



Chartered
Institute of
Housing
Scotland

Homes at the Heart

A manifesto for Scotland's housing sector 2021-2026



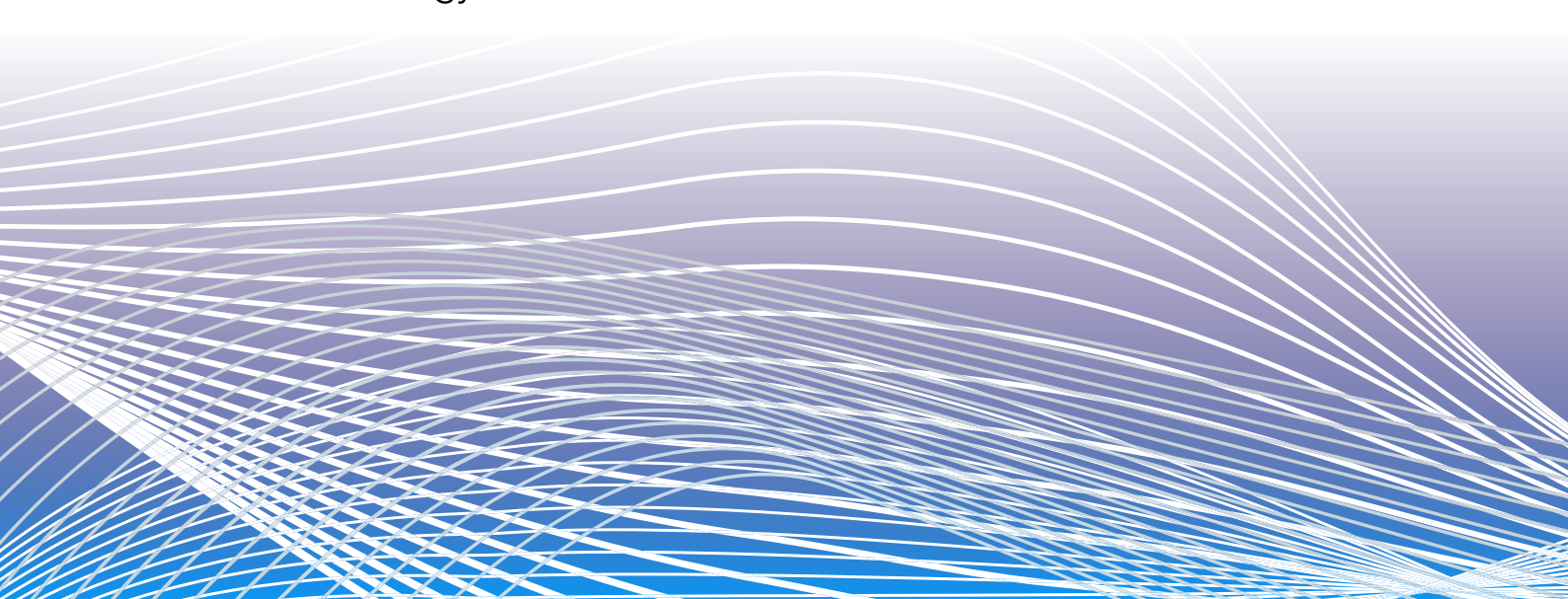
Introduction

Housing plays a central role in the lives of every person living in, working or visiting Scotland. Safe, secure, affordable homes can improve health and wellbeing, ensure children have stability to access education and develop friendships and give adults a base to fulfil their potential. Investing in new and existing homes also creates skilled jobs and supports the economy - a more pressing matter now as we make plans to recover from the Coronavirus pandemic.

2020 has been a year of upheaval, of dealing with unexpected challenges and learning to adapt and do things differently. Never has the importance of 'home' been so stark. As some people have enjoyed working from home, spending more time with their families and enjoying time outdoors, others have been living, working and playing in overcrowded homes with no outdoor space, while family dynamics become increasingly strained. Some have only just been given a roof over their heads to shield them from the worst effects of an unexpected pandemic. So what should the future of the housing sector in Scotland look like?

Ahead of the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections, we are asking MSPs from all parties to put housing at the heart of their manifestos. To recognise housing as a human right as the starting point to achieving a fairer and more equal Scotland.

We need to continue investing in our affordable housing supply programme so everyone has a home they can afford. While homes across all tenures must be fit for the future. This means they are accessible, adaptable and will meet the changing needs of our ageing population. The effects of climate change must be urgently addressed and if the Scottish Government is to achieve its ambitious statutory targets to eliminate fuel poverty and reach net-zero carbon emissions, our homes must be energy efficient and affordable to heat.

