

Electrical Safety First Briefing

Private Tenancies Bill - Consideration Stage in the
Northern Ireland Assembly

Electrical Safety First is the only UK charity dedicated to reducing deaths, injuries and fires caused by domestic electrical accidents: www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk

- Electrical Safety First welcomes the Private Tenancies Bill which enables regulations to be introduced in relation to electrical safety standards in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in Northern Ireland, through Clause 10 and Schedule 3 of the Bill.
- **We believe that the Bill should be strengthened by including a frequency of periodic electrical safety checks of intervals of at least every five years.** This would bring consistency with the requirements in England and Scotland where five yearly checks are now required by law in the PRS. The same measure will be introduced in Wales during 2022. It would also bring regulations into line with those for Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) in Northern Ireland.¹
- During the Department for Communities consultation on the Private Rented Sector, **88% of responses supported the proposal of periodic electrical safety checks.** This included substantial support from tenants for five yearly electrical checks.²
- Students from Northern Ireland studying elsewhere in the UK (of which there were 16,515 between 2019 and 2020) would be protected by five yearly electrical safety checks while renting privately elsewhere in the UK **but would not be afforded the same protection on return to Northern Ireland.**³ We believe this is unjust.
- The Bill contains provisions relating to electrical installations, fixtures, fittings, and any appliances provided by a private landlord. We would stress the importance of including both installations and appliances in the regulations as **we estimate that the majority (63%) of electrical house fires in Northern Ireland are caused by appliances.**⁴ An Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) and report on Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) should be given to tenants within 28 days of testing or to prospective tenants within 28 days of request.

Contact Details:

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

Karter Kane, Policy and Public Affairs Advisor

at: karter.kane@electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk or on 07812 059 889

¹ Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service Bill Paper, Private Tenancies Bill, page 104

² <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2017-2022/communities/research-papers-2021/private-tenancies-bill/>

³ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/communities/private-rented-sector-proposals-for-change-consultation-response.pdf> (page 5 and 14)

⁴ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/higher-education-enrolments>

⁵ <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/media/5v4cbqhc/ni-recharge-report-4.pdf>