

A new deal for tenants

Tell us what you think



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1. Do you think the idea is a good one?

Yes

No

Not sure



A new deal for tenants



A **tenant** is someone who pays money to a landlord every month, so that they can live in a home.

A **deal** is an agreement, made by the people who are part of it.

The Scottish Government made a plan called 'Housing to 2040.'



It says what we want homes and communities to look and feel like for the people of Scotland, no matter where they live and what point in their life they are at.

What is our vision for rented housing?

What do we want to see?



It is a vision where:

- everyone can have a warm and safe home that is not expensive
- standards are the same if you rent or own your home
- housing has easy access to green spaces and services you need





- there is no homelessness, child poverty and fuel poverty



- there is enough good quality homes to rent



- all tenants have a voice and can be heard

We want to make things fairer for **renting** a home.

The Scottish Government wants these things for:



- tenants in social rented homes, like council houses
- tenants in private rented homes



Renting means paying money every month to a landlord, to live in their house or flat.

To make our vision happen we will:



- listen to what you say in deciding our final plan for the Rented Sector
- put money into improvements and building more affordable housing



- make sure we understand the needs of:
 - minority ethnic communities
 - women
 - people with disabilities
 - and all people with protected characteristics



- make sure support is available for anyone who needs support to manage and stay in their tenancy



- make sure the rented sector works and plans are made with local communities so the sector works well for everyone



We want to make sure all people can live in a home that is right for them.

We want to start a Private Tenant Participation Panel.

We want to find out how to support tenants and landlords better.

We need people to understand their rights and responsibilities.



Question: What makes it difficult for people with protected characteristics when renting somewhere to live?

Pets



Pets are an important part of the family for many people and are good for their health and wellbeing.

Many private landlords do not allow pets because they worry they will damage the property or make a mess.



If a landlord agrees for their tenant to keep pets it is written in a document called a Tenancy Agreement.



There are Easy Read or Supporting Notes that must come with every Private Residential Tenancy Agreement.

A tenant can ask the landlord to change the tenancy if they are disabled and need an assistance dog to be able to live in the property.



If the landlord says no they may be discriminating on the grounds of disability.

This could be illegal – against the law.



Question: How could a right to keep pets be introduced for the private sector?

Should exceptions be allowed?

Question: Should the right to keep pets also be introduced as a right in the social sector?

Personalisation



Personalisation means making something feel like your own.

Private rented tenants, especially those living in rented accommodation for a long time, would like to be able to

change things so it feels more like their home.

This could be things like changing the colour of walls or putting pictures up.

People who own their home and social rented tenants can already do this.



If a tenant wants to change things in the house they must get the landlord to agree in writing.

It is up to the landlord to agree or not.

Question: How could we have a right to personalise a privately rented home?

Question: Should rules be the same if a property is furnished or unfurnished?

Question: Landlords keep a deposit – a sum of money from the tenant that they keep if there is damage to the property.

Could there be a new way to protect private landlords against damage to their property caused by personalisation?

Who should sort any disagreements?



Changes to the eviction process



An **eviction** means the tenant must leave the property.

For private tenants, a law called the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016 gave tenants more security.

Landlords cannot ask a tenant to leave for no reason and must now use one of 18 reasons called 'grounds'.

Landlords must give their tenant at least 84 days' notice that the tenancy will come to an end if they have lived in the let property for more than six months, and when a conduct ground is not being used to end the tenancy.

Being asked to leave a tenancy and finding somewhere else to live can be more stressful and difficult in winter because:



- there are not as many places to rent
- it is harder to get services because of staff holidays
- people have higher costs particularly for heating and are at more risk of financial hardship



We want to look at ways we can support and protect tenants more from being asked to leave or be evicted from their rented property over the winter period.

Question: Do you think there need to be more protections to help prevent tenancies ending during winter?



Question: What length of time should 'winter' be?

Question: What other things could help stop evictions during the winter period?

A new housing standard for Scotland



Many homes in the private rented sector are not in as good condition as owner-occupied or social rented homes.

We must make sure everyone has a warm, safe, affordable home to live in.

The Scottish Government has said there will be a new Housing Standard in law by 2025.

This will cover all homes, rented and owned.





Good quality housing is a human right.

All tenancies and new homes must follow the same high standards.

