INDUSTRY BRIEFING | MAY 2026
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STRATEGIC TRANSITION IN RESIDENTIAL LETTINGS • RENTERS' RIGHTS ACT 2025

COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS FOR PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS

Renters' Rights Act 2025

Royal Assent: 27 October 2025

From 1 May 2026, no-fault evictions, fixed-term contracts and unregulated rent-bidding cease to have any legal basis. This briefing provides a complete operational and compliance framework for every property manager in England.

ABOLISHED	ENDED	BY 2030
Section 21	**Fixed Terms**	**EPC C**

1 May 2026
COMMENCEMENT DATE

90+
OFFICES NATIONWIDE

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OVERVIEW

Executive Overview

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 received Royal Assent on 27 October 2025, marking the most decisive regulatory overhaul of the English private rented sector since the Assured Shorthold Tenancy was introduced in the late twentieth century. From 1 May 2026, no-fault evictions, fixed-term tenancy contracts and unregulated rent-bidding cease to have any legal basis. This briefing sets out the full compliance and operational framework that follows for property managers.

ROYAL ASSENT	COMMENCEMENT	SECTION 21 SUNSET	EPC C DEADLINE
27 Oct 2025	**1 May 2026**	**30 Apr 2026**	**1 Oct 2030**
Act enters statute	All tenancies convert	Last valid S21 notice	EPC C mandatory

Legislative Note: Implementation details may be subject to secondary regulations and court interpretation. This briefing reflects the position as of May 2026. Readers should verify the current status of any provision before acting.

What This Briefing Covers

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SECTION 01

Regulatory Framework & Implementation Timeline

The transition is characterised by a "big bang" implementation: nearly all core reforms apply simultaneously to both new and existing tenancies on 1 May 2026. This demands an immediate, holistic portfolio audit from every property manager.

Critical Implementation Milestones — 2026

DATE	STATUTORY EVENT	PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENT
15 Jan 2026	Legislative Updates Published	Final review of internal compliance protocols and client communications.
March 2026	Government Information Sheet Released	Prepare distribution workflow for mandatory tenant disclosure.
30 Apr 2026	Section 21 Sunset — 4:30 PM	Last date to serve a no-fault notice. Track all issued notices immediately.
1 May 2026	Commencement	All ASTs convert to Assured Periodic Tenancies. Section 21 abolished in law.
31 May 2026	Tenant Disclosure Deadline	Issue the official Information Sheet to ALL existing tenants. Retain proof of service.
31 Jul 2026	Possession Longstop	Court proceedings for pre-May S21 notices must be filed by this date or notice expires.
Late 2026	PRS Database Phase 2	Mandatory regional registration of all landlords and properties.

Dates in red are hard legal deadlines — missing them invalidates the relevant notice or claim.

The Section 21 Transition Window

A Section 21 notice served before 30 April remains legally valid only if possession proceedings are commenced by the earlier of six months from service or 31 July 2026. Failure to file by the longstop renders the notice legally inert — forcing a restart under the considerably more demanding Section 8 framework.

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SECTION 02

The Structural Rebirth of the Tenancy Agreement

From 1 May 2026, every AST — including those still within a fixed term — automatically converts to an open-ended Assured Periodic Tenancy (APT). The guaranteed income period of a fixed term is replaced by a rolling monthly agreement.

Mechanics of the Assured Periodic Tenancy

Four key operational consequences for property managers:

- Tenants may serve two months' notice from day one — no minimum term exists.
- Initial acquisition cost recovery must be modelled against potentially shorter average tenancy durations.
- Rental payments are limited to monthly intervals — quarterly or bi-annual advance payments are prohibited.
- A maximum of one month's rent in advance may be accepted; higher upfront sums to secure a property are illegal.

AST vs. Assured Periodic Tenancy: Comparative Overview

FEATURE	OLD AST REGIME	NEW APT REGIME
Contract Type	Fixed term (typically 6/12 months)	Open-ended, monthly rolling
Minimum Term	Contractually set	None — tenant can give notice from day 1
Tenant Notice	Break clause dependent	2 months at any time
No-Fault Eviction	Section 21 available	**Abolished**
Advance Rent	Flexible — e.g. 6 months	Maximum 1 month in advance
Rent Increases	Contractual review clauses	Statutory Section 13 (Form 4A) only

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SECTION 03

Possession Reform & Judicial Realities

With Section 21 abolished, all possession must be sought via the revised Section 8 grounds. The burden of proof shifts entirely onto the landlord, requiring impeccable digital audit trails for every managed unit.

