

Ending Homelessness Together Annual report to the Scottish Parliament

December 2025



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Introduction

This annual report summarises the progress made during the last year towards ending homelessness in Scotland.

The Scottish Government and our local authority partners are committed to ending homelessness. By ending homelessness, we do not mean that no one will ever lose their home again, but [Scotland's homelessness strategy](#) – a strategy owned jointly by the Scottish Government and COSLA – sets out how we will work together to address the root causes of homelessness; prevent homelessness where possible; and respond quickly when homelessness does occur. Our aim is to ensure that everyone has a home that meets their needs. The Housing (Scotland) Bill was passed on 30 September 2025 and became the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act](#) on 6 November 2025. It presents an opportunity for Scotland to be a world leader in ending homelessness. Scotland already has some of the strongest homelessness rights in the world and the new legislation introduces transformational measures that will make preventing homelessness a shared public responsibility and ensure intervention starts as early as possible and before people reach crisis point.

The most recently published [homelessness statistics](#), covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, demonstrate the scale of the challenge Scotland faces in reducing homelessness. Having a safe, warm and affordable home is the foundation for a life of dignity and opportunity. While we are proud of the legally enshrined right to temporary accommodation for homeless households who need it, long stays in temporary accommodation are not good for anyone's health and wellbeing.

We know high housing costs contribute to homelessness and to child poverty. The Scottish Government's [housing emergency action plan](#) was launched in September 2025 and the proposals within it were broadly agreed at a COSLA meeting of council leaders. Homelessness charities and housing organisations welcomed the focus on children and groups experiencing housing precarity. The plan is an important part of the Scottish Government's efforts to eradicate child poverty and sets out new actions to end children living in unsuitable temporary accommodation; to support the housing needs of those most at risk of homelessness; and to increase the supply of affordable and social housing in order to give children the best start in life.

Progress against actions to 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
4. Raise public awareness of homelessness and challenge stigma
5. Consider and respond to the recommendations of the measuring impact task and finish group

- We published [research into housing insecurity and hidden homelessness](#) in April 2025 to improve our understanding of people who are homeless or in housing precarity but who do not appear in Scotland's official figures.
- Research commissioned by Shelter Scotland into [children's experiences in temporary accommodation](#) was published in March 2025 and informed the Scottish Government's [housing emergency action plan](#).
- Our future homelessness data collections will take into account the new statutory homelessness prevention duties.
- The review of content for our homelessness datasets is expected to conclude during 2026 and we will then agree timescales for implementation with local authorities.
- Through continued funding for and involvement with the [Change Team](#), we ensure that our policies are rooted in real life experience of homelessness.
- We updated our [equality impact assessment](#) for Scotland's discretionary housing payment scheme in the last year. It shows how the Scottish Government's mitigation of the benefit cap makes a positive difference to single mothers and children, contributing to efforts to eradicate child poverty.
- Our [new homelessness prevention duties](#) were passed by parliament in September 2025. Shaped by people with lived experience and reflecting no wrong door principles, they will ensure people get the help they need regardless of where the risk of homelessness is first identified.
- The Scottish Government made an increased investment of £100,000 in personalised budgets for frontline staff in winter 2025-26. This empowers frontline workers to support people at risk of rough sleeping where they are and in a way that fits with their needs.
- Thanks to work started during a secondment to the Scottish Government, Homeless Network Scotland staff created and offered a [course to explore the drivers and impact of stigma](#) in November 2024.
- Since her appointment in June 2025, the Cabinet Secretary for Housing Màiri McAllan MSP has worked hard to raise awareness of homelessness, challenge biased narratives and ensure that delivery of new homes and tackling homelessness are at the heart of government. In visits to [West Granton Housing Co-operative](#), [Scottish Women's Aid](#) and [Fife Gingerbread](#); during parliamentary debates; and in speeches at Cyrenians' World Homeless Day reception and at [Homeless Network Scotland's annual conference](#), the housing secretary has upheld Scotland's strong rights framework and emphasised the importance of preventing homelessness and reducing harm for children and those with the most difficult experiences of homelessness.
- The Scottish Government is working with the chairs of the [measuring impact task and finish group](#) to reach agreement on a final set of indicators. We plan to respond to the report in the new year.

