



# RENTERS' REFORM DECODED:

A LANDLORD'S GUIDE TO  
THRIVING IN 2025+ >>>

by ABC Gone Ltd



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# INTRODUCTION

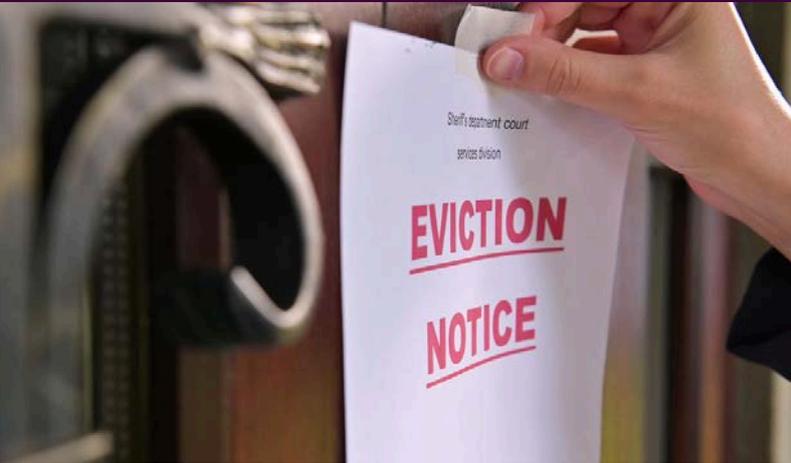
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The UK's Renters' (Reform) Bill – now passed as the **Renters' Rights Act 2025** – promises the biggest shake-up of tenancy law in decades. If you're a landlord in London or Essex, you might be wondering what these changes mean for you. In plain English, this guide breaks down **what's changing, how it affects you, and what you should do about it**. We'll focus on practical outcomes: from the end of "no-fault" evictions to new rules on rent increases, pets, and property standards—no dense legal jargon – just a clear roadmap to help you adapt and **come out ahead**.

*ABC Gone's 15+ years of property management in London and Essex have taught us that staying ahead of regulation is key to stress-free letting. This guide translates the reforms into actionable advice, with an expert eye on keeping your rental business compliant and profitable.*

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# KEY CHANGES AT A GLANCE:



## NO-FAULT EVICTIONS ABOLISHED:

Section 21 evictions are being scrapped, ending fixed-term tenancies and moving all rentals to rolling periodic agreements. Landlords will need valid grounds (like tenant breach or sale of property) to regain possession.

## OPEN-ENDED TENANCIES:

As of May 1, 2026, all new and existing tenancies will be converted to open-ended periodic tenancies, offering tenants greater security and flexibility.



## TOUGHER EVICTION GROUNDS:

New Section 8 grounds will allow eviction for sale or moving in (after a 6-month tenancy) and persistent rent arrears or anti-social Behaviour – but the processes will require more proof and possibly more time.



## RENT INCREASE LIMITS:

Rent review clauses in contracts will be banned. Rent can only be increased once per year, with a **minimum** of two months' notice to tenants. No more bidding wars – you must advertise a fixed asking rent and cannot accept offers above it.





## TENANT-FRIENDLY MEASURES:

Blanket bans on renting to families with children or benefit recipients ("No DSS") will be illegal. Landlords can't unreasonably refuse tenants who request to keep pets, although requiring pet insurance may be permitted.

## NEW OBLIGATIONS FOR LANDLORDS:

A **Private Renters' Ombudsman** will be established, and all landlords must join (membership mandatory) to resolve disputes out of court. A national **Property Portal (database)** will register every rental property, helping enforce standards.



## HIGHER PROPERTY STANDARDS:

Over time, private rentals must meet a **Decent Homes Standard** – ensuring properties are safe, well-maintained and free of serious hazards. "Awaab's Law" will establish strict timeframes for addressing hazardous issues, such as mould. More stringent energy efficiency rules (EPC rating C by 2030) are also on the horizon.



These reforms aim to **empower tenants with greater security and improved homes**, while raising the standards for landlords. Importantly, the government insists that good, responsible landlords will benefit from more straightforward rules and a more level playing field. In the sections ahead, we decode each significant change and provide London/Essex landlords with an **action plan to stay compliant and thrive** in this new era. ABC Gone is here to help translate these changes into stress-free landlording – **Guaranteed Rent. Done Right** – but more on that later. Let's dive into the details.

A hand holding a set of keys is shown in the foreground, with a blurred background of a house model on a desk. A purple diamond-shaped overlay covers the central part of the image, containing the title text.

# WHY REFORM? (AND WHY IT MATTERS NOW)

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# WHY REFORM? (AND WHY IT MATTERS NOW)



After years of debate, the rental law is being overhauled to address what the government calls a "broken" system of insecurity and variable standards. In places like London and Essex, high demand and rising rents have put pressure on tenants, while landlords have relied on tools like Section 21 notices for flexibility. The Renters' Rights Act 2025 is a response to this imbalance, aiming to **provide tenants with more stability and to root out rogue practices** without penalizing fair landlords.

Timing is critical: the Act received Royal Assent on October 27 2025. The first wave of changes kicks in on **May 1 2026**, with further phases in late 2026 and beyond. That means **2025 is your window to prepare**. By understanding the reforms now, you can make proactive adjustments – updating tenancy agreements, scheduling any necessary changes, and educating yourself and your team. The goal is not just to "survive" the new rules, but to **use them as an opportunity** to professionalize your approach, stand out as a quality landlord, and maintain a steady income stream.

In short, change is coming, but with the proper preparation, you can stay **ahead of the curve**. **Next, we break down each reform and what you should do about it, one topic at a time.**

# 1

## END OF SECTION 21 AND OPEN-ENDED TENANCIES



Perhaps the most significant change is the **abolition of Section 21 "no-fault" evictions**, which also spells the end of fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs). **Here's what that means in practice:**



### All Tenancies Become Periodic:

From May 1 2026, **every new tenancy must be periodic** (rolling monthly or weekly) from the start, and all existing fixed-term ASTs will transition to periodic by law. Tenancies will no longer have an automatic end date; they will continue until the tenant gives notice or the landlord regains possession through a legal ground.



### Tenant Notice Period:

Tenants are free to leave at their discretion (e.g., to purchase a home or accept a new job), provided they provide **two months' written notice** to the landlord in advance. This adds flexibility for tenants, but it means landlords must be prepared for departures with two months' notice at any point.



### No More "No-Fault" Evictions:

Landlords will **lose the ability to evict without providing a reason**. Currently, a Section 21 notice allows for the termination of a tenancy with two months' notice, with no justification required – this will no longer be an option. If you want to regain possession, you'll have to cite a valid ground under Section 8 (e.g. rent arrears, tenant fault, or specific circumstantial grounds).



## New Grounds for Possession:

To compensate landlords for losing Section 21, the Act is **expanding Section 8 grounds**:

### SELLING OR MOVING IN:

A new ground will allow eviction if you **intend to sell the property** or move into it (or have close family move in). However, you **cannot use this ground in the first 12 months** of a tenancy, and if you do use it, you must not re-let or market the property for 12 months from when you served notice. This is to prevent abuse of the rule, for example saying you will sell to remove a tenant and then letting the property out again straight away.

### REPEAT RENT ARREARS:

A tougher **mandatory ground for persistent arrears** is introduced – if a tenant has been **two or more months behind on rent at least three times in the last three years**, you can seek possession even if they're not in arrears on the hearing day. This targets serial late payers, where previously a tenant could avoid eviction by paying up right before court.

### ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR:

\* It will be easier to evict tenants for **anti-social Behaviour** or serious misconduct. The Act promises to strengthen these grounds, for example by widening the definition and streamlining evidence, so that **disruptive or dangerous tenants can be removed more swiftly**. Judges will be asked to look closely at the impact on neighbours and victims. The direction is clear, to support landlords dealing with serious anti-social tenants.

### LONGER NOTICE FOR EVICTIONS:

Some possession grounds will require more notice to the tenant under the new rules. For example, the notice period for evictions due to rent arrears is being extended to **4 weeks (up from 2)** in many cases. While not drastic, it means building in a bit more time if you have to go down the legal route.



