

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance
and Local Government
Leas-Phrìomh Mhinistear agus Rùnaire a' Chaibineit
airson Ionmhas agus Riaghaltas Ionadail
Jenny Gilruth MSP



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Craig Hoy MSP
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Social Justice, Housing and Local Government
Committee
Scottish Parliament
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17th October 2026

Dear Convener,

I am writing to inform the Committee of the Scottish Government's intention to take action to ensure that victim-survivors of domestic abuse are not unfairly burdened by council tax debt arising from an abusive relationship.

The Scottish Government supported the inclusion in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2025 of a requirement to review how joint and several liability for council tax arrears affects people experiencing domestic abuse. The review is currently underway and is considering both the available evidence and the views of key stakeholders, including domestic abuse support organisations, money advice and debt charities, and local authorities.

Nobody should have to face additional harm as a result of domestic abuse. We recognise that joint and several liability for council tax can create very difficult circumstances for those experiencing, or who have experienced, abuse.

Ahead of the conclusion of the review, we will create a statutory exception to joint and several liability rules to protect victims of domestic abuse, alongside wider measures to protect those affected by the impact of council tax debt.

These measures will build on existing protections, including our Council Tax Reduction scheme and investment in debt advice services, helping to ensure that people receive the support they need and are treated fairly and with dignity when engaging with the council tax system.

The review report, and a statement of action setting out the Scottish Government's response, will be laid before the Scottish Parliament by 6 November 2026. I intend to provide further detail on these measures at that time and expect a public consultation on these and wider council tax debt reform proposals during 2027.

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I trust the Committee finds this update helpful and will, of course, keep Parliament informed as this work progresses.

JENNY GILRUTH

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