

Ending Homelessness Together Annual report to the Scottish Parliament

October 2022



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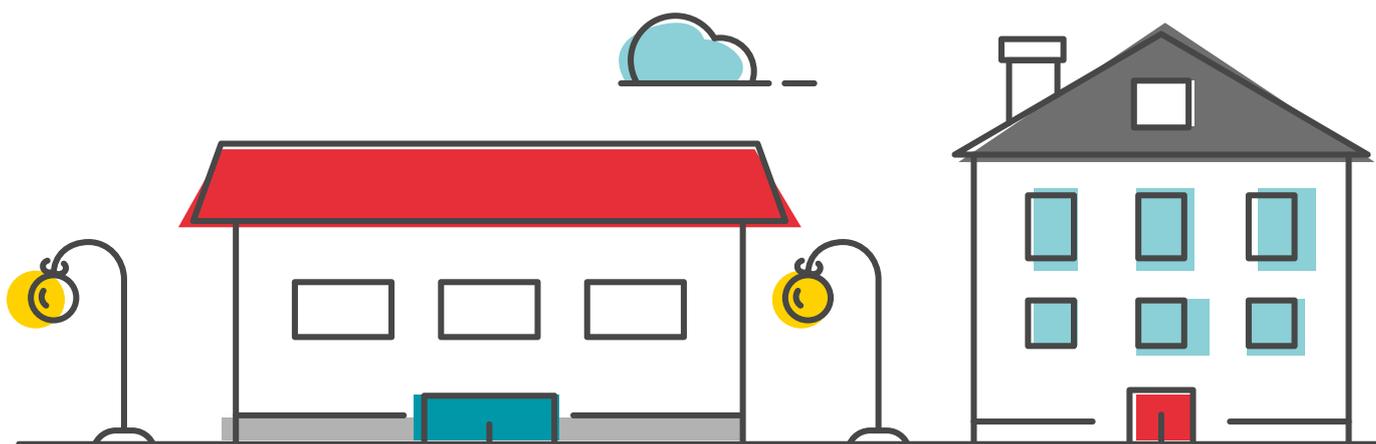
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Contents

Foreword	02
List of actions 2022	05
Progress against actions to embed a person-centred approach	08
Progress against actions to prevent homelessness from happening in the first place	11
Progress against actions to prioritise settled homes for all	17
Progress against actions to respond quickly and effectively whenever homelessness happens	22
Progress against actions to join up planning and resources to tackle homelessness	29



Foreword



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

This annual report describes the progress made during the last 12 months towards ending homelessness in Scotland.

It is published in a period dominated by the implications of the cost of living crisis, including soaring inflation and spiralling household energy bills.

The cost of living crisis is affecting everyone but is disproportionately impacting those on the lowest incomes, including tenants who are already struggling with housing costs, people out of work and people who are unable to work. These households will find it very hard to manage rising bills in the months to come, and we may see more people pushed towards housing precarity and homelessness. That is one of the reasons why the Scottish Government took action to support and protect tenants by introducing emergency legislation to deliver a moratorium on evictions and a rent freeze until at least 31 March 2023.

The illegal war in Ukraine and the number of displaced people seeking a place of safety in Europe highlight just how important it is to have safe housing during a time of crisis. Providing accommodation and support is a humanitarian imperative and Scotland has responded with a warm welcome. Local authorities have a long and proud history of stepping forward at a time of crisis and resettlement teams are in place in all 32 areas to support

new arrivals and help them integrate. Scotland has already offered sanctuary to thousands of people who have fled Ukraine and we have seen the highest number of applications, visas issued and arrivals per head of population of any of the four UK nations.

The challenge faced by national and local government and our partners to support people with housing need is on the scale of the pandemic. It requires leadership, partnership, carefully targeted action and early intervention to prevent households reaching crisis point.

The Scottish Government has already allocated almost £3 billion this year to support people in Scotland with rising prices and we continue to do more. The measures announced in [A stronger and more resilient Scotland](#), the Scottish Government's programme for government 2022 to 2023, are designed to mitigate the impact of the crisis, reduce hardship for those most in need and support people to stay in their homes. We know people need clear advice on their housing rights and information on the range of support available. The Scottish Government [launched a new website](#) on [cost of living support](#), providing information on the financial help available to people in Scotland at the end of September 2022.

Scotland's vision in [Ending Homelessness Together](#) is that everyone has a home that meets their needs and homelessness is ended. We know that the best way to end homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place, which is why we are introducing new homelessness prevention duties as part of the forthcoming housing bill.

In spite of the very challenging financial context, Scotland continues to make steady progress towards ending homelessness. We can feel proud of what has been accomplished in the last 12 months.

We have delivered nearly 113,000 affordable homes since 2007 and have started work towards our next target of delivering 110,000 affordable homes by 2032.

We have significantly increased investment in anti-poverty measures such as the Scottish Child Payment and discretionary housing payments – evidence of our resolve to tackle the root causes of homelessness and provide direct financial support to people.

We have taken important steps towards improving rights for tenants and for people at risk of homelessness. We carried out consultations on new homelessness prevention duties and a new deal for tenants and we published an important report aimed at national and local government, social landlords and specialist housing providers on how to prevent homelessness for former armed forces personnel.

We have helped more people with high support needs into settled housing. Local authorities have now provided more than 1,000 Housing First tenancies across Scotland.

We are seeing a declining trend in repeat homelessness and the number of people sleeping rough in Scotland continues to fall.

These are important achievements but we need to step up efforts in other areas. While most local authorities are managing to reduce the use of temporary accommodation, we know that there are far too many households with children in temporary accommodation. This shows us that the impacts of the pandemic are still being felt, particularly in our largest cities, and that some people are waiting much longer for the stability of a settled home. We are determined to reverse this trend and are working with an expert group to find solutions.

The Scottish Government and local authorities will do everything possible to help people through these exceptionally difficult times. This will mean making difficult choices and focusing on the immediate response to the cost of living crisis. Taking targeted action now will help build a stronger and more resilient Scotland and allow us to continue with our ambition to end homelessness for good.



Councillor Maureen Chalmers, COSLA Spokesperson for Community Wellbeing

I welcome this Ending Homelessness Together annual report. Local authorities, as a sphere

of government and as major landlords, manage a significant proportion of social housing across Scotland.

As well as being local strategic housing authorities seeking to improve supply and the overall condition of housing stock, local authorities play a critical role in preventing and alleviating homelessness.

Homelessness can happen to anyone in a local community and councils work tirelessly to address this injustice. The last thing any local authority wants is for people to be sleeping rough on the streets or living in temporary accommodation any longer than is absolutely necessary.

