

# Shelter Scotland Impact Report 2016/17



Until there's a home for everyone.

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

Shelter  
Scotland

# WHAT WE DO

Shelter Scotland is Scotland’s national housing and homelessness charity. We are here so that no-one has to face bad housing or homelessness on their own. Our vision is of a home for everyone in Scotland.

For nearly 50 years, the way we drive change has remained the same. We advise and support people in housing need today and use the insight we gain to inform our campaigns to change tomorrow. We also raise professional standards for those working in Scotland’s housing and homelessness sector by offering a broad range of training courses.



Working under this model, we primarily help those that come to us for support to “find”, “keep” or “improve” their home. We use the framework outlined below to measure our impact in these areas:



# INTRODUCTION

This summary of Shelter Scotland's work and impact in the last year highlights that Scotland is still very much in the grip of a housing crisis. It is a housing crisis with a human cost that disproportionately impacts on some of the most vulnerable in our society. It is for this reason that our work today, sadly, remains as vital as it did when we were founded in Scotland, nearly 50 years ago in 1968.



Last year our frontline advisors and support workers helped over 21,000 people across Scotland and more than 820,000 people accessed information and advice through our online Get Advice pages. In analysing who comes to us through these channels, there are clear trends emerging in relation to the demands on our services: we help a disproportionate number of people in the private rented sector; similarly, young people are over-represented, against wider population demographics, across all our advice and support work. In addition, there is a clear theme of people struggling with the affordability of their home emerging across all our work. These issues, arising from the help we provide across Scotland, have been borne out in our associated policy work on trends and challenges in homelessness in Scotland, social sector eviction levels and our ongoing work to reform the private rented sector.

Since our inception, Shelter Scotland has been proud to be a vocal and effective campaigning voice for change and this ethos is still at the heart of what we do today. Informed by our case work and the experiences of those we help, last year we successfully campaigned through our *Manifesto for Homes* to get all parties in Scotland to commit to building more affordable homes. This resulted in a step change commitment from the Scottish Government to build 50,000 new affordable homes by 2021.

Our *Make Renting Right* campaign culminated in April 2016 with the passing of the new Private Tenancies Act in Scotland. This landmark legislation, due to come into effect in late 2017, will provide greater security for private renters and deliver a fundamental rebalancing of rights for the growing number of individuals and families who call the private rented sector home.

In September 2016 we launched our flagship *Homelessness: Far From Fixed* campaign. This hard hitting campaign sought to highlight and drive action on the simply disgraceful fact that in 2016/17 a household in Scotland becomes homeless every 19 minutes. Our campaign is calling for action from local and national government and for a new National Homelessness Strategy to better tackle and prevent homelessness today. To date, the campaign has garnered a huge amount of public, stakeholder and celebrity support and has helped secure a commitment to refresh the Scottish Government's strategic approach to homelessness. Holyrood's Local Government Committee has also launched an enquiry into homelessness in Scotland.

That Shelter Scotland's campaigns and services are still as needed as ever should be a cause for concern for all of us. However, as this report highlights, we continue to be an effective champion of change, both in legislation and practice.

We think we're good at what we do, but we are not complacent and we know there is still some way to go. We encounter this every day in the demand for our services, which we sometimes struggle to meet. The figures in this report give us a baseline of our impact and we will seek to continually improve these numbers. We will continue to invest in our pioneering digital advice work so that we can reach more people, and we will carry on pushing for and campaigning on our solutions to Scotland's housing crisis.

We will continue our work until there is a home for everyone in Scotland.

**Graeme Brown, Director, Shelter Scotland**

# YEAR IN NUMBERS



**21,145**  
people helped by our housing advice and support services in **2016/17**

Across all those we helped the top three issues were:

- Struggling to pay or afford housing costs;
- Housing conditions;
- Issues with their landlords

**54%** were male  
**46%** were female

Of those that came to us for help:

**44%** needed help keeping their home

**29%** needed help finding a home

**24%** needed help improving their home

In 2016/17 we recorded **829,555** unique visits to our online Get Advice pages with a **49.2%** net promoter score for our online content



**46%** of all our clients were aged **16-34**

**46%** of all our clients came from the private rented sector



**85%** of the public in Scotland know about Shelter Scotland and **78%** have a favourable impression of us

We carried out **5,428** online chat sessions with people using our website

We published **19** policy papers and responded to **25** Scottish Government consultations on key housing and homelessness issues

We held **26** street campaign days in cities and towns across Scotland involving **51** service users to promote our campaigns



We issued **285** press releases in total **5 per week**

We have **9,033** registered campaign supporters across Scotland

**82%** of those polled describe Shelter Scotland as "trustworthy" and **77%** describe us as a "passionate" organisation



**520** people accessed our physical and online training courses



**124** people completed our Housing Law Advice course in 2016/17

**97** volunteers gave over **9,039** volunteer hours to support our work in 2016/17



**181** paying delegates attended across our three annual policy conferences

## KEY INSIGHTS

The following are some of the key insights that have emerged from our work in 2016/17:

