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# **A Connected Scotland: Tackling social isolation and loneliness and building stronger social connections**

Shelter Scotland  
consultation  
response

April 2018

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## SUMMARY

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.

Housing issues can compound social isolation and loneliness. Homelessness in particular can have a huge impact – resulting in increased stress, and frequent moves which make it difficult to put down foundations in any one area. However, good housing can also help to build stability and social connections in a community, and it can provide a sense of safety and belonging.

As well as alleviating social isolation and poverty via assisting people with their housing, our advice and support services provide a vital linkage for people to other forms of social support, in some instances running befriending services and social groups, and our volunteering programme provides benefits to both our volunteers and those who we work with.

As such, Shelter Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on a new social isolation and loneliness strategy. Our response below builds on our experience in all these areas, and sits alongside a response which is submitted separately presenting the views of some of the people we work alongside in a specific project, the Men's Shed, in Renfrewshire. We have pulled some of the feedback from the event into this response including a variety of direct quotes from some of the Men's Shed attendees.

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Until there's a home for everyone.

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# CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

## 1. What needs to change in your community to reduce social isolation and loneliness and increase the range and quality of social connections?

**We need to increase the supply of safe, secure and affordable housing across Scotland.**

Good housing has a huge role in reducing social isolation and loneliness.

For those without a secure home, for example those who are homeless and living in temporary accommodation, the ability to build up strong relationships with your neighbours is lost as families move from pillar to post. At the last count, there were 10,899 households in temporary accommodation in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> These households are living in limbo, unable to put down roots in their community, often unsure how long they will have to stay in each placement which could be miles from their family and friends, and they could be waiting years until they get to a settled home. On average, people spend 24 weeks in temporary accommodation, with 1 in 10 spending over a year there.<sup>2</sup> We need to ensure that people are moved onto permanent accommodation much quicker than they are at present to limit disruption to families and their support networks.

**Case study:** One client is a single mother of two young children (aged 5 and 1), who was assessed as homeless after fleeing an abusive partner. She moved between five B&Bs and hotels in less than a month, some several miles from her eldest child's school and her support networks.

In addition, moving on to permanent accommodation this can also be a very isolating experience for those who have previously been homeless. Often someone has limited choice in what home they are allocated, and for many this will be their first time living on their own, or they may be young or vulnerable for other reasons which makes it even more difficult if this housing is away from established support networks.

In 2013 Shelter Scotland established the Commission on Housing and Wellbeing, and asked it to make an independent, evidence-based assessment of the importance of housing for general wellbeing in Scotland. The Commission focused on eight areas of wellbeing, including highlighting the role of housing on neighbourhood and community.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government (January 2018), Homelessness in Scotland: Update to 30 September 2017, <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/01/8686>

<sup>2</sup> Shelter Scotland (2017), The use of temporary accommodation in Scotland – 2016, [https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/the\\_use\\_of\\_temporary\\_accommodation\\_in\\_scotland\\_-\\_2016](https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/the_use_of_temporary_accommodation_in_scotland_-_2016)

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*Good housing is an essential part of a successful neighbourhood and local community. Good design can help to create a positive appearance and, depending on location, make provision for - or help to ensure - accessible links to shops, schools, other local facilities, open space and the countryside and employment opportunities. The oversight of the neighbourhood by local authorities and other public bodies can help foster a positive reputation and provide opportunities for residents to influence their local environment, to develop social contacts with neighbours and to minimise crime and anti-social behaviour.<sup>3</sup>*

The Scottish Government has committed to building more affordable homes, and our recent research showed they are on course to achieve this target. However, we need to ensure that these homes are in places that people want to live, and ensure that the benefits of increasing supply in housing results in change on the ground in terms of real choice in allocations providing people with the opportunity to retain their existing links with support networks.<sup>4</sup> Good community resources, transport links, and everything else involved in good ‘place’ design are crucial too for ensuring that these new homes, as well as existing ones, contribute to building strong communities and enabling good social connections for people. The use of tools such as the Place Standard can help ensure this aim is achieved.<sup>5</sup>

We also know there is a link between poverty and housing, with the most recent statistics showing that when housing costs were included there were over 1 million people living in poverty in Scotland.<sup>6</sup> It is crucial we tackle this issue by providing more affordable housing, given we know that poverty can increase isolation – not only by affecting the social activities people are able to take part in.

