

Research report

Evictions by social landlords in Scotland 2011- 12

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Summary

- This Shelter Scotland report looks at the number of evictions¹ for rent arrears across Scotland from the social sector, looking at both local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) for the period April 2011 – March 2012.
- In 2011/12 there was no statistically relevant increase in social sector evictions across Scotland. Evictions increased by only 2 evictions across the demonstrating a levelling out in evictions, compared to the previous few years.
- This plateau in evictions follows a 49 per cent decrease in evictions over the past 4 years which is likely to be due to landlord good practice and work on tenancy sustainment.
- Shelter Scotland recognises the concerted effort by RSL and local authority staff to change policies and practice to bring about the reduction in the use of eviction as an enforcement tool.
- The vast majority – around 96 per cent – of eviction actions are for rent arrears and are often a symptom of wider debt and money problems or housing benefit issues.
- Shelter Scotland support the use of the eviction process for anti-social behaviour to protect communities and ensure that everyone is able to live peacefully in their own home.
- Although there has been a 1 per cent increase in the total amount of rent arrears to Local Authorities in the last year, the total number of tenants in rent arrears has also increased. This suggests that the amount of rent arrears individual tenants are accruing has fallen.
- In 2011/12 social landlords issued over 72,000 Notice of Proceedings for recovery of possession (NOPs). This suggests that eviction or the threat of eviction is still being used as a mechanism for rent collection which, we argue, is an expensive and unproductive way to communicate with tenants who are struggling with debt issues.

¹ For the purpose of this report, 'eviction' includes post-decree abandonments as per the Scottish Government statistics. A post-eviction decree means that the landlord has been granted decree for eviction by the court and the tenant has decided to flee the property before being forcibly removed.

- In 2011/12 almost 1 in 6 local authority tenants received notice of eviction proceedings.
- The introduction of 'Pre-Action Requirements' for rent arrears cases should mean that the high number of tenants taken to court without resulting in eviction will be reduced. We intend to monitor the operation of Pre-Action Requirements over the coming year.
- Despite the national trend showing that eviction rates have levelled out, there remains a great deal of regional variation across different social landlords. Some landlords have actually increased evictions showing that, despite some improvements, more work needs to be done.
- **We anticipate that cuts to housing benefit, particularly the introduction of new size criteria in the social rented sector in April 2013 and the roll-out of direct payments to social tenants under Universal Credit, may have a significant impact on rent arrears in coming years. Landlords will need to develop new approaches to arrears management and rent collection to ensure these changes do not increase evictions. We intend to report on this in future.**

Introduction

This report, the fifth in a series of Shelter Scotland reports looking at evictions in the social rented sector in Scotland, draws on Scottish Government and Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) statistics for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012. The report considers official statistics for evictions, in particular the number of actions for repossessions started, number of cases going to court at a national and local level and 'technical evictions'. It also looks at regional variations and the policies behind the statistics.

Shelter Scotland has been campaigning over the past few years for the high numbers of social rented sector evictions to be reduced, and for a fundamental change in the approach to rent arrears management and tenancy sustainment. The majority of all social sector evictions are for rent arrears. We believe that eviction is, in most cases, a blunt and ineffective tool to deal with individuals and families often struggling with debt and other complex financial and social issues. Leaving aside evictions for antisocial behaviour which only constitute a tiny minority of the total²; eviction and the threat of eviction is used too frequently as a mechanism for collecting rent and in many cases simply displaces the problem rather than solving it. Eviction compounds many of the issues that have contributed to the mounting of arrears and places additional stress onto individuals and families. Forcing someone to leave their home should only ever be a last resort.

In 2008 Shelter Scotland produced a report highlighting that there were nearly 4,000 evictions by social landlords in 2007/2008 and urged the Scottish Government and all social landlords to do more to try and reduce that number³. In the second report, published in 2009⁴, Shelter Scotland highlighted research showing that evicting a single person would cost the social landlord £15,000 at a conservative estimate. If that person then went on to be homeless, the costs can rapidly rise through ongoing temporary accommodation and support costs. Last year's report showed a significant reduction in the number of social sector evictions, with a 45 per cent reduction on the previous two years. Due to the difficult economic landscape that social landlords were operating in, this reduction is likely to be because of significant and successful changes in policy and practice, rather than changes in the environment or the tenant group.

