# Residents call for urgent reform amid Scotland’s historic tenement evacuation crisis



Residents affected by the deteriorating conditions of historic tenements in Scotland are calling for urgent legislative action to provide better support for those evacuated from unsafe homes. Concerns have been heightened as the Daily Record reported that the estimated repair costs for these ageing buildings exceed £10 billion.

The issue has particularly resonated in Glasgow, where MSP Paul Sweeney has warned that increasing numbers of tenement residents could face homelessness due to the inability of local councils to effectively address the needs of those displaced from condemned properties.

In one distressing case, Wendy Murray, a tenement homeowner, described her experience after Glasgow City Council declared her home unsafe. She was relocated to what she described as a “hellhole” hotel, showcasing the inadequacy of the interim support offered to evacuees. Murray's situation reflects a larger pattern of anxiety and financial strain among tenants and homeowners facing similar circumstances.

Graham Watson, a 51-year-old resident, recounted that ten people were forcibly evacuated from an unsafe block on Bridge Street last year. He highlighted the emotional and financial toll that the evacuation process has taken on the affected residents. “None of us who came home from work that day could have ever expected to be homeless within an hour,” he stated, expressing frustration at the lack of support from authorities during the crisis. “While I don’t challenge the emergency nature, it’s shocking the council felt no obligation to help us in the impossible situation they’d put us in.”

Watson emphasised that, following the evacuation, many residents were left in a state of distress, with several forced to take time off work due to the psychological impact of their situation. One moving anecdote involved a neighbour who was told to consider her missing cat lost as the council prepared to board up the building amidst the chaos.

The situation was exacerbated when the council authorities took 16 weeks to demolish the building, which was still deemed too dangerous for residents to return even after the demolition. Residents experienced an extended period of uncertainty, described by Watson as indicative of the council's lack of accountability towards the growing homeless crisis. “When we complained, the council dismissed us and told us they didn’t feel they were responsible,” he explained.

Current legislation under the Buildings Scotland Act 2003 does allow for the evacuation of residents from hazardous properties; however, it provides no obligation for councils to manage or temporarily house those affected. This apparent gap in duty of care has raised questions regarding the responsibilities of local authorities.

A representative from Glasgow City Council maintained that property owners bear the responsibility for maintaining their buildings and asserted that evacuations occur only when a property is assessed as dangerous. "Owners are responsible for their properties," the spokesperson stated.

In contrast, a Scottish Government representative noted that while local authorities possess the authority to act on dangerous or defective buildings, it is ultimately their prerogative to determine the best course of action in light of specific circumstances.

Adding to the complexities of the issue, many homeowners face complications with insurance claims, as needs for repairs often arise in adjacent buildings, leaving them without coverage.

As the community grapples with the realities of precarious housing and inadequate support systems, the calls for legislative reform continue to gain momentum, aiming to secure more robust protections for vulnerable tenants during such emergencies.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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