

Shelter Scotland briefing: Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Bill

Shelter Scotland welcomes the on-going work by the Scottish Government to put in place legislation to protect people from the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. For people who are homeless and those who are struggling to pay their rent this support is crucial and must continue once lockdown measures are lifted.

Changes to student residential tenancies

We welcome the changes being brought in by this bill which will:

- allow students to terminate their current student accommodation tenancy by giving seven days notice
- allow students to terminate their tenancy contract in the next academic year by giving 28 days notice

Student accommodation providers must provide maximum flexibility in these unprecedented times – and these proposed changes will ensure protection for **all** students who cannot remain in their student residential accommodation due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Post pandemic period

This pandemic has shown how crucial having a safe home is. We will continue to work closely with the Scottish Government and key stakeholders to ensure that people are protected during this health emergency, and that they will continue to be supported during the post pandemic period. The impact of this pandemic will have far reaching consequences for quite some time and we must quickly build on the positive changes brought forward in the last few weeks.

For example, some people who are currently homeless and have been rough sleeping have been supported into temporary accommodation such as hotels, with some families being supported into Airbnb accommodation. This has shown that measures can be implemented quickly, and we must now ensure as a matter of urgency that people continue to be provided with suitable good quality temporary accommodation and are provided with suitable settled accommodation soon as possible. We must never return to a situation where we see people sleeping rough on our streets in Scotland.

People who are struggling to pay their rent due to impact of the pandemic must also be supported to keep their home. We have concerns that the impact of the pandemic will unfortunately last for many months beyond the end of September 2020, when the emergency measures protecting tenants from eviction are lifted, risking a spike in evictions due to rent arrears. We would therefore like to see the measures from the first Emergency Coronavirus Bill extended to protect tenants from eviction due to pandemic related rent arrears.