## IMPACT:

Losing Section 21 is a big adjustment. For landlords in London and Essex, accustomed to a brisk rental market, it means you **cannot simply ask a tenant to leave because you want to re-let at a higher rent or because a fixed term is ending**. You'll need a concrete reason, and likely a court order, to evict. This makes **tenant selection and management more critical than ever** – once a tenant is in place, if they pay rent and adhere to the tenancy terms, they can stay for years.

Some landlords fear that without Section 21, they'll be "stuck" with problematic tenants. Regaining possession will rely on slower court processes. Still, the government is positioning the reforms as balanced: "good landlords enjoy simpler regulation and clear, expanded possession grounds...to regain their properties quickly when necessary," according to the Housing Minister. In theory, a well-documented case of rent abuse or property misuse should still result in eviction; however, it will require **due process**.



# WHAT TO DO



## KNOW YOUR GROUNDS:

Familiarise yourself with the **revised Section 8 grounds** and their criteria. If you haven't dealt with fault-based evictions before, consider training or resources from landlord associations (the NRLA has guides on the new process). Understanding what constitutes valid evidence for each ground (e.g. records of arrears, complaints, damage reports) will be crucial.



## PLAN FOR POSSESSION:

If you were **relying on a fixed-term tenancy ending in late 2026 or beyond, note that it will not automatically end.** To regain possession for selling or moving in, budget for at least 6-7 months' lead time (6-month minimum tenancy before you can serve notice on the new ground, plus 2 months' tenant notice and possibly court time). If you anticipate needing your property back for personal reasons, plan accordingly.



## ADDRESS ISSUES EARLY:

With no "easy quit" button, it's wise to tackle problems promptly. If a tenant is falling behind on rent or causing trouble, **document all incidents** and communicate your concerns promptly. In severe cases, you might decide to pursue possession **before** the law changes (using Section 21 in 2025) – **but weigh this carefully.** Evicting a decent long-term tenant out of fear may be counterproductive if they could continue smoothly. Focus on fact-based decisions: if there is a genuine, ongoing breach or need for possession, act within the current legal framework. If not, maintain good relations and get ready to work within the new system.

WHY REFORM? (AND WHY IT MATTERS NOW)

END OF SECTION 21 AND OPEN-ENDED TENANCIES - WHAT TO DO



CONSIDER TENANCY STRUCTURE:

Although fixed terms will be phased out legally, you can still create stable arrangements. One idea is to **sign longer initial agreements in 2024/25** that then roll periodically. Or use **break clauses** if needed (keeping in mind these might need to align with new law – e.g. you can't contract around the abolition of fixed terms, but you might include a clause about sale/move-out scenarios consistent with new grounds). Always ensure that any agreement aligns with the Act's spirit, as illegal clauses (such as a "pre-signed" Section 21) will be void.



STAY UPDATED:

The government will publish detailed guidance for landlords in November 2025, covering these tenancy changes at gov. Keep an eye out for the official guidance and the promised "Information Sheet" that must be provided to all tenants by May 31, 2026, explaining their new rights and responsibilities. Ensure you deliver this to your renters on time – it's a new legal requirement.



ABC GONE'S PERSPECTIVE:

With Section 21 gone, partnering with a reliable property manager becomes even more valuable. At ABC Gone, **tenant vetting is highly rigorous**, and we maintain good tenant relationships through proactive management – reducing the risk you'll ever need to evict. In a worst-case scenario, if a tenant defaults or misbehaves, **ABC Gone shoulders that hassle**: our landlords continue to receive their fixed monthly payments. At the same time, we handle the legal process of repossession if needed. In short, our Guaranteed Rent model is designed for precisely this kind of environment, providing you **with certainty of income** and professional support in navigating the new rules.

# 2

## NEW LIMITS ON RENT INCREASES AND ADVERTISING



Renting in London and Essex has often been a landlord's market, characterized by high demand that leads to rent bidding wars and frequent rent increases. The Renters' Reform changes are introducing **more control and transparency over rent adjustments**. Here's what's changing:

### Rent Review Clauses Banned:



Any clause in a tenancy agreement that allows the rent to increase during a fixed term (or at set intervals) will be outlawed. The Act prohibits the insertion of **rent review clauses** in contracts. This means you **cannot pre-write a 5% increase every 6 months** into the agreement, as some landlords might have done.

### One Increase Per Year:



Landlords will be limited to **one rent increase per 12 months** of a tenancy. Even if the market is rising quickly, you'll have to wait at least a year between raises. This applies to periodic tenancies via the formal process (Section 13 notice), which becomes the standard mechanism for rent changes.

### Two Months' Notice for Rent Hike:



To raise the rent, you must serve a **Section 13 notice of proposed increase**, providing the tenant with at least two months' advance notice. The tenant can agree to the new rent or refer it to a tribunal if they find it excessive. Importantly, the law will ensure tenants have time to react, budget, or challenge an increase.



## No More Bidding Wars:

In competitive areas (inner London, for example), it became common to advertise a rent "guide price" and then accept the highest offer from interested tenants. The new rules forbid this. **Landlords must publish a precise asking rent and cannot accept offers above that advertised rate.** In essence, you must pick your tenant on a **first-come, first-qualified** basis rather than on who pays more. This levels the playing field for renters and prevents informal auctions that drive up rents.



## Fair Market Rent Emphasis:

Tenants will have a stronger ability to challenge rent increases that seem unfair. While existing tribunal mechanisms remain in place, the overall goal is to align increases more closely with market norms and inflation rates. Landlords who attempt exorbitant rent increases (especially as a strategy to force a tenant out) will likely be scrutinized by the new system.



## IMPACT:



Your **pricing strategy will need to be more measured and forward-looking.** Without automatic clauses, you'll set an initial rent and generally live with it for at least a year. In fast-changing markets like London, that means you might not always capture the absolute peak of market rent in the short term – but it also ensures stability (for both you and the tenant). Notably, by banning rent bidding wars and frequent hikes, the Act aims to discourage the practice of churning through tenants for higher rent, promoting longer tenancies.

For many professional landlords, these changes may not feel too burdensome – it's already common to review rents annually. However, if you have been in the habit of mid-tenancy raises or opportunistic increases every 6 months, you'll need to adjust. Also, transparent advertising means **presenting a fair rent upfront**; if you undervalue in the ad, you can't later ask new applicants to outbid each other.



# WHAT TO DO



## SET THE RIGHT RENT INITIALLY:

Conduct thorough research on market rents for your area and property type. Since you can't raise the rent for a year (and then only modestly, realistically), price it correctly at the start of a tenancy. Aim for a rent that is **sustainable for the tenant and satisfactory for you** over a 12-month or longer horizon.



## USE SECTION 13 PROPERLY:

If you need to increase rent on an ongoing tenancy, familiarise yourself with the **Section 13 notice** procedure (many landlords have never had to use it formally). The notice must be in a prescribed form and give the required notice period. If you're unsure, consult a professional or resources like NRLA guides – a defective notice can delay your increase.



## DOCUMENT MARKET JUSTIFICATION:

When proposing an increase, it is helpful to have evidence that the new rent is reasonable – e.g., similar properties' rents, local index trends. If a tenant challenges it at tribunal, they will check if it's in line with the market rate. Being fair and justifiable will save you from disputes.



## PLAN FOR INFLATION:

With annual limits, consider how inflation or rising costs (e.g. interest rates on mortgages, upcoming expenses) might affect your yield. You can implement smaller, regular increases rather than a massive hike after several years. The Act forces regularity, which can actually be beneficial if you communicate openly. Tenants often prefer predictable, smaller rises than a surprise, significant jump.

## WHY REFORM? (AND WHY IT MATTERS NOW)

NEW LIMITS ON RENT INCREASES AND ADVERTISING – WHAT TO DO

UPDATE  
YOUR  
LISTINGS:

Ensure all advertising (whether on Rightmove, Zoopla, or a letting agent's site) complies with the following: list a single rent figure. Remove any phrasing like "Offers over £X" or "Starting from £X". This is particularly relevant in hot areas of London, where some agents tried quasi-auctions. Also, avoid marketing tricks like very low teaser rent – it could lead to issues if you then try to negotiate upward. Clarity and honesty in your ads will keep you on the right side of the law and build trust with applicants.

