

WELSH GOVERNMENT INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Title of proposal:	Renting Homes (Amendment) (Wales) Bill
Official(s) completing the Integrated Impact Assessment (name(s) and name of team):	Jon Roche Housing Strategy and Legislation
Department:	Housing Policy
Head of Division/SRO (name):	Emma Williams
Cabinet Secretary/Minister responsible:	Julie James AM, Minister for Housing and Local Government
Start Date:	January 2020

SECTION 1. WHAT ACTION IS THE WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSIDERING AND WHY?

Prosperity for All states the importance of housing as a key priority for Welsh Ministers. It recognises the role of good quality, affordable and accessible homes in providing a springboard from which individuals and families can create secure and successful futures and meet their full potential.

Renting a home is increasingly becoming a longer-term proposition for a wider range of people, and the private rented sector (PRS) plays an important part in meeting the housing needs of the people of Wales, providing over 400,000 homes¹, approximately 15% of all dwelling stock, and has more than doubled in size between 2000/01 and 2014/15.

Given the increasing importance of the sector, the Welsh Government is committed to supporting the PRS and ensuring it is a viable choice for those who wish to rent their home, whilst also ensuring that landlords are able to regain their property in a predictable and timely manner when they have a legitimate need to do so. As part of this, we need to ensure there is the right balance of support and regulation in the PRS, so that renting a home is an option which provides for security of tenure, where tenants understand their rights and responsibilities and are supported to access them, and where they will have peace of mind that the landlords they rent from will treat them fairly.

The overarching aim of the Renting Homes (Amendment) (Wales) Bill ('the Bill') is to improve security of tenure for those who rent their home in Wales. Whilst its provisions will apply to all landlords, its greatest impact will be felt in the private rented sector. Increased security of tenure will be achieved by amending the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 ('the 2016 Act') to extend the minimum notice period for a notice given under section 173 – Landlord's Notice – from two months to six months, and to restrict the issuing of such a notice until six months after the occupation date of the contract (the 2016 Act currently

¹ Dwelling stock estimates for Wales 2016/17: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Housing/Dwelling-Stock-Estimates/dwellingstockestimates-by-localauthority-tenure>

sets this at four months). These changes will apply to the periodic 'standard contract', which is one of the default contracts for private landlords.

The net effect of these changes will be to double the length of time before a landlord can seek possession at the beginning of a contract from six months to one year – as long as the contract holder does not breach the terms of the contract. It would also ensure that, in the event of a section 173 notice being served, contract-holders have six months, rather than two, to find a new home.

We are seeking to make these changes as we have concluded that retaining an arrangement which enables a landlord to end a contract with only two months' notice, in a situation where the contract-holder is not at fault, would undermine the security of tenure we are seeking to achieve, and could potentially result in contract-holders in Wales being subject to a less favourable set of arrangements than apply in other parts of the UK.

We have therefore decided to introduce this amending legislation now, before the provisions of the 2016 Act have become effective, and to bring the Act, as amended, into force before the end of the current Assembly term. We believe that taking this approach will minimise the disruption that might otherwise occur if we were to allow the 2016 Act arrangements to come into effect and then change key elements of these within a short time of the new regime having been implemented.

During the policy development process a range of potential approaches were considered to achieve improved security of tenure, including replacing the 'no-fault' possession ground with a range of other grounds, as has been introduced elsewhere. However, Ministers felt that the best way of delivering their objective during the current National Assembly term was to amend the 2016 Act to increase the landlord's notice period to six months and to limit its use in certain circumstances, and then bring the amended 2016 Act into force in 2021.

The Welsh Government has strong relationships with stakeholders from across the housing sector, and their views on our proposals were sought through a formal consultation exercise during summer/autumn 2019. The opinions expressed and the evidence provided by stakeholders as part of that process have helped inform this assessment and the development of the Regulatory Impact Assessment that has been

published alongside the Bill. A formal consultation response report has also been published.

