**Housing Scotland Bill – contact your MSP – Guidance and letter and email template**

**Taking action**

* Your MSP works on behalf of you and other residents in the area.
* In order to make your voice heard in the Scottish Parliament, your MSP needs to know what you want to say.
* When lobbying your MSP, it is important to be persuasive, not confrontational - you want your MSP to be an ally.

**Write to your MSP**

Writing a personal letter or email to your MSP is an effective campaigning tactic. We have set out a step-by-step guide to writing your letter or email.

1. Include your address so they know you are a constituent – either say your office is located in the constituency or home address if these are different.
2. You can find your local MSP on the Scottish Parliament website at <https://www.parliament.scot/msps>
3. Tell the MSP who you are e.g. “I am a member of your constituency, work as a letting agent and a member of Propertymark, the UK’s leading professional body for property agents.”
4. Inform the MSP about the Housing (Scotland) Bill.
5. Tell them about your concerns with the changes and give examples from your work.
6. Inform them about your personal connection to the issue.
7. Inform the MSP of a potential solution to some of the proposed reforms.
8. Ask them to raise the issue in the Scottish Parliament and speak up for letting agents.
9. Ask them to write to Paul McLennan MSP, Minister for Housing.

1. Thank them for their time and consideration and let them know you would like a response. You could say “I look forward to hearing from you.”

**Correspondence**

After you’ve sent your email or letter, please let the Policy and Campaigns Team know so we can track MSPs as part of our campaign via policy@propertymark.co.uk

MSPs are most likely to respond to a personalised letter or email, and especially one written by a passionate constituent or someone working in a local business in the area who sets out why an issue is so important to them.

To support you, here’s a template example you could use to help you write to your MSP:

[YOUR FULL ADDRESS]

[YOUR POSTCODE]

[DATE]

Dear [MSP NAME],

My names is [YOUR NAME] and I am a constituent of [OUR CONSTITUENCY]. I am a letting agent and a member of Propertymark, the UK’s leading professional membership body for property agents.

I am writing to you today because I am concerned about the Housing (Scotland) Bill. The legislation will bring in changes to the law covering rent controls, tenants’ rights to keep pets and decorate their homes, and a mechanism to delay evictions under certain circumstances.

We want to see standards improved but the changes must be balanced and fair for agents, landlords and tenants.

There is huge demand for private rented property in the area, but I am concerned that this legislation does nothing to address the situation, and many landlords have been impacted by tax changes and further regulatory burdens. [BRING IN ANY STATISTICS FROM YOUR BUSINESS].

Furthermore, rent control should not be applicable between tenancies to ensure landlords can invest or upgrade the property. The legislation must ensure that landlords have the funds and incentives for the adequate repair and improvement of properties.

I am asking you to take the following steps to address my concerns:

* Ask the Scottish Government to commit to reviewing all costs and taxes impacting private landlords to ensure landlords continue in the market and more landlords can meet the demand for home to rent.
* In any area of Scotland, including the whole of Scotland, we do not know what the stock of supply. The Scottish Government must also commit in legislation to publish an annual parliamentary update via a Ministerial Statement on the state of the private rented sector. This should include data on the supply, size and location of properties.
* To help tenants and landlords understand when designation of a rent control area will take place, local authorities should be required submit their reports on the same date.
* Scottish Ministers should be required to report back within a statutory timescale, which should be set out in the Bill. Currently, Scottish Ministers can report back, ‘as soon as reasonably practicable after the receipt of a report.’
* Rental data also needs to be collected and coordinated nationally to be consistent and transparent.

Without these changes, the Bill in its current form is highly likely to reduce the availability of homes for tenants and increase their costs, with more landlords withdrawing homes from the private rented sector.

I would be very grateful if you would raise these issues in the Scottish Parliament and write to Paul McLennan MSP, Minister for Housing.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

[YOUR NAME]