- Of all the people accessing our advice and support services in 2016/17, most enquiries are related to “keeping a home”. On further analysis, we can see that “struggling to afford or pay housing costs” is the dominant presenting problem that people had when coming to us. When we look at presenting problem by tenure type, issues with affordability was a top issue across private renters, social sector renters and home owners.
- The challenge around affordability of housing aligns with the findings from our recent policy report into social sector evictions (April 2017), highlighting that 95% of all social evictions in Scotland are related to rent arrears. It is Shelter Scotland’s view that this is clearly linked to recent changes in social security and benefit caps and represents a huge public policy problem in the years ahead. We need to see action on this now, before it gets worse.
- We continue to support an over representative number of people living in the private rented sector (PRS) in Scotland. 46% of all our client cases last year were tenants in the PRS, but only 14% of Scottish households live in the PRS. It is our view that this highlights the urgent need for reform to this sector to better balance the rights of tenants and ensure they can take action to raise standards.
- 46% of all our client cases came from people aged 16-34, yet this demographic only accounts for around 25% of people in Scotland. While some of this can be attributed to the nature of some of the services we run, the majority of our client cases come from our free national helpline which is a universal service for everyone. This significant number of young people coming to us for help confirms our view that Scotland’s housing crisis disproportionately impacts on the young and is storing up major problems for future generations.
- Housing currently has a high profile as a public policy issue in Scotland and we consistently hear from MPs, MSPs and councillors that housing issues dominate their surgeries and inboxes as local representatives. This underlines our view that despite good progress on national legislation and targets in some key areas in recent years, there are still major local challenges in relation to the implementation of housing laws and housing rights in communities across Scotland, particularly in relation to homelessness issues.
- The significant level of support from the public and stakeholders across the housing, homelessness and anti-poverty sectors in Scotland for our Homelessness: Far From Fixed campaign has been notable in 2016/17. There is now a clear and consistent demand from many voices on the need for strategic action on this issue.
- Reflecting wider trends in society, the way people come to us for help is changing, with online and digital demand for our services and advice far outstripping demand in other areas of our work. Ensuring our content and the format of our online advice remains current and engaging is a continual challenge for our team to stay ahead of the curve.

*Joe: “Shelter Scotland has been brilliant. They’ve given me good advice and helped me with the council. My adviser understood the stuff that bamboozled me and he made sure my point of view got across. Now I’ve got my own place near my support network, it’s just brilliant”.*

## CASE STUDY: FREE NATIONAL HELPDESK

**David is from a village in East Central Scotland. He became homeless when his wife asked him to leave the family home. He was initially told the council would not help him. He uses crutches following the amputation of one of his legs.**

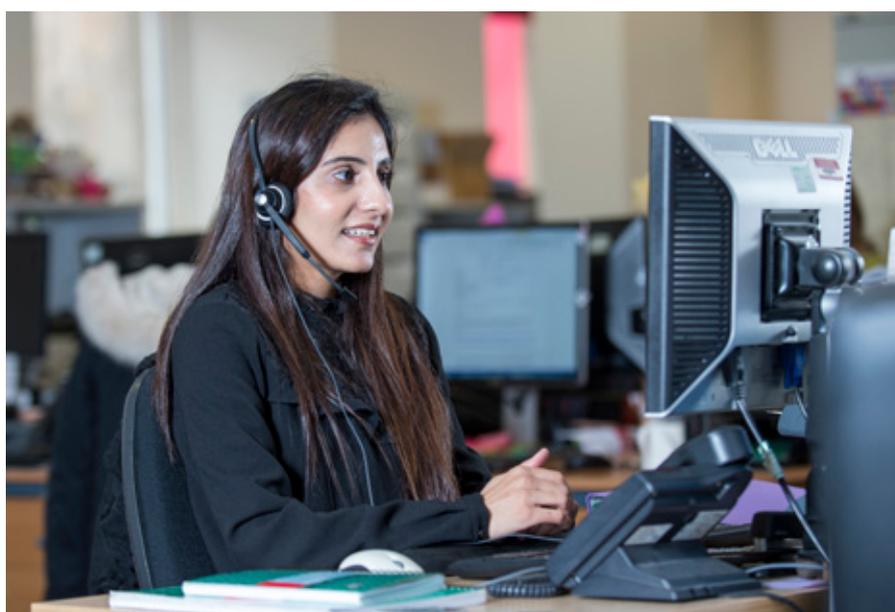
*“I was living with my wife, who was pregnant, and our three children. She asked me to leave. The first meeting I had with someone from the homeless team at my local council was horrible. They spoke down to me, weren't interested in the situation I was in and although they knew I was sleeping in my car, said “you're not homeless”. The official said I could make an application to be assessed as homeless but that they would be the one assessing it and they believed I had a right to go back to the family home. It didn't matter that I had kids and it didn't matter that I was disabled. I ended up filling in an application. I told them that my wife had asked me to leave and that she was pregnant and there were three children in the house and I didn't want to put that stress on everyone by forcing my way back in but they didn't care. I left the place in tears.*

*“First night I slept in a friend's house. Second another friend's couch and then four nights in the car. It was horrendous. It was just horrible. I didn't know where I could turn. I knew nothing and it put me mentally in a bad place at that time. A couple of friends were keeping talking to me and making sure I didn't do anything stupid. All I was thinking was what would I do when I got my kids – I couldn't just drive around with them all the time? I didn't know where to turn until I got the number for Shelter Scotland's helpline from a friend.*

*“The Shelter Scotland helpline advisor was amazing. She spoke to the council on my behalf and told them they were breaching my legal rights. The council initially put me into a B&B miles from my kids. It was on the first floor so I was up and down stairs, which is hard to do on crutches, and it was also filthy with ants on the table. At the time I was thinking it was a start. I've got a roof over my head.*

*“I was there for five nights and then the council offered me a one-bedroom place. When they told me it was in the same village as my kids live I was over the moon but it's actually just round the corner so they can come round and see me whenever they like – that's just the icing on the cake.”*

**David, East Central Scotland**



# IMPACT OF OUR SERVICES

This section summarises and analyses the people Shelter Scotland helped in 2016/17 through our range of advice and support services across Scotland.

