

# Getting the Regulations to Work in Practice

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# Overview

- Scottish Government Private Rented Sector Review
- 2012 – why private rented sector essential
- Response to regulations
- LetFirst – an innovative Local Lettings Agency
- Partnership working
- Questions and discussion

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# Scottish Government Private Rented Sector Review

- Diverse sector of approx 233,000 households
- Landlords mainly individuals or couples investing for capital growth
- 85% of tenants satisfied with landlord, agent and home
- Small minority of tenants subject to poor property and management standards
- Tenancy regime operating satisfactorily
- PRS has key role in helping Councils discharge homelessness duties

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# 2012 – Why PRS Essential

- Rising housing waiting lists
- Large numbers of homeless presentations
- Effects of the credit crunch
- Ageing population
- Lower void turnover rates
- Temporary accommodation requirements
- Budgetary position of Government and local authorities

**PRS** – Can provide significant boost to supply. Landlords willing to let to homeless client group IF they receive guarantees (especially rent and/or property condition)

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# Response to Regulations

- SG's Housing Aspirations Study showed location, property type and neighbourhood greater priority than tenure
- Can help Councils to access wider supply of housing
- Will be suitable in many cases but needs a willing landlord and tenant
- 12 month tenancy – reaction of landlords, lenders and tenants?
- How can we 'normalise' the lettings experience?
- Tackling stereotypes – landlords, social housing tenants, homeless
- Other impacts e.g. Housing Benefit Consultation



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# LetFirst – Local Lettings Agency

- Background
- Contract with City of Edinburgh Council
- Secure access to PRS for up to 300 households per year
- Homeless prevention initiative
- Includes housing advice and information
- No financial barriers e.g. deposits, references
- 6 month Rent Guarantee to landlords
- Service started on 27<sup>th</sup> April; shop opened on 9<sup>th</sup> July
- 162 properties; 1,123 referrals
- Builds on success of PSL scheme
- Has now been adopted by City of Westminster Council

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# Partnership Working

- Roles for Councils, RSLs, private and voluntary sectors
- Benefits of appointing specialist management agent
- Need for Council funding to establish service
- Importance of links with Revenues around Safeguarding, etc
- Information sharing around client group
- Works best as part of housing options – realistic information given
- Culture change for all including housing professionals



# Questions & Discussion