

Margaret Burgess MSP
Minister for Housing and Welfare
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG
Dear Mrs Burgess,

11th March 2016

Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Bill

I write in relation to the above legislation which I understand you are currently reviewing in advance of the Stage 3 proceedings on 17th March 2016.

In my current position as Vice-President Student Support for Glasgow University Students' Representative Council it is my responsibility to promote the welfare of all students within the University of Glasgow. As I'm sure you are aware, a significant proportion of the student population studying at our University are currently housed in the private rented sector. We have been actively involved in responding to the previous 2 consultations on the bill.

Whilst we welcome many of the amendments made to the bill since it was first introduced last October, in particular the removal of the "no-fault" repossession ground and the removal of the initial tenancy term, there are still some sections of the bill which we are deeply concerned about.

Stage 2 amendments 113-115 relating to eviction grounds 13 and 13a where a tenant can be evicted for anti-social behaviour, or by associating with someone who was engaged in anti-social behaviour, are of particular concern.

If enacted in their current form, these amendments would permit a landlord to apply to evict a tenant if they were convicted of anti-social behaviour in a location completely unrelated to the property they are renting. Whilst we agree that landlords and communities should be protected from anti-social tenants, the current wording of the bill could see unscrupulous landlords evicting tenants via the "back door" for a crime completely unrelated to the tenancy or property in question.

It is also conceivable that a tenant could find themselves evicted for "associating" with a friend or family member who has been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment which bears no relevance or relation to their current tenancy. Again this could result in innocent parties being put at risk of losing their home due simply to the fact that they are unaware of a friend or family member's criminal past. This could also potentially have a huge impact on students renting a shared HMO property wherein one of the tenants has previously been convicted of a relevant crime or could give rise to instances where a tenant who has been the victim of domestic abuse could find themselves subject to eviction proceedings due to their partner's conviction.

I would therefore encourage you to amend eviction ground 13 to state that a tenant can only be evicted if convicted of anti-social behaviour either in the relevant property or the locality of the property. We are also unclear on the definition of locality used for the purposes of the bill and would urge that this be more clearly defined in the bill.

Similarly I would request that you amend or delete eviction ground 13a to remove the possibility of a tenant being evicted due to unrelated crimes of a friend or family member.

Finally I would like to thank you for taking the time to review our concerns on this issue and I would be happy to discuss these in more detail if it would be helpful. My contact details are included below.

Yours sincerely



Una Marie Darragh
Vice President Student Support