**LHS Private Sector Consultation: Landlord and Letting Agent Report**

**Introduction**

This report presents the findings from Falkirk Councils private sector Landlord and Letting Agent consultation for the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023-2028, which ran from 26/10/22 until 31/1/23. The survey was highlighted at our 29/9/22 Forum and emailed to landlords and letting agents on our distribution list. Awareness was also raised through our People’s Panel, via staff/ services as well as drop-in sessions, online and through social media.

The survey contained 25 private rented sector questions for landlords and 22 questions for letting agents. The questions sought to gather information about how the sector was operating, awareness levels around current regulations and support, gauge perceptions around property conditions as well as highlighting possible areas of assistance for tenants, landlords and letting agents. As part of the survey, we also asked equality questions to landlords.

79 landlords and 2 letting agents responded to this consultation.

To extend the reach of this consultation, the main findings were shared in our [May 2023 Renting Matters in Falkirk newsletter](https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/homes-property/private-housing/renting-matters.aspx), which was sent to all landlords and letting agents on our distribution list. We also shared the findings at our Landlord and Letting Agent Forum on 21/6/23. We offered the opportunity to feedback comments on both occasions: this helped validate the consultation findings. In addition, we will offer landlords and letting agents the opportunity to feedback their views on these findings, when this report is published.

Key findings, the results for private rented sector questions, a summary of the equality findings along with a list of all questions asked are detailed below. Please note that due to rounding, figures may not always add up to 100%. Care also needs to be taken when interpreting these findings as they represent a response rate of under 2%.

Survey findings and the feedback received from this consultation have been fed into the development of the first Private Rented Sector section within our Local Housing Strategy, due early 2024. The LHS outlines the actions we plan to take over the next 5 years and aims to address actions highlighted below.

**Landlord and Letting Agent Survey – Key Findings**

**Landlords:**

* 79 Landlord responses
* have an average of 3 properties within, 2 properties out-with Falkirk
* 50% have let for over 10 years, 33% 4-9 years, 17% 0-4 years
* 45% let as an investment, 31% secondary business/ income
* 58% use a Letting Agent
* Flats are most in demand
* 82% always let properties for the advertised rent
* 65% source tenants from a letting agent, 15% online
* 49% set rents based on letting agent advice, 18% set it based on a mixture of factors, 16% set it based on similar rents in area
* 57% knew where to direct tenants for help
* 54% have established repair arrangements, 43% were reactive, 3% have mixed arrangements
* 58% have established improvement plans in place, 38% are reactive, 4% had mixed arrangements
* 99% rated the condition of their properties as very good / good
* 59% plan to continue letting in some form, 31% intend to leave, 9% are undecided

**Letting Agents:**

* 2 Letting Agent responses
* have an average of 9 properties within, 289 properties out-with Falkirk
* in business for 10+ years
* operate as a main business
* terraced & semi-detached properties are most in demand
* always let properties for the advertised rent
* source tenants online
* set rent based on similar rents in area
* know where to direct tenants for help
* have a mixture of established and reactive repair arrangements
* highlight improvements to landlord
* plan to continue to manage properties

**Results: All Questions**

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| **Question 1**  Landlord & Letting Agent | **How many properties do you hold in your portfolio?**  **How many properties are you responsible for?** |
|  | On average, landlords owned 3 properties within and 2 properties out-with Falkirk. Letting agents managed 9 properties within and 289 properties out-with Falkirk. |
| **Question 2**  Landlord & Letting Agent | **How long have you rented out property?**  **How long have you operated as a Letting Agent?** |
|  | 50% of landlords had been letting for 10+ years, 33% for 4-9 years, 17% for up to 4 years. Both letting agents had been letting for 10+ years. |
| **Question 3**  Landlord & Letting Agent | Why did you become a private sector landlord? **Why did you become a Letting Agent?** |
|  | 45% of landlords let as an investment, 31% as a secondary business/ income, 9% let after inheriting a property, 8% stated Other, 7% let as a main business. Comments made under Other included: temporary move, moved in with partner, unable to sell, family agreement.  Both letting agents operate as a main business. |
| **Question 4**  Landlord & Letting Agent | What do you think makes a good private sector landlord? Please select all that apply |
|  | Landlords ranked the following aspects:   1. Reliable and fair 2. Repairs & Improves property 3. Charges reasonable rent 4. Legislation awareness & compliance 5. Good Communication/ contactable 6. Values and listens to letting agent & tenants 7. Market Knowledge 8. Other   Comments mentioned under Other included: letting agent manages, membership of Scottish Association of Landlords (SAL), looking after tenants, staying ahead of minimum standards. |