Cost/benefit analysis work undertaken by the Welsh Government as part of the development of the RIA has concluded that the Bill will be largely cost neutral, or may even provide cost savings in some areas over time. This contrasts with concerns expressed by some PRS stakeholders who have suggested that that our proposals will lead to increased financial risk for private landlords and may result in a contraction of the sector. Whilst we do not necessarily share these views, we will of course give due consideration to any further evidence that may be submitted during scrutiny by PRS representatives and opposition parties and objectively consider amendments to the Bill where these are felt necessary.

SECTION 2. WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON SOCIAL WELL-BEING?

2.1 People and Communities

The private rented sector is changing. Not only is the PRS continuing to grow in size (increasing from 9% of households in 2007 (118,000) to 13% (176,000) in 2017), but the demographics of the sector are also changing: increasing numbers of families with children, and older people, are letting from private landlords, and for longer periods than has been the case historically. Whereas the sector was once predominantly the domain of younger, mainly single-person households and students, for whom flexibility was important, it is increasingly becoming a mainstream housing option for a wider range of household types.

Given the changing nature of the sector, the Welsh Government has concluded that two months is no longer an adequate notice period. We believe that six months is more appropriate, as it will allow sufficient time for contract-holders to find suitable alternative accommodation within the same community or area should they wish to do so. Having only two months to make such arrangements increases the likelihood of having to find 'any' accommodation, rather than optimal alternative accommodation. This unnecessarily contributes to people having to leave not just the property, but the community as well. Six months' notice also provides individuals with more time to save up to pay for the cost of the move and complete all necessary administrative tasks, including making contact with housing support or benefit agencies where appropriate, and to generally plan for the move around their everyday lives, including employment and family commitments, in a manner more similar to those who are selling their home.

Many of the stakeholder organisations who responded to our consultation supported this rationale and agreed that six months was a more realistic timescale for making the necessary arrangements.

Research reveals that current arrangements hit the more vulnerable elements in the PRS the hardest. They are more likely to be disrupted by having to find accommodation at short notice and more likely to suffer hardship as a consequence. For instance, Generation Rent has noted the correlation between no-fault evictions and the rise in homelessness, citing a correlation of 94% nationally. Meanwhile, a study by Salford University on the post-

implementation evaluation of Part 2 of the Housing Act (Wales) 2014 also recognises that whilst the PRS is an option to alleviate homelessness, it can also be a causal factor for many homelessness applications. Those participating within the first wave of fieldwork who were rehoused in the PRS under the local authority's homelessness duties still felt that their situation was precarious.

In the same Salford study, local authorities were questioned about their opinions of the PRS as a solution to end homelessness. Some felt this was not an ideal long term solution and reported that clients were reluctant to enter the PRS for a range of reasons, including anticipated eviction and the short term nature of tenancies

A Third Sector representative, also within the above study, said "Lots of our casework is people coming to the end of their Section 21 notice and panicking. They can't find somewhere else to live." This highlights the importance of ensuring that renters have sufficient time to find alternative accommodation in such circumstances.

Extending the initial minimum period of tenure to twelve months should reduce current levels of residential 'churn' which can negatively impact on communities as well as individuals. This, in turn, should deliver benefits for the wider community, such as improved integration, more active citizenship and increased cohesion.

Greater security of tenure will also support the delivery of homelessness reduction provisions within the Housing (Wales) Act 2014: homelessness presentations due to the loss of a PRS tenancy would likely reduce as a result of contract-holders having more time to source suitable alternative accommodation.

2.2 Children's Rights

The Bill will have a positive impact on all who rent a home in the private rented sector, including households with children.

It is not known exactly how many children live in the private rented sector in Wales: 2011 census data showed that there was a slightly higher proportion of households with dependent children than in the general population (34% in PRS, compared to 28% across all tenures) and a higher percentage of lone parents (17% in PRS, compared to 11%

across all tenures), whilst more recent population data shows that the PRS is becoming an increasingly popular tenure type, and this is likely to mean that a higher proportion of children are accommodated through the PRS than in the past.²

The Resolution Foundation state in *A New Generational Contract: The final report of the Intergenerational Commission* “[in] the short term, with the private rented sector now a tenure in which millions of children are raised and in which more people will spend retirements in future, it is essential to address its poor record for security.” The number of families with children living in rented accommodation in the UK has also risen by 94% in the last decade, with approximately half of children being born to families who are renting privately in 2016-17. This means that many children will now spend a number of their formative years in private rented accommodation.

