FINANCE COMMITTEE CALL FOR EVIDENCE
WELFARE FUNDS (SCOTLAND) BILL: FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM
SUBMISSION FROM SHELTER SCOTLAND

Shelter Scotland has made a full written submission to the Welfare Reform Committee’s call for written evidence on the Welfare Funds (Scotland) Bill. Although Shelter Scotland are not in a position to answer the Finance Committee questionnaire, we would like to take this opportunity to add some comments to assist the Committee’s scrutiny of the Financial Memorandum.

Shelter Scotland welcomes the continuation of extra funding for the Welfare Funds to 2015/16, as set out in the Financial Memorandum. The Welfare Funds are a vital lifeline for households facing crisis and for those who would otherwise not be able to gain or maintain independent living. Through providing help to divert crisis and preventing people from requiring institutional care or living lifestyles that place high demand on public services, financial investment in the Welfare Funds prevents higher public spend in other areas.

There is no doubt that beyond 2015/16 there will remain a critical need for grants in situations of crisis and to enable vulnerable households to gain or maintain a home. Therefore, funding for the Welfare Funds must be ring-fenced to ensure that these grants which support some of the most vulnerable people in society are not lost or diminished in the comprehensive spending review.

As the programme of Welfare Reforms continues to be rolled-out in Scotland the benefits landscape will significantly change over the coming years. Concerns regarding the impact of these changes on the most vulnerable in society have been widely voiced, including the increased potential for households to face crisis situations. Therefore the level of funding made available, along with other aspects of the Funds, should be periodically reviewed to meet emerging needs.

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From the Shelter Scotland policy library www.shelterscotland.org
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