COMMUNICA  
TE WITH  
TENANTS:

If you have a good tenant in place but your costs have increased (for example, due to inflation or new compliance costs), approach the topic of a rent increase in a transparent manner. Explain the situation and provide them with ample notice, even before issuing the formal notice. Good tenants are more likely to accept a reasonable rise if they feel respected and informed. This can avoid tribunal challenges and maintain goodwill.

## ABC GONE'S PERSPECTIVE:

ABC Gone offers **Guaranteed Rent** for landlords, which means we take on the tenant-facing side – including rent setting and increases – so you don't have to worry about these procedural changes. Our team analyses market trends to set fair rents from the outset, ensuring the property is filled quickly without underselling value. And since we become your tenant (paying you a fixed monthly amount), you're insulated from the complexities of rent negotiations altogether. **No more negotiating or serving notices – you get a steady income, and we handle any discussions with occupants.** That said, we always keep rents at fair market levels, which aligns with the new rules and helps with tenant retention (zero voids benefits everyone!).

# 3

## MANDATORY OMBUDSMAN: DISPUTE RESOLUTION OVERHAUL



The Renters' Rights Act is introducing a **Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman** scheme. This represents a significant shift in how tenant complaints and disputes are handled, moving many issues **out of the courts** and into a more accessible resolution service. Here's what landlords need to know:



### All Landlords Must Join:

Membership in the Ombudsman scheme will be **mandatory for all private landlords** (with a few exceptions, such as resident landlords). This is not optional – once the system is up and running (planned from late 2026), you'll have to register yourself. The Ombudsman will be a single, government-approved body covering the whole of England.



### Handling Tenant Complaints:

The Ombudsman offers tenants a free and independent means to resolve issues with their landlord. If a tenant feels that you've acted unfairly, broken the rules, or failed to fulfil your obligations, they can bring a complaint to the Ombudsman. Think of it like a mediation and adjudication service specifically for landlord-tenant matters (similar to how the Financial Ombudsman works for banking, for example).



### Powers and Compensation:

Importantly, the Ombudsman will have the authority to act. They can require landlords to **apologize, provide information, take specific actions to rectify problems, or even pay compensation up to £25,000** in severe cases. That's a significant sum, reflecting that some issues (e.g. severe disrepair or illegal evictions) can be very costly to the tenant. For context, current deposit protection schemes cap potential awards around the deposit amount; £25k is on another level, intended to cover substantial losses.



## Goal: Quick and Fair Resolution:

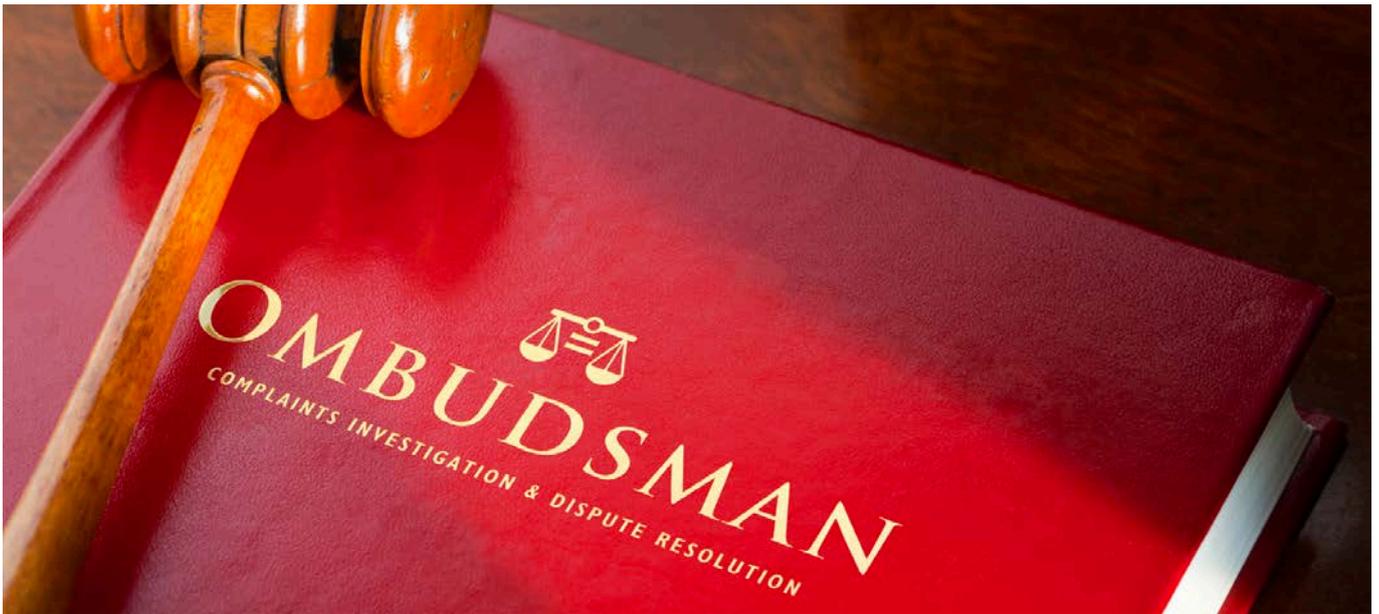
For responsible landlords, this scheme can actually be beneficial. It's designed to be **quicker and less costly than court** for resolving disputes, and it shines a light on bad practices (which tarnish the sector's reputation). As one industry expert noted, "the introduction of an Ombudsman is positive as it will help to elevate the reputable landlords in the industry and deter the rogues" [nrla.org.uk](https://www.nrla.org.uk). Instead of months waiting for a court date, a complaint might be handled through an Ombudsman investigation and decision within weeks.



## Enforcement:

Details are still emerging, but failure to join the Ombudsman could likely result in penalties or an inability to evict (for instance, the law might say you can't serve a Section 8 notice unless you're registered with the Ombudsman – similar to how failing to protect a deposit currently bars you from Section 21). The government's roadmap indicates that Phase 2 (late 2026) will see the establishment of the Ombudsman, and by 2028, all landlords will be required to be members once the system is fully operational. There may be a grace period, but don't count on slipping through unnoticed – it will be effectively compulsory.

REGULATORY



## IMPACT:

London and Essex landlords who have operated professionally likely already handle complaints diligently. However, this formalizes the process and introduces an external referee. **Every complaint you receive from a tenant now carries more weight** because, if not resolved, it can be referred to a third party who can issue binding decisions. This means **record-keeping and communication are paramount**. If a tenant says "the heating isn't working properly" and you ignore them, it could snowball into an Ombudsman case with evidence of negligence. On the flip side, frivolous or unfounded complaints can be dismissed by the Ombudsman, which may spare you a court appearance if a tenant was trying it on.

The presence of an Ombudsman also means **greater consistency in dispute outcomes**. Many landlords have horror stories of court – one judge might be sympathetic to a tenant's claim, another might not, leading to unpredictable results. A dedicated housing Ombudsman is expected to apply clear standards across the board.



## WHAT TO DO



### REGISTER ON TIME:

Once the Ombudsman scheme opens for registration, make it a priority to sign up. Don't wait until the last minute (2028) – being an early adopter might also give you access to guidance and support. We anticipate the registration process will be straightforward online with a modest annual fee (exact fee TBC, but likely similar to redress schemes for agents or a few tens of pounds).



### ADOPT A COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:

To prepare, establish a simple **written complaints procedure** for your tenants. For example, provide a contact email or portal for issues, commit to acknowledging receipt within two working days and giving a complete response or solution within, say, 14 days. If you demonstrate that you have a system and follow it, many tenants will feel heard and won't need to escalate the issue externally. This also creates a paper trail that demonstrates you are acting reasonably.



### KEEP RECORDS:

Maintain records of all communications with tenants regarding any issues – including emails, texts, and repair logs. If a dispute does reach the Ombudsman, having a documented history ("Tenant reported leak on January 5, plumber sent January 6, fixed by January 7") will be invaluable. It will help prove you responded appropriately. Conversely, if you have nothing to show, it may become a "he said, she said" that could go against you.



