

Petitioner submission of 14 January 2024

PE1946/H: To call on the Scottish Government to pay all charges for homeless temporary accommodation

The Scottish Government has abandoned its homeless people by failing to declare a housing and homeless emergency and is also planning to cut its affordable housing budget by 25%. When I wrote Petition 1946 in 2022, I predicted that homelessness would worsen due to the cost of living crisis and that is what has happened with a 9% increase in homeless applications to 39,006, and there was a 10% increase in homeless assessments to 32,242 households representing 53,111 people with 16,263 being children to the year ending 31st March 2023.

Given these record numbers of homeless, there has been a major increase of homeless households found in often squalid and substandard temporary accommodation increasing to 15,039 households with there being 9,595 homeless children languishing in such Dickensian temporary accommodation. That is an increase of 27% in households and a 30% increase in children between March 2020 and March 2023.

Increasingly there are homeless households in temporary accommodation who are working and do not qualify for full housing benefit and find themselves deep in debt due to these high costs for temporary accommodation.

In such circumstances, the Scottish Government has rejected the call of this petition for the state to pay the high costs of temporary accommodation set by local authorities and refused to write off the historic debt of £33.3 million owed by the homeless to local authorities.

I would urge the MSPs on this committee to be courageous and keep this petition alive to pressurise the Scottish Government into a change of mind as we are now in a housing and homeless emergency with Edinburgh, Glasgow, Argyle and Bute declaring emergencies and a fourth local authority Fife Council has stated in recent days its intention to declare a housing emergency very soon.

Please stand up for homeless men, women and children in Scotland by sending a clear signal by keeping this petition alive and sending it to the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee.