



The government has now announced its plans to “switch on” the Renters Rights Act (Act). The changes will provide greater security for tenants of residential properties and streamline the process for landlords to seek possession of their properties. For a detailed summary of the changes, [see our article](#).

The government’s proposals will be implemented in three phases over the coming years.

## Phase 1



The first phase will introduce periodic tenancies as a replacement for existing fixed-term tenancies. All new private residential tenancies from 1 May 2026 will be periodic, and most existing fixed term tenancies will automatically convert.

Phase 1 will see the controversial abolition of the existing “no fault” eviction under Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 (HA 1988). Landlords will now need a valid reason under Section 8 HA 1998 to remove a tenant. For landlords with a valid reason, the Act intends to ease the burden of obtaining possession. For more details on Section 8 grounds, see our article linked above. Until Phase 1 comes into force, landlords can still serve a Section 21 notice. A valid Section 21 notice will remain valid after the introduction of Phase 1 until proceedings in respect of that notice are concluded.

The government is also seeking to promote fairness in the private rental sector by:

- Prohibiting rental increases outside of a revised Section 13 of the HA 1998, which requires landlords to serve a notice in the prescribed form to increase rent. Not less than two months’ notice will now be required before any increase can take effect under the Act.
- Only permitting one rent increase a year.
- Limiting the requirement for rent in advance to one months’ rent.
- Requiring landlords to consider tenant requests to rent with a pet and giving a valid reason for refusal.
- Prohibiting unfairness towards those with children or in receipt of benefits.

Penalties for noncompliance are being expanded, with local councils required to report on enforcement activity to ensure the new measures are implemented. Local councils will be able to issue financial penalties of up to £7,000 to landlords for noncompliance or up to £40,000 for continuing or additional breaches.

The measures in Phase 1 will come into force on 1 May 2026. See our timeline below for key dates before and after Phase 1.

## Phase 2

In late 2026, the government will introduce a database holding key information on landlords and properties. All landlords in the private rental sector will be required to register and pay an annual fee, though this is not expected to begin until 2028. Public access to the system will follow at a later stage.

The database will also hold safety information for properties, and landlords will not be able to obtain a possession order if such safety information is not up to date. This aligns with recent case law on mandatory provision of gas safety records to tenants.

A new "Landlord Ombudsman" will also be introduced as an alternative to costly court proceedings, providing a mechanism to resolve landlord and tenant disputes, and offering guidance for landlords.

As above, the onus on local councils to actively enforce the new measures is increasing. From 27 December 2025, councils will have enhanced powers to inspect properties, demand documents and access third-party data to assist them with enforcement.

There are also plans to extend similar measures and protections to those renting in the social housing sector within Phase 2.

## Phase 3

Specific timescales for Phase 3 are yet to be announced but are expected to be introduced in 2035 or later.

It will include provisions setting a minimum quality standard for all properties let in the private residential sector, including applying a health and safety rating system and implementing Awaab's Law in the private rental sector. Awaab's Law currently only applies to social housing and requires landlords to address all emergency hazards within fixed timeframes, including from damp and mould, that pose a significant risk of harm to tenants. The Act will empower tenants to apply to court to force landlords to address those hazards. The government's guide to the Act contains more detail on Awaab's Law and all other proposals under the Act and can be found in the [GOV.UK Guide to the Renters' Rights Act](#).

## Next Steps

Further regulations and guidance will be released during all phases of the Act.

To support the rollout, the government has confirmed that local councils, courts and tribunals are being consulted to ensure that disputes arising under the Act can be resolved quickly and efficiently.

## Timeline

### November 2025

Communications campaign for landlords including landlord guidance for first phase of measures  
Enforcement guidance for local councils

### 27 December 2025

New local council enforcement measures and investigatory powers come into force

### April 2026

Communications campaign for tenants commences, including guidance for tenants on first phase

### 30 April 2026

Last day for a valid Section 21 notice to be served

### 1 May 2026

Phase 1 in force

### Late 2026

Database and associated guidance to be introduced for local councils and landlords

### 2027

Similar reforms to be applied to the social housing sector

### 2028

Mandatory sign-up for landlords to join the private rental sector Landlord Ombudsman

### TBC – subject to consultation

Implementation of Awaab's Law in the private rented sector

### TBC – subject to consultation

Implementation of Decent Homes Standard for the private rented sector

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