*See once you lose your job you lose your social circle. Because you've no got the money to go...you can't do anything as you don't have money...[Men's Shed attendee<sup>7</sup>]*

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<sup>3</sup> Commission on Housing and Wellbeing (June 2015), A blueprint for Scotland's future, <http://housingandwellbeing.org/assets/documents/Commission-Final-Report.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Young, G. and Donohoe, T. (February 2018) Review of Strategic Investment Plans for Affordable Housing, [https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/review\\_of\\_strategic\\_investment\\_plans\\_for\\_affordable\\_housing](https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/review_of_strategic_investment_plans_for_affordable_housing)

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the Place Standard, see for example: <https://www.placestandard.scot/>

<sup>6</sup> Shelter Scotland (March 2018), The uncomfortable truth: unaffordable housing is pushing an extra 50,000 children into poverty, <https://blog.scotland.shelter.org.uk/uncomfortable-truth-unaffordable-housing-pushing-extra-50000-children-poverty/>

<sup>7</sup> This quote and all other quotes denoted as a Men's Shed attendee are taken from a consultation event with the Men's Shed to feed into the Scottish Government's consultation on social isolation and loneliness. Shelter Scotland, (April 2018), A Connected Scotland: Tackling social isolation and loneliness and building stronger social connections. Shelter Scotland Men's Shed consultation response [https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/a\\_connected\\_scotland\\_tackling\\_social\\_isolation\\_and\\_loneliness\\_and\\_building\\_stronger\\_social\\_connections\\_shelter\\_scotland\\_mens\\_shed\\_consultation\\_response](https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/a_connected_scotland_tackling_social_isolation_and_loneliness_and_building_stronger_social_connections_shelter_scotland_mens_shed_consultation_response)

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**We need to provide more opportunities for social interaction, by increasing access to and awareness of volunteering and community groups and services.**

Shelter Scotland places huge value on its volunteers in terms of all of the work they do, including the support they provide our clients in reducing isolation, for example through their roles as befrienders. Volunteering roles allow us as an organisation to achieve much more by extending our capacity and enabling some of the more time-intensive but crucially important activities for increasing opportunities for social interaction.

**Case study: Befriending services**

Several of our housing support services including those in Dumfries and Galloway and South Lanarkshire offer befriending services which have developed to meet identified need. Befrienders are an important addition to the service offerings, allowing flexibility and further capacity to traditional models of support. In our Dumfries and Galloway housing support service, rural isolation makes the support from a befriender particularly invaluable.

Volunteer befrienders are matched one to one with a client, offering support to appointments whether that be a medical appointment or with regards to benefits, providing help with shopping on a budget, and simply helping someone struggling with their mental health to get out of the house, go for a coffee and offering a listening ear. Befrienders provide an essential extra layer of support to our clients, helping them to get to know their local community, and build their social networks and in turn their confidence as well as reducing social isolation and loneliness.

We also see the wider benefits of befriending in helping service users to build and maintain key social connections, and confidence, in terms of developing skills in managing their tenancy, paying bills and linking in with wider supports.

Shelter Scotland is also acutely aware of the important role volunteering can make in providing opportunities for social connections for our volunteers themselves, including within our network of retail shops, which is why it is so important that volunteering is accessible for everyone.

*Volunteering for Shelter has changed my life. When I approached to become a volunteer I hadn't worked for a few years due to suffering with depression and crippling anxiety...[volunteering] has given me back my confidence, so much so that I was able to apply for full-time paid employment. If it wasn't for Shelter I would be stuck in my house hiding from the world and wouldn't feel like I am slowly getting my life back on track.<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup> Quote from a Shelter Scotland volunteer in our annual volunteer survey, March 2018

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We also run, via our advice and support services, a variety of groups aimed, at least in part, at tackling loneliness and building a sense of community.

*I'm only out the house because of all the different groups set up. That's all I do now. [Men's Shed attendee]*

**Case study: The Men's Shed, Renfrewshire, run by Foundations First (a Shelter Scotland project)**

The Men's Shed provides opportunities for an informal catch up with peers, as well as taking part in community-led activities including tending to an allotment, a walking group, and joinery. Anyone from the community can attend and share their skills but primarily this project aims to help communities build social connections and work together to build community resilience. Importantly, the group and activities are designed, specified and run by the community, with support from Foundations First. It follows the model of Men's Sheds throughout the country which provide space and support for men.

