

Immediate release (01/05/2026): Four major parties make manifesto commitments on tenement reform

In a first for a Scottish Parliamentary election, the majority of major parties have endorsed tenement law reform.

Ahead of the election, the SNP, Liberal Democrats, Labour, and Greens have explicitly mentioned supporting reforms to help tenement flat owners organise repairs in their 2026 manifestos.

This follows campaigning work from the Tenement Action Group (TAG), which asked each party to make a commitment to support the three recommendations made by the [Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Tenement Maintenance Working Group](#):

- Establishment of compulsory owners' associations
- Obligation for tenements to be inspected every five years
- Establishment of building reserve funds

TAG members, whose membership includes architects, surveyors, flat owners, and other housing professionals from across the sector, believe that enacting these recommendations will result in well-maintained buildings providing warm homes, affordable maintenance bills, and enhanced resilience to deal with future repairs.

BEFS, the umbrella body for organisations working in Scotland's built environment and TAG member, has [published a party manifesto round-up](#) which summarises the positions of each major political party on issues related to BEFS's [2026 Manifesto for the Built Environment](#).

The SNP have committed to reform the Tenements (Scotland) Act, while the Liberal Democrats specifically mention support for the introduction of mandatory owners' associations, building reserve funds, and building inspections.

Scottish Labour have promised to speed up progress on tenement maintenance reforms, and widen eligibility for financial help for retrofit, and the Scottish Greens have committed to make it easier for tenement flat owners to manage repairs, maintenance and retrofit, specifically supporting mandatory owners' associations.

Mike Heffron, Chief Executive of Scotland's tenement charity Under One Roof and TAG member, said:

"The successful work of the Tenement Action Group to get a majority of Scotland's major political parties to make explicit commitments on tenement law reform is an excellent outcome for the 900,000 tenement flat owners in Scotland.

"These flat owners will be expecting reforms to be quickly enacted to ensure their homes are warm, and their buildings well-maintained, for many decades to come."

Hazel Johnson, Director of Built Environment Forum Scotland said:

"Across the new term of the Scottish Parliament BEFS will continue to advocate for tenement reform and the recommendations of the Tenement Maintenance Working Group - and how these can deliver cross cutting benefits in addressing the climate emergency, achieving net zero, and keeping Scotland's homes warm, comfortable and wind and watertight.

We look forward to supporting further cross-party efforts to leverage the value of the built environment and deliver tangible positive outcomes for our people and places.”

Contact

Please contact Mike Heffron at mike@underoneroof.scot if you have any questions.

Notes

Tenement Action Group

The Tenement Action Group, which membership includes architects, surveyors, academics, property managers, and other housing professionals, is focused on reforming tenement legislation to ensure owners of tenement properties are better able to conduct maintenance, repairs, and retrofit of flats.

TAG manifesto asks

A commitment to support the three recommendations made by the [Scottish Parliament’s Cross-Party Tenement Maintenance Working Group](#):

- Establishment of compulsory owners’ associations
- Obligation for tenements to be inspected every five years
- Establishment of building reserve funds

We believe that enacting their recommendations will result in well-maintained buildings providing warm homes, affordable maintenance bills, and enhanced resilience to deal with future repairs.

Background

- 895,000 properties in Scotland are defined as tenements, around one-third of which were built before 1919.
- The latest 2023 Scottish House Conditions Survey report indicates that disrepair of critical housing elements is evident in 45% of properties.
- For pre-1919 dwellings, which make up approximately 18% of Scotland’s building stock including tenements, the number is significantly higher.

Further information

- Following initial activity in 2018/19, the Scottish Parliament’s Cross-Party Tenement Maintenance Working Group produced a [Final Report](#) that made recommendations on owners’ associations, inspections, and reserve funds. The Scottish Government agreed to bring these proposals forward.
- On 11 December 2025, the Scottish Law Commission, at the direction of the Housing Minister, published a [Report and Draft Bill](#) for the Scottish Government to consider. Their purpose is to bring tenement owners together as legal entities that can deal with building issues, manage maintenance and repair budgets, and enter into contracts for works.
- Tenement Action Group member [Under One Roof](#) published a research report in 2025 titled: [Building Reserve Funds – a workable model for Scotland](#). The report investigates European models and options for introducing an appropriate vehicle in Scotland. Building reserve funds will help owners save for the inevitable and not be hit by

unanticipated, traumatic and unaffordable repair costs. The proposals are to build reserve funds up over time, with enforcement of contributions by existing owners taking place when they sell their flat and have equity.

- Five-year inspection reports will ensure existing owners have a knowledge base on which to take a best value approach to repairs, while buyers and lenders will have a full overview of building conditions. Ongoing work indicates that a typical cost of a £3000 five yearly inspection across eight owners, is only £75 per annum per owner. Inspections will enable all owners to budget for future repairs, buying into properties they can truly afford.