

What you need to know about the Programme for Government 2023



Chartered
Institute of
Housing
Scotland

Introduction

The Scottish Government's Programme for Government (PfG) is published every year after the summer recess and sets out the Government's ambitions and legislative programme for the next parliamentary year.

The PfG 2023/24, [Equality, opportunity, community](#), was introduced by First Minister Humza Yousif on 5 September 2023 with a focus on tackling poverty and inequality and meeting net-zero commitments while supporting economic growth.

This CIH member briefing summarises the main points relating to the housing sector.

Housing

The PfG confirms that a Housing Bill will be introduced and will create powers for long term rent controls, support tenants' rights and introduce new homelessness prevention duties.

In addition to the Bill, the Government will continue to focus on:

- Preventing homelessness where possible and promoting Housing First.
- Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by creating a £60 million acquisition plan for 2023/24 through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP).
- Affordable housing supply, investing £752 million this year.
- Publication of a Remote, Rural and Islands Housing Action Plan this autumn and providing up to £25 million AHSP budget for 2023-28 to provide homes for key workers in rural communities.
- Introducing powers for local authorities to charge a Council Tax premium on second homes.
- Introduction of a Cladding Renumeration Bill creating a new power to undertake urgent measures to remediate unsafe cladding.
- Considering recommendations of the short-life Housing Review Group on local authority housing pressures which is due to report to the Housing to 2040 Strategic Board in September.
- Supporting transition to the long-term integration of people displaced from Ukraine.
- Supporting population of Scotland's rural areas.





Net-zero

The Scottish Government repeated its commitment to consult on a Heat in Buildings (HiBS) Bill. The Bill, which is still expected to be introduced during this parliamentary term, would set out minimum energy efficiency standards and requirements for zero emissions heating systems across housing tenures.

The final Energy strategy and Just Transition Plan will be published this year and a refreshed Warmer Homes Scotland Scheme will provide targeted support for energy efficiency and net zero emissions heating schemes.

National Care Service

The Scottish Government will continue to work with local authorities on the development of a National Care Service (NCS).

Human rights Bill

The Government has re-stated its commitment to introduce a Human Rights Bill within the limits of devolved competence.

Social security

Funding for all Scottish social security is to increase by £1 billion in 2024/25. This includes (but is not limited to) the following provisions.

The Independent Living Fund will be reopened with an initial £9 million investment in 2024/25 to enable up to 1,000 disabled people with complex needs to access additional support.

The Scottish Child Payment will continue to support 300,000 children across Scotland.

The Scottish Government will call on the UK Government to introduce an “essentials guarantee” to ensure that Universal Credit (UC) covers the cost of essentials. The [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) suggests that this should be set at £120 per week for a single adult and £200 for a couple.

The CIH View

The programme for government confirms what we knew about the Scottish Government’s priorities for the housing sector, with legislation due in a Housing Bill, Heat in Buildings Bill, and a Human Rights Bill during 2023-24. However, what we are waiting on is the detail. All of these have already undergone significant consultation with rigorous input from housing professionals, academics, third sector workers and representative bodies – practitioners, tenants and customers urgently need to see the specifics of what will be included in these Bills to allow the sector to respond and prepare for implementing changes.

The housing sector is still facing many challenges, as reflected in the recent report from the Scottish Housing Regulator on [homelessness services](#), and in the ALACHO and SOLACE report on [wider housing pressures](#). We look forward to upcoming Housing Review Group report and response from the Scottish Government. Time is of the essence if we are to meet the climate, supply and sustainability crisis in Scotland’s housing sector.

