

IMPACT REPORT

2022/23





**'NONE OF OUR WORK
TO END THE HOUSING
EMERGENCY IS
POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE
GENEROSITY OF OUR
PARTNERS, SUPPORTERS
AND DONORS. TOGETHER
WE'LL CONTINUE TO
DEFEND THE RIGHT TO A
SAFE HOME
FOR EVERYONE.'**



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INTRODUCTION

FROM HELEN BAKER, CHAIR OF SHELTER'S BOARD AND POLLY NEATE CBE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The housing emergency has intensified dramatically over this past year. Homelessness was already rising before the cost of living crisis took hold. Rents at a record high, social housing waiting lists at record length, crippling food and fuel bills and even more families stuck in temporary accommodation – it is all pushing thousands of people to hopelessness, fear and destitution. But, together with our many supporters, we can change this.

Over this past year we have joined forces with more communities, grassroots organisations and people with lived experience of homelessness. Together, we've worked to tackle the root causes of unfit housing and homelessness at a local level, helping more individuals and families at the sharp end of the housing emergency to find security and hope for the future. While at a national level, we have campaigned for improved housing rights and a new generation of safe and secure social homes that people on low incomes can actually afford – the only way to bring this national emergency to an end.

HELPING PEOPLE DIRECTLY

Across our emergency helpline, our 11 community hubs and our live webchat, we worked with over 45,400 people. This ranged from individuals with nowhere to sleep that night, to families trapped in temporary accommodation, sometimes for many years. We find that while we

can work with people to make significant improvements in their situation, all too often they are still far from finding a permanent, safe and affordable home. Increasingly we see exactly why our movement for change and our support services must go hand in hand.

CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

Our advocacy for long term structural change is always in partnership with people who have direct experience of the housing emergency and we welcome all those that want to join and stand in solidarity.

AT A LOCAL LEVEL

More than ever before, we are achieving systemic change at a local level. Each of our community hubs has its own plan for delivering change, focusing on what matters to the people we work with and responding to their experience of what

creates a housing emergency in their communities. Page 14 shares the story of the Birmingham Fair Renting Campaign – including helping to force the council into declaring a housing emergency.

AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

In the last year, we have worked with supporters directly affected by the housing emergency and a coalition of partners and communities to call for reform of the private and social rented sectors. We've successfully campaigned alongside Grenfell United for big changes to the way social housing is managed and maintained. Parliament has now passed the long-awaited Social Housing Regulation Bill into legislation, improving safety and living conditions for millions. The government has also published the Renters' Reform Bill, aimed at scrapping no-fault evictions – a leading direct cause of homelessness – and creating a national landlord register.

INCREASING THE REACH OF OUR WORK ON HOUSING RIGHTS

Only building genuinely affordable social homes can end the housing emergency. But at Shelter, we also need to deal with its effects now. As well as defending the right to a safe home for individuals and families, we also share our skills and expertise with other organisations, to increase our reach. Page 17 shares insight into this Community Model, from Manchester Communications Academy where we worked with school staff to provide advice to the families of students.

On page 11 you can read about our strategic litigation approach where just one case has made it easier for thousands of private renting families to find a suitable home to rent.

None of our work to end the housing emergency – with individuals, in communities, or on a national scale – can continue without the generosity of partners and donors. From our emergency helpline preventing someone from sleeping in their car, to our innovative support model developing a whole community's knowledge of housing rights, to our local and national campaigning that is bringing real policy and public opinion change, your support is vital.

Over the next few pages, we'll spotlight a few programmes which demonstrate, through their impact, how with your continued commitment to Shelter, and with people with lived experience at the forefront of all we do, we can continue to build a better future where nobody is denied the right to a safe home.

From everyone here at Shelter, thank you.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Baker".

HELEN BAKER
CHAIR OF
TRUSTEES



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Polly Neate".

