



impact report 2018/19

Shelter

What we do

Shelter exists to defend the right to a safe home for individuals, in communities, and across society. Every year, we help defend the rights of millions struggling with bad housing or homelessness through our advice, support and legal services. And we campaign to make sure that, one day, a safe home will be a reality for everyone.

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An introduction from Emma Casey, Shelter GROW Trainee

I've been homeless several times in my life, initially when I was 15 and again more recently, and I will always have empathy and compassion for other people in similar situations. I've also experienced several other traumatic life events that resulted in long periods of depression, anxiety, and social isolation, so I know just how debilitating the effects of poor mental health can be.

Eventually, I reached a place of recovery, but I still faced huge barriers to employment before I could begin to rebuild my life and meaningfully reconnect with the world. Until recently, I felt completely unemployable. There were large gaps in my work history, and I felt far too ashamed of my experiences to even think they could be useful to anyone.

When I heard about Shelter's Getting Real Opportunities of Work (GROW) traineeship, I was immediately interested. It was the first time I'd seen a role where lived experience of the issues I'd faced was desired and valued. I soon realised that this role could potentially be life-changing for me, and that I'd be passing up a huge opportunity if I didn't apply.

I passed the interview and got the role, and the benefits to my life have been immeasurable ever since. The impact on my confidence, mental health, and sense of purpose have been huge, and the experiences and insights I've gained have been invaluable.

Shelter's had a huge impact on my life – and I'm just one of millions of people whose lives would be much worse if not for Shelter's amazing work. I feel very proud to work for such a dedicated and passionate organisation.

I hope we continue to make a positive impact on the lives of people who are struggling with bad housing and homelessness, and that our work will ensure a future where nobody will be denied their right to a safe, secure, and affordable home.

Emma Casey

Shelter Getting Real Opportunities of Work (GROW) Trainee



The year at a glance

Based on a representative survey of people who came to Shelter for help in 2018/19:



39% were facing eviction or repossession



41% were looking for somewhere new to live



17% needed help dealing with poor conditions



18% lived in an unsafe house or area



39% were having trouble with their landlord, letting agency, or tenancy



44% were struggling to cope or manage on a day-to-day basis



30% needed help with their finances

4.3m

people visited our online advice pages

41,192

households received advice from our helpline



38,098

households were seen by our hubs' services



14,841

people were helped by our prison services



41,508

conversations on our webchat service

In 2018/19, thanks to help from Shelter:

33,000 households

saw a positive change in their housing situation

5,300

homeless households found somewhere to live

10,600

households who were having an issue with their landlord or tenancy saw an improvement

3,200

households saw their poor conditions improve

8,700

households halted their eviction or repossession proceeding, and kept their homes

2,100

households that needed to move home found somewhere to live

12,900

households are now coping or managing better on a day-to-day basis

8,800

households improved their financial situation

3,900

households saw an improvement to the safety of their house or local area



Changing people's lives

We provide expert advice and support to anyone who needs it, every single day of the year.

Thanks to our supporters, staff, and volunteers, we will always be here, ready to help, so no one has to struggle with bad housing or homelessness on their own.



Helpline

Shelter's free national helpline provides support to people in urgent need of housing advice. Our expert team help people experiencing a housing emergency to resolve their problems there and then, offering practical help and telling people their rights. Every single conversation that our advisers have can be the difference between someone keeping or losing their home.

Last year, 41,192 households were given advice over the phone

Digital advice

Our digital advice gives people what they need to resolve their housing problems. We have step-by-step guides, interactive tools, a live webchat, template letters, and videos to help people navigate the complex world of housing law. We deliver our advice in the way people need it on the platforms they use.

We had 41,508 conversations on our online webchat service

Getting Real Opportunities of Work (GROW)

GROW Traineeships are paid employment placements that give people with lived experiences of homelessness, mental health conditions, substance misuse or offending a chance to use their experiences positively. Trainees gain valuable skills while also using their understanding to influence and shape services to better meet the needs of the people who use them.

Hubs

We have 12 hubs across England and four in Scotland. Each offers face-to-face advice and support in housing, welfare benefits, and debt matters, delivered in partnership with and tailored to the local community. Legal advice and representation can be accessed through all hubs, and many offer long-term support to people with multiple barriers to housing.

