# Nicola Sturgeon and SNP figures urge urgent rent controls amid soaring costs in Scotland



Concerns over rising rents in Scotland have sparked intense debate, with former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon at the forefront of a pushback against the government's recent decision to remove essential rent control protections. As highlighted in documents obtained by the Sunday Mail, Sturgeon, alongside other senior SNP figures, reached out to Housing Minister Paul McLennan to express their apprehensions regarding the implications of this policy shift, particularly for vulnerable tenants.

Sturgeon articulated her fears in a letter to McLennan, noting the looming threat of exorbitant rent increases once protections were lifted. Her call for a "transitional approach" underscores the anxiety shared by many constituents who fear losing their homes amid rising housing costs. Reflecting similar sentiments, Public Finance Minister Ivan McKee and Equalities Minister Kaukab Stewart both reported increased distress among constituents, citing examples of rent hikes that outstrip inflation, further intensifying calls for action.

As of April 1, the cap on rental increases was lifted entirely, allowing landlords to increase rates based on perceived market values. Thousands of tenants have already reported drastic increases, with some facing rises as steep as £400 per month—an untenable situation for many, including expectant parents and low-wage workers struggling to make ends meet. One expectant mother expressed her fears about impending homelessness just as she approaches maternity leave, emphasising a deeply personal struggle amidst broader societal issues.

The Scottish Greens, represented by MSP Maggie Chapman, are advocating for the reinstatement of temporary rent protections until a more robust framework is established through the proposed Housing Bill, which is intended to introduce permanent rent controls by 2027. Chapman's assertion that the Scottish Government must respond to rising public concern reflects a growing consensus that immediate protective measures are needed to safeguard tenants during this turbulent period.

Analyzing the government's stance, it appears there remains a significant gap between policy intentions and the lived experiences of tenants. While the government claims that tenants still have avenues to appeal rent increases, the efficacy of this process is questioned by many, particularly given that adjudicators can potentially approve even higher increases. Further compounding these issues, Labour has publicly critiqued the SNP's handling of rent controls, citing a lack of planning that has led to a staggering 20% increase in contested rents since the cap's removal, exacerbating the housing affordability crisis across Scotland.

Looking ahead, the Scottish Government has proposed an amendment to the Housing (Scotland) Bill, which seeks to establish new rent caps tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%, with a maximum increase set at 6%. This proposal aims to balance the needs of tenants and landlords, fostering a more stable environment within Scotland's rental market. With a consultation period planned for Spring 2025, stakeholders—including tenants, landlords, and housing advocates—are poised to contribute their insights, which may inform future legislation and its implementation.

As the landscape of rental protections evolves, the ongoing discourse highlights the urgent need for responsive governance that prioritises the rights and wellbeing of tenants amid a housing crisis that shows no signs of abating. The challenge remains for policymakers to reconcile the competing interests of landlords and tenants while ensuring that necessary support mechanisms are in place to protect those at risk of falling into economic hardship.

In this climate of uncertainty, voices from all quarters underscore the imperative for immediate measures, even as the long-term legislative apparatus begins to take shape.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/nicola-sturgeon-msps-lobbied-minister-35219858)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/nicola-sturgeon-msps-lobbied-minister-35219858)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/nicola-sturgeon-msps-lobbied-minister-35219858)
4. Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/nicola-sturgeon-msps-lobbied-minister-35219858)
5. Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/nicola-sturgeon-msps-lobbied-minister-35219858)
6. Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/nicola-sturgeon-msps-lobbied-minister-35219858)
7. Paragraph 7: [[2]](https://www.gov.scot/news/housing-scotland-bill-rent-cap-proposed/), [[6]](https://www.gov.scot/publications/minister-for-housing-statement-on-housing-scotland-bill/)
8. Paragraph 8: [[3]](https://scottishlandlords.com/news-and-campaigns/news/housing-minister-announces-amendment-to-proposed-rent-controls/), [[5]](https://news.stv.tv/scotland/government-accused-of-prioritising-landlords-as-rent-cap-ends), [[7]](https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/articles/failure-to-plan-for-post-rent-control-period-caused-20-jump-in-rents-says-labour)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/nicola-sturgeon-msps-lobbied-minister-35219858> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.scot/news/housing-scotland-bill-rent-cap-proposed/> - The Scottish Government has proposed an amendment to the Housing (Scotland) Bill to cap rent increases in designated rent control areas. The cap would be set at the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%, up to a maximum increase of 6%. This measure aims to stabilize rents, support tenants, and address housing affordability while balancing the interests of landlords and encouraging investment. A consultation in Spring 2025 will seek views on potential exemptions from rent controls and circumstances allowing rent increases above the cap.
3. <https://scottishlandlords.com/news-and-campaigns/news/housing-minister-announces-amendment-to-proposed-rent-controls/> - Housing Minister Paul McLennan announced an amendment to the Housing (Scotland) Bill, proposing that rent increases within rent control areas be capped at CPI plus 1%, up to a maximum of 6%. This amendment aims to provide clarity on rent setting within these areas. The Scottish Association of Landlords (SAL) welcomed the certainty but expressed ongoing concerns about the potential impact of rent controls on the supply, quality, and affordability of rental properties. A consultation is planned for Spring 2025 to gather views on possible exemptions and circumstances for rent increases above the cap.
4. <https://scottishlandlords.com/news-and-campaigns/news/government-to-remove-temporary-rent-increase-controls/> - The Scottish Government has informed the Scottish Association of Landlords (SAL) that it will withdraw temporary restrictions on rent increases at the end of March 2025. This means that from April 1, 2025, tenants will no longer have the ability to challenge rent increases through the rent officer or tribunal, and rents will be set at the open market rental value. The government intends to introduce permanent rent controls through the Housing (Scotland) Bill, with implementation expected in 2027. SAL continues to raise concerns about the potential negative effects of rent controls on the rental sector.
5. <https://news.stv.tv/scotland/government-accused-of-prioritising-landlords-as-rent-cap-ends> - The Scottish Government has been accused of prioritizing landlords over tenants as the temporary rent cap ends on April 1, 2025. Tenant union Living Rent warns that without the cap, tenants may face significant rent increases, potentially plunging them into further poverty. The Scottish Greens also express concern, stating that tenants will receive notices of rent increases with little notice or chance to appeal. The government has stated that private renters remain protected from above-market rent increases and can seek a review of any rent increases.
6. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/minister-for-housing-statement-on-housing-scotland-bill/> - Housing Minister Paul McLennan provided a statement on the Housing (Scotland) Bill, emphasizing the government's commitment to implementing a rent control system that supports tenants while protecting landlords' property rights and encouraging investment. The bill includes provisions for rent control areas where rent increases would be capped at CPI plus 1%, up to a maximum of 6%. A consultation in early Spring 2025 will seek views on how powers allowing exemptions from rent controls or rent increases above the cap could be used by Scottish Ministers.
7. <https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/articles/failure-to-plan-for-post-rent-control-period-caused-20-jump-in-rents-says-labour> - Scottish Labour has criticized the SNP government for failing to plan for the end of temporary rent controls, leading to a 20% increase in average contested rents. Data obtained by Scottish Labour indicates that one landlord attempted to raise rents by 186% following the end of the control period. The party argues that the government's lack of planning has resulted in rents rising faster in Scotland than in most other parts of the UK, exacerbating housing affordability issues for tenants.