

Fair Rents (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to protect private sector tenants by introducing measures to limit rent increases and to increase the availability of information about rent levels. The consultation runs from 15 May 2019 to 6 August 2019. All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer. All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response. Please note that you must complete the survey in order for your response to be accepted. If you don't wish to complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded. Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here: [Consultation document](#) [Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice attached to this consultation which explains how my personal data will be used

About you

Please choose whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. Note: If you choose "individual" and consent to have the response published, it will appear under your own name. If you choose "on behalf of an organisation" and consent to have the response published, it will be published under the organisation's name.

an individual

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

Member of the public

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what expertise or experience you have that is relevant to the subject-matter of the consultation:

Accredited Landlord (LAS)

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

No Response

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your name or the name of your organisation. (Note: the name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response).

Allan Parkinson

Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number. We will not publish these details.

Aim and approach - rent cap

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of capping private sector rent increases annually across Scotland at one percentage point above inflation (measured according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI))?

Fully opposed

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Financial obligations on landlords have been increasing at a rate far above inflation, the legislative compliance and management costs have increased significantly in recent years. Where once there was a surplus to allow for improvements to property fabric this has now diminished and the financial risk of providing good quality homes increasing to a level where exiting the property sector is the wiser choice.

Rent level appeals

Q2. Which of the following best expresses your view of providing that, when tenants appeal their rent, rent officers and the First-tier Tribunal would be able to either lower or maintain the rent but not increase the rent?

Fully opposed

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The rent may not have been increased on a regular basis from the date the tenant moved in and fallen well below average market rents. Tenants should be able to conclude being charged a fair rent before raising a case and if decide to pursue accept the risk of FTT awarding a higher rent.

Landlord registration scheme

Q3. Which of the following best expresses your view of expanding the landlord registration scheme so that landlords must input the rent that they charge when they register, and update the system when the rent changes?

Fully opposed

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Councils are already claiming require greater funding to operate the registration scheme and the increasing compliance checking (recent Government consultation) which will result in yet more costs to Landlords. This is one more obligation which will have to be funded, and unnecessary and good market date already exists from like of CityLets.

Other options - Rent Pressure Zones

Q4. Which of the following best expresses your view of tackling the problem of rents rising significantly faster than inflation by making it easier for a local authority to apply to create a Rent Pressure Zone (RPZ)?

Fully opposed

Please explain the reasons for this response.

Key influence on rent levels is supply and demand. Recent government initiatives are driving down and restricting the supply. Requires a change in government approach to encourage the PRS, not drive out Private Landlords.

Financial implications

Q5. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have on:

	Significant increase in cost	Some increase in cost	Broadly cost-neutral	Some reduction in cost	Significant reduction in cost	Unsure
Government and the public sector	X					
Businesses (including landlords)	X					
Individuals (including tenants)		X				

Please explain the reasons for your response.

More administration will drive up requirement for public sector funding, further restrict investment pot for improving housing stock and Landlords will opt to increase rents on a regular basis in an attempt to cover increased costs.

Q6. Are there ways in which the Bill could achieve its aim more cost-effectively (e.g. by reducing costs or increasing savings)?

Guarantee increased public service costs will not be passed onto landlords, offer incentives to maintain registration data (consultation on landlord registration proposed fee when data updated and removing discount for joint owners - which will only lead to less compliance), work with CityLets who already provide good quality data.

Equalities

Q7. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, maternity and pregnancy, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation?

Neutral (neither positive nor negative)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Difficult to envisage how these proposals would have any impact.

Q8. In what ways could any negative impact of the Bill on equality be minimised or avoided?

N/A

Sustainability

Q9. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably, i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Threat to economic and social impacts in driving up costs and restricting good quality homes

General

Q10. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?

Levels of Housing Benefit are understood to be based on analysis of local market rents, this should have been addressed in the proposal document as clearly there is a process which covers some of issues raised in this Proposal