² According to Scottish Government figures, 96% of the evictions/abandonments carried out in 2011/12 by local authorities were for rent arrears, the remaining being largely for antisocial behaviour. The proportion of evictions for anti-social behaviour has remained constant over the last five years.

Figures from 2010/11 show that 91% of RSL evictions were for rent arrears.

³ 'Research: Evictions by social landlords in Scotland' (Dec 2008)

http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/152517/Evictions_2007-2008.pdf

⁴ 'Briefing: Eviction of children and families. The impact and the alternatives' (November 2009)

http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/223672/Evictions_Nov09_Shelter.pdf

With local authority arrears currently standing at £36.3m⁵ and RSL arrears at £5m⁶, the payment of rent is rightly a priority. Paying rent on time is vital for effective housing management and a key obligation of any tenancy agreement. Shelter Scotland believes that a clear policy focusing on helping tenants meet their tenancy obligations and resolve debt problems as early as possible can reduce arrears and evictions at the same time.

Background

Forcing someone to leave their home should only ever be used as a last resort, as landlords could simply be displacing tenants' social and financial problems. Since the publication of the first Shelter Scotland eviction report in 2008, there have been a series of national and local developments in policy and practice in relation to eviction. These have focused on reducing evictions where possible and changing policy and practice to focus on communication and tenancy sustainment. With a reduction of more than 1,700 social sector evictions since 2007/08, the shifts in policy and practice appear to have had an effect.

On 1 April 2009, Section 11 of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 was implemented. This places a duty on RSLs, mortgage lenders and private landlords to notify the relevant local authority when they plan to initiate legal proceedings to repossess a property. These notifications are designed to alert local authorities to households at risk of homelessness, providing an early warning for councils so they can provide information and support. This should prevent homelessness or allow a planned route into suitable alternative accommodation if required. Across the three years where there is data, there have been 12,064 Section 11 notifications from RSLs⁷, falling from 4,406 notifications in 2009/10 to 3,673 in 2010/11 and rising again to 3,985 in 2011/12. It is currently unclear to what extent these notifications are helping to prevent evictions, although there is evidence⁸ that RSLs are engaging with local authorities in the Section 11 process, to share information about households at risk of eviction and ultimately homelessness.

Following the final report of the Scottish Government's Repossessions Working Group in 2009 it was recommended that the Scottish Government should investigate what protection was in place to protect tenants in the socially rented sector from eviction for rent arrears⁹. These recommendations were taken through various consultation stages

⁵ Scottish Government Housing Income and Expenditure 2012

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/HRA2008-09>

⁶ Scottish Housing Regulator RSL Annual Statistical return 2012

<http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/performance-tables-%E2%80%93-rent-arrears>

⁷ Scottish Government Operation of the Homeless Persons Legislation in Scotland 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 <http://scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables>

⁸ 'Review of Section 11 of the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003' (September 2011)

http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/review_of_section_11_of_the_homelessness_scotland_act_2003

⁹ 'Repossessions group: final report' Scottish Government (June 2009)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/274765/0082205.pdf>

and resulted in new legislation to ensure social landlords explore all possible alternatives to eviction before resorting to court action, as part of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. The resulting 'Pre-Action Requirements (PARs)'¹⁰ are a series of steps that landlords must take in rent arrears cases, to try and resolve the underlying debt and financial difficulties. PARs build on existing good practice and should help to reduce not only the number of evictions, but the number of unnecessary NOPs issued and court actions raised. The steps are designed to facilitate communication between landlord and tenant to try and resolve the debt issue before the need for court action. This approach focuses on early intervention and trying to find alternatives to eviction when possible. The steps – including giving the tenant clear information on the amount owed, offering advice on debt management and trying to agree a repayment plan – must be completed before pursuing an action. With the current high number of court actions initiated which do not result in eviction, it is hoped that PARs will have an effect in reducing these cases. This legislation commenced on 1st August 2012 and we will monitor the impact on an ongoing basis.

