



What you need to know about the Programme for Government

Background

The First Minister announced the [Programme for Government](#) on 03 September 2019 setting out the Scottish Government's focus and legislative programme for the year ahead.

The First Minister opened her speech by repeating the Government's commitment to tackling the global climate change emergency and concerns with the impact of a no-deal Brexit. She also warned that in the event of a no-deal Brexit, the commitments set out in the Programme for Government may have to be revised.

What is included in this year's Programme for Government?

Affordable homes: The First Minister announced that the Scottish Government was on track to deliver 50,000 affordable homes (35,000 of which are to be for social rent) over the life of the Parliament. No mention was made of future targets or funding.

The PfG does include commitments to

- Publish refreshed Local Housing Strategy guidance with strengthened requirements on Gypsy/Traveller accommodation and wheelchair accessible housing;
- Respond to the report *New housing and future construction skills: Adapting and modernizing for growth*;
- Introduce a new £150 million pilot scheme to support first time buyers with up to £25,000 towards a deposit from December; and
- Continue to support the delivery of new homes through the Building Scotland Fund, with an increased focus on the SME sector.

Homelessness: The Scottish Government will continue to invest in the roll out of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs) and continue funding support for the delivery of Housing First. In addition, the Scottish Government will specifically:

- Introduce legislation in the coming year

to extend the Unsuitable Accommodation Order (UAO) to all households;

- Implement legal changes to remove local authorities' duty to assess for intentionality;
- Develop plans to prevent local connection referrals;
- Publish information about how homelessness affects different groups (such as women) by the end of the year;
- Create a domestic abuse prevention pathway to support women to access safe accommodation; and
- Create a care leavers homelessness prevention pathway.

Energy Efficiency and climate change:

The First Minister set out plans to establish Scotland as a world leader in tackling climate change. The Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map which sets out phased targets for all housing tenures to meet minimum EPC standards will be updated with a more ambitious timescale and is due to be published in December.

A new target for all new build homes to be heated with low carbon or renewable technology by 2024 (revised from 2025) was announced and a new District Heating Bill to support expansion of heat networks.

The First Minister also suggested that a new National Investment Bank would be at the heart of ensuring a just transition to net zero carbon.

The CIH view

We support the Scottish Government's ambitious plans to tackle homelessness and are particularly pleased to see commitments to better understand how homelessness and domestic abuse affect women.

However, we have some concerns about plans to push ahead with changes to homelessness assessments (local connection and intentionality) and to extend the UAO. Without enough lead in time and sufficient resources, there is a danger



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that some local authorities will struggle to meet new legal obligations and may have to focus on these at the expense of RRTPs and Housing First.

Commitments to make energy efficiency a national infrastructure priority and to tackle the "climate change emergency" are welcome but at this stage there is no detail on how the budget will reflect these ambitions. We have supported the introduction of minimum energy efficiency standards across all tenures but have repeatedly called for increases in funding to support energy efficiency work to be carried out. This is particularly important for fuel poor households and to protect private and social renters from rent increases.