

Letting Fees Bill to make renting simpler and fairer

The Renting Homes (Fees etc.) (Wales) Bill will:

- ensure tenants are no longer charged for an accompanied viewing, receiving an inventory, signing a contract, or renewing a tenancy
- permit letting agents and landlords to only charge fees relating to rent, security deposits, holding deposits, or when a tenant breaches a contract
- provide a regulation-making power to limit the level of security deposits
- cap holding deposits to reserve a property before the signing of a rental contract to the equivalent of a week's rent and create provisions to ensure their prompt repayment
- create a clear, simple and robust enforcement regime for when offences occur.

The enforcement regime will allow for fixed penalty notices to be issued against anyone requiring a prohibited payment; if penalties are not paid Local Housing Authorities can prosecute offences through the Magistrates Court. Convictions for an offence could result in an unlimited fine, and will be taken into account by Rent Smart Wales when considering whether to grant or renew a licence.

Rebecca Evans said:

“In recent years we have seen a significant increase in the number of people renting in Wales. The private rented sector now accounts for 15% of all housing.

“This Bill builds on the work we have already done here in Wales through the Housing and Renting Homes Acts to ensure that those wishing to rent in the private sector can expect high standards, fair treatment and transparency.

“Fees charged by letting agents often present a significant barrier to many tenants, especially those on lower incomes.

“The Bill will mean that tenants no longer face significant upfront fees when they start renting. In most instances they will only need to pay their monthly rent and a security deposit.

“No longer will tenants be charged for an accompanied viewing, receiving an inventory or signing a contract. No longer will they be charged for renewing a tenancy. And no longer will they have to pay check out fees when they move out.

“I want renting to be a positive and widely accessible choice for

people and this Bill will ensure that rental costs become more reasonable, affordable and transparent.”