### RECTIFY ISSUES PROMPTLY:

The best way to avoid complaints is to be proactive. Ensure you meet all your legal obligations (repairs within a reasonable time, safety checks done, no unfair terms in your contract, etc.). Many Ombudsman cases will likely involve properties in disrepair or services not being delivered. By keeping your property in good condition and addressing repair requests quickly, tenants have little reason to seek external help.

WHY REFORM? (AND WHY IT MATTERS NOW)

MANDATORY OMBUDSMAN: DISPUTE RESOLUTION OVERHAUL- WHAT TO DO



UNDERSTAND POTENTIAL REMEDIES:

Be aware that compensation awards are a possible outcome. For example, if you've been dragging your feet on a serious damp problem that made part of the property unusable, the Ombudsman could order a rent refund for that period or money for the tenant's damaged belongings. It's better (and usually cheaper) to fix the issue than to end up paying compensation later. Insurance might cover some events, but insurers may require evidence that you acted responsibly, too.



STAY INFORMED:

The government and industry bodies will release guidelines on what the Ombudsman will cover and how to interact with it. Keep an eye out in 2026 for these details. The NRLA and other landlord forums will likely provide summaries. Knowledge will help you navigate the process confidently if it ever arises.



ABC GONE'S PERSPECTIVE:

When you work with ABC Gone, **we effectively become your tenant and property manager in one**, meaning we handle tenant relations on your behalf. We are already members of a **redress scheme** for property agents (as required by law for managing agents), and we will naturally comply with the new Ombudsman as well. What this means for you is **shielded peace of mind**: if any occupant has an issue, **ABC Gone addresses it directly** – from initial complaint to final resolution – following best practices. We aim to resolve matters before any external intervention is necessary. Our track record speaks for itself: zero Ombudsman cases and zero missed payments in 15 years. By ensuring repairs, compliance, and fair treatment, we keep tenants happy and landlords worry-free. The Ombudsman becomes little more than a safety net, rarely, if ever, needed in our partnerships.

# 4

## THE NEW PROPERTY PORTAL (LANDLORD DATABASE)



Another cornerstone of the reforms is the creation of a **Property Portal** – essentially a nationwide database of private rented properties and their landlords. Think of it as a central register for the PRS (Private Rented Sector), which aims to improve transparency and enforcement. Here's the lowdown:



### Every Rental Must Be Registered:

Landlords will be required to **register each property they let out on the portal**, providing key information. This likely includes details such as the address, the landlord's name and contact information, and compliance confirmations (e.g., gas safety certificate status, EPC rating, etc.). The idea is to create a one-stop record that a property is being rented and meets basic legal requirements.



### Unique Property ID:

The government has mentioned a system of unique property reference numbers. Once you register, you'll receive an ID for that property, which can be used in tenancy agreements or when serving notices, allowing authorities to look up the property's compliance history easily.



### Tenant and Public Access:

Tenants (and prospective renters) will likely be able to verify if a property is on the portal and see specific details. For example, a tenant can ascertain that their landlord is registered correctly and check if the property has up-to-date certificates. This encourages **trust through transparency**. It may also indicate if a landlord has been fined or penalized, serving as a deterrent to those who misbehave.



### Enforcement Tool for Councils:

Local councils will utilize the database to identify properties and landlords within their respective areas. It will help them target enforcement against those who don't comply with standards or licensing. For landlords, this means **you must be on the portal to fly under the radar no longer** – if you're not listed, it will be a glaring red flag.



## Tied to Possession Rights:

Not being on the portal could directly hurt you. It's expected that if a landlord isn't registered, they **won't be able to use specific eviction grounds under Section 8**. For instance, you might be barred from obtaining a possession order until you register (similar to how failing to protect a deposit or hold a license in a selective licensing area can currently derail an eviction). In short: no registration, no rent increase notices or eviction notices – a strong incentive to comply.



## Phased Launch:

According to the implementation roadmap, the portal (also called the "Database of PRS Properties") will come online in late 2026 as part of Phase 2. There may be an initial period during which registration is voluntary or in beta, but by 2027, it is expected to be fully operational. The Housing Secretary has indicated that, after a certain point (possibly 2028), registration will become a legal requirement for all landlords, with penalties for those who fail to register.

# IMPACT:



For many conscientious landlords, registering will be a straightforward task – likely involving an online form that takes a few minutes per property. The **bigger effect is ensuring all your compliance ducks are in a row**. Because once you input your property details, you may need to declare or upload proof of items such as Gas Safety, Electrical Safety (EICR), Deposit Protection, and EPC rating, among others. If you're missing something, now's the time to sort it out before the portal goes live.

London and Essex landlords should note that some boroughs already have landlord licensing schemes (for HMOs or selective licensing in specific areas). The national portal doesn't replace these local schemes, but it will run alongside them, possibly sharing data. If you've been through license applications, you know the drill – the portal will be analogous but nationwide. Those who have never had licensing obligations will face a new layer of administration.



# WHAT TO DO



## GET YOUR DOCUMENTS IN ORDER:

Use 2025 and early 2026 to audit each of your rental properties. Ensure you have **valid certificates** for Gas Safety (annual), EICR (electrical, 5-yearly), EPC (energy, 10-year), and that smoke/CO alarm rules are followed. Verify that your **deposit is protected** and that you've provided all required "How to Rent" information to tenants. Essentially, pretend the portal is live tomorrow – would you be confident to submit everything? If not, address the gaps now.



## STAY INFORMED ABOUT THE PORTAL LAUNCH:

Watch for announcements in 2026 regarding the portal. There will likely be a government website or portal opening. The process should be widely publicized. The NRLA and agents will also disseminate info. Make a note to register as soon as it's available – being an early registrant can only help (and avoids any last-minute rush or enforcement letters).



## BE ACCURATE AND HONEST:

When registering, please provide accurate and honest information. It's an offence to give false details. If something changes (e.g., you obtain a new gas certificate or sell the property), you'll need to update the portal entry. Treat it like a living profile for your property.



## BUDGET FOR POSSIBLE FEES:

The White Paper preceding the Bill suggested a small fee to register (to cover admin costs). It might be around £50 per property, or so (just an estimate). Plan for this expense in your 2026 budgeting. It's likely tax-deductible as an expense.

## WHY REFORM? (AND WHY IT MATTERS NOW)

THE NEW PROPERTY PORTAL (LANDLORD DATABASE)- WHAT TO DO

LEVERAGE  
THE  
PORTAL'S  
BENEFITS:

Rather than viewing it solely as a burden, utilize the portal as a **benchmark for professional property management**. If you have multiple properties, the portal might help you track compliance dates and ensure nothing slips through the cracks. Also, promoting that you're fully registered and compliant can be a selling point to quality tenants (some may start asking, "Is your property on the new rental portal?"). Show them you're on top of it – it builds trust.

CONSEQUENCES  
OF NON-  
COMPLIANCE:

Understand that ignoring the portal is not an option. Penalties could range from fines to restrictions on evictions. Given the digital nature, it will be easy for authorities to spot non-registrants. Don't gamble with "going under the radar" – the risk to your livelihood (rent collection and asset security) is too high. Instead, embrace the transparency; it will squeeze out slumlords and let reputable landlords shine.



## ABC GONE'S PERSPECTIVE:

ABC Gone is proactively preparing for the property portal. For our client landlords, **we will handle the registration process on your behalf**. We maintain meticulous records of all compliance documents for each property we manage, so when the portal opens, our team will ensure every ABC Gone property is promptly and correctly listed. This means **zero hassle for you** – and no risk of missing a registration deadline. Moreover, because we guarantee compliance as part of our service (which includes arranging gas safety checks and EICRs), you can rest assured that everything reported on the portal is up-to-date and accurate. In short, we take the administrative load off your shoulders; you gain the peace of mind that comes with being fully compliant with the new law, without lifting a finger.

## 5

ENFORCEMENT AND  
PENALTIES: WHAT HAPPENS IF  
YOU GET IT WRONG

## NEW PENALTIES FOR LANDLORDS AND AGENTS

The Renters' Rights Act does not only change how tenancies work, it also turns up the heat on enforcement.