*We've got companionship here. A lot of the guys are living on their own. This gets them out their place once a week. [Men's Shed attendee]*

*I like it because I like the people who come here as well – because we have a laugh and a joke with each other – we can talk about what you've done through the week. [Men's Shed attendee]*

*See for your mental health its good as well...see when you're amongst folk, we're social animals you've got to – we like to blether you know what I mean. And if you're just sitting in that house alone, you'll sink, sink, sink until your head goes under. [Men's Shed attendee]*

Our experience is that these services, including the case study example of our Men's Shed project in Renfrewshire, alongside those run by third sector colleagues, are crucial in increasing social connections in the community. Raising awareness of all services, and ensuring that everyone in the community takes shared responsibility for this (facilitated by local information sharing frameworks and infrastructure such as libraries and community centres) is important to reach those who are most isolated. This should include local health partners, libraries, the local authority, and third sector partners.

*For a few months nobody new was coming to the group, it was the same old faces. But now we've got new people here it's expanding a wee bit more but it's taken time. So you could say the information is not out there, it's out there but nobody knows how to find it. [Men's Shed attendee]*

*It would have been handy for me to know about groups like this before things got really bad. But the thing is it's not until you've already jumped off that cliff that you find out about places like this. [Men's Shed attendee]*

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*Everybody should be talking, to make connections and raise awareness. [Men's Shed attendee]*

## **2. Who is key at local level in driving this change, and what do you want to see them doing more (or less) of?**

People who live in the community should be key players in any change, but they need to be empowered to do so. Organisations working with the community should ensure they are working in partnership with and for the benefit of them.

*I think it's up to local agencies as well who work in the area to communicate about what's missing, what's needed, to do some consultation with people about what you want in your community. [Men's Shed attendee]*

The local authority should also play a key role in terms of facilitating community activity, for example through allowing community groups to make access of local spaces for free or for little charge, and helping to share information.

Local third sector partners already play a large role in the provision of community groups and community activity and should continue to work together to fill gaps working in partnership with each other and the community. Local housing partners again play a key role but could be more active in linking tenants up with activity in their local area.

*I'm at a group, every month, and we've invited our housing officer to the community hub group...we're hoping he comes along so people first of all know who he is, because nobody knows who the housing officer is, but he's key, he should be coming back on a monthly basis how are you settling in, how are you, how's everything working. [Men's Shed attendee]*

## **3. What does Government need to do nationally to better empower communities and create the conditions to allow social connections to flourish?**

As referred to in question 1, increasing the supply of affordable homes and ensuring these are delivered in places that people want to live taking into account other aspects of good design, as highlighted by tools such as the Place Standard, is crucial for alleviating the social isolation and loneliness caused by long periods in temporary accommodation, as well as unaffordable and unsuitable housing.

We agree with the commitment to investing resources in community based projects, as well as the greater emphasis on promoting the sustainability of funded projects. Easily accessible, sustainable funding sources for community groups would empower communities to access and apply for funding for themselves, particularly when funding from other sources runs out.

*If the government are serious about sorting out isolation, because it is a big problem you know what I mean, so they've got to back it with money. [Men's Shed attendee]*

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*There is still a lot of money floating about outside but it's trying to get into these funds. And what I feel is – there's certain companies who are giving out grants of up to £1000, £2000, £5000 a year. But how do you tap into them, how do you find out about them. And I feel a lot of places, they're only sharing their information to certain groups – not everybody. So it's unfair to other groups. [Men's Shed attendee]*

**4. Do you agree or disagree with our definitions of (i) social isolation and (ii) loneliness? Please provide comments, particularly if you disagree.**

Yes, we agree with the definitions of social isolation and loneliness provided in the consultation document.

**5. Do you agree with the evidence sources we are drawing from? Are there other evidence sources you think we should be using?**

Yes, we agree with the evidence sources the consultation paper draws on.

