

The Letting Experts Guide To...

Renters' Rights Act **FAQ**

Adapting to a New Era of Lettings

The Renters' Rights Act represents one of the biggest shifts the lettings industry has seen in years, and with change comes the chance to adapt, improve, and strengthen the way we do things. It introduces a range of updates across areas such as tenancy structures, rent reviews, possession rights, and compliance standards.

This guide has been created to help you understand what's changing and to prepare for what's ahead. It's clear, factual, and supportive, offering straightforward answers to the questions we're being asked the most.

While the legislation brings new responsibilities, it also encourages higher standards; from improving record-keeping and communication to ensuring homes meet the highest safety and maintenance standards. Many landlords are already meeting these expectations, meaning for most, it's a case of refining rather than reinventing.

The aim isn't to make things harder, but to create consistency and fairness across the private rented sector. With the right knowledge and preparation, landlords can continue to let safely, securely, and with confidence in the years ahead.

Whether you manage your own portfolio or work with an agent, staying informed and proactive will make all the difference. The lettings landscape may be changing, but with awareness and adaptability, landlords can continue to succeed.



Staying in Control

End of Section 21

Will I still be able to regain possession without Section 21?

Yes, you'll use strengthened Section 8 grounds instead. For example, persistent arrears, tenancy breaches, wanting to sell, or moving back in yourself. Most tenants will still leave once a valid notice is served, but if they don't, you'll need a possession order through the courts.

Will it be harder in practice?

Not necessarily. Many tenancies will end once the right notice is served. The best approach is early intervention: keep accurate records such as payment history, inspection notes, and communication logs, and make sure the correct notice is served at the right time. If a case does reach court, being well organised and prepared will make the process much smoother.

Arrears and Possession Timelines

When can I start possession proceedings for rent arrears?

You'll only be able to start possession proceedings once a tenant falls three months behind on rent. Some waiting time in the courts is likely, but the best approach is early action. Follow up promptly on arrears, keep clear payment records, use the correct possession ground, and have your evidence ready before applying. Taking these steps will help in protect your cashflow and minimise further delays.

If the arrears are cleared before a hearing, possession might not be granted, but including other relevant grounds, such as persistent late payments, can help strengthen your position. Enquire about our guide 'The End of Section 21' for further information.

Adapting to Change

Rent Increases and Reviews

How often can I review the rent?

You can still carry out rent reviews, but only once a year under the new rules. Increases must be fair, transparent, and reflect local market values, with at least two months' notice given. Tenants will be able to challenge any increase they believe is unreasonable, so support your review with clear market evidence and written records.

What's the best approach to setting new rent levels?

Check comparable properties in your area, review recent market trends, and keep records to show how you've calculated any increases. Large or sudden increases can lead to voids or disputes, while well-documented reviews help maintain good tenant relationships and stable income.

Permitting Pets

Do I have to allow pets now?

Under the Renters' Rights Act, tenants have the right to request permission to keep a pet, and landlords can only refuse with a valid reason. Blanket bans are no longer allowed, and all refusals must be explained clearly in writing, for example, if the property's lease prohibits pets, or the space isn't suitable.

How can I protect my property?

You can't ask tenants to pay a separate pet deposit or take out pet insurance. The standard five-week deposit (or six weeks where annual rent exceeds £50,000) remains the only permitted security, although the government has said this could be reviewed in future. To reduce risk, include a clear pet clause in the tenancy agreement outlining expectations for cleaning, damage, and maintenance, and make sure all pet requests and responses are documented in writing.

Rolling Tenancies

What happens to fixed terms?

Most tenancies will move to periodic agreements. Tenants can give notice at any time with at least two months' notice, so plan ahead for possible voids. Keep marketing materials ready, including photos, EPC's, and compliance documents, to re-let quickly.

How can I reduce the impact of shorter notice periods?

Focus on tenant retention and preparation. Keep communication open, respond quickly to issues, and maintain the property to a high standard. Happy tenants are far less likely to leave unexpectedly.



