

London Assembly Housing Committee Inquiry into Implementing and Monitoring the Renters' Rights Act in London

Written Evidence from the Renters' Reform Coalition

About the Renters' Reform Coalition

The Renters' Reform Coalition (RRC) is made up of 18 leading housing organisations, from national housing charities and think tanks, to advice centres and renters' unions. We are united in our mission to reform the private rented sector so that everyone who relies on it for their housing can prosper.

The Coalition has come together to offer solutions for change, with the purpose of shaping the government's approach to renting policy. Our members have a broad range of expertise on housing and associated issues. They represent all parts of the renters' movement, and campaign for policy change both inside and outside of the Renters' Reform Coalition.

1. What will change for private renters and landlords in London due to the measures introduced by the Renters' Rights Act, and how will it be possible to measure their success?

The introduction of the Renters' Rights Act represents the most significant improvement to renters' protections in more than a generation. Once implemented on 1 May 2026, the Act will bring in a swathe of new measures to protect renters from unfair landlord practices that are commonplace in private renting. With many of the issues and challenges of renting pronounced in the capital, these changes stand to particularly benefit London's 2.7 million renters.

At the heart of the reform is the banning of Section 21 'no-fault' evictions – where landlords are able to evict a tenant without being required to give a prescribed reason. Instead, landlords will be able to regain possession of a rented home on a set of specified grounds, such as to sell the home or cases where the tenant has not been paying rent. This will bring a transformational improvement to the security and stability of renters in their homes. Removing Section 21 evictions will genuinely empower renters by giving them the ability to raise issues such as a need for a repair in their home with a reduced fear of a retaliatory eviction from their landlord. To highlight the need to reduce unnecessarily frequent evictions in the capital, London local authorities account for 6 of the 10 boroughs with the highest rate of private landlord repossessions.¹

¹ MoJ Mortgage and landlord possession statistics, , <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics-october-to-december-2024/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics-october-to-december-2024#landlord-possession-timeliness>, February 2025

From May, the Act also bans a range of unfair and harmful practices carried out by landlords. Measures in the Act include limiting rent in advance to 1 month, prohibiting rental bidding wars, preventing unreasonable refusal of a tenant owning a pet, and banning discrimination against prospective tenants with children and people receiving benefits. Again these measures will particularly stand to benefit London renters, where 1 in 4 private renters has had to bid on a rental property to secure a tenancy,² and fewer than one in ten rented homes are pet friendly.³

Longer term, the Act will enable the Government to introduce further measures to improve landlord accountability and renters' rights. Within the next 12 months, a national database of landlords will be introduced. In the years ahead, Awaab's Law will be applied to the private landlords, to set expected timelines to respond to tenant's reports of hazards, and a Private Rented Sector Ombudsman Service will be introduced. In 2035, the Decent Homes Standard will be applied to private rented homes, which will set a comprehensive baseline standard of quality and safety.

It will be possible to measure the success of these reforms through monitoring a range of quantitative indicators, for instance in the annual English Housing Survey, as well as gathering qualitative data through engaging with renters on their lived experience.

The success of the Renters' Rights Act can be assessed by examining whether it meaningfully strengthens security of tenure and shifts the balance of power towards tenants. This would be particularly evident through a reduction in evictions. A key qualitative measure of success would be increased tenant confidence: renters should feel able to assert their rights, challenge unfair landlord practices, and raise complaints without fear of retaliation or eviction.

In addition, higher rates of enforcement following tenant complaints would signal that the Act is working as intended. We would expect to see more investigations by local authorities, and a rise in recorded enforcement actions, including increased civil penalties issued to landlords who fail to comply with the law. If complaints are more consistently acted upon and lead to timely resolutions, it would demonstrate that tenant rights are not only formally protected on paper but are also practically enforceable.

To monitor whether the changes are having their intended impact, a number of indicators should be monitored that measure the following:

- Renters' understanding of their rights
- Renters' sense of security and overall satisfaction with renting
- Frequency of evictions, use of the new possession grounds and tenant mobility rates
- Quality and conditions of renters' homes, including presence of hazards, EPC ratings and the timeliness of repairs
- Renters' confidence in raising issues, and the level of access to redress
- Volume and nature of complaints received by local authorities

² Cornerstone Tax, [Research reveals 20% of tenants battling 'bidding wars' for homes - Cornerstone Tax - The UK's leading property tax advisers](#), April 2024

³ SW Londoner, <https://www.swlondoner.co.uk/life/16072024-fewer-than-one-in-ten-london-rentals-are-pet-friendly>, July 2024

- Enforcement response rates and outcomes
- Criminal landlord behaviour, including instances of harassment and illegal evictions
- The prevalence of landlords using guarantors and other potential exclusionary practices

This can work alongside wider monitoring of the private rented sector in London that includes the number of rented homes and the average cost of renting.

