



SHELTER SCOTLAND CALLS FOR ACTION: UK GENERAL ELECTION 2024

Shelter Scotland exists to defend the right to a safe home and fight the devastating impact the housing emergency has on people and society. We work in communities to understand the problem and change the system. We run national campaigns to fight for home.

The choices made on housing today have implications for decades to come. Just as we continue to live with the impact of policy decisions made since the 1980s, the decades of underinvestment and ongoing austerity policies, policy and spending decisions made now will impact our communities far into the future.

We are in a housing emergency. It is an emergency which damages lives across the country, and has a disproportionate impact on minoritised groups, such as minoritised ethnic communities and people with disabilities. It requires an emergency response from all levels of government, including at Westminster to help alleviate and tackle the devastating housing emergency across Scotland and the rest of the UK.

We are calling on candidates from all parties to accept there is a housing emergency in Scotland and commit to doing what they can to help tackle it.

A fairer housing system for all

Realigning benefits and housing costs

The impact of austerity policies over the last decade and more continues to damage society and is fuelling the housing emergency. Wages and benefits have failed to keep pace with housing costs. Far too many people continue to be forced to choose between heating their homes, feeding their families, or keeping a roof over their head. That must end now.

We are calling on the next UK government to commit to:

- **Keeping LHA unfrozen and covering at least the cheapest third of rents**
- **Reforming the Broad Rental Market Area mechanism of LHA to better reflect rental costs in local communities**
- **Increasing temporary accommodation LHA rates so they align with other rents**
- **Ending the damaging benefit cap and abolishing the bedroom tax across the UK**
- **Putting an end to the two-child limit and so-called 'rape clause'.**

An anti-racist approach to ending the housing emergency

For too long, cruelty has been at the heart of the UK's policies towards refugees and people seeking asylum. This intentional cruelty has fostered divisions within our communities, pitting individuals against each other and causing untold harm to those at the sharp end of the crisis. The response in Scotland and across the UK to those fleeing the illegal invasion of Ukraine shows what is possible and underscores that the cruel response to those fleeing violence, discrimination and hardship in other parts of the world is nothing but a political choice. This choice has undermined local authorities' ability to deliver the homes people need, caused division in our communities, and has failed those we have a duty to help. It has deepened the housing emergency.

We are calling for all parties to:

- **Put an end to the 'hostile environment' policies which have caused untold harm and hardship across the UK¹**
- **Provide adequate funding to local authorities to ensure they are able to meet the housing needs of refugee and asylum populations, including additional funding for local authorities facing the largest demand on services**
- **Embed a truly anti-racist approach to migration and asylum throughout government, particularly within the Home Office, so everyone is able to get the help and support they need, with dignity and humanity at the heart of policymaking.**

Public investment in homes and services

While we have been critical over the choices made by the Scottish Government in relation to its existing capital budget, it is clear that additional investment is vital if we are to deliver the homes and communities we need across the country. Significant forecast cuts to the capital budget in upcoming years will do nothing to help increase investment in housing when we need this investment most – and recent research from our colleagues in England has shown the economic value that committing to increased capital investment in social homes can bring.²

Equally, local services are crying out for additional investment to meet growing need across our housing and homelessness system. While it is up to the Scottish Government to allocate funding to local authorities, it remains clear that additional investment is needed across the board. The austerity policies which have undermined our politics for the past decade and more, leaving local authorities across the UK bankrupt or on the brink, must urgently come to an end.

We are therefore calling for all parties to:

- **Commit to increasing the capital grant available to the Scottish Government and ensuring this keeps pace with inflation to help protect the housing budget from future cuts.**
- **Commit to ending austerity and investing in public services to ensure growing demand on housing and homelessness services is met.**

For more details on how the next UK government can help to tackle the housing emergency in England, our colleagues at Shelter England have developed [a full manifesto](#) outlining their asks for how to fix the broken and biased housing system.

¹ For more details on how to end the refugee homelessness emergency, please consult the policies of the [Scottish Refugee Council](#).

² Shelter and the National Housing Federation, [The economic impact of building social housing](#) (2024)