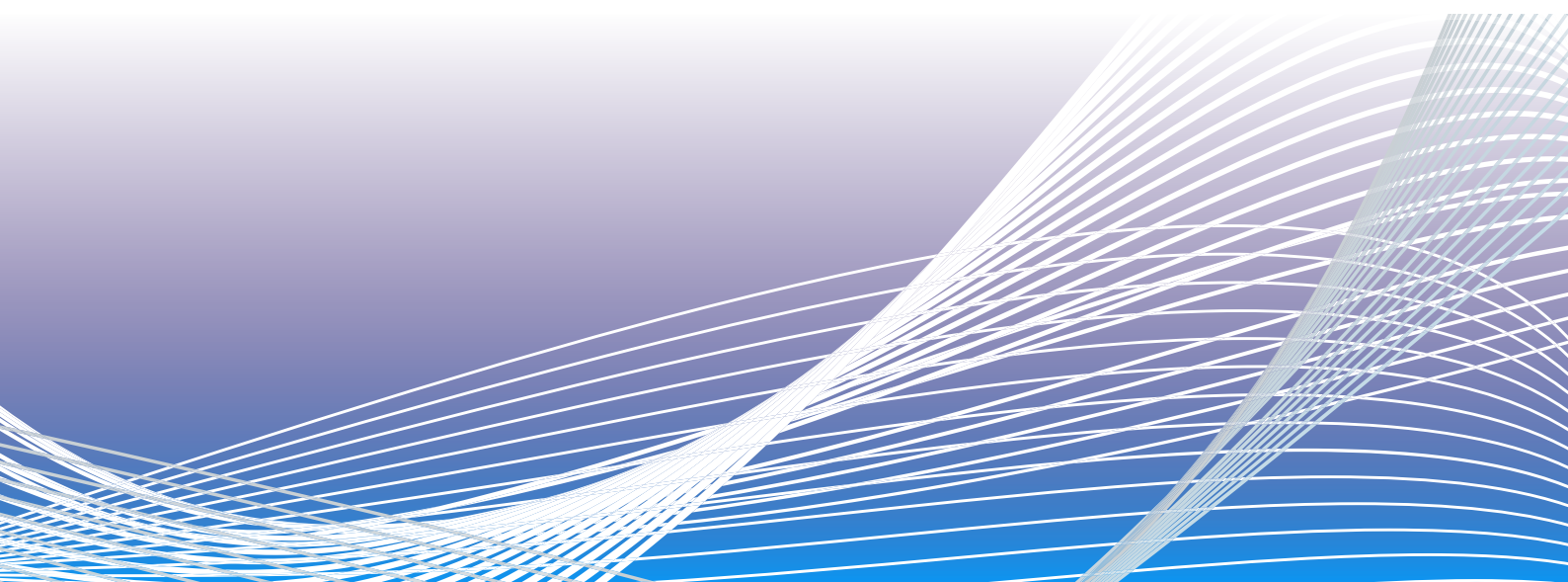


A well-functioning housing system is about much more than just bricks and mortar. It is about connecting the people of Scotland with their communities, it is about building better links between housing, health and social care and it is about providing the foundation for everyone to reach their potential. Never has ensuring everyone has a safe, affordable home within our housing system been more important.

This CIH Scotland manifesto for housing 2021-2026 sets out our key asks and recommendations under five key themes:

- **Housing supply**
- **Improving existing homes**
- **Housing as a profession**
- **Partnership working**
- **Housing as a human right**

This manifesto builds on consultation with our CIH Scotland board and members and other key stakeholders which informed our response to the Scottish Government's consultation on Housing to 2040¹ and, more recently, CIH member surveys and roundtables that have focussed on the impact of Coronavirus on the housing sector.



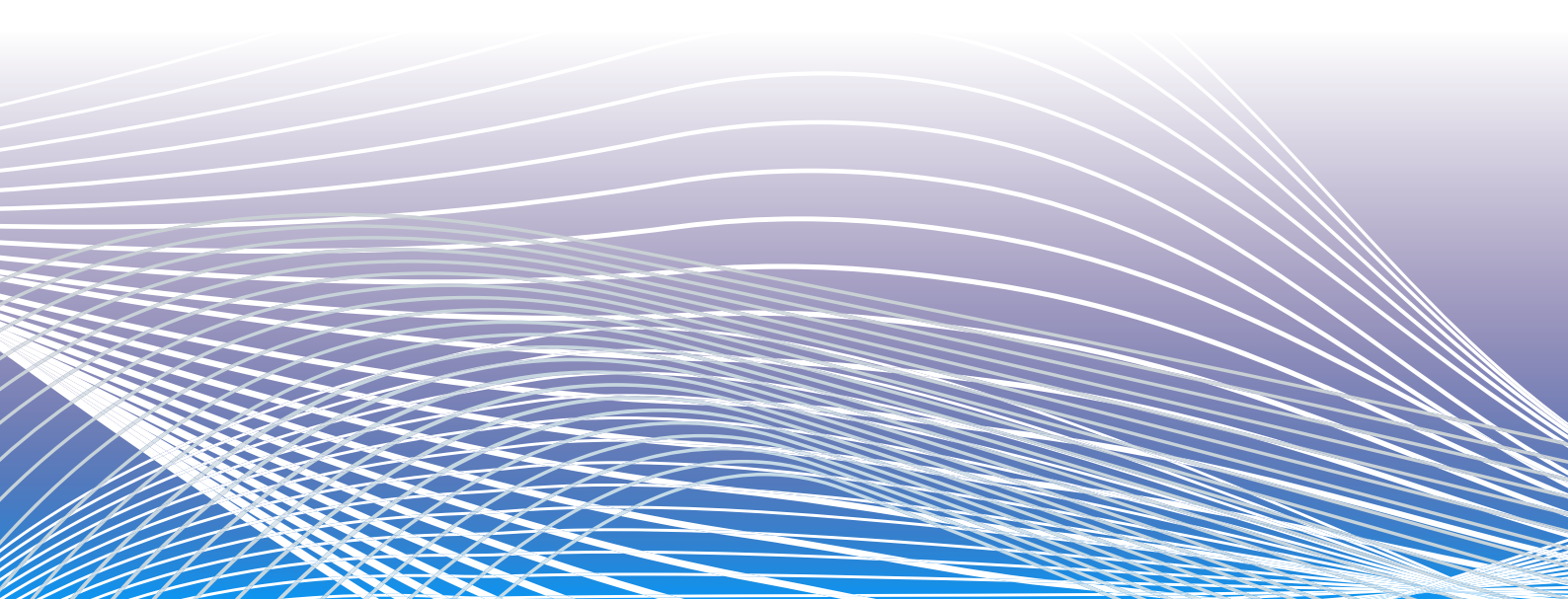
Housing supply

Before the Coronavirus halted all construction, we were on track to deliver the Scottish Government's target of 50,000 affordable homes by 2021. While the housing sector should be proud of the progress made, we still face a significant shortfall of housing across all tenures while our population is expected to continue increasing and ageing with more people living alone or in smaller households. Between 2016 and 2041, our population is expected to increase by five percent while the number of households is expected to increase by 13 percent².

