

DTRVA 11 Electrical Safety First

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor yr Economi, Masnach a Materion Gwledig | Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee

Bil Datblygu Twristiaeth a Rheoleiddio Llety Ymwelwyr (Cymru) | Development of Tourism and Regulation of Visitor Accommodation (Wales) Bill

Evidence from Electrical Safety First

1. What are your views on the general principles of the Bill, and whether there is a need for legislation to deliver the stated policy intention?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Electrical Safety First is the UK charity dedicated to reducing deaths, injuries and fires caused by domestic electrical accidents. As an organisation we have long campaigned for improved electrical safety measures in all rented tenures, and were extremely pleased on the coming into force of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016. This act contained several provisions which in effect required landlords in both social and private rented sectors to ensure that their properties were electrically safe by having them checked by a professional electrician, with evidence provided to the tenant.

This is important as Wales has some of the oldest housing stock in Europe. and many homes will still be using electrical installations many decades old, which not only may have suffered degradation over the years but may also now be insufficient to handle the demands of modern electrical appliances.

Without periodic electrical installation inspections conducted by a professional electrician any faults can remain undetected until they cause damage to equipment, electric shock or fire. Anyone renting a domestic property in any tenure for any reason must be protected from the risks posed by faulty electrical installations, and in Wales short term lets remain an unprotected category. The provisions in this bill close that gap and so are much needed to bring visitor accommodation into line with other tenures.

Electrical Safety First considers that this bill will provided enhanced safety and reassurance for guests and owners, reduce the risk to properties from accidental electrical fires, improve the quality of Welsh housing stock and protect the reputation of the Welsh Tourism industry.

2. What are your views on the Bill's provisions, including whether they are workable and will deliver the stated policy intention?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Restricting the response to the safety aspects of the bill, Electrical Safety First considers that these provisions are a necessary and sensible measure to ensure safety in Short Term Lets across Wales and will bring this tenure in line with the other rented tenures in Wales.

Ensuring that all rented properties are subject to the same basic standard of safety will result in properties undergoing regular checks and any previously overlooked or ignored issues in these properties resolved. This will deliver certainty for guests, raise the quality of the sector, protect landlord assets and prevent unscrupulous actors from undercutting responsible operators by prohibiting the letting of unsafe, substandard properties.

3. In your view, are there any potential barriers to the implementation of the Bill's provisions?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Restricting the response to the safety aspects of the bill, Electrical Safety First considers that as these measures have already been successfully introduced in the Social and Private rented sectors in Wales and similar measures in force in Scotland there is no significant barrier to implementation.

4. Do you feel there will be any unintended consequences arising from the Bill?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Restricting the response to the safety aspects of the bill, as similar provisions are already in force in other tenures in Wales it is felt that the risk of unintended or unforeseen consequences is very low, and any that occur will not remove the benefit arising from safer properties.

5. What are your views on the Welsh Government's assessment of the financial and other impacts of the Bill as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Electrical Safety First considers that the additional costs imposed on property owners that may be required by the bill are minimal. Electrical installation inspections are

already legal requirements in other tenures and standard practice for many operators, and so should not be considered an onerous burden.

6. What are your views on the appropriateness of the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Part 1: Chapter 5 of the Explanatory Memorandum)?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Electrical Safety First considers that the powers as described are appropriate.

7. Are there any other issues you would like to raise about the Bill and the Explanatory Memorandum or any related matters?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

No