

Crisis' campaign: Prevent homelessness in Scotland



Why campaign to prevent homelessness?

Scotland has some of the best legal protections in the world for people who lose their home. But rising demand is putting homelessness services under pressure. With 8% of Scots having experienced homelessness – or around 1 in 12 people – far too many people are being forced to experience the trauma of homelessness when it could have been prevented. Emergency measures like temporary accommodation should be a safety net for a small number of people whose homelessness cannot be prevented, but currently it is council's default response to people coming to them with a housing crisis.

It doesn't have to be this way. **The best way to end homelessness is to prevent it happening in the first place.** By acting earlier, we can reduce the number of people pushed into homelessness.

How can we stop more people being forced from their homes?

Crisis worked with Scottish Government and [published a report](#), which set out the changes needed to prevent homelessness. It consisted of two main reforms:

1. To introduce a law for public services to **ask** people about their housing situation, and **act** upon that information to offer support – making **preventing homelessness everybody's business**.
2. Changes to existing law, so anyone with unstable housing can get support from their council up to **six months before they are likely to become homeless**, and make sure the support available is more person-centred and co-designed so that it **ends the risk of homelessness for good**.

The Housing Bill

Following our campaign, and based on the report's recommendations, Government outlined new laws to prevent homelessness in the Housing Bill (Scotland). **Crisis supports proposals in the Bill.** But we still need to campaign, so the new laws are effective, properly funded, and the Bill is passed by parliament to become an Act.

Our calls:

1. Ministers to set out a clear vision of what successful prevention activity will look like in practice and establish a Homelessness Prevention Delivery Unit, tasked with successful implementation of the new legislation once it receives royal assent.
2. Amend the draft legislation to be clearer on what support will be provided by the public services listed under the 'Act' duty, so that people and services are clear what is expected, and to define, in law, what constitutes 6 months before becoming homeless.
3. Adequately fund the new duties, alongside additional funding for implementation.

The principles of homelessness prevention have cross-party support and the backing of local authorities. As the Housing Bill moves through Parliament Crisis will keep campaigning, to make sure the legislation is fit for purpose and delivers for the people of Scotland. We need your help to make this happen.

To get more information on how you can help, visit: www.crisis.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/prevent-homelessness-in-scotland

Or email: Campaigns@crisis.org.uk