

COSLA Briefing on the Housing Bill (Scotland)

Background

This briefing outlines COSLA's position on the Housing Bill (Scotland) to inform Stage 2 of the Bill's passage through the Scottish Parliament.

It is intended to underline and emphasise key aspects of the Bill on behalf of our member councils that require to be taken on board by members of the Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee, as well as the Social Justice and Social Security Committee.

We trust committee members will find this briefing helpful to inform their considerations on the Housing Bill.

Local Govt, Housing and Planning Committee Members

- COSLA recommends that there is an extended implementation period on rent controls, in order that effective guidance can be produced and clarity be provided on data requirements.
- The data collection for 'Rent Pressure Areas' should also be undertaken by the Scottish Government, should adequate and sufficient resources not be assured for local authorities to do this.

Social Justice and Social Security Committee Members

- COSLA recommends that there should be a phased implementation of the homelessness prevention duties.
- Local authorities must also be provided with adequate resources for implementation of the Housing Bill's homelessness prevention duties.
- COSLA believes that domestic abuse measures should come into force sooner, along with other elements of related legislation that are still to be implemented.
- COSLA also believes it would be helpful if GPs are covered by the proposed homelessness prevention duty, given they would be involved in considering the extent to which any particular medical condition could impact on an individual's capacity to sustain a tenancy. They will also be expected to ensure that their health needs are met either by the GP practice or by referral to appropriate specialist health services.

3rd March 2025
COSLA