

**Councillor Jim McClung
Wigtown West**

Your Ref:

Our Ref: A/4 JMcC/MS

9 May 2013

Ms Anne Peat
Clerk
Public Petitions Committee

Kirkbank House
English Street
Dumfries
DG1 2HS

petitions@scottish.parliament.uk

Dear Madam

**WELFARE REFORM ACT 2012
PETITION BY GOVAN LAW CENTRE TO SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT'S PUBLIC
PETITIONS COMMITTEE**

I refer to the petition submitted by the Govan Law Centre seeking changes to Section 16 of Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, that would prevent 'bedroom tax' arrears being used to establish or justify a crave for eviction.

This matter was recently considered by Dumfries and Galloway Council's Housing Sub Committee and a unanimous decision of Elected Members was to formally submit this letter to articulate this Council's support for the petition.

There are currently 1,800 households in Dumfries and Galloway affected by the bedroom tax. Many of these tenants have lived in their homes for years, in small rural and remote communities. It is unreasonable and often not possible for these households to move to smaller accommodation as the stock of one and two bedroom homes is insufficient to meet existing demand. In these circumstances, Members believe it is fundamentally unjust to threaten such households with the possibility of eviction.

As a stock-transferred authority, we work very closely with our strategic partners in the RSL sector and support the range of additional tenancy services they have put in place to mitigate some of the impacts of welfare reform. Our Council has also provided a number of additional services and increased our Discretionary Housing Payment fund, which is now under unprecedented pressure with hundreds of applications having been received since April 2013.

I would/-

I would urge the Public Petition's Committee to consider these issues when examining Govan Law Centre's petition. Our Elected Members are of the clear view that removing the possibility of eviction through a change in legislation is fully justified.

Yours faithfully

Cllr Jim McClung
Chairman
Housing Sub-Committee