

UNISON

Influencers 2026

SOLVING THE HOUSING CRISIS

Scotland has a housing emergency with record levels of homelessness. There's not enough affordable homes, of the right type. Lack of supply means house prices and private rents have gone through the roof.

For the past 40 years governments of all types have favoured a privatised housing system. We sold off council homes and didn't replace them and left housing to the market. New social housebuilding was slashed in the 1970s and almost ground to a halt in the following decades.

We urgently need social homes to replace the thousands sold off under Right to Buy. While social housebuilding in Scotland has outstripped the rest of the UK, it's not enough and new starts are falling.

Councils spend £160m per year on record levels of temporary accommodation. Investing in social housing will save money and end misery and combat child poverty. It will alleviate the social care crisis, which is connected. With an ageing population we must improve the join-up between housing and social care.

Key facts

- 500,000 council homes were sold off under the Right to Buy scheme in Scotland.
- 125,000 households are on council house waiting lists across Scotland.
- 33,966 households were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness in year to Sept 2025.
- 18,000 households and 10,500 children are trapped in temporary accommodation.
- 15,693 extra social homes must be built each year of the next parliament to tackle homelessness.

Key actions UNISON is calling for

- A mass programme of social house building.
- Increased government funding for councils & RSLs to convert buildings, buy houses and bring empty homes back into use on a larger scale.
- More public funding and delivery of housing aids & adaptations and energy efficiency retrofitting.

Questions for candidates

- Do you agree building social housing must be the top priority for the next government?
- Will encouraging more private build to rent developments charging rents of c£1,750 per month for a 2 bed flat meet the needs of public service workers?
- How would you make sure local authorities are able to meet their statutory duties towards the homeless?
- Should hotel companies be allowed to profit from homelessness and what will you do to stop this?

Follow our campaign *Public services at the heart of a fairer Scotland* [here](#)

**Public services:
the heart of a fairer
Scotland**

UNISON
Scotland