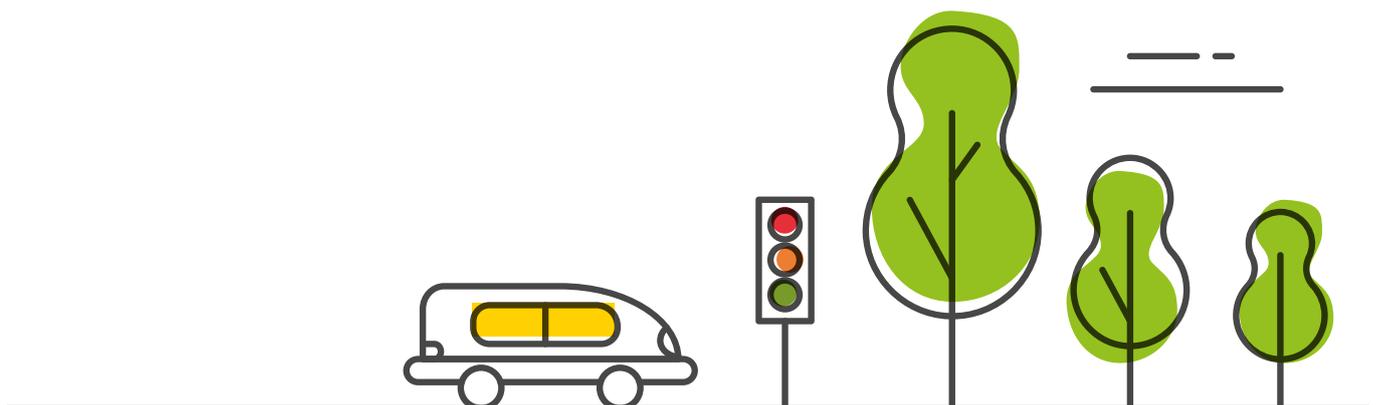
It has been encouraging to see progress made in the annual report with our key partners, the Scottish Government. I also commend the excellent work by individual local authorities. That said, there is a great deal of work to be done and further challenges due to Scotland's increasingly pressurised housing system.

I am heartened to see that the findings of the extensive Scottish Government/ COSLA prevention of homelessness duties consultation show widespread support for the consultation's proposals from all partners.

Early intervention and prevention are crucial to avoid people becoming homeless. Public bodies and agencies working in partnership can help tackle homelessness more effectively, as well as address the various underlying causes that can result in repeat homelessness, such as addiction, domestic abuse or mental health issues.

In the months and years ahead, a shared responsibility across all partners will be of great value, especially given the homelessness challenges that have emerged in recent months, such as cost of living pressures and displaced Ukrainian people fleeing their war torn country.

I look forward to continued close partnership working between local government, the Scottish Government and other key partners to address future housing and homelessness challenges together over the next year.



List of actions 2022

Theme		Action
Embed a person-centred approach	1.	Develop the evidence base on homelessness and review the homelessness data collection
	2.	Apply a gendered analysis to our actions and conduct equality impact assessments, ensuring the homelessness system meets the needs of diverse groups of women, including the needs of mothers and children
	3.	Ensure homelessness services are grounded in no wrong door and person-centred principles and make homelessness assessments more flexible
	4.	Support people to access digital equipment, data and training
	5.	Raise public awareness of homelessness and challenge stigma
Prevent homelessness from happening in the first place	6.	Increase focus on tenancy sustainment and establish mechanisms to avoid evictions into homelessness
	7.	Consider more streamlined application processes for discretionary housing payments and use information sharing powers to target people who are most in need of discretionary housing payments
	8.	Understand the impact of UK welfare reforms
	9.	Improve affordability in the private rented sector
	10.	Support the First-tier Tribunal to improve transparency around outcomes for tenants through better use of data
	11.	Develop, implement and review prevention pathways for groups at particular risk, including for women experiencing domestic abuse

Theme		Action
Prioritise settled homes for all	12.	Take forward work on the right to adequate housing
	13.	Complete the delivery of 50,000 affordable homes
	14.	Encourage the housing sector to bring more empty homes back into use and support local authorities to develop their empty homes services and private rented sector access schemes
	15.	Roll out Housing First in Scotland
	16.	Develop best practice examples of choice in settled housing and assess impacts of providing wide range of housing options in local areas
	17.	Set out our position on a temporary accommodation funding framework
Respond quickly and effectively whenever homelessness happens	18.	Support local authorities and health and social care partners with their efforts to provide support and accommodation for all those currently in bed and breakfast accommodation
	19.	Support local winter planning, including efforts by partners to end the use of night shelter and dormitory-style provision
	20.	Develop a model of frontline outreach and support people engaged in street begging
	21.	Prevent homelessness for those with no recourse to public funds
	22.	Learn from recent initiatives and set out a broader range of accommodation options in crisis situations
	23.	Provide clarity on the changes to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order
	24.	Revise legislative arrangements for intentionality and local connection and amend intentionality definition to focus more closely on 'deliberate manipulation'
	25.	Introduce temporary accommodation standards

Theme		Action
Join up planning and resources to tackle homelessness	26.	Ensure next National Performance Framework review includes explicit consideration of homelessness
	27.	Improve how we use Public Health Scotland data and intelligence capabilities
	28.	Further improve drug and alcohol treatment and harm reduction services
	29.	Embed homelessness as a public health priority
	30.	Improve join up between health, social care, housing and homelessness planning
	31.	Ensure local authorities, housing providers and public bodies join up to prevent homelessness
	32.	Ensure the Hard Edges Scotland report continues to inform the response to severe and multiple disadvantage
	33.	Update code of guidance on homelessness and review need for a code of practice in code of guidance on homelessness
	34.	Join up housing, employment and employability support

Progress against actions to embed a person-centred approach

For many people, the solution to their homelessness is straightforward: an affordable home. Some households have dependent children; some will have a health condition or disability; for others, homelessness can be interwoven with poverty, childhood trauma and abuse, violence, substance use and mental ill health. This means the solutions we provide must be as diverse as people's needs and preferences, and flexible enough to meet evolving requirements.

We hear regularly from people with lived and frontline experience of homelessness that trauma-informed and person-centred approaches are most effective. We continue to **develop the evidence base on homelessness**, which includes listening to real-life stories from people who have experienced homelessness and we are committed to **improving the quality and accuracy of our homelessness data collection processes**.

- The Scottish Government created a new post within the homelessness statistics and analysis team in June 2022 to take forward the review of our homelessness data collections. The review will consider gaps in the homelessness evidence base and assess the feasibility of collecting enhanced information on equalities. This will help us assess the effectiveness of our policies and interventions for particular groups, and will guide local and national government on funding decisions and service design and delivery.

- We have invited bids for research into housing insecurity and hidden homelessness to better understand those people who do not appear in Scotland's official figures.
- Scottish Government officials are currently collaborating with colleagues in the Office for National Statistics, who are investigating novel methods of capturing information on a UK-wide basis about hidden homeless groups. This work will complement the Scottish Government-commissioned research.

We continue to **apply a gendered analysis to our actions and conduct equality impact assessments, ensuring the homelessness system meets the needs of diverse groups of women**.

- To show local authorities that equality impact assessments (EQIAs) are an essential tool in addressing women's homelessness, a session was organised for rapid rehousing transition plan coordinators in May 2022 to guide local authorities on how to carry out and use equality impact assessments when developing or reviewing homelessness policies.
- The Scottish Government has carried out an equality impact assessment of the proposal to mitigate the UK Government's benefit cap more fully. In Scotland, 72 per cent of households affected by the benefit cap are single parent families, with women accounting for 92 per cent of single parents.

- A full suite of impact assessments will be undertaken as part of the development of the new homelessness prevention legislation, including an equality impact assessment.

We said we would **support the homelessness system to respond more appropriately to the shared needs of mothers and children.**

We are very disappointed that the number of children in temporary accommodation has risen since last year. The Scottish Government's [latest homelessness statistics](#) show that, while we are learning to live with the pandemic, it continues to have an impact on homelessness services. While coronavirus restrictions have eased, local authorities are still dealing with a large number of households waiting for settled accommodation. It is encouraging to see that that 20 local authorities have reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation when compared to last year, but far too many people remain in temporary accommodation.