POLLY NEATE CBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

ACROSS OUR SERVICES IN ENGLAND IN 2022/23

15,555

households received advice
from our emergency helpline

15,846

households came to our local hubs
in England for advice and support

Our legal advice services
worked with

4,074

HOUSEHOLDS

Our professional advice
services responded to

16,588

QUERIES

from other organisations
needing our housing expertise

Our justice services
assisted

3,453

CASES

with people in custody
and in the community

6.2 MILLION

visits made to our online advice and
services pages in England

14,026

conversations through our webchat service

TOP 10 ONLINE ADVICE PAGES

- 1 Damp and mould in rented homes
- 2 Emergency housing from the council
- 3 Emergency grants, loans and money help
- 4 How to find landlords who accept benefits
- 5 Section 21 eviction: how to check a section 21 notice is valid
- 6 Landlord and tenant responsibilities for repairs
- 7 How to apply for council housing: how long does it take to get a council home
- 8 How to get emergency housing from the council
- 9 Get homelessness help from the council
- 10 Get help from the council: who qualifies for housing

**WITH SUPPORT FROM OUR
HUBS OR EMERGENCY HELPLINE:**

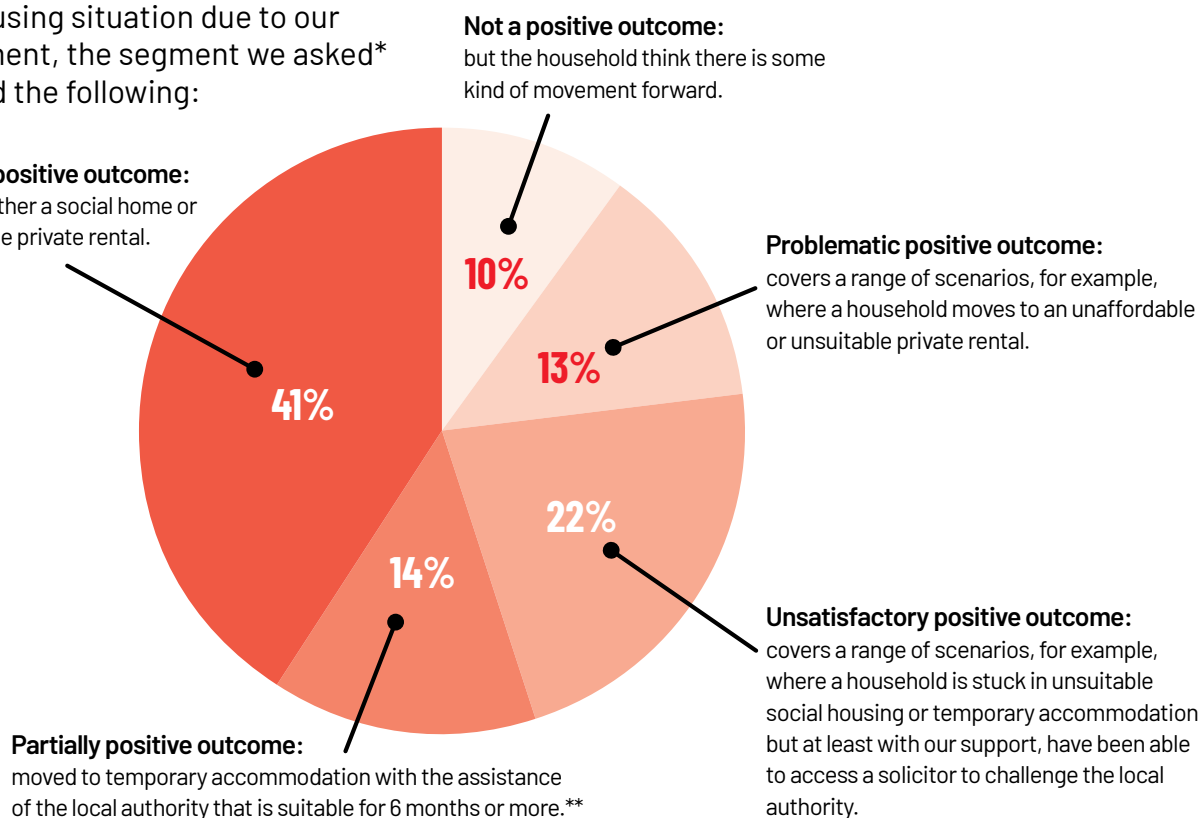
12,900

households (48%) saw a positive
change in their housing situation

Our ambition for everyone is that they have a safe, settled and affordable home. We wanted to know how many households experiencing a positive change had achieved this standard, to better understand what advice can do for people in the midst of the housing emergency.

Out of the **48% of households** reporting a positive change in their housing situation due to our involvement, the segment we asked* achieved the following:

Excellent positive outcome:
moved to either a social home or an affordable private rental.



Not a positive outcome:
but the household think there is some kind of movement forward.

Problematic positive outcome:
covers a range of scenarios, for example, where a household moves to an unaffordable or unsuitable private rental.

Unsatisfactory positive outcome:
covers a range of scenarios, for example, where a household is stuck in unsuitable social housing or temporary accommodation but at least with our support, have been able to access a solicitor to challenge the local authority.

These results demonstrate that as important as our advisory support is to people at the sharp end of the housing emergency there are limits to the impact our services alone can deliver in any one year. This is why it is so important that we continue to work for change: with individuals, in communities and across society and why your support to improve renters' rights and to pressure the government to build social housing at scale is so crucial in the fight to end the housing emergency for good.