Research published in June 2020 by CIH Scotland, Shelter Scotland and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations shows that we need to deliver at least 53,000 affordable homes over the next five years to meet housing needs³. But housing supply is not just a numbers game.

We need to make sure that people can access a range of housing options as their needs change throughout their lives. This means building homes of different sizes and different types, in communities that people want to live in. The pandemic has encouraged us all to think about what we want from a home with regards to location, outdoor space and digital connectivity. Yet there is a significant shortfall of homes for single people and couples⁴ and a lack of suitable homes for older people who might want to downsize. We need the right homes in the right places.

This also means our new homes need to be more accessible and more easily adaptable. Over 17,000 wheelchair users in Scotland don't have a home that meets their needs and this number is expected to increase by 80 percent by 2024⁵. The Housing for Varying Needs design guide⁶ was useful in ensuring that new affordable homes have been built to better standards but at nearly 20 years old,



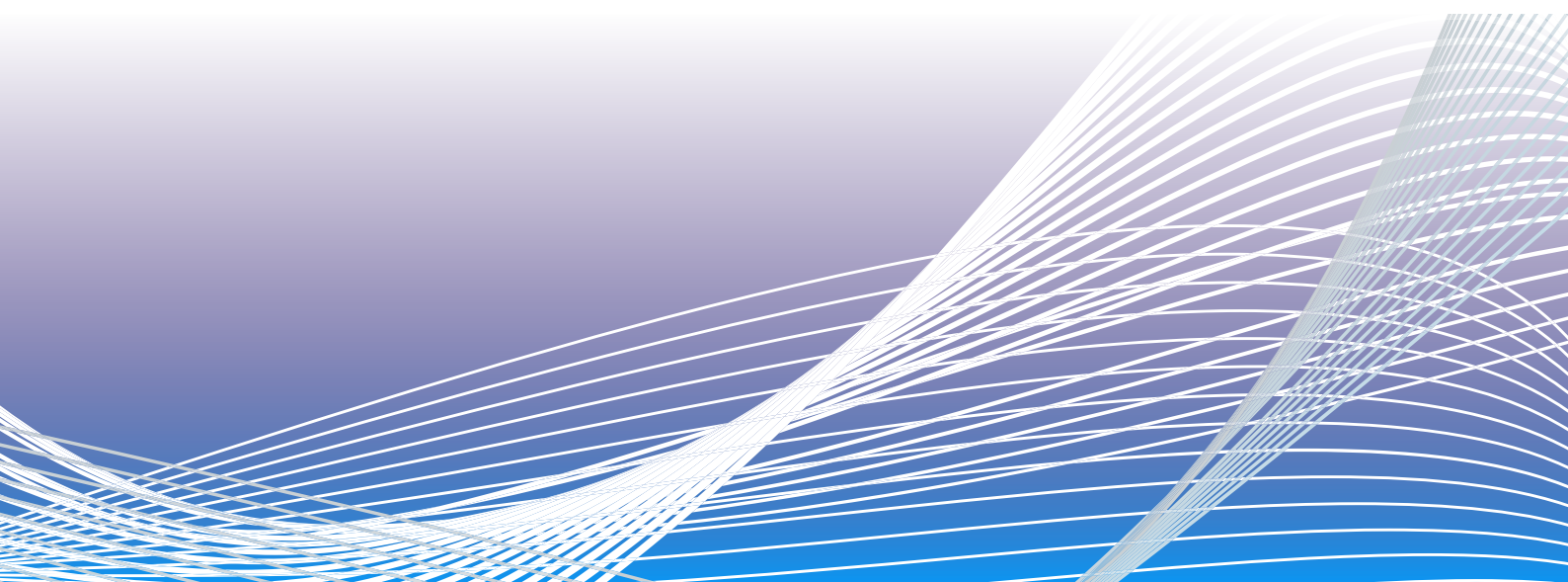
is out of date. While the Scottish Government has committed to review Housing for Varying Needs, we want national standards that set accessibility as the default, not the exception. New standards should include dementia friendly aspects, support digital connectivity and be applicable to private developments as well as affordable housing.

As well as providing good quality homes, investing in new homes supports jobs and the economy. Research published by Homes for Scotland suggests that the housebuilding industry supports 80,000 jobs across Scotland and contributes £570 million to the economy⁷. Glasgow Housing Association's investment in improving stock and delivering new homes has contributed to £2 billion to Scotland's GDP and supports 2,425 full time jobs each year⁸.

Investing in housing must be prioritised within the Scottish Government's Coronavirus recovery plans.

What we want to see:

- Commitment to deliver 53,000 affordable homes over five years, at least 70 percent of which should be for social rent.
- Grant levels should reflect the need to build more accessible, energy efficient homes while keeping rents affordable.
- National standards to improve the accessibility and adaptability of new homes across all sectors considering space, accessibility and dementia friendly design.