Reformed Section 8 Grounds

GROUND	STATUS	REASON	NOTICE
Ground 1	Mandatory	Landlord or close family intends to occupy the property.	**4 Months**
Ground 1A	Mandatory	Landlord intends to sell the property.	**4 Months**
Ground 4A	Mandatory	Student HMO — recovery for academic cycle (June–Sept).	**4 Months**
Ground 6	Mandatory	Substantial redevelopment or demolition required.	**4 Months**
Ground 8	Mandatory	Serious rent arrears: 3+ months unpaid.	**4 Weeks**
Ground 14	Discretionary	Anti-social behaviour or nuisance to neighbours.	**2 Weeks**

Mandatory grounds require possession where facts are proven; discretionary grounds allow judicial assessment of reasonableness.

The Rent Arrears Timeline — A Critical Operational Warning

Ground 8 threshold has risen from two to three months and notice has doubled to four weeks. A tenant will be close to four months in arrears before proceedings can commence. With average judicial timelines of 27.4 weeks, the realistic window from first missed payment to vacant possession is **10–12 months**.

STAGE	DURATION	CUMULATIVE
Arrears reach 3-month threshold	~13 weeks	~13 weeks
Mandatory 4-week Section 8 notice period	4 weeks	~17 weeks
Court processing & hearing	~15 weeks	~32 weeks
Possession order to bailiff enforcement	4–8 weeks	~36–40 weeks
TOTAL: First missed payment → vacant possession	**10–12 months**	**Up to 52 weeks**

Early intervention strategies and rent guarantee insurance products are now essential risk-management tools for every managed portfolio.

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The Student HMO Exception — Ground 4A

All four conditions must be met for Ground 4A to be valid:

- Notice served four months in advance.
- Notice must expire between 1 June and 30 September.
- A written statement of intent must be issued at the start of tenancy.
- For existing tenancies at May 2026: statement must be issued by 31 May 2026.

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Economic Regulation & Rent Reviews

Prohibition of Rental Bidding

Transparency is a statutory requirement at the marketing stage. Managers must advertise a single proposed rent — price ranges and 'offers invited' are banned. Encouraging, inviting or accepting any bid above the advertised price is unlawful. Civil penalties up to £7,000 apply for initial offences. Accurate benchmarking from the outset is now a legal obligation.

The Section 13 Statutory Process

All contractual rent review clauses are void. Increases must use prescribed Form 4A.

RULE	DETAIL
Frequency	Once per 12-month period maximum.
Notice Period	Minimum two months' written notice required.
Tenant Appeal	Tenants may challenge at the First-tier Tribunal if increase exceeds open market rent.
Tribunal Cap	The Tribunal cannot award a rent HIGHER than the landlord's own proposal.
Effective Date	New rent takes effect from the Tribunal's determination date — not the notice date.

Strategic implication: tenants gain a strong financial incentive to refer increases to the Tribunal — it delays the effective date with no risk of a higher outcome. All proposed increases must be robustly evidenced with comparable market data.

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The Decent Homes Standard

New Habitability Baseline

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 provides for the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) to be extended to England's private rented sector for the first time, establishing a consistent benchmark for safe, warm and well-maintained rental properties.

In January 2026, the government confirmed its intention to introduce the new standard from **2035**, subject to the necessary regulations. Until then, landlords must continue to meet existing legal obligations relating to property safety, repairs and fitness for human habitation.

The Five Criteria

CRITERION	REQUIREMENT	IMPLEMENTATION DETAIL
A: Hazards	**Free from Category 1 hazards**	Properties must be free from serious hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which covers 29 hazard types.
B: Repair	**Reasonable state of repair**	A property fails if one key building component, or two other components, are not in a reasonable state of repair.
C: Facilities	**Core facilities and services**	Houses must meet at least two of three specified facility requirements; flats must meet at least three of four. Child-resistant window restrictors are also required where specified fall risks exist.
D: Comfort	**Thermal comfort**	Adequate, programmable heating throughout the home and compliance with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. The government has set an EPC C or equivalent target for private rentals by October 2030, subject to applicable exemptions.
E: Hygiene	**Free from damp and mould**	Landlords must address damp and mould. Under the new standard, hazards assessed at HHSRS bands A–H would result in failure of this criterion.