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|  | Letting agents ranked the following aspects:   1. Repairs & Improves property 2. Legislation awareness & compliance 3. Reliable & fair 4. Good Communication/ contactable 5. Values and listens to letting agent & tenants 6. Charges reasonable rent 7. Market Knowledge 8. Other   Comments mentioned under Other included: kind nature/ approachable. |
| **Question 5**  Landlord | Do you use a Letting Agent? |
|  | 58% of landlords use a letting agent, 42% manage properties themselves. |
| **Question 6**  Landlord & Letting Agent | What do you think makes a good letting agent? Please select all that apply. |
|  | Landlords ranked the following aspects:   1. Good Communication & contactable 2. Values and listens to landlords & tenants 3. Legislation awareness & compliance 4. Professional & cares 5. Reliable & fair 6. Undertakes repairs timeously 7. Market Knowledge 8. Other   Comments mentioned under Other included: professional integrity.  Letting agents believed options 1 to 7 above made a good letting agent equally. In addition, communication and professional integrity were mentioned under Other. |
| **Question 7**  Landlord & Letting Agent | Which property types are in highest demand? |
|  | Landlords confirmed flats (61%), semi-detached (15%) and terraced (7%), Detached (3%) and Bungalows (3%) were in demand. 10% selected Other, no suggestions were made.  Letting agents confirmed Terraced (50%) and semi-detached (50%) were in demand. |

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| **Question 8**  Landlord & Letting Agent | Which property locations are in highest demand? |
|  | The top three property locations in demand, within the Falkirk Council area, were ranked as:   1. Falkirk 2. Larbert 3. all areas |
| **Question 9**  Landlord & Letting Agent | Which properties are hard to let? (size, location, property type, heating, condition) |
|  | The following properties were confirmed equally, as the hardest to let:   * properties with no gas/ properties with electric heating * 1 bed properties/ 1 bed flats |
| **Question 10**  Landlord & Letting Agent | Are properties let for the advertised rental price? |
|  | 82% of landlords and both letting agents confirmed that they always let for the advertised price. 14% of landlords have reduced the rent to meet demand/ tenants needs, while 4% had increased the rent due to demand. |
| **Question 11**  Landlord & Letting Agent | How do you source tenants? |
|  | 65% of landlords source tenants from a letting agent. 15% of landlords and 100% of letting agents source tenants online, 10% of landlords source via Word of Mouth, 8% selected Other, 1% sourced via newspapers and shops. Comments mentioned under Other included a mixture of the above as well as family. |
| **Question 12**  Landlord & Letting Agent | How do you set the rent level of your properties? |
|  | 49% of landlords confirmed rents are set on the advice of a letting agent, 18% confirmed it was a mixture of factors, 16% base it on similar rents in the area, 5% covered costs, 5% stated Other, 4% based it on what the tenants can afford, 3% based it on Local Housing Allowance (LHA). Comments mentioned under Other included: not increased, tenant affordability and commercial let less 20%.  100% of letting agents base rent on similar rents in the area. |