38,098 households came to our hubs for advice and support

Work in prisons

Our specialist services in prisons are tailored to individuals' needs, including crisis interventions, housing, benefits, and relationships. Our 'through the gate' resettlement plans enable people to get help in both custody and the community. This ensures they have a safe home on release and reduces the likelihood of reoffending.

We worked with 14,841 people in prisons

Supporting communities

With six million households in England and Scotland either denied the right to a safe, secure, and affordable home, or threatened with losing it, we're building a national movement for change.

At a local level, our hubs and shops are bases for connecting communities. We unite people with a shared purpose, offering support, training, and development to help communities tackle the housing emergency and achieve change.

Community organisers

Part of our vision is to **make every Shelter hub a base for change in its community**. This year, we put this into action by creating community organiser posts in Manchester and Glasgow. Here, our organisers work to build power and leadership in communities, supporting people campaigning for their housing rights.

Candlelit vigil

In December, Shelter Manchester held a candlelit vigil in Sackville Gardens to commemorate all the rough sleepers who died in the city in 2018. The name of every person who passed away was read out before the public were invited to light candles in remembrance. The vigil raised awareness of the brutal conditions rough sleepers endure, and served as a reminder that behind the statistics, these were real people with families who never deserved to be invisible to the authorities.



Transforming society

Everyone should have a place to call home. This is a basic right. And fighting for this right is at the heart of everything we do.

This year, we've continued to achieve important policy wins that have improved the lives of thousands of people. Together with our supporters, we're building a movement for change, to fight social injustice and defend the right to a safe home.



Reforming renters' rights

On 15 April 2019, after decades of pressure from Shelter and many other campaigners, the government announced plans to **scrap section 21** evictions. If made into law, this means a tenant can no longer be evicted from their home without a legitimate reason. This is a historic win and will help England's 11 million private renters feel more secure and settled in their homes. It'll also give more renters the confidence to raise issues like poor conditions with their landlord without fear of a revenge eviction.

This move followed in the footsteps of our successful campaign to transform renting in Scotland, which resulted in the introduction of a new, modern tenancy in December 2017, offering security and flexibility for Scotland's 760,000 private renters.

No excuse for 'No DSS'

This was a huge year for our campaign to end discrimination against tenants who rely on benefit payments to help them pay their rent. 'No DSS' policies, named after the defunct Department for Social Security, have unfairly locked hundreds of thousands of people out of homes they could otherwise afford, pushing them closer to homelessness.

In March 2019, NatWest announced they were joining Nationwide in scrapping the clause in their buy-to-let mortgages that stops landlords from renting to tenants on benefits. The Co-operative Bank followed suit in April, and now virtually all mortgages of this kind accept tenants receiving housing benefit. After direct pressure from us, Zoopla announced they were banning 'No DSS' adverts and Rightmove made steps in the same direction. The issue was raised in parliament by both Chris Walker MP and Melanie Onn MP, and the government has now stated its intention to crack down on DSS discrimination.

A Big Conversation about social housing

In the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire, Shelter brought together an independent commission to investigate the future of social housing. In January 2019, our **16 commissioners** – who come from across the political spectrum and from diverse backgrounds – published their findings. They made the case for a historic renewal of our country's social housing with a plan for 3.1 million homes to be delivered over 20 years. They also called for a new regulator to protect and enforce standards, a greater voice for social tenants, and increased legal rights for all renters. We have the evidence; now we must compel the government to act.

Advice for other housing professionals

The National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS) provides free expert advice, training, and support to local authorities, statutory agencies, and advice-giving charity professionals in England. Our consultancy line delivers fast, comprehensive advice to help solve even the most challenging cases. Professional debt advisers can also get free support on complex matters via our Specialist Debt Advice Service.

- In 2018/19 in England, there were 9,365 consultancy cases opened for professional advice workers who required specialist advice on housing, homelessness, and debt issues; our surveys show that 99% of respondents were satisfied with the housing and homelessness consultancy line.

In Scotland, the Scottish Welfare Reform Advisory Service (ScotWRAS) is funded by the Scottish Legal Aid Board and provides free advice to frontline support and advice staff across the country.