Property Condition and Compliance

The new standard places greater emphasis on the actual condition and performance of a property rather than simply the age of its components.

A heating system, for example, must provide adequate warmth and meet applicable efficiency requirements. Its age alone does not determine compliance.

For letting agents, regular routine property visits and detailed periodic property reports will play an important role in identifying defects early, documenting property conditions and supporting planned maintenance across managed portfolios.

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Awaab's Law — Private Rented Sector Extension

Awaab's Law currently applies to social housing in England, introducing statutory response times for certain serious hazards.

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 provides for these protections to be extended to private rented tenancies. However, the government has not yet confirmed the final PRS response times or commencement date.

On 9 October 2026, the government launched a consultation on the proposed PRS requirements, including investigation deadlines, repair timescales and implementation arrangements. The earliest feasible implementation is 2027, but this is not a confirmed commencement date.

Letting agents should prepare by establishing clear procedures for recording hazard reports, escalating urgent concerns, arranging remedial work and maintaining evidence of actions taken.

Digital Reporting and Audit Trails

Accurate documentation is essential for effective property management.

Professional property reports, supported by timestamped photographs, maintenance observations and recommended actions, help letting agents maintain a consistent record of property condition.

No Letting Go's Kaptur platform supports structured digital reporting and provides an accessible audit trail, helping property managers demonstrate proactive management and prepare for evolving regulatory expectations.

Digital reporting supports compliance processes but does not replace the need to meet statutory repair and safety obligations.

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Energy Performance & the 2030 EPC Target

All domestic private rented properties must achieve EPC rating C or equivalent by 1 October 2030. The EPC metric system is itself being reformed in late 2026, replacing the single headline figure with four distinct measures.

New Domestic EPC Metrics (from late 2026)

Energy Cost

Financial estimate of the tenant's likely annual energy bills.

Fabric Performance

How effectively walls, roofs and floors retain heat.

Heating System

Carbon impact and efficiency rating of the heat source.

Smart Readiness

Capacity for smart meters and flexible energy tariffs.

Compliance Pathways & The Financial Case

Landlords must invest up to £10,000 per property toward EPC C compliance. Most cost-effective routes:

- Top up loft insulation to the 270mm standard
- Install modern condensing boilers with smart thermostatic controls
- Cavity wall insulation and upgraded double glazing where absent

A 0.5% green mortgage rate reduction on a £250,000 mortgage saves **£1,250 per year** — fully recovering a £5,000 upgrade within four years. Acting early avoids a costly compliance rush as the 2030 deadline approaches.

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Institutional Oversight: PRS Database & Ombudsman

The Private Rented Sector Database

The PRS Database launches regionally in late 2026 as a digital compliance register.

FEATURE	OPERATIONAL IMPACT
Mandatory Registration	Every landlord and every property must be individually registered.
Compliance Tracking	Records current gas safety, EICR, and EPC certificate status.
Enforcement Linkage	Unregistered landlords are legally barred from seeking possession under Section 8.
Tenant Access	Key compliance data accessible to current and prospective tenants.

The PRS Landlord Ombudsman

Mandatory membership by 2028. Free for tenants, binding for landlords. The Ombudsman can order:

- Formal apologies and remedial actions
- Financial compensation up to £25,000
- Simultaneous investigation of both landlord and managing agent

Agents may be held jointly liable where failure to advise results in a compensation award. Robust internal complaint-handling is now a commercial necessity.

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SECTION 08

Anti-Discrimination & Pet Rights

The Act explicitly bans blanket exclusions of tenants on housing benefit or with children. Vetting must shift from categorical exclusion to individualised affordability assessment.

Statutory Right to Request a Pet

SCENARIO	REQUIRED ACTION
Pet request received	Must respond in writing within 28 days — no response = deemed unreasonable refusal.
Grounds for refusal	Must be evidenced: property size constraints or superior lease restrictions.
Accepting a pet	Manager may require the tenant to maintain pet damage insurance.
Inventory requirement	An exceptionally detailed pre-tenancy inventory is now critical for any future claim.
Routine visits	Regular, documented tenancy visits provide essential continuing evidence.