## Key figures to know

- Up to **£40,000** for unlawful eviction or harassment under the Protection from Eviction Act
- Other civil penalties now typically **£7,000**, rising to **£40,000** for repeat offences
- In many situations, agents can be held liable as well as landlords

These are maximum penalties. Local authorities will decide what to apply in each case, using their own guidance.

## Why this matters

If you cut corners on notices, redress, licensing or the landlord database, the price of a mistake is now far more than a slap on the wrist. Penalties at this level can wipe out a year or more of rental income.

At **ABC Gone** we treat compliance as part of your risk management, not as an optional extra. Our role is to help you stay ahead of these rules so you can focus on income, not enforcement letters.

*This guide is for information only. Always check the latest government guidance or take independent advice on your specific situation.*

## NEW OFFENCES TO WATCH

The Renters' Rights Act draws a much clearer line between an honest mistake and behaviour that counts as an offence. The list below highlights the main areas where landlords and agents now need to take extra care.

1.

### PRETENDING A TENANCY HAS A FIXED TERM

From 1 May 2026 **all new tenancies are periodic**. If you advertise or sign an agreement that suggests a "12 month **fixed term**," you risk enforcement action because the agreement does not reflect the law.

**TAKEAWAY:**

Describe tenancies accurately and **update old templates** so they match the new rules.

2.

### NOT GIVING TENANTS A PROPER WRITTEN STATEMENT

Landlords and agents must provide a **clear written statement of the tenancy terms**. This includes **rent, notice, repairs, safety responsibilities** and any special clauses.

**TAKEAWAY:**

Make sure **every tenant receives written terms at the start** and keep a copy of what you gave them.

3.

### SERVING THE WRONG NOTICE

Using the abolished Section 21 notice after May 2026, or serving a notice that does not match the ground you want to rely on, can now be treated as an offence rather than just a technical error.

**TAKEAWAY:**

Before you serve notice, check that the form and the ground are still valid under the new system.

## 4. MISUSING POSSESSION GROUNDS

It is now an offence to rely on a possession ground that does not really apply.

**Examples include:**

- Saying you need to sell within the first year when the law does not allow you to use that ground
- Using a ground that requires prior warning when no warning was given
- Claiming a ground you never intend to follow through on

**TAKEAWAY:**

Only use a ground if you can back it up with evidence and you genuinely intend to act on it.

## 5. RE-LETTING TOO SOON AFTER "SELL" OR "MOVE IN" GROUNDS

If you regain possession using the "selling" or "moving back in" grounds, you must not re-let or advertise the property for 12 months from the date of the notice.

**TAKEAWAY:**

If you use these grounds, plan for a full year before marketing the property again.

## 6. REDRESS SCHEME AND DATABASE BREACHES

Enforcement can now follow if you:

- Ignore your obligation to join or comply with the landlord redress scheme
- Fail to provide required information to the national landlord database
- Provide false or misleading information when you register

**TAKEAWAY:**

Treat redress and database duties as core compliance, not admin for another day.

## RENT REPAYMENT ORDERS: WHY GETTING THIS WRONG IS SO EXPENSIVE

Rent Repayment Orders, often called RROs, allow tenants or local authorities to claim back rent where a landlord has seriously breached the rules. Under the new regime, RROs have far more bite.

### BIGGER FINANCIAL HIT

The maximum amount a tribunal can order has increased.

- Up to two years' worth of rent can now be ordered to be repaid
- The time limit for bringing a claim has increased to 2 years

This sits on top of other penalties. It is possible to face both a civil penalty and an RRO for the same behaviour.

### RENT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE PAID STRAIGHT TO YOU

Previously, some landlords avoided RROs because rent had been paid to an intermediary, for example a rent to rent company. The new rules close that gap.

If you benefit from the rent and are responsible for the breach, you can still face an RRO even if the tenant paid someone else.

### NEW GROUNDS FOR MAKING A CLAIM

RROs can now be used for a wider range of behavior, including:

- Knowingly or recklessly misusing a possession ground, such as pretending you will sell when you cannot use that ground
- Ongoing breaches of the landlord redress scheme rules
- Providing false or misleading information to the national landlord database

These come on top of existing grounds such as licensing failures or unlawful eviction.

**WHY REFORM? (AND WHY IT MATTERS NOW)**

ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES: WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU GET IT WRONG

**DIRECTORS CAN BE PERSONALLY ON THE HOOK**

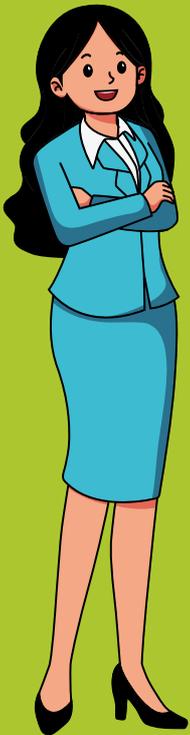
Where a landlord operates through a company, directors can be held personally liable if offences are committed with their consent, involvement or neglect.

For portfolio landlords who use companies, this makes good governance and proper oversight more important than ever.

**RENT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE PAID STRAIGHT TO YOU**

Previously, some landlords avoided RROs because rent had been paid to an intermediary, for example a rent to rent company. The new rules close that gap.

If you benefit from the rent and are responsible for the breach, you can still face an RRO even if the tenant paid someone else.

**WHAT PRACTICAL LESSON SHOULD LANDLORDS TAKE?**

You do not need to become a lawyer. You do need to:

- Keep licensing, redress and database entries up to date
- Use the correct notices and possession grounds, and keep records
- Avoid “creative” workarounds that could later look like misrepresentation

Get the basics right and RROs become something you read about, not something you face.

**At ABC Gone our job is to build these safeguards into your day-to-day management so you can grow your portfolio with confidence.**

*THIS GUIDE EXPLAINS THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL IN PLAIN ENGLISH. FOR DETAILED ADVICE ON YOUR OWN SITUATION, SPEAK TO A LEGAL PROFESSIONAL OR CHECK THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE.*

# 6

## RAISING THE STANDARDS: DECENT HOMES, AWAAB'S LAW, AND MORE



Beyond tenancy and procedural changes, the Renters' reform agenda has a clear message: **improve the quality of rental housing**. Two key initiatives here are extending the **Decent Homes Standard** to private rentals and implementing "**Awaab's Law**" for hazard remediation. There are also parallel efforts to tighten energy efficiency rules. Let's unpack these:

### Decent Homes Standard (DHS):



Currently, the DHS serves as a benchmark in social housing, encompassing a set of criteria that a property must meet, including aspects such as the state of repair, modern facilities (e.g., the age of the kitchen and bathroom), safety, and thermal comfort. The Act will, for the first time, **apply a Decent Homes Standard to the private sector**. Practically, this means by a future deadline (the government is considering **2035 or 2037** as the target), all rental properties must meet minimum quality thresholds. For example, a property shouldn't have persistent damp or serious disrepair, should have reasonably modern amenities, and be warm and energy-efficient enough. Given that approximately **21% of private rentals currently fail** DHS criteria, this represents a significant improvement for many older or neglected properties. Landlords will likely be required to make improvements over the coming decade (such as replacing ancient kitchens, improving insulation, or fixing long-term defects) to meet the standard.





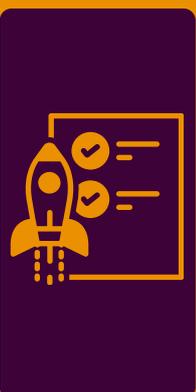
## Awaab's Law:

This is named after Awaab Ishak, a toddler who tragically died in 2020 due to mould in his social housing flat. The new law (already being applied in social housing, now extended to private) will set **strict time limits for landlords to remedy serious health and safety hazards** like mould, structural issues, heating problems, etc. The exact timeframe is to be determined, but in social housing, Awaab's Law requires issues such as damp and mould to be inspected and rectified within days or weeks. Expect that if a tenant reports a Category 1 hazard (the most severe under the HHSRS system), you will have a legal deadline (e.g., 14 or 21 days) to initiate repairs; otherwise, tenants can seek enforcement. This law essentially forces prompt action on critical maintenance – no more ignoring dangerous conditions.