There will be ways to check that landlords are following the standards.



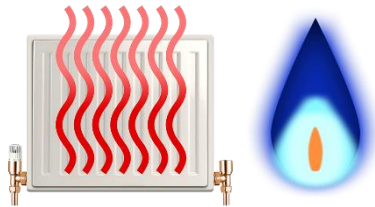
Action: The Scottish Government will publish a consultation on a new housing standard.

We will look at what people tell us.



We will publish a draft standard in 2023 and introduce laws in 2024/25

The new housing standard will come into force between 2026 to 2030.



It will follow energy efficiency standards in the Heat in Buildings Strategy.

Affordability

People must be able to rent good quality homes that are not expensive.

How much rent you pay for a private rented home can depend on a number of things such as:



- the amount of holiday lets and second homes in the area



- the cost of owning a home
- how many people are looking for homes
- economic changes.



The economy is how the country produces and uses goods, services and money.



- the number of homes that are rented out to people on holiday
- how many **second homes** there are in the area.

A **second home** is one where the person who owns it does not live there.

They use it for holidays.

Rents can be unaffordable and unfair in some areas.

This means many people find it very difficult to find a home.



The high cost of housing puts a lot of people into poverty especially younger households.



Poverty means not having enough money to buy basic things like food or housing.



Many people cannot own their own home because they cannot save for a deposit.

They are spending so much of their wage on rent.



By the end of 2025 the Scottish Government plans to introduce national rent controls.

Rent controls would aim to make rents more affordable.

Tenants would be more likely to be able to afford to rent because the cost is not too high.

We will have a consultation about rent controls.

What we want rent controls to look like



- tenants pay rent that is not too expensive for good quality housing
- local councils can introduce local measures
- rent controls will be based on evidence – facts, figures and information



- they will support and encourage the private rented sector to improve the quality of rented properties
- private tenants will be given a stronger voice



Question: Do you agree with the vision and principles set out above in relation to a future model of rent controls for the private rented sector in Scotland?

Disability and the Rented Sector



A 2016 Scottish Government report found three main things made it difficult for disabled people to get good housing:

- not enough suitable housing
- difficult to get and keep support
- the expectations of housing officers, care staff and families



Positive housing experiences for people with disabilities were:

- location
- space
- have a choice in housing decisions
- information
- staff understanding what they want and need



Housing that is not suitable can leave disabled people and their carers feeling trapped in their home and make their mental health worse.

Housing should give people independence, control and choice on how they live.



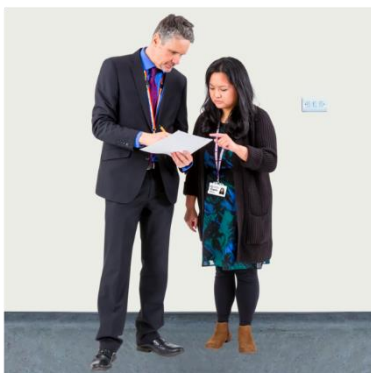
It is not easy or equal for everyone who needs an adaptation to get one in their house.

We will review the adaptations system and make it quicker and easier to use.



We must think about the needs of:

- ethnic minority communities
- and other groups with protected characteristics
- a population that will have a larger number of people over 65



The Scottish Government is also undertaking a review of aids and equipment guidance, and information on this will be added to the adaptations review.

We are looking at how this will change when we have a new National Care Service.



Question: What is your personal experience in securing necessary adaptations - either for yourself, or for your tenants - in rented accommodation?

Did anything make it difficult for you?

Did this happen in the private or social rented sector?



Housing for Varying Needs is guidance on home design so they:

- are flexible and can change if people's needs change
- suit people of different abilities
- are easy to live in
- are fit for purpose



New build homes should meet the 'basic' design rules in Housing for Varying Needs guidance

'Desirable' design rules should also be included where possible.

There is a review of:

- The Housing for Varying Needs Design Guide
- Building Standards



These new standards will be part of a Scottish Accessible Homes Standard which all new homes must achieve.



We will have more accessible and adapted homes.

This will make sure tenants and people who own their home have more choice.



We have made guidance for local council about having more housing that is accessible for people who use wheelchairs.



Councils will make a report every year to say how many accessible homes they have.