



SHELTER SCOTLAND BRIEFING: PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT 2024-25

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.

Key lines

- **The First Minister must prioritise ending the housing emergency in his first Programme for Government. The 10,000 children trapped in temporary accommodation cannot wait any longer.**
- **There is no route to eradicating child poverty, the First Minister's "driving mission", without ending the housing emergency.**
- **The 138% increase in the number of children stuck in temporary accommodation since 2014 is a national scandal.**
- **Recent interventions from the Scottish Housing Regulator and from ALACHO show the scale of the challenge facing local authorities in dealing with the emergency and the government must prioritise additional financial support if people are to have their housing rights enforced and upheld.**
- **The First Minister must show how he will urgently deliver the radical changes needed across Scotland's housing system, prevent more failure in our homelessness services, and find permanent homes for the 10,000 children currently without one.**

Scotland's Housing Emergency

Scotland is in the grip of a devastating housing emergency which damages lives.

- **A record 9,860 children trapped in temporary accommodation** – up 138% since 2014.
- **45 children become homeless every day.**
- **A household becomes homeless every 16 minutes.**
- **A 10% increase** in households becoming homeless compared to last year.¹
- **Local Authority homelessness services facing systemic failure across the country.**
- **Routine failure by local authorities** to uphold housing rights.
- **A failure to deliver the social homes** we urgently need and a significant slowdown in new social housing developments in the last year.
- **Private rents continuing to rise** and household incomes and the UK Government's **Local Housing Allowance rates are failing to keep pace.**

This is an emergency that damages health, wellbeing, education and the economy, and leaves tens of thousands of people without anywhere to call home. It is **a national scandal.**

National Housing Emergency Action Plan

In response to Scotland's deepening housing emergency and the Scottish Government's acceptance that we are in an emergency, Shelter Scotland has joined with ALACHO, CIH

¹ Scottish Government (2023), [Homelessness in Scotland 2022/23](#).

Scotland, Homes for Scotland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and Scottish Federation of Housing Associations to propose a national Housing Emergency Action Plan.²

This unprecedented coalition has called on the Scottish Government to make early progress in tackling the housing emergency across four priority areas: urgently increasing the supply of new social homes; making maximal use of existing homes for people in need; fully funding local homelessness services; and maximising affordability across all tenures.

The need for an emergency response has continued to grow since the parliament formally declared a housing emergency. In addition to the Scottish Housing Regulator [placing 10 local authorities either in, or at heightened risk of, systemic failure](#) due to now routine breaking of housing and homelessness laws across the country, senior housing officers have also [stated they are struggling to cope with demand](#) at authorities across Scotland. We also know that the now delayed homelessness statistics for 2023-24 will most likely be the worst on record yet again. Something must change.

Key to this is providing the urgency and leadership to deliver the policies which we know will make the greatest difference to those at the sharp end of the emergency right now.

We are therefore calling on the Scottish Government to:

- **Put social housing at the centre of the government's mission to eradicate child poverty.**
- **Fully reverse the 37% cut to the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) over the last two years by pausing spending on other capital projects if necessary.**
- **Expedite the acquisition of larger properties specifically for households with children trapped in temporary accommodation for more than a year where needed to help reduce the harm being inflicted on children due to the housing emergency.**
- **Create a match fund for local authorities to scale up existing empty homes teams to bring 3,000 private empty homes per year back into use. This should be supported by 100% funding for acquisition of such homes and support to bring homes up to standard.**
- **Provide additional funding to local authorities to ensure they are able to uphold and enforce housing rights, and for that funding to be targeted based on need.**
- **Create a new Homelessness Prevention Fund accessible to local authorities, RSLs and the third sector for tenants across tenures.**
- **Commit to maintaining funding for Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans until the end of this Parliament and provide clarity on future funding plans for subsequent years.**

It is incumbent on the First Minister to lead this response. If we are to make progress, then it is vital that he puts his political capital behind tackling the emergency situation that his government has accepted we are in. Only with that level of oversight and leadership will we get the results we need for the people suffering at the sharp end of the housing emergency. **His Programme for Government is an opportunity to show that he is personally invested in ending the emergency.**

Simply put, **the First Minister will fail in his mission to eradicate child poverty if he does not tackle the housing emergency.** He must commit to the radical action that the 10,000 children in temporary accommodation are depending on.

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² Shelter Scotland (2024), [A National Housing Emergency Action Plan for Scotland](#).