¹⁰ Section 155 Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/17/part/16/enacted>

1. Evictions in Scotland 2011/12

The statistics for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 show a levelling out in the number of evictions for socially rented tenants. Across the sector, the number of evictions has remained at constant level over the past year from 1,822 in 2010/11 to 1,824 in 2011/12. These figures include actual evictions as well as properties which were abandoned after a decree for eviction had been granted. This flat lining in the number of evictions in the past year, follows falls in the previous three years (see Figure 1). There has however been an 11 per cent fall in technical evictions, where a new post decree tenancy has been granted at the same property. We are likely to see a further fall in technical evictions because of an amendment to legislation brought in by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010¹¹, which came into effect on 1st August 2012, meaning that the tenancy is only ended once the landlord recovers possession of the property, instead of when the decree is granted. This has effectively ended the use of technical evictions and means that if the landlord and tenant reach a repayment arrangement, and the landlord no longer wishes to evict the tenant, there is no need to create a new tenancy.

There has also been a decrease over the last year to 72,436 notice of proceedings issued (down 8 per cent), 13,971 actions taken to court at (down 4 per cent) and 4,819 decrees granted (down 5 per cent).

Table 1 gives the combined totals for eviction actions for all social landlords and the percentage change from the previous year.

Table 1: Eviction actions by social landlords 2011/12				
	Councils	RSLs	Total	Percentage change from 2010/2011
Notice of Proceedings	52,285	20,151	72,436	-8%
Taken to court	9,624	4,347	13,971	-4%
Decree granted	3,371	1,448	4,819	-5%
Eviction occurred*	1,057	767	1,824	-0.1%
Technical evictions**	354	302	656	-11%

Source: Housing Statistics for Scotland 2012, Scottish Government (August 2012), Annual Performance & Statistical Return (APSR), Scottish Housing Regulator (September 2012).

* Including post-decree abandonments
 ** Where a new post-decree tenancy has been granted at the same property

¹¹Section 153 Housing (Scotland) Act 2010

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/17/section/153#text%3Drepossession>

Trends in eviction

Figure 1 shows the number of evictions carried out from 2007/08 to 2011/12 showing the proportion carried out by both RSLs and local authorities. There were 3,573 evictions in 2007/08 and since then there has been a significant 49 per cent reduction in evictions. There has been no decline in evictions however in the last year.

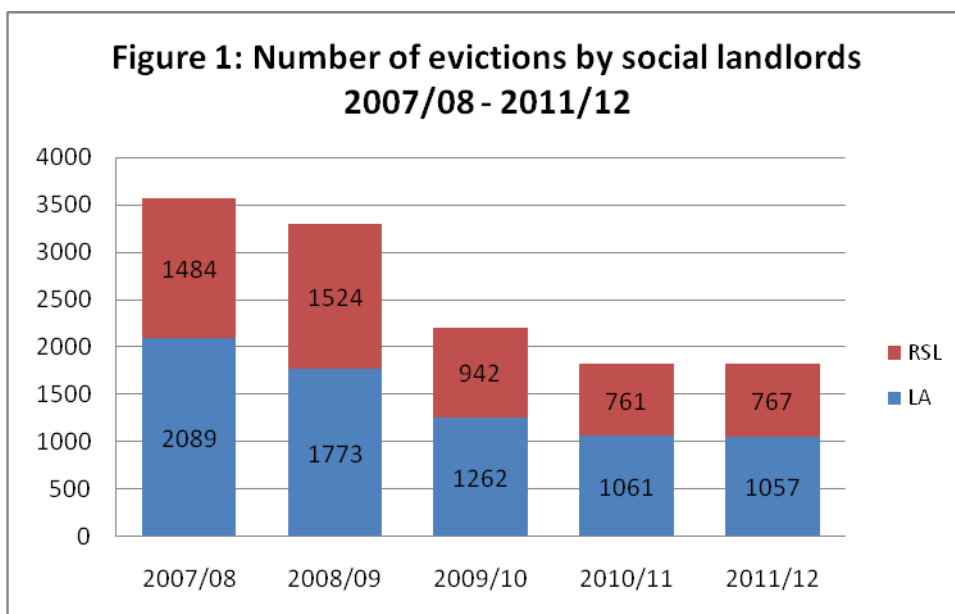


Table 2: Eviction actions initiated by local authorities resulting in termination of tenancy in 2007/08 to 2011-12¹²

