

# Local Government Manifesto for Homes

April 2017

homelessness

**FAR FROM FIXED**

Until there's a home for everyone.

[shelterscotland.org](http://shelterscotland.org)

Shelter  
Scotland

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# INTRODUCTION

Our local councils, and the many services they provide, play a vital role in ensuring that people in communities across Scotland are supported to find and keep a safe and secure home when they need it the most. Shelter Scotland is calling on all candidates in the forthcoming local government elections in Scotland to prioritise taking urgent and real action on housing and homelessness over the next 5 years, and beyond. We need to ensure that we can deliver on our ambition of a home for everyone in Scotland.

Access to a safe, secure and affordable place to call home is a fundamental human right and is critical to people's health, prosperity and to the success of Scotland as a thriving and diverse country. Sadly, however, in Scotland today this is simply not a reality for far too many people. Over successive generations we have failed to get to grips with the issues at the heart of this problem, and Scotland is now in a major housing crisis. A housing crisis with a very human cost.

There are currently 142,500 households waiting for a home across the country and in excess of 34,662 households made a homeless application last year. Right now there are more than 10,570 households living in temporary accommodation and tomorrow morning over 5,751 children in Scotland will wake up homeless

The private rented sector has almost tripled in size since 1999, with 350,000 households now living in privately rented accommodation across Scotland. There are also 91,000 families with children living in private rented accommodation. Spiralling monthly rents combined with sky high house prices that continue to rise well above inflation mean that for many, even those on above average incomes, the ambition of one day owning a home of their own is now beyond reach.

Underpinning all of these issues, the ongoing cuts to our welfare system combined with a punitive and challenging sanctions regime mean that rights and support available for some of the most vulnerable people in our society are being eroded and undermined day by day.

A good home is central to our wellbeing both as individuals and collectively as a nation. From improving our health outcomes to raising educational attainment, reducing reoffending rates to tackling inequality, improving social mobility and genuinely realising the advantages of spend to save initiatives – all of these things rest on whether or not people in Scotland have a decent home.

The ambitions outlined in this Local Government Manifesto for Homes build on the recommendations from the landmark report from the [Commission on Housing and Wellbeing](#) in 2015 and it includes the recommendations from our current [Homelessness: Far From Fixed campaign](#).

**We are asking all candidates from all political parties to support this manifesto for homes and sign up to our [Homelessness: Far From Fixed campaign](#). Housing and homelessness should be at the top of the agenda in all local authorities.**

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# COMMITMENT 1

## DELIVER A HOME FOR EVERYONE IN SCOTLAND

### HOW

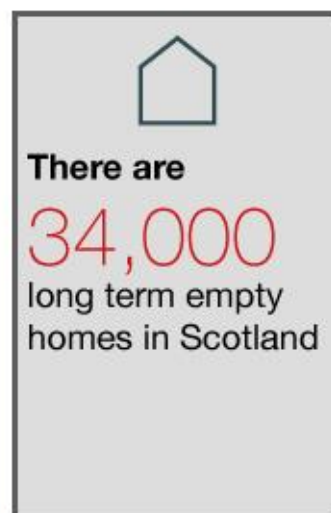
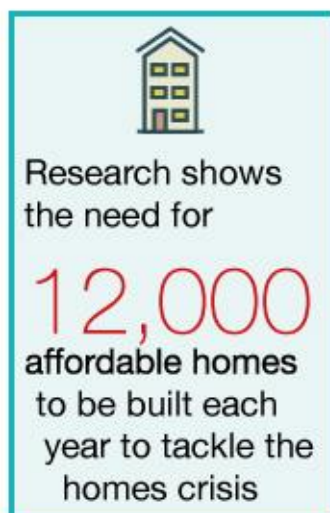
All local authorities to commit to delivering the required affordable housing to meet the needs of their area.

All local authorities to provide access for all households living in fuel poverty to information, support and assistance.

All local authorities to have a dedicated empty homes officer to bring more empty homes back into use.