**6. Are there examples of best practice outside Scotland (either elsewhere in the UK or overseas) focused on tackling social isolation and loneliness that you think we should be looking at?**

[No answer provided]

**7. Are you aware of any good practice in a local community to build social connections that you want to tell us about?**

**At Shelter Scotland we have several projects specifically aimed at building social connections and empowering communities.**

**Time for Change** is a project set up by Shelter Scotland in Glasgow and co-designed by people who have been homeless. Set up in summer 2016, the Glasgow Participation Project aimed to explore how Shelter Scotland could better assist those with 'multiple and complex' needs that are at risk of, or experiencing, repeat or long term homelessness. From this, the Time for Change project was created. They undertake peer led advocacy and assisted presentation for people who are approaching their local authority to make a homeless application – ensuring they are not alone when they take this difficult step, as well as outreach work where people with experience of homelessness seek to reach out to people who are traditionally excluded from services or isolated from the community. In addition, the group provides a sense of community, empowerment and self-value for those who are involved in running the group, and a tailored plan for trainees to achieve a qualification and experience. The project **has been successful and a new group has recently been set up in Dundee.**

**The Men's Shed** is a project run as part of Foundations First, a service based in Renfrewshire. The Men's Shed provides opportunities for an informal catch up with peers, as well as taking part in community-led activities including tending to an allotment, a walking group, and joinery. Anyone from the community can attend and share their skills but primarily this project aims to help communities build social connections and work together to build community resilience.



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Importantly, the group and activities are designed, specified and run by the community, with support from Foundations First. It follows the model of Men's Sheds throughout the country which provide space and support for men.

*There's only so much you can do in the house all the time. You can only cut that grass in the garden once a week, sometimes two. People can be very isolated, they don't see anyone. [the Men's Shed] is probably the only time people get out once a week to see people. [Men's Shed attendee]*

*It's like companionship. If you need anything, ask someone and they'll be able to tell them about it. If you need something made, you can ask and they'll make it up for you. [Men's Shed attendee]*

Our South Lanarkshire family housing support service facilitates a **peer support group**. This is an organic group set up by parents who use the service, and which is run by service users themselves. The group meets on a monthly basis in the local Shelter Scotland office and they themselves identify a range of activities for the group, including for example a healthy eating class. It has been hugely successful in terms of outcomes for service users and sustainability of the group, and that is largely attributed to the fact that the design is led by the community themselves as well as the fact that it is voluntary, and independent of statutory services. One example of the positive effect groups like this can have is one attendee who was previously too nervous and withdrawn to even take her coat off when she started attending, but her confidence has grown through her continued presence and she is now helping to lead the group.

**8. How can we all work together to challenge stigma around social isolation and loneliness, and raise awareness of it as an issue? Are there examples of people doing this well that you're aware of?**

[No answer provided]

**9. Using the Carnegie UK Trust's report as a starting point, what more should we be doing to promote kindness as a route to reducing social isolation and loneliness?**

Shelter Scotland believes that there is an important role for kindness, in the form of informal volunteering activity, in reducing social isolation and loneliness, and that there is an increasing need for the Scottish Government to better promote and measure informal volunteering opportunities in Scotland. At Shelter Scotland we are increasingly aware from social media that individuals often want to help people affected by bad housing or homelessness, particularly those affected by street homelessness, but don't necessarily want to do so in a formal or structured way. This was particularly apparent during the spell of snowy weather experienced at the end of February 2018.

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Informal volunteering is defined by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations as ‘giving unpaid help to individual people who are not relatives, and not through a group, club or organisation’.<sup>9</sup> It is therefore motivated by individual kindness, and often takes the form of support to disadvantaged groups at a local community level. The Scottish Household Survey only asks about formal volunteering activity (defined as ‘providing unpaid help to organisations or groups’),<sup>10</sup> meaning that there is currently little known about rates of informal volunteering in Scotland. However, the Community Life Survey in England does ask about informal volunteering activity, and in 2015/16 60% of adults in England reported volunteering informally at least once in the last year and 34% had done so at least once a month.<sup>11</sup> If the rates are broadly similar for Scotland, then this suggests a significant amount of activity generated by individual kindness that is currently not measured.

Shelter Scotland supports the Scottish Government’s proposal, following the consultation last year, to introduce Scottish Household Survey questions from 2018 regarding informal volunteering activity.<sup>12</sup> This will allow greater understanding of informal volunteering activity in Scotland, and provide evidence to support greater resources in promoting individual acts of kindness.