Maintaining Standards and Fairness

Staying Compliant and Prepared

Are standards increasing?

Yes. Expect a tougher stance on damp, mould, response times, and overall property condition as the new Decent Homes Standard expands to the private rented sector. Keep clear records of what was reported, when, and how they were resolved. It's as much about demonstrating accountability as it is taking action.

What should I have in place now?

Make sure your compliance documents are current: EICR, gas safety, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, EPC, deposit protection, How to Rent guide, right to rent checks, and legionella notes. From May 2026, this will also include providing tenants with a Written Statement of Terms before a new tenancy is agreed. Keep a simple repairs log with dates, photos, and updates so you can evidence a clear maintenance trail.

Selecting Tenants Fairly

How detailed can I be with referencing and suitability?

You can still be thorough, but you must stay fair and consistent. Carry out full checks on ID, right to rent, income, employment and landlord references, credit history, and affordability. Guarantors are appropriate where justified, just avoid blanket bans or automatic exclusions, and record your reasoning clearly if you decide not to proceed.

Can tenants still offer higher rent or pay in advance?

No. Under the Renters' Rights Act, rent bidding will be banned. Landlords can't ask for, encourage, or accept offers above the advertised rent. Because all tenancies will be rolling, rent can only be paid monthly in advance, and never before both parties have signed the agreement.



Looking Ahead

Is being a landlord still sustainable?

Yes, with the right approach. Margins may be narrower, but smart management and preparation make a real difference. The landlords adapting best are those who price realistically using market data, stay proactive with arrears and maintenance, use guarantors or rent protection where risk is higher, and keep properties market-ready to minimise voids. Small improvements to process can make a big difference to overall returns.

When will these changes take effect?

Reforms will be introduced in stages throughout 2026. New requirements will apply to new tenancies first, with existing tenancies transitioning over time. Updated standards, the ombudsman scheme, and related processes will follow on a phased basis. Keep an eye out for commencement dates, we'll share clear updates as each stage is confirmed.

Quick Answers to Common Concerns

Can I still review rent once a tenancy has started?

Yes, rent reviews are still allowed once per year, provided you give the correct notice and base any increase on fair, transparent evidence.

Can tenants end their tenancy at any time?

They can give two months' notice under rolling agreements, so it's best to stay prepared to market properties quickly when needed.

What happens if I want to move back in?

That's covered under strengthened Section 8 grounds, accompanied by the right notice and supporting evidence.

Can I still take a holding deposit?

Yes, up to one week's rent, which can be applied to the first month's rent once the tenancy begins.

Do I need to provide any new paperwork at the start of a tenancy?

Yes. From May 2026, landlords (or their agents) will need to provide tenants with a Written Statement of Terms before a new tenancy is agreed.

Do I need to change existing tenancies right away?

No, there'll be a transition period. The new rules will apply to new tenancies first.



Next Steps For Landlords

Staying organised now will make the transition much easier. Keep your paperwork up to date, tenancy agreements, deposit protection, prescribed information, safety certificates, EPCs, alarms, and the How to Rent guide. Make sure your arrears process is clear and consistent, with prompt follow-ups and accurate records of payments and communication. Evidence everything from inspections to repairs so you can demonstrate clear timelines and action taken.

Review your rent policy to ensure increases are fair and backed by local data, and prepare a standard pet clause that outlines expectations for cleaning and maintenance. Keep referencing thorough but fair, defining when guarantors or rent protection will be used. If you manage student or shared lets, plan renewals and mid-year checks early.

As new rules take effect, it's also worth reviewing how you manage your properties. Some landlords may find that using a professional management service now offers greater protection, saves time, and ensures compliance with evolving legislation. If you're unsure whether self-managing is still the right for for you, seek expert advice before the changes take effect.

Above all, stay informed. We'll continue sharing key updates and guidance as new details are confirmed.



The **Future** of Lettings

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

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