

Scottish Government Launches Housing Emergency Action Plan

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Housing support services given limited mention in the action plan

The Scottish Government's [Housing Emergency Action Plan](#), published last week, sets out planned measures to end children living in unsuitable accommodation, to support the needs of vulnerable communities, and to maximise investment in Scotland's housing sector.

Background

A national housing emergency was declared by the Scottish Parliament in May 2024. In Scotland, there's no standard definition of a "housing emergency" and the declaration of one has no legal effect.¹

The Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee [recommended](#) in May that the government introduce a national housing emergency action plan with clear milestones and outcomes, which are not prominent in the action plan as published.

The importance of housing and support

We welcome the acknowledgement in the action plan that people facing homelessness must be able to access housing and support when they most need it. However, the challenges in the housing sector are acute, as evidenced by Includem's recent [report on housing for young people and families](#).

Some recent government strategies (the Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework; Scotland's Population Health Framework; and Scotland's Public Service Reform Strategy: Delivering for Scotland) have emphasised the importance of prevention, people-led services and digital transformation, all of which the HSEU believes housing support can deliver. Read our [briefing](#) on these strategies for more information. Housing support services have the ability to deliver on many of the government's aims on prevention, but must be offered the appropriate support.

Investment in housing to improve access to housing

Included in the plan is a commitment to deliver up to £4.9 billion of investment over the coming four years, with homes delivered through a mixture of public and privately leveraged investment. The HSEU would welcome further detail of the investment profile and where this funding will be targeted.

The plan commits to investing in a geographically targeted Housing First expansion scheme by incentivising registered social landlords to pledge an additional number of tenancies for Housing First through a £3 million capital grant that enables registered social landlords to

¹ However, we can look to international examples of initiatives taken during times of housing crises e.g. in Spain: [These are the 12 Government measures to improve access to housing in Spain - Urbanitae Blog](#)

acquire suitable properties. Details on the geographical areas which will be eligible have not yet been published.

The government will also ask local authorities to flip accommodation from temporary to permanent where appropriate and to proactively contact all relevant households to discuss the option of flipping. To replenish stock, the targeted 'voids and acquisition' fund will be doubled to £80 million with a focus on acquisition.

The planning of rapid rehousing will be funded to the end of March 2027

There will be a £1 million Housing First uplift to Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) funding in 2025-26, taking total funding to £9m, and a commitment to RRTP funding of £8 million in 2026-27. The rapid rehousing approach entails people facing homelessness being given access to a permanent home rather than having to face temporary accommodation arrangements.

The government will also fund pilot schemes to reduce the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation and invest up to £2 million through the discretionary housing payments scheme to support households currently in temporary accommodation to find settled homes in the private rented sector.

A national fund to help survivors of domestic abuse

The announcement further sets out plans for a £1 million national fund to help survivors of domestic abuse to leave an abusive partner, allowing survivors to purchase essentials and have a financial safety net while navigating the social security system. The fund is expected to support up to 1,200 women and their children and the scheme will be made permanent.

The Housing Bill

The government has previously announced a £4 million Homelessness Prevention Pilot Fund to trial programmes using 'Ask and Act' measures which are included in the Housing Bill. The fund opened on Monday 1st September.

The Cabinet Secretary for Housing also confirmed the government's intention to exempt Mid-Market Rent and Build to Rent properties from rent control measures in the Housing Bill where appropriate. [Partial analysis](#) of consultation responses on these exemptions has been published. The issue of exemptions for supported housing was raised by some respondents.

Conclusion

The Housing Emergency Action Plan aims to help people move on from homelessness swiftly to limit its damaging impact on people's lives and particularly on the lives of children experiencing temporary accommodation. Although the plan acknowledges the importance of people being able to access housing and support when they need it, further measures will be needed to maintain or increase housing support capacity to help deal with the current housing crisis and to help prevent homelessness in the future. In addition, further clarification about the £4.9 billion investment in housing is needed, particularly whether an

element of the investment will be focused on permanent supported housing for people who face homelessness for whom Housing First is not the best option.

About the HSEU

The aim of the Unit is to offer support and assistance to providers of housing support and supported housing across the voluntary sector, the private sector and to Registered Social Landlords. You can find out more about the work of the Unit on our website.

The HSEU is hosted by the Coalition of Care and Support Providers Scotland (CCPS) and funded by the Scottish Government.



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