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Bob Doris MSP  
Convener  
Local Government and Communities Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
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Dear Bob

## **HOUSING (AMENDMENT) (SCOTLAND) BILL**

As part of its scrutiny of the Housing (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill, your committee will want to note that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) announced on 16 November that it has reclassified English housing associations to the private sector. The announcement can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/news/statementsandletters/statementonclassificationofenglishhousingassociationsnovember2017>

ONS made its decision in light of regulations limiting local authority influence over the associations. The regulations were made earlier this month by DCLG Ministers under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, and were the final step in the process of securing reclassification in England. The other steps were changes to the powers of the regulator in England, and these were made directly through the 2016 Act.

As you know, our Bill is intended to pave the way for the ONS to reclassify registered social landlords in Scotland by making provisions similar to those made for England - including the power for Scottish Ministers to make regulations equivalent to those just made in England to limit local authority influence over RSLs. I am encouraged, therefore, by the ONS decision, which – consistent with the discussions we have had with the ONS – suggests that the provisions of our Bill, if enacted and brought into force in their current form, are likely to achieve their intended purpose.

I look forward to giving evidence on the Bill when I meet the Committee on 13 December.

Kind Regards

**KEVIN STEWART**

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