.



We will help others to tackle the housing emergency by providing professional training and support. Working constructively and supportively with other professionals is fundamental to achieving better outcomes for people in housing need and our wider strategic impact and purpose.



We will seek to ensure that in our work with children and families Shelter Scotland is a partner of choice with children's charities and housing providers in Scotland. This will build on the successful partnership approach piloted in our Bridges Partnership and Building Families projects.



We will develop for public access the country's first interactive map indexing the many different housing issues people face and build a detailed picture of where the right to a home is denied or threatened. This will transform responses to housing need at every level and will help drive understanding, policy and change far beyond Shelter Scotland's work alone. This also focuses our ambitions for growth, by showing where we or other services are most needed.



We will review and further develop how we define, track, measure and communicate our impact and effectiveness.

# Join us

Scotland's housing emergency affects all of us. Everyone should be able to do something about it. At Shelter Scotland, we want to make it as easy as possible for anyone to get involved in supporting our work – no matter who you are, where you live, or how much time you have to spare.

**Join our movement for change. Find out about our campaigning, volunteering and fundraising opportunities, and the different ways you can partner with us, at: [shelterscotland.org/get\\_involved](https://shelterscotland.org/get_involved)**

Shelter Scotland helps over half a million people every year struggling with bad housing or homelessness through our advice, support and legal services. And we campaign to make sure that, one day, no-one will have to turn to us for help.

We're here so no-one has to fight bad housing or homelessness on their own.

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