



THE RENTERS' RIGHTS ACT

WHAT EVERY LANDLORD SHOULD KNOW.

A TRUSTED, INDEPENDENT LETTINGS & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PARTNER



The Renters' Rights Act introduces the most significant reforms to the private rented sector in many years.

This guide has been created to help landlords understand the key provisions of the Act, the impact these changes may have on their properties and tenancies, and the practical steps needed to remain compliant as the new legislation is introduced in stages.

Should you have any questions about how these changes affect you, please call 0113 460 3451 or email enquiries@savoylettings.co.uk.

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INTRODUCTION & TIMELINE

The Renters' Rights Act introduces the most significant reforms to the private rented sector in many years, bringing substantial changes to the way residential tenancies are managed across England. The legislation places greater emphasis on tenant protections while introducing new legal responsibilities and compliance requirements for landlords.

The Government is introducing the changes in stages to allow landlords and letting agents time to prepare.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



Enhanced Investigatory Powers

Local authorities receive expanded powers to investigate and enforce breaches of housing legislation.



Tenancy Reform

The main tenancy reforms come into effect, including the introduction of periodic tenancies and the abolition of Section 21 notices.



Landlord Ombudsman & PRS Database

The mandatory Landlord Ombudsman scheme and the new Private Rented Sector Database are expected to be introduced.



Decent Homes Standard & Awaab's Law

These measures will be introduced at a later date, following further consultation and secondary legislation.

THE END OF SECTION 21

The Renters' Rights Act removes the use of Section 21 'no-fault' evictions, meaning landlords can no longer end an assured tenancy without providing a legally recognised reason. Possession must instead be sought using the Section 8 process and one or more of the prescribed legal grounds.

WHAT CHANGES?

- Section 21 notices will no longer be available for ending an assured tenancy.
- Landlords must rely on an appropriate Section 8 ground when seeking possession.
- Valid reasons may include persistent rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, serious tenancy breaches, selling the property, or moving into it themselves.
- The accelerated possession procedure will no longer be available for these tenancies.
- Disputed possession claims will generally require a court hearing before possession can be granted.

IMPACT ON LANDLORDS

Without the option of serving a no-fault notice, landlords should expect possession claims to become more structured and, in some cases, take longer to conclude. This makes selecting suitable tenants from the outset more important than ever. Maintaining thorough tenancy records, carrying out regular inspections and responding promptly to tenancy issues will also become increasingly important should possession ever become necessary.

IMPACT ON TENANTS

Tenants will have increased security within their homes, as landlords must demonstrate a valid legal ground before possession can be sought. Where a landlord is entitled to recover possession, tenants will generally receive longer notice periods than under the previous legislation, giving them additional time to secure alternative accommodation where appropriate.

PREPARING FOR THE CHANGES

- Ensure tenancy agreements are updated to reflect the latest legal requirements.
- Carry out comprehensive referencing and affordability checks before granting a tenancy.
- Keep accurate records of inspections, communications and any tenancy breaches.
- Familiarise yourself with the revised Section 8 possession grounds and associated notice periods.
- Seek professional advice before serving any possession notice to ensure the correct legal process is followed.

SECTION 8 POSSESSION GROUNDS

Under Section 8 of the Housing Act, landlords can seek possession of a property where specific legal grounds apply. These grounds are divided into two categories.

MANDATORY GROUNDS

Where the legal requirements are met, the court is required to grant possession. Examples include:

- The landlord intends to sell the property or move back into it.
- The tenant has engaged in serious criminal activity.
- The tenant has accrued significant rent arrears (subject to the current legal threshold).

DISCRETIONARY GROUNDS

The court will decide whether it is reasonable to grant possession based on the circumstances of the case. These grounds include:

- Breaches of the tenancy agreement.
- Anti-social or nuisance behaviour.
- Damage to the property or its contents caused by the tenant.

The notice period a landlord must provide will depend on the possession ground being relied upon.