The Bill is likely to have a positive impact on children of tenants who will be afforded additional time to access alternative accommodation of their choice and a longer period to save money to prepare for a move. This could mean moving to an area where there are better job prospects, educational opportunity, support structures, or simply to a property which is more suitable for the tenant’s needs, all of which are likely to have a positive impact on the lives of the children of tenants.

Frequently moving schools can have a particularly damaging effect on children: “We know that the private rented sector is the least secure and the lowest-quality tenure of all types, and that is obviously not a great place to bring up your kids,” says Lindsay Judge, a senior policy analyst at the Resolution Foundation, “The vast majority of private rented contracts are assured shorthold tenancies, so in theory you could have to get out with two months’ notice. That’s grim for anybody if you don’t want to leave, but if you have got children in school, your social networks, your support systems, these things are more challenging if you have got a family and you are trying to create a stable home.”

² Between 2000/01 and 2014/15 the number of privately rented dwellings in Wales has more than doubled, and now accounts for around 15% of dwelling stock.(Dwelling stock data) Wales’ population is projected to increase over the next 20 years, possibly by around 5% (Welsh Government Future Trends Report, 2017)

Given that 38% of households in the sector are families with dependent children a six month, rather than two month notice period will help avoid having to change a child's school, or provide sufficient time to make arrangements for a change where it is necessary or desirable.

In summary, increasing security of tenure and the length of time that contract-holders have to find affordable and suitable accommodation when faced with a move is important in supporting stability and limiting the disruption that finding new accommodation at short notice can cause to families, including to children themselves.

2.3 Equality

In drafting the Bill, consideration has been given to the Welsh Ministers' duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share characteristics and those who do not.

Due regard has been given to the principle there should be equality of opportunity for all people and to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

There are not considered to be any negative implications for people with protected characteristics as a result of these proposed changes.

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and the results are recorded at annex b below.

2.4 Rural Proofing

Our Bill to improve security of tenure will help ensure that the rental sector is able to play its full part in providing secure and good quality accommodation to citizens in all parts of Wales.

The benefits described at section 2.1 above in relation to reduced population churn, improved community cohesion and participative citizenship apply to rural areas as much as they do to urban.

Consultation responses from organisations representing landlords in the agricultural sector and church-owned properties (often located in rural areas) raised a number of specific issues and concerns regarding our proposals. In particular, the Welsh Government was asked to be mindful of circumstances in which properties in rural areas are rented out for short periods as holiday lets, and circumstances in which an agricultural landlord may need to regain possession of a tenanted property on a farm holding for legitimate business reasons, such as seasonal workers. It was suggested that an exemption for the sector, or a variation in the arrangements, be considered (for example, a break clause inserted into a contract triggered on cessation of employment with two months' notice).

We were also told by several representatives of religious bodies in Wales that a six month notice period would cause difficulties in the case of housing for ministers of religion, and that churches often require possession of properties within shorter timescales.

In this context, it should be noted that the Act already provides for certain exemptions, including in relation to service occupancies (where someone is required to occupy a dwelling by their contract of employment). Such exemptions will also apply to the proposals under the Bill. Similarly, holiday lets are already exempted from the scope of the Act.

2.5 Health

Evidence shows that poor quality housing can cause or exacerbate physical health problems, whilst insecurity of tenure is a common cause of mental health problems. By way of example, a recent study by Mind found that four in five people with a mental health

condition stated that a housing situation had made their mental health worse³. Paul Spencer, a policy director at Mind, said: “The lack of security in rented accommodation can be damaging for mental health and involuntary home moves can have a particularly severe effect ... For those of us with mental health problems, it may also mean you have to move away from mental health services or other services in your community that were supporting you.”

