



Homeless A8 migrants - the Scottish experience

A recent research report from the Scottish Council for Single Homeless looks at the growing numbers of European migrant workers who become homeless.

Migrant workers from the A8 countries [the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia] are making a significant contribution to the Scottish economy. However, they can be vulnerable to homelessness and can have difficulty in accessing appropriate services. Their status as migrants can also make it complex for local authorities, and other service providers, to respond effectively to their needs.

Robert Aldridge, SCSH Director, said : 'Our report shows that A8 migrants are often in precarious housing conditions, where their house is tied to their job. If you lose your job you can lose your home. If

they do become homeless there is a confusing and complicated set of regulations which determine whether they can get all the help they need.

'Scotland's local authorities are working well to meet the challenges that the 2012 target presents. Migrants are a new factor which, whilst manageable, needs to be addressed. The report makes a series of recommendations for the Scottish Executive, Department for Work & Pensions, local authorities and others and calls for further research.'

The Scottish Executive said : 'We know that some councils are facing challenges in providing accommodation and assistance to homeless A8 nationals. We are in discussion with them to clarify any problems they have. This is a relatively new issue and we have changed our statistical collection to gain a better understanding of homelessness amongst non-UK nationals. Our Code of Guidance sets out the current position regarding LA's duties to A8 nationals. Policy and guidance on benefit entitlements is reserved to Westminster but we are liaising with them on this issue.'

Want to Know More?

The report is available from SCSH at £12.50 [payment with order]. Contact us on 0131 226 4382 or enquiries@scsch.org.uk. The Executive Summary is available at www.scsch.org.uk.

SCSH National Homelessness Conference

Thursday 9 & Friday 10
November 2006

Booking is now open for this year's National Homelessness Conference. The conference is the ideal forum for all those working to tackle homelessness in Scotland to come together to share information and ideas, discuss issues and challenges, and learn about innovative and original practice. Plenaries will introduce issues of current concern whilst a series of workshops will allow delegates to engage with colleagues from across the sector, and across disciplines.

Speakers include Craig Sanderson, Chief Executive LINK Group, on the contribution housing associations can make to meeting the 2012 target; Freek Spinnewijn, Director FEANTSA, on issues facing European partners; Andy Gale, Department of Communities & Local Government [formerly ODPM], on prevention activities in England and Wales; and Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick, University of York, on initiatives to tackle street homelessness .

Whatever your particular interest – health, housing associations, young people, local authorities – we hope you will join us in November.

The full programme and booking details are available from 0131 226 4382 or at www.scsch.org.uk/conference.htm.

National Homelessness Conference 2006



Updates



Communities Scotland has now published its draft **Regulatory Code of Governance** for consultation.

Framed around the Langlands principles, the Code aims to consolidate existing guidance and brings the agency's regulatory expectations into one document. The consultation runs until Friday 22 September.

The Code is available at www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk.



The Statistical Bulletin **Housing trends in Scotland** for the quarter to 31 March 2006 has been published. This includes information on public house sales, new house building and local authority lettings and evictions.

Key points identified include:

- > 6% more new dwellings were started but 10% fewer were completed
- > 5% increase in local authority permanent lettings
- > 10% more evictions of local authority tenants
- > 19% fewer local authority properties were sold to sitting tenants.

All figures relate to changes against the same quarter [1 January - 31 March] in 2005. The full report is available on the web at www.scotland.gov.uk.



A new **web based gateway** providing information on all aspects of homelessness has been launched by CRISIS in partnership with the New Policy Institute.

The site is divided into sections covering background information, homelessness statistics, issues surrounding the 'hidden homeless' and a section providing a summary of government policies throughout the UK. The gateway also offers a critique of UK wide government policies on the related areas of work, income, education & skills, advice & support, housing benefit housing and health - all from a homeless perspective.

Throughout the web site there are comprehensive links to original documents, external organisations and a wide range of other relevant sites and web based resources.

www.crisis.org.uk



A new web site has been set up to take forward the work of the **Changing Lives Implementation Plan**. The site is designed to be interactive and participative, with a series of discussion fora available on themes such as performance improvement, practice governance and learning from practice. There is also a forum for service users to share their experiences, reflecting the inclusive nature of the original review.

www.socialworkscotland.org.uk

Research

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 contains provisions for Ministers to introduce a Scottish tenancy deposit protection scheme. The first meeting of the stakeholders group took place recently, with SCSH and CoSLA amongst those represented.

One of the main concerns raised at the meeting centred on the availability of hard evidence for the actual need for a deposit scheme. While there are a minority of landlords who withhold tenants' deposits unreasonably, in the great majority of cases the process of deposit return appears - on the basis of the limited evidence that exists - to run smoothly.

SCSH is keen to find out more from members, particularly local authorities, of instances where deposits have been withheld. This will inform the discussion at the next meeting. At this early stage we wish to focus on two main issues :

- > the extent to which deposits are being withheld, to establish if this is a significant issue for a large number of tenants
- > whether or not the amount being withheld is the whole deposit of a proportion, and whether some landlords are routinely withholding a percentage.

We understand that it may not be easy to determine how many homelessness presentations are a result of deposits being withheld or the exact amounts of deposit being retained. Nevertheless, any information would be useful at this stage. Please contact Dan Coote, Policy Officer - 0131 226 4382 or daniel@scsh.org.uk.

