

Citizens Advice Scotland briefing on Stage 3 of the Housing (Scotland) Bill

September 2025

Everyone should have a safe, secure and sustainable home

Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) supports the Housing (Scotland) Bill and is keen to work with all parties to help the Bill realise its full potential. Homes are the foundation of all our lives and in a just and compassionate Scotland, everyone should have access to a safe, secure and sustainable home.

While the Bill will not solve the Housing Emergency on its own, it will make positive improvements around homelessness prevention and the private rented sector. The Bill should be delivered alongside the emergency action plan and backed by sustained investment to achieve its potential.

We urge MSPs to vote in favour of the Housing (Scotland) Bill at Stage 3

- The Housing Bill has seen significant changes at Stage 2, which will help develop, strengthen and make the private rented sector fairer for tenants and landlords. **It is essential that the Bill's measures are regularly reviewed to ensure it is having the intended impact** and delivering positive outcomes for people.
- We will work with the Scottish Government to ensure the provisions regarding three golden threads of **data, enforcement and resources** - which are critical to the success of the Bill - are implemented as soon as practicable.

The rented sector urgently requires reform

Every day, advisers in local CABs across Scotland give advice to people struggling to access a safe, secure and sustainable home and we know there is a strong link to the housing emergency across much of the advice we give. In Q1 of this year alone, the network provided:

- **Over 62,000 pieces of housing advice**, most commonly about private renting and renting from a local authority.
- **More than 400 queries about rents and rent increases** in the private rented sector.
- **Over 2,000 pieces of advice on homelessness**, with many seeking advice on temporary accommodation standards and possession action, signalling the insecurity of housing for thousands of people.
- **Free and impartial advice to people like Judith***, who sought advice from her local CAB after being notified by her landlord about a rent increase of £150 per month. Judith has a number of health conditions and cares for a child with autism and was very worried about how she will afford the rent increase, or how the landlord will react if she challenges the increase.

Tenants need more affordable rented homes

Evidence from across the Citizens Advice Network in Scotland demonstrates that renters are struggling with affordability. More needs to be done to support people to stay in their homes. **The average rent debt of private renters seeking advice from us is growing; last year this was over £4,200, 14% higher than the previous year.** Without ambitious action on affordability, homelessness due to rent arrears will continue to rise and the Housing Emergency will not end. Rent controls are a key mechanism in achieving this.

The Bill must deliver a robust national system of rent controls that is easy to understand and implement and that also has a significant impact in improving affordability for tenants. There must be minimal exemptions and sufficient resources for local authorities to effectively implement these measures if the Bill is to really tackle affordability pressures in the private rented sector.

It is vital that the private rented sector is better regulated in order to improve outcomes for everyone. The Housing (Scotland) Bill will contribute positively towards this. **We urge MSPs to vote for the Bill to pass Stage 3.**

For more information, please contact: Aoife Deery, Senior Social Justice Policy Officer (aoife.deery@cas.org.uk)