

Homeless
Network
Scotland
we are all in



Report

HOME FOR 10

HOME FOR 10

Scotland's Annual Homelessness Conference
Glasgow | 4 October 2022



2022 marks ten years since the removal of the 'priority need test' in Scotland; the result of progressive legislation from the Scottish Parliament which created an almost universal right to housing. The annual conference was an opportunity to reflect on this important milestone, to explore why rights alone did not end homelessness and to consider the stubborn and emerging challenges ahead.

The day was packed with talks, panel discussions and breakout sessions, covering topics including housing rights, access to housing, homelessness prevention, the cost-of-living crisis, the National Care Service and language.

Thank you to our amazing speakers for your time and insights — and over 200 delegates who connected to review a difficult year and draw inspiration for the years ahead.



Online Delegate Pack

[homelessnetwork.scot/
home-for-10-delegate-pack](https://homelessnetwork.scot/home-for-10-delegate-pack)

Maggie Brunjes, chief executive of Homeless Network Scotland introduced the Home For 10 Journal. It is a collection of key insights and provocations that provides the strongest steer on what it will take to end homelessness and mapped by people closest to the issues across policy, practice, personal experience and academia.

It highlights the positive impact of a rights-based approach, but which had some unintended consequences too — especially around the increasing reliance on temporary accommodation, and on the systematic disadvantage faced by single people in the quality and location of that accommodation. How the UK government policy have made our task harder, especially around welfare reform, a hostile immigration environment, and fiscal policy of austerity. While the Scottish Parliament and Government has taken a different, rights-based track and centred the experiences of people affected by homelessness.

But who can also do more — on prevention, more homes, on closing the implementation gap. And the big choices on things like tax, welfare and minimum incomes to redress inequality.

The journal also shows that we should hold our nerve. Local Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans have been shown to be the right mechanism to chart a route away from over reliance on temporary accommodation, and towards earlier prevention — but which now need a better way of measuring outcomes and progress. And it highlights that the impact of integration of health and social care on homelessness in Scotland is unknown, so too there are different views on what a national care service can bring. But we do know that people who face disadvantage and adversity often get a less joined-up service response and that a No Wrong Door approach is needed to unravel people's full potential to build and live their lives.



SUMMARY

Making the Shift

We heard from **Leilani Farha**, the Global Director of The SHIFT about housing rights, reflecting on the strong legislation in Scotland compared to other parts of the world. A key message from **Leilani** is that the universal right to housing will won't be achieved overnight, it's incremental. Progressive realisation takes time and should not be mistaken for no progress: stay the course, just because you haven't won yet doesn't mean you're not on the winning team.

Stemming the tide

We are all aware of the impact of the current economic situation on people's lives. For many people, this has become a cost-of-living crisis where they are struggling to pay for rent, heat their homes or buy food. **Darren McGarvey**, author and musician, kicked off this session by sharing his take on experiences of extreme hardship, including homelessness. Darren asks us to focus more on prevention — *"stop pulling people out of the river and instead go further upstream and stop them falling in"*.

Rewriting Social Care

We were joined for this session by author and blogger **Bryony Shannon** who talked about her experience of working in social care, the difficulties she had understanding and navigating the system. Bryony seeks to unpick why the words and phrases that we still use every single day in the current world of social care perpetuate the system and dehumanise the people within it. This is about exploring an alternative vocabulary that describes a very different approach.

The workshops

The energy the speakers and audiences brought to the workshops led to animated discussions and some ideas and challenges for the future. We discussed the art of advocacy and activism, the importance of all parts of the public sector asking people about their housing situation, how we can get better at measuring what matters, and what rolling out a 'no wrong door' approach could look like.

The workshops identified common essential elements for working together to end homelessness:

- Create and nurture trusted and valued relationships.
- Involve people with experience of homelessness and of using services in all stages of our work, including how we measure impact.
- Take a place-based approach, working with people in the communities they already live in can help prevent homelessness.
- Break down silos to ensure that people are at the heart of service delivery across housing, homelessness, health and other parts of the public sector.

TAKEAWAY MESSAGES

Abolishing 'Priority Need' was about wanting and hoping for fairness, about learning from the past to shape a better future. So — what do we need to do now to ensure that homelessness is ended before we reach another milestone for ending priority need?

1) Work together across the public sector to prevent homelessness before it happens. Ask about people's housing situations, find out whether they are at risk of homelessness and work together to help them avoid it.

2) Get better at equality. We know that men and women have different experiences of housing, homelessness, using services, asking for support – let's build our knowledge from there and make sure our work is informed by understanding of equality.

3) Work alongside people who have experience of using services. Let's ask people how we can get better at this and take the action we need to take.

4) Rely less on temporary accommodation. Let's make better use of good quality affordable accommodation in the private rented sector and ensure private (and social) landlords meet their obligations under human rights legislation.

5) Try out new things, pilot new approaches, have the confidence to listen and learn alongside each other. **Support the no wrong door trial** to see how we can ensure people are at the heart of services.

6) Keep striving to achieve the right to adequate housing for everyone in Scotland. Challenge ourselves and our policy makers to ensure we are always moving in the right direction.

7) Take a moment to consider the language we use when we write and talk about homelessness. Make a commitment to think about how our words sound from someone else's perspective and to change what doesn't feel right.

8) Build systems around belonging, love, home, safety, meaning, purpose, identity, community, and hope instead of systems that create distance between us.

9) Use the evidence we have about work works in Scotland and beyond, building on and celebrating what we are already doing well. Let's support the creation of new evidence – measuring what we think matters.

10) Acknowledge that many people were already living in a cost-of-living crisis even before this current economic situation. Let's not accept that.