

Hanover

Renters' Rights Act: What You Need to Know

Key changes that will affect landlords, agents and tenants across England



Key changes that will affect landlords, agents and tenants

Big Changes

TENANCY REFORM

End of Section 21; no accelerated possession procedure

PERIODIC TENANCIES

End of fixed tenancies; all tenancies will be periodic

RENT INCREASES

Only by Section 13 notice; no rent increase clauses in tenancy agreement

RENTAL BIDDING

Cannot accept bids above asking rent

Standards & Protections

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

Decent home standard to apply in PRS

RENTING WITH PETS

Reasonable requests can't be refused to have a pet in a property

AWAAB'S LAW

This law will now apply to PRS in relation to damp & mould

RENT IN ADVANCE

Limitations in the way rent can be requested in advance

Accountability & Enforcement

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

Landlords must sign up even if using an agent

ENFORCEMENT

Rent repayment orders/penalties/new and expanded offences

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

No discrimination against tenants with children or those on benefits

GROUNDS FOR POSSESSION

Expanded Section 8 grounds & longer notice periods

PRS DATABASE

All landlords must register themselves & each property



> TENANCY REFORM

PERIODIC TENANCIES

RENT INCREASES

RENTAL BIDDING

RENT IN ADVANCE

RENTING WITH PETS

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

GROUNDINGS FOR POSSESSION

PRS DATABASE

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

ENFORCEMENT

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

AWAAB'S LAW

Tenancy Reform

*The **Renters' Rights Act (RRA)** has introduced a transformative new tenancy system, ending section 21 evictions and fixed-term tenancies. This new tenancy system will provide tenants with greater security and stability and empower them to challenge bad practice without fear of retaliatory eviction. Landlords also benefit, with more straightforward regulation and clearer and expanded possession grounds.*

The Renters' Rights Bill was first released in September of 2024 and has now completed the Parliamentary process and received Royal Assent on 27th October 2025. It will be implemented on 1 May 2026. The RRA does not apply to Rent Act tenancies and will apply to England only as housing is a devolved issue.

This Act is the largest reform of the Private Rented Sector since the late 1980s and will hugely increase the security of tenure for tenants. Perhaps the most important changes for landlords and agents are the new duties and increases in financial penalties/criminal offences for breaches. Also the widened limitations on obtaining possession if there is any non-compliance.

The Renters' Rights Act begins a new era in residential letting and property management in England and agents and their landlords need to be able to navigate and understand the implications.

Periodic Tenancies

The RRA has **removed fixed-term assured tenancies**. This provides flexibility to tenants so they are able to move in response to changing circumstances, for example after relationship breakdown, to take up a new job or when buying a first home.

From 1 May 2026 all existing Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST) will automatically become 'Assured Period Tenancies' (APT), meaning tenants are able to stay in the property until they decide to end the tenancy by giving 2 months' notice. Fixed-term tenancies will no longer exist and will no longer be able to be created.

It's important that with effect from 1 May 2026 date landlords/agents do not use any old tenancy agreements or statement of terms that purports to be 'fixed term' (or uses the term), as the local authority could impose a civil penalty of up to £7,000.

The Act also requires that the landlord must give the tenant a 'Statement of Terms' before the tenancy starts - in effect, a written (tenancy) agreement.

TENANCY REFORM

> PERIODIC TENANCIES

RENT INCREASES

RENTAL BIDDING

RENT IN ADVANCE

RENTING WITH PETS

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

GROUND FOR POSSESSION

PRS DATABASE

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

ENFORCEMENT

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

AWAAB'S LAW



TENANCY REFORM

PERIODIC TENANCIES

> RENT INCREASES

RENTAL BIDDING

RENT IN ADVANCE

RENTING WITH PETS

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

GROUNDWORK FOR POSSESSION

PRS DATABASE

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

ENFORCEMENT

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

AWAAB'S LAW



Rent Increases

From 1 May 2026 landlords will be able to increase rents only once per year to the market rate – the price that would be achieved if the property was newly advertised to let. To do this, they must serve a Section 13 notice, setting out the new rent and giving at least 2 months' notice of it taking effect. Rent increases by any other means – such as previous rent review clauses in a tenancy agreement – are not permitted. It is also not possible to agree a rent increase informally, by for example text, email or a letter - the Section 13 rent increase process must be used, using Form 4 (the form will be amended at some stage prior to the commencement date).

