



RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION, JUNE 2023

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.

Scotland's Housing Emergency

We are in a growing housing emergency:

- Record numbers of children (9,130) trapped in temporary accommodation – a 120% increase since 2014¹
- Rising homelessness with a 40% increase in households (14,458) having to live in temporary accommodation compared to 2014
- People are spending increasing amounts of time in temporary accommodation. In areas with the highest pressure on housing families with children spend on average two years in limbo waiting for a home.
- Homelessness services 'at emerging risk of systemic failure', according to the Scottish Housing Regulator²

Social justice cannot be achieved if people do not have a home they can thrive in. A whole system approach is required to address the growing housing emergency and fix the broken and biased housing system. This is why it is so important that housing is prioritised within the National Performance Framework. If urgent action is not taken, we will be unable to address the growing housing emergency and that will make it much more difficult to achieve the National Outcomes particularly those relating to poverty, health, education and employment.

Changes to the National Outcomes and National Indicators

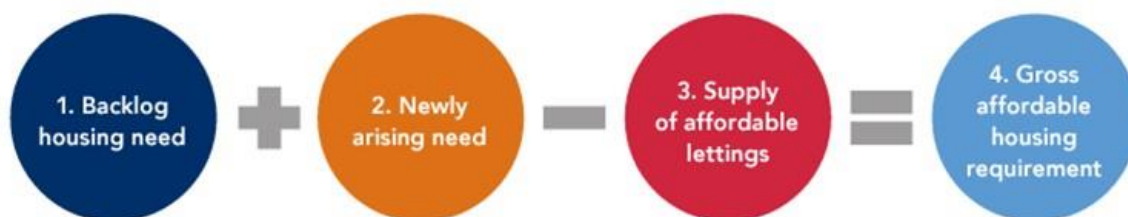
There should be a new National Outcome on housing that should read **"We all have a safe, secure and affordable home which meets our needs"**. This outcome should have a set of key indicators that sit underneath it ensuring that the housing emergency is addressed.

Primarily, the National Outcome should drive change and be measured by the reduction of affordable housing need. In 2020, independent research commissioned by SFHA, CIH and Shelter Scotland further developed a model to define and calculate affordable housing need by taking into account the backlog of housing need, new housing need, and the supply of

¹ All homeless statistics from Scottish Government (2023) [Homelessness in Scotland: update to 30 September 2022](#)

² Scottish Housing Regulator (2023) [Homelessness services in Scotland: A thematic review - February 2023](#)

affordable lets.³ We therefore recommend that **the primary indicator for the National Outcome on housing should be the reduction of affordable housing need**, as defined by this model.



Additional indicators should include:

- The numbers of households, including children in temporary accommodation
- The time households have to spend in temporary accommodation
- The number of new suitable, quality social homes delivered in

The outcome and indicators should be aligned with the forthcoming Human Rights Bill which will incorporate the right to adequate housing into Scots law. The right to adequate housing includes seven elements: affordability, habitability, security of tenure, availability of services, accessibility, locality and cultural adequacy, and these elements should provide a steer for performance measurements. This would also enable measurement of progress against progressive realisation of this right.

The specific inclusion of homelessness within the National Performance Framework is supported by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group⁴ and the Scottish Government and COSLA's Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan which included a recommendation to "ensure next National Performance Framework review includes explicit consideration of homelessness".⁵

What are the main obstacles and barriers in the further implementation of the National Outcomes?

Housing is the foundation for social justice and wellbeing and having a safe, secure and affordable home is crucial to meeting many of the existing National Outcomes – in particular those relating to tackling poverty, growing up loved, safe and protected and respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights.

Currently, we are in a housing emergency and the insufficient supply of social housing is the key barrier to fixing our broken and biased housing system, and thereby achieving the National Outcomes. The lives and futures of thousands of children are being damaged by the fact they are being denied their right to a safe, secure and affordable home.

However, the structural solutions to the housing emergency are clear:

³ Shelter Scotland, CIH and SFHA (2020) [Affordable Housing Need in Scotland Post-2021](#)

⁴ Homeless and Rough Sleeping Action Group (2020) [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group: tackling homelessness following coronavirus](#)

⁵ Scottish Government and COSLA (2020) [Ending homelessness together: updated action plan - October 2020](#)

- Buy and build at least 38,500 social homes by 2026 to reduce housing need⁶
- A national acquisition programme should be introduced to support local authorities to quickly procure new social housing stock where it is most needed
- Fully fund local government and local homelessness services, including carrying out a full audit of existing homelessness spend
- Create a new Homelessness Emergency Fund to direct money where it is most needed
- Guarantee the right to a home for everyone experiencing homelessness

These recommendations are supported by the recent report of the Scottish Government's Temporary Accommodation Task & Finish group⁷, and the Scottish Housing Regulator's report on homelessness services in Scotland.

The Task and Finish Group brought together a range of experts from across the sector and individuals with lived experience of the housing emergency to put forward recommendations on how to reduce the numbers of households and the numbers of children stuck in temporary accommodation. The Task and Finish Group outlined 15 key recommendations which they believe must be taken forward across three priority areas:

1. New supply of social homes
2. Maximal use of existing housing stock
3. Providing the support people need to move on

Similarly, the Scottish Housing Regulator⁸ reported that homelessness services in Scotland are at "emerging risk of systemic failure" due to the pressure on the system, with local authorities increasingly unable to meet their statutory duties. The Regulator said that the "Scottish Government may need to consider what further urgent measures it can take to support councils to respond to the immediate challenges they face in delivering services for people who are homeless." It also identifies throughout that the solution to the problems we are facing is a rapid increase in the supply of social homes.

The latest housing statistics show social house building is slowing down. 2022 was the worst year for approvals for new social house building since 2015 and fell by 21% compared with 2021. Starts for construction of new build social homes fell by 19% in 2022 compared to 2021, and are at the lowest level since 2016.⁹

With less funding and increased costs we can only expect that downward trend to continue. Failing to deliver the 38,500 social homes, whether that's through building them, through acquisitions or bringing empty homes back into use, will keep Scotland in the grip of this devastating housing emergency.

Planning for fewer social homes means planning for higher child poverty rates, more homelessness, more families in temporary accommodation for longer periods of time, more children falling behind at school, worse health outcomes, and missing out on potential

⁶ 38,500 social homes by 2026 would mean the Scottish Government delivering 50% of its longer-term target of 110,000 affordable homes, at least 70% of which are for social rent, by 2032.

⁷ Scottish Government (2023), [Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group: final report and recommendations](#)

⁸ Scottish Housing Regulator (2023) [Homelessness services in Scotland: A thematic review - February 2023](#)

⁹ Scottish Government (March 2023), [Quarterly Housing Statistics, March 2023](#)

economic benefits.¹⁰ Similarly – social housing has been evidenced to provide social value which would help work towards the existing National Outcomes and the proposed new Outcome on housing.¹¹

Properly implementing a human rights-based approach to budgeting will ensure the resources required to meet government commitments to delivery of new social homes as well as delivery of vital homelessness services. We cannot end the housing emergency, tackle the crisis in temporary accommodation or meet the National Outcomes without the delivery of enough social homes to reduce housing need.

Contact: Lisa Borthwick, Advocacy Manager, lisa_borthwick@shelter.org.uk

¹⁰ Shelter Scotland (2020), [A New Economic Case for Social Housing](#)

¹¹ For example Shelter Scotland (2023), [The Social Value of Social Housing: HACT 2023](#) and JRF (2023) [Poverty in Scotland 2022](#)