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| **Question 13**  Landlord & Letting Agent | Do you know where to direct tenants if they were struggling to pay their rent? |
|  | 57% of landlords and both letting agents knew where to direct tenants for help, just under 1/3rd advised no (information was provided within the survey for reference) and 12% selected Other. The majority of comments mentioned under Other confirmed an awareness or that they would find out if asked. |
| **Question 14**  Landlord & Letting Agent | From your experience, what help do private tenants need, if any? |
|  | Responses ranked the help needed by private tenants as:   1. Knowing where to get help on a range of issues from money advice, debt, eviction, tenancy agreements 2. Budgeting 3. Getting repairs carried out 4. Energy costs/ Energy efficiency 5. Less Government intervention 6. More social housing/ more affordable houses to buy |
| **Question 15**  Landlord & Letting Agent | What are the common reasons for tenants contacting you? (please select top 3 reasons) |
|  | The top 3 reasons for tenants making contact to both landlords and letting agents were:   1. Request a repair 2. Request a property improvement 3. To discuss paying rent   Other comments made included: neighbour complaints, to discuss or end the tenancy, request an adaptation, apply for benefits and keeping a pet. |
| **Question 16**  Landlord | How would you rate the condition of your properties? |
|  | 99% of landlords rated the condition of their properties as very good / good. |
| **Question 17**  Landlord & Letting Agent | How are repairs carried out in your properties? |
|  | The majority of landlords had established arrangements in place (54%), some were reactive, sourcing trades as and when required (43%), some had a mixed arrangement (3%). Lettings agent confirmed a mixture of established and reactive arrangements. |

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| **Question 18**  Landlord & Letting Agent | How do you plan improvements to your properties? **Do you highlight improvement works to landlords?** |
|  | 58% of landlords had established improvement plans in place, 38% were reactive, 4% confirmed mixed arrangements.  Both letting agents confirmed that improvements are highlighted to landlords for consideration. |
| **Question 19**  Landlord & Letting Agent | What are your plans over the next 5 years? |
|  | 59% of landlords confirmed that they will continue letting in some form, 31% intend to leave the sector, 9% were undecided.  Both letting agents confirmed their businesses will continue. |
| **Question 20**  Landlord & Letting Agent | How aware are you of the following? |

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|  | **Landlord**  **Awareness**   * Landlord Register 100% |
|  | * The Tolerable (Housing) Standard 80% |
|  | * Repairing Standard 84% |
|  | * Tenancy Deposit Schemes in Scotland 100% |
|  | * Unlawful Fees 71% |
|  | * Housing and Property Chamber 54% |
|  | * EPC Reform 71% |
|  | * Private Sector Team 75% |
|  | * Scottish Association of Landlords/ Council of Letting Agents 75% |
|  | * Landlord Accreditation Scotland 67% |
|  | * Home Energy Scotland 67% |
|  | * Under One Roof 20% |
|  | There were high levels of awareness around the Landlord Register, Tenancy Deposits, with lower levels of awareness around Repairing Standard, Tolerable Standard, Energy Performance Certificate reform and Unlawful fees in landlords.  There were also lower levels of support awareness in landlords (Private Sector Team, Scottish Association of Landlords, Landlord Accreditation Scotland, Home Energy Scotland, Under One Roof).  Letting Agents confirmed an awareness of everything listed. |

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| **Question 21**  Landlord | Helping Landlords – how important are the following resources to you? **Helping Letting Agents – how important are the following resources to you?** |

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|  | Landlords ranked the following resources:   1. Private Sector Team 2. Forum/ Virtual Forum 3. Private Sector webpages 4. E-newsletter: Renting Matters in Falkirk   Letting Agents ranked the following resources:   1. Forum/ Virtual Forum 2. E-newsletter: Renting Matters in Falkirk 3. Private Sector webpages 4. Private Sector Team contact |
| **Question 22**  Landlord & Letting Agent | What other resources would you find helpful? |
|  | The following ranked resources were identified:   1. Information for landlords: support organisations, landlord’s rights, how-to guides, defaulting tenants 2. Less intervention/ more support 3. Help co-ordinating communal repairs 4. Tenancy support 5. Review planned EPC requirements 6. Private Sector Team information 7. List of approved builders/ contractors 8. Landlord chat function 9. List of people looking to rent |
| **Question 23**  Landlord & Letting Agent | What would you like us to… |
|  | Include in our webpages: The following ranked suggestions were made:   1. What’s New (legislation, regulation & trends) 2. Help and Assistance (landlords & tenants) 3. Property conditions 4. Signposting 5. Mediation |