- A task and finish group, co-chaired by Alison Watson, director of Shelter Scotland, and John Mills, head of housing at Fife Council and chair of the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers, has been considering how we can reduce the numbers of households, especially those with children, staying long periods in temporary accommodation. The group, which reports to the [Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#), has delivered its initial recommendations and will refine these further in the months ahead.

The Scottish Government and COSLA remain committed to **ensuring homelessness services are grounded in no wrong door and person-centred principles.** This also means we need to make **homelessness assessments more flexible** so that anyone who needs a service can access it in a way that fits with their needs.

- Building on the relationships developed during the pandemic, statutory services and frontline outreach teams have continued to work collaboratively so that homelessness assessments are carried out in ways that meet individual needs. Outreach hubs in Glasgow and Edinburgh provide flexible and person-centred support and have local authority housing officers embedded in teams so that support is on hand when it is needed.
- The Scottish Government provided small budgets to frontline organisations in winter 2021-22 so that outreach teams could respond to people with the most acute housing needs in a personalised and immediate way.
- The housing options hubs are close to completing development of a training toolkit made up of six modules covering the skills and person-centred approaches involved in delivering housing options services. The first three modules (introduction to housing options; accessing accommodation; and maintaining existing accommodation) were launched in January 2022. The second set of modules (health and wellbeing; income and affordability; and employment and training) are due to be launched in January 2023.

- The new homelessness prevention duties, due to be introduced in the Scottish Government's forthcoming housing bill, will be faithful to the principle of no wrong door and will promote a joined up approach across public bodies to ensure people can access the help they need irrespective of where the risk of homelessness is first identified.
- The new service standards for temporary accommodation, due to be signed off later in 2022, are clear that services should be shaped by an assessment of the needs of all members of the household. This offers local authorities flexibility to meet the needs of local communities while ensuring a level of consistency nationally.
- Based on evaluations of the impact of homelessness prevention legislation in Wales and England, we expect Scotland's new prevention duties to result in a more proactive and person-centred culture in local authority homelessness services.

We have **supported even more people to access digital equipment, data and training.**

- Building on the success of [Get Connected 100](#), we provided a further £160,000 for Simon Community Scotland's [Get Connected 500](#). The programme launched in May 2022 and will support 500 people experiencing homelessness by connecting them to the digital world. Each participant in the project will receive a free digital device (a smartphone or a tablet) and unlimited connectivity for 12 months.

- So far, 259 devices have been supplied to people and 76 frontline workers have been trained as digital champions to support participants in the scheme.

We will continue to **raise public awareness of homelessness and challenge stigma.**

- In the last 12 months, the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government has raised public awareness and encouraged stakeholders to stay focused on the ambition to end homelessness by sharing messages on social media @ [ScotGovFairer](#), meeting with cabinet colleagues and housing conveners of local authorities, and speaking at a wide range of events. These include the [Glasgow Impact Forum 2022](#); the [debate on the prevention of homelessness duties](#) in the Scottish Parliament; the [Housing First Scotland Annual Conference](#); the launch event for the Crisis compendium, [75 ways to prevent homelessness](#); and [Scotland's Annual Homelessness Conference 2022](#).
- Following the publication of a set of style guidelines aimed at reshaping public perceptions of homelessness in Scotland, Scottish Government officials met with third sector homelessness organisations in summer 2022 to evaluate the effectiveness of the [Responsibly communicating homelessness](#) guide. We will work with partners to review the guidelines during the year ahead.

Progress against actions to prevent homelessness from happening in the first place

Preventing homelessness from happening in the first place is the best and most effective way to end homelessness. The Scottish Government's plans to introduce new homelessness prevention duties as part of the forthcoming housing bill remain on track. This ground-breaking new legislation take us even closer to our goal of ending homelessness in Scotland. The new duties will allow people to get help earlier – up to six months before they are at risk of homelessness – and will require public services to ask about someone's housing situation and then act to get them help if needed.

- The Scottish Government and COSLA consulted on the new homelessness prevention duties between December 2021 and April 2022 and received 113 responses.
- [Independent analysis](#) of the responses by social research agency [The Lines Between](#) found widespread support for the proposed new homelessness prevention duties. Respondents believed the proposals would strengthen existing practice, improve consistency and positively impact those at greater risk of homelessness. They also noted the potential long-term savings resulting from a focus on prevention.

- The Scottish Government will draw on this evidence base when shaping the duties to be included in the housing bill and when developing the associated guidance.
- Local authorities are already doing excellent work on homelessness prevention. In August 2022, Crisis published [75 ways to prevent homelessness](#), a compendium of examples showing that many services in Scotland are already operating in the spirit of the new homelessness duties.
- A task and finish group of the [Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#), co-chaired by Matt Downie, chief executive of Crisis, and Ewan Aitken, chief executive officer of Cyrenians, will consider what groundwork is needed to ensure successful implementation of Scotland's homelessness prevention legislation.



Our forthcoming housing bill will give new and strengthened rights to tenants. In the meantime, the need to help people through the cost of living crisis means the Scottish Government's [programme for government 2022 to 2023](#) has a **strong focus on tenancy sustainment** alongside measures to protect tenants' rights and **avoid evictions into homelessness**.

- The Scottish Government has introduced temporary emergency legislation to protect tenants by introducing a zero per cent cap on the level of rent increases served on or after 6 September 2022 and imposing a moratorium on evictions until at least 31 March 2023. The rent cap and moratorium on evictions will be for a six-month period initially, with the ability for Scottish ministers to vary, extend or expire measures as required. We recognise that the impacts of the cost crisis may also be felt by some landlords and so certain safeguards apply to both the rent cap and moratorium on evictions.
- We are doubling our fuel insecurity fund to £20 million in 2022-23 to help households at risk of self-disconnection or self-rationing of energy supply.
- We have widened eligibility for the £10 million tenant grant fund, originally launched at the end of September 2021. Over 4,400 grants have been awarded so far to tenants with pandemic-related rent arrears. Local authorities can now use any remaining funds to help those struggling with rent arrears due to cost of living pressures.
- We are providing an additional £5 million to local authorities for discretionary housing payments (DHPs) so they have the flexibility to help people with energy costs as well as rental liabilities. This takes our expected investment in DHPs to £88 million in 2022-23.
- Through the Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) Act, the Scottish Government is ensuring that further protections from eviction – introduced on a temporary basis during the pandemic – are made permanent from October 2022. This means private landlords should continue to follow the pre-action protocol in respect of any rent arrears cases – and the Tribunal will retain its discretion to decide whether an eviction case is reasonable or not.
- The Scottish Government launched a new [cost of living support website](#) at the end of September 2022, which includes information on renters' rights and the help available to tenants.

DHPs assist those struggling with housing costs as a result of the UK Government's unfair welfare reforms and are an important tool for preventing homelessness. Scottish Government officials have consulted with local authorities on how to deliver **more streamlined application processes for discretionary housing payments** and how we can **use information sharing powers to target people who are most in need of discretionary housing payments**.

- A series of DHP practitioners' groups are planned to facilitate the sharing of good practice, including simplified application processes and efficient claims processing.
- The groups will consider how data supplied by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) can be used more effectively and if additional data is needed.
- In light of the differences we are making to the DHP scheme in Scotland, we will develop a Scottish DHP guidance manual during 2023 to replace the DWP guidance manual.

