

Renters' Rights Act – guidance for tenants and landlords

The Renters' Rights Act introduces major changes to the private rented sector in England. The Act is intended to improve security and standards for tenants while ensuring landlords can still manage their properties effectively.

These changes will affect tenants, landlords and letting agents. Some measures will come into force at different times. Key dates to be aware of:

- The first phase (part 1 of the Act) relating to tenancy reform will come into force on 1st May 2026
- The rest of the Act will follow in 2 further stages

This document provides an overview of the main reforms and what they may mean for residents and landlords in Hertsmere.

Key changes effective 1st May 2026

1. End of “no-fault” evictions

- The Act abolishes **Section 21 eviction**
- This means landlords will no longer be able to end a tenancy without giving a reason
- Landlords will still be able to regain possession of their property using other grounds, including revised **Section 8 eviction grounds**, for example if:
 - the landlord intends to sell the property
 - the landlord or a close family member plan to move in
 - the tenant is in serious rent arrears
 - the tenant has breached the tenancy agreement

2. Periodic tenancies

Most private rented tenancies will move to **periodic tenancies**.

This means:

- Tenancies will not have fixed end dates
- Tenants can leave by giving **two months’ notice**
- Landlords must rely on legal grounds if they want to end a tenancy

3. Written agreements

- From 1st May 2026, the Renters’ Rights Act mandates that all new and existing residential tenancies in England provide a written statement of key terms to tenants.
- Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs) will be replaced by Assured Periodic Tenancies (APTs), requiring written details on rent, parties, and contact info with mandatory information sheets required for existing tenancies by 31st May 2026

4. Stronger protections against unfair rent increases

The Act introduces a process to challenge rent increases.

- Landlords will normally only be able to increase rent **once per year**, and tenants will have the right to challenge increases through the **First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber)** if they believe the increase is above market rate

5. No discrimination against pets, households with children and households on benefits

- Tenants can request to keep pets. Landlords must consider requests and cannot refuse without a valid reason. Restrictions may still apply in Houses in Multiple Occupation or lease agreements
- It will be illegal for landlords to discriminate against tenants who receive benefits or have children

Phase 2 (from late 2026 onwards)

1. A new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman

A new **Private Rented Sector Ombudsman** will be created.

All private landlords will be required to join the scheme. It will:

- Provide independent dispute resolution between landlords and tenants
- Require landlords to comply with decisions
- Help tenants resolve complaints without going to court

2. Private Rented Sector database

A new national database of landlords and rented properties will be introduced.

Landlords will be required to register their properties. This will help:

- Tenants check compliance
- Councils identify non-compliant landlords
- Improve enforcement of housing standards

3. Property standards and enforcement

- The Act strengthens requirements for landlords to maintain safe and decent homes.
- It will introduce a **Decent Homes Standard** for the private rented sector and expands local authority enforcement powers. This is expected to apply to private rented homes from 2035
- This includes action against serious hazards under the **Housing Act 2004** and the **Housing Health and Safety Rating System**

What the Renters' Rights Act means for tenants

Tenants will benefit from:

- Greater security in their home
- Protection from unfair eviction
- Clearer routes to challenge rent increases
- Access to an ombudsman for disputes

What the Renters' Rights Act means for landlords

Landlords will need to:

- Use specific legal grounds to end a tenancy
- Join the Private Rented Sector Ombudsman
- Register on the national landlord database
- Ensure properties meet required standards

What should landlords do now to prepare?

Keep up to date and be the first to hear about changes by:

- Reviewing tenancy agreements to reflect new rules
- Planning rent reviews to comply with annual limits
- Registering properties when the private rented sector database goes live in late 2026
- Ensuring property standards meet legal requirements
- Signing up to government email alerts
- Joining Hertsmere Borough Council's Landlord Forum which meets twice a year and provides key information to landlords. It is free to attend, please contact the team with the details below to register your interest for upcoming events
- Visiting www.gov.uk/rentingischanging for full details of the latest updates
- Using the government approved checklist to make sure you are up to date and ready

Further information

You can find more information about renting rights and responsibilities on the GOV.UK website. If you are a landlord or tenant experiencing problems with your tenancy or property, contact the council's Housing Enforcement and Licensing Team **020 8207 2277** or private.sector@hertsmere.gov.uk