

SOUTH LANARKSHIRE TENANTS DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROJECT

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

The following response is submitted on behalf of tenants from across South Lanarkshire based on feedback from a session held to discuss the Housing Bill.

Q1 What are your views on the provisions which abolish the right to buy for social housing tenants?

Tenants were still broadly concerned about the proposal to remove the right to buy and felt that it was too late to make a difference as most social landlords had already lost most of their more desirable stock. The consensus was that right to buy should be left as is, and with the changes already made by the Scottish Government less and less stock would be lost. Indeed a majority of the tenants felt that by abolishing the right to buy social landlords would lose more stock over the next 3 years as tenants felt forced to make a decision to exercise their right. This is particularly the case as rent increases continue to be greater than inflation and wage increases. Could the proposal end up losing more social stock than if it had been left as is?

Q2 Do you have any views on the proposed 3 year timetable before these provisions come into force?

Assuming the proposal to abolish Right to Buy is made, tenants felt that a 3 year window was not sufficient to give tenants an appropriate time to decide whether to exercise their right to buy. They felt a 5 year window would be more appropriate. They would also like clarity on what happens with applications that have been made before the 'deadline' which have not yet been completed.

They feel that if the proposal is accepted and Right to Buy is indeed abolished then the Government needs to take steps to inform every tenant individually who will lose their right. Whether this is organised by landlords or not, the tenants felt the Government should fund the publicity.

Q3 In your view, will the provisions which are proposed to increase the flexibility that landlords have when allocating housing, allow them to make best use of social housing?

Tenants support the proposal to give landlords more flexibility in allocations, particularly the change to include those who are under occupying. Tenants also support the changes made with regard to home ownership and ability to be allocated a social property. Tenants on the whole however, do worry that the lack of stock will always be an issue in addressing housing need, despite the very welcome investment by the Scottish Government in social and in particular Council Housing.

Q4 Will the proposals which will adjust the operation of short Scottish secure tenancies and Scottish secure tenancies provide landlords with tools that will assist them in tackling antisocial behaviour in an appropriate and proportionate manner?

Tenants feel it will make a little difference and so should be welcomed. However, tenants still felt that landlords and agencies needed to be doing more to prevent anti social behaviour impacting on communities. Tenants are very supportive of the proposal to enable landlords to use convictions in another court to support eviction proceedings.

Further comments

Tenants are concerned about the extra powers being granted to the Regulator, especially as there has been no consultation in this area.

**South Lanarkshire Tenants Development Support Project
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