

2024-25 Draft Scottish Government Budget



Chartered
Institute of
Housing
Scotland

Briefing for MSPs

Key messages

- We welcome and support the Scottish Government's commitment to ending homelessness and recognise the funding that has been committed to improving access to housing in Scotland.
- However, with around 30,000 households in Scotland's homelessness system, almost 10,000 children in temporary accommodation and local authorities unable to meet their statutory duties, we are not doing enough. Cost pressures, labour shortages and a lack of supply of social homes are the biggest barriers to building a fair housing system.
- This year's budget provides an opportunity to deliver the social housing that we require and to improve housing outcomes for everyone. We want to see the Government commit to more money for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme - this includes a larger overall fund and a larger grant for social landlords so they can deliver the social homes Scotland needs.
- Alongside the investment in new supply, local authorities need resources so that they can meet their duties, commission services and protect people from all communities from homelessness. This requires the Scottish Government to recommit to Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs) for at least the next three years and ensuring that this is properly funded.

Homelessness

What was already a fragile situation has been exacerbated by the ongoing recovery from the pandemic, cost of living crisis, and under-resourced refugee resettlement schemes. Urgent and radical action is now needed to avoid a deepening crisis in our response to homelessness across Scotland. The latest homelessness statistics show:

- 39,000 homeless applications during 2022/23, up nine per cent compared to the previous year, and the highest since records began

- More households and children than ever in temporary accommodation, up six and nine per cent respectively
- Longer stays in temporary accommodation, now averaging 223 days
- More local authorities having to resort to the regular and repeated use of unsuitable temporary accommodation
- Increasing numbers of open cases as people face longer waits to be rehoused, an increase of 15 per cent to 29,652 households in 2022/23.

In addition, thousands of households are being accommodated in unrecorded temporary accommodation through resettlement schemes and may still present as homeless in the future with no indication that resources will be available to deal with additional demand. The Scottish Housing Regulator's [thematic review of homelessness](#) states that some local authorities are under such extreme pressure, they are facing systemic failure.

Continued funding for RRTPs

CIH Scotland's recent work with local authorities on Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs) warns that failure to continue to focus on RRTPs and funding for services will result in a loss of progress made on homelessness prevention, service transformation and the roll out of Housing First.

RRTPs were intended to be a transitional tool to support transformational change in the homelessness system and that journey is not yet complete.

We are calling for

- The Scottish Government to commit to extending RRTPs beyond the current five-year timescale (to the end of March 2024) to support the transition towards a more proactive approach to preventing and responding to homelessness.
- The Scottish Government to clarify future funding arrangements will at least match the previous funding of £8 million per year.

Investment in affordable housing

The Scottish Government has a target to deliver 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, of which at least 70 per cent will be for social rent and 10 per cent will be in remote, rural and island communities.

The latest quarterly statistics on housebuilding and affordable housing supply show that the number of new affordable housing starts in 2022/23 financial year have fallen to 6,987, down from 8,227 in 2021/22 and 12,039 in 2019/20.

The number of affordable housing approvals also fell, from 12,880 in 2020 to 7,820 in 2022 and 6,396 last year, a 50 per cent drop in three years.

However, the total number of affordable homes completed in the 12 months to the year ending September 2022 was 9,449 – up by 219 homes (two per cent) when compared with a year earlier.

We also know that the cost of building has increased over recent years with an SFHA report noting the average works cost per unit increased from £114,000 in 2016/17 to £134-138,000 in 2020/21, whereas now many landlords are experiencing a per unit cost of between £200k to £250k. The current affordable housing supply benchmark rates are not fit for purpose.

We are calling for

- More investment in the Affordable Housing Supply Programme to ensure that it meets its target to deliver 110,000 affordable homes and an uprating of the subsidy benchmarks for social landlords.

More resources for domestic abuse training

A recent report, [Policies not Promises](#), published on 25 April by Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) and CIH Scotland, has found that the majority of social landlords in Scotland have not put in place adequate policies to support survivors of domestic abuse facing homelessness.

In 2018/19, 73 Scottish social landlords signed up to the CIH Scotland [Make a Stand](#) domestic abuse campaign and promised to act and put in place their own domestic abuse policies to support their tenants. However, four years later, social landlords are still failing to support those experiencing domestic abuse, prevent victim-survivor homelessness or hold perpetrators to account.

Encouragingly, the Scottish Government has committed to include a statutory requirement for all social landlords to have a domestic abuse policy in the upcoming Housing Bill. However, CIH Scotland and SWA recognise the need to build capacity, knowledge and understanding in the social housing sector about the requirements landlords will have from this legislation, as well as duties from the Domestic Abuse (Protection Orders) Act 2021 which is expected to be enacted in 2024.

Legislation is not enough to improve practice and housing outcomes for women and children experiencing domestic abuse.

We are calling for

- Funding for the development of a national training resource on domestic abuse and housing for all social landlords.