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Percentage change from 2007/08 to 2011/12
Scotland	2,08	1,773	1,262	1,061	1,057	-49%
Aberdeen City	245	221	171	135	102	-58%
Aberdeenshire	36	33	41	37	44	22%
Angus	14	28	34	31	37	164%
Clackmannanshire	25	26	13	17	9	-64%
Dundee City	85	71	103	69	67	-21%
East Ayrshire	179	104	95	77	73	-59%
East Dunbartonshire	22	23	13	11	36	64%
East Lothian	15	14	10	5	14	-7%
East Renfrewshire	10	6	6	12	6	-40%
Edinburgh, City of	230	263	180	113	93	-60%
Falkirk	110	76	58	44	40	-64%
Fife	63	73	56	96	120	90%
Highland	26	25	34	29	43	65%
Midlothian	60	49	17	15	15	-75%
Moray	28	5	7	7	11	-61%
North Ayrshire	69	54	44	47	37	-46%
North Lanarkshire	410	302	167	113	131	-68%
Orkney	4	1	1	-	2	-50%
Perth & Kinross	10	10	6	3	8	-20%
Renfrewshire	170	146	55	60	56	-67%
Shetland	3	1	6	1	2	-33%
South Ayrshire	30	21	21	18	14	-53%
South Lanarkshire	97	70	59	51	51	-47%
Stirling	27	27	3	2	2	-93%
West Dunbartonshire	29	49	11	9	5	-83%
West Lothian	92	75	51	59	39	-58%

What does eviction cost?

Although this year saw a decrease in eviction actions there were still 13,971 eviction cases taken to court by social landlords last year, two thirds of these by local authorities. This very high volume of court actions represents a significant cost to landlords and the court system, but also places the stress of an eviction court case on almost 14,000 households.

¹² Housing Statistics for Scotland 2012

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/Evictions>

The following local authorities have been removed from this table as they no longer have stock due to whole stock transfers: Argyll & Bute Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Glasgow City Council, Inverclyde Council and Scottish Borders Council.

For those 1,824 households who actually lost their home in 2011/12, the very conservatively estimated cost of £6,000¹³ per case means a total cost of a minimum of £11 million. In addition, social landlords issued over 72,000¹⁴ Notice of Proceedings for recovery of possession (NOPs) in the same time period, which suggests that eviction, or the threat of eviction, is still being used routinely as a mechanism for rent collection.

Local authority evictions 2011/12

Over the past few years there has been a significant policy focus on reducing evictions at both national and local level, and local authorities across Scotland have seen evictions plateau, from 1,061 in 2010/11 to 1,057 in 2011/12. Across the 4 year period from 2007/08 there has been a 49 per cent reduction in the number of evictions by local authorities. This reduction in numbers is a continuation of work that has occurred in previous years, and seems to represent a shift in policy and practice by a number of councils towards early intervention and tenancy sustainment.

While a fall in the overall number of evictions is very positive, there is huge regional variation in local authority performance over the past year, from a 227 per cent increase in eviction by East Dunbartonshire Council to a 34 per cent decrease in eviction by West Lothian Council. This disparity is unlikely to reflect regional circumstances and economic factors; rather it is symptomatic of variation in practice and the management of arrears.

In total, 12 of the 26 local authorities with housing stock saw a fall in the number of evictions from 2010/11 to 2011/12, and 3 saw no change. 10 local authorities saw an increase in evictions, those with significant increases included East Dunbartonshire, Fife and Highland. Specifically, Fife Council has seen a 25 per cent increase in the last year, and looking back over the last 10 years there has been an increase from 55 to 120 evictions a year.

