

Shona Robison MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government

Cllr Maureen Chalmers
Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, COSLA

15th September 2022

Dear Cabinet Secretary and Cllr Chalmers,

We are writing to you as Co-Chairs of the Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group to submit our initial recommendations, ahead of the next meeting of the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group.

As you will be aware, the Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group has been given a remit to explore how Scotland can turn the dial on the temporary accommodation statistics. This is with the aim of reducing the number of people living temporary accommodation and the length of time they stay there.

These recommendations have been formulated from discussions with stakeholders at the meetings of the Group and are informed by evidence given by those with lived experience of temporary accommodation. These three initial recommendations are set out below:

1. We are proposing the establishment of a large-scale national acquisition plan for permanent social sector homes.

This plan is needed in order to increase the supply of permanent social sector accommodation and will enable people to more quickly move on from temporary accommodation into a permanent home.

In particular this plan will enable those groups who often spend the longest in temporary accommodation because of the lack of suitable permanent housing—such as large families and those with disabilities, to move on into a home that meets their needs.

2. There needs to be consideration of how to address the inconsistent nature of advice, support and communication for people in temporary accommodation.

Evidence from our experts with lived experience indicated that the advice and support for people living in temporary accommodation is often inadequate and/or inappropriate for their needs.

This must be addressed in order to help ensure that people are able to exercise choice and control, that they are aware of their rights and can access the support they need to move on from temporary accommodation. The available support must also be offered proactively, so the onus is not placed on the individual to seek out the support.

3. The Homeless Prevention and Strategy Group should consider a timeline to phase out the use of Hostels and Bed and Breakfasts as temporary accommodation in Scotland.

Hostel and Bed and Breakfast temporary accommodation is often poor quality and unsuitable for people's needs. The group has heard from experts with lived experience on the significant negative impacts these forms of temporary accommodation have had on them.

We therefore recommend the Scottish Government considers how to phase out the use of these types of temporary accommodation completely.

We hope that the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group is able to consider these recommendations at their next meeting.

Best Wishes,

Alison Watson, Co-Chair of Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group
Director, Shelter Scotland

John Mills, Co-Chair of Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group
Head of Housing Services, Fife Council and Co-Chair of ALACHO