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Renters' Rights Bill – Sept 2025

1. What's Definitely Coming

The Renters' Rights Bill is now in its final stages, with Royal Assent expected later this year. Several changes are guaranteed as they are government policy and have wide cross-party support. These include:

- **Abolition of Section 21 'no-fault' evictions.** Landlords will no longer be able to regain possession without showing one of the prescribed grounds. This represents the most significant shift in private renting in 30 years.
- **All tenancies will convert to periodic (rolling) tenancies.** Fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) will no longer exist. This will give tenants flexibility to leave with 2 months' notice but makes landlord possession more reliant on formal grounds.
- **A new PRS Ombudsman.** Landlords will be required to join a redress scheme so that tenants have a free, independent complaints service. This mirrors the system already in place in the social housing sector and aims to reduce reliance on the courts.
- **A national PRS property database.** All rented properties will need to be registered on a central database, increasing transparency and enforcement capability. Local authorities will be able to check compliance more easily.
- **Rent increase rules will be tightened.** Rent can only be increased once per year, with at least 2 months' notice, and tenants will retain the right to challenge unfair increases at the First-tier Tribunal.
- **Extension of the Decent Homes Standard into the PRS.** Landlords will be required to ensure their properties meet basic criteria on repairs, safety, and insulation. The government has confirmed the principle but is consulting on the detail, with phased implementation expected.

2. Grounds for Eviction – What’s Changing

With Section 21 abolished, landlords will need to rely on specific legal grounds to recover possession. The Bill strengthens and updates these grounds:

- **Sale of property:** A new sale ground will allow landlords to evict if genuinely selling the property. The Lords want to shorten the period during which the landlord cannot re-let from 12 months to 6 months. This is uncertain and will be voted on in the Commons.
- **Moving in:** Landlords and close family members will be able to reclaim the property to live in. Unlike before, there is no need to give notice before the tenancy begins. Notice periods are longer (4 months), and a 12-month ‘protected period’ prevents use of this ground at the start of a tenancy.
- **Rent arrears:** Serious arrears (Ground 8) now requires 3 months’ unpaid rent rather than 2. Discretionary arrears grounds remain available for smaller or persistent arrears. Notice periods have been lengthened to 4 weeks.
- **Anti-social behaviour:** Landlords can still rely on this ground with immediate effect after serving notice. Courts are encouraged to take into account tenant cooperation in deciding reasonableness.
- **Carer ground:** Proposed by the Lords, this would allow landlords to evict if the property is required to house a carer for the landlord or immediate family. This is not yet agreed and may not survive Commons scrutiny.
- **Student lets:** The student possession ground has been clarified and expanded, particularly for smaller properties let to full-time students under approved codes of practice. The Lords want wider application, which remains uncertain.

3. Pets & Deposits

The Bill makes it clear that tenants have the right to request to keep a pet, and landlords cannot unreasonably refuse. This represents a cultural shift towards recognising pets as part of family life. However, landlords are entitled to require that tenants cover the cost of pet-related damage.

The Lords have proposed a new, separate ‘pet damage deposit’ of up to 3 weeks’ rent. This sits outside the usual tenancy deposit cap. If agreed, this would give landlords greater protection against pet-related wear and tear, but it is still subject to Commons approval. The government has signalled support for more flexibility on pets, but has not yet committed to this amendment.

4. Standards & Enforcement

The Decent Homes Standard will be extended to the PRS, obliging landlords to ensure properties are free of hazards, in a reasonable state of repair, and offer adequate heating and insulation. This aligns the PRS with the social housing sector and aims to raise conditions across the board. The details are being consulted on, so the precise requirements may evolve.

On enforcement, the Lords attempted to raise the evidential bar for some civil penalties (changing from the civil standard of proof to 'beyond reasonable doubt'). This would make prosecutions harder and is not supported by the government. It is likely to be reversed in the Commons. Overall, landlords should prepare for stronger regulatory oversight, greater scrutiny of compliance, and potentially higher costs in meeting standards.