## Energy Efficiency – EPC C by 2030:

Although not explicitly stated in the Renters' Reform Bill text, the government has reiterated its plans to **raise the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES)** for rentals to an **EPC rating of C by 2030**, where feasible ([gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)). Currently, rentals need an E rating or better (and F/G are banned unless exempt). Moving to C will require many landlords to invest in insulation, better heating systems, and double glazing, especially in older properties common in Greater London. This is still under consultation, but very likely to be implemented given the push for carbon reduction. So it's wise to factor this into long-term plans.



## No Discrimination:

While not a physical standard, it's a "quality of service" standard – we mentioned earlier that the Act bans blanket refusals of tenants based on their benefits or having children. If you had such policies, they must be scrapped. Make decisions on a case-by-case basis, considering individuals on their merits and the suitability of the property, rather than relying on proxies like income source. Also note, there's talk of banning "rent to rent" arrangements that lead to poor conditions, but if you're directly letting, that may not apply.



## No 'Bait-and-Switch' or Unfair Terms:

A general principle in raising standards is also eliminating practices like bait-and-switch (advertising one thing and delivering another) or hidden fees (which are already addressed mainly by the Tenant Fees Act 2019). The new regime reinforces fairness – for instance, an advertised feature in a property should be in good working order. Ensure you deliver what you promise in listings (if you say there's a working dryer, it should work, etc.).

**Decent Homes Standard (DHS):**



**Awaab's Law:**



**Energy Efficiency – EPC C by 2030:**



**No Discrimination:**



**No 'Bait-and-Switch' or Unfair Terms:**



## IMPACT:

These measures underscore that being a landlord is increasingly viewed as a professional business, rather than a casual investment. **Substandard properties will not be acceptable** in the long run. Many individual landlords in London/Essex have one or two older flats that might need upgrades – perhaps the bathroom is 30 years old, or there's recurring damp in a bedroom. Under DHS, those issues will eventually need to be addressed, or you risk enforcement action or being unable to rent out. The timeline to 2035 provides some breathing room, but savvy landlords will begin improvements gradually.

Also, with energy bills a concern for tenants, a more efficient property is more attractive. London's Victorian housing stock, in particular, has challenges to reach EPC C, but solutions (insulation, efficient boilers, maybe solar panels in some cases) will be increasingly expected. Keep in mind that there may be grants or incentives available for energy improvements – take advantage of them if possible.



# WHAT TO DO



## ASSESS YOUR PROPERTIES:

Conduct a thorough assessment of each property's condition in relation to the Decent Homes Standard. Key DHS criteria include: no serious hazards (HHSRS category 1), in a reasonable state of repair (with no major components, such as the roof, walls, or windows, in poor condition), modern facilities (ideally, a kitchen under 20 years old and a bathroom under 30 years old), and decent insulation/heating. If you're unsure, a chartered surveyor or property inspector can do a DHS assessment. Alternatively, use the EPC and any inspection reports as clues: an EPC recommendation list can highlight energy issues, and a history of council inspections may reveal potential hazard issues.



## PLAN UPGRADES:

Create a **long-term maintenance plan** for upgrades. For example, if the kitchen is 18 years old and a bit worn, budget to refurbish it in the next 2-3 years rather than waiting 10 more. If the boiler is old and inefficient, plan to replace it with an efficient model or heat pump by the late 2020s. Stagger the investments to spread the cost over time. Think of it as future-proofing your asset – a property that meets the new standards will also command better rent and valuation.



## ADDRESS KNOWN ISSUES NOW:

Don't Postpone Critical Repairs. If you have a mould-prone flat or a leak that keeps recurring, fix it **properly** (not just with cosmetic paint-over). This not only avoids potential Awaab's Law violations but also keeps tenants happy and avoids long-term damage. Document your repairs; if a tenant ever claims you didn't act, your records will serve as a defence.

WHY REFORM? (AND WHY IT MATTERS NOW)

RAISING THE STANDARDS: DECENT HOMES, AWAAB'S LAW, AND MORE – WHAT TO DO



IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY:

Obtain an **updated EPC** if yours is a few years old – it will indicate your current position on the path to C. Many London rentals, especially flats, may be currently rated D or E. Common improvements include loft insulation, cavity wall insulation (if applicable), double glazing, upgrading electric radiators to modern, efficient ones or installing a gas combi boiler (if gas is an option), adding thermostats, and LED lighting. Some boroughs offer Green Home grant schemes; research to see if any funding is available in your area for insulation or heating upgrades. Starting with low-hanging fruit (e.g., insulating hot water cylinders and sealing drafts) can significantly improve the rating at a low cost. The sooner you reach C, the sooner you gain a marketing edge and peace of mind regarding the 2030 rule.



STAY ON TOP OF SAFETY:

The HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System) is being updated and will work in conjunction with the DHS. Ensure smoke alarms (and CO alarms where necessary) are in place and tested regularly. Also, verify that stairs have proper bannisters, windows above the ground floor have safety catches if needed, and other necessary safety measures are in place. This is mostly common sense and already law in parts, but once DHS is enforceable, councils may proactively inspect and fine for things like poor fire safety or severe damp.



MIND THE GAP:

Landlords who fail to bring their properties up to standard by the deadlines may not be able to rent them out legally. We observed this with EPCs: F/G-rated homes became unrentable after 2020 unless they were exempt. Expect a similar hard line for DHS by 2035 – non-compliant properties might be barred from new tenancies. It's essentially a **use-it-or-upgrade-it ultimatum**: either invest in quality or consider exiting the market before then (selling to someone who will improve it, or who wants to occupy it, etc.).

WHY REFORM? (AND WHY IT MATTERS NOW)

RAISING THE STANDARDS: DECENT HOMES, AWAAB'S LAW, AND MORE



ABC GONE'S PERSPECTIVE:

Our philosophy at ABC Gone has always been that **better homes attract better tenants** – and keep them in the long term. We actively work with our landlords to plan property improvements that enhance value and comply with emerging standards. When you partner with us, we'll **evaluate your property's condition and make tailored recommendations** (for example, suggesting a cost-effective bathroom refresh or an insulation upgrade). We can even coordinate these upgrades for you through our vetted contractors, spreading out work during natural void periods or tenancy turns. This way, you'll be well ahead of the regulatory curve. Moreover, because we **guarantee the rent and cover void periods**, you have the flexibility to undertake improvements without losing income – we continue paying you even if, say, we pause to replace a boiler or fix a damp issue between tenants. By ensuring every ABC Gone property already meets or exceeds the Decent Homes Standard, we protect our landlords from future penalties and position their investments to **thrive in the high-standard rental market of 2030 and beyond.**

# TIMELINE OF CHANGES AND KEY DATES

To help you stay organized, here's a timeline of the Renters' Reform implementation as it stands, along with what happens at each stage:

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To help you stay organized, here's a timeline of the Renters' Reform implementation as it stands, along with what happens at each stage:



### Late 2025:

The Renters' Rights Bill passed Parliament and became law in October 2025. [nrla.org.uk](http://nrla.org.uk). Secondary legislation and guidance are being prepared. Action: Start learning about the changes (which you're doing now!) and audit your current tenancies and properties.

### Q4 2025 – Q1 2026:

Detailed landlord guidance for Phase 1 (tenancy reforms) to be published by the government (expected November 2025). Action: Read this official guidance when out, and adjust any tenancy agreement templates or processes accordingly.

### May 1 2026:

**"Big Bang" Day – Phase 1 Begins.** This is when the core tenancy reforms go live. On this date:

# MAY 1 2026:



"Big Bang" Day – Phase 1 Begins.

Section 21 is abolished (no new no-fault notices can be served).

All new tenancies must be periodic. All existing ASTs will convert to periodic tenancies by law (landlords must provide tenants with an information sheet about the changes by May 31, 2026).

Rent increase rules (with no review clauses and a maximum of one review per year) take effect.

Discrimination ban (no blanket 'No DSS/No kids') and advertising rules (fixed asking rent) take effect.

Pet requests: Tenants can start requesting pets, and landlords must consider them reasonably.

## What this means:

Essentially, from this day forward, the new regime is in place for how you manage tenancies and rent. If you were mid-way through a fixed term, it's now periodic. If you had a rent review clause kicking in June 2026, it's void – you'd need to serve a Section 13 notice after May 1 if you intend to raise rent (and only if no increase was done in the last year). Adjust your mindset and paperwork to this "new normal" starting in May.

