

**Shelter Scotland**

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20 March 2020

Councillor Susan Aitken  
Leader, Glasgow City Council

Dear Susan,

We are facing an unprecedented set of circumstances with the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic and Shelter Scotland is doing all within its power to find solutions for the most vulnerable people across the country – by keeping our advice services operating and ensuring those who need us at this critical time are able to get the support they need.

We are deeply concerned about the closure of the Glasgow Night Shelter and the implications this will have for vulnerable individuals already on the margins of our society. While the decision to close it is undoubtedly the correct one, it does leave many people without somewhere safe to sleep at night. As Scotland's national charity for homeless people, we stand ready to help in whatever way we can. We require swift action by the council to find a solution for people who are needing a safe place to stay.

We are also extremely disappointed to hear that Glasgow City Council continues to practice gatekeeping in these troubling times. Turning people back out onto the street at any time is totally unacceptable – and illegal – but even more concerning in the current circumstances.

Now more than ever, every member of our society needs a roof over their head. People cannot follow the advice to stay at home if they don't have one. We need to see urgent action from Glasgow City Council to end the practice of gatekeeping once and for all, but we must also all work together throughout this emergency – local authorities, elected representatives, the third sector and both Scottish and UK Governments – to ensure that people are not put in even greater danger.

We will not stand by while people are turned out onto the streets during this pandemic. This is a humanitarian crisis. It is time for us all to step up and ensure that already vulnerable people are not left at even greater risk. Use of vacant hotel rooms would be one place to start, with the provision of support and ensuring it will be a safe environment being vital considerations – and we are of course ready to provide further input as necessary in order to protect life during this emergency.

Best wishes,



Gordon MacRae  
Assistant Director for Communication & Advocacy  
Shelter Scotland

**Until there's a home for everyone**  
**[shelterscotland.org](http://shelterscotland.org)**