2. What support do private renters need to help them benefit from the measures contained in the Renters' Rights Act?

For renters to benefit from changes brought in by the Act, they must be able to effectively challenge their landlord where there has been a breach of their protections, by ensuring they have:

- An understanding of their rights under the new system, to be able to recognise when those rights are being breached
- Confidence to challenge their landlord without fear of negative consequences
- Access to advice services, including free legal advice
- Access to effective and timely enforcement

The starting point for supporting renters with the changes to their rights is raising awareness of the upcoming changes. 7 in 10 renters in England do not have an understanding of how the Act will change their rights.⁴ Nonetheless, raising awareness of the Act isn't enough in making sure that the new protections are upheld in practice - accessible support and routes to justice are equally as important.

Some demographics of renters present lower awareness of their rights overall, or face additional barriers to asserting them, and will require targeted support, notably: younger renters, students, digitally excluded renters, minority ethnic renters, and renters with low incomes.

Tenants' unions, charities and advice services already play a critical role in bridging these gaps: 13% of London renters are aware of the Act due to these organisations - more than in any other area of the country.⁵ Sustained partnership and funding for trusted advice services will be essential to supporting renters to benefit from their new rights. There is also a need to improve the availability of free legal advice for tenants: a lack of access to these services is frequently a barrier to tenants challenging their landlord.

Local authorities can also play a role in awareness raising, but the most important support they can offer to renters is ensuring that it is accessible and straightforward to escalate a complaint where landlords are in breach of the Act. Local authorities must ensure they are able to support tenants with timely responses, open communication and clear action where an issue has been reported. A key step towards improving local authorities' support and services for renters would

⁴ TDS Charitable Foundation, <https://www.tdsfoundation.org.uk/post/seven-in-ten-renters-lack-clarity-on-the-renters-rights-act-ahead-of-major-reforms>, November 2025

⁵ TDS Charitable Foundation, <https://www.tdsfoundation.org.uk/post/seven-in-ten-renters-lack-clarity-on-the-renters-rights-act-ahead-of-major-reforms>, November 2025

be to introduce a tenant relations officer role within councils, where such a role does not already exist.

Underlining the need for local authorities to provide renters with a clear route to challenge their landlords is the wait for the future Private Rented Sector Ombudsman. The new Ombudsman service will play an important role in improving tenants' access to resolving complaints against their landlord and potential redress but is not expected to be established until at least 2028. In the intervening years, local authority enforcement will be the primary vehicle through which renters can challenge poor landlord practices and assert their rights. It is therefore important for councils' development of new enforcement processes in response to the Act to progress at pace.

3. What will be the main challenges for local authorities in London in monitoring and enforcing the measures introduced by the Renters' Rights Act?

The Renters' Rights Act will only be as effective as its enforcement, and this is where our greatest concern lies. We anticipate a key barrier to meaningful enforcement of the Act to be the limited resources and capacity of local authorities – we will expand on this challenge in further detail under our response to question 4.

Another key challenge for local authorities is that enforcing the Act is heavily reliant on tenants coming forward and self-reporting breaches of the legislation, in a context where tenant awareness and confidence to challenge a landlord is limited. There are a variety of barriers to tenants escalating breaches of the Act to local authorities. While the Act will empower renters by reducing the risk of a retaliatory evictions through banning Section 21 no-fault evictions, challenging a landlord will remain intimidating - particularly where renters fear retaliatory actions, immigration consequences, or financial risk, such as a rent increase.

If renters do not understand their rights, do not feel safe in reporting breaches, or do not believe enforcement will lead to meaningful outcomes, many violations will go unreported and non-compliant landlords will continue harmful practices without facing consequence. Addressing this challenge will require a highly proactive approach from councils in supporting renters and taking effective action.

