



Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee members  
[ehrcj.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:ehrcj.committee@parliament.scot)

21 May 2024

Dear Members,

I'm writing to note concerns we have around delays to Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) funding, which may be of interest in your role on the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee.

By way of background, Shelter Scotland has been in receipt of SLAB funding since 2012, which has been annualised since 2017. This funds a project to offer representation to clients facing eviction due to private rented sector arrears and mortgage arrears.

Over recent years, confirmation of this funding has been arriving later and later in the financial year, making it very difficult for organisations such as us to plan ahead. Internal decisions around staffing have to be made at the end of the financial year, which has unfortunately resulted in some projects in the sector having to close due to uncertainty over future funding.

We have seen that happen once again this year, with the [closure of two vital projects in Edinburgh](#) – simply because of uncertainty around whether future funding would be forthcoming for those projects.

Other legal projects, offering housing support and advice to many people across the country, may also have no option but to cease service delivery and lose highly specialised staff at a time when 5 local authorities and the Scottish Government have declared housing emergencies, and the Scottish Housing Regulator has said that 10 local authorities are in, or are at risk of, systemic failure in their homelessness services. To lose the expert advice and support that people rely on to realise their housing rights due to uncertainty over funding at this critical juncture would be disastrous.

We appreciate any support or assistance your committee is able to offer to ensure we do not lose the much needed legal expertise due to these funding delays.

Best wishes,

Alison Watson  
Director, Shelter Scotland