Our impact



To put our work into context and to clearly show the outcomes of the help, support, and campaigning we've delivered in 2018/19, we've divided the Impact Report into the following sections:

- **What we do to help people stay in their homes**
- **How we help people find somewhere to live**
- **The fight against unsafe and unfit conditions**
- **Our work with people with multiple and complex needs**

Unless otherwise specified, findings about outcomes are based on a survey of approximately 2,000 clients or management information collected through our services. More information about the numbers and how they have been calculated can be found either in the Methodology section of this report or in the technical report:

shelter.org.uk/impact

We help people stay in their homes

The loss of a home is a traumatic, destabilising event which can have a long-term effect on a person's health and welfare. Homelessness happens to a family in Britain every 11 minutes.

Our community hubs, helpline, webchat, and online advice pages offer services that are designed to prevent homelessness. Many of those who came to us were facing eviction or repossession of their homes. Last year, thanks to our work, **8,700 households** halted their eviction or repossession proceedings and kept their homes. Those in prison can be especially vulnerable to eviction. Last year, more than **660 people** in prison were able to keep their homes after working with our offender resettlement services to retain their tenancies and prevent eviction.

Financial problems such as rent arrears, delays in benefit payments, and debts put people's homes at risk. In 2018/19, thanks to Shelter, **8,800 households** improved their financial situation. We also help people to understand the processes for eviction and repossession, and help people tackle the issues that can lead to losing a home, preventing many more cases of homelessness before they happen.

The impact of specific services

Legal advice service

Last year, our legal advice service worked with **7,796 households** in England and **415 households** in Scotland. Our team of solicitors offered expert legal advice, helped fight repossession and eviction, and attended court to defend people at risk of losing their home.

Our solicitors also challenged local authority homelessness decisions, stepping in when councils weren't doing enough to support those in need of housing.

Of the people who used our legal services in 2018/19:

90%

of households who were struggling on a day-to-day basis are now coping or managing better

72%

of households who were faced with eviction or repossession stayed in their home



Family support service

Families are disproportionately affected when they experience homelessness, poor living conditions, or the insecurity of temporary accommodation. Children's development can be delayed, and schoolwork suffers. Over the past year, our family support workers have worked intensively with hundreds of families who are at risk of becoming homeless. They've done this by providing long-term, tailored support, like advising parents how to get into work, access mental health support and manage finances or rent arrears.

- For families who have used our specialist family support services, **75% who were facing eviction or repossession** had issues with their finances or were struggling to cope on a day-to-day basis are now better able to keep their home

Of the people who got in touch with Shelter last year:

30%

said they needed help with their finances

39%

were facing or threatened with eviction from, or repossession of, their homes

44%

were struggling to cope or manage on a day-to-day basis

39%

of households who came to Shelter's services were looking for help with their landlord, letting agency, or tenancy issues

In Scotland: Foundations First

Foundations First was set up to support families with housing difficulties in Renfrewshire, giving them advice, advocacy, and support. The service supports those who are homeless or worrying about losing a home, and those struggling financially, living in poor conditions, living with domestic abuse, affected by offending behaviour, or experiencing mental or physical health issues.

We help with both short-term matters, offering services like advocacy at meetings and support to attend appointments, and longer-term issues, offering more intensive support for those with multiple and complex needs. Funded by the STV Children's Appeal until 2019, we are supported by Shelter Scotland's housing and money/debt advice services and work jointly with existing service providers to put Renfrewshire families first.

So far, the project has **realised around £192,000** of financial gain for families through income maximisation and access to grants, trusts, and funds. By including families in community capacity-building activities, they also benefit from peer support and build relationships that will last beyond the service.

“If it weren't for Shelter, I would've been made homeless with little to no money to live on. Thanks to Shelter, I managed to keep my home and arrange to pay off arrears at an affordable amount each month.

When my money decreased due to other issues, Shelter helped me approach my landlord to have the arrears payments reduced.”

– Legal services user
Scotland

We help people find somewhere to live

A home is a fundamental human need and a basic moral right, as vital as education or healthcare.