No Letting Go's professional inventory and periodic property reports provide the photographic, timestamped evidence that protects landlords in exactly these circumstances.

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SECTION 09

Technology & Property Management Platforms

The cumulative compliance burden — Awaab's Law timers, Section 13 notice tracking, PRS Database management and Ombudsman-ready audit trails — makes manual management operationally untenable. The PMS market now offers enterprise 'single-stack' systems alongside modular AI-native platforms.

Key Platform Comparison for 2026

PLATFORM	TARGET AUDIENCE	KEY COMPLIANCE ADVANTAGE
MRI Software	Large Institutional Investors	Open API; 200+ native accounting and compliance integrations.
Yardi Voyager	BTR & Student Housing	Single-view dashboard for high-volume portfolios and recurring compliance tasks.
Landlord Studio	Small/Mid Landlords	MTD-ready accounting with built-in EPC and gas safety renewal alerts.
Houseshare AI	HMO & Co-living	AI maintenance triage resolving issues via WhatsApp before they become tickets.
Goodlord	Letting Agencies	Automated APT contract generation and Form 4A rent notice creation.

AI-Native Compliance & Kaptur

AI-native tools such as Lanten and Rentfix.ai use LLMs trained on UK property law to verify tenancy agreement compliance clause-by-clause. For property managers, No Letting Go's Kaptur platform is already built around this principle — providing the central audit trail for inspection reports, maintenance records and compliance certificates that the 2025 Act demands.

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SECTION 10

Operational Audit & Compliance Checklist

Priority levels below reflect legal exposure and deadline urgency.

PRIORITY	ACTION REQUIRED	DEADLINE
URGENT	Identify tenancies needing S21; track to ensure court claims filed before longstop.	By 31 Jul 2026
URGENT	Download and distribute Government Information Sheet to ALL existing tenants.	By 31 May 2026
HIGH	Conduct 12-month rent review; consider increases before 1 May to simplify the process.	Before 1 May 2026
HIGH	Commission Decent Homes pre-inspection on every unit; prioritise Category 1 hazards.	Ongoing — now
HIGH	Issue Ground 4A written statements to all qualifying student HMO tenants.	By 31 May 2026
MEDIUM	Cleanse all property data in preparation for PRS Database mandatory registration.	Late 2026
MEDIUM	Commission EPC assessments; identify Band D properties needing upgrade planning.	Before Oct 2030
MEDIUM	Implement formal complaint procedure aligned with Ombudsman requirements.	Before 2028
ONGOING	Ensure all maintenance communication uses auditable, timestamped platforms (e.g. Kaptur).	From 1 May 2026
ONGOING	Update pet request policy; document compliant 28-day response procedure.	From 1 May 2026

Financial Penalties for Non-Compliance

BREACH	MAXIMUM PENALTY
Prohibited rent bidding / advertising price ranges	**Up to £7,000**
Serious / repeated regulatory breaches (Local Authority)	**Up to £40,000**
Habitability standard failures (First-tier Tribunal)	**Up to 24 months' rent**
Ombudsman-ordered compensation	**Up to £25,000**

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CONCLUSION

Strategic Outlook & Conclusion

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 fundamentally rebalances the private rented sector in favour of the resident — but simultaneously creates a powerful framework for professional property management to demonstrate its true value. The exit of less-compliant 'amateur' landlords from the market creates a significant opportunity for professional managers to grow portfolios from those unable to navigate the new landscape independently.

Three Pillars of Success Post-May 2026

01

Education

Deep knowledge of reformed Section 8 grounds, Section 13, and DHS criteria.

02

Audit

Pre-May inspections, EPC assessments, data cleansing and disclosure compliance.

03

Automation

PropTech for automated compliance tracking, notice generation and Awaab's Law timers.

The 2025 Act creates a digital-first rental market where transparency, quality and accountability are the norm. No Letting Go exists to support property professionals through exactly this kind of regulatory transition — providing independent, evidence-based property reporting that protects landlords, agents and tenants alike.

NEXT STEP FOR PROPERTY MANAGERS

Book a compliance readiness review or speak to your local No Letting Go office to ensure your portfolio is fully prepared for the post-May 2026 landscape.

Book a Property Report | Speak to Your Local NLG Office

No Letting Go | Property Inventory Management Specialists

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