

# CHANGES TO THE RENTERS' RIGHTS ACT IN MAY 2026: QUICK GUIDE FOR TENANTS (ENGLAND AND WALES)



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# WHO THIS APPLIES TO

These changes apply to private renters only.

Different rules apply if you:

- Rent from a housing association or council
- Live in student halls of residence
- Are a lodger



# MAJOR TENANCY CHANGES

## (FROM 1 MAY 2026)

- Most assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) will automatically become assured periodic (rolling) tenancies
- All new tenancies from 1 May 2026 will be open-ended (no fixed end date)
- Tenancies will run weekly or monthly, depending on what is agreed by both the landlord and the tenant
- Any fixed end date in your agreement will no longer apply

### Important:

- No need to sign a new contract if you already have one
- Landlords must provide a government Information Sheet by **31 May 2026**. [Download here](#)
- If no written tenancy exists, landlords must provide key terms in writing
- New tenancies after 1 May 2026 must include written terms (usually in a tenancy agreement)

# KEY RENT RULE CHANGES

## 1. Rent in Advance

- Landlords cannot request rent before you have signed the tenancy agreement
- After signing, landlords can only ask for maximum 1 month's rent in advance

## 2. Rent Increases

- Limited to once per year
- Not permitted in the first year of a tenancy
- Landlords must use Form 4A and give at least 2 months' notice (under Section 13 of the Housing Act 1988, known as a "Section 13 notice").

[Download Form 4A here.](#)

- Tenants can challenge increases above market rent, this can be achieved by:
  - Making an application to the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) after receiving a Section 13 notice
  - The application must be made before the proposed new rent takes effect

## 3. Rental Bidding Ban

- Landlords cannot accept or encourage offers above advertised rent

# TENANT RIGHTS & PROTECTIONS

## Keeping a Pet

- Tenants have the right to request permission to keep a pet
- Requests must be made in writing
- Landlords must consider the request and respond within 28 days
- Landlords can ask for more information if needed, when provided, a response must be given within 7 days
- Any refusal must be reasonable and clearly explained

## Rental Discrimination

Landlords cannot refuse tenants based on:

- Being on benefits
- Having children
- Protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010, including age, disability and gender reassignment. For a full list of protected characteristics, [click here](#).

# ENDING YOUR TENANCY – NOTICE PERIOD

Tenants can end a tenancy with 2 months' notice:

- In writing (letter, email, or text)
- The notice must end on the day the rent is due, or the day before

What this means:

- If your rent is due on the 1st of each month, your tenancy should end on either the 31st or the 1st
- Your notice period must align with your rent payment cycle

Key points:

- Rent must be paid during the notice period
- You can agree with your landlord to:
  - End the tenancy earlier
  - Have a shorter notice period (in writing)

# EVICTIONS: KEY CHANGES

## No More “No Fault” Evictions

- Section 21 evictions are abolished from 1 May 2026
- Landlords must provide a valid legal reason (grounds for possession)

## Notice Period

- Usually at least 4 months
- May be shorter depending on the reason

## Legal Reasons for Eviction Include:

- Landlord intends to sell or move in (not within the first 12 months of the tenancy)
- If you have not paid your rent on time (where the tenant owes 3 months' rent or more)
- If you, others living with you, or visitors commit antisocial behaviour in or near the property
- Student HMOs (end of academic year)

## Court Process

If you don't leave:

- Landlords may apply to the court for a possession order to get their property back

# IF YOUR LANDLORD DOES NOT COMPLY

## Get Help

- [Shelter](#)
- [Citizens Advice](#)

## Enforcement Action

- Your local council can investigate and enforce breaches
- You may apply to the First-Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) for a Rent Repayment Order (RRO)
  - Claim back up to 2 years' rent in some cases



# SUMMARY

- **No more fixed terms:** Tenancies become open-ended (rolling) from 1 May 2026.
- **Section 21 abolished:** Landlords need a valid legal reason to evict you.
- **Rent increases limited:** Once per year, not in the first year, with 2 months' notice.
- **Bidding ban:** Landlords cannot accept offers above the advertised rent.
- **Pets allowed on request:** Landlords must consider and give a valid reason if they refuse.
- **You can end tenancy:** With 2 months' written notice (aligning with rent due date).
- **No discrimination:** Against tenants on benefits, with children, or protected characteristics.
- **Enforcement:** You can challenge unfair rent or claim back up to 2 years' rent via tribunal.