5. What Landlords Should Expect

In summary:

Certain changes: Section 21 will end, periodic tenancies will become standard, rent regulation will tighten, the PRS Ombudsman will be introduced, and the Decent Homes Standard will apply. These are definite.

Uncertain changes (subject to today's vote): The Lords' proposals for a pet damage deposit, shortening the re-let restriction on the sale ground, introducing a new carer ground, and expanding the student ground could survive or be struck out. Landlords should be alert to the final shape of these provisions.

The practical effect is that landlords will face more regulation but will still have workable routes to possession if they genuinely need the property back for sale, occupation, or if tenants fall into serious arrears or engage in anti-social behaviour.

6. Timeline

- **8 Sept 2025:** Commons votes on Lords' amendments (final stage before Royal Assent).

- **Autumn 2025:** Bill expected to gain Royal Assent and become law.

- **2026 onwards:** Implementation in phases. Expect early commencement of the new tenancy framework, with later rollout of the PRS database and Decent Homes Standard following consultation.

Landlords should plan ahead for compliance, especially with property standards and registration.

Eviction Grounds – Before vs After

Ground / Scenario	BEFORE (Housing Act 1988)	AFTER (Renters' Rights Bill)	Status
Serious rent arrears (Ground 8 – mandatory)	Tenant at least 2 months (8 weeks) in arrears at notice and at hearing. Notice period was 2 weeks.	Now requires 3 months' arrears at both notice and hearing. Notice period extended to 4 weeks. UC delays exempted.	Certain
Any arrears (Ground 10) & Persistent delay (Ground 11)	Ground 10: any arrears at notice. Ground 11: persistent late payment. Notice: 2 weeks.	Both remain discretionary. Notice periods lengthened to 4 weeks. Allows landlords to act against poor payers.	Certain
Anti-social behaviour (Ground 14)	Landlord can start proceedings immediately after serving notice. No waiting period.	Unchanged, but courts may give weight to tenant cooperation or remedial action when assessing reasonableness.	Certain
Landlord/family move in (Ground 1)	Landlord must have served prior notice before tenancy. Notice usually 2 months.	Prior notice trap removed. Applies to close family. 4 months' notice. Protected period of 12 months from start of tenancy.	Certain
Selling the property (Ground 1A – new)	No specific ground – landlords often relied on Section 21.	New sale ground. 4 months' notice, protected period of 12 months, restrictions on re-letting for a period after eviction.	Certain
Sale ground – re-let restriction length	N/A	Lords propose shortening re-let prohibition from 12 months to 6 months	Uncertain

		with genuine marketing test.	
Right to Rent (Ground 7B)	Tenant disqualified by immigration status. Notice: 2 weeks.	Ground retained with same 2-week notice period.	Certain
Death of tenant (Ground 7)	Where tenant dies and no statutory succession applies. Landlord must bring claim within 12 months. 2 months' notice.	Ground retained. 2 months' notice. Clarifications added but substance unchanged.	Certain
Redevelopment (Ground 6)	Where works cannot reasonably be done with tenant in place. Complex prior notice requirements.	Ground clarified. 4 months' notice. Social landlords must offer alternative accommodation in some cases.	Certain
Student lets (Ground 4A)	Mainly PBSA and larger HMOs tied to educational institutions. Often relied on fixed terms or Section 21.	Ground clarified and extended to smaller properties let under approved student codes. 4 months' notice and academic cycle alignment. Lords propose wider exemptions.	Certain core; Lords' widening uncertain
New Carer ground (proposed 8A)	No specific provision for carers.	Ground would allow landlord to evict if property needed to house a carer for landlord or family. Notice expected 4 months.	Uncertain

Note: 'Certain' = confirmed in core Bill. 'Uncertain' = Lords proposal, subject to Commons vote (8 Sept 2025).

This summary is for information only and should not be treated as legal advice.