### WHY

- **142,500** households are currently on local authority lists waiting for a home across Scotland
- Research shows the need for **12,000** affordable homes to be built in Scotland each year to tackle the homes crisis
- There are **34,000** long term empty homes in Scotland



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## COMMITMENT 2

### TACKLE ROOT CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS & MEET THE NEEDS OF EVERY HOMELESS PERSON

#### HOW

Protect and enhance funding available for local services that prevent and tackle homelessness.

Improve the supply of and access to affordable, good quality temporary accommodation.

Support our call for a new National Homelessness Strategy to tackle and prevent homelessness in Scotland.

#### WHY

- 34,662 homeless applications in 2015/16
- 10,570 households in temporary accommodation in Scotland, including 5,751 children
- 70,000 households are living in overcrowded conditions in Scotland



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# COMMITMENT 3

## MAKE PRIVATE RENTING RIGHT

### HOW

Provide tenants with the information, support and advice they need to challenge bad landlords and letting agents.

Use new and existing powers to take tough, targeted action against landlords who break the law.

Support private landlords and letting agents to improve practice by providing one to one support and advice.

### WHY

- There are **350,000 households** living in privately rented homes across Scotland
- **1 in 4** private rented households contain children
- The number of households living in the private rented sector has **almost tripled** since 1999



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# COMMITMENT 4

## PUT HOMES AT THE HEART OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND TACKLING CHILD POVERTY

### HOW

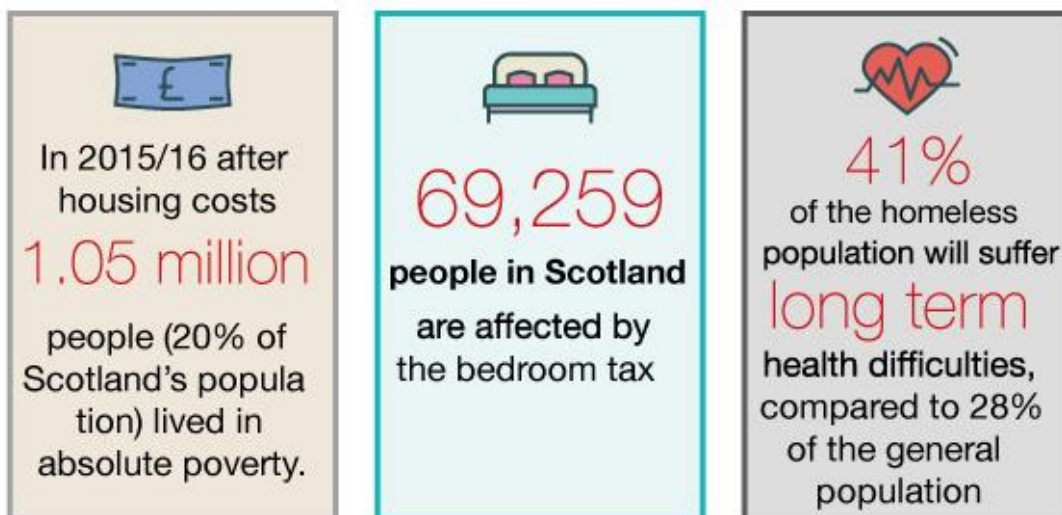
Ensure information and support is available to all local tenants affected by welfare reforms and the introduction of Universal Credit.

Improve public health by ensuring housing is at the heart of local health and social care integration in Scotland.

Ensure that eviction for rent arrears is an absolute last resort.

### WHY

- In 2015/16, after housing costs **1.05 million people** were living in relative poverty (20% of the population)
- **69,259 people** in Scotland are affected by the bedroom tax
- **41%** of the homeless population will suffer long term health difficulties compared to **28%** of the general population



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# FACTS ABOUT THE HOUSING CRISIS