Being required to leave your home at short notice can be stressful and anxiety-inducing for all individuals, not just those with pre-existing mental health problems. For instance, an evidence review by Dr Jenny Preece and Dr Emma Bimpson (University of Sheffield) Published in March 2019 highlights the unsurprising fact that evictions and foreclosures have been shown to have an adverse effect on mental health (Vasquez-Vera et al. 2017, Hardy and Gillespie, 2016), whilst research in Sweden has found that individuals facing eviction were four times more likely to attempt suicide than the rest of the population (Rojas and Stenberg, 2016). And it is not only the loss of one’s home that can lead to mental health issues, but also the wider ongoing feeling of insecurity and apprehension at the possibility of potentially being asked to leave one’s home at short notice that many tenants in the PRS report (McKee and Soaita, 2018). Greater security of tenure and longer notice periods when a tenant is required to move should help reduce the prevalence and impact of these issues.

In addition, longer notice periods will also allow more time for individuals and their carers to arrange for changes to existing care packages where an individual or someone they live with may be in ill health or require care and support and a move to a different local authority or health board area is required.

2.6 Privacy

The Bill does not produce any new requirements relating to privacy or the sharing of information. There will be no impact on privacy as a consequence of this legislation.

³ <https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/news/four-in-five-people-with-mental-health-problems-say-their-housing-has-made-their-mental-health-worse/>

SECTION 3. WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON CULTURAL WELL-BEING AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE?

3.1 Cultural Well-being

3.2 Welsh Language

The Bill should not give rise to any negative impacts in relation to cultural well-being or the Welsh language. The Impact Assessment found there to be no clear link to the Welsh Language Standards, however, the potential benefits for communities and individuals from reduced population churn outlined at section 2.1 above are as relevant to cultural well-being as they are to social or economic well-being, whilst greater security of tenure may also help to preserve Welsh-speaking communities for the same reasons.

SECTION 4. WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON ECONOMIC WELL-BEING?

4.1 Business, the general public and individuals

The potential economic, and wider monetary and non-monetary impacts of the Bill both for individuals and the various sectors that will be affected have been set out in detail in the Costs and Benefits section of the RIA.

The analysis conducted by the Welsh Government concluded that the Bill will be largely cost neutral, or may even provide cost savings in some areas over time. The detail is set out in the Regulatory Impact Assessment, at part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum.

Justice Impact

A justice System Impact Assessment has been conducted and will be published alongside the Bill.

SECTION 5. WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING?

5.1 Natural Resources

By seeking to ensure that the best use is made of existing housing stock across all sectors in Wales and supporting stronger communities through the reduction of residential churn, the Bill will support the 'Taking a place based approach' priority.

The national challenges and opportunities the Bill will help support are:

- ◆ *Taking action to reduce the pressures on natural resources, such as through resource efficiency and renewable energy;*
- ◆ *Supporting action to tackle health and economic inequalities;*
- ◆ *Supporting community cohesion; and,*
- ◆ *Supporting secure and stable employment.*

5.2 Biodiversity

See page 27 below.

5.3 Climate Change

5.3a Decarbonisation

The Bill will not impact on emissions in Wales.

The Bill will not affect ability to adapt to the effects of climate change.

5.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

A Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required for this Bill.

5.5 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

A Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required for this Bill.

5.6 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Environmental Impact Assessment is not required for this Bill.

SECTION 7. CONCLUSION

The Welsh Government has strong relationships with stakeholders from across the housing sector, and their views on our proposals were sought through a formal consultation exercise during summer/autumn 2019. The consultation was published on the Welsh Government website and information about it and how to respond was widely distributed and shared via social media and via e-mail.

In addition, during the consultation period, Welsh Government officials met with a number of key stakeholders to discuss the proposals in more detail. The views expressed during those meetings also informed the policy development process.

