

Retaining Social Housing



On 18th October 2009 the Scottish Government announced that Right To Buy (RTB) for new tenants entering the social rented sector will be ended shortly. The Housing (Scotland) Bill 2009 will bring this into effect through reforms to the current RTB provisions.

This will mean that first time tenants and those returning to social housing after a break, will no longer be entitled to RTB. However, existing tenants will not be affected.

Almost half a million homes for rent in Scotland have been sold at a discount since the RTB introduction 30 years ago. It is hoped that the reforms will retain up to an estimated 18,000 properties in the

social housing sector over a 10 year period.

In responding to the consultation on these proposals this summer, SCSH raised some specific concerns about the definition of 'continuous occupation' (which entitles a person to maintain RTB), and suggested consideration be given to circumstances where people might have a break in tenancy due to time spent in an institutional setting. Similarly, where there is relationship breakdown and one partner transfers to a new build property they should not automatically have the RTB. An exception could be where the dispute involved violence or threats of violence.

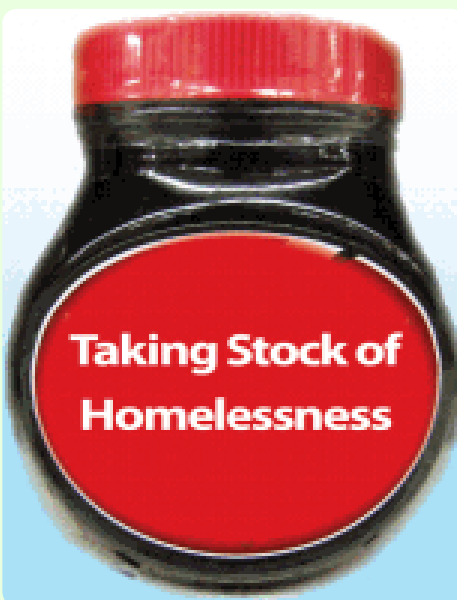
Approximately one in four Scottish households (over 600,000 households across the country) live in social housing where it provides a secure and sustainable alternative to home ownership.

For more information, please contact Robert Aldridge, at robert@scsh.org.uk

'Taking Stock' - Last Few Places Available

'Taking Stock' is the theme of Scotland's 10th National Homelessness Conference being run by SCSH on 5th and 6th November 2009 at the Apex International Hotel in Edinburgh.

It offers the chance to take stock of what has been achieved, what works well, and what still needs to be done. It offers an ideal opportunity to learn about policy and practice at home and abroad, share ideas and galvanise the momentum needed to keep Scotland's homelessness strategy on track.



Repossession Protection

The Scottish Government is consulting on proposals which would give more protection for tenants caught up in complicated repossession cases.

Some of the proposed changes relate to cases where there may have been a breach of a mortgage agreement where landlords let out properties without informing the lender.

At the moment, in the event of repossession of a property, any 'unauthorised' tenants have limited rights. The Scottish Government has estimated that up to 300 households a year are affected.

If there is support for the measures, the Government will propose amendments at Stage 2 of the Home Owner and Debtor Protection (Scotland) Bill.

The consultation ends on the 6 November.

To download the consultation paper go to www.scotland.gov.uk/Consultations/Current

Unmissable keynote sessions include a Ministerial Address from Alex Neil MSP; Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick on Devolution and Housing; Dharmendra Kanani on Charitable Funding; and Karen Anderson on Social Enterprise.

There is still a lot of hard work to be done to reach the 2012 target. The Conference offers a unique opportunity to reinvigorate the momentum to make it happen.

To book just fill out the booking form on the back of this newsletter and present it to our reception desk at the hotel.

What's New...

Concerns for Homeless Non-UK Nationals in Northern Ireland



A recent investigation report by the Human Rights Commission identified serious human rights concerns for homeless non-UK nationals in Northern Ireland who do not have recourse to public funds.

The 'No Home from Home' report published on the 1 September finds that restrictions in current immigration legislation often prevent access to even the most basic levels of support from government agencies.

'No Home from Home' analyses the causes and consequences of homelessness, examining the extent to which policy, practice and legislation affects access to support and welfare benefits for those migrants facing destitution in Northern Ireland.

Some of the issues examined within the research were health and disability, domestic violence, labour exploitation and racial intimidation.

The investigation by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in May 2008 covered three regions of Northern Ireland - Belfast, Cookstown and Dungannon.

The investigation examined the practices of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Social

Security Agency and the Health and Social Care Trusts in the three regions. It also looked at how day to day decision making impacts on access to welfare benefits and homeless assistance.

In addition to interviews with government agency staff and input from the voluntary sector, the report includes personal accounts from homeless individuals.

The interviews highlighted how immigration legislation fails to take into account the human rights impacts of denying access to welfare benefits and homelessness assistance.

For more information please contact SCSH Policy Officer, Daniel Coote, at 0131 2264382 or daniel@scsh.org.uk

Want better housing for young people? Then have your say!



The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) tries to improve the housing choices available to young people. The JRF are looking for 16 to 25 year olds to help ensure that the ideas they come up with are based on the reality of young people's lives in Scotland.

So far young people across the UK have told JRF that:

- Help is crucial – whether that's help with a form, knowing where to look for somewhere to live or finding out how to manage bills;
- Everyone needs more than one chance to set up home on their own but young people are often judged because of their



age, making it more difficult to find somewhere to live, especially in private renting;

- Housing can be expensive and really difficult to find and it isn't cheaper to live just because you're under 25!