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

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| <p>6. Ensure the recommendations of the task and finish group on homelessness prevention inform the drafting and delivery of the new homelessness prevention legislation</p> |
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7. Increase focus on tenancy sustainment and establish mechanisms to avoid evictions into homelessness
8. Push the UK Government to reverse its welfare policies that put people at risk of homelessness
9. 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
10. Improve affordability in the private rented sector
11. Implement and review prevention pathways for groups at particular risk, including for women experiencing domestic abuse

- [Scottish Government amendments](#) to the homelessness prevention provisions in the Housing (Scotland) Bill – now an [Act](#) of the Scottish Parliament – aimed to provide clarity on the bodies affected and the meaning of ‘ask and act’ and were strongly informed by the recommendations of the [task and finish group on homelessness prevention](#).
- One of the task and finish group’s main messages was that cross-sector culture change and leadership is required so that homelessness prevention is seen as everyone’s business. The Scottish Government has [invested £4 million in homelessness prevention pilots](#) in 2025-26 to explore what ask and act means in practice. The pilots will allow us to test, promote and scale up innovative approaches to help people stay in their homes. Learning from the pilots will inform regulations and guidance for new duties. Fifteen pilot projects were awarded funding in November 2025 and run until December 2026.
- In May 2025, the Scottish Government launched a [£1 million fund for social landlords, third sector organisations and other community partners](#) to support tenancy sustainment. [Seven projects have been awarded funding](#) to help tenants remain in their homes. This funding is on top of £30.5 million made available to local authorities in 2025-26 for their work to prevent homelessness.
- The Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland held its [annual housing awards ceremony](#) in November 2025. The awards recognise the dedicated professionals who deliver vital housing services, including through innovative approaches to preventing homelessness. Winners included Riverside Scotland for its housing first for families service and Berwickshire Housing Association for the excellent service it provides to tenants.
- We continue to support councils to deliver housing options services, which can help prevent homelessness. The annual [statistics on housing options services in Scotland](#) were published on 25 November 2025.
- The [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#) will deliver improved housing outcomes for tenants in the rented sector. Changes include a long-term system of rent control that will help stabilise rents and stronger penalties for unlawful eviction and wrongful termination. There will also be new duties on the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) and the courts to consider a delay to the enforcement of an eviction, except in limited circumstances, where an order or decree is granted. This aims to reduce the negative impact of the timing of an eviction.
- To mitigate the impact of UK government welfare policies, we are making over £100 million available to local authorities to spend on discretionary housing payments (DHPs). DHPs assist households affected by the bedroom tax and

the benefit cap, including many children, and they help renters whose benefits are restricted because of local housing allowance (LHA) rates.

- The [Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government](#) wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in October 2025 to set out Scottish Government priorities for the UK government's autumn budget, and urged the Chancellor to reverse the bedroom tax and benefit cap and address shortfalls in LHA rates.
- We reviewed local authorities' DHP application processes during summer 2025. A number of recommendations were shared with members of the DHP practitioners' forum to help streamline application processes, improve accessibility and boost take-up by struggling households.
- The [expert group on housing affordability](#) set up by the Scottish Government to develop a shared understanding of housing affordability has concluded its work and submitted its [final report](#). Ministers are now considering the findings.
- Following the successful £500,000 fund to leave pilot in 2023-24, we are launching a new £1.5 million national fund to leave in the coming months. Part of the housing emergency action plan, this will help up to 1,800 women and children experiencing domestic abuse to leave an abusive relationship.
- We are making progress with implementing part 2 of the [Domestic Abuse \(Protection\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#). These provisions will help a woman experiencing domestic abuse to remain in her home as they enable social landlords to end the perpetrator's interest in a joint tenancy. We are aiming to lay the secondary legislation required to bring part 2 of the Act into force in December 2025.
- The Housing (Scotland) Act will require social landlords to develop and implement a policy to support tenants at risk of homelessness due to domestic abuse.
- The Scottish Government has also committed as part of the new legislation to develop guidance for landlords in the private rented sector on supporting tenants experiencing domestic abuse and to strengthen existing guidance on pre-action protocols for rent arrears.
- We have recently established a subgroup of the [Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#) to ensure momentum is maintained with implementation of the recommendations in the [care leavers' housing pathway](#).