Our work to **understand the impact of UK Government welfare reforms** and mitigate against them has resulted in important policy commitments this year. Evidence shows that the benefit cap disproportionately affects single mothers with children, even though they find it most difficult to avoid the impact of the cap.¹ The benefit cap hits women harder because the majority of households receiving the highest levels of benefits

are single parent households, and 92 per cent of single parents in Scotland are women.² The cap also penalises women and children who need to leave their home to stay safe.³ The Scottish Government continues to put pressure on the UK Government by highlighting the detrimental impact of its welfare reform policies.

We work closely with the Scottish Fiscal Commission so we can forecast the impact of the UK Government's bedroom tax and benefit cap policies in Scotland and put in place mitigation measures. In 2022-23, the Scottish Government expects to make up to £88 million⁴ available for discretionary housing payments.

- Recognising that the majority of households affected by the benefit cap are families (98 per cent of households affected), and mainly lone parent families (72 per cent of households affected), the Scottish Government has committed to mitigating the benefit cap as far as is possible within its powers as part of its second delivery plan to tackle child poverty, [Best Start, Bright Futures](#).
- In addition to providing £68.1 million to mitigate the bedroom tax in 2022-23 – helping over 91,000 households in Scotland – the Scottish Government has committed to increasing the DHP budget to cover the cost of benefit cap mitigation more fully.

1 [Benefit cap – CPAG intervention – R \(SG and others\) v SSWP formerly JS and others | CPAG.](#)

2 [Case summary: The benefit cap and human rights | Just Fair.](#)

3 [Joint Briefing with Women's Aid: The Benefit Cap and Domestic Abuse – Shelter England.](#)

4 £68.1 million will be used to fully mitigate the UK Government's bedroom tax and £15.1 million will be used to mitigate other UK Government welfare cuts (including up to £7.2 million to mitigate the benefit cap, as far as we are able within devolved powers). We intend to invest a further £5 million in DHPs – subject to the outcome of the emergency budget review – so that local authorities can help people on low incomes who are struggling with rising energy bills.

- The additional support to mitigate the benefit cap will help over 4,000 families with around 14,000 children sustain their tenancies and cope with the cost of living.
- The Scottish Government has urged the UK Government to reconsider the decision to freeze local housing allowance rates at 2020 levels, a real-terms cut, and to take steps to restore rates to the 30th percentile as a minimum.
- The Scottish Government commissioned [Craigforth](#) to carry out [independent analysis](#) of the 8,346 responses received. A wide range of views were expressed, particularly on rent controls. We will consider these views carefully in taking forward our commitment to rent controls. The majority (90 per cent) of respondents thought that additional protections against the ending of tenancies during the winter period were needed. Most respondents (95 per cent) also agreed that enabling private landlords to initiate eviction proceedings to end a perpetrator's interest in a joint tenancy was sensible, fair and reasonable, and would provide greater protection to victim-survivors of abuse.

The Scottish Government is continuing with longer term work to **improve affordability in the private rented sector**.

As a result of the Private Residential (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016, Scotland already has the strongest tenancy protections in the UK. There are strict legal processes a private landlord must follow to increase rent, including only being able to raise rent once a year and providing three months' notice. Tenants can also challenge any unfair rises through Rent Service Scotland. We are working to ensure more tenants know about these rights and how to use them.

- The Scottish Government is introducing a housing bill which will strengthen tenants' rights further. The forthcoming bill will include a framework for the delivery of new rent controls in the private rented sector by 2025.
- Between December 2021 and April 2022, the Scottish Government consulted on its draft rented sector strategy, [A New Deal for Tenants](#), which seeks to improve accessibility, affordability and standards across the whole rented sector in Scotland.
- The Scottish Government has committed to developing a shared understanding of housing affordability for Scotland and has convened a working group of stakeholders and experts, including tenants, to assist with this task. With an initial focus on the rented sector, the group is exploring the meaning of housing affordability and its different uses within housing debates, policy and practice. It aims to reach a shared understanding of housing affordability to inform future housing policy.
- The group will consult with tenants in the social and private rented sectors to take account of opinion on the ground. Housing affordability was an important theme of the [Tenant Participation Advisory Service \(TPAS\) Annual Conference](#) in June 2022. The Scottish Government held a workshop at the conference to hear what tenants understand by the term 'affordable housing'.

We also said we would **support the First-tier Tribunal to improve transparency around outcomes for tenants through better use of data.**

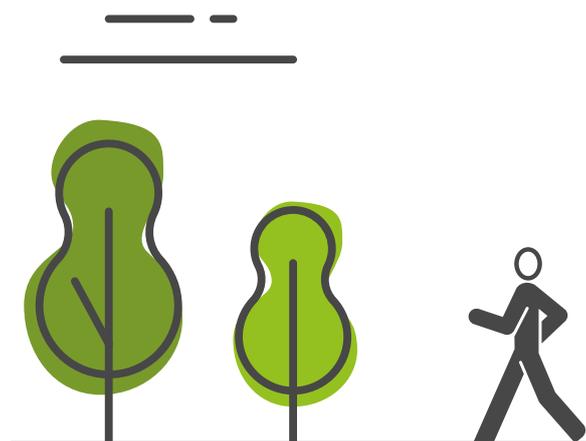
- We continue to review the data provided by the President of Scottish Tribunals to monitor tribunal decisions and keep abreast of policy implementation.

We continue to **develop, implement and review prevention pathways for groups at particular risk of homelessness.** Five prevention pathways have now been developed. The [Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone \(SHORE\) Standards](#), published in 2017, set out steps to ensure that the housing needs of people in prison are handled at an early stage. The [Improving Care Leavers Housing Pathways](#) was published in November 2019. [Improving housing outcomes for women and children experiencing domestic abuse](#) was published in December 2020. The [Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway](#) was published in March 2021. The [Veterans' Homelessness Prevention Pathway](#) was published in January 2022.

As part of the review of the SHORE Standards, Scottish Government officials and partners are considering how to ensure an individual in prison receives the same quality housing support and advice no matter which prison they are in and which local authority area they are returning to on liberation.

We remain strongly focused on **improving outcomes for women experiencing domestic abuse.** We are making progress with plans to protect the rights of women and children experiencing domestic abuse to stay safely in their own homes if they choose. On 5 May 2021, the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act received royal assent. This new legislation will help prevent women's homelessness by barring the perpetrator of domestic abuse from the home and giving social landlords the ability to transfer tenancies to the victim-survivor.

- The Scottish Government is currently developing the necessary secondary legislation and guidance and is working with the Scottish Court Service to develop changes to court rules and forms. The law giving social landlords the ability to apply to the court for an order to transfer a tenancy to a victim-survivor is expected to come into force later in 2023.
- The Scottish Government has convened an implementation and monitoring group to drive change and oversee delivery of the recommendations in the [Improving Housing Outcomes for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse](#) report. The group has met four times since November 2021 and has grouped actions into five workstreams with assigned leads.



- We will make it mandatory for social landlords to develop and implement a domestic abuse housing policy in our forthcoming housing bill.
- The [Veterans' Homelessness Prevention Pathway](#) was published in January 2022 and is a resource aimed at reducing and preventing homelessness for veterans in Scotland.
- In line with its gender-specific and trauma-informed approach to the management of women in custody, the Scottish Prison Service has built two new [community custody units](#) (CCUs). The Bella Centre in Dundee opened in August 2022. The CCUs are unlike any other facility in the prison estate and will enable women to foster closer links with relevant support agencies in preparation for successful reintegration into the community.

