
ROWE & HART
ESTATE & LETTING AGENTS · LONDON

The London Landlord's 2026 Briefing

The Renters' Rights Act is in force. Ten changes that matter,
one checklist, and no scaremongering.

CHECKED AGAINST GOV.UK · JULY 2026

IN FORCE SINCE 1 MAY 2026

The ten changes that matter

01 Every AST became a periodic tenancy

On 1 May 2026 existing assured shorthold tenancies became periodic assured tenancies by operation of law. No form, no new agreement. Fixed terms and end dates stopped being part of the picture, and new tenancies cannot include them.

02 Section 21 is gone

You can no longer evict with a no-fault notice. Every possession case needs a legal ground under the reformed Section 8. Recovering your property is still possible; being casual about how is not.

03 Selling or moving in: 4 months' notice

Ground 1A (selling) and Ground 1 (you or close family moving in) require 4 months' notice and cannot be used in a tenancy's first 12 months. After using them, the property cannot be re-let or re-marketed for 12 months.

04 Rent arrears threshold rose

Mandatory possession for serious arrears (Ground 8) now requires 3 months of arrears, up from 2, with the notice period at 4 weeks.

05 Rent rises once a year, on Form 4A

One increase per year, served on the prescribed form with at least 2 months' notice. Tenants can challenge an above-market increase at tribunal. Informal uplift letters and automatic escalation clauses are finished.

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The ten changes, continued

06 Rent bidding is banned

Adverts must state an asking rent, offers above it cannot be invited or accepted, and no more than one month's rent can be taken in advance. Accurate pricing at the start is now the legally sensible strategy, not just the honest one.

07 Pets: case by case, in writing

Tenants have a statutory right to request a pet, refusable only with a valid reason. Blanket bans are exactly what the Act removes. The rumoured pet-insurance condition did not survive into the Act; do not make consent conditional on it.

08 Children and benefits: no blanket refusals

It is unlawful to refuse or disadvantage applicants because they have children or receive benefits. Assess each application on its own facts, and keep your reasons in writing.

09 The Information Sheet deadline has passed

Every written tenancy needed the official Renters' Rights Act Information Sheet by 31 May 2026, per tenancy. If any are outstanding, serve them late rather than never, and keep proof of service.

10 Two pieces are still to come

The Private Rented Sector Database is expected to open for registration from late 2026, and mandatory ombudsman membership is currently expected in 2028. Nothing to register for today; the task is being ready.

THIRTY MINUTES WITH YOUR FILES

The compliance checklist

- Information Sheet served for every written tenancy, with proof kept. Verbal tenancies given written key terms.
- Deposit protected in a government scheme and the Prescribed Information served.
- Gas safety record current (renewed every 12 months) and given to tenants.
- Electrical safety report (EICR) dated within the last 5 years.
- EPC rated E or above, or a valid exemption registered.
- Smoke alarms on every storey; carbon monoxide alarms where required.
- Borough licensing checked: mandatory HMO, additional and selective schemes change street by street.
- Current How to Rent guide served at the start of each tenancy.
- Right-to-rent checks completed and recorded for all adult occupiers.
- Any rent increase this year served on Form 4A with 2 months' notice, once only.
- Adverts state an asking rent; no bidding invited; no more than one month's rent in advance.
- Pet requests answered individually, in writing, with valid reasons for any refusal.

WHY THIS LIST IS WORTH THIRTY MINUTES

Civil penalties reach £7,000 for initial breaches and up to £40,000 for serious or repeat ones, and rent repayment orders can now stretch to two years' rent. Most failures are paperwork failures: the landlord did the right thing but cannot prove it.

IF YOU WOULD RATHER HAND THIS OVER

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SOURCES · GOV.UK: Guide to the Renters' Rights Act · Renters' Rights Act 2025 (SI 2026/421 commencement) · How to Rent · Right to Rent · gas, electrical and EPC regulations. All facts checked against GOV.UK in July 2026; legislation moves, so check dates before acting.

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