Improving existing homes

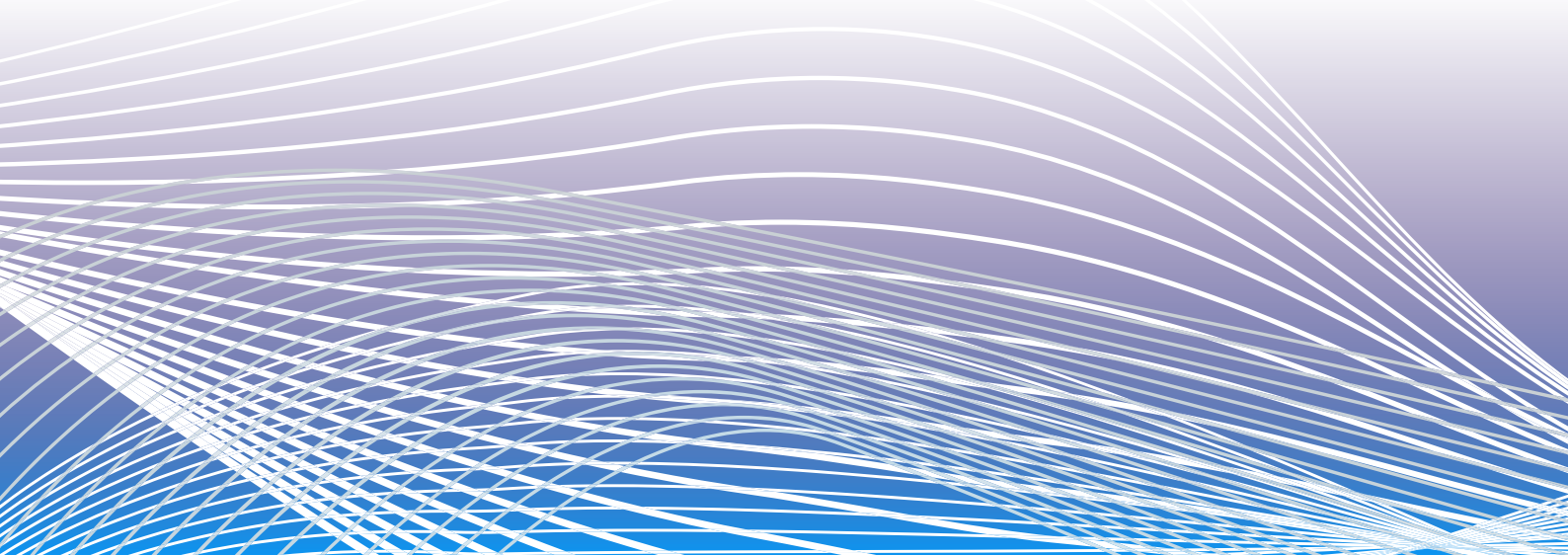
Housing generates 16 percent of all emissions across Scotland⁹. While progress has been made to improve the condition of our homes, radical action is required if we are to meet statutory targets to reduce fuel poverty to no more than five percent by 2040 and reach net-zero carbon by 2045.

Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, social landlords invested over £373 million from their own resources towards meeting Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing (EESH), 86 percent of the total spend¹⁰. It will not be possible for social landlords to maintain this level of investment and start working towards EESH2 without passing on the costs to tenants through rent increases, potentially leaving some of our lowest income households worse off.

We welcome the steps taken to introduce energy efficiency standards to the private rented sector and for homeowners. The private sector accounts for most homes in Scotland, and some of the worst performing in terms of energy efficiency. The Scottish Government must move quickly to provide clear advice and information on requirements and timescales for compliance as well as financial support (low cost loans or grants) for those who need it. We want to see at least a doubling of current investment in energy efficiency from £119 million per year to £240 million¹¹.

As well as ensuring our homes are energy efficient and affordable to heat, we need to make sure they are safe and accessible and support independent living.

The national housing strategy for older people¹² aims to support people to live in their own home (or in a homely setting) for as long as possible, as independently as possible. It will not always be possible, but for many people, adaptations, equipment and technology can help them to stay healthy, avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and maintain their independence for longer.

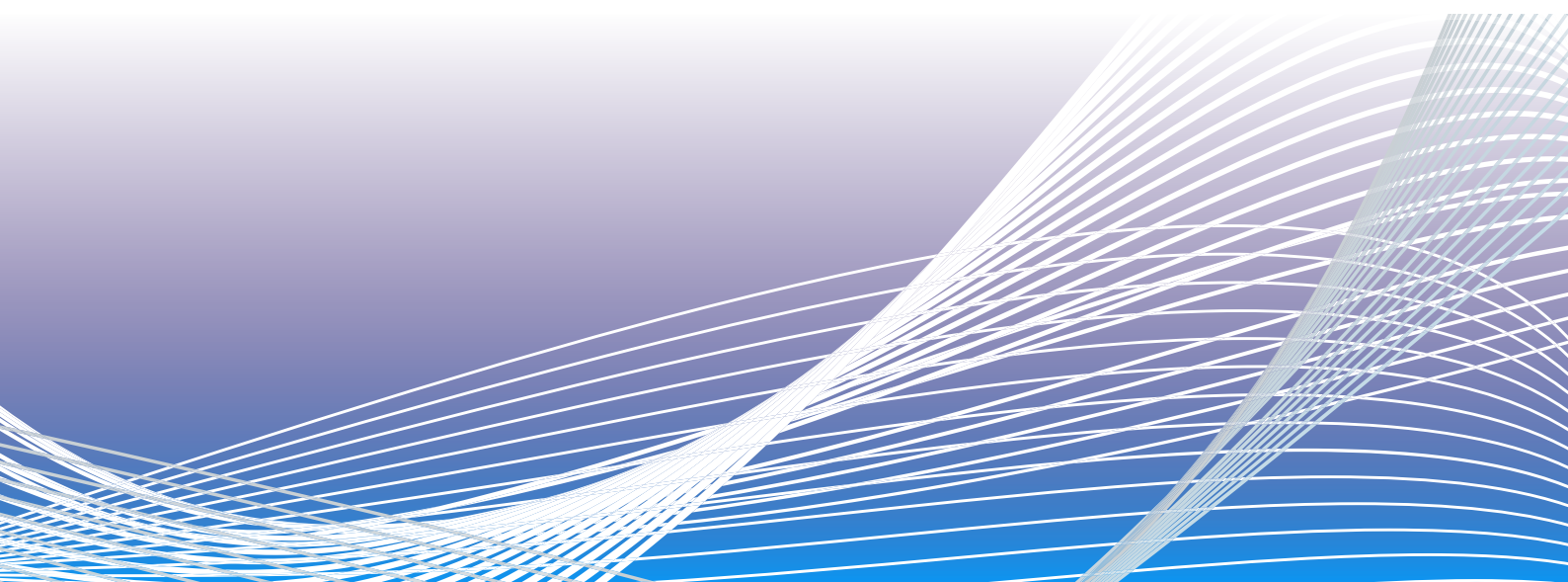


The number of people aged 75+ is estimated to increase by 71 percent by 2043¹³. While ageing does not inevitably lead to increased frailty, it does significantly increase the risk of age-related conditions such as dementia. Over 90,000 people in Scotland are thought to be living with dementia and this is expected to increase to 164,000 people within the next 15 years¹⁴.