## Mid/Late 2026: Phase 2 Launches.

The focus shifts to infrastructure:

The **Private Rented Sector Database (Property Portal)** is expected to go live in the latter part of 2026. Initially, it may be a voluntary or pilot period to get landlords signed up.

The **Landlord Ombudsman** service will also be set up around this time. Landlords may start joining the scheme voluntarily or as part of a soft launch.

Action: Plan to register on the portal as soon as it's available and join the Ombudsman scheme. This phase might roll out over several months. Keep an ear out for announcements – being an early adopter will ensure you don't accidentally fall foul of requirements.

## October 27 2026:

(One year post-Royal Assent) – Possibly a milestone where the government assesses progress. By this point, most Phase 1 changes have been active for ~6 months. We may see tweaks or clarifications based on how things are progressing, or initial enforcement cases (e.g., first fines for a banned "No DSS" advert as a warning to others).

## 2027:

Ongoing enforcement and possibly more secondary legislation. If not already mandatory, registration with the portal and the Ombudsman is likely to become compulsory in 2027. Landlords should all be in the systems by the end of this year.

## 2028:

Full enforcement of **Portal & Ombudsman membership**. The government expects that by 2028, every landlord will be in the Ombudsman scheme and all rental properties will be registered. If you have missed this by now, you will face penalties. Additionally, by 2028, data from the portal may begin to be used to enforce Decent Homes improvements (e.g., identifying properties with low EPC ratings or recurring repair issues).

## 2030:

**Target for EPC C requirement** (if confirmed). From 2030, any new tenancies might require the property to be EPC Band C or better. Some exceptions or exemptions will apply, but plan as if it's coming. This is also around the time when any early Decent Homes Standard rules could go into effect for new tenancies (if they decide to phase it in starting in 2030, before the final deadline).

## 2035:

Proposed deadline for all rentals to meet Decent Homes Standard. This is a tentative date; the government consulted on either 2035 or 2037. Whichever it lands on, the mid-2030s is when your property must be entirely up to scratch. Enforcement could mean non-compliant properties cannot be let, and local councils could issue improvement notices or fines for sub-standard conditions.

Please note that this timeline may be subject to slight adjustments due to political developments (e.g., a general election scheduled for 2025 could alter priorities). However, as of now, the Renters' Rights Act has cross-party support and is law, so a major rollback is unlikely. The wise course is to prepare according to this roadmap. Mark these dates in your calendar. Consider scheduling reminders a few months before each significant milestone (e.g. "March 2026 – finalize new tenancy agreement template and send info sheets to tenants"). By being prepared, the implementation of each phase will be a non-event for you rather than a scramble.

# ACTION PLAN: THRIVING AS A LANDLORD POST- REFORM

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# ACTION PLAN: THRIVING AS A LANDLORD POST-REFORM



Now that we've covered the what and when, let's focus on the how. How can you, as a landlord, not just comply with these new rules but actually thrive under them? Below is a practical action plan, distilled into key steps:

**1. Review and Refresh Your Tenancy Agreements**



**2. Audit Your Compliance (Safety & Licensing)**



**3. Optimise Tenant Selection and Onboarding**



**4. Strengthen Your Property Maintenance Regime**



**5. Financial Planning and Professional Advice**



**6. Embrace Support and Partnerships**



# 1. REVIEW AND REFRESH YOUR TENANCY AGREEMENTS

Your tenancy agreement is about to transform. With fixed terms out and new clauses needed, it's time to update:



## REMOVE UNLAWFUL CLAUSES:

Strip out any Section 21 references, rent review clauses, "no pets" blanket bans, or anything contradicting the new law. These will either be unenforceable or actively illegal post-2026.



## ADD/UPDATE CLAUSES:

Consider adding a pet policy clause (e.g. "pets require landlord's written consent, not to be unreasonably withheld, and tenant must have pet damage insurance"), aligning with the Act. Additionally, include a note stating that the tenancy is periodic and outlining the notice requirements (two months' notice from the tenant, with grounds required from the landlord).



## INCLUDE NEW INFO:

The Act will mandate the provision of specific written information for new tenancies – likely a statement of the main terms and the tenant's rights. Plan to incorporate any such prescribed information into your tenancy pack.



## HAVE A PROFESSIONAL CHECK:

It's wise to have a solicitor or trusted letting agent review your revised contract in 2025 to ensure it's watertight for 2026. The NRLA often provides template agreements; use those as a benchmark for compliance.

## 2. AUDIT YOUR COMPLIANCE (SAFETY & LICENSING)

In the new era, **there's no room for neglecting legal obligations.**

Use a checklist approach:

- ✓ Verify every property's **Gas Safety** certificate is current (annual) and diary the following due dates.
- ✓ Check you have a valid **EICR** (electrical report, 5-yearly) on file. If any "urgent remedial" works were noted, confirm they were done.
- ✓ Test and log **smoke alarm and CO alarm** checks (which should be conducted at the start of the tenancy and ideally annually).
- ✓ Ensure **that deposits are protected** under a government scheme, and you've provided tenants with the prescribed information.
- ✓ Suppose any of your properties are in areas of **selective licensing** (some London boroughs have these) or are HMOs requiring licenses, confirm that those licenses are active and not expiring soon. Renew if needed.
- ✓ Compile these into a master compliance folder (digital or physical) so you can easily produce any document if asked by a tenant, Ombudsman, or council.

# 3. OPTIMISE TENANT SELECTION AND ONBOARDING

With evictions harder, getting the **right tenant from the start is paramount**:



## WIDEN YOUR POOL (CAREFULLY):

Don't automatically reject applicants based on benefits or family status – that could be unlawful now. Instead, evaluate each applicant on their merits (creditworthiness, references, etc.). You might find excellent long-term tenants you'd have missed under old biases.



## THOROUGH REFERENCING:

Double-down on referencing – employment/income verification, previous landlord references, and credit checks. A bit more effort here is insurance against future issues. If using agents, ensure they adhere to rigorous screening (especially as some quick-let agents might cut corners – insist on quality).



## RIGHT TO RENT & OTHER DOCUMENTS:

Continue to perform Right to Rent checks (which is still the law) and provide 'How to Rent' guides, etc., at move-in. The new portal registration will also remind you to have these in order.

WHY REFORM? (AND WHY IT MATTERS NOW)

ACTION PLAN: THRIVING AS A LANDLORD POST-REFORM - 3. OPTIMISE TENANT SELECTION AND ONBOARDING

✓ **CLEAR RULES & EXPECTATIONS:**

When the tenancy begins, provide the tenant with a welcome pack that outlines how to report issues, their responsibilities (e.g., minor maintenance tasks such as changing light bulbs), and any relevant house rules. An informed tenant is less likely to cause disputes out of ignorance.

✓ **DEPOSIT & INVENTORY:**

Take a proper deposit (within the cap) and document the property condition with an inventory and photos. This protects both sides and will be helpful if disputes arise later (especially since deposit disputes might also end up via Ombudsman rather than traditional routes).



## 4. STRENGTHEN YOUR PROPERTY MAINTENANCE REGIME

Proactive maintenance will be your best friend in avoiding complaints and meeting standards:



### REGULAR INSPECTIONS:

Schedule property inspections twice to three times a year. Not to snoop, but to catch issues early (leaks, tenant damage, etc.) and remind tenants you care about upkeep. Post-Act, you might structure these as "health and safety checks" to ensure the property remains in Decent Homes condition. Always give proper notice to inspect.



### SWIFT REPAIRS:

We strive for a quick turnaround on repair requests – minor issues are addressed within 1-2 days, and significant issues (such as no heat or water leaks) are resolved on the same day, if possible. Keep tenants informed if there's a delay (e.g., ordering parts).



### TRUSTED CONTRACTORS:

Build a relationship with reliable local tradespeople (plumbers, electricians, handypersons). Their prompt service will keep your tenants happy and your properties in top shape. Additionally, you'll need to have the contact information of certified professionals for certain repairs (e.g., those related to gas), so be prepared to have it ready.