Shelter Scotland provides both universal and bespoke housing support and advice in a number of different ways. Most frequently our advice is accessed through Get Advice (our online content) and our National Helpdesk, which consists of a free national helpline, email advice and digital chat web service. In addition, we run a suite of core advice services from our four Community Hubs based in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee.

We also seek to develop innovative housing services to pilot and test new approaches and to further demonstrate best practice in this complex field. We do this through a variety of statutory and grant funded projects across Scotland with notable services currently being run in Dumfries and Galloway, South Lanarkshire and Paisley.

For the purposes of this section of analysis, the support we provide is measured in case work and referred to as “cases” or “cases opened” and the individuals we help are referred to as “clients” in line with how we record the support we provide on our central systems. Given the nature and sensitivity of this area of our work, we record a variety of types and a varying amount of information in relation to the specific impact of our work.

## WHO CAME TO US FOR HELP?

In 2016/17 Shelter Scotland helped a total of **21,145** people across our housing advice and support services in Scotland (not including those who came to us for advice online). Of this number, **16,237 (77%)** came via our universal Helpdesk advice services.

### GENDER

Of those client cases where the information was obtained in 2016/17, 54% of those that sought help were recorded as female and 46% were recorded as male. In less than 1% of our case load did the client identify themselves as transgender.

### AGE

From those cases where we were able to record the age of the client, we can determine that:

- 46% of those we helped were young people aged 16-34
- 50% of those we helped were aged 35-64
- 4% of those we helped were aged 65+

### LOCATION

In total, 55% of all our client case load in 2016/17 came from just five of Scotland’s local authority areas. These were:

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| ■ Glasgow City Council      | 22% |
| ■ Edinburgh City Council    | 15% |
| ■ Aberdeen City Council     | 7%  |
| ■ Dundee City Council       | 6%  |
| ■ South Lanarkshire Council | 5%  |

The remaining 45% of our client cases came from across Scotland’s other 27 local authority areas.

## TENURE TYPE

For those cases where tenancy was recorded, we can clearly see that by a significant margin, issues from tenants in the private rented sector account for the single largest group of cases we handled (46%).

| Tenure Type                        | Percentage of total cases |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Private Rented Sector Tenant       | 46%                       |
| Non-Tenant Occupier                | 19%                       |
| Council or RSL <sup>1</sup> Tenant | 17%                       |
| Owner Occupier                     | 13%                       |
| Roofless/Rough Sleeping            | 5%                        |

As highlighted in the table above, 19% of all our client cases last year came from what are termed as 'non-tenant occupiers'. This includes tenants in temporary accommodation, tenants of resident landlords, tied accommodation, or people living with their parents or spouse. This group have limited housing rights in Scotland.

## WHAT DID WE HELP THEM WITH?

The reasons people come to us for advice and support can be broadly grouped into three categories:

- Issues around **keeping their homes** – including people struggling to afford their housing costs, or facing eviction (44% of all client cases)
- Issues related to people **finding a home** – including advice and assistance with homelessness (29% of all client cases)
- Issues related to people seeking to **improve their home** – including landlord issues or housing conditions (24% of all client cases)

