



MORE HOMES SCOTLAND, JULY 2026

Shelter Scotland exists to defend the right to a safe home and fight the devastating impact the housing emergency has on people and society. Home is everything.

Homelessness occurs when there are not enough homes for the people who need one where they need it. Research, including the Affordable Housing Need research commissioned by Shelter Scotland, CIH Scotland and SFHA,ⁱ demonstrates that **Scotland lacks sufficient affordable housing of the size, type and in the places that we need it.**

Homelessness is therefore inevitable in Scotland unless we address the chronic shortage of affordable, and in particular, social housing.

Who experiences homelessness when homes are scarce is sadly predictable by looking at those individuals and communities most excluded from society. Care leavers, Black and People of Colour, women fleeing domestic violence, people experiencing acute poverty and other marginalised groups all are at greater risk of losing out in the competition for scarce suitable homes.

Over the last five years the lack of homes has overwhelmed local homelessness services with the Scottish Housing Regulator determining that Glasgow and Edinburgh are in systemic failure with an additional nine other local authorities at a heightened risk of systemic failure in their homelessness services.

People are not broken, our housing system is.

Why do Shelter Scotland support a new housing agency?

Driving up the supply of social and affordable housing must become a national mission shared by all parts of civic Scotland. More homes, more quickly, more equitably and more efficiently than we have seen in recent years is possible if we adopt a new approach and secure new investment.

It is in this context that we called for the new Scottish Government to explore the opportunity for a national delivery agency in our 'Delivery Plan' for the Scottish election.ⁱⁱ

Recognising their work in the area, we commissioned CaCHE to explore how the idea previously championed by the Scottish Land Commission and other housing stakeholders could be meaningfully delivered.

Measuring success for More Homes Scotland

Despite investment over the past two parliaments, the housing emergency is directly linked to decades of underinvestment and under-delivery of new social housing. We have seen a long-term decline in our social housing stock, which has allowed for an unsustainable growth in profit-led, less secure, more unaffordable private rented accommodation.

While social homes have been delivered in recent years, they have not had the result of reducing housing need, as targets are set without having a clearly defined outcome of what is trying to be achieved. That must change.

We recognise the link between increasing all tenure homes, a well-functioning housing system and access to land and units for social landlords. The use of section 75 agreements to increase social homes is vital.

However, the success of the new More Homes Agency cannot be measured against simply more homes overall. Building a numerical target without also focussing on place and type will not reduce affordable housing need or tackle Scotland's housing emergency: if the additional homes the agency supports are not in the places of greatest need or of the size needed to lift children out of temporary accommodation, then we cannot consider the agency a success.

By focusing on reducing affordable housing need – which can be measured by calculating emerging need, plus the backlog need in the homelessness system, less the newly built homesⁱⁱⁱ – delivery of new homes can be guided to focus on the areas where they are most needed, and of the size and type that will relieve systemic failure in the homelessness system. Only this will help see us build our way out of our housing emergency.

Impact on communities

If we continue to fail to deliver these homes at the scale and pace needed in the new parliamentary session, we will continue to see homelessness increase, health and education damaged, and the economy suffer.

More children will have their safety, wellbeing and education affected by being placed in temporary accommodation for years, Black and People of Colour will suffer from being disproportionately stuck in the expensive and insecure private rented sector with less access to social housing, and disabled people will continue to be literally trapped in homes that do not come close to meeting their needs.

We know that the cost of this failure on our public purse is significant. At a time of continually-constrained public finances, the best preventative spending and spend-to-save we can make is investing in the social homes we need. If we continue to fail here, we will continue to see cuts to other services to fill the gaps.

Research with the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE)

Predating the government announcement, Shelter Scotland had commissioned researchers at CaCHE to explore how a new land and housing agency could enable the delivery of a minimum of 15,693 affordable homes every year to reduce affordable housing need.^{iv} An initial briefing^v was published in March 2026 on the elements of the agency which seem to have consensus, as well as an indication of some of the important choices government must make.

This research has now concluded and **the final report on this research is now available.**^{vi}

Whilst the previous Cabinet Secretary's letter of April 2026 outlines some information and intent on the agency so far, the final research report outlines that there are critical decisions still to be made. These decisions related to the structure, powers, and constitution of the agency that will have clear implications on its efficacy – the agency's relationship with government; the resources including both staffing and budget available to the agency; how it will work with different agencies and complement local (and national) decision-making; whether it has a research function; and how it will determine areas for intervention. The report outlines that the government must also answer *"whether the Agency would prioritise meeting affordable need through new social and affordable supply, or all-tenure housing supply which could mean trading off public resource for affordable housing with interventions in market housing."*

Conclusion

We know that for the first year **the Agency's greatest priority is to increase supply of affordable homes and tackle the housing emergency**^{vii}. Shelter Scotland are clear that this should be a clear and in fact long term objective which should both drive the design of the Agency and be used to measure any success of the Agency's interventions in the housing system.

Government intervention and public investment must be focused on driving public gain, and the agency must put social benefit over private profit.

The new agency has the opportunity to remove barriers, speed up delivery and ultimately help tackle Scotland's housing emergency. But **for the agency to succeed, it must move at speed and scale, which will require proper funding, powers and a singular clarity of focus on reducing affordable housing need**. The Scottish Government must ensure that the agency has the powers and focus to deliver the homes the people of Scotland need.

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ⁱ Marshall, M., Watkins, C., Keskin, B., Dunning, R., Ferrari, E. (2025) [Affordable Housing Need in Scotland Post-2026](#).

ⁱⁱ Shelter Scotland, [Housing Delivery Plan 2026](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ This methodology was used in Marshall, M., Watkins, C., Keskin, B., Dunning, R., Ferrari, E. (2025) [Affordable Housing Need in Scotland Post-2026](#).

^{iv} Separate research commissioned by SFHA, CIH and Shelter Scotland showed that a minimum of 15,693 affordable homes must be delivered each year of this new parliamentary term to reduce affordable housing need. Marshall, M., Watkins, C., Keskin, B., Dunning, R., Ferrari, E. (2025) [Affordable Housing Need in Scotland Post-2026](#).

^v Gibb, K., Earley, A., James, G. and Watson, A.R. (2026) [More Homes Scotland: Debating a New Housing Agency](#). CaCHE. Commissioned by Shelter Scotland

^{vi} The report is available on Shelter Scotland's [website](#)

^{vii} As detailed in the then Cabinet Secretary's letter to parliament on the Agency in March.