Table 2 shows the total number of evictions for each local authority with housing stock over the past 4 years and shows that the majority of councils have seen a drop in their evictions each year. The table highlights the spectrum of performance by local authorities and how varied eviction practice is. Certain councils have shown a fairly large reduction such as North Lanarkshire which carried out 18 fewer evictions in 2011/12 than the previous year and over 4 years has seen a 68 per cent reduction. Similarly, North Lanarkshire council evicted 20 fewer households in the last year with a 60 per cent reduction in the last four years, and Renfrewshire Council evicted 114 fewer tenants than in 2007/08. In the case of both City of Edinburgh and North Lanarkshire Councils,

¹³ Research by Community Finance Solutions in 2006 suggests that every eviction costs a social landlord £6,000 [Community access to money: social landlords reaping the benefits](http://www.crisis.org.uk/policywatch/bkpage/files/howmanyhowmuch_full.pdf). Crisis research from 2003 put the cost of eviction between £15,000 and £83,000 for a single person http://www.crisis.org.uk/policywatch/bkpage/files/howmanyhowmuch_full.pdf and SCSH research from 2007 put the cost of eviction at between £12-23,000. <http://www.scshe.co.uk/information/briefings/07%20Tenancy%20Failure%20Briefing.pdf>

¹⁴ In 2011/12, local authorities issued 52,285 NOPs and RSLs issued 20,151 NOPs.

evictions have been high in previous years, meaning that these councils had room for improvement.

These reductions in the space of a year highlight the potential for all social landlords to re-evaluate their practices to ensure that eviction is truly a last resort. Angus Council however has seen a steadily rising number of evictions, more than doubling in the last four years from 14 in 2007/08 to 37 in 2011/12, a trend that Angus Council as a landlord, should examine closely.

In 2011/12, local authorities took 9,624 cases to court and secured 3,371 decrees against tenants, which resulted in 1,057 evictions or post-decree abandonments shown in Table 3. This means 11 per cent of court actions actually result in evictions and in real terms represents a considerable investment of both time and money for councils.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Percentage change from 2010/11
Notice of proceedings	-	-	57,068	57,998	52,285	-10%
Taken to court	13,382	13,323	11,782	10,789	9,624	-11%
Decree granted	5,063	5,246	4,613	3,743	3,371	-10%
Eviction occurred	2,089	1,773	1,262	1,061	1,057	-0.4%
Technical evictions	-	-	470	434	354	-18%

It is important to note that councils issued 52,205 NOPs which is an extremely high number – about 1 in 6 local authority tenants received an NOP in 2011/12¹⁵. We would argue that the threat of eviction is still being used too frequently as a mechanism for rent recovery. If NOPs are used too frequently, the process loses its deterrent effect. This also suggests that local authority processes are still too mechanistic. It is clear that the eviction process can kick in too early, with an eviction notification, or NOP being ‘triggered’ on the housing management system by a fixed number of weeks arrears. While it is vital to address arrears as early as possible to stop them accumulating, it would be far better for arrears to trigger face-to-face discussions and early interventions to tackle repayment. Shelter Scotland often sees eviction actions being brought against tenants with very low arrears where the cost of carrying out the eviction is more than the debt owed.

¹⁵ In 2011/12 local authority rented stock totalled 319,384 units and 52,205 NOPs were issued. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/KeyInfoTables>

