

Crisis' Campaign to End Homelessness in Scotland by 2040



Briefing for 2026 Scottish election candidates

The Scottish Parliament elections in May represent a critical moment for ending homelessness in Scotland and every party has a choice: make ending all forms of homelessness a national priority or watch as more people are forced from their homes.

We need every political party to commit to ending all forms of homelessness in Scotland by 2040 and enshrine this in law.

Scotland has strong rights in place for people experiencing homelessness. But more people are being forced from their homes every week. Record numbers of people sleeping on our streets. Growing numbers trapped in temporary accommodation. The number of people experiencing different forms of homelessness is at an all-time high.

The upcoming election in May 2026 is our chance to change this. Scotland can end all forms of homelessness by 2040 – we just need a bold commitment and the political will to act. By doing this, we can create a country where everyone has a safe and stable home. A society that's thriving because we can all take better care of our health, relationships and work. Together, we can end homelessness for good.

Why make a bold commitment to end all forms of homelessness by 2040?

The election is a chance for candidates from all political parties to show the electorate their political will to make this to happen. Ending homelessness is what Scotland wants and needs. Doing nothing is not an option.

Politicians across the political spectrum often talk of the trauma and indignity of homelessness, and regularly stand up in Holyrood to describe constituent's experiences of being without a settled home to call their own. However, homelessness levels are rising across the country. Talking is not enough. We need a bold, long-term commitment to end homelessness in Scotland once and for all. In doing so, the next government can build a Scotland where everyone has a safe secure place to call home.

Why 2040?

Scotland has a plan to deliver enough housing for everyone by 2040. This is a great step forward, but it will not in itself end homelessness. With commitments to ending all forms of homelessness by 2040 across every political party, the incoming government will have to bring together house building plans with a long-term strategy to end all forms of homelessness in Scotland. This means aligning infrastructure plans with reforms to public services, so people get the help they need when they need it, providing both housing and support to communities across the country. This way we can create a Scotland with a future free from homelessness.

Why enshrined in law?

A commitment to end homelessness is not enough on its own. Such a commitment needs a clear dated goal, ideally aligned to the housing supply strategy, and for it to be enshrined in legislation so that this ambition stands the test of time- including changes to government over several parliamentary terms. This ensures the next government, and

subsequent governments, will take the necessary action – with proper parliamentary scrutiny – to achieve this goal. A long-term strategic approach, with the necessary resources is what is needed for ending homelessness in Scotland, and this is best brought about by legislative targets.

What about the housing emergency?

By focusing on the housing emergency alone we will not end homelessness. The numbers of people sleeping on our streets, on friend's sofas, or hidden away in unsuitable precarious accommodation with little to no access to support will continue to rise across Scotland. By focusing solely on the housing emergency, the new government will be in a constant state of firefighting and crucially miss the opportunity to prevent homelessness from arising in the first place.

What needs to happen?

Ending homelessness in Scotland is not, and should never be, a political football. Doing so is, instead, entirely dependent on political will. Ending all forms of homelessness in Scotland by 2040, once and for all, will require long-term, cross-party focus. Alongside a manifesto commitment to end homelessness in Scotland by 2040, key priorities for the next parliament should consist of:

- Building the right number of the right type of homes, in the right places so people across Scotland have a home to call their own.
- Reforming public services to give people better support before they become homeless.
- Making sure money spent brings down levels of homelessness.

The new homelessness prevention duties in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2025 will come into force by the end of 2028, at the latest. These could be transformative, and their success will rely on their implementation during the term of the next parliament. A reformation of public services to work better together to ensure their success is vital, as is a managed pivot towards prioritising prevention work across public bodies – especially those who will have responsibilities under the new prevention duties. Learnings from the £4 million prevention pilots must be used, in the next parliament, to inform secondary legislation and statutory guidance.

Help us end homelessness

We need your help to get the commitment to end homelessness in Scotland by 2040 into your party's manifesto for the May 2026 election, with plans to enshrine this in law.

Locally, we will also need your help to make the new homeless prevention duties a success in your constituency; by working with relevant bodies in your area to ensure they are on track to deliver on this target during the next parliamentary term. If you are elected – ending homelessness will be both a national and a local priority. We have a generational opportunity to end all forms of homelessness in Scotland, and you can be part of that.

To meet and discuss our election ask, please contact: Rhuraidh.Fleming@crisis.org.uk