*We asked households who reported a positive outcome in their housing due to our involvement and had either moved, decided they had to move but hadn't yet done so or were homeless when coming to Shelter. This represented a smaller section of the 817 households reporting a positive change in their housing situation because of Shelter (635) and did not include those that, as part of their positive change involved staying where they were.

**This will hopefully be a stepping stone towards these households then moving to a social home or an affordable and suitable private rental. However, we know that 6 in 10 (61%) households in temporary accommodation have been there for longer than a year. This increases to more than two-thirds (68%) when looking at families with children.

CAMPAIGNING FOR HOUSING SUPPORT MEASURES DURING THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

The housing emergency is inextricably linked with the cost of living crisis. As prices for everyday essentials continue to soar, hundreds of thousands of people are left struggling to afford to keep a roof over their heads. Even before costs started rising, 48% of renters had no savings thanks to already unaffordable rents – leaving no breathing space if a bill shot up.

In July and August 2022 we conducted research to understand the impact this was having, and our findings showed that almost 1.1 million private renters in England – one in seven – had their rent increased. The hardest hit were low-income renters, who were falling short on their rent to the tune of £1,812 a year because the safety net of housing benefit – frozen since March 2020 despite rising rents – was failing them and not reaching its purpose.

The winter of 2022 was particularly hard. During this time, Tracey, Shelter's Strategic Lead in Sheffield, reflected:

'We are already seeing people who are struggling to make ends meet, to manage the costs of their housing and pay all other bills. We see people all the time who are relying on food banks, and our staff are constantly making referrals to the city's free food provision or to hardship schemes for our clients and this is only going to get worse as people

try and cope in the Winter months, where many have already received notices from their energy suppliers about increases to direct debits (in one case from £70 to £300) and don't have the means to pay the increases. We are very concerned about how people are going to cope this Winter and anticipate an increase in homelessness, decline in health and wellbeing, and increase in demand.'

54% of private renters claiming housing benefit had to make up a shortfall to cover their rent, with an average shortfall of £151 a month – money they did not have. The consequences for renters were severe – in Shelter hubs up and down the country, our teams were and are continuing to work with people who are struggling right now because their household income simply isn't enough to afford a home in their local area.