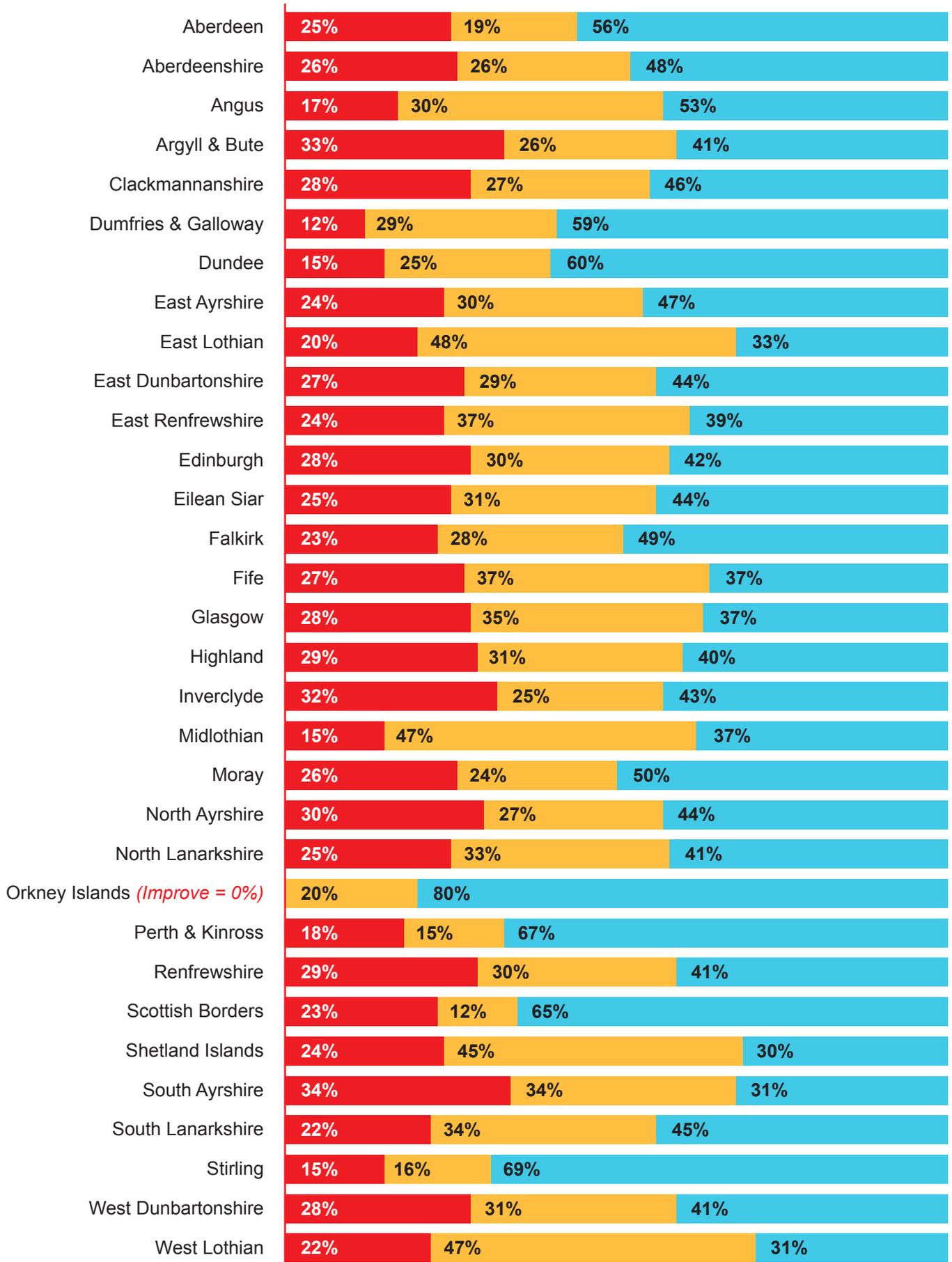
A total of **4%** of all remaining client cases in 2016/17 did not fit into any of these categories and were recorded as "other". In addition, it is important to note that often people who come to us for help and support will have numerous difficulties spanning these three broad areas of categorisation.

*David: "I didn't know where to turn until I got the number for Shelter Scotland from a friend. The adviser was amazing. She spoke to the council on my behalf and told them they were breaching my legal rights".*

<sup>1</sup> Registered Social Landlord

**LOCAL AUTHORITY VARIATION\***

**% Improve**   **% Find**   **% Keep**



\*Due to the rounding of figures, the percentages of some Local Authorities do not total 100%

## TOP PRESENTING PROBLEMS

In 2016/17 the top three individual types of presenting problems that people came to us for help with were:

- Struggling to pay or afford housing costs = 15% of all cases
- Housing conditions = 12% of all cases
- Landlord issues = 10% of all cases

## PRESENTING PROBLEM BY TENURE TYPE

| Tenancy type                             | Top 3 Presenting Problems                               | Percentage of total cases from tenure type |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Private Rented Sector Tenant</b>      | 1. Landlord Issues                                      | 20%  |
|  | 2. Housing Conditions                                   | 19%  |
|  | 3. Struggling to pay / afford housing costs             | 18%  |
| <b>Council or RSL<sup>2</sup> Tenant</b> | 1. Struggling to pay / afford housing costs             | 17%  |
|  | 2. Debt   | 11%  |
|  | 3. Welfare Benefits                                     | 10%  |
| <b>Non-Tenant Occupier</b>               | 1. Advice / assistance with LA allocation               | 27%  |
|  | 2. Advice / assistance with homelessness                | 18%  |
|  | 3. Seeking accommodation – type of accommodation        | 16%  |
| <b>Owner Occupier</b>                    | 1. Other  | 17%  |
|  | 2. Housing conditions                                   | 17%  |
|  | 3. Struggling to pay / afford housing costs             | 15%  |
| <b>Roofless/Rough Sleeping</b>           | 1. Seeking accommodation – type of accommodation        | 32%  |
|  | 2. Advice / assistance with Local Authority allocations | 31%  |
|  | 3. Advice / assistance with homelessness                | 16%  |

## WHAT OUTCOMES DID WE ACHIEVE?

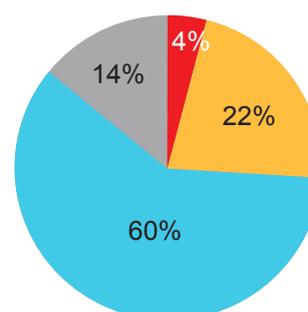
Due in part to the varied nature of the advice and support we provide, not all of our case work cases concluded with a clear outcome recorded for the client. However, 79% of all of our case work cases did have a clear “outcome plan” in place.

Of those client cases where a clear outcome was recorded on closing the case, the following is a summary overview of the type of outcome achieved.

### Outcome Type

- Helping clients to “Improve” a home
- Helping clients to “Find” a home
- Helping clients to “Keep” a home
- No positive outcome

### Percentage



<sup>2</sup> Registered Social Landlord

## GET ADVICE ONLINE

In 2016/17 more than **829,555** unique visitors came to our online **Get Advice** pages, which cover a range of housing and homelessness information specifically for people living in Scotland. This average of over 69,000 unique visitors each month demonstrates the significant demand for this type of information provision.

