

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 10 December 2025
19th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

PE2147: Create more women-only homeless accommodation that protects and meets the specific needs of women

Introduction

Petitioner Laura Jones on behalf of the Scottish Tenants Organisation

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to reform homeless services in Scotland and ensure services protect women from sexual assault and exploitation by increasing funding and supporting the creation of more women-only homeless accommodation.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2147>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 7 May 2025](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received a new written submission from the Scottish Government, which is set out in **Annexe C**.
4. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage](#).
5. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
6. [The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 8 April 2025](#).
7. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 748 signatures have been received on this petition.

Action

8. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
December 2025

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE2147: Create more women-only homeless accommodation that protects and meets the specific needs of women

Petitioner

Laura Jones on behalf of the Scottish Tenants Organisation

Date Lodged

24 February 2025

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to reform homeless services in Scotland and ensure services protect women from sexual assault and exploitation by increasing funding and supporting the creation of more women-only homeless accommodation.

Background information

Increasing numbers of women are placed in unsuitable hotel/bed and breakfast accommodation, where there is a ratio of 14 men to 1 woman.

There is a clear lack of safeguarding in emergency temporary accommodation in general, but very little attention has been paid to the specific challenges faced by women who are stuck in the homeless system. [Women are particularly at risk in mixed-sex emergency accommodation, and the hotels are notorious, with increased reports of rapes and sexual assaults.](#)

We need secure women-only halfway accommodation that meets the specific needs of women with the objective of rapidly placing them in permanent social housing.

As part of the Glasgow Times “End the Homeless Hotel Shame” campaign, and with official figures suggesting that the number of families living in homeless hotels and B&Bs quadrupled in 2024, we support calls for more emphasis to be placed on the affordable housing supply budget.

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE2147 on 7 May 2025

The Convener: Item 3 is consideration of new petitions, of which we have only one this morning. I highlight—as I always do—that, in advance of the committee considering new petitions, we do two things. First, we invite the Scottish Parliament’s independent research body, the Scottish Parliament information centre, to offer us a view on the issues that have been raised in the petition. That information is submitted to members of the committee in advance, with the papers that we receive. We also invite the Scottish Government to give us a preliminary view. We do those two things because, historically, they were the first two things that the committee used to recommend doing, which only delayed the progress and consideration of the petition. So, we come to the petition with those bits of information in front of us.

PE2147, lodged by Laura Jones on behalf of the Scottish Tenants Organisation, seeks to create more women-only homeless accommodation that protects and meets the specific needs of women. It calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to reform homeless services in Scotland, and to ensure that services protect women from sexual assault and exploitation, by increasing funding and supporting the creation of more women-only homeless accommodation.

The petitioner tells us that increasing numbers of women are being placed in unsuitable hotel and bed-and-breakfast emergency accommodation, with little consideration for the specific challenges and risks that that poses for women. The petitioner is concerned in particular about the risk of sexual assault and exploitation that women face when placed in temporary emergency accommodation.

As the SPICe briefing notes, although local authorities have a duty to assess anyone in their area who is applying as homeless and to provide temporary accommodation in certain circumstances, the Scottish Government has a policy to reduce the use of temporary accommodation. The briefing also highlights Scottish Government homelessness statistics for the period between April and September 2024, which indicate that hostels and bed and breakfast accommodation accounted for 24 per cent of temporary homeless accommodation.

10:15

In its response to the petition, the Scottish Government recognises that women’s experiences of homelessness are very different to men’s experiences, and the response to women’s housing needs should therefore also be different. The response draws our attention to the temporary accommodation standards framework, which was published in April 2023 and aims

“to ensure that any time spent in temporary accommodation causes minimal harm.”

To achieve that, it aims to ensure that the accommodation is of good quality, safe, warm and affordable, and that standards are consistent across Scotland. The framework includes standards on support to access different types of accommodation, which are allocated based on gender, and provision of single-gender accommodation for households that are experiencing domestic abuse. The

Scottish Government response also references the implementation of the equally safe strategy, which is aimed at preventing violence against women and girls and supporting survivors who have experienced such abuse. In the year ahead, the Government will invest £21.6 million in delivering the equally safe funding programme.

Members will also have noted from our papers that issues related to the petition have been raised as part of the Housing (Scotland) Bill and the Social Justice and Social Security Committee's inquiry on financial considerations when leaving an abusive relationship.

This is the first time that we have considered the petition and I can see that we are joined in the gallery by those who might have an interest in it. Colleagues, do you have any suggestions as to how we might proceed?

