

The Letting Experts Guide To...

Managing Tenancies

Structured Tenancy Management

Tenancy management is entering a new phase under the Renters' Rights Act. From May, tenancies will move to a periodic structure as standard, shifting the focus away from fixed end dates and towards how tenancies are managed on an ongoing basis.

This change does not remove the fundamentals of tenancy management. Notice periods still apply, rent reviews remain part of the process, and landlords continue to make decisions about how their properties are run. What changes is where stability comes from. Instead of being anchored to a contract term, it is shaped by communication, consistency, and how decisions are handled over time.

Areas such as rent reviews, pet requests, and everyday tenant communication can all be challenged under the new framework. This does not mean landlords are required to agree to every request. Decisions are assessed on whether they are reasonable, supported by evidence, and clearly explained, rather than on the outcome alone.

This guide focuses on the practical realities of managing tenancies under the new rules. It explains how periodic tenancies work day to day, how rent reviews are approached, what "reasonable" looks like when responding to pet requests, and how clear communication can reduce the risk of disputes escalating. Its aim is to support structured, professional tenancy management as expectations continue to change.



Periodic Tenancies

Under the Renters' Rights Act, fixed-term tenancies will be replaced with a periodic structure from 1 May 2026. This means agreements will no longer have a set term and will instead continue on an ongoing basis until either party brings them to an end in line with the legal process.

Tenants will be required to give a minimum of two months' notice to end the tenancy. That notice can be served at any time and does not need to align with the rent payment date. The notice period runs from the date the notice is given, rather than from the end of a rental period.

While this is a change from how many landlords are used to operating, it does not mean tenancies become unpredictable. Notice periods still apply, and landlords retain the ability to plan ahead, manage re-letting, and maintain continuity.

Many tenancies already continue beyond their initial fixed term and operate on a rolling basis. Stability in those situations is usually maintained through clear communication, notice, and proactive management rather than repeated contract renewals.

Under the new framework, rent is expected to be paid on a periodic basis. Because there is no longer a fixed term, there is no defined period for large upfront payments to apply to. As a result, landlords will no longer be able to rely on rent paid in advance as a way of managing situations where a tenant has limited UK credit history or referencing, or does not have a guarantor in place. Instead, decisions will need to be based on standard affordability and referencing checks from the outset, with suitability assessed through due diligence rather than secured through advance payments.



Rent Reviews

Rent reviews will follow a single, standardised process. Rent can still be increased, but only once in any 12-month period and must reflect the current market level. Any change must be made using a Section 13 notice, which sets out the proposed new rent and gives tenants at least two months' notice before it takes effect. Contractual rent review clauses will no longer be permitted.

Market rent is defined as the rent the property would reasonably achieve if it were newly advertised to let. This places greater importance on setting rents realistically and being able to evidence how the figure has been reached, using local comparables and current market conditions.

If a tenant believes a proposed rent increase is above market level, they have the right to challenge it at the First-tier Tribunal. The Tribunal will review the evidence provided by both parties and determine the appropriate rent. It cannot increase the rent beyond the amount proposed by the landlord, and rent increases will no longer be backdated. Where appropriate, the Tribunal may also defer the new rent by up to a further two months if applying it immediately would cause undue hardship.

Rent reviews that are evidence-led, aligned with local market conditions, and clearly communicated are far less likely to be disputed and remain a manageable part of long-term tenancy management.



Managing Pet Requests

Under the new rules, tenants will have a legal right to request permission to keep a pet. Landlords will not be able to refuse such requests unless it is reasonable to do so. This does not mean pets must always be allowed. It means requests must be considered properly, on a case-by-case basis, and responded to within the required timeframe. Tenants must make their request in writing and include a description of the pet they wish to keep.

Once a request is received, landlords normally have 28 days to respond in writing. Where further information is reasonably required, such as the size, type, or training of the pet, landlords can ask for this within the initial 28 days and will then have either the remainder of that period or a further 7 days, whichever is later, to give their final response. Requests cannot be refused simply because a landlord does not like pets, has had negative experiences with pets in the past, or has general concerns about potential damage. These reasons are not normally considered reasonable under the new framework.