In 2016/17 our five most visited web pages were:

| Online Get Advice Page                            | Unique Page Views in 2016/17 |
|---|------------------------------|
| Get Advice Homepage                               | 36,278                       |
| Short Assured Tenancies                           | 25,707                       |
| Housing rights while pregnant                     | 24,678                       |
| Your rights if you and your partner own your home | 24,624                       |
| Your rights if your partner wants you to move out | 20,420                       |

42% of all unique visits to our Get Advice section were from mobile devices, while 37% came from desktop devices and 11% from tablet devices. The additional 10% is made up of other internet enabled devices not picked up by Google Analytics, such as TVs and games consoles.

We received a total of 5,936 feedback comments on the content of our Get Advice pages and our average monthly Net Promoter Score over the course of the year was 49.8% (compared to a public sector benchmark of 20%) – a company's Net Promoter Score is an index that measures the willingness of customers to recommend a company's services to others.

## DIGITAL CHAT

In 2016/17 we provided **5,428 online chat sessions**, where a volunteer adviser supports an online advice seeker to find and understand the information they need. This innovative online delivery of housing advice led to 2,949 additional client cases being opened last year. Trends and insight from these cases are included in the overall summary provided in the first section of this report.

## VOLUNTEERING

In 2016/17 a total of **97 people from a variety of backgrounds and interests gave their time to volunteer with Shelter Scotland** (not including volunteers in our retail shops across the country). These people gave a **total of 9,039 volunteer hours** of their time over the year to support our work across all of our offices and service locations in Scotland. This represents a 37% increase in volunteering hours on the previous year.

*Tommy: "The help I got from Shelter Scotland was great. The council wasn't doing anything. Three nights in a row they turned me down for a bed. Then I phoned Shelter Scotland and they got me a room immediately".*



Politicians sign up to Make Renting Right



Far From Fixed launches in Glasgow



Bringing advice to local communities with our Housing Street Clinics



Scottish music artists come together for "Home for the Holidays"



Angela Constance, Cabinet Secretary, speaks at our Homelessness Conference



Presents donated for Social Media Santa



Our Foundations First group in Paisley



Jack Monroe shows her support for Far From Fixed

*Gail Porter shows her support for Far From Fixed*



*Funds from the Borders Cycle Challenge help us be there for more people facing homelessness*



*Armando Iannucci pledges his support for Far From Fixed*



*Developing digital ideas at our first Shelter Scotland Hackathon*



*Launch of our Manifesto for Homes Campaign*



*We help and support anyone dealing with issues affecting their ability to find or keep a home*



*Photovoice project launch. Tenants took their own photos to tell their experiences of renting*



*Party to celebrate 1 year anniversary of our Men's Shed in Paisley*

## CASE STUDY: SAFE AND SOUND PROJECT (DUNDEE)

Shelter Scotland's Safe and Sound project in Dundee was founded in 2012 in partnership with Relationships Scotland and funded by the Big Lottery Fund, Scotland. The project works with young people at risk of leaving home in an unplanned way, and their families when at risk of relationship breakdown. Sally\* (13 years old) was referred to Shelter Scotland's Safe and Sound project last year from Police Scotland, after she was reported missing by her Gran, who she lives with.

*A Safe and Sound worker met with Sally to conduct a 'Return to Home Welfare Interview'. During this discussion, it was established why Sally ran away, the risks that she faced as a result of this and the challenges she was facing in her personal life. Support from the Safe and Sound project was then offered, which Sally accepted. From meeting with Sally, and carrying out an assessment, Sally decided she would like to work on a few themes that she was struggling with.*

*Firstly, her anger, which was causing a lot of problems at home, leading to relationship breakdown with her Gran. Sally also wanted to look at her risk taking behaviour in the community, which included drink and drugs, and look at the difference between positive and negative relationships/friendships. During the 'Return to Home Welfare Interview', Sally also disclosed that she had experienced a sexual assault when she was 12. She wanted support to digest what had happened to her, and to tell her family.*

*Sally's worker supported her to write an anger management plan to use at home and school. This has had a positive impact on reducing conflict at home, and Sally has gone from being on a part time timetable at school, back to a full time timetable as she is able to manage classes better.*

*Our partners, Relationship Scotland, became involved to support Sally and her Gran's relationship. Both met a mediator, which resulted in a positive move forward in their relationship.*

*Sally is no longer drinking as much, and takes no drugs. This change coincides with her relationship strengthening at home, and a positive change in her friendship group.*

*Sally didn't want to go ahead and make a complaint to the police about the sexual assault, however social work needed to be informed, due to Sally's age. Sally understood that this was to protect her, and others, and Sally was supported to tell her Gran and Mum. Specialist support was offered to Sally, however she decided that she only wanted to speak to her Shelter Scotland Safe and Sound worker about her experience. This was incorporated into her support plan.*

*Sally continues to engage well, and has just come back from a very positive family holiday.*

*\*The identity of this individual has been anonymised*



# IMPACT OF OUR CAMPAIGNS

Shelter Scotland has a proud history of being an effective campaigning voice for those facing bad housing or homelessness. We are here so that no-one has to face bad housing or homelessness alone and driving forward change through our campaigning work remains the primary function of our Communications and Policy department. This is done across a range of activities and functions linked to a wide range of issues. This section aims to provide an overview of our activity and impact in this area in 2016/17.

