



## The Long-Term Approach to Short-Term Letting

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Founded in 1978, the Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers (ASSC) is the leading source of knowledge on short-term letting and holiday homes in Scotland. The ASSC is the only trade body representing the interests of the traditional self-catering sector. It has more than 665 Members, operating in excess of 7,000 self-catering properties throughout Scotland, and has close links with other European countries, as founding members of the European Holiday Homes Association (EHHA). The ASSC commits its members to maintaining the principles of "quality, integrity, cleanliness, comfort, courtesy and efficiency" and to offering visitors to Scotland consistently high standards within their self-catering properties. The ASSC's vision is to place our members at the forefront of a professional, vibrant and prosperous Scottish self-catering sector.

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The ASSC has worked hard to engage with those concerned about the impact of short-term lets across Scotland, listening to the concerns raised regarding housing pressure and anti-social behaviour. As a result, the ASSC commissioned an evidence-based report, produced by Frontline, to investigate and address these concerns, entitled *Far More Than Just Houses*. The report concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that short-term lets are causing or exacerbating housing shortages or rent increases. Despite this, the ASSC accepts that there is need for some targeted and proportionate regulation of the short-term lets sector in order to allow local authorities to manage its growth. In addition, the ASSC introduced a Code of Conduct in 2017 for all its members, aimed at improving standards in the industry and encouraging best practice. The ASSC strongly recommends a wider adoption of this Code of Conduct by short-term letting agencies, owners, managers and online platforms.

### Policy Summary

- All short-term rental accommodation must be registered with the local authority
- In areas of demonstrated housing pressure and where the local authority has designated it a Rent Pressure Zone (RPZ), whole properties available for over 140 nights of the year must apply for a licence from the local authority in which they are situated and the number of licences may be limited by the council

## All short-term lets will need to register with the local authority in which they are situated.

The ASSC proposes a simple, online registration scheme whereby short-term lets are registered with the local authority to create a transparent network in order to enable the council to assess the prevalence and distribution of short-term lets.

## In areas of demonstrable housing pressure, short-term lets of whole homes for over 140 nights a year may be restricted by the council.

Local authorities may apply to Scottish Government Ministers to introduce Rent Pressure Zones (RPZ), as created by the **Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016**, to designate the areas where there is considerable pressure on the housing market. Since the greater part of most local authorities have no issue with short-term lets, they should be delineated between areas where short-term lets should be capped, rather than have blanket arbitrary limit across the whole city, or indeed an entire local authority area.

Local councils can apply to Scottish Ministers to have an area designated as a 'rent pressure zone' (RPZ) if they can prove that:

- Rents in the area are rising too much
- The rent rises are causing problems for the tenants
- The local council is coming under pressure to provide housing or subsidise the cost of housing as a result

These three points are the requirements of the existing legislation. If an area is designated as an RPZ, a maximum limit is set on how much rents can increase for existing tenants with a private residential tenancy each year in that area. Scottish Ministers must consult landlords' and tenants' representatives before they make any area a rent pressure zone.

The ASSC believes that where an area has been designated as a RPZ, this provides sufficient evidence that there is demonstrable housing shortage and local authorities may restrict the number of short-term lets.

Those that wish to operate a short-term let for over 140 nights per year in a Rent Pressure Zone would need a licence issued by the local authority. 140 nights is used in order to run concurrently with the current business rates threshold (if your property is available to let for 140 days or more a year, it is liable for business rates).

This would allow amateur short-term letters and home sharers sufficient ability to let out their homes while also giving the local authority the power to regulate and control the number of short-term lets in areas of demonstrable concentration of such properties.

Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers

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