

Landlord Facts Document: Key Changes Under the Renters' Rights Act

The Renters' Rights Act introduces the most significant reform to the private rented sector in decades. This facts document highlights the major changes that landlords must be aware of and provides a timeline for when the reforms take effect.

The first and arguably most significant changes take effect on the 1st May 2026 (Phase 1) and other changes thereafter (Phase 2 and beyond)

PHASE 1

1. Abolition of Section 21 ("No-Fault") Evictions

- Section 21 notices will no longer be valid from the 1st May 2026 (Phase 1), existing notices can be used to start court proceedings until 31st July 2026
- Thereafter all evictions must use updated Section 8 possession grounds, which have been expanded to include selling the property, moving back in, persistent arrears, and anti-social behaviour. The notice periods for these grounds have been amended.

2. End of Fixed-Term Tenancies

- Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs) and fixed terms are replaced with open-ended periodic tenancies.
- Tenancies will roll monthly from day one.
- Tenants can give two months' notice to leave from a rent due date.
- Landlords must rely on statutory possession grounds when they need to end a tenancy.
- Existing tenancies will become assured periodic tenancies and the new government published information sheet will need to be served on or before 31st May 2026.
- MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and local Government) will be publishing draft agreements in January 2026 and the information sheet will follow in March 2026

3. Rent Review Rules

- Rent increases limited to one per 12-month period.
- All increases must follow the formal notice process set out in the Act with a 2 month notice period.
- Tenants have the right to challenge above-market increases through the First Tier Tribunal.

- Rents will be set by the Tribunal and will take effect from the Tribunal determination date.
 - Tribunal is currently free of charge and secondary legislation will confirm whether any charges will be levied.
-

4. Pets in Rental Properties

- Tenants gain a formal right to request permission for a pet.
 - Landlords must have reasonable grounds to refuse as follows:
 - Another tenant has an allergy,
 - The property is too small for a large or several pets,
 - The pet is illegal to own,
 - Freehold restrictions.
 - Once the tenant has made a request Landlords will have 28 days to respond. Further details can be requested within the 28 days such as type, size and number of pets, and you will then need to respond within 7 days of the tenants response.
 - Agreements are irrevocable.
 - Damage can be claimed from a deposit.
-

5. Discrimination

- As a landlord you will not be able to do anything to make a tenant less likely to rent a property because they have children or receive benefits.
 - Civil Penalty of up to £7000 for each offence.
 - Examples include withholding information about a property, stopping someone from viewing or refusing to grant a tenancy.
 - Landlords will receive a notice of intent from the local authority if a complaint has been made and will have 28 days to reply with evidence including timestamped copies of communications and legal documents.
-

6. Bidding & Rent in Advance

- Landlords may not ask for, encourage or accept an offer higher than the advertised rent.
 - Rent in advance cannot be required by Landlords however tenants can offer to pay in advance.
 - Rent cannot be taken until a tenancy agreement is signed.
-

7. Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour

- Behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to other people. It applies to tenants, their visitors and their pets.

- Dependent upon the severity of anti-social behaviour, mandatory or new discretionary grounds can be used to evict your tenant.

8. Revised Notice Periods

- Notice periods differ by possession ground: some become shorter (e.g., for anti-social behaviour) and some longer (for general grounds).
- Tenants' notice requirement is typically two months from a rent due date.
- To sell or move back into a property 4 months' notice is required, and you cannot ask the tenant for possession in the first 12 months.
- If possession is required to sell or move back, you may not re-offer the property to let for a 12-month period.
- In the event of rent arrears, the notice period is 4 weeks however the tenant must be in 3 months arrears to be able to rely on mandatory ground 8.
- Anti-social behaviour allows immediate application to court.

PHASE 2 & BEYOND

9. Private Rented Data Base

- All Landlords and properties must be registered on a new national database prior to advertising.
- Full information that will be required and published on the database was still being agreed as of 31st December 2025.
- There are plans for information to be available on the database relating to safety standards.
- There will be a 'Proportionate & good value' fee, however it is not yet confirmed.
- Timescale for Implementation is not yet determined, however expected to be late 2026.

10. Decent Homes Standard (Private Sector)

- The private sector must meet a strengthened Decent Homes Standard, previously applied only to social housing.
- Minimum expectations include:
 - Safe, hazard-free living conditions
 - Adequate heating and insulation
 - Good repair of structure and installations
 - Free from damp and mould hazards
- Full Timescale is not yet determined.
- Awaab's Law is likely to be implemented for the PRS in 2027.

11. Private Rented Ombudsman

- All private Landlords will be required to join by law.
- Tenants will be able to use the service without charge to complain about Landlords actions or behaviours.
- Landlords will benefit because it provides a quick, straightforward service to resolve disputes.
- Failure to join may result in rent repayment orders.
- Timescale expected to be 2028.
- Small annual fee per property to be expected.

NOTES FROM THE DC LANE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Dan commented “The renters rights act poses a significant change to the way in which our clients and our business must approach arranging tenancies and managing property. That said, we see the reforms to be either neutral or positive in most cases; however it is clear to us that a progressive approach and considered processes are needed to ensure effective, safe and profitable investment in the sector”

- *The changes increase the importance of clear records, good communication, and prompt management of any tenancy breaches.*
- *Professional inventories become more critical to protect property during a tenancy.*
- *Landlords and Agents need to think carefully about their application process to avoid discrimination, DC Lanes processes are already compliant; with accurate record keeping of communication.*
- *Legal Expenses Insurance and Rent Guarantee Services should be considered to mitigate risks.*
- *The viability of a sale in respect of condition and legal matters should be thought through before serving notice to sell.*
- *We are reviewing all our managed tenancies to ensure that rents are appropriate and any compliance risks identified.*
- *In January once the model agreements are published, we will be able to provide further detail.*
- *It is expected that the new processes will require updated terms of business which will be rolled out well before the 1st May.*
- *Non managed Landlords are advised to carry out the same checks and should perhaps consider moving to a managed service with DC Lane if it is more appropriate.*

Please do not hesitate to contact Dan, Sophie or the team should you wish to discuss any management or insurance-based services

Sources & Further Reading:

Our fact sheet has been written by Dan Collier and Sophie Fear, using sources including but not limited to:

1. Propertymark Renters Rights Act toolkit. Copies of these FAQ documents can be requested from our office.
2. MHCLG website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/renting-out-your-property-guidance-for-landlords-and-letting-agents>
3. MHCLG website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-renters-rights-act>
4. MHCLG website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grounds-for-possession-guidance-for-landlords-and-letting-agents>