Despite an obvious need for adaptations, the budget has remained static at £10 million for the last seven years. This should at the very least be increased in line with inflation to £11.9 million per year¹⁵. More also needs to be done to improve the adaptations process. Applications and funding streams for adaptations differ across tenures meaning the process can be difficult and time consuming. Clearer advice and information about adaptations or alternative housing options is needed, especially for homeowners or private renters. Guidance on adaptations also lacks flexibility, placing restrictions on what can be offered. For example, not reflecting the value of technology enabled care.

What we want to see:

- At least a doubling of investment in energy efficiency measures from £119 million to £240 million per year.
- Clear communication from Scottish Government on energy efficiency requirements and timescales for homes to reach at least EPC C by 2030 – especially for private housing.
- Increase funding for adaptations to at least £11.9 million per year in line with CPI and allow more flexibility to make sure people get the equipment they need.



Housing as a profession

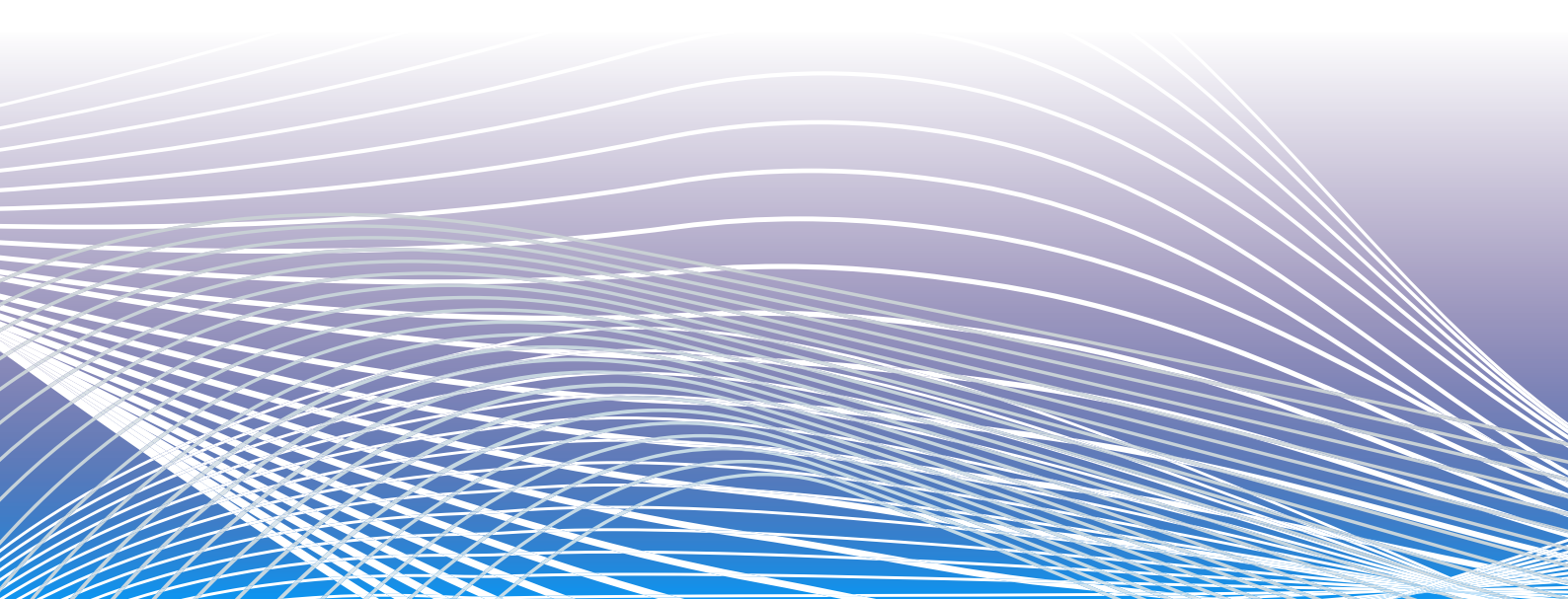
There is not always a clear path for a career in housing, whether that's working with homeless households, housing policy, planning or development. While there is a general lack of data on employment within the housing sector, our membership profile suggests that we have an ageing workforce and a lack of diversity. We need to do more to attract younger people into the profession and support professional development to create a new generation of housing leaders.

The Coronavirus pandemic has shone a light on the housing sector like never before and highlighted the essential services that housing practitioners provide. In the social sector, landlords have provided support with food and other essentials, proactively contacted thousands of tenants and facilitated digital connectivity to help people keep in touch with family and friends. Many private landlords have also been contacting their tenants and helping to make arrangements for those struggling to cover their rent.

Housing practitioners deserve to be recognised as key workers alongside other essential service providers.

The increase in private renting from five percent in 1999 to 14 percent in 2018¹⁶ has quite rightly led to Government intervention seeking to improve conditions for private renters and ensure that landlords uphold minimum standards.