KEY CHANGES FOR LANDLORDS

- Longer Notice Periods — for most mandatory grounds where the tenant is not at fault, the required notice period will increase to four months.
- Restrictions On Selling Or Moving Back In — landlords will not be able to serve notice on these grounds within the first 12 months of a new tenancy.
- 12-Month Re-Letting Restriction — where possession is obtained because the property is being sold, it cannot be re-let for 12 months following the notice period.
- Updated Rent Arrears Rules — tenants must be at least three months in arrears before this ground can be used, and the notice period increases from two to four weeks.
- Stronger Anti-Social Behaviour Grounds — landlords can begin possession proceedings immediately where there is evidence of serious anti-social or criminal behaviour.

4 MONTHS
STANDARD NOTICE

3 MONTHS
ARREARS THRESHOLD

4 WEEKS
ARREARS NOTICE

HOW LANDLORDS CAN PREPARE

- Carry out thorough tenant referencing before granting a tenancy.
- Maintain detailed tenancy records, including correspondence, inspections and photographs.
- Seek professional or legal advice before serving any possession notice.

THE MOVE TO PERIODIC TENANCIES

The Renters' Rights Act introduces one of the most significant changes to the private rental sector by replacing fixed-term Assured Shorthold Tenancies with rolling periodic tenancies. Tenants will no longer be tied into fixed-term agreements — instead, all tenancies will continue on a periodic basis.

KEY CHANGES

- Fixed-term tenancy agreements will be abolished, with all new and existing tenancies moving to periodic (rolling) agreements.
- Landlords will no longer be able to require tenants to sign a fixed-term contract as a condition of renting a property.
- Tenants will be able to end their tenancy by giving at least two months' notice.
- Written tenancy agreements will become mandatory.
- Advance rent payments will be restricted, with landlords only able to request the first month's rent in advance.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR LANDLORDS

- Less certainty over tenancy length, as tenants are no longer tied into fixed-term contracts.
- A greater possibility of void periods and higher re-letting costs, including marketing, referencing and tenancy administration.
- Increased importance of tenant retention and excellent property management.
- More opportunities to review rental values when a tenancy ends.

HOW LANDLORDS CAN PREPARE

- Ensure all tenancy agreements comply with the latest legal requirements.
- Carry out thorough tenant referencing to secure reliable, long-term tenants.
- Maintain your property to a high standard to improve tenant satisfaction.
- Plan financially for potential void periods by maintaining a contingency fund.

RENT REVIEW & INCREASES

The Renters' Rights Act introduces a new framework for how and when landlords can increase rent. Once the legislation is in force, all rent increases must follow the statutory Section 13 procedure — existing methods such as rent review clauses or mutually agreed increases will no longer apply to periodic tenancies.

KEY CHANGES

- Rent increases must be made using the statutory Section 13 notice process.
- Rent can only be increased once within any 12-month period.
- Any increase must reflect the property's current market rental value.
- Tenants will have enhanced rights to challenge increases they believe are unreasonable, via the First-tier Tribunal.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR LANDLORDS

- A minimum of two months' notice must be given before any increase takes effect.
- Rent review clauses contained within tenancy agreements will no longer be enforceable.
- Even where a tenant agrees to the increase, the correct legal notice must still be served.
- If a tenant refers the increase to the Tribunal, implementation may be delayed and any approved increase will only take effect from the Tribunal's decision date.

HOW LANDLORDS CAN PREPARE

- Remove or update any tenancy agreements containing rent review clauses.
- Keep accurate records of previous rent increases to ensure the 12-month rule is followed.
- Review local market rents regularly and plan future increases well in advance.
- Retain evidence of comparable market rents to support any proposed increase if challenged.

PETS, RIGHTS & ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

The Renters' Rights Act introduces new measures designed to make the private rented sector fairer and more inclusive, placing greater restrictions on when landlords can refuse pets and preventing blanket policies that automatically exclude certain groups of prospective tenants.

KEY CHANGES

- Tenants may request permission to keep a pet; landlords must consider each request individually and may only refuse with valid, reasonable justification.
- Blanket “no pets” policies will no longer be permitted without appropriate grounds.
- Landlords generally must respond to written pet requests within 28 days.
- Blanket bans against applicants who receive benefits or have children will no longer be permitted.
- Tenant applications must be assessed on their individual circumstances.
- The final Act does not require tenants to obtain pet damage insurance.