## WHAT WE DID

### POLICY AND CAMPAIGNS

The first principle of our approach to campaigning is that all of our campaign work will be *evidence-led and data-driven*. In this context, in 2016/17 Shelter Scotland:

- Published and proactively campaigned on our [Manifesto for Homes](#) in the run up to the 2016 Holyrood Elections, asking all political parties to sign up to our four key commitments to tackle Scotland's housing crisis.
- Launched our flagship [Homelessness Far From Fixed](#) campaign, highlighting that it is a national badge of shame that a household becomes homeless every 19 minutes in Scotland and calling for renewed and joined up national action to tackle and prevent homelessness in Scotland.
- Researched, produced and disseminated **19 policy papers and statistical analysis papers** on core housing and homelessness issues in 2016/17, which are all available via our online [Policy Library](#).
- Responded to **25 Scottish Government consultations** on issues relating to housing, homelessness and poverty and published **46 policy related blogs** over the course of the year.
- Held over **600 policy-related engagements** with key stakeholders and policy contacts in Scotland in 2016/17 and structured **177 engagement opportunities with people with lived experience of bad housing or homelessness** to inform our work.
- Organised **26 street campaign days** in cities and towns across Scotland involving **51 of our service users** over the course of the year in support of our campaigns.
- Held **130 direct engagement** meetings with MSPs, MPs or Councillors in Scotland to promote our campaigns and policy asks.
- Through a combination of in-person, online and email communications over the course of the year, we added **1,168 campaign supporters** to our logs, bringing our total to **9,033 registered campaign supporters**.

### MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Our Marketing and Communications function is responsible for retaining our public profile and driving awareness of both our campaign asks and our advice services.

- In 2016/17 we retained an average rating of **85% awareness** and **78% favourability** of our brand in Scotland (tracked by independent polling among Scottish adults) with an average of 82% describing Shelter Scotland as **"trustworthy"** and 77% describing us as a **"passionate"** organisation.
- We issued **285 press releases** across a range of housing and homelessness issues, securing **426 million opportunities to hear or see** about our work in print, broadcast and online media.
- We delivered **3 high-profile policy conferences**, engaging with over **181 paying delegates** as well as the annual Shelter Scotland Borders Bike Ride, Home for the Holidays and Social Media Santa engagement initiatives over the year.

## WHAT WE ACHIEVED

Across all of our campaigning work we are determined to always be outcome-focussed in ensuring we are constantly working to drive change for those most negatively affected by Scotland's housing crisis.

In summarising the impact of the activity outlined above, we have attempted to keep to the same broad themes of our work relating to helping people “**keep**”, “**find**” or “**improve**” a home, as outlined in previous sections of this report.

### Helping people “Keep” their home

- Building on the success of our Make Renting Right campaign, we have worked constructively with the Scottish Government as they design and finalise the details of the new private tenancy that will come into effect in Scotland later in 2017. Fundamentally, this will provide much greater security of tenure for the growing number of private renters in Scotland making it harder for them to be evicted on the whim of a landlord.
- Linked to the new private rented tenancy, we also successfully campaigned for changes to ensure that rents in the private sector will only be able to be raised once annually and that this will be within a more predictable and controlled framework. This will make it easier for private tenants in Scotland to manage their household finances and ensure that they are not victim to excessive rent rises.
- Our research into trends in social sector evictions highlighted a worrying rise in evictions across councils and housing associations in Scotland in recent years. Following this work, we have begun a series of engagements with the sector to share best practice in tackling rent arrears to ensure more people in Scotland's social sector are able to keep the home that they are in when financial pressures mount up.

### Helping people “Find” a home

- On the back of our Manifesto for Homes campaign work in the run up to the 2016 Holyrood election, we secured high profile commitments from all major political parties in Scotland to build a great many more affordable homes over the lifetime of this parliament.
- This resulted in the new Scottish Government committing to building 50,000 affordable homes by 2021, with 35,000 available for social rent – this represents a major and welcome step change in affordable housing supply in Scotland and over time should help ensure more people are able to access a genuinely affordable home.
- Our Homelessness: Far From Fixed campaign has aimed to raise awareness and drive renewed action to tackle homelessness in Scotland. Despite progressive legislation we know that for many the right to a home is not the same as getting a home. Following our campaign launch, the Scottish Parliament will now be undertaking an enquiry into homelessness in Scotland and the Housing Minister has committed to strengthening and refocussing the high level Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group in Scotland - all important steps to ensuring more people in Scotland can access the home they are entitled to.
- Our work hosting the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP) on behalf of the Scottish Government has contributed to improving the supply of housing in Scotland by working to bring back into use more and more of Scotland's 34,000 long term private empty properties. In the last year, **840 long-term empty homes** have been brought back into use across Scotland, supported by the work of the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership.

## Helping people “Improve” their home

- Our work with stakeholders on a common quality standard has helped shape the Scottish Government’s proposals for changes to the repairing standard, to bring the quality of private housing more in line with social housing standards.
- We worked with the health sector to understand and promote the issue of healthy homes. With funding from British Gas, we trained 137 frontline health practitioners to help them recognise patients who might be in or at risk of fuel poverty, and to know how to support them. This resulted in tangible improvement on 23 of these staff’s patients. As a member of the Scottish Public Health Network’s Health and Housing Advisory Group, we developed a ‘best practice resource’ to guide the public health and housing sectors in Scotland in their role in improving health and reducing inequalities through the provision of good homes.
- Our campaigning as a member of the Existing Homes Alliance helped bring forward proposed legislation for a minimum standard of energy efficiency in private rented housing, giving private tenants the opportunity to experience the same level of affordable warmth and comfort as their social renting peers. We have helped to raise the profile of fuel poverty in Scotland and shape the conversations on the development of a forthcoming new fuel poverty strategy and Warm Homes Bill in this parliament.
- Our private tenant engagement work has helped raise the voice of private tenants in a crucial time of lots of new legislation. We also took on **596 private landlords cases** in Dundee and the Highlands to raise standards by improving compliance with the rules and regulations which cover the private rented sector.

