

Shelter Scotland Briefing Paper: **Build Scotland's Future**

Shelter Scotland is calling for a bold new house building programme to deliver the 37,100 social homes Scotland needs.

Purpose of the campaign

On the 21st September 2020, Shelter Scotland launched its Social Housing Campaign to call on the Scottish Government of the day to commit to building a minimum of **37,100 homes for social rent** over the next 5 years (2021 – 2026). This number of homes is the level of building required to begin to reduce housing need in Scotland.

The Scottish Government has committed to build a record number of social homes over the current parliament but it's not enough to meet the arising or backlog of demand. Homelessness and a lack of housing is not inevitable, building more social housing will help to reduce housing need, where it is needed, for the people that need it most. An ambitious new affordable house building programme can deliver this social housing but this will take leadership, investment and long-term commitment from the Scottish Government to make this a reality.

Put another way, over the next five years, in addition to the current target - Scotland must commit to building just one extra home for social rent a day, compared to the current number of homes being built, to start reducing Scotland's housing needs.

By building more homes, we can help rebuild Scotland's economy, rebuild our communities, create more jobs, help meet climate and child poverty targets and build a brighter future. That's why we're calling on all political parties to build more social homes.

Why now?

It could be perceived as tone deaf to simply be calling for the building of more social housing in the light of a public health emergency. However, the message has been simple, *stay safe, stay home*.

Housing and having a home have been central to the response to the pandemic and access to appropriate housing that enables social distancing has been central to the safety and health of the public.

Despite record levels of investment in building more affordable housing over the last four years, waiting lists remain high and homelessness is again on the rise. The latest figures show that there were around 130,000 households on a waiting list for social housing in Scotland¹, over 14,000² households were in

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2020/09/scottish-household-survey-2019-annual-report/documents/scotlands-people-annual-report-2019/scotlands-people-annual-report-2019/govscot%3Adocument/scotlands-people-annual-report-2019.pdf>

² <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/media/1524/july-dashboard.pdf>

temporary accommodation, these households spending over six months on average in this kind of accommodation³.

Current government statistics give an insight into the inevitable increasing need for affordable housing, with more households struggling to cope... 9.6m jobs are currently furloughed⁴... Evictions have been delayed up until April next year... 1.5m claims to Universal Credit, six times more than the same period last year⁵.

What can building more social rented homes achieve?

Building a minimum of **37,100 homes for social rent** over the next 5 years (2021 – 2026) is a figure that resulted from independent academic research. Shelter Scotland, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Scotland published, [Affordable Housing Need in Scotland Post-2021](#) (June 2020), a report examining housing need in Scotland between 2021–2026. The report found that increasing affordable housing supply levels from the current target of 50,000 affordable homes to 53,000, of which 37,100 should be socially rented homes, will help to address existing, as well as reduce newly arising, housing need from 2021.

This academic study is a follow up to research produced five years ago by Shelter Scotland and partners which informed the Scottish Government's current programme that is delivering the most affordable homes for a generation and was on track before the pandemic hit.

A recently published [Audit Scotland report](#) states that the Scottish Government expects the economic output associated with the 50,000 target of the current affordable housing programme to be £1.4 billion per year and that it will support about 10,000 additional jobs. Indeed, the Scottish Government's own commissioned [economic recovery report](#) by Benny Higgins advised building affordable housing in order to support the economic recovery:

“Scotland faces a number of structural challenges, including caring for our ageing population and tackling homelessness, which have only been exacerbated by the crisis. Investment in housing has an important part to play in supporting Scotland's recovery, in supporting jobs, creating confidence and contributing to both social policy and climate change goals.”

These views are echoed by [The Impact of Social Housing: Economic, Social, Health and Wellbeing](#), a report commissioned by SFHA alongside the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), Public Health Scotland, and the Rural and Islands Housing Associations Forum. The report found that the building of 53,000 affordable homes over the next five years can make significant contributions to Scotland's

³ <https://www.gov.scot/collections/homelessness-statistics/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-coronavirus-covid-19-statistics>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-29-april-2013-to-9-april-2020/universal-credit-29-april-2013-to-9-april-2020>

#BuildScotlandsFuture

economy by creating around 200,000 jobs, in the construction and related industries, and contributing more than £2 billion additional output per annum as well as additional Scottish tax revenues of £100 million. The report also found many social benefits that can help to address inequality, for example, the increasing of affordable housing supply levels, with lower rents than in the private sector, was found to directly reduce child poverty in Scotland.

This progress can be secured through an ambitious affordable housing programme, providing the means to help stop homelessness.

This programme will do much more than put a roof over people's heads. It will help to reinvigorate our economy, society and our communities for years to come.

Until there's a home for everyone
shelterscotland.org

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