

Government Response: The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Residential Tenancies: Extension of Period of Protection from Eviction) (No. 3) (Wales) Regulations 2021

Merit Scrutiny point 2:

Response

As the Committee has noted, the rationale for the decision taken is set out in paragraph 4.4 of the Explanatory Memorandum and summarised again in paragraph 6.12. Paragraphs 6.8 and 6.18 note the potential financial and economic effects that the Regulations may have on landlords and others but also note those things that help to mitigate any harmful effects.

The Welsh Government is satisfied that the Regulations are compatible with Convention Rights.

Merit Scrutiny point 3:

Response

Paragraph 6.12 of the Explanatory Memorandum states that *'given the recent, and predicted, increases in both case numbers and hospitalisations, retaining six month notice periods is likely to best support the objectives of containing and slowing the virus, easing the burden on frontline staff and supporting people. In particular, concerns about the impact of a further wave combined with the expected impact of normal winter pressures on the health service, supports a more cautious approach.'*

The Committee may wish to note that a more cautious approach is also being followed in Scotland, where the notice period for most grounds (including rent arrears) is increased to six months until 31 March 2022, and in Northern Ireland, where increased notice periods of twelve weeks will remain in place until May 2022.

Merit Scrutiny point 6:

Response

The Committee will wish to note that since the Welsh Government's previous response, the Tenancy Hardship Grant has been officially introduced. The Grant supports tenants with rent arrears owed to landlords and accrued due to Covid-19 up to June 2021, and mitigates against some of the economic effects of the Regulations on landlords, particularly as the grant is paid directly to landlords on behalf of the tenant who applies.

The Tenancy Hardship Grant has replaced the Tenancy Saver Loan. Tenants who have already taken a loan through the scheme will have their loan converted to a grant.