The Scottish Government remains committed to implementing all five existing prevention pathways and developing new prevention pathways in line with [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group](#) recommendations. Due to capacity challenges, we are focusing on the prevention pathways for women and children experiencing domestic abuse and people leaving prison. This means that implementation of the prevention pathways for care leavers, young people and veterans has been temporarily paused. Scottish Government officials continue to liaise with the groups that were commissioned to develop the pathways and these partners have been asked to consider what actions they are in a position to take forward.



Progress against actions to prioritise settled homes for all

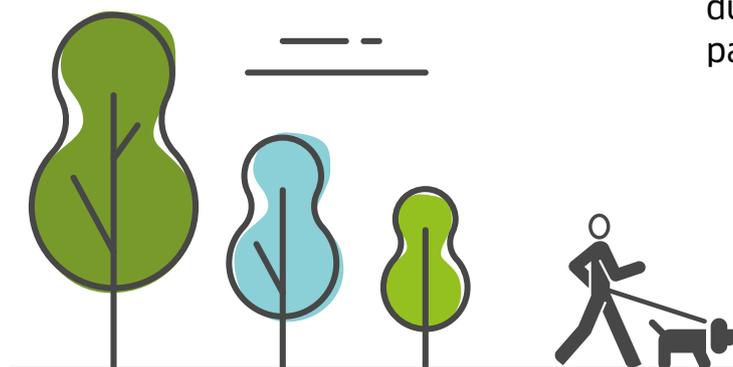
Our vision is for everyone to have a home that meets their needs. Living in a settled home without the fear of being forced to leave at short notice helps people put down roots and achieve a sense of community and belonging.

The Scottish Government is committed to taking action to realise **the right to adequate housing** in Scotland. We are committed to introducing a new Human Rights Bill during this parliamentary session. The bill will incorporate into Scots law four different international treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and will give effect to a wide range of human rights as far as possible within devolved competence. These rights will include the right to an adequate standard of living, which relates to poverty, adequate food and housing.

Incorporating four international treaties into Scots law is a complex endeavour. The Scottish Government is benefitting from the constructive input of many stakeholders, including a human rights lived experience board, advisory board and executive board. The advisory board functions as a sounding board and advice giving group for the Scottish Government and includes Shelter Scotland and Crisis. We want to take the time to consider the perspectives of these groups as part of our policy development.

- The Scottish Government will consult formally on the proposals for the bill in 2023.
- As affordability is an important element of the right to adequate housing, the Scottish Government has created an expert group to develop a shared understanding of housing affordability for Scotland. More details are provided earlier in the document.

The Scottish Government had intended to undertake a comprehensive audit of our current housing and homelessness legislation to establish the best way to make the right to adequate housing a reality. This work was due to start during the last year but has been paused temporarily.



We said we would **complete the delivery of 50,000 affordable homes**. Affordable homes are allocated based on housing need with reasonable preference given to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and those with unmet housing need. Local authorities are responsible for assessing the housing needs in their areas and setting out how this will be met in their local housing strategies (LHS) and strategic housing investment plans. [Guidance on preparing a local housing strategy](#) published in September 2019 requires local authorities to ensure that equality is central to housing provision and housing services delivery. Each local authority is required to prepare an equality impact assessment to inform LHS priorities and outcomes, and this should include a statement of the local authority's commitment to addressing inequalities in housing and how this will be achieved.

- The [50,000 affordable homes target](#) was reached during March 2022 thanks to the hard work, investment and expertise of registered social landlords, local authorities, community and construction sector partners. Of the 50,000 affordable homes completed between 1 April 2016 and 23 March 2022, 34,407 homes (69 per cent) were for social rent; 6,245 (12 per cent) were for affordable rent; and 9,348 (19 per cent) were for affordable home ownership.

- The latest [quarterly affordable housing supply programme statistics](#) were published in October 2022 and show that Scotland is leading the way in the delivery of affordable housing across the UK with 112,993 affordable homes now delivered since 2007, over 79,000 (79,187) of which were for social rent, including 19,727 council homes.
- Between 2017-18 and 2020-21, Scotland has seen 62 per cent more affordable homes delivered per head of population than in England (an annual average of 15.5 homes per 10,000 population, compared with 9.6 in England), and nine times as many social rented homes delivered per head of population (an annual average of 10.8 homes per 10,000 population in Scotland compared to just 1.2 in England).
- We have started work towards our next target of delivering 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, of which at least 70 per cent will be available for social rent and 10 per cent will be in our remote, rural and island communities.
- A total of 2,362 homes have now been delivered to end June 2022 towards the new 110,000 target, of which 2,068 (88 per cent) are for social rent.

We continue to **encourage the housing sector to bring more empty homes back into use and support local authorities to develop their empty homes services and private rented sector access schemes**.

The [Scottish Empty Homes Partnership](#) is working with local authorities to develop a deeper understanding of the data that feeds into the annual council tax return. This has enabled some local authorities to build a more detailed picture of where homes are located and the reasons why they are empty.

- 1,152 properties were brought back to use in 2021-22,⁵ bringing the total number brought back into use since the partnership was formed to 7,759.
- The Scottish Government will work with local authorities and the partnership to undertake a comprehensive audit of empty homes. The audit will provide enhanced information on where empty properties are located and the prospects of bringing them back into use, helping to better target and design future interventions. The invitation to tender has been issued and the audit is expected to be completed by April 2023.
- The [Scottish Empty Homes Partnership](#) offers free advice about private sector homes that have been empty longer than six months. The partnership recently improved its advice for owners of empty homes, adding information on council tax, financing renovations and a calculator, so that owners of empty homes can find out what their empty home is costing and how much they could save by it being occupied.

We are making good progress with the **roll out of Housing First in Scotland**.

The three-year Housing First pathfinder operated from 2019 to 2022 with the help of funding from the Scottish Government (£5.5 million was provided from the homelessness and health budgets), the Merchants House of Glasgow and Social Bite.

- Scotland's three-year Housing First pathfinder programme was the largest of its kind in the UK. The number of tenancies started in the pathfinder areas of Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire, Dundee, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Stirling was 579. The tenancy sustainment rate is 85 per cent⁶ and there have been no evictions.
- Outside the pathfinder areas, local authorities have been developing their own Housing First programmes in line with their rapid rehousing transition plans (RRTPs). The Scottish Government has allocated £52.5 million to local authorities to assist them with implementation of their RRTPs, including Housing First programmes. By the end of June 2022, 24 local authorities were offering Housing First as part of their service provision and a further three local authorities have plans to offer Housing First in 2022-23.
- Homeless Network Scotland published a national framework, [Branching Out](#), which captures the learning from the Housing First pathfinder in March 2021. It guides housing professionals on starting up and scaling up Housing First in Scotland and is reviewed every six months to capture the latest learning.

⁵ [Impact Report 2022 | Scottish Empty Homes Partnership](#).

⁶ [Housing First pathfinder tracker, September 2021](#).