**CAMPAIGN WIN** - New tenancy and stronger rights for private renters



**CAMPAIGN WIN** - Government pledge to build more affordable homes



**CAMPAIGN WIN** - Scottish Parliament enquiry into homelessness



*Peter & Margaret: “Our Shelter Scotland support worker has been a breath of fresh air because we were worried about everything, but she kept us right.”*

# CASE STUDY: HEALTHY HOMES PROJECT

In 2016, Shelter Scotland partnered with British Gas to run a 'healthy homes' project, looking to highlight the links between health and housing, and specifically focusing on fuel poverty.

At Shelter Scotland, all our work is centred around supporting people to have a safe, secure and affordable home. But for people living in fuel poverty, their home is none of these things – high energy bills affect the affordability of running a home, and in its worst form can result in rent or mortgage arrears putting this home at risk. Health, fuel poverty and cold homes are inextricably linked and the relationship is bi-directional: poor health increases susceptibility to the effects of fuel poverty, such as poor health, for example through anxiety around bills and not being able to afford to heat your home.

The project was based in our Communications and Policy team and sought to understand the problem of fuel poverty, and explore solutions that involve working with the health sector. With the support of our Training team, we developed an online training course on fuel poverty, specifically targeted at frontline health and social care professionals to help them identify their patients at risk of fuel poverty, and provide help and advice to them.

We trained 137 health practitioners for free around Scotland.

- Prior to the training, whilst almost all staff (96%) felt fuel poverty was an issue for their patients, only 23% felt they had good knowledge of fuel poverty and only 11% said they had good knowledge on how to refer patients on for support.
- After the training, all trainees noted improved knowledge, and 92% noted improved confidence in identifying and supporting patients at risk of fuel poverty.
- Within three months of the training, over half had already put their knowledge into practice with a patient.

The biggest test of impact, though, is in the impact the training had on patients.

*"Patients have made comments on how they feel more positive in knowing that they are facing winter with some support and guidance as well as knowing there is people just to speak to about their concerns."*

*"[Patient is] less anxious about opening letters. Knows it is less likely to be a demand for unpaid bill."*

*"[Patient's] Self-stated improvement in decreased anxiety regarding these issues"*

We then used this knowledge and experience to campaign for a cross-sectoral approach to tackle fuel poverty in strategies currently being consulted on by the Scottish Government.



<sup>3</sup> Of 43 practitioners completing a follow up questionnaire 3 months after completing the training, 27 practitioners stated they had used their knowledge from the training to support one of their patients.

---

# IMPACT OF OUR TRAINING

Shelter Scotland offers practical training solutions for housing and homelessness professionals and anyone working in or interested in the sector. Through developing the knowledge and expertise of these professionals, we aim to ensure they can best support their service users in a changing housing landscape.

## WHAT WE DID

In 2016/17 a total of **520 people accessed our physical and online training courses** in Scotland. This represents an increase of almost 300% on the previous year.

In 2016/17 Shelter Scotland launched a new **online store** making it easier for people to find out about and access our courses.

We innovated new ways of delivering e-learning including using animations, new-look learning materials, improving our mobile accessibility, and improving our support for learners.

In 2016/17 Shelter Scotland created and launched a number of new courses in response to growing trends and needs in the sector, including:

- Housing and Homelessness Rights of EEA Nationals
- Self-Directed Support (SDS) for Housing Support Practitioners
- Healthy Homes: Fuel Poverty
- National Progression award in Tenancy and Citizenship

We continued to offer our sector-leading Housing Law Advice qualification with **124 people completing this course in 2016/17**.

## WHAT WE ACHIEVED

### Housing Law Advice

- 69% of learners on our Housing Law Advice training course found the course relevant to their role, and again 69% said the course had equipped them with a greater understanding of the key areas of housing legislation. 70% said it had given them more confidence when dealing with clients.

### Self-Directed Support

- After completing this course, 100% of learners on our self-directed support training course felt more knowledgeable and confident around assisting clients to make informed and sustainable choices.

### Fuel Poverty

- 100% of trainees on our fuel poverty training course noted improved knowledge around issues of fuel poverty.
- 92% of staff noted improved confidence in identifying and supporting patients at risk of fuel poverty.
- From the 43 trainees who responded 3 months after completing the course, 23 practitioners felt the advice they had provided their patients had benefitted their health in some way.