Progress against actions to prioritise settled homes for all

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">12. Take forward work on the right to adequate housing13. Complete the delivery of 110,000 affordable homes14. 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 schemes15. Reduce the use of temporary accommodation16. Roll out housing first in Scotland and consider the role of supported housing17. Maximise housing options for people |
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- Scottish ministers have committed to introducing a human rights bill in the first year of the next parliamentary session, subject to the outcome of the 2026 Scottish parliamentary election. The bill will seek to incorporate economic,

social and cultural rights, including the right to adequate housing, into Scots law within the limits of devolved competence. A [discussion paper](#) setting out the Scottish Government's current thinking on the bill was published on 1 July and will be used to test and refine proposals ahead of decisions to legislate.

- The latest [quarterly affordable housing supply programme statistics](#) were published in September 2025 and show that by June 2025, 29,680 homes have been delivered towards the 110,000 affordable homes target, of which 22,910 (77 per cent) are homes for social rent.
- The Scottish Government has committed £2 million in 2025-26 to support work by the [Scottish Empty Homes Partnership](#) (SEHP) to bring empty homes back into use. SEHP is supporting local authorities to expand their empty homes services, providing more capacity for outreach work with private homeowners. The investment is also funding third sector organisations to acquire and return homes to use and enabling the creation of a new compulsory purchase hub to support local authorities to use these powers. In its latest impact report, the SEHP reported that [2,066 properties were brought back to use in 2024-25](#). Nearly 13,000 homes have been brought back into use since the partnership was formed.
- Many Scottish local authorities operate rent deposit guarantee schemes to facilitate access to the private rented sector (PRS) for homeless households. Homelessness charity Crisis maintains a database of [29 schemes in Scotland that help people overcome barriers to accessing accommodation in the PRS](#).
- The Scottish Government is investing an extra £2 million in DHPs over 2025-26 and 2026-27 as part of its [housing emergency action plan](#). This funding will enable local authorities to support households to find settled homes in the private rented sector. A [further £1 million investment in DHPs](#) in 2025-26 will help eligible households with other housing-related financial hardship.
- Our [homelessness statistics 2024-25](#) show that, compared to last year, the number of households in temporary accommodation (17,240) increased by 6 per cent and the number of children in temporary accommodation (10,180) decreased by 1.7 per cent. There was a small decrease (1 per cent) in homelessness applications in 2024-25. While figures remain too high, they suggest that the housing system can recover with continued investment.
- In 2025-26, we are investing £808 million in the affordable housing supply programme – an increase of £251 million when compared to the 2024-25 budget. This includes £80 million for councils to acquire family homes now to relieve homelessness pressures. Four-fifths of the acquisition funding is targeted at areas with the greatest temporary accommodation challenges.
- We have made a new commitment to invest [up to £4.9 billion over the next four years](#) to deliver around 36,000 affordable homes by 2029-30.
- The Scottish Government is currently consulting on [proposals to modernise the law on compulsory purchase](#) in Scotland, to make the system simpler, more streamlined and fairer for all parties. Compulsory purchase is a powerful tool which can support a wide range of projects, including bringing empty properties back into use and accelerating the delivery of new homes.
- The Cabinet Secretary for Housing and COSLA's Community Wellbeing Spokesperson wrote to local authorities in October 2025 asking them to contact every household with children in good quality temporary accommodation to explore if the property is suitable for conversion into the family's permanent home. The letter included a link to the [good practice note](#)

[on converting temporary accommodation](#) produced by the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers.