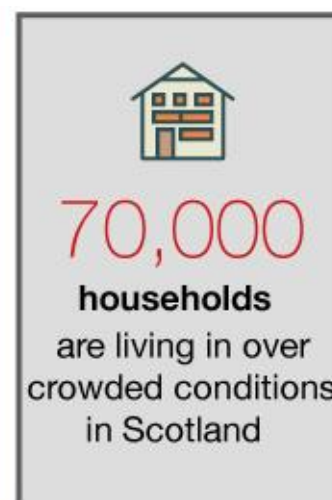
## PEOPLE

More and more people are suffering from homelessness or bad housing



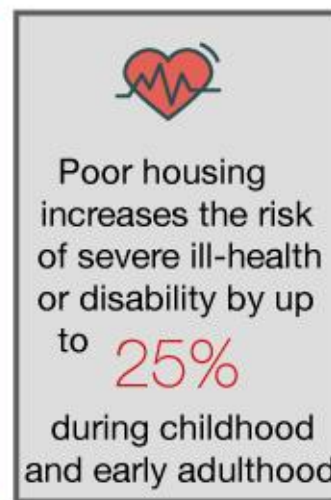
## HOMES

Across all tenures, the current quality of Scotland's homes is a major issue of concern



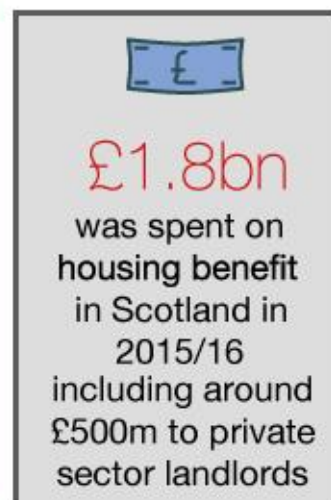
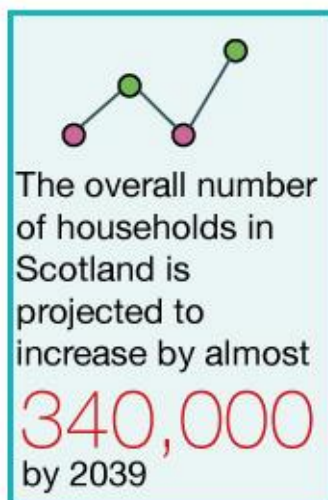
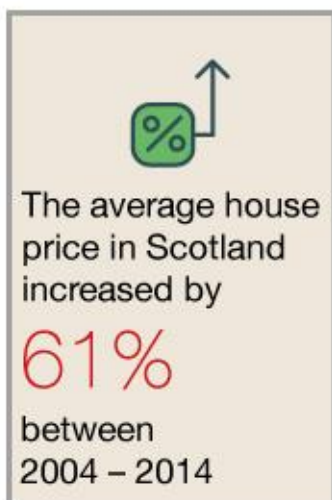
## WELLBEING

The housing crisis is impacting on people's health, wellbeing and life chances



## SCOTLAND

Scotland has an ageing population and we are not meeting current or future housing need





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## Links to relevant statistics, reports, blogs and briefings

### **National and Local Housing and Homelessness Statistics**

[National and local authority homeless and housing statistics](#)

### **Housing need and empty homes**

[Affordable Housing Need - Summary Report, September 2015](#)

[Scottish Empty Homes Partnership information](#)

### **Homelessness**

[Homelessness: Far From Fixed campaign policy report](#)

[Funding homelessness services in Scotland](#)

[Funding Homelessness Services in Scotland - full report](#)

[Homelessness evidence for the Local Government and Communities Committee](#)

[The Use of Temporary Accommodation in Scotland 2016](#)

[Statistical analysis report on homelessness and housing options data](#)

[The Guidance on standards in Temporary Accommodation](#)

### **Private Renting**

[Make Renting right campaign briefing](#)

[Consultation response – a strategy for the private rented sector](#)

[A New Tenancy Regime for Scotland - Shelter Scotland's Consultation Response](#)

[Letting Agent Plus: helping letting agents support private tenants to sustain their tenancies](#)

### **Poverty and social security in Scotland**

[Over 1 million people living in poverty in Scotland: The families behind the figures](#)

[Consultation on Social Security in Scotland](#)

[Finding the Fix: Why we must protect housing benefit for 18-21 year olds](#)

### **Health and fuel poverty**

[Health, cold homes, and fuel poverty: can we prescribe affordable warmth?](#)

[Working with the health sector to tackle fuel poverty](#)

[1 in 4 people worried about paying for home](#)

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.

Please support us at [shelterscotland.org](https://shelterscotland.org)

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