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Ariane Burgess MSP
Convener, Local Government, Housing and
Planning Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

5th June 2025

Dear Ariane,

Private Rented Sector (PRS) Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) and Heat & Energy Efficiency Technical Suitability Assessment (HEETSA)

I am pleased to inform the Committee that tomorrow, Friday 6th June, I will publish two consultations, one of which seeks stakeholder views on our proposals to introduce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) regulations within the domestic Private Rented Sector (PRS), and one which seeks views on the concept and initial proposals for a Heat & Energy Efficiency Technical Suitability Assessment (HEETSA).

Both consultations relate to the statement I gave to Parliament on 3 April on next steps with the Heat in Buildings Bill. I set out that we would now be working to introduce a Bill later in Year 5 of this session, and that it would be accompanied by the introduction of a MEES in the PRS.

In addition to introducing the Bill and laying regulations for the PRS MEES, I have already made the Committee aware of my intention to lay new regulations to reform Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs). These regulations will bring in a new EPC rating system, including a new Heat Retention Rating (HRR) for domestic buildings, which will more accurately reflect the fabric energy efficiency of the property, and which I propose be used as the basis for setting the PRS MEES.

PRS MEES

Improving energy efficiency is one of the levers available to the Scottish Government that can support both our commitments to reach net-zero by 2045 and reduce fuel poverty. In recent years, the energy efficiency of homes across Scotland has continued to improve with 56% now rated EPC band C or better. However, in the PRS 48% of properties are rated EPC band D or lower, with the sector also having the highest percentage (14%) of EPC band E, F or G rated properties which, we believe, is contributing to the high numbers of people living in fuel poverty in the PRS (44%).

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That's why I am now proposing to bring forward regulations to introduce a MEES in the PRS. These regulations would mean all privately rented properties, as far as possible, reaching reformed EPC HRR band C from 2028 for new tenancies and by 2033 for all privately rented homes. This will improve those homes, reduce energy costs for tenants and support the transition to clean heating.

The consultation will run from 6th June to 29th August, and can be accessed from tomorrow at 9:00am here: <http://www.gov.scot/ISBN/9781836916642>. We will be running a series of stakeholder engagement workshops and would be happy to engage further with the Committee if helpful.

HEETSA

When I set out in the Government Response to the EPC reform consultation, my intention to introduce new regulations, I also made clear that the Scottish Government recognises stakeholder feedback on the limits of the EPC as a basic, standardised assessment. Many stakeholders, including representatives of the Committee, have also expressed a view that building owners and tenants also need to have access to more bespoke assessments which can determine which energy efficiency measures or clean heating systems are technically suitable for a building, and which are not.

I am therefore pleased to also share with the Committee our scoping consultation on the potential to develop a Heat & Energy Efficiency Technical Suitability Assessment (HEETSA) as a step beyond the EPC. We propose that HEETSA could build upon the range of retrofit assessments which are already available within the market, through government approval and accreditation of assessors and methodologies – as is already the case for the EPC. HEETSA would fill current gaps in the retrofit assessment market, particularly for assessment of clean heating systems and for more complex-to-decarbonise buildings such as tenements and traditional or protected buildings.

HEETSA would therefore benefit consumers seeking evidence beyond the EPC of the potential technical suitability of energy efficiency or clean heating system measures for their building. Introducing a government-backed scheme would not remove consumer choice in the market, but would provide additional safeguards, for those consumers who wished to have them, of the assurance of government-backed methodologies and practitioners who were required to operate to government specified quality standards. The results of a HEETSA could therefore help to support landlords who wished to, in evidencing how their building could or could not comply with the proposed PRS MEES.

This is very much an initial call for evidence on whether or not HEETSA is needed, the form it could take, and the circumstances in which it could support building owners. The consultation will run from 6th June to 29th August, and can be accessed from tomorrow at 9:00am here: <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781836917212>.

I look forward to continued engagement with the Committee on these matters over the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

ALASDAIR ALLAN

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