The date of the proposed rent increase needs to coincide with the start of a rent period and serving of the S13 notice is the start of the rent increase negotiation. If the tenant asks for and is granted, a lower increase as a result of the negotiation, they will not be able to challenge the rent later at the First-Tier Tribunal (FTT).

If a tenant believes the proposed rent increase exceeds market rate, they can challenge this before the new rent is due to start. The FTT will then determine what the market rent should be. It is free for the tenant to appeal to the FTT and the Tribunal will also have a new jurisdiction to determine the validity of the Section 13 notice.

TENANCY REFORM

PERIODIC TENANCIES

RENT INCREASES

> RENTAL BIDDING

RENT IN ADVANCE

RENTING WITH PETS

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

GROUNDS FOR POSSESSION

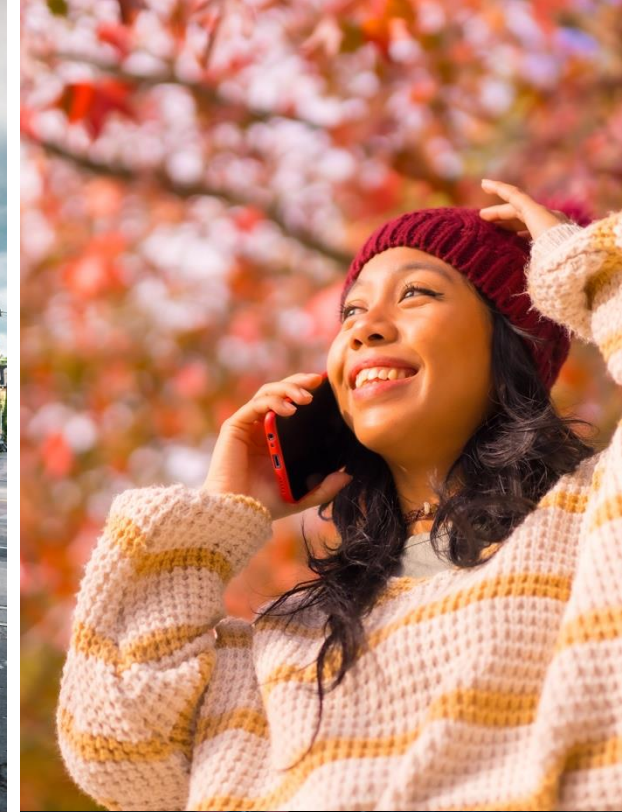
PRS DATABASE

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

ENFORCEMENT

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

AWAAB'S LAW



Rental Bidding

On the commencement date the RRA will require landlords and letting agents to publish the proposed asking rent for the property. It also prohibits landlords or agents from asking for, encouraging or accepting any bids above this price. There is nothing in the Act preventing the landlord or agent from accepting a lower bid.

This requirement applies to all forms of advertising, including the property portals and the local authority can impose a civil penalty of up to £7,000 if the regulation is breached.

The landlord or agent must not encourage or accept an offer, that exceeds the published rent; this includes any unsolicited offer above the proposed rent received from a tenant.

TENANCY REFORM

PERIODIC TENANCIES

RENT INCREASES

RENTAL BIDDING

> RENT IN ADVANCE

RENTING WITH PETS

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

GROUNDWORK FOR POSSESSION

PRS DATABASE

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

ENFORCEMENT

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

AWAAB'S LAW



Rent in Advance

From 1 May 2026, the Act will amend the Tenant Fees Act 2019 to prohibit landlords or letting agents from requiring or accepting any payment of rent in advance of the tenancy being entered into. A landlord will only be able to require up to one month's rent (or 28 days' rent for tenancies with rental periods of less than one month) once a tenancy agreement has been signed and before the tenancy starts. The Renters' Rights Act will also amend the Housing Act 1988 to provide that, once a tenancy starts, a landlord will be unable to enforce any terms in a tenancy agreement that require rent to be paid in advance of the agreed due date.

While landlords will be restricted from including terms in a tenancy agreement which require rent to be due in advance of the rent period to which the rent relates, tenants will remain free to pay prior to the rent due date should they wish to do so. This maintains flexibility for tenants to manage their tenancies in the way that best suits them. A landlord will not be able to require a tenant to pay their rent before it is due.

TENANCY REFORM

PERIODIC TENANCIES

RENT INCREASES

RENTAL BIDDING

RENT IN ADVANCE

> RENTING WITH PETS

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

GROUND FOR POSSESSION

PRS DATABASE

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

ENFORCEMENT

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

AWAAB'S LAW



Renting with Pets

The RRA ensures *landlords do not unreasonably withhold consent when a tenant requests to have a pet in their home*, with the tenant able to challenge unfair decisions. There is a term implied into all new tenancies after the commencement date that a tenant has the right to request to keep a pet, although they must follow the statutory process.