We also welcome Scottish Government plans to develop a National Outcomes Framework for volunteering and we recommend that informal volunteering should feature strongly in this. We believe that there is an opportunity to promote individual acts of kindness in the form of community level informal volunteering with clearer guidance and infrastructure.

**10. How can we ensure that those who experience both poverty and social isolation receive the right support?**

[No answer provided]

**11. What do we need to be doing more of (or less of) to ensure that we tackle social isolation and loneliness for the specific life stages and groups mentioned above?**

At Shelter Scotland we know that dealing with bad housing and homelessness in particular can be very isolating for those experiencing it, as highlighted in question 1. The design of our services reflects this, for example including offerings of befriending services and social groups and activities as detailed in question 1 and 7.

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<sup>9</sup> NCVO, UK Civil Society Almanac 2017: Volunteering Overview, <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac17/volunteering-overview/> (last accessed 25/04/18)

<sup>10</sup> Scottish Government (September 2017), Scotland’s People Annual Report 2016, <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00525075.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> NCVO, UK Civil Society Almanac 2017: Volunteering Overview, <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac17/volunteering-overview/> (last accessed 25/04/18)

<sup>12</sup> Scottish Government (October 2017), SHS 2018-2021 Questionnaire Review – Full Report, <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002/Publications/QuestReviewFullReport>

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Our experience shows that the provision of peer support is really important and has a twofold benefit in reducing loneliness and increasing social connections both for those providing the service, and for those using it. In addition to peer befrienders and the peer support group referred to in question 7, we also run a peer advocacy service in Glasgow as part of our Time for Change group. This involves people who have experienced homelessness in the past providing support to help those experiencing homelessness now to access services and other supports. One individual who benefitted from the peer advocacy service is quoted below showing the value they place on peer support.

*On the housing situation, there should be people in there with lived experience. Personally, I would not be in the place where I am without Julie McCallagh having lived experience. She took me to the casework team and fought for my rights with me through Shelter. I took to her right away—we clicked and I listened to her. People with lived experience are more understanding.<sup>13</sup>*

**12. How can health services play their part in better reducing social isolation and loneliness?**

[No answer provided]

**13. How can we ensure that the social care sector contributes to tackling social isolation and loneliness?**

[No answer provided]

**14. What more can we do to encourage people to get involved in local groups that promote physical activity?**

Shelter Scotland welcome the acknowledgement of the role of physical activity in reducing social isolation – but particularly welcome the reference to the importance of walking groups and that it is wider than just organised sport. Our experience in facilitating a walking group, which is open to everyone and not just men, as part of our Men’s Shed project in Renfrewshire supports this finding. We have also providing training for community members to become walk leaders ensuring that community benefits are maximised.

*Everyone thought for one the walking group was a great thing to do. One of the guys had never been walking before. I had been but I thought it’d be good health wise. [Men’s Shed attendee]*

*It’s nice to go home and you’ve done something constructive, done some exercise and then can just sit and relax then. [Men’s Shed attendee]*

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<sup>13</sup> Source: Scottish Parliament Report on Homelessness <https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/LGC/2018/2/12/Report-on-Homelessness/LGCS52018R6.pdf> Quote from Thomas Lyon, point 207

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Our Men's Shed project also provides opportunities to take part in other types of physical activity including joinery activities and tending to an allotment. Providing a variety of opportunities suited to a wide range of needs and experience via existing social groups is likely to make people more comfortable to take part in physical activity.

**15. How can we better equip people with the skills to establish and nurture strong and positive social connections?**

[No answer provided]

**16. How can we better ensure that our services that support children and young people are better able to identify where someone may be socially isolated, and capable of offering the right support?**

[No answer provided]

**17. How can the third sector and social enterprise play a stronger role in helping to tackle social isolation and loneliness in communities?**

We welcome the acknowledgement in the strategy of the importance of the third sector to tackling social isolation and loneliness. There are lots of examples of good practice in the sector of providing interventions and support, and ensuring that the voices of individuals and communities are heard in the design and development of services. The sector works particularly well when it can provide long term support to nurture those connections and build up resilience in local communities. Many of the issues we come across in this regard are in relation to issues around funding and resource.

