



Your details

Please complete the following details below. It is essential that we have a name and the name of any organisation if you are responding on their behalf. Contact details would be helpful if we need to follow up on any points.

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Would you like us to keep your response confidential:	

Consultation questions

Below you will find response boxes for each of our consultation questions. If possible, please base your response on answers to these questions.

Some questions may be somewhat irrelevant to your interests, in which case please feel free to answer as many or as few as you like. And please feel free to offer other comments if you think they are relevant to our remit. There is space at the end for you to do so.

You can skip to the section(s) that you wish to respond to through the links below:

1. [Wellbeing](#)
2. [Housing and investment](#)
3. [Housing and the economy](#)
4. [Housing and welfare policy](#)
5. [Housing and the environment](#)
6. [Housing and health and education](#)
7. [Housing and community regeneration](#)
8. [The Private Rented Sector \(PRS\)](#)

Section 1: Our assessment of the importance of housing for wellbeing in Scotland

Q.1. Has our assessment of housing and wellbeing missed any important benefits and, if so, which benefits and what is the evidence for this?

At Homeless Action Scotland we believe that access to rights are an integral part of housing wellbeing. In all tenures in Scotland there tends to be an unequal relationship where power is held by the landlord or mortgage provider by their knowledge of the legal system and laws surrounding housing. Although there is a lot of information about peoples housing rights it is often not known or easily accessed by those who would need it most.

Some local authorities in Scotland have good access to rights based organisations who can take on a case for a tenant or home owner should problems arise. This specialist form of intervention not only gives tenants/home owners their rights but saves the public purse in the long term by avoiding the need for evictions or repossession. We believe that every person in Scotland should have access to understanding their rights and access to exercising them through the legal system and independent advice agencies should those not be met.

Q.2. Has our assessment exaggerated any of the benefits of housing for wellbeing and, if so, in what respects and what are your reasons for saying this?

Homeless Action believe that a strong, secure and stable home is a key aspect of wellbeing for every individual in Scotland. Having a decent home improves all aspects of a person's life and a secure home is something which aids the recovery of anyone who may have fallen into hard times.

All aspects of social life are improved by having a good home. Whether its a young person preparing for their exams, an older adult coming into retirement or someone recovering from addiction, having a strong home will improve every aspect of a person's life.

We strongly support the "Housing First" approach for people with complex needs which has proven to be successful within Scotland, Europe and the USA & Canada.

We therefore believe that one cannot exaggerate just how important it is for Scotland to have a housing market that allows for people to flourish



Section 2: Does Scotland invest enough in housing?

Q.3. Do you agree with our assessment of the current position on investment in housing?

Yes

Q.4. Do you agree with our brief assessment of current policy on investment in housing?

Yes

Q.5. Do you agree with our suggestions for further action in the area of investment in housing?

Yes



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6. Do you have any other suggestions that we have not mentioned in relation to investment in housing?

Housing and house building has to become a priority of the Scottish Government. There is simply not enough houses being built across any tenure which will address the shortfall in housing provision. Having a home is vital to individuals, families, communities and the economy. Good quality and affordable housing is a vital component of leading a meaningful, valued and productive life. Yet over successive years, house completions have not met the growing gap between demand and supply across all tenures.

We would like to see a consensus develop between the house building industry, government, political parties, tenant's organisations, housing bodies and third sector in order to deliver an agreed target number of house completions in the right geographical areas and across all tenures.

Section 3: Getting a better fit between housing and the economy

Q.7. Do you agree with our assessment of the current position regarding housing and the economy? What more would you add?

Q.8. Do you agree with our assessment of the current situation of UK Government policy with regards to the housing market and the economy?



Q.9. What are your views about the five areas of policy reforms suggested here?

Section 4: Getting a better fit between housing and welfare policy

Q.10. Do you agree with our assessment of the current position regarding housing and welfare benefits? What more would you add?

Housing benefit is paid to people who cannot afford to pay their rent, many of whom are in work. It is for those whose income is so low that they cannot pay their rent. For those out of work it provides a home even if one is unable to secure work. We do have concerns about the impact of high rents in temporary & supported accommodation and the ability of tenants to afford to undertake paid work or training and believe this needs to be considered.

Homeless Action Scotland is concerned with the statement "...whether the available resources should be used to fund additional housing rather than provide subsidies to individuals". We believe that it is right to consider the balance between personal targeted subsidies and subsidies for *bricks and mortar* but that this is a complex issue. Any change must ensure people in need are still protected under any new arrangement.



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Q.111. Do you agree with our assessment of the current situation of government policy at UK levels and the possible outcomes post-referendum? What more would you add?

The newly devolved powers to the Scottish Parliament allow for more some creative responses to welfare and housing. We are particularly pleased that there is the ability for Holyrood to create new benefits which could help to end the type of poverty Scotland currently faces.