Funded by Nationwide Building Society, Shelter surveyed the public throughout the last year to gain an insight into how the cost of living had affected households. Through this research, we found in the last year:

- **35%** of renters were spending at least half of their income on rent
- **31%** of those who have seen their rent increase have had an increase of £100 per month.
- **70%** say that if they were evicted they would struggle to find somewhere suitable to live in their area
- **31%** of people with a mortgage have seen their mortgage increase
- **£177** a month was the mean rise in mortgages

To support with the issues people were facing, at the end of March 2023, we created a new online tool to help people check if they could get help from the council with homelessness. It has been used over 3,000 times since launch.



AMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE

At the height of the crisis, the news was full of unhelpful rhetoric outlining ways individuals could survive the worst cost of living crisis in the UK since the 1950s – from reusing old teabags to putting on another jumper, or just ‘working more hours’ – as one politician suggested. But we needed more than just hacks. In response, we created a cost of living hacks campaign calling on the government to make housing more affordable.

Clearly communicating the link between the housing emergency and the cost of living crisis, the ambition behind this campaign was to make the public feel compelled to put pressure on the government to adopt solutions; such as increasing local housing allowance rates and building social housing at scale.

During the life of the campaign, the numbers of those who believe in our cause rose by 3% in the adult population and by 17% of those adults under 45. After the campaign, 14% of adults had heard Shelter talking about the cost-of-living crisis in the previous month, demonstrating our reach with the general public.

The cost of living crisis would not have hit communities as hard if the UK was not in the midst of a housing emergency. While it still casts uncertainty for everybody, we’ll continue to influence social and political thinking, until the government commits to building a new generation of social housing to provide a stable foundation for all.



SHAKING UP THE SYSTEM

The only way out of this housing emergency is to completely eradicate the root causes of homelessness. Quick fixes, temporary solutions: they are simply not enough to secure a stable foundation from which people can build their lives. With the help of those who have experienced the effects of this broken system first-hand, we challenge issues in need of urgent action – to fight for a future where nobody is left out or let down.

Shelter's Strategic Litigation and Community Legal teams are among those leading the charge. Using their expertise, they work with our clients to challenge and influence poor or unlawful practices; creating legal precedent that brings about systemic change. These cases would not be possible without the support of our donors who give generously to our Justice Fund. One such case is Lexi's.

A 33-year-old NHS neonatal nurse based in Sussex, Lexi lives with her husband and their four children. On Christmas Eve in 2021, they were handed a 'no fault' section 21 eviction notice. The urgency to find a new private rental put a huge pressure on the family. But the search proved even more stressful than Lexi could have imagined, when no landlords or letting agents would rent to a family with four children.

Despite both Lexi and her husband passing affordability checks, they eventually had no choice but to register with the council as homeless.





'The fact kids could be discriminated against is abhorrent and should never have been able to happen. I couldn't believe this was happening to me, yet the more I talked about it, the more people came forward saying they'd experienced the same or knew someone who had.' **LEXI**

'No kids' discrimination is a practice where landlords and letting agents refuse to consider a tenant, simply because they have children - even if the property is otherwise suitable and affordable for them. Shelter's most recent data shows that one in five parents - equating to almost 300,000 families in England - have been unable to rent somewhere they wanted in the last five years because they have children.

Previous court wins had proved that DSS Discrimination is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010, but we hadn't been able to take any 'no kids' cases to court. With court action often expensive, stressful and time consuming, our legal team decided to instead work with Lexi to challenge the practice with The Property Ombudsman (TPO), who investigate complaints about letting agents.

Supported by Shelter solicitor Rose Arnall, Lexi successfully challenged the 'no kids' barrier on the grounds that it breached the equality rules laid out in the TPO's Code of Practice. In the future, any letting agent who is a member of TPO will not be able to include blanket bans in property listings - or follow a landlord's orders to do so - without reasonable evidence or justification.

