



Crisis Policy Briefing: Priorities for the new Government on ending all forms of homelessness by 2040

Crisis is the national charity for people experiencing homelessness. We help people directly out of homelessness, including through our Skylight service operating in Edinburgh and the Lothians, and we research and campaign for the social changes needed to solve it altogether.

Crisis launched our “Ending Homelessness in Scotland by 2040” campaign¹ in late-2025, in which we propose solutions to be enacted to ensure that all forms of homelessness are ended, for good, within three full parliamentary terms. As part of our campaign, we asked all political parties for: **“A commitment to end all forms of homelessness in Scotland by 2040, enshrined in legislation by the second half of the next Parliament”** and for work to be undertaken in the forthcoming parliamentary term up to 2031 to (i) deliver the right number, of the right type of homes, in the right places, (ii) improve the support available to people in housing need and (iii) provide strategic, long-term funding assigned to clear outcomes.

This briefing outlines proposals for Scottish Government to undertake as part of its first 100 days' work with a view towards longer term commitments in its Programme for Government following the summer recess.

Summary of key proposals

1. Commit to work towards ending all forms of homelessness in Scotland for good by 2040, noting the link between housing stability and ending child poverty.
2. Establish cross-portfolio responsibility for ending homelessness via shared responsibility between cabinet secretaries and/or via the establishment of a cabinet sub-committee that will cut across siloed working.
3. Commit to fully funding the homelessness prevention duties contained in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2025, and put forward a robust implementation plan for transforming the housing support system to become an early action model of integrated, personalised support

¹ [End Homelessness in Scotland | Scottish Elections 2026 | Crisis](#)

1. Reaffirm commitment to ending all forms of homelessness for good and put in place a strategy to achieve this by 2040, in line with housing supply goals for Scotland.

Crisis has been calling on the Scottish Government for an end to all forms of homelessness since 2017 when we launched our [Plan to End Homelessness](#). Following on from this report, Crisis was asked to chair the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG), on behalf of Government. HARSAG came up with a number of proposals which led to the development of the [Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan](#) 2018, and the later edition in 2020. This Action Plan has a commitment in it to end homeless for good. On 21 May 2021, then First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, stated that *“We will continue our work to tackle homelessness”*, as part of her Priorities of Government statement delivered to the Scottish Parliament. More recently, prior to the dissolution of the last Parliament, Crisis welcomed all party leaders to our Skylight in Edinburgh where we [secured cross party support](#) for ending homelessness in Scotland for good. First Minister, John Swinney, stated that *“I can’t eradicate child poverty without tackling homelessness”*. We agree with the First Minister. Housing stability and whole family support will be central to ending child poverty and addressing the cost-of-living crisis. During the election campaign, Crisis secured party commitments to ending all forms of homelessness in three of the six political party manifestos, and with strong support for preventing homelessness across all political party manifestos.

Crisis is calling on the First Minister, in his Priorities of Government statement to the Scottish Parliament, to reaffirm his commitment to end all forms of homelessness for good, to put in place a plan to achieve this by 2040, and to set up the necessary governance structures to achieve this through stronger, cross-portfolio action. Importantly, this will put housing stability at the centre of strategic thinking on tackling child poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.

2. Cross-portfolio working

Homelessness is the most acute form of poverty and is the result of failed agendas across a breadth of policy portfolios. The best way to end homelessness is to give people the help they need much earlier on, ensure there are enough truly affordable homes in the places that people need them, and thirdly, to ensure that people can afford their essentials. Therefore, this requires an infrastructure strategy and labour market strategy to addressing housing supply and employment, as well as a public service reform agenda to ensure that public bodies work better together, much earlier on, to support households in a more personalised and integrated way. As a result, significantly more households will be stabilised and homelessness therefore prevented. Furthermore, those households that do end up in the homeless system will get the wrap

around support they need to sustain a new tenancy, preventing them from becoming homeless again.

Crisis proposes that the First Minister **convene a Cabinet sub-committee on ending all forms of homelessness for good**. By doing so, this would bring together all the necessary portfolios needed to achieve this goal and would allow for the strategic oversight needed to ensure multiple strategies and programmes of work are in place and operating effectively across government.

Furthermore, Crisis proposes that parliament scrutiny is designed to have a meaningful role to play in scrutinising strategies and delivery plans to end all forms of homelessness in Scotland, with shared responsibility given to both the Social Justice and Social Security Committee and the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee. This would help to further develop the cross-party collaborative working and political will that we know is needed to end homelessness in Scotland for good.

3. Prevention and Early Action Systems change

Prevention is the most effective way to end homelessness- ensuring that future generations of people in Scotland do not need to suffer the trauma and indignity of homelessness, along with the personal, and societal, costs that homelessness creates.

Moreover, there is a re-emerging agenda on prevention across public services (mental health prevention, public health prevention, poverty prevention, crime prevention, etc) going back to the Christie Commission report. These agendas reinforce each other and ensure better outcomes for individuals and society at large.

The revolutionary duties contained within Part 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2025 have potential to re-establish Scotland once again as a world leader in ending homelessness through prevention.

To ensure these duties are effectively implemented, Crisis proposes the following:

- A full plan for commencing the new duties by 2028 led by Scottish Government and COSLA with input from all relevant bodies named in legislation. This should include:
 - Full implementation funding for local authority homelessness services and all relevant public bodies, as well as funding for strategic systems change to implement the duties and create the culture, systems and process to enable a reconfiguration of provision.
 - Clear guidance and secondary legislation ensuring all bodies play their part to deliver prevention and early action support which is integrated across services and personalised towards individual needs.

- A clear monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure effective implementation of the legal duties and ultimately, an ability to monitor how prevention and early action support is most effectively deployed to reduce inflow into the homeless system.
- Commitment in first Programme for Govt post-election for an implementation plan to reform public services to resolve housing instability and homelessness, through better integration, personalisation and preventative, early action support.
- Recognition of the importance of “home” in a revised National Performance Framework for the delivery of Scottish public services and the outcomes of the people of Scotland.

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