Over 850 responses were received from across a range of sectors, with both Shelter Cymru and the Tenant Participation Advisory Service of Wales (TPAS) Cymru drawing on survey work they undertook with their own stakeholders to inform their consultation responses.

The majority of tenants and organisations which represent or support tenants were largely supportive of our proposals to increase notice periods and limit the use of possession notices (although a number of third sector organisations considered that this approach fell short of the abolition of no-fault evictions they were expecting). On the other hand, landlords, letting agents, and their representative bodies – including a number of community landlords – expressed concerns or opposition to our proposed changes in this regard. Given the current widespread use of section 21 possession notices, we had anticipated that there would be opposition to the proposal to extend the section 173 notice period and to limit its use in certain circumstances.

The opinions expressed and the evidence provided by stakeholders as part of that process have helped inform the development of the Bill and the Regulatory Impact Assessment that has been published alongside the Bill. A formal consultation response report has also been published.

Contract-holders will have a more realistic prospect of sourcing suitable alternative accommodation, preparing for a move, and raising funds for moving costs and deposits. For the contract holder, the longer notice period will help prepare for a move. It will,

therefore, significantly mitigate the most difficult aspect of moving: having to prepare logistically and financially for a move following only two months' notice.

Given that a significant proportion of households within the PRS are 'low income households' (37% have a net annual income of £15,000 or less and 22% of private renters are in receipt of housing benefit), increased time to seek such support is particularly important for this section of the population and will help to reduce social and economic pressures generally.

The impact of not having settled accommodation and concerns over the security of that accommodation can have a deep and lasting impact on some of the already vulnerable parts of society. Improving this security will provide greater confidence for those individuals that they will not have to find new accommodation at short notice.

From the landlords' perspective, the extended notice period will mean that that a 'no-fault' notice will no longer necessarily be a quicker alternative to the other possession grounds. This would mean that landlords who required possession more quickly because of a breach of contract will be more likely to rely on a more relevant ground, for example that relating to rent arrears or antisocial behaviour, rather than a 'no fault' notice. This would also ensure greater judicial oversight of possession proceedings than is currently the case.

In their consultation responses, landlords and their representative organisations raised concerns that the Bill would have the following negative impacts:

- It will make it more difficult and costly for landlords to evict contract-holders who are not paying rent, are committing antisocial behaviour, or otherwise breaching the terms of their tenancy – the Welsh Government's response to this would be that other, more relevant, grounds exist to pursue possession in such circumstances.
- It will lead to landlords becoming more selective about the types of tenants they let to, or leaving the market altogether. This would result in higher rents in the private rented sector as private landlords become more risk-averse, and greater demands and costs being placed on community landlords, leading to longer housing lists and increased waiting times for tenants seeking accommodation in the social rented sector – In response to this the Welsh Government would highlight the role that the proposed PRS

Leasing Scheme can play in providing an alternative letting option for cautious landlords.

- A greater volume of possession orders will reach the courts as landlords turn to other alternative grounds to end contracts. This increase in the courts' caseload will lead to landlords having to wait longer for hearings to take place, and greatly diminish the certainty of outcome they currently enjoy under Section 21. These two factors, it is contended, would further deter private landlords – particularly small-scale (or 'hobby') landlords – from entering or remaining in the market. Preventing such delays from occurring would require a significant increase in capacity in the courts service, some stakeholders argued, and asked whether additional funding would be made available to support such an expansion. Also in relation to the courts service, some respondents went further, suggesting that the current system was 'not fit for purpose' and should be replaced by a dedicated housing court or tribunal similar to that in place in Scotland – the Welsh Government's response to this will be to point to the fact that around two thirds of possession cases currently relate to social landlords, and our policy of significantly reducing social landlord repossessions should free up sufficient court time to address any increase in PRS cases.

Prosperity for All, the Welsh Government's national strategy, emphasises the role that secure and affordable homes play in forming the basis for individuals and families to flourish in all aspects of their lives. It also stresses the importance of good quality housing as a bedrock for improved health outcomes.