- Overall, [social landlords allocated 46 per cent of homes](#) to homeless households in 2024-25 (up from 44 per cent in 2023-24).
 - Local authorities increased the proportion of lets to homeless households from 49 per cent to 50 per cent.
 - Registered social landlords increased the proportion of lets to homeless households from 39 per cent to 42 per cent.
- Our [homelessness statistics 2024-25](#) show that 82 per cent of unintentionally homeless households (24,033) secured settled accommodation in 2024-25.
- Investment in rapid rehousing and housing first reduces the need for many forms of temporary accommodation. As part of the housing emergency action plan, we are investing a further [£4 million in 2025-26 to expand housing first schemes in Scotland](#). The plan includes a commitment to provide a further £8 million of rapid rehousing transition plan funding in 2026-27.
- That means that by end March 2027, the Scottish Government will have allocated £84.5 million to local authorities since 2018-19 to assist them with the transition to rapid rehousing and the rollout of housing first.
- The Scottish Government's latest [housing first monitoring report](#) estimated that by 31 March 2025, 2,154 people with the hardest experiences of homelessness had received keys to settled homes, and that 83 per cent of people were still in their housing first tenancies 12 months after entry.
- Homeless Network Scotland published its latest [Housing First Annual Check-Up](#) in October 2025. A survey of people with housing first tenancies found that housing first support was working well for 89 per cent of respondents.
- The Scottish Government is considering the recommendations of the [supported housing task and finish group](#) and we aim to respond in early 2026.
- Our new homelessness prevention legislation aims to give people at risk of homelessness maximal housing options, including remaining in their current accommodation, renting in the social or private sector or considering other settled forms of housing.

Progress against actions to respond quickly and effectively whenever homelessness happens

18. Support local authorities with their efforts to reduce the use of unsuitable accommodation
19. Consult on options to legally enforce the temporary accommodation standards framework
20. Support local winter planning, including efforts by partners to end the use of night shelter and dormitory-style provision
21. Improve housing outcomes for people at the hard edges
22. Prevent homelessness for those with no recourse to public funds
23. Learn from recent initiatives and set out a broader range of accommodation options in crisis situations
24. Revise legislative arrangements for intentionality and amend intentionality definition to focus more closely on 'deliberate manipulation'

- The Scottish Government is making over £15 billion available to councils in 2025-26 to deliver a range of services, including homelessness services.
- Local authorities are expected to comply with both the [Unsuitable Accommodation Order](#) and with the standards in the Scottish Government's [temporary accommodation standards framework](#) until it is legally enforceable. We know, however, that the demand for homelessness services in some areas is making it difficult for councils to meet their statutory duties.
- As part of the next phase of work to ensure that temporary accommodation is of good quality and meets households' needs, the Scottish Government published a [consultation on the legal enforcement of the temporary accommodation standards framework](#) on 22 October 2025. Responses to the consultation will inform next steps, including how the Scottish Housing Regulator will assess landlords' performance on meeting the standards.
- The housing emergency action plan includes a range of actions to help reduce the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation such as hostels, hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation:
 - we are funding pilot projects in 2025-26, including private sector leasing schemes, where private landlords lease their properties to the council for use as suitable temporary accommodation;
 - we have doubled our investment in the acquisitions programme from £40 million to £80 million in 2025-26, with supported targeted at those councils with the greatest temporary accommodation pressures;
 - we will raise the standard of all rented accommodation by bringing Awaab's Law into force, starting with tackling damp and mould, from March 2026.
- We continue to champion efforts to end the use of night shelter provision. In 2024-25, the Scottish Government provided funding of £144,504 to third sector partners towards the operation of a rapid rehousing welcome centre in Edinburgh and £87,141 to ensure supportive measures were in place to support people at risk of or experiencing rough sleeping in Glasgow.
 - During 2024-25, [Bethany Christian Trust](#) supported 618 people at the rapid rehousing welcome centre in Edinburgh. Outcomes were captured for 55 per cent of guests, 99 per cent of whom moved on to a positive destination.
 - [Glasgow City Mission](#) employed six housing settlement officers to work intensively with guests in temporary hotel and B&B accommodation in Glasgow, supporting 619 people. Glasgow City Mission also provided emergency hotel rooms which prevented 233 people from sleeping rough.
- The Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research at Heriot-Watt University published an article in the International Journal of Homelessness in August 2025, [Beyond Shelters: Unpacking Global Lessons from Scotland's Journey Towards Housing Justice](#), setting out the lessons that can be drawn from Scotland's bold approach to ending the use of shelters.
- Scottish Government officials meet regularly with representatives of homelessness organisations across Scotland to evaluate the extent of rough sleeping in the areas where it is concentrated. In 2024-25, we provided £74,000 of funding to third sector organisations in Dundee, Fife, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth and Kinross for 'personalised budgets' so that frontline

staff could meet the immediate needs of people at risk of or experiencing rough sleeping.

