Dear

I am writing as a local resident, ahead of the Senedd election, asking for you to support landlords in tackling the housing crisis.

The private rented sector (PRS) is a growing and valuable source of housing for those who cannot afford to buy or do not need to use valuable and scarce resources in the social sector. As happened following the 2008 financial crisis, the coronavirus pandemic is also likely to drive people towards the PRS for somewhere to live. With the increasing importance of the PRS, policymakers should give their attention to ensuring landlords are equipped with the tools they need to provide the best housing they can, sustain tenancies, and tackle bad tenants.

With over 100,000 landlords in Wales, the vast majority of PRS accommodation is clearly supplied by ordinary people who own one or two properties, investing as an alternative to a pension. The PRS is an essential part of any solution to the housing crisis. They need to be supported by policies that boost the supply of safe secure and legal homes.

*<Add your own details>*

However, recent government policy has undermined the confidence of private landlords. This has not just been apparent in the one-sided possession reform Bill, but in the lack of support for both landlords and tenants to sustain tenancies during the coronavirus pandemic, while denying landlords the chance to take back the property from tenants who would not pay rent. This plunged many into financial difficulties, hardship even. The NRLA website documents several cases of landlords who have lost thousands, even tens of thousands, of pounds as a result. These have punished good landlords, not the worst.

The last seven years have seen four pieces of legislation and several regulations pass the Senedd, but little increase in enforcement against criminal landlords. This combination increases the burden on good landlords who want to provide high quality homes while doing nothing to root out the small minority of criminals in the sector.

That’s why the Welsh Government need to streamline landlord licensing, without compromising on standards. A simpler, cheaper, less repetitive and bureaucratic system that makes life and business easier for landlords, at no detriment to the tenant, will reap its own rewards but will also allow councils to focus on enforcement rather than licence processing. Unlike in England, Wales has a national licensing body in Rent Smart Wales. Despite this, landlords still have to comply with and pay for local licensing schemes. The NRLA believes that when the Renting Homes Act is implemented (scheduled for Spring 2022) existing rules and regulations will make local licensing obsolete. It also wants RSW to be more accountable.

The NRLA also want direct support for PRS landlords to be in line with that available in the social sector so they can better serve tenants. This should include funding for Landlord Support Officers in councils and adding anti-social behaviour to the list of mandatory grounds for repossession. It also wants the next Welsh Government to introduce a “tenant passport” allowing for a mobile deposit system and live referencing.

Landlords need funding to help meet energy efficiency targets and financial incentives for landlords to bring empty properties back into use. This is essential for decarbonisation, ending fuel poverty, and revitalising communities. Additionally, a Welsh Housing Survey is needed to collect better data for evidence-based housing policymaking that is currently present in England, but not Wales.

A key component to helping landlords and tenants achieve cheaper and quicker justice while also tackling the large backlog in cases that already existed before the pandemic is a dedicated Welsh Housing Court. Exploring this is something Senedd committees have already recommended.

It is also essential that you resist any attempt to extend the UK Government’s Right-to-Rent scheme into Wales, as it forces landlords to act as border agents, acting as a barrier to them and potential tenants. I hope you also reject the importation of rent controls too as they have been a proven failure across the world and will lead to less supply and, ironically, higher rents.

As you can see from these proposals, I am calling for changes that help me operate as a landlord, but do not harm the tenant and, in many cases, improves their lot too. For these reasons, I hope you will join me in supporting the NRLA’s campaigns at [nrla.org.uk/campaigns/wales/campaigns](https://www.nrla.org.uk/campaigns/wales/campaigns).

Let us build a fairer PRS that does not pit landlords and tenants against each other.

Thank you for reading and kind regards