

For the benefit of people across Scotland, COSLA expects a UK government, working with their devolved governments, to respect the democratic mandate of Councillors and put the **LOCAL** back into Local Government by:

Working collectively across the spheres of government to accelerate work to tackle the causes and effects of poverty, particularly the impact on children.

The impact on our communities: tackling homelessness

- In November 2023, following a joint call from COSLA and the Scottish Government, the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in his Autumn Statement that from April 2024, Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates (which are used to calculate Housing Benefit for tenants renting from private landlords) were to be increased.
- Whilst this change is expected to alleviate pressures on the affordability of rents for private sector Housing Benefit claimants, the Local Housing Allowance rates applied to Housing Benefit have remained unchanged since 2011. The consequence of this continuing freeze has been higher costs for councils supporting those experiencing homelessness during a growing housing crisis.

Our ask for the incoming UK Government:

- COSLA's ask of a newly elected UK Government is to permanently unfreeze (all) Local Housing Allowance rates, allowing Housing Benefit payments to more closely match the true cost of temporary accommodation and enable councils to support homeless clients in a more sustainable way.
- Councils being able to deliver more effective and meaningful support to those experiencing homelessness will begin to eradicate poverty, tackle poor mental health and wellbeing, and support individuals and families back into the local economy. Preventative approaches are found locally and an empowered Local Government working with partners making place-based decisions is essential.
- A newly elected UK Government must work with its devolved partners to ensure we have a strong and well-funded local government able to deliver change locally.