

KEY DATES

- **27 December 2025** - Local authorities gain new enforcement and investigatory powers.
- **January 2026** - Publication of information that needs to be in tenancy agreements.
- **March 2026** - Publication of information sheet for existing tenants.
- **30 April 2026** - Last day to serve a Section 21 notice or agree a tenancy that can take rent in advance.
- **1 May 2026** - All ASTs convert to assured periodic tenancies, Section 21 abolished, changes to rules around discrimination, advertising, rent in advance, pet requested, Section 8 evictions and more.
- **Spring/Summer 2026** - New civil penalty of up to 7k for having a category 1 HHSRS hazard.
- **31 May 2026** - Deadline for serving information on existing tenants.
- **31 July 2026** - Last day to apply to court on an older possession notice.
- **Late 2026** - PRS database registrations begin with regional rollout.
- **2028** - Registration with the PRS ombudsman required.

CHANGES FOR YOU

Mortgage-specific changes

Terms in mortgages and insurance that restrict tenants with pets or in receipt of benefits are of no effect (all mortgages, only new insurance products).

This change applies to England, Scotland and Wales.

Section 8 Ground 2 (sale by mortgagee) ground will no longer require prior notice, and so will not need to be checked for in tenancy agreements.

Wider changes impacting you

The Act enhances risks to landlords who get paperwork wrong or do not meet property standards. May feed into higher costs.

In-tenancy rent increases are likely to be harder to achieve and less predictable in future.

Periodic tenancies may make void periods more likely.

Similar reforms in Scotland led to lower supply, particularly in student housing.

TENANCY REFORM (MAY 1ST)

Assured periodic tenancies

- Fixed term ASTs replaced with Assured Periodic Tenancies.
- Rental periods limited to no more than one month.
- Any one tenant can give two months' notice at any time and it can come in any form of written communication (text, whatsapp, etc).

Written statement

- Written tenancy agreement needed before agreeing the tenancy. This must contain mandatory information set by the Government.
- Mandatory information not set yet but expected to include the new duties and rules set out in the RRA.

Pets in properties

- Right to request a pet for tenants. Can only be refused on reasonable grounds and must be responded to within 28 days.

Rent increases and determinations

- Rent can only be increased once per year and must start with a Section 13 notice (two months' notice) setting out the new rent.
- After serving the section 13 notice then either:
 1. You and the tenant can agree to lower the rent than the one on the S13 form in writing.
 2. The tenant accepts the rent, and the new rent starts on the day the notice expires.
 3. The tenant challenges the rent for free, delaying the rent increase until the Tribunal has decided on a new rent level.

Rent in advance

No rent can be taken before agreeing tenancy; rent in advance restricted to one month after signing (except existing tenancies).

ADVERTISING & DISCRIMINATION (MAY 1st)

Banning bidding wars

- Must list asking rent on any adverts and offers.
- Banned from encouraging or accepting rents above this.

Preventing discrimination

- Bans discrimination against tenants in receipt of benefits, or with children, including when:
 - Enquiring about or seeking information on the property.
 - Attending viewings.
 - Entering a tenancy.
- Still allowed to decide based on income, affordability and past behaviour

ENDING A PERIODIC TENANCY

(MAY 1ST)

- Section 21 abolished.
- Landlords must use Section 8 setting out a ground for possession.
- New and amended Section 8 grounds including:
 - Grounds for sale or moving family (1 and 1a).
 - Require four months' notice, cannot end in the first 12 months and cannot relet, or try to relet, for more than a year after serving.
 - An updated mandatory rent arrears ground (8).
 - Three months' arrears and four weeks' notice.
 - Any Universal Credit delays don't count as arrears.
 - A new student ground (4a).
 - Only applies to student HMOs, June-September, where the tenancy entered is less than six months before move in*.
- New offences and penalties for misusing possession grounds, seeking to end a tenancy orally, and higher fines for harassment or illegal eviction.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENFORCEMENT

- Range of new offences that could catch landlords out from May 1st onwards.
- Civil penalty of up to £7,000 for -
 - Trying to let an assured tenancy as a fixed term.
 - Not being the database/ombudsman or breaking their rules.
 - Breaking the new advertising or discrimination rules.
 - Not given a written statement of terms on a new tenancy or the mandatory information for existing tenancies.
 - Including possession grounds with no reasonable chance of success on the Section 8 notice.
 - Filling out a Section 8 notice incorrectly.
 - Using a notice to quit to end the tenancy.
 - Having a category 1 hazard (Spring/Summer 26).

