

**THE**  
**JUS-**  
**TICE**  
**FUND**

**Using the law  
to prevent  
homelessness**

Shelter



**108**

families in Britain  
become homeless  
every day

**“We use the  
law to fight  
discrimination  
and keep  
people's homes.  
Winning one  
case can  
change  
thousands  
of lives.”**

**MARK BOWDEN  
HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES, SHELTER**




# THIS IS AN EMERGENCY

In England, 280,000 people do not have a permanent home - which can mean sleeping on the streets, on a sofa, or in cramped B&Bs and hostels.

Thousands of people are facing illegal evictions, repossession, or enduring housing conditions that are detrimental to their health. Millions more are at risk of losing their homes because of financial hardship and limited protection for renters.

**Legal support can be the difference  
between losing your home or keeping it.**

A photograph of a woman with dark curly hair, wearing a white sweater and a patterned skirt, hugging a young child from behind. They are standing in a cluttered room with red patterned curtains, a small table with a blue monitor, and various items on the floor. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from a window in the background.

**“I would have ended  
up on the street with  
my family.”**

**A FAMILY HELPED BY SHELTER EASTERN COUNTIES**

# MAKING SURE EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Funding cuts have seen free housing advice nearly disappear in over half of all local authorities in England and Wales. This leaves thousands of people without the help they are legally entitled to and they are losing their homes as a result.

Our legal expertise shapes everything we do, from informing people of their rights to guiding our campaigning strategy. We help hundreds of thousands of people each year, providing critical legal advice, advocacy and representation in court.

**“If I didn't get the advice  
and support from Shelter  
I would have been evicted  
from my property.**

**JANE, HELPED BY OUR LEGAL TEAM IN DEVON AND CORNWALL**





# OUR LEGAL TEAM

**12** Shelter  
centres  
nationwide

**46** solicitors

**59** legal  
support  
staff

\*based on 5,648 people helped by our England legal team with an average household size of 2.45.

# HELPED **13,837** PEOPLE IN 2019/20



**77%**  
saw a positive change  
in their situation, such  
as finding a new home,  
or improved living  
conditions.





# DEFENDING HOME

Dimple Patel, Managing Solicitor at Shelter Birmingham, is waiting at court to meet her first client.

Some days, she could have 12 hearings to defend people in the space of two and a half hours. Five minutes may be all she has to take instructions from her client, form an argument, and then go before the judge to defend them from eviction.

It's just another day for Dimple but can be life-changing for each person she sees.

## SAM'S CASE

"I met Sam, a care leaver who was being evicted because of rent arrears. Usually, a person in these circumstances will lose their home. But I was able to find grounds to defend him.

Hearing what Sam had been through was heart-wrenching. Sam had been abused by his father, and his mother had been sectioned on more than one occasion. Even the housing officer trying to gain possession of his property was in tears.

I managed to negotiate with the council and he was allowed to keep his tenancy. Being able to keep this young man in his home was the best feeling."



# IMPACT AT SCALE

By identifying the issues that affect the greatest number of people, our legal team has the opportunity to have a real impact. Pursuing one or two well-selected legal cases can transform the rights of generations to come.

## ROSE'S FIGHT

'No DSS' (Department for Social Security) lettings have, until recently, been commonplace with women and people with disabilities disproportionately affected. The 'No DSS' term is used in adverts when landlords or letting agents won't rent to someone on housing benefit.

Rosie, Amanda, and Emma all received housing benefit to help pay the rent. When each of them had to move – because of damp, domestic violence, and as their landlord was selling, respectively – they couldn't find a new home.

Rose, a Shelter Solicitor, helped Rosie prepare her case for court. It was settled with the letting agent admitting unlawful indirect discrimination on the basis of sex.

Successive cases saw wins for Amanda and Emma, and – following meetings with businesses including NatWest and Zoopla – 'No DSS' has since been removed from many mortgage terms and letting websites.



**“Wins like these show the power a single legal challenge can have.**

**ROSE ARNALL, SHELTER SOLICITOR**

# HOW WE HELP



## SUPPORT

WE'RE AT THE END OF THE LINE  
WHEN PEOPLE NEED URGENT  
HOUSING ADVICE



## PREVENT

WHETHER IN COURT OR  
INVESTIGATING CASES WE HELP  
PEOPLE TO STAY IN THEIR HOME



## CHALLENGE

WE INTERVENE WHEN WE CAN  
CHANGE BAD PRACTICE OR  
IMPROVE THE SYSTEM



## EMPOWER

WE HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND  
THEIR RIGHTS AND BUILD A  
MOVEMENT FOR REAL  
SOCIAL CHANGE



# WE CAN CHANGE LIVES

Our legal team make it possible for us to defend everyone's right to a home. Without them, we couldn't stand up for people affected by the housing emergency or fight to put an end to the systems that perpetuate homelessness.

The Justice Fund powers our legal team to defend people today and fuels our ambitions to achieve lasting social change.

Every eviction stopped, homelessness decision successfully appealed, or discrimination challenged, is an opportunity to change people's lives.

**Your support can help us to protect people from losing their homes in the first place.**







# STAND AGAINST INJUSTICE

We rely on generous individuals, trusts and corporates to drive our legal work to protect thousands of people from losing their homes.

To be part of our effort to help those imminently at risk of becoming homeless, while we also change the system for the better long-term, we are looking for people to join the Justice Fund by pledging to support us with a major gift over multiple years.

**£5,000** could pay for our solicitors to write on behalf of 100 people to challenge a council's homelessness decision.

**£10,000** could cover the costs of 18 court cases to defend people from losing their homes.

**£20,000** could power our national legal team for one week and help us keep 299 people in safe, suitable homes.\*

**Will you stand with us?**

\*Donations are combined with Legal Aid funding to meet the full cost of running our services. The above examples set out the average costs that can be met with the help of donations.



# JOIN OUR MOVEMENT

Supporters of Shelter's Justice Fund will have a unique opportunity to connect with our groundbreaking legal work.

## **Insight and information**

You'll get dedicated support from a Philanthropy Manager as well as the latest insights in housing law from some of the country's brightest legal minds.

## **Events**

You'll be invited to exclusive events where you'll deepen your understanding of our impact and meet like-minded individuals equally committed to tackling social injustice.

## **Seeing the impact**

You'll have opportunities to visit Shelter services across the country and receive regular updates and reports on the impact of your support.

## **Please contact us to find out more.**

Email: [justicefund@shelter.org.uk](mailto:justicefund@shelter.org.uk)

Phone: 0344 515 1216



**Shelter**