This landmark case has set a precedent which will provide relief to thousands of private renting families impacted by the 'no kids' discrimination. The next step is to ensure the government delivers a robust Renters' Reform Bill that makes it directly illegal for landlords and agents to refuse to rent properties to people who have children, so that we can truly end family discrimination in renting.



MOBILISING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

As our broken system has proven time and again, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to this housing emergency. With communities impacted differently across the country, mobilising people on a local level is a crucial component in this national fight for home.

Over the past four years we've been building our Community Organising capacity across 10 locations, with the aim to equip communities with the knowledge and skills to challenge and achieve change on the housing emergency issues that affect them locally. By tackling local issues such as poor conditions in the private sector and the need for more social housing, communities contribute to the movement for long-lasting change. The Birmingham Fair Housing Campaign was among the first to go live.

Housing issues range widely across the country; from damp and mould, 'no-fault' Section 21 evictions, families trapped in temporary accommodation and sky-rocketing rents. Therefore, it was vital that local people were at the forefront of the Birmingham Fair Housing Campaign, so that the campaign accurately reflected the issues in the area.

In 2020, Shelter Birmingham launched the 'Home Truths' listening campaign, with 340 people sharing their stories of the housing emergency and what they thought needed to change.



Following the end of the 'Home Truths', Shelter Birmingham brought together some of the people who had taken part in the listening campaign. Over four months, they interrogated the findings to understand the root causes of the housing emergency, draw on their own lived experience and on the knowledge of housing policy experts. At the end of the process, the Birmingham Fair Housing Campaign was established, and the 'People's Manifesto for Fair Housing in Birmingham' was created as a response to the city's housing issues.

Shaped by lived experiences and knowledge of housing policy experts, the campaign's demands struck a chord with local people. 3,361 people and 22 organisations signed the manifesto, and over 70 people attended the group's 'Fight for Home' festival.

With a clear aim of changing local policy and practice as well as influencing national decisions, the group's campaigners spoke with local Health Chiefs about the detrimental impact of damp and mould on people living in unsafe social homes. From there, they were asked to share their lived experience at select committees in Parliament and spoke alongside Lisa Nandy MP at the Labour Housing Policy Day.

In January 2023, the campaign successfully lobbied Birmingham City Council to finally declare a housing emergency – a vital first step to ensuring that housing services provide decent, safe homes. Campaigners have subsequently secured a meeting with the Leader of the Council, to discuss what needs to happen to solve the housing emergency in Birmingham.

Karen, who has been a member of the Birmingham Fair Housing Campaign from the beginning, has used her experiences to provide valuable help for her community. 'Being part of this campaign is a big achievement. It feels massive after all the different things I've had to deal with. We've still got a big fight but we're not giving up.



'We'll keep fighting and it feels good. It's empowering. We've taken so many great actions.' KAREN

Last year thanks to Shelter's Community Organising team and countless volunteers and people experiencing the housing emergency we had:

– Of the active campaigns:

4 community-inspired and community-led campaigns up and running across our 11 hubs

2 are advocating for more social housing

6 community-inspired and community-led campaigns in development across our 11 hubs

3 are calling for action on improving conditions and/or affordability in the private rented sector

It's empowering. We've taken so many great actions. We've successfully pushed for Birmingham City Council to declare a housing emergency, introduce a landlord licensing scheme and set up a working group to address the needs of Traveller Communities. We've fought disrepair which is huge, and we're fighting against homelessness which is also huge.'

Musurut Dar, Shelter's Senior Community Organiser, works alongside BFHC members and has seen the impact that a campaign led by local people can have; 'There are far too many people in our city affected by the housing emergency, but by working collaboratively, real change is possible. Our vision is for everyone in our city to have a safe, secure and affordable home and for this to be a human right.'

For now, the campaigners intend to keep speaking up for fellow Brummies experiencing the housing emergency and keep putting pressure on local decision makers – as well as supporting similar groups tackling the housing emergency across the country.

