

UK Government's Renters (Reform) Bill, Crisis submission, 17 May 2024

As you will probably be aware, it's been confirmed that the Renters Reform Bill will not now be passed due to the General Election.

That said, we would strongly welcome the legislative consent motion as set out to prevent blanket bans on "no DSS" and letting to tenants with children. We have been working closely with Shelter who have led this work in England, and I know you are aware of Shelter Scotland's research on this, as well as the Rent Better research, both of which demonstrate that Scottish landlords can be reluctant to let to tenants receiving benefits.

Nevertheless, the experience of our Skylight frontline staff is that often these policies are implemented informally, especially when housing markets are pressured and letting agents and landlords can choose their tenants. Some of the issues result from the complexity of navigating the benefits system. We would urge the Committee to consider how these prohibitions may be effectively enforced, and how landlords may be supported to be able to navigate the benefits system effectively. These may be appropriately considered as part of the measures within the current Housing Bill, including in part 5 on measures to prevent homelessness, which should include landlord and tenant assistance to support access to the private rented sector.