

**Submission to the Scottish Parliament**  
**Consultation on 'A New Deal for Tenants'**  
**14 April 2022**

## Overview

Electrical Safety First is the charity committed to reducing the number of deaths, injuries and accidents caused by electricity. To support this objective, we have long campaigned for the electrical safety of tenants and were involved in the introduction of electrical safety checks in the private rented sector (PRS), social rented sector (SRS) and for short-term lets (STLs) in Scotland. We therefore welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the rights of tenants, but **we believe an important issue has been overlooked.**

Tenants, in particular, face specific barriers to installing safe Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points in their homes, which can lead to them adopting risky charging practices. The rights of tenants being able to install dedicated home chargers in their home should be considered in this strategy to ensure everyone can help achieve the Scottish Government's net zero aims in a safe way.

## Key Messages

- Currently tenants need to get permission to install an EV charge point in their home, and the landlord does not need to give this. **This leads to tenants resorting to risky charging practices.**
- These include using multiple **extension leads** and/or leaving these **plugged in when it is raining, which all increase the risk of electrical shock or fire.**
- About 38% of homes in Scotland are rented.<sup>1</sup> This represents a large proportion of people who may be affected by these barriers to charging and could be put at risk.
- We believe that removing barriers to tenants installing charge points at home is in **keeping with the overarching aims of this strategy**, to “ensure that everyone has access to a...**safe**... and energy efficient home that **meets their needs**”<sup>2</sup>

## The Ongoing Risk of Unsafe Charging

- We surveyed 1,500 EV owners and more than 8 out of 10 respondents in Scotland admitted that they were aware that multi-socket extension leads should not be used outside, yet half of Scottish EV users who charge using an extension lead have left cables running to their vehicle when it has been raining.<sup>3</sup>
- The Scottish Government has set targets to phase out petrol and diesel cars by 2030 meaning that this issue will only become more apparent, and more people could turn to risky charging practices.
- Through our consumer helpline, Electrical Safety First has heard testimony of private renters who have had great difficulty in having charging points installed in their home. In one case in Aberdeen, the renter requested permission to install a home charging point for their EV, but a number of barriers were placed in their way. In the end, their landlord refused the request citing issues with insurance.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-scottish-household-survey-data-explorer/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-deal-tenants-draft-strategy-consultation-paper/>

<sup>3</sup> Consumer research commissioned by Electrical Safety First and conducted by Censuswide surveying 1,500 owners of plug-in vehicles in the UK in March 2019.

- Although there is the option of using public charge points, it is estimated that 80% of people will charge at home.<sup>4</sup>
- The Scottish Government has previously revised the private residential tenancy agreement to provide a tenant with the right to alter the property in special circumstances. A similar model could be used to make it easier for renters to be able to access safe charging points. The social rented sector has a similar tenancy agreement model which could be altered in the same way.
- As more people will be required to transition to EV ownership, it is important that as many of these barriers are removed from renters to **ensure that everyone has access to safe EV charging and are protected from the safety risks.**

## Plugging into the Future

Electrical Safety First's report "Plugging into the Future" provides further details of Electrical Safety First's policy positions, and this provides further context to our submission.

The report can be found at [Electrical Safety First | Plugging into the Future](#)<sup>5</sup>

### Contact Details:

If you would like further details about this consultation response, please contact:

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/23465-EST%2BDFT-Charging%20Electric%20 Vehicles%20-%20Best%20Practice%20Guide-WEB.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/what-we-do/our-policies/scotland/plugging-into-the-future/>