JRF would like to work with young people to come up with solutions that will improve the housing situation for young people in Scotland.



You can get involved by:

- Helping JRF to find out more about how young people would tackle the housing problems they face;

- Blogging about your thoughts, experiences and ideas at www.youngpeoplemovingon.org.uk **If a comment is left before the end of December you get the chance to win an iPhone;**
- Becoming a regular blogger - just let the JRF know.

To find out more about the JRF's work on young people, get in touch with Kathleen Kelly (kathleen.kelly@jrf.org.uk) - or phone or text her on 07736 977061.

Back Copies

Back copies of previous newsletters can be found at our website www.scsh.org.uk

Want to Contribute?

On occasion, we require relevant material of a high quality for our **inhouse** publication. If you wish to contribute please email us at daniel@scsh.org.uk

10th National Homelessness Conference Preview...

Workshops to Look Forward To - Section 11 and Housing Support !



Prevention of Homelessness
Guidance

The Scottish Government and the Convention of
Scottish Local Authorities

June 2009

Alan Parr and Ruth Robin from Renfrewshire Council will discuss at the conference how they

have embraced Section 11 and used it as a tool for prevention.

The workshop will discuss how Renfrewshire responded to Section 11, the challenges faced, the positive outcomes, the impact on resources and future service development. There will also be a group discussion around the experiences of the group, with regards to Section 11 and prevention.

On the same day, Yvette Burgess and Simon Laidlaw from the Housing Support Enabling Unit

will give an insight into the initial findings of two years worth of research into the funding of housing support in Scotland.



This workshop will also give providers of housing support an opportunity to discuss the national funding picture and the future of housing support.

A Big Thanks To Our Conference Sponsors!

Main Conference Sponsor:



Workshop Spaces



European Plenary



Delegate Packs



Trafficking in Human Beings

"My name is Maria and I am 24 years old. When I was 13 my sister sold me to a man I didn't know. I was taken by boat to Italy, where I was kept prisoner for seven months. They controlled my eating and made me drink vinegar. Then I was smuggled into the UK in a lorry. I was in London for five years. I worked every day, seeing 65 to 70 customers a day. I could earn up to £1,000 per day, but I had to pay £400 every day in rent and £60 for a maid, as well as 20% of everything else I earned. The men who came to me were of all different nationalities. I did not ask any of them for help. I was too frightened. My traffickers threatened to kill me, and they threatened to take my sister too and do the same to her. I was beaten often, very badly. I have scars from it now, especially from my broken arm. I have been raped many times. I finally escaped with the other

women in my house. We ran away with the owner's boyfriend and went to the police. Although I am now free I am depressed. I will never forget what they did to me."



2007 marked the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade however many would argue that today we are still faced with this abhorrent crime. Human trafficking continues to be a worldwide phenomenon and has been described as modern day slavery. The victims may be legal or illegal

immigrants or nationals of the country within which they are trafficked. It affects men, women and children.

It involves the transportation of people away from their communities and forcing them to work against their will using violence, deception or coercion. It does not have to be across international borders – people can be trafficked within the country, even town, where they live. People can be trafficked for sexual exploitation, labour exploitation (e.g domestic servitude or agricultural work) or for illegal organ trafficking.

It is a hidden crime and figures relating to the scale of the problem in both the UK and worldwide vary.

Sandra Jamieson, from Lothian and Borders Police will run a workshop on Friday at the conference which will aim to open delegate's eyes to this horrific trade in people.



Housing and equalities- are you prepared?

**Tuesday 24 November 2009, Edinburgh
(Radisson Blu Hotel)**

Details at - www.cih.org/scotland/conferences



A Housing Concordat for Scotland

**Monday 14 December 2009, Glasgow
(Crowne Plaza Hotel)**

Details at - www.sfha.co.uk/index.php?pg=4



CIH Annual Conference and Exhibition 2010

**16 - 18 March 2010, Glasgow
(SECC)**

Details at - www.cihscotland-conference.org/

**SCOTTISH COUNCIL FOR
SINGLE HOMELESS**

10th National Homelessness Conference: Taking Stock of Homelessness

Thursday 5th and Friday 6th November 2009
Apex International Hotel, 31 Grassmarket, Edinburgh

Conference Booking Form

Name _____ Job Title _____

Organisation _____

Address _____

Town/City _____ Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Any dietary and/or access needs _____

Conference Prices (please tick)

	SCSH Members	Non-Members	
Both days	£230 <input type="checkbox"/>	£295 <input type="checkbox"/>	Join now and you and your colleagues can take advantage of our member's rate for this conference and other SCSH events.
Day one - Thursday	£145 <input type="checkbox"/>	£195 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Day two - Friday	£145 <input type="checkbox"/>	£195 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Extras			
Day one - Conference Dinner	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>	Contact SCSH for individual membership rates.

You will be invoiced at the above address. If invoices should be sent to another address please provide details.

Please fax this form to: 0131 225 4382 or return to SCSH, Wellgate House, 200 Cowgate, Edinburgh, EH1 1NQ.

For further details contact SCSH on 0131 226 4382 or visit www.scsch.org.uk

Please tick here if you do not wish to be added to our distribution list, this is not passed to other organisations.

No refunds for cancellations. Substitute delegates can be accepted at any time.

Scottish Council for Single Homeless - Scottish Charity SC002734

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

For full membership details phone 0131 226 4382 or visit www.scsch.org.uk

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W: www.leavinghome.info

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