Unfortunately, the sheer lack of appropriate, affordable accommodation caused by a failure of successive governments to build enough social housing, coupled with a lack of rights for renters and discrimination against renters on housing benefit, means that for many, this right is denied.

In 2018/19, **41% of households** who came to Shelter said that they were looking for somewhere to live. Faced with 40 years of failed government policy, our services can only do so much – yet our helpline, face-to-face, and webchat services all helped many people find a home. Our website advice pages provide practical guidance to help people increase their incomes if possible, access deposit schemes, search for homes, and negotiate with landlords.

Entrenched rough sleepers service

Our service for entrenched rough sleepers in Greater Manchester supports those who have slept rough for two years and/or are well known to homelessness services. We work together with partners across all 10 Greater Manchester local authority areas to make accessing support as straightforward as possible. Individuals are given personalised support from both an engagement worker and a peer mentor with personal experience of homelessness. This approach ensures that people get the practical help they need to start a new life off the streets, as well as the emotional support that's key for them to succeed.

- **169** entrenched rough sleepers in Manchester found accommodation, of which 102 are now in secure, settled accommodation

Prison work

We run specialist services in **18 prisons** that aim to give people a chance to rebuild their lives once they leave. These deliver housing, debt, and benefits advice to people within the prison community, as well as giving wider advice around employment options. If a person can move into stable accommodation when they leave prison, it reduces their chances of reoffending by 20%¹. That's why we create resettlement plans for prisoners nearing the end of their sentence.

Among prison leavers whose outcomes are known, **55% of people** who we worked with received help finding somewhere to live:

- **262** people moved into settled or more permanent housing
- **2,267** people moved back into the family home
- **1,619** people accessed emergency, temporary or supported accommodation

¹SEU, *Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners*, ODP, 2002



Thanks to Shelter, among
prison leavers whose
outcomes are known:

5,300

homeless households found
somewhere to live

2,100

households that needed to move
home found somewhere to live

In Scotland: The Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP)

This partnership is aimed at encouraging local authorities to bring private sector empty homes back into use and covers a range of activity including policy work, practical support for owners, and advice for anyone concerned about an empty home in Scotland. Funded by Scottish government and hosted by Shelter Scotland, the SEHP supports empty homes work across all Scottish local authorities, with 20 councils now having a dedicated empty homes officer in post. Support is delivered via training and learning opportunities, an online knowledge hub, and a range of guides, tools, and templates that help the network of empty home officers to share best practice.

- In 2018/19 a record number of properties have once again become homes (1,128), 18% of which were added to the local affordable housing supply

“ If it wasn’t for Shelter, I don’t think I would’ve got a house. I would’ve ended up on the street with my family.

The council refused to house me, and Shelter told me that’s not legal. With Shelter’s support, the council accepted my homelessness application.

– Legal services user
Eastern Counties Hub

We fight against unsafe living conditions

In 2018/19, 17% of households who got in touch with Shelter said they needed help dealing with poor housing conditions, and 18% said they lived in an unsafe house or area.

Many use the popular advice pages on our website to get the information and guidance on repairs and safety they need.

In some cases, we take a more active role in tackling unsafe and unfit conditions by negotiating with landlords on people's behalves and making them take responsibility for their property's poor conditions. We can also order environmental health assessments to highlight safety hazards and enforce action as a result.

DIY skills advisers

Last year, **433 households** were helped by our DIY skills advisers. The idea is to help people gain the practical DIY skills, know-how, and confidence to make their homes liveable. Our advisers share their DIY expertise so that people can create – and subsequently maintain – safe, comfortable environments for themselves.

Properties need nurturing to become homes. Without that care and attention, people simply can't settle physically or emotionally into their own space. That's why giving people the tools and motivation to make their house a home is vital.

- More than **1,050 jobs were completed**. This included 209 decorating jobs, 148 removals and deliveries, and 49 gardening jobs

Thanks to Shelter's support:

3,200

households saw their poor conditions improve

3,900

households felt their unsafe house or area had improved



Helen's story

Helen* is a young parent with a four-year-old son and newborn daughter. The family had been living in temporary accommodation after fleeing domestic abuse. Fortunately, they were able to find a new property – but it badly needed decorating and updating to make it a home.