Furthermore, we anticipate that certain elements of the Act will be more challenging for local authorities to enforce, where it will be harder to identify or obtain sufficient evidence of breaches. Examples of practices prohibited by the Act that will be more challenging for councils to enforce against include:

- Rental bidding wars, as landlords and lettings agents could arrange for bidding and ask for offers for higher rent behind closed doors.
- Discrimination against prospective tenants with children or those that receive benefits, which may not be clear where numerous prospective tenants would like to rent a property.
- Unlawful reletting within the 12-month period following an eviction to sell, as tenants will have left the home and it may not be directly evident to them that it has been re-let.

Again, identifying and addressing these breaches of the Act will demand fostering strong awareness among renters as well as the confidence to actively report concerns.

The challenges in reducing common harmful practices in renting go beyond the introduction of the Act. For example, there are frequent failures in protecting renters from illegal evictions, which have a poor track record of enforcement action, and as well as lack of reliable data on their occurrence. While there are thousands of recorded illegal eviction cases nationally, the charity Safer Renting found that landlords were prosecuted for illegal evictions in less than 1% of cases in 2022.⁶ The Act itself will not address this issue, with the rate of illegal evictions only likely to increase following the end of Section 21 no-fault evictions and the introduction of a more limited set of grounds for possession in place. Tackling illegal evictions and other deeply harmful criminal landlord practices will require a renewed approach to enforcement from councils.

4. Do local authorities in London have the capacity and resources they need to monitor and enforce the measures introduced by the Renters' Rights Act?

The Act not only brings a new system of rights for renters but introduces several new legal obligations for local authorities to enforce these protections. However, most London local authorities do not currently have the capacity or resources to meaningfully enforce existing regulation of the private rented sector, let alone the expanded responsibilities they will have under the Act.

While the Mayor's initiatives have contributed to slightly higher enforcement rates in London compared to other regions, overall enforcement activity remains low and highly inconsistent across local authority areas. Over three years in 2022-24, more than a third of London councils did not prosecute a single landlord. Of those prosecuted, only 8 landlords in London have been banned from letting homes in this 3-year period.⁷

To meaningfully enforce the Act and improve conditions for renters in practice, there is a need for local authorities to adopt a proactive approach to enforcement. The key barrier to this, however, is insufficient and unpredictable funding. The capacity of local authorities to enforce renters' protections has been affected by funding cuts to councils over the last 15 years.

A lack of funding has not only limited the expansion of enforcement processes but created a struggle for councils to maintain enough experienced and knowledgeable staff, with many local authority workforces having reduced in size over several years of funding cuts. A lack of consistent and predictable funding only makes it more challenging for local authorities to recruit new enforcement staff. Furthermore, councils frequently report they find a shortage of suitably qualified staff when looking to recruit new enforcement and environmental health officers. The lack of workforce capacity harms local authorities' ability to develop new processes in response to the Act and be more proactive in their enforcement.

There are new powers coming in through the Act that can help contribute towards more proactive and well-resourced enforcement, such as new inspections powers for councils and new on-the-spot fines – which councils should utilise to boost enforcement. However, the current annual New Burdens funding of £18.2m granted by central government to fund enforcement of the Act across all English councils will be insufficient to improve enforcement

⁶ Safer Renting, [Press-Release-Safer-Renting-Illegal-eviction-and-harrassment-report-1-December-2023.pdf](#), December 2023

⁷ The Guardian, [Two-thirds of English councils have not prosecuted a single landlord in past three years | Renting property | The Guardian](#), November 2025

capacity to the level needed to adequately support renters in practice. We therefore believe that expanding licensing could play an important role in supporting local authorities' enforcement capabilities beyond the introduction of the Act – particularly by providing a sustained, reliable source of funding.

Licensing also provides local authorities with the powers and means to address a range of prevalent issues for renters that go beyond the Act. For example, they can impose license conditions that address overcrowding - a pronounced issue in London where 8.5% of privately rented homes are overcrowded.⁸ Licensing allows local authorities better oversight of rented homes and a clear means through which to routinely carry out inspections, allowing councils to carry out more proactive and thorough enforcement.

However, there are significant gaps in licensing of rented homes across London. Though larger Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) are required to have a mandatory license, more than a third of HMOs in London that should have a mandatory license have not been issued one.⁹ Additional and selective licensing are also greatly underutilised, with 40% of London local authorities not operating a single selective licensing scheme.¹⁰ While introducing licensing schemes present a modest cost to landlords, the funds they can provide to councils are invaluable in improving their enforcement capabilities.

