

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).

Audrey Barnes

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.

I definitely support a cap. However, over the course of time, that 1% above inflation can amount to significant increase. Concerns arising should deflation occur, and with regards to stagnation in wages, and the fact that urban rent rates are already at a point of crisis, pushing folks to further and further away from towns and cities, relying more on expensive transportation. I would hope that additional measures would be considered for the disproportionate burden placed on lower income residents, and especially those with additional care responsibilities and/or accessibility needs. It's part of a much bigger, more complex system of things.

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?

Partially supportive

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

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 would support this - in other countries, such as the US with rent control areas, this has enabled lower income households the time and space to afford access to other services (e.g. education, transportation, community participation, work) and improve issues related to economic disparities. However, it would likely depend greatly on the landlord/rent registration system being expanded and enforced; otherwise, what system would commities and tenants? A case by case reporting/escalation/application process? Better to have a data collection and tracking system in place, ensuring efficiency and accumulation of information over time to allow for continued improvement of systems.

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.

Costs of housing increasing push up inflation across the board, as it tends to be a measure used for product/service providers to modify pricing, both in general, and to specific regions/zones/districts. Make rent affordable and increases in debt to cover all life costs will reduced, and the increases in cost of living for all (including Scottish-resident landlords) will be slowed to a (slightly more) manageable pace.

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

Working with third party organisations, such as living rent, unions, citizens advice bureau, and ombudsman - they are already collecting a lot of data, have reporting systems, and real-life qualitative insights from the front line of the nuanced and significant impact rent and cost of living has on the people of Scotland. A collaborative approach could provide great opportunities to build an appropriate response, without the needs to spend on totally "reinventing the wheel".

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.

The costs of housing and living more generally are a higher proportion of overall income for those of lower income - which also happens to be the income brackets in which so many of those of protected characteristics are. This relates to additional resource requirements for healthcare, daily accessibility needs, as well as systematic biases which are faced in employment seeking and progression. If rents escalate, the costs all too often fall disproportionately on these groups/intersections of society. Make rents, and rent systems in general, more fair - taking steps to recognise the barriers faced by these groups in implementation - and we move towards a more fair society.

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

Should rent be kept within affordable ranges, it may enable more folks to rent multiple properties for the purposes of sub-letting (e.g. AirBnB) - only exacerbating housing access issues. This needs to be recognised in the Bill, with implementation acting to stop it.

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.

Consult with those researching the wider impact and nuanced details of systems developed in response to the bill, and on a continuous basis.

General

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

No Response