The landlord must either give or refuse consent in writing within 28 days of the date of the request from the tenant, although the landlord can ask for further information from the tenant which the tenant must provide within 7 days. If the tenant doesn't provide the information, the landlord doesn't need to give or refuse consent.

The circumstances in which the Act states it is reasonable for a landlord to refuse consent for a pet include, those in which the landlord would be in breach with their superior landlord or the landlord has been unable to obtain consent from the superior landlord.

If a tenant believes that their landlord has unreasonably refused their request for a pet, they can appeal against a refusal by escalating a complaint to the Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman or by taking the case to court.

TENANCY REFORM

PERIODIC TENANCIES

RENT INCREASES

RENTAL BIDDING

RENT IN ADVANCE

RENTING WITH PETS

> RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

GROUNDWORK FOR POSSESSION

PRS DATABASE

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

ENFORCEMENT

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

AWAAB'S LAW

Rental Discrimination

The RRA has taken action to **address rental discrimination practices in the PRS**. It addresses both overt discriminatory practices, such as 'No DSS' adverts and situations where landlords or letting agents use other indirect practices in order to prevent someone entering into a tenancy.

Landlords and agents continue to have the final say on who they let their property to and can carry out referencing checks to make sure tenancies are sustainable for all parties. They can do this based on affordability, but not on the basis that the prospective tenant has children or is in receipt of benefits.

The local authority can impose a civil penalty of up to £7,000 if the regulation is breached.



Grounds for Possession

With the removal of Section 21, landlords will no longer be able to rely on 'no-fault' evictions. Instead, possession will be based on specific legal grounds under an expanded Section 8 framework. The notice period a landlord must give will depend on the reason for regaining possession, with some grounds now requiring up to four months' notice. Below, we've grouped these grounds by notice period and explained what they typically mean in practice.

Section 8 legal grounds (reference numbers)	Period
1, 1A, 1B, 2, 2ZA, 2ZB, 2ZC, 2ZD, 4A, 6, 6A, 6B	4 months' notice Landlord-led reasons for possession Used when a landlord needs to recover the property, for example to sell or move back in.
5, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 5H, 7, 9	2 months' notice Ongoing tenancy issues Used where there are breaches of the tenancy or continuing problems during the tenancy that may justify possession.
5E, 5F, 5G, 8, 10, 11, 18	4 weeks' notice Serious rent or tenancy breaches Used where there are significant rent arrears or serious tenancy breaches.
4, 7B, 12, 13, 14ZA, 14A, 15, 17	4 weeks' notice Urgent or serious misconduct Applies in more serious cases such as antisocial behaviour or criminal activity.

TENANCY REFORM

PERIODIC TENANCIES

RENT INCREASES

RENTAL BIDDING

RENT IN ADVANCE

RENTING WITH PETS

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

> GROUNDS FOR POSSESSION

PRS DATABASE

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

ENFORCEMENT

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

AWAAB'S LAW

Private Rented Sector Database

*The Renters' Rights Act will introduce a **new Private Rented Sector Database from late 2026 for landlords and local councils**. Signing up to the PRS Database will be mandatory for all PRS landlords and they will be required to pay an annual fee which will be confirmed closer to launch. Landlords could be subject to penalties if they market or let out a property without registering it and providing the required information.*

Regulations will mandate landlord registration, payment of a fee and the provision of key information by landlords. The database is expected to include at minimum for each PRS property: the landlord's contact details with all the relevant information from all joint landlords, such as the property details including the full address, type of property (flat/house), number of bedrooms, number of households/residents and confirming whether the property is occupied and furnished. Safety information will also be registered including gas, electric and Energy Performance Certificates so that tenants are assured about the safety and energy efficiency of the property.

For tenants, the database will increase transparency and the information available before they decide to rent a property and throughout their renting journey. The database will provide local councils with more data about private rented sector properties. One of the biggest and most time-consuming barriers faced by local councils is identifying poor quality and non-compliant private rented sector properties and who owns them. The database will provide a trusted and consistent intelligence source which will remove unnecessary, frustrating administration, meaning council staff will be able to focus on enforcement against criminal landlords. The database will also mandate the recording of landlord banning order offences by local councils.

Public access and data sharing will be enabled following the launch of landlord registration.