- The Scottish Government publishes a [Housing First monitoring report](#) on a quarterly basis to capture all Housing First activity in Scotland. The most recent report (August 2022) estimated that by 30 June 2022, 1,224 people with the hardest experiences of homelessness had received keys to settled homes.
- A self-assessment and peer assessment tool to monitor fidelity to the seven principles of Housing First⁷ is being tested by 13 local authorities and will provide useful evidence on the quality of interventions.
- Eight local authority areas have set up Housing First programmes for specific groups, including young people, women escaping domestic abuse, people leaving prison and people who have experienced mental health problems.
- Overall, social landlords let 39 per cent of homes to homeless households in 2021-22 (down from 44 per cent in 2020-21).
- Local authorities decreased the proportion of lets to homeless households to 46 per cent of all lets in 2021-22 (down from 50 per cent in 2020-21).
- Registered social landlords decreased the proportion of lets to homeless households to 33 per cent of all lets in 2021-22 (down from 38 per cent in 2020-21).
- Social landlords let 20,683 homes to homeless households in 2021-22. This was 11 per cent more lets than in 2020-21, but should be viewed in the context of a 25 per cent increase in all lets.
- In August 2022, we published Scotland's [homelessness statistics](#) for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. Of the 25,816 unintentionally homelessness cases that closed in 2021-22 – where contact was maintained and the outcome was known – 82 per cent (20,686) secured settled accommodation, compared with 80 per cent in 2020-21.

The Scottish Government and COSLA want to see a greater proportion of social homes allocated to homeless households. Social housing allocations ground to a halt during the pandemic, which prevented people moving on from temporary accommodation. While restrictions have now eased, councils are still dealing with a backlog of households waiting for settled accommodation.

7 Housing First is built around a series of principles to meet, rather than a series of specific tasks or activities to deliver.

The seven principles are:

1. People have a right to a home
2. Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed
3. Housing and support are separated
4. People have choice and control
5. An active engagement approach is used
6. The service is based on people's strengths, goals and aspirations
7. A harm reduction approach is used

We said we would **develop best practice examples of choice in settled housing** and **assess the impacts of providing a wide range of housing options in local areas**.

When local authorities discharge their homelessness duty, they can offer people social or private tenancies. Nonetheless, the majority of settled homes offered to people who are homeless are in the social rented sector.

- The Scottish Government's new homelessness prevention legislation will ensure that people facing homelessness have greater choice and control over their housing options and outcomes.
- We have established a private rented sector forum so that local authorities can share learning and good practice on the use of the private rented sector for homelessness prevention and tenancy sustainment.
- The Scottish Government organised a successful rapid rehousing transition plan co-ordinators' event in May 2022 to share good practice and experiences of providing a wider range of housing options.

The Scottish Government and COSLA have started work to develop a new and fairer **temporary accommodation funding framework**. Local authorities currently receive an annual share of the £23.5 million homelessness support grant and a share of the £7 million former hostels grant. The present distribution methodology is based on the amount of temporary accommodation used by local authorities rather than the efforts they are making to transform the use of temporary accommodation through their rapid rehousing transition plans (RRTPs).

- As the names of the grants do not reflect the importance local and national government place on homelessness prevention and earlier intervention, we intend to merge these two grants to create a new £30.5 million homelessness prevention fund. The aim is to provide greater clarity in budget documents for citizens who want to understand how their money is spent.
- We are considering a fairer distribution formula that better represents the drivers of need in homelessness and recognises local authority efforts to reduce the use of temporary accommodation.
- The final decision on the distribution of funding will be made by ministers and COSLA leaders and is expected to be implemented for 2023-24 budgets.

Progress against actions to respond quickly and effectively whenever homelessness happens

When homelessness cannot be prevented, our aim is to provide a housing-led response, which means offering appropriate accommodation and any necessary support as quickly as possible. Nobody facing homelessness should have to prove they are 'tenancy ready'.

Scotland's most recent [homelessness statistics](#) show decreases in the most acute forms of homelessness and in repeat homelessness. This would suggest that people are getting the right solutions to their homelessness. However, some local authorities have too many households in bed and breakfast accommodation, a situation that was exacerbated by the pandemic. The Scottish Government continues to support local authorities and health and social care partners with their efforts to provide appropriate support and accommodation for all those currently in bed and breakfast accommodation.

- Glasgow City HSCP has developed an ambitious temporary accommodation strategy with the aim of moving away from unsuitable temporary accommodation and ending the use of bed and breakfast accommodation by year three of the plan.
- Given accommodation supply challenges in Edinburgh, a short term task force has been established to look at ways the Scottish Government can help the City of Edinburgh Council with plans to deliver more settled accommodation in the short and longer term.
- Local authorities have reported on progress with implementation of their rapid rehousing transition plans (RRTPs), including efforts to reduce the use of temporary accommodation, in their activity and spend RRTP templates, which were submitted during summer 2022.
- Scottish Government officials meet regularly with senior officers in Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and the City of Edinburgh Council to discuss progress with move on from bed and breakfast accommodation, the use of which is more prevalent in large cities. Progress in other local authority areas is shared at housing options hubs meetings.

We continue to **support local winter planning**, including efforts by partners to **end the use of night shelter and dormitory-style provision**.

Rapid rehousing welcome centres (RRWCs) were initially established in Glasgow and Edinburgh in 2020 as part of our commitment to end the use of night shelter and dormitory-style provision. These centres provide short-term, self-contained accommodation and trauma-informed support services, with the aim of assisting people at risk of rough sleeping to move onto more settled accommodation, including Housing First. While our ambition is to reduce the use of these centres in future, we recognise that there may always be a need for a small amount of rapid access accommodation, especially in areas where rough sleeping is concentrated. The two centres gather equality information from people accessing the service. It is voluntary for people to disclose this information and data is anonymised.

- In 2021-22, the Scottish Government provided funding of £387,025 towards the continued operation of RRWCs in Glasgow and Edinburgh over the winter months, including a top up of £263,000 when services were most under pressure.
- People using the centres were offered a range of services, which included health and social care support as well as assistance with housing, legal, immigration, financial and employment matters.

- The success of the RRWC model means that there has been no return to night shelter or dormitory-style provision in Scotland, unlike in other parts of the UK.
- The Scottish Government provided £1,500 top up funding in 2021-22 to third sector organisations in Perth and Kinross and Dundee for personalised budgets so that frontline staff could meet the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping.
- Both [Bethany Christian Trust](#) and [Glasgow City Mission](#) have published annual reports on the use of RRWCs in Glasgow and Edinburgh. They report that 97 per cent of guests in Edinburgh and 96 per cent of guests in Glasgow had positive outcomes and moved onto alternative accommodation. Both centres had more male than female guests, but did provide safe accommodation to women, including victim-survivors of domestic abuse and pregnant women.

We said we would **develop a model of frontline outreach**, which is linked to our commitment to train and support frontline staff in their work with people experiencing homelessness. We also said we would **support people engaged in street begging**.

Scottish Government officials continue to engage regularly with representatives from frontline homelessness organisations across Scotland to ensure they have the tools and resources they need to support people who are rough sleeping or engaged in street begging, many of whom have multiple and complex needs. Research⁸ into begging has shown that people have often experienced lifelong poverty and trauma and are suffering from poor mental and physical health, including addiction. To address it effectively, we have to better respond to the complexities of the lives of those begging. The Scottish Government has made reducing drug related deaths and harms a national mission and is taking action to tackle child poverty⁹ and create a social security system in Scotland that is based on dignity, fairness and respect.

To estimate the number of people who are sleeping rough, the Scottish Government relies on homelessness data collection from local authorities as well as intelligence provided by frontline homelessness services. There are, however, limitations with both approaches and, as well as reviewing our homelessness data collection, we intend to develop a shared case management system to enable confidential exchange of relevant information between organisations supporting people experiencing the most acute forms of homelessness. This work has been paused temporarily to focus on other priorities.