Providing a home for someone to live in is a serious responsibility, set within a complex legal landscape and we firmly believe that landlords and letting agents must be able to demonstrate awareness of their legal obligations. As such, we welcomed the introduction of mandatory registration and a qualification for some letting agency staff. While the registration and enforcement system is still



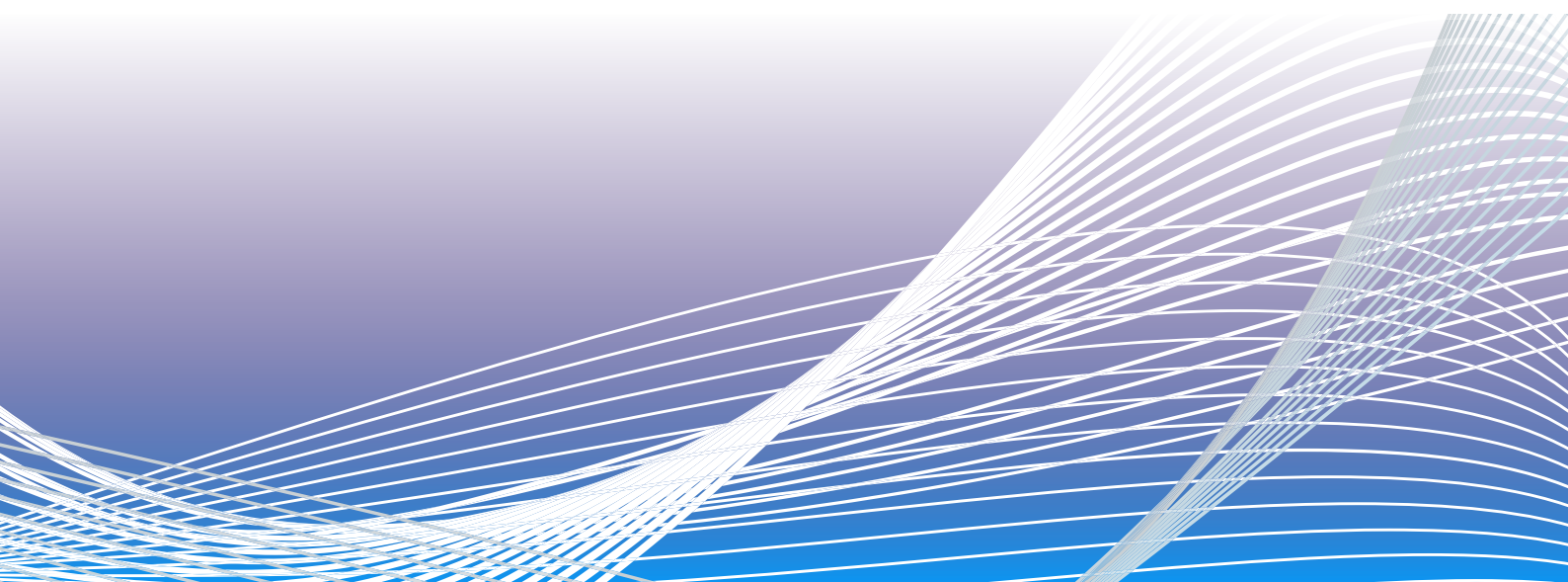
fairly new, it is difficult to determine whether changes have resulted in improved outcomes. An evaluation should be undertaken to ensure that qualifications are leading to better informed staff and improved services for landlords and tenants.

In recent years, restructuring and budget cuts in some local authority areas have seen departments merge and responsibilities become blurred. Given the complexity and strategic importance of housing and homelessness services, there is a clear need for every local authority to have a dedicated 'head of housing' post.

The announcement from Scottish Government that £100 million will be made available to support employment and help people to re-skill as we recover from Coronavirus provides a welcome opportunity¹⁷. Continuing to increase the supply of affordable housing and improve the quality of existing homes to meet fuel poverty and climate change targets requires skilled tradespeople, planners and surveyors, housing officers, advice staff, policy and strategy officers, finance managers and many more. The housing sector provides a rich variety of roles and the Government should invest in supporting new talent and developing skills.

What we want to see

- Support from Scottish Government to attract more people into housing as a career of choice with specific investment in housing education. Active promotion of the value of qualifications for housing staff and for local authorities to have a dedicated head of housing post.
- Evaluation of the impact of qualification for letting agency staff and consideration of extending this requirement to other housing professionals.
- Formal recognition of housing practitioners as key workers.



Partnership working

Creating a well-functioning housing system is about more than just bricks and mortar. To maintain a healthy household, people may need support to manage their tenancy – a service that is routinely provided by social landlords. But they may also need help with their mental and physical health at different points in their lives and this is not always easy to access. Private tenants and homeowners, in particular, can find it difficult to access the help that they need.

The Public Bodies (Joint Working)(Scotland) Act 2014¹⁸ has gone some way to recognise the role of housing within the health and social care agenda. However, in a recent CIH Scotland survey 59 percent of respondents said that they don't think the legislation has been effective in improving joint working.

There is evidence that shows the positive impact that housing can have on people's health and wellbeing¹⁹, reducing spend for the NHS. Having a home to go to on release from prison can also reduce the likelihood of reoffending, helping to end a destructive cycle and saving money for the justice system²⁰.

