



PRESS RELEASE

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Scottish renters are continuing to be unfairly refused the return of their deposits from private landlords. The problem, which primarily affects those on low or fixed incomes, has increased by up to 30% since 2006.

Between 8,000 and 11,000 tenants in Scotland are having their deposits unfairly withheld, totalling between £2.2m and £3.6m per annum. Despite this the Scottish Government 'Review of the Private Sector' refuses to support a Protected Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

Student bodies throughout Scotland are urging the government to provide a scheme which prevents landlords from withholding deposits or reducing the sum payable without cause. Tenancy deposit protection schemes ensure that a third party kept each renter's deposit and returned it when due.

Currently victims of landlords withholding their money can challenge this only through a claim through a Small Claims Court, yet many loopholes in the law often make success difficult. Landlords who change the name of the company, but keep the rental properties and premises of their business, avoid having to pay any debts they have accumulated, causing financially and time-poor renters lose their deposits entirely.

Tenancy deposit schemes are in place throughout Europe, including in England and Wales. The current system in these countries is self-financing, and does not place any additional financial strain on government, landlord, or tenant.

Gavin Lee, Convenor of CHES said:

"It's absolutely essential that the government understands how important this issue is, especially since it affects vulnerable groups such as those on low-incomes, including students."

"A tenancy deposit protection scheme is a practical way to ensure fairness and safety for tenants. The Scottish Government review states one of its aims is to 'provide better safeguards for tenants' – on that point alone, they have singularly failed."

The Coalition of Higher Education Students in Scotland (CHES) exists to promote and enhance the position of students in higher education in Scotland and act as their voice on national issues. By listening to CHES as a national student body you can be assured that you are listening to the voice of 100,000 higher education students in Scottish institutions. CHES reflects the commitment to voicing concerns on issues that really matter to students.

CHES represents the students of the following institutions at a national level: the University of Dundee, the University of Glasgow, the Glasgow School of Art, Open University in Scotland, the University of Strathclyde, the University of St. Andrews.

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