

Preparing for the Renters' Rights Act

The [Renters' Rights Act](#) passed by Parliament in October 2025 brings significant changes to the private rented sector. These changes will affect how landlords let and manage their properties.

The Government has confirmed that Phase 1 of the Act, which focuses on tenancy reform, will come into force on 1 May 2026. The remaining measures will be introduced in two further phases.

A full guide to the Act can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

Understanding these changes early will help landlords to:

- prepare for a smooth transition
- avoid enforcement action or penalties
- maintain a good relationship with your tenant

What the Renters' Rights Act means for landlords

The Renters Act will give tenants more protection and security in their homes. Landlords will only be able to end tenancies for specific legal reasons, and properties must meet clearer standards. Councils will also have stronger powers to take action where landlords do not meet their responsibilities.

What landlords should do now

- [stay up to date with changes](#) on GOV.UK
- review your property portfolio and identify areas needing upgrades or compliance adjustments
- be ready to update your tenancy agreements in line with the new requirements
- carry out regular property inspections, including checks for licensing compliance
- keep clear and accurate records to demonstrate compliance
- Consider joining a professional landlord association for advice and support

Phase 1 changes, from 1 May 2026

End to section 21 'no-fault' evictions

- Section 21 eviction notices will be abolished. This means that:
- you'll only be able to evict tenants when you have a specific legally valid reason, known as a 'possession ground'
- within 12 months, landlords can only give notice in limited circumstances, such as rent arrears or antisocial behaviour
- after 12 months, a landlord may only seek possession under defined grounds, such as selling or moving into the property, with 4 months' notice

End to fixed-term tenancies

Fixed-term assured and assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) will be replaced by **Rolling tenancies** (periodic assured tenancies). This means that renters will be able to stay in their

property until they end the tenancy or until a landlord serves a valid notice to end it or obtains a court order for possession. Renters will be able to end the tenancy at any point by giving 2 months' notice.

Rent increases (within a tenancy)

These will be limited to once a year at the market rate. Landlords must give tenants at least 2 months' notice of a rent increase. Tenants can challenge increases at the First-tier Tribunal.

Advance rent

Only one month's rent will be payable in advance and landlords will be unable to request payment before an agreement is signed.

Written agreements

All tenancies must have a written contract.

Right to request a pet

Landlords cannot unreasonably refuse a tenant's request to have a pet.

Ending rental bidding

It will be illegal to invite or accept bids above the advertised rent.

End to discrimination

It will be illegal for landlords to discriminate against tenants who receive benefits or have children.

How to prepare for phase 1

Landlords should:

- review your tenant selection processes to ensure they are non-discriminatory - remove any policies that could unfairly exclude applicants
- base decisions only on affordability, references, and credit history remove any outdated policies that might unintentionally exclude certain groups
- if you are using an agent, ensure they are following the guidance on your behalf
- landlords and agents will have to publish the asking rent and not accept offers made above this rate
- familiarise yourself with the new possession grounds – understand when and how you can lawfully regain possession
- keep clear records if you plan to sell, refurbish, or move into a property to support any future possession claims
- improve tenant communication
- create a fair and transparent pet policy, balancing tenant need, property upkeep and property suitability
- set up a rent review calendar - plan rent adjustments in a structured way
- ensure rent increases are based on market conditions to avoid disputes
- keep clear records of rent changes and justifications

- do your research - get to know your local market

Phase 2: likely to start in late 2026

Introduction of a Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman

A Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman will handle disputes between landlords and tenants. The Ombudsman's decisions will be legally binding and all landlords will need to register with the scheme.

Private rented sector database

All landlords will have to register their properties on a new national private rented sector database. This aims to improve transparency and enforcement in the rental market.

How to prepare for phase 2

You should:

- sign up for the Ombudsman Scheme as soon as it's available - it will be mandatory.
- focus on clear communication with tenants to prevent conflicts before they escalate.
- keep detailed records of maintenance requests and tenant interactions to help resolve disputes
- gather essential documents ahead of time, including your Gas Safety Certificate, Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) and Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)
- ensure your records are up to date, as missing documents could lead to compliance issues
- ensure all your property certificates and documents are easily accessible and in one central place
- ensure you have a robust system in place, so you do not miss any key deadlines

Phase 3: timescale to be confirmed

Meeting the Decent Homes Standard

The Decent Homes Standard will be extended to the private rental sector. This means ensuring properties are:

- safe and well-maintained
- free from serious hazards such as damp, faulty wiring, or poor insulation
- fit for human habitation
- meet Awaab's Law which requires private sector landlords to address damp and mould issues within set timescales - Read more about [Awaab's Law](#) on the GOV.UK website

How to prepare for phase 3

You should:

- conduct an inspection, either yourself or with a professional, to identify and fix potential hazards
- budget for necessary repairs, as non-compliance could lead to fines
- respond to tenant repair requests promptly, ensuring you meet the new legal timeframes
- ensure you have a clear process in place for communicating with your tenants
- ensure your tenants know how to contact you should they have a problem and make clear plans for when you go on holiday or have any unexpected absences such as sickness