

# Transcript

## **RRA Unit 1.1**

### **The headline changes, phasing and timetable**

So our next video looks at the headline changes introduced by the Renters' Rights Act. We are going to look at the phasing of the commencement of these changes and then go into a little more detail on the immediate timetable. Do not worry, though. This video is only about the main headline changes. There will be separate videos covering each of these areas in much more detail as part of this module.

There are 12 big headline changes, and we are going to go through them briefly here. As I say, each of these major changes will be covered in more detail in later videos within the module.

The biggest and most controversial change is the abolition of Section 21 no fault evictions and the abolition of assured shorthold tenancies. Section 21 is one of the ways landlords have been able to remove tenants by issuing a Section 21 notice. It is not the only route, because landlords can also use a Section 8 notice, which we will come to shortly. However, Section 21 disappears at midnight on 30 April 2026. After that point, landlords will no longer be able to issue a Section 21 notice. There are some protections for landlords who issued Section 21 notices before 1 May, and there are strict timetables governing when those notices can still be used in court. By the time you are watching this video, though, we will most likely have gone past that protected period, so there is little point dwelling on it here. More detail is included in the module text itself.

The end of assured shorthold tenancies brings us to the second major headline change, which is the introduction of assured periodic tenancies. These will become the default form of tenure in the private rented sector. So, out go ASTs and in come APTs. For those of you in housing options teams who have been using the term ASTs for years, from 1 May it will be APTs instead. We will explain exactly what an assured periodic tenancy means in the next video.

The third big change is the revision of possession grounds. Since landlords will no longer be able to use a Section 21 no fault notice to regain possession of a property, they will instead need to use a Section 8 notice. The possession grounds under Section 8 have been revised. There are mandatory grounds and discretionary grounds, and in total there are around 36 separate grounds. All of these come under Section 8,

and we will cover them in further videos. Quite a few of these grounds have been changed by the government.

The fourth big change is that rent increases will be limited to once a year. A landlord will no longer be able to argue that inflation has gone up and therefore increase the rent every three months or every six months. Under the new rules, rent can only be increased once a year.

The fifth major change is a ban on rental bidding, along with restrictions on asking for rent in advance. Landlords will not be allowed to ask for rent in advance before the tenancy is signed, and once the tenancy is signed they can only require one month's rent in advance. The ban on rental bidding means landlords cannot invite prospective tenants to outbid one another. If a landlord sets a rent, for example £1,000 a month, they must stick to that figure rather than accepting a higher offer from another applicant.

The sixth big change is the government's move to tackle rental discrimination. It will become an offence to discriminate against families with children or against people receiving benefits. That could include a single person receiving benefits as well as a family with children. So this is about ending rental discrimination against prospective renters with children and or those receiving benefits. We will cover that in more detail in a later video.

Number seven is that tenants will be able to request permission to keep a pet. That does not mean landlords must automatically grant the request, but from 1 May tenants will have the right to ask, and landlords will not be allowed to refuse unreasonably. What amounts to a reasonable refusal is likely to become an important question. Equally, what counts as a reasonable request will also be tested. We may well see a number of cases emerging around this issue.

The eighth big change is on enforcement. Councils will be given new powers, and there will be a new civil penalty regime. This will make it easier for councils to take action against landlords who break the rules under the Renters' Rights Act. Under the old rules, councils might have had to prosecute landlords in court, for example where there had been an illegal eviction. From 1 May, things become much easier because councils will be able to issue fines through a civil penalty system. There will be a range of situations in which councils can fine landlords for breaches of the rules and for offences under the Act. There will be a separate video on this.

Number nine is the introduction of a landlord database for private rented properties. This is a major change because landlords will have to register all of their properties on a national database. There will be specific information that must be included, and we will look at that in more detail in the video dealing specifically with the database.

The tenth big change is the establishment of a private rented sector landlord ombudsman. Those of you working in local government will already be familiar with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, which deals with complaints about how local authorities have acted. Until now, there has not been an ombudsman for the private rented sector. Under the new system, there will be one. However, this is not expected to go live until around 2028, and we will discuss it in more detail in a future video.

Number eleven is the introduction of a Decent Homes Standard for the private rented sector. There is already a Decent Homes Standard for council housing, and one is also being introduced for housing association tenancies. The same will now apply to the private rented sector. That does not mean landlords will suddenly have to carry out extensive works next year. The standard is still being consulted on by the government, and landlords will not have to meet it until 2035. So it is still some way off, and at this stage we do not yet know exactly what the final standard will be.

The twelfth and final headline change is the extension of Awaab's Law to the private rented sector. Many of you will remember the tragic case of the young boy in Rochdale who died as a result of severe damp and mould in a housing association property. In response, the government has named the law requiring landlords to address hazards such as damp and mould after him. It will not apply only to damp and mould, as there will be other hazards that landlords will also be required to tackle. This law will now be extended to the private rented sector. There will be a timetable setting out which hazards must be remedied and the timescales for doing so. Those provisions will be brought in in the future.

That brings us to the phasing of the Renters' Rights Act. We have covered the 12 big headline changes, but they will not all come into force at the same time. As with any new legislation, the Act itself is passed first and then the government decides how and when to commence its provisions. The Renters' Rights Act received Royal Assent in October 2025, which is why it is the Renters' Rights Act 2025 rather than 2026. The government is bringing it into force in three phases.

Phase one is the big one, and it begins on 1 May 2026. That is when the major changes to the tenancy system come in, along with other tenancy-related reforms

such as the end of rental bidding, the ban on rental discrimination, the pets provision and various other new rules. This phase brings in the majority of the new measures.

Phase two has two main elements. From late 2026, although no exact date has yet been given, the landlord database will begin to be introduced and rolled out. That does not mean all landlords will need to register immediately by the end of 2026. Instead, the database will be introduced gradually, and the government has suggested it may be rolled out on a regional basis. So it may be late 2027 before some regions are required to register. Phase two also includes the beginning of the secondary legislation process to set up the private rented sector ombudsman. However, that is not the same as the ombudsman going live. As mentioned earlier, that is not expected until around 2028.

Phase three is about raising standards in the private rented sector. Much of this is still under consultation and will require further secondary legislation. The two key elements here are the introduction of the Decent Homes Standard for the private rented sector and the extension of Awaab's Law to that sector. We are still waiting to see exactly when those measures will come into force.

Finally, let us look at the more detailed timetable. The first major date is 1 May 2026, when the phase one measures, mainly those relating to tenancies, come into force. From late 2026, the landlord database starts to be rolled out. In practice, landlords may not actually be required to sign up until 2027. At some point in 2027, the Renters' Rights Act reforms will also begin to apply to the social rented sector, including housing associations, though no exact date has yet been given.

Then, in 2028, on a date still to be determined, landlords will have to sign up to the ombudsman service and that service will go live. After that, subject to consultation, Awaab's Law will be introduced, and the Decent Homes Standard will also be implemented. Although once the Decent Homes Standard is in place, landlords will not actually have to meet it until 2035.

So that is the overall timetable, the three phases of implementation, and the 12 big headline changes. Do not worry if that feels like a lot, because many of these topics are covered in separate videos as part of this module.