### UPGRADE PLAN:

As discussed, lay out a long-term upgrade plan. Allocate a certain amount of rental income each year to a maintenance/improvement fund. Treat your property like the investment it is – reinvesting in it will pay off with higher rents and values, and now it's also a legal necessity on the horizon.

## 5. FINANCIAL PLANNING AND PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

The new laws might bring some additional costs (membership fees, upgrade costs, possibly slightly longer voids due to extended notice):



### RECALCULATE YOUR YIELDS:

Factor in potential costs, such as the Ombudsman fee, portal fee, and projected upgrade expenses, when planning your finances. It might shave a point off your net yield in the short term, but consider it an investment in compliance.



### CONSIDER RENT INSURANCE:

With eviction taking longer if things go wrong, you may want to carry rent guarantee insurance (if not using a service like ABC Gone that guarantees rent). Ensure any such policy will still cover you under the new regime (some require you to begin eviction proceedings within X days of arrears – check that they update terms for the three strikes arrears ground, etc.).



### TAX AND LEGAL CONSULTATION

Major changes are a good time for a check-in with your accountant or tax adviser. Some landlords may restructure their portfolios or sell underperforming properties (especially those requiring significant upgrades by 2030) to reinvest in more manageable ones. Factor in capital gains implications if you decide to sell. Legally, consult on how the end of fixed terms might affect any other agreements or if you have lenders (most buy-to-let mortgages should adapt, but keep an eye out for any mortgage conditions referencing having ASTs of a particular type).



### STAY EDUCATED:

Keep your NRLA membership active or join one if you haven't. They will be running webinars, Q&As, and have helplines for members. The landscape is shifting, but you're not alone – tap into the landlord community and resources. Attend local meetups or online forums to share insights.

## 6. EMBRACE SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Finally, recognize that landlordship is becoming more hands-on with regulation – you don't have to go it alone:



### USE LETTING AGENTS WISELY:

If managing all this feels overwhelming, consider hiring a **reputable letting agent or a full-service property manager**. They'll handle day-to-day compliance and tenant issues. Make sure any agent you use is up to speed on the reforms (ask them pointed questions; if you know more than they do from this guide, that's a red flag!).



### ABC GONE'S GUARANTEED RENT SERVICE:

For a truly hands-off experience that guarantees your income, look into ABC Gone or similar schemes – but do your homework, as not all "guaranteed rent" companies are created equal. ABC Gone is underwritten and does not rely on council subtenants, meaning we carry the risk and ensure the quality of our tenants. By partnering with us, you essentially outsource compliance and tenant management to professionals who have already integrated these reforms into their operations. Your property stays compliant, your tenants are happy, and **you get paid every month – even if the property is empty or the tenant is problematic** (we handle those bumps). In a world without Section 21, that kind of stability is gold.



### LEGAL HELP FOR TOUGH CASES:

If you do encounter a serious dispute or need to evict for cause, don't hesitate to involve legal experts early. The courts will still be there for complex cases (e.g. if a tenant appeals an Ombudsman decision or you need to evict for a reason not covered by the new grounds). Having a solicitor or a specialist possession service guide you can save time and prevent mistakes.

✓ **PEER NETWORK:**

Engage with other landlords in your area. London and Essex have active landlord networks. Sharing experiences about portal registration or how an Ombudsman case progressed can be invaluable. It also gives you moral support – change is easier when you know others are in the same boat and managing fine.





# LANDLORD ACTION CHECKLIST:



Use this summary to ensure you're on track:



## USE LETTING AGENTS WISELY:

Update to remove banned clauses (no-fault break clauses, frequent rent hikes) and add compliant ones (pet policy, periodic terms).



## TENANT COMMUNICATION:

Inform current tenants in early 2026 about upcoming changes (e.g. "your lease will become periodic, here's what stays the same and what changes"). Provide the government info sheet **by May 2026**.



## COMPLIANCE CHECK:

Verify all safety certificates and documents for each property to ensure compliance with relevant regulations. Fix any lapsed or soon-to-lapse items now (don't wait for enforcement or an Ombudsman complaint).



## REGISTER EARLY:

As soon as the Property Portal and Ombudsman scheme open, register yourself and your properties—Mark reminders for late 2026 to do this.



## UPGRADE PLAN:

List any necessary improvements for each property (e.g., new windows, mould treatment, insulation) and create a timetable to address them. Tackle any health-and-safety-related ones ASAP.

### RENT STRATEGY:



Decide how you will handle rent increases reasonably. If you haven't raised the rent in a long time and the property is under-market, consider a reasonable increase **before May 2026** (with proper notice) so you can start closer to market rate, then stick to annual reviews.

### DOCUMENTATION:



Keep a log of all tenant requests and your responses to them. This habit will prepare you well if an Ombudsman ever reviews a case – you can show your professionalism.

### GET HELP IF NEEDED:



Don't get overwhelmed by new rules – enlist a reputable agent or service like ABC Gone if managing it all is too much. The small cost can be well worth the peace of mind and time saved.

### STAY POSITIVE:



Remember that these changes, while requiring effort, ultimately aim to create a more stable rental environment. Landlords who adapt will find good tenants staying longer, fewer nasty surprises, and potentially less competition from amateur landlords (since only serious players remain).



# CHECKLIST



# CONCLUSION: EMBRACING CHANGE FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

The Renters' Reform is a watershed moment for English landlords. Change can be unsettling – indeed, some old ways of working (like a quick Section 21 to end a tenancy or a casual approach to documentation) must give way to newer, more regulated practices. However, **with change comes opportunity**. The opportunity here is to distinguish yourself as a **professional, high-quality landlord** in a market that will value that more than ever.

By adapting early, you won't be caught off guard when May 2026 arrives. Instead, you'll be ahead of the curve: your tenancy agreements will already be compliant, your properties in great shape, and your tenants informed and satisfied. Responsible landlords stand to gain from a system that **weeds out the neglectful operators**, improving the overall reputation of the sector. Think of it this way: if bad landlords are pushed out, their tenants (and perhaps their properties) become opportunities for good landlords to expand or improve their portfolios. A more trusted private rental sector could also invite favourable sentiment from policymakers in the future (maybe even incentives or grants for improvements, who knows).

For landlords in London and Essex, where demand remains strong, combining these reforms with good business sense will keep your investments rewarding. Tenants who feel secure and heard are more likely to **stay longer** and take care of the home. Properties that are well-maintained to the Decent Homes Standard will **retain and increase in value**. And by leveraging services like ABC Gone's Guaranteed Rent, you can **eliminate much of the remaining hassle and uncertainty**, allowing you to focus on the benefits of owning a property. At the same time, we handle the compliance and tenant care behind the scenes. Our role is to be your partner in this new era – ensuring that "Guaranteed Rent. Done Right." isn't just a tagline, but a daily reality that aligns perfectly with the post-reform world of renting.

In summary, by making smart adjustments and possibly leaning on expert help, you can not only comply with the Renters' Rights Act 2025 – you can **thrive** under it. Here's to 2025 and beyond, where you can continue to enjoy steady rental income, growing property values, and the confidence that comes with providing top-notch homes in a fair and flourishing rental market. That's a win-win outcome we can all aim for.

## SOURCES

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5. **Enforcement Framework – Government & Sector Analysis (2025 Updates):** Recent government enforcement guidance and sector analysis outline new civil penalties (up to £40,000), expanded offences for misuse of notices or grounds, and stronger Rent Repayment Orders of up to two years' rent. These insights inform the enforcement section of this guide and highlight why compliance matters more than ever.
6. **ABC Gone – Company Ethos and Competitive Edge (Brand Info):** ABC Gone's model addresses many reform pain points: underwriter-backed guaranteed rent, zero voids, compliance handled end-to-end, and rigorous tenant vetting. This aligns with the new law's aim to improve standards while giving landlords a reliable, stress-free path to compliance.

# GOT QUESTIONS OR NEED SUPPORT? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. We hope it's given you a clearer picture of the changes ahead and more confidence in managing your property.

If you'd like to see how a professional, hands-on approach could help protect your income and simplify your lettings, we're here to support you.

[BOOK A FREE VALUATION TODAY](#)



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