

Media Briefing

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Shelter Scotland's campaign: Hometime Scotland

1. What is the campaign about? Problems with housing can affect almost everyone at some point in their lives but young people very often struggle to get a decent, affordable home.

In 2003, the Scottish Parliament passed groundbreaking legislation stating that everyone in Scotland should have the right to a home by 2012. In November 2007, the budget gave less than 20 per cent of the additional money needed to meet Scotland's housing needs, making the 2012 target more challenging.

We believe the target can still be met but we must focus on doing everything possible to meet it. We're calling on people to sign up to the new Hometime Scotland campaign to make meeting the 2012 target a top political priority and ensure Scotland leads the way on ending homelessness.

2. What are we asking people to do? Through the Hometime Scotland campaign we're asking people to tell us what song reminds them of home. Well-known and up and coming Scottish musicians, bands and artists have already pledged their support by telling us what song reminds them of home.

3. What are the different elements of the campaign?

- We're taking the Hometime Scotland campaign to festivals across the summer.
- We have a new bespoke website www.hometimescotland.org.uk where people can tell us what song reminds them of home, and sign up to be a Shelter Scotland campaigner.
 - ***Please can you include this web link in any copy to help us to drive people to the Shelter website where they can tell us what home means to them.***

- We have Facebook and Bebo Hometime Scotland groups, and customized skins for users to download onto their profiles.
- Emerging Scottish designers Staunch have designed a limited edition t-shirt. A t-shirt is available to win in an online competition.

6. Why do we need to run this campaign? There are thousands of people in need of a home. In 2006/7, 40,000 households were assessed as homeless – of which nearly 7,500 were 18 to 24 year-olds.

Over 9,000 households were in temporary accommodation in March 2007 and in addition, over 200,000 households are on the main house waiting list.

7. What do we want politicians to do? Shelter Scotland is calling for the following actions to be prioritised to help meet the 2012 homelessness target:

1. Greater public investment in affordable rented housing. Shelter, along with other housing bodies in Scotland, believes a minimum of 10,000 additional affordable rented homes a year for the next three years are needed.
2. Scottish Ministers should push for creative options to ensure a greater number of affordable lets are available in the housing system. This includes pressing housing associations to help house more homeless people, and using private landlords to fulfil a semi-social role, involving longer-term lets, higher management standards, and measures to address high rents.
3. Homelessness prevention – i.e. ways to stop people becoming homeless in the first place, for example, reducing evictions, improving housing benefit payments and providing support to keep people in their homes – should continue to be a priority.
4. Further reform of the Right to Buy to ensure that councils can determine how best the policy should fit with the needs of their area
5. The Scottish Government must undertake a full stocktake on progress on homelessness to ensure that this pioneering programme stays on track and continues to enhance Scotland's reputation abroad.

8. Why do people end up homeless? About a third of people or families can't continue to live with their friends or relatives. A quarter of people have had their relationship break down. The third most common reason is the loss of a private tenancy and the fourth is people escaping domestic abuse or violence in the area where they live.

9. What exactly is the 2012 deadline? In 2003 the Scottish Parliament passed groundbreaking legislation stating that everyone who is homeless would have the right to a permanent home by 2012. Currently, only people designated to be in 'priority need' – generally families with children –

have the right to permanent homes. All others have access to only temporary accommodation and support. By 2012, there will be no distinction and everyone will have the right to a home.

Other key statistics

A Shelter poll revealed that almost half of all 16-25 year olds don't know where to turn when they face housing problems. This means young people are at risk of suffering in bad housing or even becoming homeless, simply because they don't know their housing rights.

A UK wide Shelter survey showed that more than 80 per cent of young people between the ages of 18 – 34 are worried about soaring house prices – with less than 40 per cent believing that they'd be able to afford to buy within the next ten years. *(YouGov Plc polled 6,017 adults between 10 September and 4 October. The total number of 18-34 year olds polled who didn't own their own home was 1172. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+)*

The poll also showed that almost 80 per cent, or nearly 8 out of 10, young people said their biggest housing problem in the next five years will be buying their own home or finding somewhere decent to live.

For more information, telephone the media office 0844 515 2442 (connects to out of hours), or visit www.shelter.org.uk