Web links to all documents referred to in this issue can be found on our web site at www.scsh.org.uk - just click on Newsletter

Thursday 9 & Friday 10
November

Book now - [www.scsh.org.uk/
conference.htm](http://www.scsh.org.uk/conference.htm)

Working with young people



SCSH's **homesmart** campaign – to ensure every S4 pupil in Scotland learns the key facts about homelessness and how to avoid it – continues to gather pace.

The Housing Education Project have developed a special set of lesson plans for the campaign and packs will be distributed to schools at the start of October. We have had a strong response from schools, many of whom are planning to use the lesson plans to tie in with BBC programming in November on the theme of homelessness. Other schools will register their existing work with the campaign or invite local homelessness services to address young people. We are also delighted that so many local authorities are working closely with us to provide local content for the schools pack in their areas.

For the most up to date list of supporters and to learn more about the campaign go to www.leavinghome.info/homesmart.



How good is your throughcare & aftercare service?

The Scottish Throughcare & Aftercare Forum is hosting a one day conference to launch a guide to quality indicators for best practice in support services for young people who are, or who have been, looked after. Designed to be used as a self-assessment tool, the guide will help service providers to evaluate the extent and quality of services provided to young people as they approach adulthood. The event is open to all who are involved in providing or managing services in the statutory, independent or voluntary sectors.

The launch will take place at the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh on Friday 6 October. Further details of the event and booking forms are available from the Forum on 0141 357 4614 - enquiries@scottishthroughcare.org.uk.



Glasgow launch Youth Housing Advice & Information Strategy

On Tuesday 29 August, Glasgow Homelessness Partnership (GHP) launched their new strategy aimed at providing the best possible advice and information on housing to young people in the city. A key part of the strategy is focused on early prevention work and GHP commissioned SCSH to produce a short information booklet aimed at 16-21 year olds.

The booklet, based on *My Space, My Place*, covers some of the pros and cons of leaving home, what young people's housing options are and what to do in a crisis. The booklet will be distributed in a wide range of youth work settings and, along with a training programme for the city's youth workers, will seek to help young people access the services that can help prevent housing crisis.



SYHN's autumn training programme launched

The first course - **A beginner's guide to housing law and related issues** - takes place in Edinburgh on Tuesday 26 September. Designed to explain the current Scottish legislation, delegates will explore housing allocations policies,

tenants' rights & responsibilities, management of anti-social behaviour and how to meet the needs of young people who are homeless.

The second course of the season - **Introduction to welfare benefits and housing costs for young people** - takes place in Glasgow on Wednesday 11 October and aims to introduce delegates to the full range of welfare and housing benefits that are available to young people as they move into independent living.

SYHN aims to improve the housing provision for young people by creating and supporting links between individuals and agencies, providing information on legislation and policy and disseminating good practice. Why not join and take advantage of the reduced £95 subscribers' rates for training? [non-subscribers' rate £140] **Full details from SYHN 0131 226 4382 or www.syhn.org.uk**

Diary

Scottish Housing and Support Conference

Thursday 5 & Friday 6 October

Your chance to discuss the latest issues and how they affect services and service users. The active input of service users ensures that SHASC remains a unique forum for new ideas and the promotion of new ways of working. Full details available from Edna Milne - 01383 861521, mailshasc-conf@yahoo.co.uk or www.joa.co.uk/shasc.html

SCSH Youth Unit Practical Steps

Training designed to help you equip young people with the practical skills they need to sustain their tenancies and avoid homelessness.

Perth - Wed 11 Oct **Edinburgh** - Thu 19 Oct

Inverness - Tue 24 Oct **Aberdeen** - Thu 26 Oct

Booking details from 0131 226 4382 or wendy@scsh.org.uk

Thursday 14 September

SCSH with the Scottish Throughcare & Aftercare Forum Preventing Homelessness & Sustaining Tenancies

Joint training seminar for those involved in supporting young people as they leave care and move to more independent living. £125 [£95 members] including copies of *My Space, My Place* and *Moving Towards Independence*. Call 0131 226 4382, wendy@scsh.org.uk.

Tuesday 26 September



Complaints - Turning negatives into positives

Delivered jointly with the Public Services Ombudsman, this conference aims to learn the lessons from housing complaints and help delegates appreciate the value that can come from handling complaints effectively. Details from, CIHS, 0131 225 4544, scotland.training@cih.org.

Tuesday 26 September



Engaging with first time tenants

First time tenants can be a challenge in terms of the support they require to sustain their tenancy. This course will look at how to work with young people, immigrants and those leaving long term care. Full details from Kathleen McNeely, 0141 567 6229, kmcneely@sfha.co.uk

Friday 6 October

Scottish Churches
Housing Action



Target 2012 - The Church Contribution

no room for homelessness!

This year's SCHA Conference will assess how churches can support the work to make the 2012 target a reality. Speakers include Jackie Baillie MSP, who chaired the Task Force on Homelessness. Full details from SCHA, 0131 477 4500, val@churches-housing.org

Monday 9 October

Scottish Drugs Forum

Cocaine : what is the scale of the risk?

What is the 'big picture' for cocaine use in Scotland - and what are the key challenges? This seminar will explore a range of education strategies and methods of working with users, including the role of mainstream alcohol services. Full details, 0141 221 1175, enquiries@sdf.org.uk

SCOTTISH COUNCIL FOR
SiNGLE HOMELESS

SCSH is the membership body for organisations and individuals working to tackle homelessness in Scotland.

Full membership details are available from 0131 226 4382 or on our web site.

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