



BECAUSE PEOPLE MATTER

## Homelessness and Prevention: What's Next?

### Close the Implementation Gap

We have a world leading, rights-based framework of legal duties and an eight-year-old policy commitment to end homelessness.

We believe we have set the right goals, and those goals should be protected, but we have not yet delivered what we've promised.

Official statistics show that more people are homeless, more people are homeless for longer, and more people are unable to access their legal right to temporary accommodation. Thirteen local authorities and the Scottish Government themselves have declared a housing emergency. The Scottish Housing Regulator has identified three local authorities in systemic failure, with a further seven at heightened risk of failure.

What we need is targeted action to deliver these goals in the current context. We must acknowledge, understand and address what's getting in our way, and we must follow through on work that has started but has not yet delivered on its promise.

<p>In 2018, local authorities were asked to develop a five-year <b>Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan</b> to transform temporary accommodation and homelessness services. £53 million has been invested in RRTPs so far, but we know that homelessness is rising, and temporary accommodation is becoming increasingly difficult to access.</p>	<p>The Task and Finish Group on <b>Supported Housing</b> made recommendations in March 2025 on how supported accommodation could strengthen the prevention of and response to homelessness. The Scottish Government has yet to respond to these recommendations.</p>
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### We are looking for our next government to:

- **Commit to delivering the Housing Justice Manifesto in full:** The Everyone Home Collective and All in For Change have set out the five solutions that will address the critical gaps in our homelessness system, covering supply, coordinated support, funding structures, protected rights and equality
- Take forward the **Supported Housing Task & Finish Group** recommendations

## Prioritise Prevention

Our homelessness system is failing; we must simultaneously address that crisis by strengthening our response to homelessness, while also shifting towards the prevention of homelessness. Delivering the promise of the homelessness prevention duty has to mean expanding our idea of who is responsible for preventing homelessness, and what they need to do; prevention is not just a housing issue.

<p><b>The Prevention Review Group</b> was established in 2019 to recommend new legal duties on local authorities and other public bodies to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>They recommended that relevant public bodies should be required to ask about a person’s housing situation and to act where a problem is identified, working with other bodies to prevent homelessness wherever possible.</p>	<p>We know that people at risk of homelessness are likely to also face poor mental health, problematic alcohol and other drug use, or be involved in the justice system. Effective prevention therefore requires a coordinated response, but actions for a <b>clearer framework for partnership working</b> recommended by the Prevention Review Group have not been taken forward.</p>
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### We are looking for our next government to:

- **Implement Prevention Review Group recommendations on partnership working and strategic planning:** We need to ensure that partners not only ask, identify risk and make connections with housing services, but also act, making use of whatever levers are at their disposal to address that risk. Without this commitment, we risk settling for an ask and refer duty; a step forward in identifying those most at risk of homelessness, but with all the increased responsibility remaining with an already failing homelessness system
- **Work to embed this duty across relevant bodies:** Encourage not only a sense of shared responsibility but an understanding and appreciation of how preventing homelessness supports the delivery of the outcomes they themselves are responsible for
- **Build on the Ask & Act pilot projects:** Learn from the Drug Death Task Force Test of Change projects, and plan ahead to ensure that learning developed and change created is embedded and sustainable past the pilot period

## Strengthen Integration

Housing has a significant part to play in supporting health and social care outcomes, and health and social care needs should be a key element of local housing planning.

<p><b>Housing First</b> was designed not as a homelessness service, but as a health and social care response to people who are homeless and who have multiple and complex support needs. It supports people who straddle the (strategically) separate spaces of homelessness, health and social care, delivering towards positive outcomes across the public service system. This should be reflected in the embedding and future development of Housing First in Scotland, as well as in our efforts to integrated health and social care provision.</p>	<p>There is a shared aim across housing, health and social care policy that people should be able to live independently at home or in a “homely setting” in their community. Some people will need a range of housing, health and social care support to achieve this.</p> <p><b>Supported Accommodation</b> can offer a settled housing option for the small number of people who don’t want or can’t sustain a mainstream tenancy, but it demands coordination between health, social care and housing that isn’t currently well supported.</p>
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It is time to revisit our health and social care integration agenda, to more consistently include housing providers and local authority housing and homelessness functions in our planning, decision-making and delivery structures, and to extend our ambition to better integrate these structures with our justice system.

When we build integration from the ground up, with a sense of partnership, mutual respect and commitment to communicate, it allows us to co-ordinate local assets in response to local need. We need integration structures that support this way of working where it’s happening and encourage and facilitate it where it is not.

### We are looking for our next government to:

- Bring the Prevention Duty together with a **new ambition for health and social care integration** that will deliver the Housing Justice Manifesto ask around coordination
- Commit to supporting **community-built integration** by building on the learning from Turning Point Scotland’s Whole System Approach partnership with Fife Council and Homeless Network Scotland’s No Wrong Door approach