**18. What more can the Scottish Government do to promote volunteering and help remove barriers to volunteering, particular for those who may be isolated?**

At Shelter Scotland we have implemented and actively promoted approaches to volunteer involvement which address common barriers to volunteering. We are committed to the involvement of those with lived experience of bad housing or homelessness in the design and delivery of our work, so it is vital that volunteering is as accessible and inclusive as possible. As such, we have developed a 'relationship-based' approach, informed by the latest research, which recognises and responds to individual volunteer needs.

As active members of the Scottish Volunteering Forum, who continually advocate and promote new approaches, we would encourage the Scottish Government to continue engaging with forum members when developing the national Outcomes Framework on volunteering to ensure that it reflects current best practice.

We would also urge the Scottish Government to ensure that the national infrastructure organisations funded to promote volunteering, Volunteer Scotland and SCVO, consult with progressive volunteer involving organisations – and one another – in a more systematic way to ensure that the routes into volunteering are clear and accessible. We have experienced an ongoing lack of a clarity in advertising volunteering opportunities on the Volunteer Scotland website and through local Third Sector Interfaces. Indeed, the introduction of an additional

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online portal for volunteering opportunities – GoodHQ – has complicated the landscape and risks causing confusion for volunteers.

In addition, a significant barrier to volunteers from disadvantaged backgrounds continues to be the way that criminal record checks are administered by Disclosure Scotland. Representatives from Shelter Scotland met with representatives from Disclosure Scotland in October 2017 as part of their ongoing review of the PVG scheme, but the complexity of the forms and the overly prescriptive documentation requirements for verifying identity are an ongoing frustration. We would ask the Scottish Government to encourage Disclosure Scotland to consider the needs of volunteers from vulnerable backgrounds as a central focus of the ongoing review process.

**Case study:** In 2017 a prospective volunteer with recent experience of homelessness was living in temporary accommodation. With support from us he was able to provide 5 documents verifying his address, but Disclosure Scotland requested more evidence despite being notified of the circumstances. Eventually we had to pay for him to get a copy of his birth certificate so that we could progress his application.

### **19. How can employers and business play their part in reducing social isolation and loneliness?**

[No answer provided]

### **20. What are the barriers presented by the lived environment in terms of socially connecting? How can these be addressed?**

Housing built without sufficient transport links, social spaces or community amenities provides barriers to people in terms of socially connecting. We need to ensure that new homes are built in places that people want to live, providing them with the opportunity to retain their existing links with support networks.<sup>14</sup> Good community resources, transport links, and everything else involved in good 'place' design are crucial too for ensuring that these new homes, as well as existing ones, contribute to building strong communities and enabling good social connections for people. The use of tools such as the Place Standard can help ensure this aim is achieved.<sup>15</sup>

This is particularly important for housing which is provided for social rent or which is available for let to homeless households, where there may be limited choices and control over what offers you have to accept.

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<sup>14</sup> Young, G. and Donohoe, T. (February 2018) Review of Strategic Investment Plans for Affordable Housing, [https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_library/policy\\_library\\_folder/review\\_of\\_strategic\\_investment\\_plans\\_for\\_affordable\\_housing](https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/review_of_strategic_investment_plans_for_affordable_housing)

<sup>15</sup> For more information on the Place Standard, see for example: <https://www.placestandard.scot/>

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**21. How can cultural services and agencies play their part in reducing social isolation and loneliness?**

[No answer provided]

**22. How can transport services play their part in reducing social isolation and loneliness?**

[No answer provided]

**23. How best can we ensure that people have both access to digital technology and the ability to use it?**

[No answer provided]

**24. Taking into account answers to questions elsewhere, is there anything else we should be doing that doesn't fall into any of these categories?**

[No answer provided]

**25. Do you agree with the framework we have created to measure our progress in tackling social isolation and loneliness?**

Shelter Scotland broadly agrees with the framework created to measure progress in tackling social isolation and loneliness, particularly the inclusion of more people volunteering in their communities and people knowing how to access support as measures of success, which we believe would encompass a knowledge of local services including community groups and befriending which from our experience are key to reducing social isolation and loneliness.

**26. Is there anything missing from this framework that you think is important for us to consider?**

We would like to see an acknowledgement of the important role played by housing and particularly homelessness and the impact of staying in temporary accommodation and as such, would suggest consideration of inclusion of this as a measure of success under 'fewer causes of social isolation and loneliness'.

**Contact:**

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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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