



LANDLORDS' NEWSLETTER

EDITION No. 1

Sharing news and information for the private rented sector.

1. Welcome & Purpose

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Surrey Heath Borough Council Landlord Newsletter. Our aim is to keep you updated on upcoming legal changes—especially the **Renters' Rights Act 2025**—new regulations impacting your role, and your responsibilities as a landlord.

Keeping informed helps you provide safe, compliant, and high-quality rental properties across the borough.

2. Key Legal Reforms: The Renters' Rights Act

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 is expected to come into force in **early 2026**, after receiving Royal Assent in late October 2025.

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 is a landmark piece of legislation aimed at strengthening tenant protections and improving standards in the private rented sector. Key reforms include the abolition of no-fault evictions (Section 21), the replacement of fixed-term tenancies with periodic rolling agreements, and new rules allowing tenants greater rights to keep pets and challenge rent increases.

The Act also introduces a Decent Homes Standard for private rentals, establishes a national landlord register and a compulsory redress scheme, and enhances local authorities' powers to enforce housing standards. These changes are designed to provide more secure, fair, and safe housing for renters while ensuring clear responsibilities for landlords.

Highlights:

- **No-fault evictions abolished**
Section 21 notices are to be abolished. Evictions must rely on Section 8 "fault" grounds and cannot be used within the first 12 months unless the tenant breaches the agreement.
- **Fixed-term tenancies replaced by periodic tenancies**
All Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST) will shift to roll-on periodic tenancies. Tenants can give 2 months' notice to leave at any time.
- **Stricter eviction protocols under Section 8**
Eviction due to landlord's need to sell or move in will require 4 months' notice and cannot occur within the first 12 months of tenancy.

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- **Annual rent increases only**
Rent may only be increased once a year via Section 13 notice, with two months' statutory notice. Tenants can challenge hikes at the First-tier Tribunal.
- **Ban on rental bidding**
The practice of encouraging tenants to offer above the advertised rent is now prohibited.
- **Pet rights**
Landlords can no longer blanket-ban pets; tenants may request to keep pets, and consent must not be unreasonably withheld. A “pet-damage” deposit or insurance may be required.
- **Ban on discrimination**
Landlords must not discriminate against tenants receiving benefits or with children. “No DSS” style restrictions are outlawed.
- **Decent Homes Standard & Awaab’s Law**
These standards will be extended to the private rented sector—requiring homes to be safe, warm, and clean. Health hazards such as damp and mould must be addressed promptly.
- **New ombudsman and landlord registry**
Mandatory registration on a new Private Rented Sector (PRS) database and compulsory membership in a landlord redress/ombudsman scheme—non-compliance may result in fines up to £7,000.
- **Enforcement & penalties**
Councils will have enhanced enforcement powers. Penalties for non-compliance may range from civil fines (e.g. up to £5,000–£30,000) to rent repayment orders (up to 24 months' rent).

The Government’s [guide to the Renters Rights Act can be found on the GOV.UK website](#).

3. What The Changes Mean For You

Area	Action required
Tenancy Type	Transition practices toward periodic tenancies. Update tenancy agreements.
Policies and Procedures	End “No DSS,” pet bans, and bidding wars. Have a clear pet-policy with deposit/insurance clauses.
Property Standards	Carry out regular inspections identifying hazards; respond swiftly to mould/damp issues.
Rent Increases	Limit increases to once a year and follow proper notice procedures.
Dispute Resolution	Ensure enrolment in the new landlord/PRS redress schemes.
Licensing	Register HMOs correctly; keep all safety certifications current.
Compliance	Stay informed and compliant with Surrey Heath Council regulations.

