1. The Electrical Safety Council is an independent and UK-wide charity committed to reducing fires, deaths and injuries through electrical accidents at home and at work. We are supported by all sectors of the electrical industry as well as local and national governments and work to promote safety and good practice.

2. The Electrical Safety Council welcomes, through the Housing (Scotland) Bill, the commitment of the Scottish Parliament to improving the quality of housing stock throughout the nation. Specifically, we are highly supportive of the moves to increase the powers of local authorities to compel private landlords to maintain a safe property for the purposes of letting.

3. However, the Electrical Safety Council believes that more can be done to assess and monitor the safety of rented property. Whilst there is a requirement for the safety of gas installations in rented properties to be assessed on an annual basis, the lack of a similar requirement for electrical inspections in rented property other than Houses in Multiple Occupation potentially puts both tenants and properties at risk. A recent survey conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Electrical Safety Council revealed that 23% of people in Scotland believed there is currently a similar requirement for regular electrical inspections as there are for gas checks. The survey also showed that 87% believed there should be similar requirements for such safety checks.

4. Furthermore, the Electrical Safety Council is concerned by the lack of in depth research in to the state of electrical installations in all properties in Scotland. Whilst England and Wales both commission in depth research relating to the electrical installations in domestic property, the equivalent survey in Scotland does not provide the same level of information. The Northern Ireland survey has recently been updated and will provide the same information as the English and Welsh surveys when it is next published. Were this information available for Scotland, it would assist both the Scottish Government and charities such as the Electrical Safety Council to target our work more effectively, and improve electrical safety in Scottish homes.

5. The Electrical Safety Council would be happy to give any further information that may be required by the committee.

Electrical Safety Council Scotland Office

---

1 The research was carried out on Ipsos MORI’s Capibus, face-to-face omnibus survey 26 March to 01 April 2010, using a nationally representative quota sample across Great Britain (aged 15+). In total, 2043 interviews were conducted across Great Britain. The data are based on 149 interviews conducted in Scotland.

2 Owing to the sample size being below 100 for Scotland only data, and on the advice of Ipsos Mori, the UK data has been used in this instance.