Greater security of tenure will support these objectives, and also help achieve a more prosperous Wales: removing the threat of eviction at short notice, and allowing more time for renters to find alternative, suitable accommodation when they are required to leave a property, will promote conditions in which people feel more settled and secure in their home and more connected to their local community. This can provide a springboard from which individuals can maximise their wellbeing through improved access to employment, education or training, whilst reduced levels of residential churn are also likely to benefit communities more widely by fostering conditions which support less transient and more cohesive populations in which participative citizenship can flourish.

The Bill will also support the reducing homelessness aims of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014: homelessness presentations due to the loss of a PRS tenancy would likely reduce due to contract holders having more time to identify alternative accommodation than is currently the case when section 21 procedures are used. Furthermore, in the responses we received to our consultation on these proposals, there was some optimism – including from local authorities and housing associations – that the creation of a de facto 12 month initial minimum rental period, combined with a longer section 173 notice period, would help make the private rented sector “a more attractive housing option for people who often cite the current lack of security as the main reason for not wanting to consider privately renting”, and in doing so help alleviate some of the pressures currently experienced by social housing providers.

As outlined at 7.2 above, landlords and their representative organisations contend that the Bill will produce adverse effects for the sector. In the RIA we address these concerns, indicating that the Welsh Government’s housing policy, under which Community Landlords will not evict tenants into homelessness, and the fact that landlords will not be required to go to court in cases of possession linked to abandonment, will mean that seeking possession via the courts through an appropriate breach of contract ground will be a more attractive option than issuing a six-month section 173 notice. Greater use of the rent arrears possession ground will also mean that landlords are able to seek compensation for lost rent, rather than writing it off as many do under current section 21 proceedings. It also understood that potential improvements to court resourcing and procedures, proposed by the UK Government, will apply to both England and Wales.

The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, and this amending Bill, are part of the Welsh Government’s wider commitment to do more to help people meet their housing needs. Subject to the Bill being passed by the National Assembly for Wales, the implementation of the new legislation will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

An independent evaluation project will be commissioned for a minimum two-year period. It will commence prior to the new legislation coming into effect, which will allow relevant baseline information to be collated and future information needs identified. This will allow arrangements to be made to collect the required information from stakeholders in a

systematic way throughout the evaluation study, and for additional research exercises e.g. sample surveys, to be undertaken.

The effectiveness of the legislation will be evaluated in a number of ways. The evaluation will include both process and impact evaluation. The process evaluation, which will be a more frequent element in the study, will consider the way in which landlords are implementing the legislation, identifying examples of good practice and what is working well. It will also consider any problems and difficulties encountered by all stakeholders so that action may be taken to resolve them at an early stage. The findings would be used to improve the adoption of the new legislation including, importantly, the use of the model contracts.

The impact evaluation will consider the impact(s) of the new legislation against the desired effects of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 as amended, which include simpler and clearer arrangements for renting a home, greater understanding of contract rights and responsibilities for both landlords and tenants, and whether this leads through to fewer disputes that require legal action to resolve.

The research design for the post-implementation evaluation will combine a variety of different research methods most suited to assessing its implementation and measuring the overall impacts of the legislation and specific elements of it. A programme of monitoring and evaluation activity will be developed to allow reporting one year after the legislation has been commenced and at appropriate points thereafter.

The evaluation will use both qualitative and quantitative methods. By way of some examples, the quantitative indicators may include the following:

- (i) Use of web-based information on the new legislation.
- (ii) Downloads of model contracts for use by landlords.

SECTION 8. DECLARATION

Declaration

I am satisfied that the impact of the proposed action has been adequately assessed and recorded.

Name of Senior Responsible Officer / Deputy Director: Emma Williams

Department: Housing & Regeneration

Date: 07 January 2020

FULL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Describe and explain the impact of the proposal on people with protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010.

The PRS has a higher proportion of younger, BAME, and non-Christian residents than other tenure types, and as such it is anticipated that the Bill will have a proportionately greater positive impact on these groups.