First, we gained Helen's trust by assessing and talking through the DIY required. Next came the hard work as we joined Helen for some DIY that included lining and painting the living room walls. By working on these tasks together, Shelter helped Helen gain the skills and confidence to improve her home herself in the future.

After working with our DIY skills adviser, Helen says she's really proud of her achievements and can't wait to use her new skills to decorate the rest of the family home.

*Due to the sensitive nature of this story, the client's name has been changed.



We help people with complex needs

Often, the people who need us most are the hardest to reach.

If we work with someone who is struggling with two or more of the following issues – homelessness, mental illness, current or historical offending, or drugs or alcohol misuse – they are classed as having multiple and complex needs. We reach these clients by offering a greater intensity of service, more flexibility, and by showing them dependability to build their trust.



Housing First

After mounting evidence of the benefits of the Housing First model in several European countries, Shelter has begun running Housing First projects in Manchester and Dorset.

The Housing First model was designed for those with high support needs and recurrent experiences of homelessness. It's based on the principle that when people have a stable home, they are better placed to tackle other issues in their lives. This way, individuals who may have been street homeless for years are offered a permanent home, without conditions they may struggle to adhere to. Alongside this, they receive intensive, personalised support to help them sustain their tenancy and rebuild their lives.

- Since the project started in 2015, **19 out of 21 Housing First Manchester clients** found and sustained a settled home

For our clients in need of longer-term support:

73%

saw an improvement in their happiness
or wellbeing

53%

saw an improvement in their mental
health

For our clients in need of more holistic support:

68%

saw their family life and relationships
improve

73%

saw an improvement in managing their
drug and alcohol issues

71%

said their ability to manage money and
bills improved

Emma's story

‘I’m a GROW trainee peer researcher within Shelter’s Inspiring Change Manchester project. The role is a perfect fit for me as my own lived experience helps me build rapport and trust with clients so they may feel more comfortable sharing their experiences.

‘Over the traineeship, I’ve learnt an incredible amount and have worked hard to overcome many personal and professional challenges – things that I once would never have considered myself capable of facing.

‘I’ve had heartfelt feedback from people who find my presence and progress inspiring, and I absolutely feel the same about many of the journeys I’ve been privileged to witness. I’ve also had countless positive interactions with clients, team members and colleagues from other Shelter departments that I’ve had the pleasure of working with. My colleagues are all extremely dedicated and very supportive, and they continue to inspire me daily.

‘Beyond our project, I’ve had lots of other opportunities for professional growth from my time at Shelter. From extensive training and networking opportunities to participation in large Shelter projects and meetings, it’s really put my confidence and interpersonal skills to the test.

‘My Shelter GROW traineeship has improved my life chances considerably. I now feel much more hopeful and confident about my future. When my traineeship ends, I hope to find further fulfilling work where I can make a real difference. I already feel far more confident in my ability to do so.’



Inspiring Change Manchester

2019 sees the end of the fifth year of our eight-year Big Lottery-funded initiative, Inspiring Change Manchester. Launched in 2014 to support Manchester's most vulnerable residents, the programme aims to inspire and support those who have entrenched damaging lifestyles to take positive steps to improve their lives.

We've been working closely with other local agencies to make sure that when people do seek help, there is no 'wrong door'. This means that we jointly put in place the support that's needed for that individual regardless of their first point of contact.

Since 2014, Inspiring Change Manchester has helped:

234

people improve their score on the Chaos Index, a measurement tool that scores individuals on issues such as risk to themselves

186

people improve their scores on a scale for mental wellbeing

234

people improve their scores on the Homelessness Outcomes Star, a scale which incorporates several dimensions included in definitions of multiple and complex needs

In Scotland: Time for Change

This programme grew out of Shelter Scotland's Glasgow Participation Project, which used the expert lived experience of former homeless people to consult on and find solutions to the biggest issues facing homeless people in the city.

Individuals who engaged in the consultation were then approached to become involved in co-producing a response to these issues. Their conclusion was to equip service users with the skills to advocate for people when they are making homelessness applications, ensuring their rights are upheld while engaging on a peer to peer basis. This award-winning approach had a 100% success rate, meaning that as a result, around 80 people weren't turned away and made to sleep rough, sofa surf or return to dangerous home situations.

