
To: Housing and Community Safety Policy Board

On: 25th August 2015

Report by: Director of Development and Housing Services

Heading: Response to Shelter Scotland's request for support for their 'Make Renting Right' campaign

1. Summary

- 1.1 Shelter Scotland approached the Council in late June 2015 seeking support for their 'Make Renting Right' campaign which aims to promote reform and improvement within the private rented sector.
 - 1.2 This campaign follows on from The Scottish Government's recent consultations on a new tenancy for the private rented sector in December 2014 and May 2015, with Renfrewshire Council responding to both consultations.
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2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Policy Board

- 2.1 Approves the signing up of Renfrewshire Council in support of Shelter Scotland's campaign as requested in their letter of 26th June 2015, (attached as Appendix 1).
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3. Background

- 3.1. The private rented sector (PRS) in Scotland has more than doubled in size over the last 15 years. The 2011 Census found that around 10% of all homes in Renfrewshire are now in the private rented sector.
- 3.2. Against this backdrop, the Scottish Government set out its policy in relation to the sector in its 2013 private rented sector strategy, "A place to stay, a place to call home".
- 3.3. Following publication of this strategy, the government set up the Private Rented Sector Tenancy Review Group to examine how suitable and effective the current private rented sector system was and to consider whether changes in the law were needed.
- 3.4. The Review Group produced a report in May 2014 with one main recommendation; that the current tenancy system for the PRS be replaced by a new private tenancy that covers all future PRS lets.
- 3.5. Following publication of this report, a consultation on a New Tenancy for the Private Rented Sector was issued in October 2014, this was followed by a second consultation that took account of feedback and tried to address the key issues raised, seeking views on more developed proposals.
- 3.6. Overall, Renfrewshire Council's response to the second consultation welcomed the Scottish Government's proposals for a new private sector tenancy regime as a positive step to increase security of tenure for private sector tenants, to create clarity for both landlords and tenants in their roles and responsibilities and to simplify the procedure for setting up and ending tenancies.
- 3.7. The Council's response included reference to Renfrewshire's Tackling Poverty Commission report, which was published in March 2015 and highlights concerns about housing costs and affordability in the private rented sector, and called for additional powers to ensure that private tenants are charged a fair price.
- 3.8. This response also notes that despite rapid growth in the private rented sector in recent years, there is no effective and comprehensive control over rents and standards in the sector and this wider issue should be addressed by the Scottish Government with consideration given to the proportion of income spent on rent, the need for recourse to housing benefit (including working households claiming benefit) and patterns of housing benefit expenditure.

- 3.9. Shelter Scotland's campaign has attracted support from a number of other Scottish local authorities including Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as organisations such as ALACHO and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA). Ahead of Scottish parliament legislation later this year, the campaign seeks to gather support to promote the creation of a more stable, predictable and flexible private rented sector. The campaign seeks:
- Stability for people wanting to make rented housing their home;
 - Flexibility for people to stay in their home as long as they need to;
 - A modern tenancy that gives security and flexibility for tenants and landlords;
 - A fair system for sorting out renting problems when they occur; and
 - Predictable rents for tenants and landlords.
- 3.10. These aims are in line with the Councils own aspirations and are reflected in the responses from the Council to the two consultations on a New Tenancy for the Private Rented Sector recently submitted to the Scottish Government and with the recommendations included within Renfrewshire's Tackling Poverty Commission report and the recent agreement by the Council to invest £6 million in a scheme to tackle child poverty (including £60,000 to maximise the councils current and future powers to register and regulate private landlords to boost standards in the private rented sector).

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial – None.**
2. **HR & Organisational Development – None.**
3. **Community Planning – None**
4. **Legal – None.**
5. **Property/Assets-None.**
6. **Information Technology – None.**
7. **Equality & Human Rights** – The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations

and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – None.
9. **Procurement** – None.
10. **Risk** – None.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None.

List of Background Papers

- Consultation on a New Tenancy for the Private Sector, Housing and Community Safety Policy Board, 20th January 2015
- Second consultation on a New Tenancy for the Private Sector, Housing and Community Safety Policy Board, 12th May 2015

Author: Mark Campbell, Housing Strategy Officer, 0141 618 6268,
mark.campbell@renfrewshire.gov.uk

26 June 2015

Sandra Black
Chief Executive Renfrewshire council
Council HQ,
North Building,
Cotton Street,
PAISLEY,
PA1 1TR

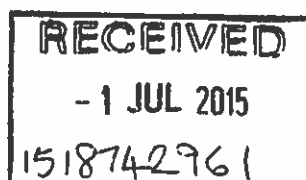
Dear Ms Black

Shelter Scotland – Make Renting Right campaign

Shelter Scotland is campaigning to reform and improve the growing private rented sector to make sure it is a safe, secure and stable housing option. We are building a coalition of supporters to 'Make Renting Right' and I wanted to ask if your council would be interested in signing up and supporting the campaign?

We have Edinburgh, Glasgow, Fife and Dundee councils signed up already and we have broad cross party support with 84 MSPs signed up so far. We also have 30 organisations and over 2000 individuals signed up. The organisations include ALACHO, SCVO, SFHA, Quarriers, Educational Institute Scotland (EIS), Govan Law Centre and Citizens Advice Scotland, amongst others. You can see all those who have signed up on our website at www.shelterscotland.org/makerentingright

312,000 households in Scotland now live in the private rented sector and in Renfrewshire 10% of households are in the private rented sector, compared to the Scottish average of 13%. The private rented sector has become home to a more diverse group of tenants in the last 10 years. The number of families with children for example has more than doubled in the last 10 years, with 80,000 households with children now living in private rented accommodation. We believe the current tenancy regime needs to change to reflect the needs of this diverse group of tenants, many of whom now see the sector as a long term housing option rather than a stepping stone to home ownership or accessing social rented housing.



Shelter: the National Campaign for Homeless People (cited)

Registered address
88 Old Street, London EC1Y 9AU
Registered in England and Wales
Company number 1018133
Registered VAT number 626 551674
Registered charity in England
and Wales (262112) and in

Until there's a home for everyone

The Scottish Government has recently consulted with a range of stakeholders through the Scottish Government's Private Rented Sector Tenancy Review Group and we were very pleased to see the group recommend *'that the current tenancy for the Private Rented Sector, the Short Assured Tenancy and the Assured Tenancy, be replaced by a new private tenancy that covers all future PRS lets'*.

Following on from this recommendation the Scottish Government recently consulted on a new tenancy for the Private Sector. We have responded to these consultations which are a precursor to forthcoming private rented sector legislation which will change the tenancy regime and is due to be introduced to the Scottish Parliament this autumn. We are therefore gathering support ahead of this legislation to ensure we can create a more secure, stable, predictable but still flexible private rented sector.

To Make Renting Right we are asking for:

1. **Stability** for people wanting to make rented housing their home
2. **Flexibility** for people to stay in their home as long as they need to
3. A **modern** tenancy that gives security and flexibility for tenants AND landlords
4. A **fair** system for sorting out renting problems when they occur
5. **Predictable** rents for tenants and landlords

We would very much appreciate your council's support for this campaign.

Information about the campaign can be seen on our website at www.shelterscotland.org/makerentingright.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Lang', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Adam Lang
Head of Communications and Policy, Shelter Scotland

CC Cllr Mark MacMillan, Council Leader
CC Councillor Williams, Convenor Housing and Community Safety Board