

22 November 2023

Shona Robison MSP Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance Scottish Government St Andrew's House Regent Road Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear Deputy First Minister

We are writing to urge you to use the upcoming Scottish Government budget to address the growing housing and homelessness emergency in Scotland.

We welcome the Scottish Government's stated and ongoing commitment to ending homelessness, as well as the important steps that have been taken in Scotland, like the abolition of priority need, to take us closer toward that vision. We also recognise and strongly welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to introducing new homelessness prevention duties for public bodies. If properly resourced and delivered, they can be transformational in putting prevention at the heart of how we respond to homelessness.

But despite all this good work and intention, the latest annual homelessness statistics confirmed that, in real terms, we are moving in the wrong direction. We also have specific concerns around the escalating homelessness crisis facing newly granted refugees and those with uncertain or restricted eligibility.

There are 30,000 households in Scotland's homelessness system, the highest level since records began. We have more children in temporary accommodation, more households experiencing homelessness and more instances where local authorities have been unable to fulfil their legal duties to provide people with suitable temporary accommodation. At the sharp end we are witnessing increasing levels of rough sleeping, after seeing historic lows.

This is a crisis that we cannot ignore, and the upcoming Scottish Government budget must reflect that.

The budget offers the opportunity to deliver the social homes that we urgently require. The investment already committed to the Affordable Housing Supply Programme will not go far enough in delivering the social homes that communities across Scotland so desperately need. That money must be increased, and it must be better targeted.

There is no route to ending homelessness, or to achieving our national mission of tackling poverty, without more social homes.

The budget must also see action to bolster local authorities. Scotland has some of the strongest statutory homelessness rights anywhere. And the strength of those rights is something we should all be proud of. But those rights mean very little if Scotland's local authorities, under-resourced and overwhelmed, are unable to meet the immense demand that they face. With rights being breached with regularity across Scotland, it is critical that the budget provides councils with the investment they need to meet their duties, commission services and to protect people from all communities from homelessness.

We have many of the building blocks in place in Scotland to end homelessness, and much progress has been made.

But across Scotland too many people are waiting for a safe, secure home; watching their life chances being damaged and their options and possibilities being limited as they are pulled into homelessness.

All of us have a role to play in responding to this, and the Scottish Government budget must play a central role in that response. The budget offers an opportunity to stem the rising tide of homelessness in the short-term, and to put in place the foundations of a system that prevents and ends homelessness in the longer-term. We urge you to seize that opportunity.

Yours,

The Housing Sector in Scotland:



Tony Cain Policy Manager ALACHO



Callum Chomczuk National Director CIH Scotland



Sally Thomas Chief Executive SFHA

The Refugee Sector in Scotland:

REFUGEE SANCTUARY SCOTLAND **Ekta Marwaha** Chief Executive Refugee Sanctuary Scotland



Sabir Zazai Chief Executive Scottish Refugee Council

The Anti-Poverty Sector in Scotland:



John Dickie Director Child Poverty Action Group Scotland



Peter Kelly Director Poverty Alliance

The Academic and Knowledge Sector:



Prof Suzanne Fitzpatrick Director I-SPHERE at Heriot Watt University



Chris Birt

Associate Director for Scotland Joseph Rowntree Foundation



Prof Sarah Johnsen Chair in Homelessness and Inclusion Health University of Edinburgh

The Homelessness Sector in Scotland:



All in For Change The platform for lived and frontline experience.



Everyone Home Collective The third sector collective as listed below:



Leona McDermid Chief Executive Aberdeen Foyer



Leanne Keegan Head of Development Blue Triangle



Matt Downie Chief Executive Crisis



Ewan Aitken Chief Executive Cyrenians





Richard Howat Chief Executive Churches Action for the Homeless

CROSS REACH Care you can but your faith in



Vic Walker Adult Care Director Crossreach

Charles Maasz Chief Executive Glasgow City Mission



Angela Devine **Chief Executive** Glasgow Women's Aid



Graeme Brown Area Manager **Hillcrest Futures**



Moira Bayne **Chief Executive** Housing Options Scotland



John Hinton Director Move On



Kate Polson Chief Executive Rock Trust

Pam Hunter

Say Women

Chief Executive

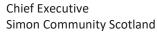








Transform Community Development



Ricky McAddock Chief Executive Street Connect

Lorraine McGrath

Bryan Smith Chief Executive Transform Community Development







Aaliya Seyal **Chief Executive**

Legal Services Agency

Homeless Network Scotland

Caryn Nicolson

Chief Executive

Maggie Brunjes

Chief Executive

Frontline Fife

Janet Haugh

Chief Executive **Right There**

Karen Barr

Rowan Alba

Chief Executive

Malcolm Page

Salvation Army

Rowan Alba More than just a roof











Alison Watson Director

Assistant Territorial Director

Shelter Scotland

Chief Executive Social Bite

David Duke Chief Executive Street Soccer Scotland

Patrick McKay **Director of Operations Turning Point Scotland**

Josh Littlejohn