



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



Sally Thomas
Chief Executive
SFHA



Callum Chomczuk
National Director
CIH Scotland

The Refugee Sector in 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



Alasdair Bennett
Chief Executive
Bethany Christian Trust



Leanne Keegan
Head of Development
Blue Triangle



Richard Howat
Chief Executive
Churches Action for
the Homeless



Matt Downie
Chief Executive
Crisis



Vic Walker
Adult Care Director
Crossreach



Ewan Aitken
Chief Executive
Cyrenians



Charles Maasz
Chief Executive
Glasgow City Mission



Angela Devine
Chief Executive
Glasgow Women's Aid



Caryn Nicolson
Chief Executive
Frontline Fife



Graeme Brown
Area Manager
Hillcrest Futures



Maggie Brunjes
Chief Executive
Homeless Network Scotland



Moira Bayne
Chief Executive
Housing Options Scotland



Aaliya Seyal
Chief Executive
Legal Services Agency



John Hinton
Director
Move On



Janet Haugh
Chief Executive
Right There



Kate Polson
Chief Executive
Rock Trust



Karen Barr
Chief Executive
Rowan Alba



Pam Hunter
Chief Executive
Say Women



Malcolm Page
Assistant Territorial Director
Salvation Army



Girijamba Polubothu
Chief Executive
Shakti Women's Aid



Alison Watson
Director
Shelter Scotland



Lorraine McGrath
Chief Executive
Simon Community Scotland



Josh Littlejohn
Chief Executive
Social Bite



Ricky McAddock
Chief Executive
Street Connect



David Duke
Chief Executive
Street Soccer Scotland



Bryan Smith
Chief Executive
Transform Community
Development



Patrick McKay
Director of Operations
Turning Point Scotland