Our local community organising work, empowering local people to fight for the causes that matter to them, has proved pivotal over the last year. We are very grateful to our supporters such as our Major Donors who have donated to this work and the Nationwide Foundation, who have funded similar work in Bristol.

With this support, we can continue to enable campaigners across the country to get their voices heard by those who have the ultimate power to dismantle unfair laws and policies. And together, we will end this housing emergency.



FIGHTING FOR HOUSING RIGHTS

Ending the housing emergency is a fight that belongs to us all. By equipping individuals and communities with skills and knowledge to challenge housing injustice, they have the power to stand up to the system that's let this country down.

Thanks to partners such as IKEA and Nationwide Building Society, we've been able to continue delivering sessions in community centres, schools and with faith groups, to raise awareness of housing rights with local people. The staff and families of students at Manchester Communications Academy are one such group joining the fight for home.

In the spring of 2022, staff at Manchester Communications Academy identified a troubling pattern of students struggling in class. On further enquiry, they found their housing situation played a crucial role in this.

A large number of their students were being forced to live in horrific conditions in temporary accommodation. Where they should have been coming home to a warm, safe space, they were instead living in unstable, unsafe bedsits and hostels, among rat infestations, damp and mould. And they had to cope with all of this, while trying to be children.

Speaking to the students' families, staff knew the situation had to stop. They called upon as many organisations as they could think of in search of support. One of those organisations was Shelter. Gareth, a Housing Rights Worker in Manchester, delivered Housing Rights awareness courses to staff at the Academy. These courses covered topics around homelessness rights, tenancy and occupancy rights, eviction processes and navigating tenancy problems.



Gareth's sessions broke down the confusing and complex housing system and gave staff the information to advocate for the families in need of support. After taking part in the courses, staff understood who was responsible for repairs in temporary housing and how to prepare to raise an issue. They also knew that when families were threatened with sudden eviction notices, they could dispute them. This provided families in very worrying situations with some reassurance and encouragement to challenge their landlords.

By September that same year, they felt confident to send out a message to all of the parents at the Academy, asking them to let the school know if they had any problems with disrepair or homelessness.

As a result, staff shared advice with 93 families. The issues they were facing ranged from problems in the private rented sector such as disrepair and disputes with their landlord, to problems with temporary accommodation and a lack of access to homeless provision.

Our supporters are helping us meet communities where they are, co-create solutions and give them power through knowledge. Together we can break down the barriers people face in a housing system that can be unjust, unfair and harmful.



'I found the sessions to be incredibly informative and useful. The week after the first session, I was able to talk confidently to one of our families who had been sent an email from their landlord giving them one months' notice. I reassured them this email was a request only. They then entered into dialogue with the landlord who had no idea about the eviction process and eventually agreed on effecting some repairs and signing a new 12-month lease. Without the information, the family would have left the property and had to stay with family.' **STAFF MEMBER AT MANCHESTER COMMUNICATIONS ACADEMY**

Last year, with support from Shelter's community services team:

783

people took part in Shelter's housing rights awareness work

63

community organisations received housing rights awareness support

3000

households with housing questions or issues were reached by those community organisations support

LOOKING AHEAD

We are proud of our impact in 2022/23, which would not have been possible without our partners and supporters. But there is still work to be done. In the next two years we want to:

1 MOBILISE A BROAD PUBLIC MOVEMENT THAT DEMANDS A NEW GENERATION OF SOCIAL HOMES.

We need the government to commit to building safe, secure, decent homes at rents people on low incomes can afford. Homes that people can stay in for the long-term, giving them secure bases for the lives they want and need, enabling them to lay down roots in their communities.

2 DEMAND HOUSING RIGHTS, RIGHT NOW.

We'll fight for everyone's housing rights through campaigning, advocacy and strategic litigation. We'll inspire and mobilise a movement both nationally and in local communities. And we will continue to fight discrimination in the housing sector, so that People of Colour will have increased access to a safe home and so that income and family discrimination in private renting comes to an end.

