

FI GHT FOR HOME

The logo for Shelter Scotland, featuring a stylized house icon above the words "SHELTER" and "SCOTLAND" in a bold, sans-serif font.

SHELTER
SCOTLAND

EDINBURGH MANIFESTO FOR HOUSING 2022

Reflecting the priorities of individuals with lived experience, housing rights activists, local communities and constituents, this co-produced manifesto for housing sets out what must happen to tackle the housing emergency in Edinburgh.



TACKLE EDINBURGH'S HOUSING SUPPLY CRISIS

The lack of an adequate supply of good quality, affordable housing across all tenures is one of the biggest social issues facing Edinburgh. The council must do more to address this.

- All political parties should commit to delivering the social housing required to reduce affordable housing need in Edinburgh, including through maximising the use of empty and vacant properties throughout the city for social homes wherever possible.
- Unaffordable rents and a lack of access to existing housing stock due to a high proportion of short-term holiday lets are key issues in Edinburgh. The local authority should take steps to address the issue of short-term lets and limit private rent levels to increase the number of affordable homes available for those who need them and limit the pursuit of profit at the cost of the housing market.
- New housing developments need to be part of sustainable and vibrant communities with access to public transport, schools, GPs and services.



STRENGTHEN AND ENFORCE HOUSING RIGHTS

Edinburgh has repeatedly failed individuals and families experiencing homelessness by not upholding people's rights, including not taking homeless applications and by not providing temporary accommodation to those entitled to it. This needs to change.

- There should be an investment in raising awareness of housing rights, both within the local authority and for people requiring housing support, so that staff are able to support people to access temporary and permanent accommodation that meets their needs.
- The local authority must abide by their legal duties to accommodate people experiencing homelessness – taking homeless applications and providing suitable temporary accommodation when necessary. People identified as “high-risk” or with complex support needs should not be denied their right to temporary accommodation.
- A lack of resources is not an excuse to deny people their rights. The council should ensure funding for homeless services is prioritised and seek further support from the Scottish Government if required. The Scottish Government must also step up and ensure local authorities have the funding to deliver the new legal duties being asked of them.

END THE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION EMERGENCY

Edinburgh is facing a crisis in its temporary accommodation with people spending 318 days on average stuck in temporary accommodation, over 2,000 households trapped in the system and 525 further instances of households not being accommodated at all, as of March 2021. Urgent action is needed to change this.

- The supply of suitable temporary accommodation needs to be improved, offering more variety and allocating people to places that suit their needs.
- All individuals entering temporary accommodation should be offered a needs assessment on arrival and regularly throughout their stay to ensure that the accommodation meets their requirements and wraparound support is offered where appropriate.
- Learning should be taken from the successful Welcome Centre approach to deliver a temporary accommodation service with support co-ordinated between the housing, health, education and social work departments within the council and the voices of lived experience playing a key part in developing the service.
- Temporary accommodation should be just that – temporary. More needs to be done to support people quickly out of all types of temporary accommodation that is detrimental to their wellbeing and into permanent settled homes, including those in Private Sector Leasing Scheme flats.



MAKE EDINBURGH'S HOMES HABITABLE

Some of Edinburgh's social housing stock is in a very poor state of repair – an issue exacerbated by the pandemic, as repairs are being further delayed. People are being forced to live in cold, damp and poorly insulated homes and some are paying the highest social rents in the country to do so.

- The council needs to ensure that the entirety of its social housing stock, and that of housing associations, is brought up and maintained to a habitable standard – achieving the highest possible energy efficiency standards and investing in repairs wherever needed, and ensuring people are getting value for their high social rent levels. This could be achieved by communicating a service-level agreement for repairs, and strictly adhering to this agreement.
- The local authority should work to make tenancies more sustainable by carrying out necessary repairs and adaptations before a tenant moves into a property.
- Social rent levels should be reduced or set at a fair level where they have become unreasonable and unaffordable to residents.



Temporary accommodation is mis-labelled, you can end up in it for years. Which for children and families has a big detrimental impact on their mental health...



It is staggering to see other Councils doing repairs to a better standard yet in Edinburgh seeing the highest rents charged and lower standards continuing.



We exist to defend the right to a safe home and fight the devastating impact the housing emergency has on people and society.

**For more information visit
shelterscotland.org**

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