TENANCY REFORM

PERIODIC TENANCIES

RENT INCREASES

RENTAL BIDDING

RENT IN ADVANCE

RENTING WITH PETS

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

GROUNDWORK FOR POSSESSION

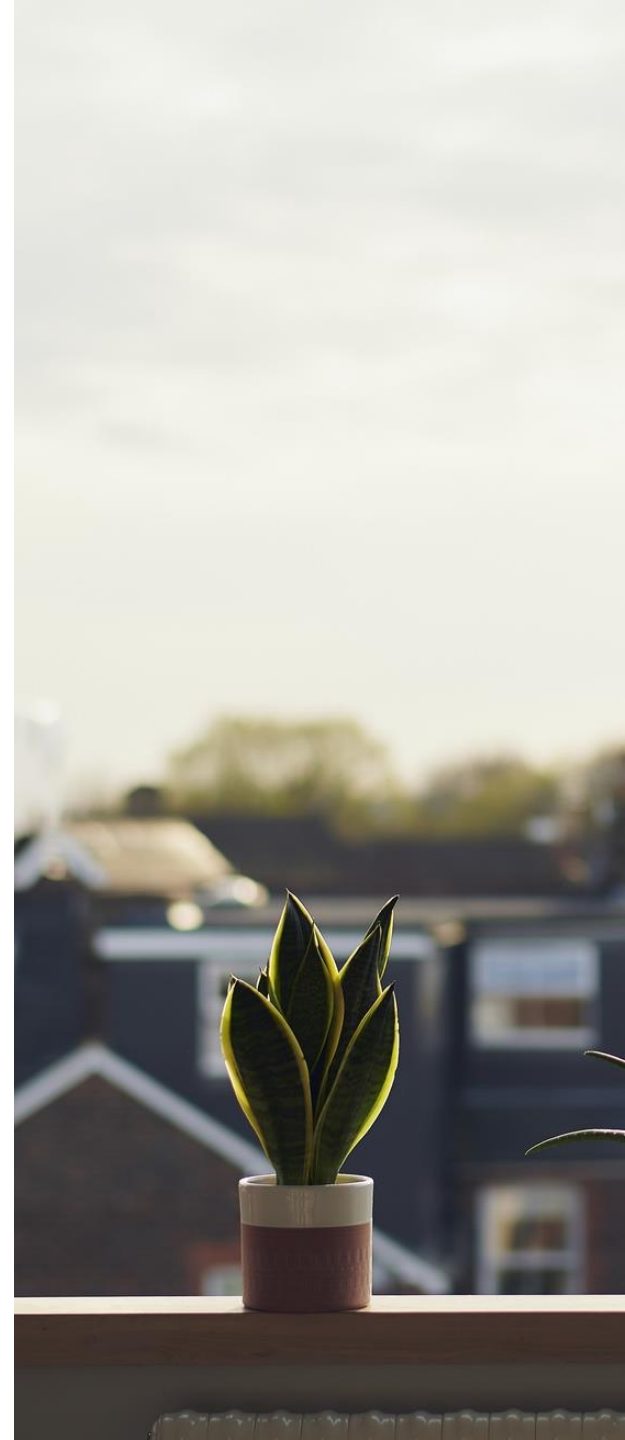
> PRS DATABASE

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

ENFORCEMENT

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

AWAAB'S LAW





TENANCY REFORM

PERIODIC TENANCIES

RENT INCREASES

RENTAL BIDDING

RENT IN ADVANCE

RENTING WITH PETS

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

GROUNDWORK FOR POSSESSION

PRS DATABASE

> PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

ENFORCEMENT

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

AWAAB'S LAW

Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman

*The RRA will introduce a new **Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman Service** expected in 2028, which all private landlords in England with assured or regulated tenancies will be required by law to join, including those who use a letting agent.*

Tenants will be able to use the service for free to complain about a landlords' actions or behaviours. The service will offer fair, impartial and binding resolution for tenants and will have powers to compel landlords to issue an apology, provide information, take remedial action and/or pay compensation. The service will also benefit landlords by resolving tenant-initiated complaints in the quickest and most cost-effective way possible. Landlords will also have access to guidance and support from the ombudsman service to help them improve their complaint handling practices.

The Act includes robust enforcement measures for the ombudsman service. Local councils will be able to take action against landlords who fail to join or against anyone who markets a PRS property where the landlord is not registered. This will include civil penalties of up to £7,000 for initial breaches and up to £40,000 or criminal prosecution for continuing or repeated breaches. Tenants will be able to seek rent repayment orders against their landlord if the landlord commits an offence by persistently failing to join the ombudsman service.

