

UK Government's Renters Reform Bill, Living Rent submission, 27 May 2024

We would support a ban on advertising properties in a discriminatory manner and the extension of the legislation to Scotland. It is also important to support this provision to ensure that there is no discrimination regarding mortgages or insurance contracts in Scotland.

However, we believe that such a ban obviously doesn't prevent landlords from just lying about the reason they are turning someone down for a tenancy. As a result, much more robust legislation is needed here, notably regarding enforcement and penalties for landlords who discriminate. Just last week, some of our members were refused a property, with the claim that the landlord did not accept people on benefits. We know that this makes people in receipt of benefits more stressed about losing a home/being under threat of eviction or raising repair issues, as they will struggle more to get a new home. For instance, consequences regarding landlord registration, penalties for letting agents, fine for landlords.

If this legislation is extended to Scotland, the proposed clause "will grant the Scottish Ministers the power to make new provisions in the future, via regulations subject to the affirmative procedure, to extend these protections to persons of another description." We believe that Scottish Ministers should be able to expand banning blanket discriminatory policies to other groups in order to ensure that everyone is able to access housing but again that this needs to be supported by more robust legislation and enforcement mechanisms.