



Meeting	Glasgow Tenant-Led Housing Commission (Private Rented Sector)		
Date	Wednesday 26 th January 2022		
Time	6.00pm		
Venue	Virtual via Microsoft TEAMS		
Present			
Beatrice Onashile	Jean Charsley (Co-Chair)	Elaine Gallagher	Victoria Hyde
David Gunn	Marjorie Cuthbert (Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living)	Danny Pilkington (Living Rent)	Benn Rapson (Strathclyde University Students Union)
Mike Smith (SafeDeposit Scotland)	Jennifer Harris (CaCHE)	Samuel Thomas (Shelter Scotland)	Stephen Connor (TIS)
Apologies			
Emma McShane (Co-Chair)	Hanne Thijs	Kirsty Purves	Daniel McCallum
Colm Birmingham	Joey Lawrie (Homes for Good)		

Minute of Previous Meeting

1. J Charsley provided an overview of discussions held at the previous meeting.

Outcome(s): Minute agreed

Matters Arising

2. There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

Outcome(s): Noted.

SafeDeposit Scotland

3. The Commission noted a presentation from M Smith (Head of SafeDeposit Scotland).

Points for consideration were noted as the following:

Increase in number of deposits held and total value of deposits.

Average deposit value increased from £756.19 (pre-pandemic) to £791.58 (mid/post-pandemic) which reflects average PRS rental increase over the same period.

The number of disputes presented increased from 3,577 in 2019-20 to 4,260 to 2020-21 with cleaning being the primary reason for disputes between tenants and landlords.

The SDS Resolution service is designed to establish a satisfactory resolution specifically to rent arrears, without the need for further action.

The self-resolution service is acknowledged as good practice and enables tenants and landlords to mediate through impartial communication channels to explore satisfactory outcomes. Positively this reduces the requirement for tenants and landlords to seek arbitration through the First-Tier Tribunal (FTT).

Scottish Government are considering mandatory self-resolution or mediation prior to arbitration at the FTT as a driver to encourage PRS stakeholders to engage.

SDS resolution process requires additional resources to be rolled-out to support all tenancies registered.

Currently tenants tend to be more open to exploring self-resolution when compared to landlords and/or letting agents.

Overall, 17% of claims are upheld in favour of tenants, 19% in favour of landlords and the remaining 64% are agreed to be split. 91% of rent arrears claims are upheld in favour of the landlord.

Inventories are not requested or submitted when a tenancy deposit is lodged. Less than 1% of tenancy deposits go on to be disputed.

SafeDeposit Scotland do not have access to anecdotal data to explore disputes per demographics. This could potentially highlight groups in need of support. There is an opportunity to explore potential discrimination against a certain demographic (e.g. *do landlords challenge students deposits more frequently?*).

Outcome(s): Presentation noted

Shelter Scotland – Common Issues for Tenants in Glasgow’s PRS

4. The Commission noted a presentation from S Thomas (Shelter Scotland).

Points for consideration were noted as the following:

There is a lack of restrictions on landlords advertising properties at set rent levels.

Does a rise in PRS rents correlate with an increase in Local Housing Allowance (i.e. unfrozen in 2020)?

There are many barriers to Glasgow’s PRS for lower income individuals/families. Rents are by and large unaffordable and result in tenants being unable to have savings.

The cost of deposits required and support systems available for deposits within Glasgow are inadequate (e.g. key funds are a breach of regulations).

There is a lack of 4-bedroom properties to accommodate large families.

SafeDeposit Scotland are developing a pilot approach to providing deposits for tenants who do not have the required funds. Thereafter the deposit provided will be absorbed by the organisation once the tenancy has ended.

Discrimination against individuals/families in receipt of benefits, students, migrants, etc. remains a challenge.

Addressing repairs in a 'reasonable' timescale cultivates a lack of clarity and understanding for landlords to address disrepair appropriately, and subsequently nurtures insecurity of tenure (e.g. tenants withholding rent).

Tenants seeking support/decision through the FTT can be expect lengthy delays in the process.

Under Common Law tenants are entitled to seek compensation where landlords fail to meet their repairing obligations and they can demonstrate loss or injury. This requires tenants to seek legal assistance with a duty to meet a threshold for evidence, both of which can be challenging.

Tenants' rights to repair are relatively clear on paper however in reality are difficult to apply.

The evidence requirement to evict tenants is low and open to misuse. Tenants can be evicted without having done anything wrong (e.g. landlord wants to sell their property or wants to move a family member into the property).

Rent arrears are the most common reason for eviction in the PRS. The threshold to demonstrate a requirement for eviction is much higher in the social rented sector when compared to the PRS. The FTT has granted eviction where tenants have owed as little as 1-months' rent.

Illegal evictions continue to be a challenge. At an operational level some police officers advise tenants that eviction matters are a civil matter. Is there a requirement to educate PRS stakeholders on what constitutes an illegal eviction?

Outcome(s): Agreed

AOCB

5. S Connor referred to September's meeting where it was agreed that meetings of the Tenant-Led Housing Commission (TLHC) would not be open to observers.

S Connor discussed the opportunity for elected members to therefore join the TLHC Mighty Network as a means of accessing paperwork and keeping up to date with the workings of the Commission.

S Connor reminded participants that we have adopted Chatham House Rule and as such no comments within paperwork are attributed to any one individual as it is a collective discussion.

S Connor advised that a monthly blog of the Commission has recently been drafted and will be made available on the TIS website as well as the TLHC Mighty Network.

The Commission will explore opportunities to engage Glasgow's colleges and universities to discuss recruitment targets and the impact on Glasgow's wider PRS.

The Commission will look to engage Positive Action in Housing to discuss housing and human rights within Glasgow's PRS.

Outcome(s): Agreed

DONM

6. The date/time of the next meeting will be **Wednesday 23rd February 2022 at 6.00pm** via Microsoft TEAMS.