

Cap on private rents to be retained in Scotland for further six months

The Scottish Parliament has decided that a cap on rents will be extended for up to six months.

Measures to protect tenants while prices and the cost of living is high, including the 3% rent cap and additional eviction protections, will run on for a further period of up to six months following a vote by MSPs.

The Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) Act was introduced in October 2022 to protect tenants against the impacts of rising costs, then extended for six months from April 2023. The Scottish Parliament has now voted for a final extension, meaning the rent cap and eviction protections will be in place until March 2024 at the latest.

This will mean:

Most in-tenancy private rent increases will continue to be capped at 3% for any 12-month period

Alternatively, private landlords can apply for increases of up to 6% to help cover certain increases in costs in a specified time period where these costs can be evidenced

Enforcement of evictions will continue to be paused for six months for most tenants, except in a number of specified circumstances

Increased damages for unlawful evictions of up to 36 months' worth of rent will continue to be applicable

Social rented sector tenants are protected by the voluntary

agreement reached with social landlords on below-inflation rent increases for this financial year.

Tenants' Rights Minister Patrick Harvie said: "It's almost a year since we first introduced these measures to support tenants and the cost of living crisis is still very much with us. While essential costs for households remain high, these measures ensure the majority of tenants have much-needed stability in their rental payments while they keep the same tenancy.

"We've also included safeguards for landlords. The option of increasing rents by 6% in specified circumstances is supporting landlords to meet some of the increased costs associated with their let property. Meanwhile, the social housing sector has agreed their rents in consultation with their tenants.

"This is the final time these measures can be extended. We will continue to keep them under review to make sure they are justified and proportionate based on the pressures both tenants and landlords are experiencing.

"Scotland leads the way in the UK in both immediate and long-term action to develop a well-regulated rented sector which works for both tenants and landlords.

"We will also introduce a Housing Bill to deliver a New Deal for Tenants, including the introduction of long-term rent controls for the private rented sector."



Patrick Harvie MSP. Photo © 2023 Martin P. McAdam
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