- We recently announced [an extra £100,000](#) to expand this scheme in 2025-26 and better support people at the hard edges of homelessness.
- We provide annual funding to Homeless Network Scotland to facilitate [Fair Way Scotland](#)¹.
- The Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research at Heriot-Watt University is undertaking a three-year evaluation of Fair Way Scotland, commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The final report is due to be published later this year. Over the first two years of operation, Fair Way partners have supported 1,973 people in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen.
- The Scottish Government and COSLA are working together to refresh the workplan for the joint ending destitution together strategy, which aims to prevent and mitigate destitution for people with no recourse to public funds.
- The Scottish Government amended the Housing (Scotland) Bill, now an Act, to ensure that no-one threatened with homelessness will face an intentionality test. We will consult on the use of the intentionality test in homelessness assessments before May 2026 and, subject to the outcome of the consultation, Scottish ministers may then take action to modify, repeal or replace the intentionality provisions.

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

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

- The Scottish Government has committed to reform the [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF). We expect to launch the next iteration of the NPF at the start of the new parliamentary session.
- Public Health Scotland has published a homelessness and health dashboard providing approved users with access to linked homelessness and health and social care data. Public Health Scotland is making this data available to all local authority areas to inform where best to target support for people experiencing multiple and complex needs within the healthcare system.

¹ Fair Way Scotland is a consortium of third sector organisations that works to ensure people with no recourse to public funds have access to essentials, support, advocacy and third sector funded accommodation. The Scottish Government supports Fair Way Scotland as far as is possible within devolved competence.

- The Scottish Government continues to improve drug and alcohol treatment and harm reduction services through the implementation of the medication assisted treatment (MAT) standards. A safer drug consumption facility, [the Thistle](#), opened in Glasgow in January 2025 and has been able to respond to a number of onsite overdose incidents.
- The latest [statistics on homeless deaths](#) were published in November 2024. They showed that drug misuse deaths accounted for two fifths (41 per cent) of all estimated homeless deaths in Scotland in 2023.
- The [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#) requires local authorities to include in their local housing strategies an assessment of the housing support needs of people in their area and the availability of housing support services in relation to homelessness.
- Public Health Scotland has engaged with local NHS territorial health boards and other stakeholders to identify what is required to develop the public health approach to homelessness – an approach which advocates for a shift in focus to the primary prevention of homelessness. Through workshops and webinars, Public Health Scotland has already reached over 250 people.
- The Scottish Government is providing Cyrenians with up to £30,000 in 2025-26 from the mental health budget to extend its [hospital in-reach service](#). The team from Cyrenians connects with people who are homeless and who have been admitted to hospital and ensures that access to suitable accommodation is prioritised as part of discharge planning. This assists recovery and reduces the risk of hospital readmission.
- Scotland's new homelessness prevention duties will require better coordination and cooperation between local authorities, housing providers and relevant public bodies to help people avoid the crisis of homelessness and the longer-term harms associated with it.
- We have committed to working closely with relevant bodies and other stakeholders, including people with lived experience of homelessness, to ensure that guidance and regulations developed to support the new homelessness prevention duties are fit for purpose.
- In September 2025, the Scottish Government invested [£750,000 in a pilot project in Glasgow](#) to make it easier for women affected by substance use to access services. The funding will be delivered through the Corra Foundation.
- The Scottish Government will begin updating the [code of guidance on homelessness](#) during 2026 to take account of recent changes, including the new homelessness prevention duties in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2025.
- No One Left Behind is Scotland's strategy for making the employability system more responsive to people's needs. The Scottish Government publishes statistics on the [number of people receiving support](#) and these capture whether people are experiencing homelessness.
- The Scottish Government's [housing first monitoring reports](#) record positive outcomes as a result of housing first tenancies, including whether people are employed or engaged in voluntary work.
- The [housing options training toolkit](#), enabled through funding from the Scottish Government, contains a module on supporting employability. The aim is to assist housing and homelessness staff in Scottish local authorities to provide employment and housing support in a joined-up way.



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