Q.12. What are your views about the medium term policy options presented here? What other ideas and issues strike you over this time frame?

Q.13. Do you agree that we have a unique opportunity to consider longer term policy options over the next key period in Scotland's history? How do you respond to the options proposed here? Are there other options that should be considered?



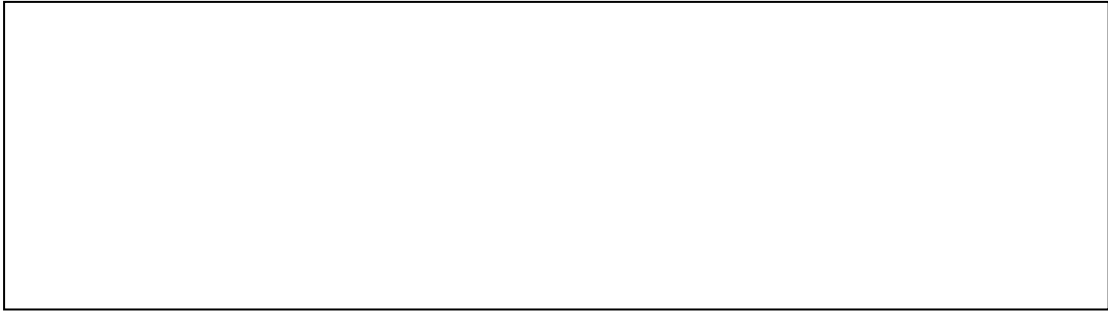
Section 5: Getting a better fit between housing and the environment

Q.14. Do you agree with our assessment of the importance of housing to the environment?

Q.15. Do you agree with our brief assessment of current policy on housing in relation to the environment?

Q.16. Do you agree with our suggestions for further action in the area of housing and the environment?

Q.17. Do you have other suggestions that we have not mentioned in relation to housing and the environment?



Section 6: Housing and Health and Education

Q.18. Do you agree with our on our assessment of the importance of housing to health and education?

Housing is a vital component of an individual, family and community's ability to thrive. Living in poor housing conditions affects a person health through a myriad of physical health problems. Poor housing conditions can also contribute to levels of poor mental health as depression and anxiety and ones living conditions affects ones mental health. If ones health is affected either physically or mentally then it is no large jump in logic to state that a persons ability to thrive in education be it school, college or university will also be affected. Poor housing conditions have a truly adverse affect on all aspects of a person's life. At Homeless Action Scotland we agree with the assessment on the importance that housing has in relation to health and education.

Q.19. Do you agree with our brief assessment of current policy on housing and health and education?

Fuel poverty, homelessness, over crowding and older people are significant issues that face Scotland in relation to housing and health.

Homeless Action Scotland has some concern in relation to older people and housing. The figures show that there could be a crisis in providing adequate care and support as our nation gets older. As budgets are being cut across Scotland for social care we have some concern as to the effective post code lottery in how older peoples services are provided.

We anticipate an increasing issue of homelessness amongst older people, due to relationship breakdown, and a potential for increasing isolation for some older people. There is a further potential on quality of life if older people become trapped in housing which they cannot adapt to their needs, or become unable to manage maintenance and repairs.



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Q.20. Do you agree with our suggestions for further action in the area of housing and health and education?

Yes

Q.21. Do you have other suggestions which we have not mentioned in relation to housing and health and education?

No

Section 7: Housing and Community Regeneration

Q.22. Do you agree with our on our assessment of the importance of community regeneration?

Yes



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Q.23. Do you agree with our brief assessment of current policy on community regeneration?

Yes

Q.24. Do you agree with our suggestions for further action in the area of community regeneration?

Q.25. Do you have other suggestions which we have not mentioned in relation to community regeneration?



Section 8: Do we need a more robust private rented sector?

Q.26. Do you agree with our views on the need for a more effective private rented sector which can make a greater contribution to meeting housing needs?

Homeless Action Scotland understands that the private rented sector has an important role to play in housing Scotland. We are concerned that some landlords are failing in their duty to provide adequate homes for those who rent from them. Under the current short assured tenancy regime, when this issue is raised by a tenant, the landlord will often simply bring a tenancy to an end. We believe a landlord should have to establish reasonable grounds to repossess someone's home.

We have to be careful however to ensure that tenants rights are met and that investment is not hampered for the good landlords that exist within the PRS. There is a balance that must be met between tenant's rights and landlords responsibilities.

Homeless Action Scotland believes that the current consultation by the Scottish Government is an important opportunity to end the short assured tenancy and rebalance the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords.

Q.27.

Do you agree with our brief assessment of current policy on the private rented sector?

Yes

Q.28. Do you agree with our suggestions for further action in the private rented sector?

We would prefer to see these proposals in more detail.



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Q.29. Do you have other suggestions which we have not mentioned in relation to the private rented sector?

Do you have any further comments in relation to the Commission on Housing and Wellbeing's consultation paper?