However, it may be reasonable to refuse a request in certain circumstances. Examples include:

- another occupier has a genuine allergy
- the property is too small or unsuitable for the type or number of pets requested
- the pet is illegal to own
- allowing the pet would breach the terms of a superior lease or freeholder agreement

If a request is refused, landlords must explain the reason clearly. Tenants have the right to challenge refusals they believe are unreasonable, either through complaint routes or, ultimately, the courts. Where consent is given, it cannot later be withdrawn for that specific pet unless new issues arise. If a tenant wishes to keep an additional pet, a new request must be made.

Landlords may continue to protect their property in the usual ways. Damage caused by pets can still be claimed against the deposit, subject to the normal rules. Landlords must not charge additional fees, higher rent, or require tenants to take out pet or damage insurance as a condition of consent, as this would constitute a banned fee. Some landlord insurance policies may provide cover for pet-related damage, subject to the terms of the policy. Cover varies, so landlords should check their policy details carefully.

It is also important to distinguish between pets and assistance animals. Assistance dogs are protected under the Equality Act, and landlords are required to make reasonable adjustments where a tenant requires one. Emotional support animals do not have the same legal status and are treated as pets under the Renters' Rights Act.



Communication and Preventing Disputes

Under periodic tenancies, communication plays a more central role in maintaining stable tenancies. Without fixed end dates driving conversations, expectations are managed through clear, timely responses.

Most disputes do not start with major issues; they usually develop from smaller concerns that are left unresolved or poorly explained. Rent reviews, repair requests, pet permissions, and behaviour concerns are common pressure points. Addressing these early, explaining decisions clearly, and confirming outcomes in writing helps prevent misunderstandings from escalating. Acknowledging issues promptly, even where a full response is not yet possible, sets expectations and reduces friction. Where additional information is needed, requesting it clearly and within the required timeframes helps keep matters on track and avoids unnecessary disputes.

Professional management is about making decisions that are reasonable, evidence-led, and clearly explained. Where landlords remain consistent, document decisions, and seek advice when needed, issues are far less likely to escalate into formal disputes or enforcement action. For many landlords, this is where working with an experienced letting professional adds real value; providing structure, clear processes, and informed guidance as expectations and regulations continue to evolve.

Quick Answers to Common Concerns

Can tenants really leave at any time under a periodic tenancy?

No. Tenants must give a minimum of two months' notice.

Do I still have control without a fixed term?

Yes. Control comes from notice periods, clear processes, and day-to-day management, not from contract length alone.

Can I still increase the rent?

Yes. Rent can be increased once in any 12 month period using the Section 13 process, and must reflect the market rate.

Does a tenant challenging a rent increase mean I've done something wrong?

No. The right to challenge exists by design. What matters is whether the proposed rent is evidence-led and reasonable.

Do I have to allow pets?

