

Scottish Land & Estates (SLE) is a membership organisation that represents the interests of land managers and land-based businesses in rural Scotland. Our members offer affordable housing in some of Scotland's most isolated communities and make significant social, economic and environmental contributions to rural Scotland, and play a key role in the delivery of national and local government objectives.

This briefing note is produced ahead of the debate on 22 June 2021, to provide information for MSPs on the SLE position Impact on the Coronavirus (Extension and Expiry) (Scotland) Bill.

Scottish Land and Estates recognises the impact that Covid-19 has had on the Private Rented Sector, especially on tenants who have been left in difficult financial situations as a result of the pandemic. As such, SLE acknowledges how important it was to implement legislation preventing tenants from being evicted during this trying time.

SLE was also pleased to see members working alongside their tenants to arrange steady repayment plans, which offered tenants the opportunity to re-pay any outstanding rent in a timeframe that suited their individual personal and financial circumstances.

However, SLE is concerned to see that the Coronavirus Bill is seeking to extend the increased notice period for the evictions of tenants by an additional six months, following the previous extension in March 2021.

Whilst SLE recognises that there are tenants who are still experiencing financial difficulties, many landlords now find themselves in a position where they have not been able to receive a steady rent for their let-out property for almost a year, and have little chance of recuperating any of the arrears that have accumulated during the pandemic. This extension of the eviction ban will accentuate this, as well as impacting on the maintenance of these properties. At a point in time where landlords are expected to be undertaking works to improve the standard and energy efficiency of their buildings, they need reassurance that they are able to receive continuing rent from its occupants, and that they have the ability to take action when this is not occurring.

However, if the extension is to proceed, SLE would request that additional support is provided to landlords to ensure they are not negatively impacted by the potential burden of lost rent, and are thus able to ensure the continued maintenance of their properties.

For more detailed information:

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