RSL evictions 2011/12

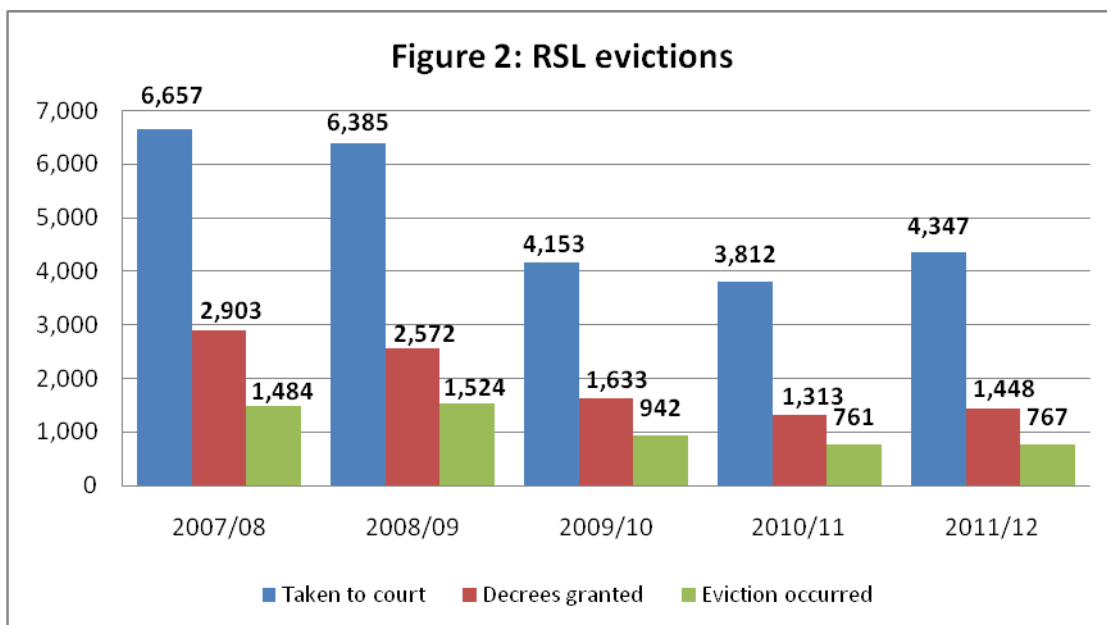
The number of evictions carried out by RSLs in 2011/12 has increased by a very small amount in the last year, increasing from 761 in 2010/11 to 767. This comes as part of a 48 per cent reduction in the last four years, reflecting an increased focus on positive eviction procedures and practices over the last few years.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Percentage change from 2010/11
Notice of Proceedings	23,144	26,568	21,911	20,842	20,151	-3%
Taken to court	6,657	6,385	4,153	3,812	4,347	14%
Decree granted	2,903	2,572	1,633	1,313	1,448	10%
Eviction occurred	1,484	1,524	942	761	767	0.7%
Technical evictions	510	490	261	305	302	-0.9%

Table 4 above shows RSL data for eviction actions started, decrees granted, evictions occurred and the number of technical evictions from 2007/08 to 2011/12. There has been a significant increase in the number of tenants taken to court for eviction, up 14 per cent since last year. This increase in the threat of evictions, while actual evictions have remained the same, again shows an increase in the mechanistic way of collecting rent arrears rather than through face to face discussions and planning. Of the 4,347 cases taken to court, 17 per cent end in eviction, compared to the local authority rate of 9 per cent.

Once again there is significant variation across different RSLs who vary in size and geographical presence. Glasgow Housing Association (GHA), Scotland's largest landlord with around 60,000 units, has seen its evictions fall by over 35 per cent from 148 in 2010/11 to 95 in 2011/12. Overall GHA, has seen a very large reduction in evictions, 83 per cent since 2007/08.

Figure 2 shows that over the past 3 years there has been a steady fall in evictions but also a fall in the number of cases taken to court and the number of decrees granted. However, it also shows that despite this reduction, RSLs took over 4,000 households to court, mainly for rent arrears, to seek possession of their homes. Despite more than 80 per cent of these cases not resulting in an eviction, there is still a significant financial and resource implication for RSLs in this volume of court actions, on top of the stress and disruption for the tenants.



2. Eviction and rent arrears

There has been concern from some social landlords that reducing the number of evictions would lead to growing arrears and in turn an increased rent arrears debt mounting up. Across Scotland both the amount of rent arrears and the number of evictions have remained at a similar level. However, 6 out of the 26 local authorities with housing stock¹⁶ saw a fall in evictions *and* rent arrears. Notably Clackmannanshire Council saw a 47 per cent reduction in evictions and 18 per cent reduction in total rent arrears. This suggests that their approach to working with tenants with rent arrears has resulted in the best outcome for both the tenant and the council – the tenant remains in their home and councils overall rent arrears are reduced.

¹⁶ The following local authorities do not appear on this table following whole stock transfers to housing associations meaning they control no social housing: Argyll & Bute Council, Dumfries & Galloway Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Glasgow City Council, Inverclyde Council and Scottish Borders Council.

