

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 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).

Isabelle Tiddy

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.

Rent increases are currently rising at significantly above inflation rates, particularly within cities such as Glasgow. This is making it difficult for students and young families to rent properties, or to save money while renting. This may lead to fewer people able to save enough to get on the property ladder, as well as people forced to remain living with their parents. Young people living with their parents due to financial issues report difficulty maintaining a social life, while those who have to work extra hours or take a part-time job alongside their studies may experience increased mental health issues due to stress. Rent control would protect tenants from landlords increasing prices by large amounts at their discretion, as is currently the case.

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.

Increases in rent leave people unable to pay leases on properties they may have occupied for some time, meaning they must either find more affordable housing (a struggle when rent is increasing across the board) or risk homelessness

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.

Landlords must be held accountable for the prices they charge and not allowed to increase prices at short notice or at rates significantly higher than inflation

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.

Rent pressure zones may protect the right to affordable housing by preventing high price increases

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.

While the government may experience some cost due to administrative costs, this will likely be balanced by reduced requirements for government funded housing support if people can afford their own rent. Landlords may incur a reduction in profits, however as many landlords are currently increasing their rent prices at significantly above the rate of inflation, this is unlikely to actually affect their costs to the point of being out of pocket. The bill would significantly reduce rent costs to prospective tenants and prevent unfair rent increases for those already letting property.

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

No Response

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.

Those with protected characteristics tend to earn less and have less job security than more privileged groups, leaving them more vulnerable to increases in rent prices. The new bill would thus have a significant positive impact on some of the most vulnerable in society.

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

In my opinion the bill is unlikely to have negative impacts on equality, however ensuring that lower earners and students get priority to rent in rent-controlled areas could ensure that this scheme is not taken advantage of by higher earners who could afford property outside rent controlled areas.

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.

Providing affordable housing is likely to have mainly positive social impacts, and the increased spending power of tenants paying fair rent prices is likely to make up for any cost to the economy. Environmental impacts may be positive as commuting may be reduced and people may be able to afford to make more eco-friendly choices in purchasing.

General

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

No Response