Protected characteristic or group	What are the positive or negative impacts of the proposal?	Reasons for your decision (including evidence)	How will you mitigate Impacts?
Age (think about different age groups)	This Bill will have a positive impact on all those in the PRS, but a disproportionately high impact on younger people, since there are a higher proportion of children and young people in the PRS than other tenures.		
Disability (think about different types of disability)	Disabled people can find it particularly difficult to identify suitable alternative accommodation and arrange a move within		

	<p>two months.</p> <p>Increasing the notice period to six months will therefore particularly benefit this group.</p>		
Gender Reassignment (the act of transitioning and Transgender people)	<p>The Bill is neutral on the grounds of gender, and it is not considered that it would have any differential impact on gender reassignment.</p>		
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>The Bill is neutral on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity, and it is not considered that it would have any differential impact on this group.</p>		
Race (include different ethnic minorities, Gypsies and Travellers and Migrants, Asylum	<p>The Bill is neutral on the grounds of race, however it is likely to have a disproportionately positive impact on those from a BME background, since</p>		

seekers and Refugees)	there is a higher proportion of BME householders in the PRS than among other tenures.		
Religion, belief and non-belief	The Bill is neutral on the grounds of religion, belief and non-belief, and it is not considered that it would have any differential based on this criteria.		
Sex / Gender	The Bill is neutral on the grounds of sex and gender, and it is not considered that it would have any differential impact based upon sex or gender.		
Sexual orientation (Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual)	The Bill is neutral on the grounds of sexual orientation, and it is not considered that it would have any differential impact based upon it.		

<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<p>The Bill is neutral on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership, and it is not considered that it would have any differential impact based upon marital status.</p>		
<p>Children and young people up to the age of 18</p>	<p>See above</p>		
<p>Low-income households</p>	<p>Given that a significant proportion of those living in the PRS are 'low income households' (37% have a net annual income of £15,000 or less and 22% of private renters are in receipt of housing benefit), the additional security of tenure this Bill will provide is likely to have a disproportionately</p>		

	positive impact on this group.		
--	--------------------------------	--	--

Human Rights and UN Conventions

The Welsh Government has considered the impact of the Bill provisions on human rights and has concluded that the Bill is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The new provisions engage the rights of landlords under Article 1 Protocol 1 ECHR (which protects the right to peaceful enjoyment of property) and the rights of contract-holders under Article 8 ECHR (right to a home and family life). The Welsh Government considers that the provisions strike a fair and proportionate balance between these rights. Some provisions (the restriction on serving further notices under a standard periodic contract; and the restrictions on serving notices following a retaliatory possession claim) apply to pre-existing contracts but are not truly retrospective as they apply only to future actions by the landlord. The Welsh Government considers that they are compatible with Article 1, Protocol 1 ECHR.

A. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Cymraeg 2050 A million Welsh speakers, acknowledges the need to create the conditions where Welsh speakers can stay in Welsh-speaking communities, or return to those communities. By creating greater security of tenure for those who rent their homes, especially in the private rented sector, the Bill will help support this aim for the reasons set out below.

Whilst the Bill has no direct impact on the on the Welsh language, the increased security of tenure it will deliver, especially in the private rented sector, could help to preserve or expand Welsh-speaking communities by making it easier for individuals who wish to reside in an area with a high density of Welsh speakers, or to access education provided in the medium of Welsh, to maintain a tenancy or find suitable alternative accommodation in the area if faced with a 'no-fault' eviction.

All advice and guidance issued to support this policy will be bilingual.

Biodiversity Impact Assessment

The Bill is concerned with tenancy reform and therefore no direct impacts on biodiversity have been identified. One of the strategic-level objectives of the Bill is to help ensure that use of existing housing stock is maximised, thereby reducing the need for the development of new housing and the potential damage to habitats and species this can cause (albeit that the planning and construction of housing in Wales is governed by strict environmental standards).

The ways in which the Bill will support the priorities of the Natural Resources Policy are set out at section 5.1 of the integrated impact assessment.