3 SHIFT THE POWER IN OUR FIGHT FOR HOME.

We'll ensure that expertise by experience, anti-racism and climate justice are at the heart of Shelter.



We won't be able to succeed without continuing our campaigning. With the general election coming between now and January 2025, we will continue to mobilise the public and ensure that the building of more social housing is firmly on the agenda. We will also ensure that renters' rights are protected, by putting pressure on the government to deliver the Renters' Reform Bill. And we'll continue this pressure by working closely with our partners, such as the Co-Op Bank, who have pledged to support our campaigning in this area for the next two years.

Our services community model will continue to be there for people in need of immediate support, with our focus remaining on enacting systemic change that will secure rights and improve the system for the future. Local action will

be essential to this, which we could not do without supporters and partners such as The Nationwide Foundation, who have partnered with us in Bristol and Manchester to improve the private rented sector in these cities for over half a decade.

As well as those partnering with us on specific areas of focus, supporting Shelter's work in general will be more and more vital due to the tough financial climate we are operating in. We'll continue to adapt, by implementing new fundraising initiatives to help raise general funds. And we'll build on our legacy marketing campaign and events, which in the past year helped us to receive 237 pledges from people who wish to leave a gift to Shelter in their will.

Retailers and brands will continue to provide high-profile support, as Shelter's Corporate Partnerships and Retail teams work to establish new relationships. Collaborations with retailers such as AllSaints has seen us benefitting from receiving corporate stock donations which support sustainable practices and have raised an incredible £1.75m in sales over the past three years. We'll continue to work with our corporate partners to create strategic change and help end the devastating impact the housing emergency is having on people and communities.

In July this year, new government figures show 79,840 households faced homelessness in England between January and March 2023 – the highest number on record. We have to fight to make sure this number does not get any higher – and it's an action that can't be delayed.

Together with our partners and supporters, we can continue delivering an impact for people at the sharp end of the housing emergency. With lived experiences shaping demands for a better housing system, we'll continue to defend the right to a safe home for all – bringing justice to millions, and the housing emergency to an end.

**For all you do in this fight for home,
we thank you.**



METHODOLOGY 22/23

This report is informed by the following:

- 1** The Outcomes Survey is a quantitative telephone and online survey that was carried out with approximately 2,000 clients from England by research agency BMG Research. The interviews were conducted at least three months after a case was closed with us (and other than a few interviews, no more than twelve months after case closure).
- 2** The sample is broadly representative of our total client population, weighted based on type of service received (Advice Support Guidance, legal, emergency helpline or support), and broad geographical regions (North, South and Central). Soft quotas were monitored to match the interview sample broadly to the profile of our clients on the characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity and the client's goal and homelessness status. Each client represents a household, which can contain multiple occupants.
- 3** The proportion of people who achieved specific 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.
- 4** In assessing the quality of overall positive changes in a households housing situation we narrowed down and asked specific questions to a specific group of people. These were, those that had moved during their housing problems, or decided that they needed to move but had not yet managed that, or were homeless when they started working with Shelter. Again, we excluded those that said 'Don't know' or 'Too early to say' or none of these situations apply.
- 5** Data was also gathered from a number of projects that collect routine information on outcomes and outputs throughout their delivery.
- 6** Internal management information provides the figures on how many people we help each year through our emergency helpline, digital, face-to-face and legal services.
- 7** The Methodology and Appendices report contains more detailed information.

CONTACT US

To discuss supporting Shelter or to hear more about the projects and services in this report, please get in touch via the following:

For corporate partners:
corporate@shelter.org.uk

For philanthropic partners:
philanthropy@shelter.org.uk

For trusts and foundations:
trusts@shelter.org.uk

For information on leaving a gift in your will:
legacies@shelter.org.uk



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

We believe that home is everything.

shelter.org.uk

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