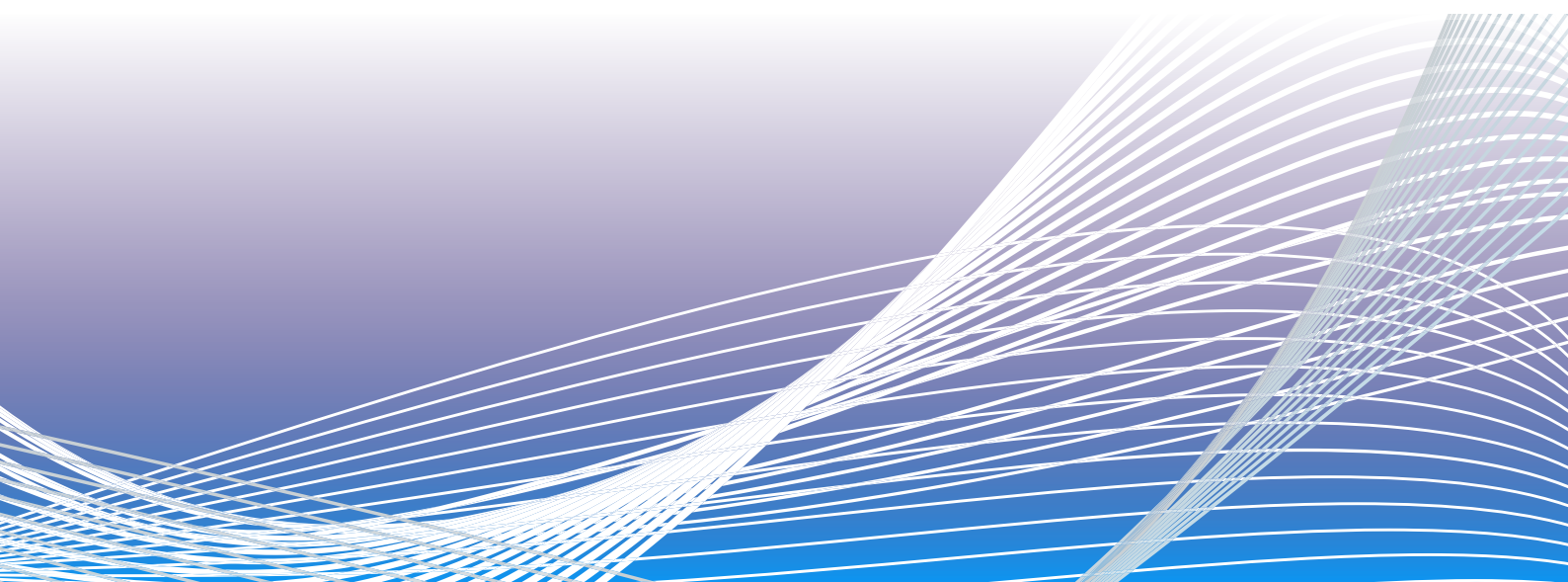
The benefit of investing in support for homeless households has been recognised in the Scottish Government's commitment to transform homelessness services through the introduction of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs) and expanding the provision of Housing First. We support this approach but have raised some concerns with the short-term nature of the Housing First Pathfinder Project which has been funded initially for two years. In order to be effective, support for housing first tenants must be unconditional and cannot be time limited. This will require long term funding and buy in from health and social care partners to ensure adequate provision. Equally other homeless households and those at risk of homelessness must be able to access the help they need when they need it. As such, RRTPs must be adequately resourced and supported by health and social care partners.

We welcome the work to consider a homelessness prevention duty for Scotland²¹. Any new duty must include health and social care partners and the prison service, or it will be a missed opportunity. Housing cannot address homelessness without support from these partners who have a role in identifying and referring those at risk of homelessness and providing support services to maintain a tenancy.

Our work on housing and dementia has highlighted that while there are examples of good partnership working, this often depends on local relationships. People living with dementia and their carers have told us that the housing system can be difficult and complex and they need better advice about housing from the point of diagnosis²². While every person in Scotland who receives a dementia diagnosis is entitled to at least one year of support from a post-diagnostic link worker, advice about housing is not explicitly reflected in their role. We need to establish better links with dementia post-diagnostic support workers.

What we want to see

- Long term funding to support RRTPs and Housing First beyond the pathfinder projects and the five year £50 million Ending Homelessness Together fund.
- Health and social care partners and the prison service must be included in any new duty to prevent homelessness in Scotland.
- Housing must be a key feature of the revised dementia strategy. This should include explicit reference of housing needs in post-diagnostic support pathways.



Housing as a human right

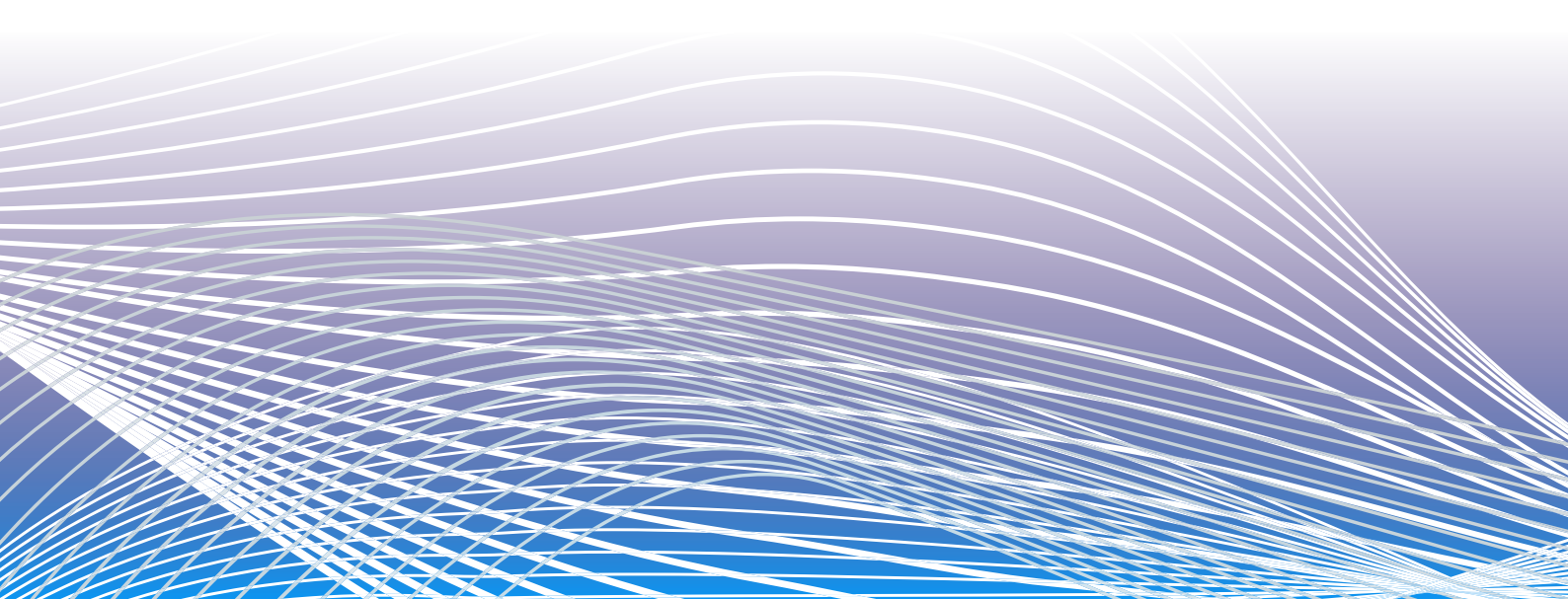
Housing is a human right and everyone deserves a home that they can afford and that meets their needs. Indeed, as our lives change, a human rights framework can support our evolving housing requirements and enable us to live where we choose.

