



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE Introduction of the Renting Homes (Amendment) (Wales) Bill
DATE 10 February 2020
BY Julie James AM, Minister for Housing and Local Government

The Renting Homes (Amendment) (Wales) Bill and the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum have today been introduced into the National Assembly.

The Bill will amend the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 (“the 2016 Act”) to provide greater security for people who rent their homes in Wales. This will particularly affect those who live in the private rented sector and occupy their homes under a ‘standard occupation contract’, the equivalent to the current assured shorthold tenancy, after the 2016 Act comes into force.

This additional security will primarily be achieved by extending the minimum notice period for issuing a section 173 notice under the 2016 Act (the equivalent of the current section 21 notice under the Housing Act 1988) from two months to six months. Landlords will also be prevented from issuing such a notice until at least six months from the date of occupancy, meaning that those renting their home will have a minimum of 12 months security of tenure from the outset of their contract (representing a doubling of the current position). Further provisions will also ensure that landlords are unable to issue rolling ‘speculative’ notices on a ‘just in case’ basis, which can undermine the sense of security that those renting a home should be able to enjoy.

The Bill also makes a number of changes to the way that fixed-term standard contracts operate to ensure these are not adopted by unscrupulous landlords as a means of circumventing the additional security that will be provided under a periodic standard contract.

Finally, the Bill makes a series of minor technical and consequential amendments to the 2016 Act.

In October, I wrote to Members reminding them of the wider benefits contract-holders will enjoy when the 2016 Act is implemented. For example, the 2016 Act will seek to address

the issue of retaliatory evictions, it will require landlords to fit and maintain functioning smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and it will improve succession rights.

The Bill I have introduced today will, if passed, add a further significant benefit to that list by ensuring that a possession notice where there is no breach of contract cannot be served for the first six months of occupation, and where possession is sought, giving the contract holder six months' notice. This will provide valuable time for individuals and families faced with possession under section 173, and the organisations and agencies that support them, to find a new home that is right for them and make all necessary arrangements for a smooth transition to their new home.

I shall be making a Legislative Statement in Plenary tomorrow and I look forward to the scrutiny of the Bill over the coming months.