## **CASE STUDY: FOUNDATIONS FIRST PROJECT (RENFREWSHIRE)**

**Shelter Scotland's Foundations First project in Renfrewshire is funded by the STV Children's Appeal. The project aims to alleviate housing difficulties for vulnerable families living locally in the area. Renfrewshire has over 6,000 children living in poverty and many families are on long waiting lists for council houses, with waiting times often in excess of 5 years. In the period between 1 January 2016 to 31 March 2017 we have supported 189 families in Renfrewshire through the project.**

Family Niven\* (a mother and two girls) moved home last February in Paisley into a top-floor flat. Since moving, the mother had felt her mental health decline. The community that she once lived in, was now gone and the children's freedom was impacted due to the property type they now lived in. She suffered from ongoing health concerns which impacted her mobility and her ability to comfortably exit and enter her property with both children. The family were also impacted by the levels and frequency of antisocial behaviour within their new community and mum felt powerless to protect her children alone.

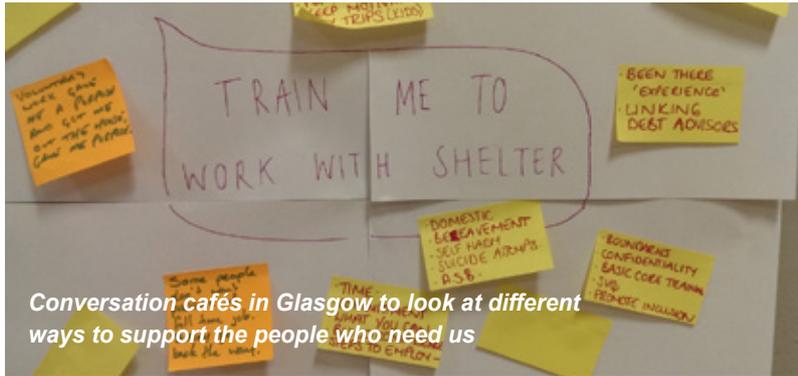
A Shelter Scotland worker recognised that the significant pressure she was under as a lone parent was impacting her physical and mental wellbeing and supported her to gain the support of a local Community Psychiatric Nurse. We helped her to apply to a local charity partner for a supported family break to Oban. Here the family were able to reconnect with other family members and have a reprieve from their stressful living environment. This was the first break the family had had in years and helped with the symptoms the mother had been experiencing. On return, with a housing solution at the heart of our response, the Foundations First team supported the family to a housing options meeting with the local authority, where we were able to help mum make informed choices about what she wanted to secure for her family in terms of a better home. Within 8 weeks of this meeting, the family were able to move to a new tenancy in a more desirable area, on the ground floor, which immediately improved their lives. The family continue to live in their new home, the children are settled and their mum continues to engage with the services around her.

Initial economic analysis conducted by Pro Bono Economics into the Foundations First project in 2016 estimated that the service would have to prevent 24 households becoming homeless for a period of 12 months in order to break even. Using data from the project's first year of operations Pro Bono Economics suggests that the project may already break even in its second year, and therefore is likely to already be providing a net benefit to the local community in Renfrewshire.

*\*The identity of this family has been anonymised*



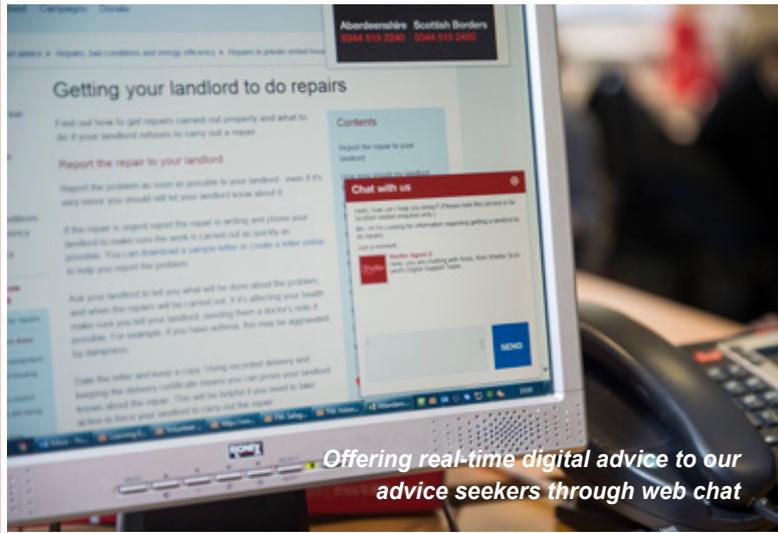
**Far From Fixed launches in Glasgow**



**Conversation cafés in Glasgow to look at different ways to support the people who need us**



**Bringing Professionals together for our popular policy conferences**



**Offering real-time digital advice to our advice seekers through web chat**



**Taking Far from Fixed to Parliament**



**Bringing advice to local communities with our Housing-Street Clinics**



**Our hubs offer specialist advice to their local community, on housing, money & debt and welfare benefits**



**Launch of our Manifesto for Homes Campaign**

## OUR PRESENCE IN SCOTLAND



- |   |               |   |   |
|---|---------------|---|---|
| 1 | Edinburgh Hub | 5 | Foundations First (Paisley)                           |
| 2 | Glasgow Hub   | 6 | Shelter Scotland Support Service, South Lanarkshire   |
| 3 | Dundee Hub    | 7 | Shelter Scotland Support Service, Dumfries & Galloway |
| 4 | Aberdeen Hub  | 8 | Glasgow Participation Project (based in Glasgow Hub)  |

**Thank you for your support in 2016/17**

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)

Registered charity in England and Wales (263710) and in Scotland (SC002327)

Shelter Scotland  
Scotiabank House  
6 South Charlotte Street  
Edinburgh EH2 4AW  
[shelterscotland.org](https://shelterscotland.org)

Shelter  
Scotland