- Civil penalty of up to £40,000 for -
 - Relet or market the property for let during the 'restricted period' after using the possession grounds for sale or moving family in.
 - Unlawful eviction or harassment.
 - Recklessly misusing possession grounds.
 - Repeatedly committing some of the 7k offences within 5 years.
 - Continuing to commit a breach for more than 28 days after receiving the first civil penalty.

LOCAL AUTHORITY INVESTIGATORY POWERS

- Local authorities also have new investigatory powers.

Powers to require information

- Can be used by the local authority to require information from any person to support an investigation.
- Where this person is a landlord or agent, they could be fined for non-compliance.
- When asking for information from a person, can be used in investigations relating to:
 - Unlawful eviction and harassment of an occupier.
 - Poor housing conditions.
 - Property licensing.
 - Banning orders.
 - Letting agent redress.
 - Breach of the Renter's Rights Act relating to the database, ombudsman and provisions against discrimination.

Powers of entry

- These powers allow local authority to enter business premises without a warrant if giving 24h notice, or with a warrant without notice.
- They can take photographs, seize documents or equipment, and make recordings.
- For entering a business premises can be used in relation to the offences above.
- For entering residential premises, can only be used in relation to illegal eviction, harassment or not being on the database while being rented out.

FUTURE LEGISLATION

Decent Homes Standard

- New standard will require home have “reasonably modern facilities”, be free of serious hazards and be in a “reasonable state of repair”.
- Not expected to apply in full before 2035 but will be able to issue on the spot fines for category 1 hazards from 2026.

Awaab’s Law

- Address damp and mould issues within set timeframes, as well as new standards on emergency repairs. Pending consultation.

PRS Database Ombudsman

- Registration on the database starting late 2026, with landlords expected to upload safety documents, contact details and annual fee.
- Registration with the new Ombudsman will occur in 2028.

WHAT SHOULD LANDLORDS DO NOW

Review their portfolios for risk:

- Does every tenancy have a written tenancy agreement?
- Are they meeting all legal obligations?
- Is the property free of hazards?
- Is the rent at, or near to, market rates?
- Are there any tenancies with arrears or ASB?
- Is their agent ready for Renter’s Rights?
- How do they handle and record complaints?
- Do they have up to date contact details?
- Do they thoroughly reference prospective tenants?

BEFORE 1 MAY 2026 (NEW TENANCIES)

For new tenancies, from May 1 landlords should:

- Update their tenancy templates, guarantor forms, application forms, etc.
- Remove any potential discrimination from their practices.
- Ensure adverts list the rent and landlords don't encourage or accept anything higher.
- Don't take rent before signing the tenancy.
- Decide what additional protections they might need (guarantors, rent insurance).

AFTER MAY 1 (EXISTING TENANCIES)

- Update their tenancy templates, guarantor forms, application forms, etc.
- Remove any potential discrimination from their practices.
- Ensure adverts list the rent and the landlord doesn't encourage or accept anything higher.
- Cannot take rent before signing the tenancy.
- Decide what additional protections they might need (guarantors, rent insurance).

CHANGES TO EPC REQUIREMENTS

- After 2030 all properties must have an EPC rating of C or higher unless they have an exclusion.
- EPC's obtained before 1st of October 2029 will follow the current methodology for rating and will remain valid for up to 10 years.
- EPC's after the 1st of October 2029 will use the new methodology under the Home Energy Model which may result in a different rating.
- The new Home Energy Model will take into account Fabric Performance, Heating System, "Smart Readiness" and Energy Costs.
- There is a Cost Cap applying to works done to gain an EPC of C or higher. This is the maximum a landlord must spend to achieve a standard. If further spend is required an exemption can be applied for.
- The Cost Cap is up to £15,000 per property unless subject property is valued under £100,000 when a lower Cost Cap will apply.
- Expenditure incurred from October 2025 will count towards the Cost Cap.
- Grants for funding can be applied for and will count towards spending against the Cost Cap.

Information extracted from an NRLA (National Residential Landlords Association) webinar 13/01/2026.

<https://www.nrla.org.uk/resources/renters-rights>