HOW LANDLORDS CAN PREPARE

- Review property adverts to remove discriminatory wording or blanket restrictions relating to pets, children or applicants receiving benefits.
- Assess pet requests individually, taking into account the property, lease restrictions and any reasonable concerns.
- Keep detailed records of tenant applications and referencing outcomes.

CIVIL PENALTIES & ENFORCEMENT

The Renters' Rights Act strengthens enforcement powers and increases the financial consequences for landlords who fail to meet their legal obligations. Local authorities will have greater ability to take action against non-compliant landlords, with higher civil penalties and expanded powers to issue fines without the need for court proceedings.

£40,000 MAXIMUM PENALTY	£7,000 ADDITIONAL OFFENCES	24 MONTHS MAX. RRO PERIOD
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KEY CHANGES

- Maximum civil penalties increase from £30,000 to £40,000 for serious breaches of housing legislation.
- Councils gain new powers to issue financial penalties for illegal evictions, previously only dealt with through court prosecution.
- Rent Repayment Orders will apply more widely, and the maximum repayment period increases from 12 months' rent to 24 months' rent.

HOW LANDLORDS CAN STAY COMPLIANT

- Carry out regular inspections to ensure the property remains safe and compliant.
- Keep detailed records of repairs, safety certificates and tenant communication.
- Work with experienced letting professionals who can guide compliance.

THE DECENT HOMES STANDARD

The Renters' Rights Act will introduce a clearer, legally enforceable standard for properties within the private rented sector, ensuring homes meet minimum expectations for safety, condition and suitability — extending principles long established in the social housing sector to privately rented homes.

KEY CHANGES

- A new legal standard will define the minimum condition and safety requirements that private rental properties must meet.
- Landlords will face stricter obligations to prevent and address damp, mould and serious hazards within set timescales.
- Heating, insulation and ventilation systems will need to meet improved efficiency and performance requirements.
- Local authorities will have increased enforcement powers, including civil penalties of up to £7,000 for serious housing failures.

AWAAB'S LAW

Introduced following the death of Awaab Ishak, linked to prolonged exposure to mould in a social housing property. Under the Renters' Rights Act, similar protections will apply to private rented homes, with clear timescales for investigating and addressing hazards such as damp and mould.

LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN & PRS DATABASE

The Renters' Rights Act introduces two major changes to the way private landlords are regulated: the creation of a Private Rented Sector Database and a compulsory Landlord Ombudsman scheme, designed to improve transparency and provide a clearer process for resolving disputes.

KEY CHANGES

- Every rental property must be registered on the PRS Database before it can be advertised or let.
- Landlords will be required to join a government-approved Ombudsman scheme, providing a formal route for resolving tenancy disputes.
- Certain enforcement actions, fines or penalties may be recorded on the database.

£7,000 INITIAL BREACH	£40,000 REPEATED NON-COMPLIANCE
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HOW LANDLORDS CAN PREPARE

- Register all required landlord and property information on the PRS Database once available, and ensure membership of the approved Ombudsman scheme.
- Maintain clear records of tenancy agreements, repairs, inspections and complaint handling.

HOW SAVOY LETTINGS CAN HELP

With changing legislation and increasing responsibilities for landlords, having the right support has never been more important. At Savoy Lettings, we take the pressure away by providing a complete property management solution designed to protect your investment, keep you compliant, and give you complete confidence.

Our Fully Managed service takes care of every aspect of your tenancy — from finding and referencing quality tenants, to managing rent collection, arranging inspections, handling maintenance, and ensuring all legal obligations are met.

With Savoy Lettings, you benefit from expert guidance, proactive management, and a team that stays ahead of changing regulations — allowing you to enjoy the rewards of property ownership without the stress of managing the day-to-day details.

PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT. COMPLETE PROTECTION. TOTAL PEACE OF MIND.

GET IN TOUCH



If you have any questions about how the Renters' Rights Act affects you as a landlord, or would like support preparing for the changes ahead, our team is here to help.

Thank you for trusting Savoy Lettings with your property. We look forward to supporting you through this period of change.

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With best wishes, Savoy Lettings.

