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RENTERS' RIGHTS TOOLKIT

10 key changes landlords need to know



Renters' Rights Act 2025 introduces major reforms to the private rented sector in England. Our quick guide summarises the key changes that landlords need to know and how letting agents can help.

MAY
2026

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Introduction

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 introduces major reforms to the private rented sector in England, impacting landlords, letting agents, and tenants. Tenancy reforms contained in the Act (1-7 below) come into force on 1 May 2026.

To support you now that the legislation has passed, here is a quick guide to summarise and help explain the key changes that landlords need to know and how letting agents can help. They include:

1. ASTs become periodic tenancies
2. New tenancy structure
3. Clearer grounds for termination and limits on 'no-fault' evictions
4. New rules on rent increases
5. Restrictions on rent bidding
6. Greater rights for tenants to keep pets
7. New anti-discrimination measures
8. New standards for private rented homes
9. New landlord registration and redress requirements
10. Expanded local authority powers for enforcement

ASTs become periodic tenancies

From 1 May 2026, all tenancies will automatically become assured periodic tenancies (rolling contracts). This means that they continue indefinitely until ended by a notice from the tenant or a notice from the landlord for specific reasons.

New tenancy structure

For new tenancies signed on or after 1 May 2026, landlords must provide tenants with certain written information about key terms of the tenancy. Such as the landlord's name and address, rent amount/due date, deposit amount, repair responsibilities and what bills the tenant must pay.

Landlords with tenancies signed before 1 May 2026 must provide tenants with a copy of The Renters' Rights Act Information Sheet 2026 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-renters-rights-act-information-sheet-2026>) as published by the UK Government on or before 31 May 2026. This document informs tenants about the changes made by the Act.

Rent cannot be taken in advance of the tenancy agreement being signed, but the deposit can be.

Clearer grounds for termination and limits on 'no-fault' evictions

Section 21 evictions are abolished. A landlord can only end a tenancy by serving a Section 8 notice, which specifies one or more appropriate grounds for possession. Different grounds have different notice periods. See Table 1 of the UK Government Guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-renters-rights-act>)

Where the landlord wants to move in or sell the property, they won't be able to do this during the first 12 months of a tenancy. A tenant can end a tenancy at any point by serving a two-month notice in writing on the landlord. If there are joint tenants, then notice by one will be effective for all tenants.

New rules on rent increases

Rent periods can only be monthly or less, and in the first month of the tenancy, only one month's rent can be accepted. In subsequent months, tenants can voluntarily pay more but cannot be required to do so.

Rent can only be increased once a year, and landlords will not be able to increase the rent within the first 12 months of the tenancy. Landlords must use the process in Section 13 of the Housing Act 1988 for increasing the rent and ensure the notice is in writing using Form 4A.

Landlords must give at least two months' notice before the increase starts. The increase must be in line with local market rents. Tenants can challenge unfair rent increases via the First Tier Tribunal.

Restriction on rental bidding

The Act requires landlords and letting agents to publish the asking rent for the property. Prospective tenants can be asked to bid up to the advertised amount, but cannot be encouraged to bid over that amount, and no offer over the advertised amount can be accepted.

Greater rights for tenants to keep pets

A landlord may not unreasonably refuse a request from a tenant to keep a pet. Landlords must respond to pet requests within 28 days. If a super landlord (such as a freeholder) does not allow pets, and they will not give permission when asked, this is a reasonable basis to not allow a pet. In other cases, it will be for the landlord to show that the request was unreasonable.

New anti-discrimination measures

Landlords must not discriminate against prospective tenants on the basis that they might or will have children living at or regularly visiting the property, or that they are, or may be, in receipt of benefits.

Landlords can still carry out affordability checks and not grant a tenancy based on income. In certain circumstances, landlords can refuse to let to a household with children if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, it may be reasonable to refuse to allow children if it would lead to the property being legally defined as overcrowded.

New standards for private rented homes

In January 2026, [the UK Government said that by 2035 private rented homes must meet the Decent Homes Standard](#). This includes being safe and well-maintained, free from serious hazards, fit for human habitation, and in compliance with Awaab's Law. In practice, this means making a timely response to damp and mould issues, should they arise at the property.

New landlord registration and redress requirements

When it is up and running, all landlords must register with the Private Rented Sector Database (expected late 2026) and join the new Landlord Ombudsman (expected by 2028), who will resolve disputes.

Expanded local authority powers for enforcement

Local councils will enforce the new rules with penalties resulting in a £7,000 fine for a first offence, rising to £40,000 for repeat offences.

For many offences, tenants can apply to the First Tier Tribunal for a Rent Repayment Order for up to 24 months of rent.

Redress schemes can also deal with complaints from tenants and require payment of damages or remove a landlord from the scheme for serious breaches.

Further information

Renters' Rights Act 2025: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2025/26/contents>

UK Government guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-renters-rights-bill/guide-to-the-renters-rights-bill>

Renters' Rights Act 2025 implementation roadmap

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/renters-rights-act-2025-implementation-roadmap/implementing-the-renters-rights-act-2025-our-roadmap-for-reforming-the-private-rented-sector>



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