Table 5: Relationship between evictions and rent arrears 2010/11 – 2011/12¹⁷

	% change in evictions 2010/11 – 2011/12	% change in rent arrears 2010/11 – 2011/12	% change in number of current tenants with arrears 2010/11 – 2011/12	% change in number of former tenants with arrears 2010/11 – 2011/12
Scotland	-0.4%	-1%	1%	12%
Aberdeen City	-24%	-25%	18%	65%
Aberdeenshire	19%	8%	4%	0%
Angus	19%	-12%	-6%	81%
Clackmannanshire	-47%	-18%	-39%	-16%
Dundee City	-3%	12%	4%	25%
East Ayrshire	-5%	-3%	5%	-14%
East Dunbartonshire	227%	4%	-12%	-14%
East Lothian	180%	18%	-7%	-36%
East Renfrewshire	-50%	14%	15%	-15%
Edinburgh, City of	-18%	6%	4%	-25%
Falkirk	-9%	22%	5%	25%
Fife	25%	3%	0%	-4%
Highland	48%	2%	-12%	-7%
Midlothian	0%	17%	11%	-11%
Moray	57%	0%	5%	4%
North Ayrshire	-21%	-18%	-9%	-9%
North Lanarkshire	16%	0%	-2%	2%
Orkney	n/a	7%	34%	-1%
Perth & Kinross	167%	14%	-5%	34%
Renfrewshire	-7%	-35%	3%	226%
Shetland	100%	-16%	-17%	-3%
South Ayrshire	-22%	-10%	-2%	0%
South Lanarkshire	0%	2%	3%	1%
Stirling	0%	17%	65%	97%
West Dunbartonshire	-44%	11%	6%	12%
West Lothian	-34%	4%	5%	-1%

¹⁷ Housing Statistics for Scotland 2012

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/Evictions>
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/HRATables>

There has however been an increase in the *number* of tenants in rent arrears, specifically an increase in the number of former tenants in arrears. With the total amount of rent arrears unchanging this suggests that more tenants are accumulating small amounts in rent arrears. If the amount of rent arrears are minimal, it would seem sensible to clear these through a discussion and setting up repayment plan, rather than going through a costly court process.

There are also current and forthcoming changes to the benefits system which are likely to have an impact on social landlords and their evictions policies. Those social sector tenants who are 'under occupying' their property, will have their housing benefit reduced from the 1st of April 2013. This so called 'bedroom tax' is likely to cause an increase in rent arrears, particularly given the high demand for property from single people and lack of social sector stock to meet these needs. Landlords should work with tenants to mitigate the impacts of welfare reform and to continue to avoid pursuing eviction actions which penalise vulnerable tenants. Shelter Scotland has been campaigning to this effect to ensure social landlords do not evict those who are forced into arrears due to the unfair cuts in their benefit entitlement.

There are also proposals by the Scottish Government to simplify/speed up the eviction process in cases of antisocial and criminal behaviour. These proposals are being considered by the Affordable Rented Housing Advisory Group and are likely to be the basis for a Housing Bill in 2013/2014. The possible provisions could speed up court cases for recovery of possession, where the tenant had already been convicted for behaviour that affects their community. Antisocial behaviour is a blight on communities and anything that reduces the impact of criminal and antisocial behaviour on families should be supported, however landlords need to consider the impact when evicting tenants for antisocial behaviour and ensure this is a last resort. Evictions will need to be monitored as these changes take effect.

3. Conclusion

Following a decrease over the last few years, the number of social sector evictions have levelled out. This follows a large decrease over the last 4 years, with evictions falling by 49 per cent. Due to the economic climate this previous fall is likely to be due to good policy and practice by landlords to prevent evictions for rent arrears.

Going forward however there are current and upcoming policy, and therefore practice changes, which are likely to have an effect on evictions. Particularly those around changes to housing benefit and the proposals to simplify the eviction process for anti-social behaviour. It will therefore become all the more important for landlords to work with tenants to mitigate the effects of these changes, to ensure social tenants keep their home¹⁸.

Shelter Scotland, March 2013

For further information contact Zoe McGuire on 0344 515 2469 or

zoe_mcguire@shelter.org.uk

¹⁸ Examples of best practice for social landlords in helping prevent eviction of tenants are given in previous Shelter Scotland eviction research reports
http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/policy_library_folder/evictions_by_social_landlords_in_scotland_2009-10