Landlords will be required to comply with ombudsman decisions. Failure to comply may result in a landlord being expelled from the scheme and subsequent local council enforcement action, as outlined above. There will be a route for landlords to rejoin the ombudsman service if they take the necessary steps to become compliant.

Enforcement

The reforms under the Act have **extended councils' powers to collect and retain revenue for future enforcement work from financial penalties against landlords who breach the rules**. Initial or minor non-compliance will incur a civil penalty of up to £7,000 and serious, persistent or repeat non-compliance, will incur a civil penalty of up to £40,000, with the alternative of a criminal prosecution.

The reforms provide councils with a range of new investigatory powers which allow them to enforce the reforms including powers to require information from relevant persons and any persons and powers of entry to business and residential premises.

A Rent Repayment Order [RRO] is a mechanism through which, currently, a landlord who has committed an offence can be ordered to repay an amount of rent to the tenant or local authority. The maximum amount of rent a landlord can be ordered to pay will double from 12 to 24 months, increasing the deterrent effect of rent repayment orders and making them more appealing for tenants and local authorities to pursue. The period in which a tenant or local authority can apply for a rent repayment order after the offence will increase from 12 to 24 months, making it easier for tenants and local authorities to pursue and helping prevent them from being timed out. Local authorities can also pursue RROs where the rent has been paid by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

TENANCY REFORM

PERIODIC TENANCIES

RENT INCREASES

RENTAL BIDDING

RENT IN ADVANCE

RENTING WITH PETS

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

GROUND FOR POSSESSION

PRS DATABASE

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

> ENFORCEMENT

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

AWAAB'S LAW





TENANCY REFORM

PERIODIC TENANCIES

RENT INCREASES

RENTAL BIDDING

RENT IN ADVANCE

RENTING WITH PETS

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

GROUNDWORK FOR POSSESSION

PRS DATABASE

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

ENFORCEMENT

> DECENT HOMES STANDARD

AWAAB'S LAW

Decent Homes Standard

*The RRA allows regulations to be made setting **out Decent Homes Standard (DHS) requirements for private rented sector homes (following consultation) and will provide local councils with enforcement powers.** This is expected to be brought into force in either 2035 or 2037. The DHS will apply to the vast majority of private rented homes, including all PRS homes let on assured tenancies. The standard will also apply to privately rented supported housing occupied both under tenancies and licences.*

If a privately rented property fails to meet DHS requirements, the local council will have a range of enforcement mechanisms available. This includes, for example, issuing an improvement notice requiring the landlord to remedy the failure within a specified timescale. Landlords who fail to comply with enforcement action can be subject to a civil penalty or criminal prosecution. If such an offence is committed, the tenant or local council can also apply to the First-Tier Tribunal for a rent repayment order.

The Act introduced a legal duty on landlords to ensure their property meets the DHS. Properties will need to be free of serious hazards, be in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities & services, provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (EPC standards) and be free of damp & mould (incorporating Awaab's Law). Local councils will have a new power to issue civil penalties of up to £7,000.

Awaab's Law

*Following the tragic and avoidable death of 2-year old Awaab Ishak due to prolonged exposure to mould in his social rented home, the Manchester Evening News, Shelter and the Ishak family led a campaign for 'Awaab's Law'. This was introduced for social housing through the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. The RRA will now extend Awaab's Law to the PRS, the date of implementation has yet to be announced. This will ensure that **all renters in England are empowered to challenge dangerous conditions and that all landlords must take swift action to make sure homes are safe.***

The measures in the Act allow new requirements to be set requiring private rented sector landlords to address hazards, such as damp and mould, within a specified time period. If landlords do not comply, tenants will be able to bring enforcement action against them through the courts.

Seeking redress through the courts is not the only way that tenants can challenge their landlords for breaches of Awaab's Law. Tenants can complain to their landlord and, if they are not satisfied with the response, this can be escalated to the new Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman.

TENANCY REFORM

PERIODIC TENANCIES

RENT INCREASES

RENTAL BIDDING

RENT IN ADVANCE

RENTING WITH PETS

RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

GROUND FOR POSSESSION

PRS DATABASE

PRS LANDLORD OMBUDSMAN

ENFORCEMENT

DECENT HOMES STANDARD

> AWAAB'S LAW



Hanover

We're here to **answer any questions** you may have.

+44 (0)20 7722 2223

sjw@hanover-residential.com

102 St John's Wood Terrace, London, NW8 6PL

