



John Swinney MSP
First Minister
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Dear First Minister,

Firstly, please accept the congratulations from all of us here at Shelter Scotland on your recent election as SNP leader, and appointment as First Minister of Scotland.

You become First Minister at a critical time for the country. We face a deepening housing emergency and systemic failure across local authority housing and homelessness services. We have record numbers of children trapped in temporary accommodation and more people trapped in the homelessness system than ever before. A household becomes homeless every 16 minutes – and 45 children become homeless every day. This cannot go on.

You now have an important opportunity to change that narrative and find safe, secure homes for the **10,000 children stuck in temporary accommodation** as quickly as possible. It is a national scandal that we have allowed the situation to deteriorate to this extent, and we need urgent and immediate action to tackle this.

Simply put, we can't tackle child poverty if we don't tackle homelessness. We can't tackle homelessness if we don't have enough social homes. You can make clear that you are serious about this problem by **declaring a national housing emergency**, and most importantly, **committing to urgent and radical actions to end the emergency**: buying and building the social homes we need; fully funding social housing supply and local homelessness services; and ensuring existing housing rights are upheld and enforced. Furthermore, **Housing must have its own seat at the Cabinet table** to ensure the needs of those suffering in this housing emergency are heard and fully represented.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the housing emergency with you in more depth in the coming weeks and months, and to offer you our views on what actions must be taken to fix Scotland's broken and biased housing system.

Congratulations once again, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Alison Watson
Director, Shelter Scotland