

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

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

No Response

Please choose one of the following:

I would like this response to be published anonymously

Please choose one of the following:

If you have requested anonymity or asked for your response not to be published, please give a reason (Note: your reason will not be published):

I am a civil servant.

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).

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 supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Because of the influx of Airbnbs etc in my area my landlord and previous landlords has - through letting agencies as intermediaries - raised the rent way above inflation. Normally about a £25 to £50 increase each time. Currently I am spending approximately 50% of my net income on rent and this figure looks set to rise again soon as my landlord pushes for further increases while my income (£10.55 p/h, 37.5 hours a week) stays the same.

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 supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The current tribunal system is toothless. It places the onus on me as a tenant to prove why my rent shouldn't be raised rather than on my landlord to prove why my rent should be.

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 supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

As a tenant I think we need to have this data on rents out in the open. It's absurd that the Scottish Government doesn't already collect data on rental costs and rent rises. If tenants like me knew what our neighbours were paying and we all knew how much we were being scammed by these leeches, it would be easier to organise politically against them.

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 supportive

Please explain the reasons for this response.

As far as I'm aware the Rent Pressure Zones are a figment of the Scottish Government's imagination.

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.

If the Scottish Labour Party stands for the many, not the few then it stands for tenants, not landlords. Capping rent rises would be great for tenants and bad for landlords - and that's exactly as it should be. It's not a legitimate form of income. It's a means of accruing wealth simply by already having wealth. They don't add anything productive to the economy, they just scoop up as much as they can from people like me who actually gets up and goes to work every morning. Housing should be either owner occupancy or for social rent, private landlords are a cabal.

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

Expanding landlord registration to make landlords have to publish rent increases, and requiring them to apply to tribunals to have rent increases accepted shouldn't cost a whole lot of money - but if it does it'll be a lot less than the amount working tenants like me are being fleeced out of every month.

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?

Positive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

As a 24 year-old I dream of owning a home with my partner but right now we pay so much of our income towards rent, so saving for a deposit is hard enough, without even factoring in the rapid rise in Scottish house prices being driven by landlord demand rather than real demand or value. An affordable rent to earnings ratio would improve both the material and mental well-being of all tenants.

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

Ensuring that tribunals are not costly for the tenant.

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?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The current trajectory of rent and indeed house price rises in Scotland is economically unsustainable. I am spending 50% of my net monthly income renting a flat which - according to the Scottish Land Register has increased in sale price by 271% since 1998. That is the definition of unsustainable.

General

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

This would probably have to be a separate piece of legislation but we have to think of ways to allow local authorities and social housing organisations to buy housing stock from private landlords. We also should be taxing landlords income at a higher rate than income obtained productively through work.