Frontline outreach services have evolved rapidly as a result of the pandemic with significantly improved partnership working with local authorities in areas where rough sleeping was most concentrated. As a result, the number of people sleeping rough remains low and has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Scottish Government officials are reviewing the case for a national model of frontline outreach with frontline partners to take account of how circumstances have changed since the [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group](#) first made its recommendation.

- The Scottish Government is consulting with third sector homelessness organisations to understand what model, if any, would empower frontline staff and be of value to people using frontline services. Initial stakeholder workshops took place in August 2022 and further engagement sessions are due take place later this year.
- In 2021-22, the Scottish Government provided funding of £481,000 over three years to Simon Community Scotland to pilot 'Relationship First', an assertive outreach service to provide psychological support to people who have been sleeping rough for long periods in Edinburgh due to severe mental ill health. The aim of the pilot is to support a transition into settled accommodation for this cohort.

⁸ [Research reveals the hardships of those begging in Edinburgh – Shelter Scotland](#), March 2019.

⁹ Poverty, particularly childhood poverty, is a powerful predictor of homelessness in adulthood. See [Can homelessness happen to anyone? Don't believe the hype | British Politics and Policy at LSE, July 2017](#).

- The Scottish Government's [programme for government 2022 to 2023](#) sets out a range of anti-poverty measures, including a commitment to increase the Scottish Child Payment from £20 to £25 per week per child from November 2022.
- COSLA published updated [guidance on supporting migrants with no recourse to public funds](#) in May 2022 and links to European Economic Area (EEA) specific guidance to help local authorities to understand their powers and duties with the aim of maximising support for people with NRPF. It also commissioned training for councils on EEA nationals' rights and entitlements. The training was delivered by the [NRPF Network](#) in May 2022 and funded by the Scottish Government as part of its [Ending Destitution Together](#) strategy.

We are doing all we can within our limited powers to **prevent homelessness for those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)**. Scottish Government ministers will continue to raise the NRPF condition and its impacts on migrant homelessness to the UK Government.

We know that people with NRPF are at risk of rough sleeping or destitution, especially where they can no longer be accommodated on public health grounds. We have sought to minimise this risk by working in partnership with the third sector and local authorities to develop third sector-led accommodation pathways for people with NRPF and by supporting local authorities to understand the support they can provide to people with NRPF.

- In January 2022, we provided £74,732 to Homeless Network Scotland to launch the NRPF Gateway¹⁰ in conjunction with a range of third sector organisations who provide accommodation and support to those with NRPF.
- COSLA works in partnership with the [International Organization for Migration](#) (UK) which provides Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC)-qualified caseworker support to local authorities. COSLA also hosts quarterly meetings of the national NRPF Scotland Network for local authorities to share good practice.
- Scottish Government officials facilitate meetings to share learning and best practice on NRPF policy with other UK nations.
- The Scottish Government funds a range of advice and advocacy services¹¹ to help people to stabilise their immigration status.

¹⁰ The NRPF Gateway is supported by a consortium of third sector organisations and sets out to deliver the Everyone Home Collective's route map to end destitution. It will provide a third sector led coordinated accommodation pathway and support package for people with NRPF who are not eligible for local authority support. The Scottish Government will continue to support the implementation of the NRPF Gateway as far as is possible within devolved competence.

¹¹ Since 2019, the Scottish Government has provided almost £2 million to our partner organisations to help EU citizens to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. This support will continue until at least March 2023. This includes funding for an immigration advisor working in COSLA and outreach and advice provided by the Citizens' Rights Project. The Scottish Government also delivers an advice service, in partnership with Citizens' Advice Scotland, to support EU citizens making late applications to the EU Settlement Scheme and understand their rights. This will continue until at least March 2023. The Scottish Government has provided funding to the Scottish Refugee Council to support a pilot diagnostic legal advice and advocacy support service for people with NRPF. The project, developed in partnership with Fair Way Scotland, will provide data to help us understand the circumstances of people that require legal support and the extent and nature of NRPF destitution in Scotland.

We said we would **learn from recent initiatives and set out a broader range of accommodation options in crisis situations.**

This action was proposed by the [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group](#) while we were dealing with a global pandemic. As a result of the war in Ukraine, Scotland is now dealing with a humanitarian crisis as well as a cost of living crisis. We learned a lot about preventing and responding to homelessness as a result of the pandemic and we are drawing on these lessons in our approach to the current set of challenges.

- The Scottish Government's [programme for government 2022 to 2023](#) sets out targeted action we are taking to help people to sustain their tenancies and help them through the cost of living crisis.
- The Scottish Government has provided safe accommodation to thousands of people from Ukraine while they wait to be matched to suitable longer term accommodation. Local authorities and their partners are playing a critical role in moving people from temporary accommodation to more settled options.
- We are currently reviewing the operation of our super sponsor scheme to ensure suitable support can be offered to those who have already applied for visas and may still travel to Scotland.

- The Scottish Government has chartered two cruise ships, docked at Leith in Edinburgh and at Govan in Glasgow, to house thousands of displaced Ukrainians.
- We have made up to £50 million available through the [Ukraine Longer Term Resettlement Fund](#) to refurbish properties that otherwise would not be available for let.
- As part of our emergency budget review at the end of October 2022, we will assess what further steps are needed to mitigate the impacts of the war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis on housing and homelessness services.

We said we would **provide clarity on the changes to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.**

The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) Scotland Order 2014, known as the Unsuitable Accommodation Order or UAO, was amended in May 2020 to protect all households who are homeless from being accommodated in hotels or bed and breakfast accommodation for more than seven days. While local authorities are working hard to reduce the use of unsuitable accommodation, our latest homelessness statistics suggest that nearly all local authorities reported an increase in the number of breaches since 31 March 2021. The Scottish Government has held UAO local authority working group meetings since the start of the pandemic where variations in the interpretation of the legislation and inconsistencies in the reporting and recording of UAO breaches were identified.

- In January 2022, the Scottish Government issued written clarification to local authorities alongside more explicit data collection guidance to minimise variations in interpretation of the legislation.

We said we would **revise legislative arrangements for intentionality and local connection** and **amend the intentionality definition to focus more closely on ‘deliberate manipulation’**.

The Scottish Government has now modified local connection rules so that people in housing crisis have the freedom to settle where they choose with access to the support they need.

- The Scottish Statutory Instrument was laid on 20 September 2022 and, if approved by parliament, will come into force on 29 November 2022. After that date, Scottish local authorities will no longer have the power to refer a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness to another local authority in Scotland on the grounds of their local connection.

The Scottish Government recognises that since consultations on local connection were undertaken in 2019 and 2020, significant events have occurred which have altered the environment in which local authorities operate, including the pandemic, Brexit and the war in Ukraine, all of which place additional pressures on local authority homelessness services.

A monitoring and reporting framework has been developed to measure the impact of the change on local authorities. Scottish Government officials will also engage regularly with local authorities and frontline services to review the impact of the new legislation. As set out in the [ministerial statement on modifying local connection](#) in March 2021, we will take appropriate action should the capacity of a local authority to meet its homelessness and housing duties be adversely affected by the modification to local connection rules.

Local authorities currently have discretion rather than a duty to look into the reasons why a person became homeless. The next stage of this work – to narrow the definition of intentionality to focus on deliberate manipulation – has been paused to allow us to focus on other priorities. While very few households are assessed as intentionally homeless¹² and the number has been decreasing year on year, we remain committed to reducing barriers to enable people to get the support they need so they can be helped at the earliest opportunity. This is closely aligned with our plans for new homelessness prevention legislation.