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|  | Include in our forums (virtual)/ e-newsletter: The following ranked suggestions were made:   1. Information and sources of help for landlords 2. Quarterly meetings 3. Falkirk Councils use of the Tenement (Scotland) Act 2004 4. Question and Answer session |
| **Question 24**  Landlord & Letting Agent | Other General comment |
|  | The following ranked comments were made:   1. Rent freeze/ Eviction ban – our costs are going up too 2. Landlords leaving the sector 3. We are not the enemy/ not recognised enough 4. Communal repairs are difficult to arrange/ not enforced 5. No profit 6. Nice to be consulted/ Falkirk council very helpful 7. More landlord enforcement 8. Landlords should require a qualification 9. Tax laws 10. Not enough support for landlords |
| **Question 25**  Landlord | Are you completing this survey as: |
|  | 75 landlords completed the survey as an individual, 3 on behalf of a company and 1 did not answer the question. |

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| **Equality –**  Landlord &  Letting Agent | **Key & relevant findings** |
|  | * 50% female, 49% male,1% other * 59% (45-64), 27% (65 or over), 14% (25-44) * 95% white, 3% mixed or multiple ethnic groups, 1% Pakistani, 1% Chinese |

**Appendix A**

**Landlord Questions**

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| **1** | How many properties do you hold in your portfolio? |
| **2** | How long have you rented out property? |
| **3** | Why did you become a private sector landlord? |
| **4** | What do you think makes a good private sector landlord? |
| **5** | Do you use a Letting Agent? |
| **6** | What do you think makes a good letting agent? |
| **7** | Which property types are in highest demand? |
| **8** | Which property locations are in highest demand? |
| **9** | Which properties are hard to let? (size, location, property type, heating, condition) |
| **10** | Are properties let for the advertised rental price? |
| **11** | How do you source tenants? |
| **12** | How do you set the rent level of your properties? |
| **13** | Do you know where to direct tenants if they were struggling to pay their rent? |
| **14** | From your experience, what help do private tenants need, if any? |
| **15** | What are the common reasons for tenants contacting you? |
| **16** | How would you rate the condition of your properties? |
| **17** | How are repairs carried out in your properties? |
| **18** | How do you plan improvements to your properties? |
| **19** | What are your plans over the next 5 years? |
| **20** | How aware are you of the following? |
| **21** | Helping Landlords – how important are the following resources to you? |
| **22** | What other resources would you find helpful? |
| **23** | What would you like us to…  Include in our webpages and Include in our forums (virtual)/ e-newsletter |
| **24** | Other general comment |

**Letting Agents Questions**

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| **1** | How many properties are you responsible for? |
| **2** | How long have you operated as a Letting Agent? |
| **3** | Why did you become a Letting Agent? |
| **4** | What do you think makes a good private sector landlord? Please select all that apply |
| **5** | **Not asked** |
| **6** | What do you think makes a good letting agent? |
| **7** | Which property types are in highest demand? |
| **8** | Which property locations are in highest demand? |
| **9** | Which properties are hard to let? (size, location, property type, heating, condition) |
| **10** | Are properties let for the advertised rental price? |
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| **13** | Do you know where to direct tenants if they were struggling to pay their rent? |
| **14** | From your experience, what help do private tenants need, if any? |
| **15** | What are the common reasons for tenants contacting you? |
| **16** | **Not asked** |
| **17** | How are repairs carried out in your properties? |
| **18** | Do you highlight improvement works to landlords? |
| **19** | What are your plans over the next 5 years? |
| **20** | How aware are you of the following? |
| **21** | Helping Letting Agents – how important are the following resources to you? |
| **22** | What other resources would you find helpful? |
| **23** | What would you like us to…  Include in our webpages and Include in our forums (virtual)/ e-newsletter |
| **24** | Other general comment |

**Equality Questions**

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| **1** | What area do you live in? |
| **2** | How best would you describe your own housing circumstances? |
| **3** | What is your gender? |
| **4** | Do you consider yourself to be trans or have a trans history? |
| **5** | What is your age? |
| **6** | Do you consider yourself to be disabled? |
| **7** | Do you have a physical or mental health condition or illness, or a learning disability, which you expect to last for 12 months or more? |
| **8** | Do any of these conditions or illnesses affect you in any of the following areas? |
| **9** | If yes, does your condition or illness reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities? |
| **10** | What is your ethnic group? |