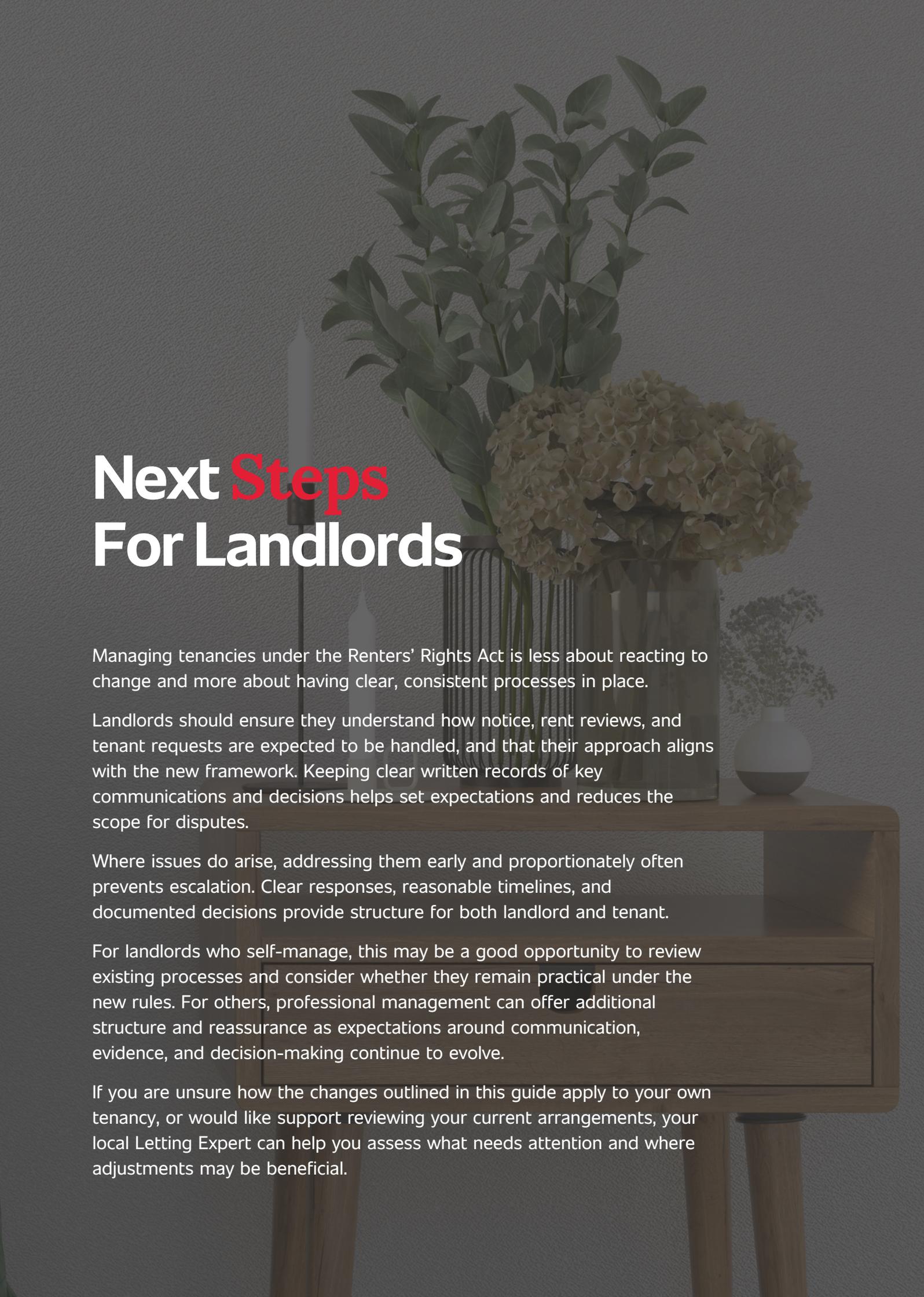
No. You must consider requests fairly, but you can refuse where it is reasonable to do so and explain why.

Can I require insurance as a condition of allowing a pet?

No. Consent cannot be made conditional on additional insurance. Pet-related damage can still be addressed through the tenancy deposit, subject to the usual rules.

What helps prevent disputes under the new rules?

Clear communication, written records, timely responses, and consistent decision-making.



Next Steps For Landlords

Managing tenancies under the Renters' Rights Act is less about reacting to change and more about having clear, consistent processes in place.

Landlords should ensure they understand how notice, rent reviews, and tenant requests are expected to be handled, and that their approach aligns with the new framework. Keeping clear written records of key communications and decisions helps set expectations and reduces the scope for disputes.

Where issues do arise, addressing them early and proportionately often prevents escalation. Clear responses, reasonable timelines, and documented decisions provide structure for both landlord and tenant.

For landlords who self-manage, this may be a good opportunity to review existing processes and consider whether they remain practical under the new rules. For others, professional management can offer additional structure and reassurance as expectations around communication, evidence, and decision-making continue to evolve.

If you are unsure how the changes outlined in this guide apply to your own tenancy, or would like support reviewing your current arrangements, your local Letting Expert can help you assess what needs attention and where adjustments may be beneficial.



The **Future** of Lettings

This information is correct at the time of writing; however, as the Renters' Rights Act progresses through parliament, it remains subject to change. We recommend seeking legal advice from an authorised professional before making any decisions based on this guide.

0333 344 9915

hello@thelettingexperts.co.uk

www.thelettingexperts.co.uk

