

Paula Bradley MLA
Committee for Communities Chairperson

Sent via email to paula.bradley@mha.niassembly.gov.uk

Friday 5th November 2021

Re: Housing Rights' evidence on the Private Tenancies Bill

Dear Paula Bradley MLA, Chair,

On behalf of Housing Rights, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for their time and attention to evidence from Housing Rights on the Private Tenancies Bill at the recent evidence session (2nd November 2021).

We appreciate the volume of evidence the Committee will be considering and thought it may be helpful if, in addition to our evidence, we noted our list of proposed amends to the Bill in summary form below.

Clause 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The notice of tenancy terms should include key information no longer required in a rent book as well as information regarding rates and the date when the tenancy will end. We note the Department intend to consult separately on these regulations and encourage efforts to be made to involve tenants and their representatives particularly.
Clause 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The requirement for a rent receipt for cash payments should include all cash payments not just those relating to rent. A time limit of 28 days should be placed on provision of receipt.
Clause 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It should be explicitly stated that deposits protected under an insurance-based scheme must be renewed as needed, to ensure they remain protected for the duration of the tenancy The amount of rent in advance which can be charged at the beginning of a tenancy should also be limited to the equivalent of one months' rent.
Clause 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed Art 5C under Clause 7(2) should be replaced with a clause enabling the Department to introduce regulations to restrict the frequency of rent increases, as well as a mechanism to challenge unfair rent increases Should the notice to quit period be extended to 12 weeks, the same period should be required for the notice of a rent increase.

Clause 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The impact of the increased notice period required by landlords would be greater if extended to 12 weeks rather than 8 weeks• The notice to quit period required by landlords for tenancies under 12 months should also be extended• Notice to quit periods required by landlords should also apply to fixed term tenancies• The extension of the notice to quit period required by a tenant to 12 weeks would <i>not</i> be proportionate• The extended notice to quit period required by landlords should be reflected within the homelessness legislation
<p>In addition, to maximise the effectiveness of the bill, it is vital that all actors in the sector are aware of the requirements under the new legislation when these come into force. To that end, a comprehensive programme of information, advice, support and training as appropriate should be put in place.</p>	

Kind regards,



Kate McCauley

Head of Policy & Development
Housing Rights

cc:

Kellie Armstrong MLA, Deputy Chair
Stephen Dunne MLA
Paul Frew MLA
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Ciara Ferguson MLA
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