

PE1743/B

COSLA Submission of 6 November 2019

I refer to your letter of 14 October 2019, which was passed to the COSLA Communities team for comment. COSLA has taken advice on this matter from colleagues in ALACHO, the professional association for heads of housing in Scottish local government.

The advice we received is that it is not for local government to get involved in the rents set by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) or private landlords. RSLs are independent private sector organisations, the rents they charge and how they go about considering increases or changes to their rent structures is up to them, though the law does require RSLs to consult and take account of the views of their tenants.

ALACHO went on to point out that whilst councils have an active interest in rents and affordability and will certainly discuss such things with RSLs locally, councils don't have role in rent setting or in mediating disputes. And whilst it is clear from this case that the situation is a complex one and one where the tenants involved feel they have a real grievance, it is for the relevant RSL board to take decisions on their rents based on their view of the interest of the tenants involved and their wider tenant group and the organisation.

Both COSLA and ALACHO share the concerns about rent rises in the social sector and we are in discussion with Scottish Government about this matter. However the particular issue raised in the petition is not one in which councils have any involvement.