12 Of the 28,882 homeless households in 2021-22, 28,513 (99 per cent) were assessed as unintentionally homeless, with the remaining 369 assessed as intentionally homeless.

We have begun work to **introduce temporary** accommodation standards.

- An expert working group, chaired by Jim Hayton of Scotland's Housing Network, held its first meeting in October 2021. The group has been tasked with producing new advisory standards for temporary accommodation and considering how these can be regulated and legally enforced. Building on the advisory standards produced by the Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland and Shelter Scotland, the group will produce a draft set of advisory standards by the end of 2022.

The work to develop a framework for the standards will take more time. The group is currently considering different legislative routes and assessing how the framework can be applied, monitored and regulated.



Progress against actions to join up planning and resources to tackle homelessness

Scotland's [National Performance Framework](#) is our vision for the nation we want to be and this drives our mission to end child poverty and homelessness. We said we would **ensure the next National Performance Framework review includes explicit consideration of homelessness.**

The current national outcomes were published in 2018. The Scottish Government is legislatively required to review them every five years and so they will be reviewed during 2022-23.

The Scottish Parliament's Finance and Public Administration Committee has also been looking at how the national outcomes shape Scottish Government policy aims and spending decisions, and how this drives delivery at national and local level.

- We will ensure that the upcoming review of national outcomes in the National Performance Framework includes consideration of homelessness.

We said we would **improve how we use Public Health Scotland data and intelligence capabilities.**

Scottish Government, COSLA and Public Health Scotland officials meet regularly to reinforce the links between health and homelessness and improve joint approaches to homelessness prevention.

- A task and finish group of the [Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#), set up in June 2022, has been considering how we can reduce the numbers of households, especially those with children, staying long periods in temporary accommodation. Public Health Scotland is contributing to the work of this group, including by reviewing the evidence on the impact of temporary accommodation on children.
- Public Health Scotland is working with Healthcare Improvement Scotland to link homelessness application data to health and social care data. Work will begin with a small number of pathfinder areas but the aim is to make this data available to all local areas to inform where best to target resource and support for people experiencing multiple and complex needs. The collaborative element of this work is a legacy of the [Reducing Harm, Improving Care](#) project.

We continue to **improve drug and alcohol treatment and harm reduction services.**

- An update on the National Mission to reduce drug deaths and improve the lives of those impacted by drugs, [National Drugs Mission Plan: 2022-2026](#), was published in August 2022.
- The Scottish Government aims to increase the number of statutory funded placements by 300 per cent over this parliamentary term so that in 2026 at least 1,000 people are publicly funded for their placement.
- We have responded to calls for more transparency and accountability by working with Public Health Scotland to track the number of residential rehabilitation placements that have been funded by alcohol and drug partnerships.
- The most recent [interim report from Public Health Scotland](#), published on 27 September 2022, found that 218 statutory funded residential rehabilitation placements had been approved across Scotland between April and June 2022, an increase of 85 from the previous quarter.
- The figures are a substantial increase on estimates from previous years, meaning more people with problem drug and alcohol use are accessing residential treatment and support to aid their recovery. While the statistics indicate progress, we recognise that more can be done to get people into appropriate treatment quicker to reduce harms and help with recovery.

- We continue to expand the naloxone programme so that naloxone can be routinely used in response to potential overdose. This includes ensuring that emergency responders and members of the public have easy access to this life saving medication and increasing awareness of the signs of drug overdose through the [public health campaign on how to save a life](#), which encourages the public to access a free naloxone kit and training.
- We continue to implement the medication assisted treatment (MAT) standards, which define what is needed for the consistent delivery of safe and accessible drug treatment and support in Scotland.

We said we would **embed homelessness as a public health priority**. Special measures put in place to protect people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic have been effective and show what public health measures and collaborations can achieve. Given the known risks of homelessness, rough sleeping and destitution to physical and mental health and wellbeing, we and our partners want to see this support continue as we recover from the pandemic.

- We continue to develop a public health approach to homelessness prevention, which means focusing on the root causes of homelessness and using evidence and data to inform policy.

We said we would **improve the join up between health, social care, housing and homelessness planning.**

The Scottish Government has committed to establishing a [National Care Service](#) by the end of this parliamentary term to improve the quality of social work and social care services in Scotland.

- The Scottish Government consulted on the plans for a National Care Service between 9 August and 2 November 2021. The [National Care Service \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced to Parliament on 20 June 2022.

It is not proposed that the housing or homelessness functions of local authorities should transfer to the National Care Service (NCS). However, social care support services will need to work effectively alongside other services. The Scottish Government envisages that a fully integrated NCS would work closely with other services, such as housing, homelessness, education, the justice system and the Scottish Prison Service to ensure everyone has seamless access to the support they need.

We said we would **ensure local authorities, housing providers and public bodies join up to prevent homelessness.**

Our new homelessness prevention legislation is designed to radically improve the way local authorities, housing providers and public bodies join up to prevent homelessness. The legislation will include new duties on wider public bodies – such as health and social care services, children’s services, police and prisons – and on social and private landlords to act in a timely way to prevent homelessness.

- The Scottish Government and COSLA consulted on plans for new homelessness prevention duties between December 2021 and April 2022. As well as inviting responses to a formal consultation paper, the Scottish Government organised a series of consultation events about the proposals related to public bodies. This included engagement with justice and health representatives.

The findings of the **Hard Edges Scotland report** continue to inform how the Scottish Government responds to the multiplicity of disadvantage that individuals and families can face in Scotland.

The Hard Edges report showed us the scale and overlapping nature of disadvantage in Scotland. It also highlighted that services and sectors often operate in silos while interacting with the same people, making services difficult to access and navigate. Our aspiration, as set out earlier in this report, is to adopt a ‘no wrong door’ approach and make sure there is a consistent and personalised offer when people reach out for services.

- Scottish charity Homeless Network Scotland has proposed implementing a no wrong door ‘test of change’ across the social care, housing and homelessness, health and community justice sectors. This would address siloed working practices by putting coordinated care systems in place at a local level for people experiencing homelessness, and particularly for those with multiple and complex needs. While the proposal is still at the scoping stage, Scottish Government officials from the homelessness unit have facilitated early cross-government conversations to allow Homeless Network Scotland to present its proposal.

We said we would **update the code of guidance on homelessness and review the need for a code of practice in the code of guidance on homelessness.**

There has been no update to the code of guidance on homelessness since the interim update in November 2019. This work has been paused to allow us to focus on more urgent tasks and so we can incorporate key legislative changes as part of the update. We remain committed to reviewing the code once the homelessness prevention duties have been laid, and we will review the need for a code of practice addendum to the code of guidance in future.

We said we would **join up housing, employment and employability support.**

The Scottish Government helps those facing significant barriers into fair and sustainable work through its first iteration of devolved employment provision, [Fair Start Scotland](#). The service offers one-to-one support, tailored to individual circumstances. Pre-employment support can last up to 18 months depending on the needs of the individual and up to 12 months in-work support is available to ensure participants remain supported during employment.

[No One Left Behind](#) sets out Scotland’s collective approach to delivering an all age employability system which is flexible, joined up and responsive.

- We will continue to work at local and national level to improve the connectivity between employability services and other provision such as health, housing and justice through the adoption of a whole person/whole systems approach.
- The Scottish Government’s [Housing First monitoring report](#) developed to capture Housing First activity across Scotland also records positive outcomes as a result of Housing First tenancies, including training and employment.



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