

Reason for supporting the proposed licensing scheme

It will ensure Short Term Lets meet minimum safety and management standards which will protect both people and property from a range of safety risks.

Overview

The stated objective of the proposed legislation is to ensure that Short Term Lets (STLs) are safe which Electrical Safety First fully supports. As the leading electrical safety charity, we believe the mandatory electrical safety measures are much needed and will benefit both guests and owners of STLs in Scotland. Our research shows that 25% of guests have experienced an electrical safety issue whilst staying in a STL in Scotland. Regular inspection and testing covering both the electrical installation and any appliances provided with STLs will help reduce the number of deaths, injuries and accidents caused by electricity – which accounts for around 75% of all house fires each year.

Electrical Safety First also notes the revisions to other aspects of the proposed legislation which we hope will be accepted by MSPs and industry so this important piece of legislation can finally be implemented.

Electrical Safety Checks

Relating to the electrical safety elements of the licencing scheme, Electrical Safety First welcomes the proposals to introduce a requirement for mandatory five-yearly electrical safety checks in the STL sector. This is vital given that STLs cover a range of tenures, which currently have differing electrical safety standards. The majority of STLs (60% in total) are let from the owner-occupied sector, which has the most basic requirements to ensure the electrical safety of those properties. Yet, tenants living in the private and social rented sectors are both afforded essential safeguards from mandatory five-yearly electrical safety checks.

The introduction of this legislation will, therefore, create safety parity between those renting short and longer term. It will also remove the incentive for landlords to choose STLs over long-term renting to avoid having to invest in a property to bring it up to a higher standard.

There has been continued growth in the size of the STLs sector. Between 2016 and 2019, the number of STLs grew threefold to 32,000. The size of the sector will have increased further given the dependence on staycations due to the travel restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

As the sector continues to grow, it is crucial that accommodation is safe, and the proposed licencing scheme will act to protect visitors, hosts, and hosting providers. This will be even more important as the decarbonisation of heat and the transition to net zero will create an increased dependence on electricity.

We, therefore, hope this legislation, ensuring a range of safety fundamentals, will receive support.

Consultation Response

Scottish Parliament Committee Call for Evidence – Short Term Lets

Online form submission:

[Licensing of short-term lets - Scottish Parliament - Citizen Space](#)

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Further Information

Electrical Safety First's report "[Short-Changed: Identifying the Gap in Safety Standards for Short-Term Lets in Scotland](#)" provides further details of Electrical Safety First's policy position, and this submission should be read in conjunction with that report.