

# Local Housing Rights Defenders

## Politics in Scotland: How are you represented?

In Scotland, the political system is different to the rest of the UK. In England, constituents have one politician that will represent them in parliament plus their local councillors. In Scotland and Wales there are several powers that our own government controls. These are called devolved powers. Because we have our own government, you can have at least 12 political representatives - that's a lot of ears who are there to listen to you!

### THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT- WHAT DOES IT DO?

The Scottish Parliament has powers to make decisions and change laws in several areas, including:

Economic development

Education and training

The environment

Fishing, farming and forestry

Health and social services

#### Housing

Law and order

Local government

Police and Fire Service

Planning

Sports and the arts

Tourism

### WHO REPRESENTS YOU IN SCOTLAND?

#### Members of Scottish Parliament

Devolved laws are decided at Holyrood, Scotland's Parliament. The Scottish Parliament is overseen by the First Minister and there are 129 Members of Scottish Parliament (MSPs). It is their duty to represent their constituents in Parliament. There are 8 MSPs (1 constituency MSP and 7 regional MSPs) representing you in your community, so you have more than one person you can influence.

Because it is a devolved issue, the power to make and change housing law sits with the Scottish Parliament

Until there's a home for everyone  
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## Scotland in the UK

There are 59 Members of Parliament (MPs) in Scotland. They will represent their constituency at Westminster around issues that are not devolved to Scotland. You will have one MP to represent you in Parliament.

## Local Government

Scotland is divided into 32 local authorities, each of which is governed by a council. Each local council has elected Councillors who cover areas called 'wards'. Your own ward will have 3 or 4 councillors depending on your ward size.

**This all adds up to you having a lot of power!**



### CASE STUDY: Homelessness: Far From Fixed

In September 2016, Shelter Scotland launched the national campaign Homelessness: Far From Fixed in Glasgow. We aimed to put homelessness on the political agenda, to educate and raise awareness of the issue, and called on the Scottish Government to develop a National Homelessness Strategy.

We organised protests, ran stalls and met with politicians. We gained the support of 76 politicians, including MSPs, MPs and councillors. As a result, in 2017 Nicola Sturgeon announced that the Scottish Government would, amongst other measures, create an 'Ending Homelessness Together Fund' of £50 million over a 5-year period to support anti-homelessness initiatives.