We also recognise that human rights are interdependent, so the right to housing cannot be separated from rights such as education and health. But by strengthening housing rights, we strengthen other accepted rights, improving outcomes across a whole range of policy areas.

International frameworks for housing as a human right already exist in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)²³ as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)²⁴ which sets out a requirement and responsibility for all children to have adequate housing.

As such we welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to embed human rights within Scottish law and we must ensure that the right to adequate housing is recognised within this legislation.

A new legal framework for housing rights will help to ensure that, regardless of tenure or circumstance, every person in Scotland should be living in a good quality home that meets their needs. This should cover the physical condition of the home, accessibility and location ensuring access to local amenities, employment and education. Homes must be affordable with a range of options to suit different needs from those able to buy their own home, private and social renters and those who need support through the social security system. The housing system also needs to be flexible and to offer people the advice and support they need to adapt their current home or to move home if their circumstances change.

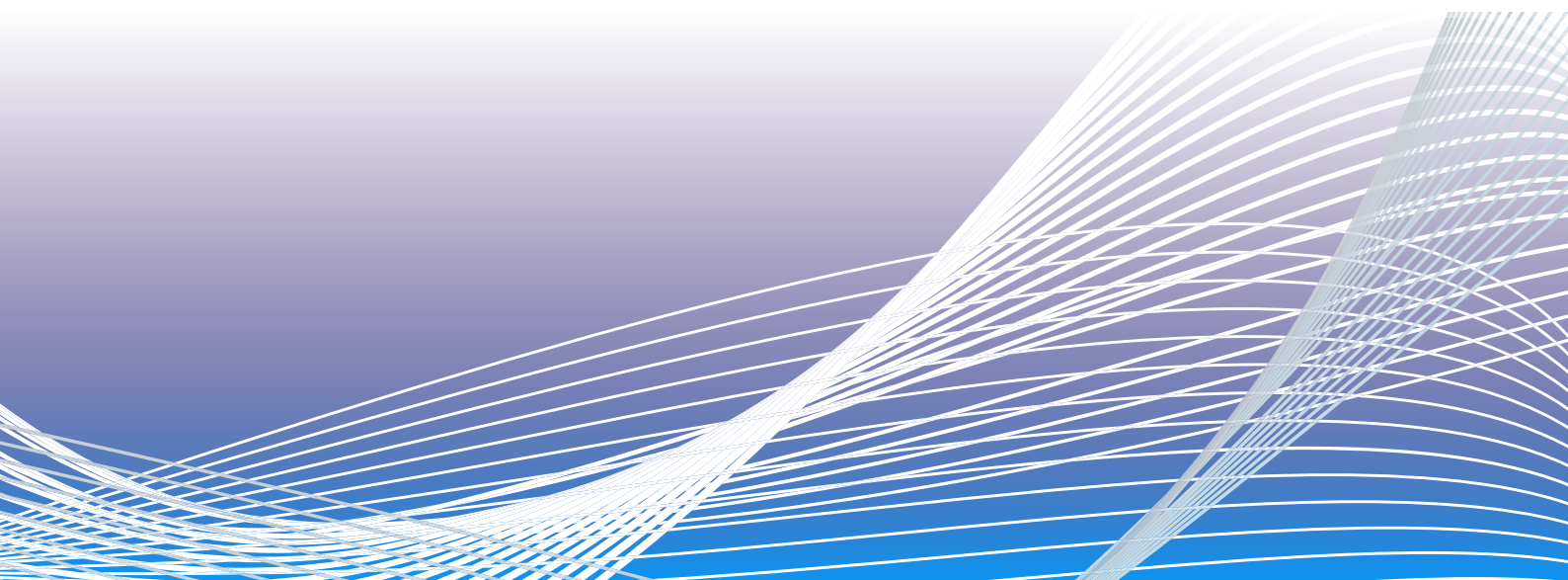


Now the process of incorporation will be a challenge, and this is only one measure to enhance housing rights. Educating the public and judiciary about the value of this approach will take time. So as we take steps to embed a human rights approach to housing we can take other measures to support tenants and customers. This means that landlords should ensure they are conducting meaningful equalities impact assessment and there is a role for the Scottish Housing Regulator to assess the equalities aspects of landlord housing policies. The human rights framework is important, but the progressive realisation of these rights can start now.

Ultimately this means adequate resources must be made available to ensure that the right to housing is realistic. This should include investment in housing supply, maintenance and improvements as well as support for those who need it through the social security system alongside enforcement and oversight.

What we want to see

- Legislation that incorporates housing as a human right in Scots law.
- An action plan that supports the progressive realisation of housing as a human right with appropriate resourcing.
- A role for the Scottish Housing Regulator assessing the equalities aspects of landlords housing policies.



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- ¹³2018-based projected population by sex and single year of age, Scotland 2018-2043: <https://bit.ly/2ZWDbCx>
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- ¹⁵Based on Bank of England CPI calculator 2012-2019: <https://bit.ly/2CoMFPd>
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- ²¹Scotland Prevention Review Group: <https://bit.ly/3eCUhKK>
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- ²³The right to adequate housing: <https://bit.ly/3jsJTJe>
- ²⁴Convention on the rights of the child: <https://bit.ly/2Bk5Ton>



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