David Torrance: I wonder whether the committee would consider writing to the Scottish Government to seek clarification on the funding that it has provided through the delivery of the equally safe fund or local government settlement, and to ask what specific contribution it has made to the provision of women-only homeless services and efforts to ensure that a consistent gender approach is taken to the allocation and supply of temporary accommodation.

I wonder whether it would also consider writing to the Government to ask when it expects the temporary accommodation standards framework to become legally enforceable.

The Convener: That latter point is particularly important. You are nodding, Mr Choudhury.

Foyso Choudhury (Lothian) (Lab): I agree with Mr Torrance.

Fergus Ewing: I agree. I am struck by the information that we have had from the petitioner and others about the gravity of the problem and the extent of the risk that those women are exposed to. In our papers, I note that Ash Regan's work on the topic of hostel safety is referenced. She has referred to the need to "stop more women dying". *The Glasgow Times* has run a campaign that highlights the issue.

Although the Scottish Government has said that funding has been provided, there is a lack of clarity about whether any of that funding will find its way to providing the solution that the petitioner wants. I agree with the approach that Mr Torrance has advocated, but we should specifically ask what will be done to address the issue this year—so as to elicit not a vague response of, "Money will be made available in a general way," but what exactly will be done—otherwise we will be in the same position and no further.

I hope that I am not being unfair to the Government—needless to say, I never wish to do that—but my concern is that women's homelessness is one of those issues on which we talk about spending huge amounts of money but nothing actually happens.

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Ewing. That is all duly noted.

Mr Torrance's recommendation is that we keep the petition open and pursue the issues as he has directed, which Mr Ewing has fleshed out. Are members content that we proceed on that basis?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: We will keep the petition open and take it forward on that basis.

Annexe C: Written submission

Scottish Government written submission, 4 June 2025

PE2147/B: Create more women-only homeless accommodation that protects and meets the specific needs of women

Thank you for your letter dated 7 May 2025, in relation to the above public petition, seeking clarification on the following:

- the funding it has provided through the Delivering Equally Safe Fund or the local government settlement, and what specific contribution this has made to the provision of women-only homelessness services, and efforts to ensure a consistent, gendered approach is taken to allocation and supply of temporary accommodation;
- when it expects the Temporary Accommodation Standards Framework to become legally enforceable.

We note the committee members' concerns outlined in the letter and would like to provide further information.

Delivering Equally Safe funding delivers women only support, including a signposting service for appropriate support/services as well as advocacy (including children's work) to women's aid and other organisations tackling domestic abuse. The appropriate service will include advice and support to help with tenancy sustainment to prevent women from becoming homeless in the first place.

The 2025-26 budget provides local government in Scotland with record funding of over £15.1 billion, a real terms increase of 5.5% and this follows on from the real terms increase of 2.5% provided in 2024-25. However, the Scottish Government's policy towards local authorities' spending is to allow local authorities the financial freedom to operate independently.

As such, the vast majority of funding is provided through the local government finance settlement by means of a block grant. It is then the responsibility of individual local authorities to manage their own budgets and to allocate the total financial resources available to them, including on women-only homelessness services, on the basis of local needs and priorities, having first fulfilled their statutory obligations and the jointly agreed set of national and local priorities.

As we indicated in our previous response, temporary accommodation is an important safety net. Our long term strategy is to reduce the time that people spend in temporary accommodation. Since 2019, we have committed £70.5 million to support local authorities to implement their rapid rehousing transition plans (RRTPs), which aim to provide a settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible with time spent in temporary accommodation reduced to a minimum. The impact of RRTP funding is evaluated annually through local authority returns.

In addition, eighty per cent of our £80 million capital funding for voids and acquisitions over 2024-25 and 2025-26 has been targeted to areas with the most

sustained temporary accommodation pressures to increase the supply of social and affordable homes through acquisitions and, where appropriate, to bring long term empty social homes back into use. This policy is designed to reduce long periods in temporary accommodation, especially for families with children.

Work is underway with the Scottish Housing Regulator to develop the measurement indicators for the temporary accommodation standards framework. This will require consultation and a review of the Scottish Social Housing Charter to include reference to the framework. Our planning assumption is that the revised charter will be in place around April 2027.

In recognition of the issues outlined in the petition, we will work with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO) to fully understand any barriers to safeguarding and providing temporary accommodation that meets the needs of women in their area.

Better Homes Division