

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

John Griffiths MS
Chair
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1SN

19 January 2021

Dear John

At Business Committee on 12 January the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd indicated that the Stage 3 debate on the Renting Homes (Amendment) (Wales) Bill would be postponed until 10 February. I am writing to explain why this has been necessary.

On 9 December I issued a Written Ministerial Statement regarding service charges levied by some housing associations and third sector organisations on assured shorthold tenancies. The statement is attached for ease of reference. As set out in the statement, the Renting Homes (Fees etc.) (Wales) Act 2019 has had a very positive impact on protecting tenants from unfair fees. However, it has had an unintentional consequence in relation to service charges levied on assured shorthold tenancies by housing associations and supported accommodation providers. In my Statement, I indicated the intention to bring forward a Statutory Instrument to address this issue.

Since issuing the Statement, it has become apparent that retrospective legislation will be required to resolve the matter fully. Therefore, I have asked officials to explore the possibility of bringing forward an amendment to the 2019 Act via an additional amendment to the Renting Homes (Amendment) (Wales) Bill, which is already making other amendments to the 2019 Act. The slight delay to Stage 3 is to provide time for the preparation of that amendment.

I am grateful for the Committee's understanding and would wish to emphasise this course of action has been chosen to ensure the matter can be resolved swiftly.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

My officials would be happy to meet with the Committee to provide an informal technical briefing on this amendment, if you consider this would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie James AS/MS

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Minister for Housing and Local Government