

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 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))?

Partially supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

As one half of a low-income household, and as the proposed bill mentioned, even a rise of £50 (for example) can be a worry to meet bills and rent from month to month, so what that 1% actually equates to (assuming the landlord increases year on year) is still an uncertainty and a stressor. I understand that there may be scope to make amendments to the way rent increases can be appealed.

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.

Following on from my previous answer, making these amendments would be a welcome relief knowing that there is both a safety net for tenants more equality within the landlord and tenant relationship/transaction.

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

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?

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Completely supportive of this, as I currently have to screenshot rental listings on letting sites as a way of recording the rental value of equivalent homes on my street and surrounding area (most of which are lower in rent than what I pay). In the event that my landlord or agency decides to put up my rent, I have this as evidence that they can't justify an increase.

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.

I'm supportive of this while also being aware that cases need to be considered on an individual basis, especially in low-income households who are in a more precarious state.

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.

I'm not sure about savings or costs to the government and public sector, but I can only assume that the profit margins of landlords will slightly decrease although overall won't impact on their quality or precariousness of their personal living/lifestyle, while for a tenant I expect the bill to help them save money taking into account individual household incomes in relation to the rent being charged, allowing them both peace of mind and a better standard of living.

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

In consideration of being cost-effective and to help tenants with monthly costs, perhaps the bill could expand on the energy efficiency on privately rented property. For example, old tenement style buildings are often not maintained, poor or no insulation, single glazing, draughty and damp. If the property isn't deemed to meet a minimum requirement of being energy efficient, something which the landlord is responsible for although the tenant is footing the runaway costs in energy bills, then the government or local council can prevent the landlord from increasing rent until they meet the minimum requirement. This would help reduce government costs in things like allocating winter fuel allowance, as it puts the responsibility back onto the landlord for their own property. It may also deter rogue landlords if a strike system is put into place allowing them ample time to fix things and thereafter if no action is taken, revoke their registration and ban them from being a landlord.

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.

Honestly I'm unsure, as inequality and discrimination seems to be ingrained in some people and companies and seeps into what marginalized people see back in wages or in the way that they are treated - this is likely not to go away completely - although in respect of the bill I'd hope that it goes some way to levelling the playing field and offers peace of mind and security, while increasing a better standard of living for those that need it most.

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

I think to have a system in place that can review individual cases if issues of equality are raised within the bill to ensure fairness and transparency without risk to the tenant. These cases can be both anonymous and open to public review to understand and learn how best practice can be maintained and how to best support tenants and landlords equally.

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.

It's difficult to say although I would hope it would be sustainable. As I mentioned previously, putting the responsibility back onto landlords for maintaining their properties and meeting minimum energy efficiency requirements could help with overall monthly costs to the tenant, thus also improving environmental impacts. If the landlord can't or doesn't want to comply and sells the property as a direct result then perhaps they can only sell at a fixed price enforced by the government, instead of treating their property as a cash-cow. This might open the market to more responsible landlords or those previously outpriced from their own neighbourhoods (depending on price), who would be better suited to looking after and

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maintaining a property, and take pride in improving, growing and maintaining the social-enviro aspects of certain neighbourhoods.

General

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

The sooner the better.