Time for Change has now been adopted as Shelter Scotland's approach to involvement. The model identifies local issues facing homeless people and, through involvement and wider consultation, creates opportunities for individuals to co-produce the design and delivery of a response to tackle those issues.

NHS Fife Intervention Project

This two-year initiative was introduced to test a new approach to providing services in NHS Scotland hospitals for patients who are homeless and who have multiple and complex needs.

Driven by Shelter Scotland and Fife Health and Social Care Partnership, the project engages and identifies individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness on admission to hospital. This is delivered via specialist housing support and advice, and by developing person-centred plans for individuals.

The initiative also uses collaboration to better support those suffering from alcohol or substance abuse. In 2018/19, 76 people were supported by the project – and more than half of these people have problems with alcohol, drug use and mental ill-health.



The right to a safe home:

Our strategy 2019-22



Our strategy

Every day, we continue to see the devastating impact the national housing emergency has on people's lives. A home is a fundamental human need and a basic moral right, as vital as education or healthcare.

But in Britain today, that right is being denied to millions of people whose lives are blighted by homelessness, bad conditions, soaring rents, a lack of homes, discrimination, and the threat of eviction.

This year, we published our new strategy, which sets out to act as a turning point – an ambitious and fearless response to the emergency. Everything we do from now on will be to defend the right to a safe home.

The strategy has three goals and in future, we will judge the impact we make against these:

1.

Rights for renters and an end to discrimination

In the last two decades, the number of households renting privately has doubled. Since 2011, rents have risen by 16%, while wages have gone up just 10% – which means private renters have the highest average weekly housing costs while having to put up with insecurity and often poor-quality housing. Our job is to stand up for private renters. We will campaign for more rights for renters and improvements in conditions, and we'll continue to use the law to fight discrimination against those on benefits.

2.

Supporting people who are struggling

We are determined to provide a service which gives the best advice and support to all who need it. But because of the increasing need, too often we cannot meet demand. For that reason, we will enhance our digital advice to cater to everyone, while ensuring anyone needing emergency help can always speak to one of our helpline advisers. And we'll expand services in our local hubs in partnership with the community and other organisations, developing a local vision for each.

3.

Building more social housing

Levels of public housebuilding have plummeted dramatically, which has led to a sharp increase in families stuck in expensive, poor-quality, insecure, privately rented homes. Right now, 1.1 million people in England are on the waiting list for social housing, yet fewer than 6,500 new social homes were built last year. We urgently need long-term, large-scale action to address this issue. Within 10 years, we want everyone who needs social housing to get it.

And in defending the right to a safe home, we'll build a movement for change, joining forces with individuals and organisations, empowering and amplifying the voice of anyone who wants to work alongside us. The national emergency cannot be stopped by anything less than a national movement.

Methodology

This report is informed by the following:

- A quantitative telephone survey was carried out with approximately 2,000 clients from England and Scotland by research agency BMG Research. The interviews were conducted three months after their case was closed with us. Weightings have been applied to the type of service received (support, Advice Support Guidance (ASG), legal, helpline), broad geographical regions (North/South), and country (England and Scotland). The sample is broadly representative of clients based on age, gender and presenting problems. Each client represents a household, which can contain multiple occupants.
- Incidence of issues people were experiencing was taken from responses in the survey, rather than management information Shelter holds from its services.
- The percentages of people who achieved certain outcomes excludes those who said 'Don't know' or 'Too early to say', and the questions were only asked to those who said they had the problem.
- Whole numbers are estimates and are calculated by using the proportions experiencing the issue, proportions with a positive change, and proportions who state the improvement was down to Shelter, at least to some extent. These proportions are applied sequentially to the number of cases closed in 2018. Numbers are then conservatively rounded up or down.
- Additional information was gathered from a number of services that collect routine information on outcomes throughout their service use. This includes our work in prisons, the DIY skills advisers, Inspiring Change Manchester, and its associated Housing First service.
- More detailed information can be found in the appendices to this report.

**Shelter exists to defend the right
to a safe home for individuals,
in communities, and across society.**

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of millions struggling with bad housing
or homelessness through our advice,
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