4. Local Landlord Responsibilities: Surrey Heath Guidelines

In addition to national legislation, Surrey Heath Borough Council expects landlords to uphold the following standards:



- **Health & safety compliance**
Ensure gas/electrical systems are safely installed and maintained, provide an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), protect tenant deposits via a government-approved scheme, and carry out “Right to Rent” verifications.
- **Repairs & maintenance**
Responsible for structural repairs, utilities (water/gas/electric), and ensuring no health hazards. Give reasonable notice for property entry for inspections or repairs unless it's an emergency.
- **HMO licensing and compliance**
For HMOs, landlords must comply with Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations: display manager contact, maintain utilities, keep shared spaces safe, and conduct annual fire, gas, and electrical checks. Non-compliance can lead to fines up to £30,000 or rent repayment orders.

More information about [HMOs can be found on the Surrey Heath Borough Council website](#).

5. Rent Choice Scheme

The Council operate a Rent Choice Scheme. The Rent Choice Scheme gives people the option of looking for a home of their choice in the private rented sector with financial help from the Council. We assist people with help towards the advance rent and a deposit bond if they are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

We are always keen to support people into the private rented sector as the supply of social housing does not meet current demand. We understand that securing a home in the private rented sector gives people a greater choice of area and property type. We encourage landlords to give long term lets as this encourages more people into the private rented sector.

You can find lots of information on our website about the Rent Choice Scheme and how this works for landlords - [here](#)

6. Tenant Matching

The Council are always looking for properties to become available for our customers to access. We are different to a letting agent in that we do not manage the property for a landlord, but we are able to introduce you to prospective tenants and provide assistance from our Rent Choice Scheme to secure a property. Our Lettings Negotiator is on hand to act as a liaison when needed and we carry out property inspections annually when the deposit bond is due for renewal. We also have an in-house Housing Support Team that can offer support to tenants if they experience any housing related difficulties, like loss of employment, during the term of the tenancy.

If you would like to discuss this further with our Lettings Negotiator then please complete our online form here - [Letting a property | Surrey Heath Borough Council](#)

7.Q&A

- **Can I still use Section 21 until the law changes?**



Yes, Section 21 notices are still valid and can be used until the Renters' Rights Act 2025 comes into force (expected in early-to-mid 2026). Once implemented, Section 21 will be abolished, and all evictions will need to follow Section 8 (fault-based or specific grounds).

- **Will the new ombudsman be free or chargeable for landlords?**

Membership in the new landlord redress scheme (ombudsman) will be compulsory and likely chargeable. While final fees haven't been confirmed, it's expected landlords will pay a modest annual fee - similar to existing schemes like the Property Ombudsman for letting agents.

- **Under the new Renters' Rights legislation can I evict a tenant within 12 months if I want to sell the property?**

No, under the new rules, landlords will not be able to evict tenants to sell or move in during the first 12 months of a tenancy. After that period, eviction under Section 8 grounds (e.g. Ground 1 or 1A) will be permitted with four months' notice.

- **Do I need to re-issue tenancy agreements now?**

No, not yet. Existing tenancy agreements remain valid until the law is enacted. However, once the Act is in force, all tenancies (including fixed term) will convert to periodic (rolling) tenancies. You will not be required to issue new agreements but updating them to reflect the new legal framework is strongly recommended.

8. Support & Resources

- **Surrey Heath Borough Council Contact:**
The Council has a Letting Negotiator within Housing Services. Reach out to us if you have any questions and we will do all we can to assist you. You can email us at housing@surreyheath.gov.uk or call on 01276 707100.
- **HMO Licensing or Housing Standards/Enforcement –**
environmental.health@surreyheath.gov.uk
- **Government and expert guidance:**
For further information on tenancy law and landlord duties, consult the official government guidance or expert legal advisers. It is important that you understand your responsibilities as a landlord and ensure you always remain compliant.

Thank you for your commitment to maintaining a high standard of rental properties across the borough of Surrey Heath.

We will continue to update you as the Renters' Rights Act 2025 progresses and more details about implementation and enforcement schedules become available.

If you would like to make suggestions for future editions of this newsletter, please email us at housing@surreyheath.gov.uk with your ideas.