5. How will the Renters' Rights Act affect the Mayor's Private Rented Sector Partnership, manifesto commitments, and work to provide safe and decent homes for Londoners?

The Act should be seen as catalyst for change that the Mayor can build on, rather than a single solution for the array of challenges faced by London's renters. The incoming Renters' Rights Act only strengthens the case for existing manifesto commitments to improve standards, enforcement and accountability in the private rented sector. The Mayor has correctly identified that stronger enforcement and accountability is essential to raising standards for renters, and implementing the Act will require further efforts to step up enforcement across all London boroughs.

The upcoming legal changes also reinforce the importance of the Private Rented Sector Partnership, which will be a vital vehicle for co-ordinating an effective response to the Act's introduction across London councils. The upcoming changes to tenants' legal protections will not improve renters' circumstances without a proactive effort and new approaches to enforcement across all London local authorities, which the Partnership can help to drive and facilitate.

However, the Act does not address the rent affordability crisis facing London renters. For many renters in the capital, the exorbitant cost of rent will remain their greatest source of insecurity and hardship. Without stronger protections against unaffordable rent increases, there is a risk that 'economic evictions' – where a rent increase effectively serves as an eviction by pricing a tenant out of their home – will replace section 21 no-fault evictions as a way for landlords to

⁸ Greater London Authority, [Housing in London annual report – London Datastore](#), January 2025

⁹ Greater London Authority, [Housing in London annual report – London Datastore](#), January 2025

¹⁰ London Property Licensing, <https://www.londonpropertylicensing.co.uk/selective-licensing/>, November 2025

remove tenants. The continuing of the Mayor's commitment to call for rent controls across London and a broader New Deal for Renters therefore remains imperative.

6. How can the Mayor support local authorities in London to implement and enforce the measures introduced by the Renters' Rights Act, and monitor the impact on Londoners?

The Mayor can play a vital leadership role to ensure the Act delivers meaningful change on the ground. This should centre on coordinating across London's local authorities to drive consistent and proactive enforcement.

To enable meaningful enforcement of the Act across London, we recommend the Mayor focuses on the following actions:

- Facilitating sharing of best practices and learning across local authorities on new enforcement approaches and processes in response to the Act
- Supporting councils to make full use of the new powers available to them through the Act, including the new inspection powers and expanded scope for civil penalties, and utilise existing routes to boost enforcement capacity, particularly expanding licensing schemes
- Creating transparency and accountability for upholding the new framework of renters' rights through benchmarking and public reporting of key indicators, building on the existing Rogue Landlord Checker.

While central government will be undertaking some work to monitor the impacts of the Act, the GLA can also support with its own work in improving circumstances for renters by closely monitoring trends in the experience of renting in London specifically. We would encourage the GLA to implement a London-focused framework for monitoring the experience of renters on the ground.

The results of any monitoring activity should be publicly available and used to hold both landlords and local authorities to account. The indicators and trends that would be helpful to monitor the impact of the Act are discussed under our response to question 1.

By working with councils, the GLA could coordinate uniform data collection across boroughs so data can be disaggregated by locality, which could give a more detailed picture when assessing changes in the renting experience in different areas.

7. How can the Mayor help renters and landlords understand their new rights and responsibilities under the Act?

We would encourage the Mayor to lead a coordinated, London-wide programme of awareness-raising in partnership with local authorities, renters' unions and advice charities. This should include a range of online and physical mediums for promoting the upcoming set of changes. For example, utilising the advertising opportunities offered by the Transport for London network to signpost to further guidance on the Act could help in reaching a large number of London's renters.

In line with the Mayor's manifesto commitment, partnering with and supporting tenants' unions and charities that offer advice to renters should be a central pillar in improving tenant awareness of the Act across London's diverse renter population and improving renters' routes to access support.

8. What impact will the Renters' Rights Act have on the supply of rented properties, and how can this be monitored?

The future impact of the Act on the number of privately rented homes is uncertain, but there is currently no strong evidence that the Act itself will lead to a significant reduction in supply. Decisions by landlords to sell properties are influenced by a range of wider factors, including taxation, interest rates and other policy areas impacting renting, rather than the relatively modest administrative changes required from landlords by the Act. Furthermore, when a landlord does decide to sell a rented home, it will be purchased by another private landlord, a council, a first-time buyer or another owner-occupier - it won't disappear from the housing stock.

Claims that basic renter protections undermine supply should be treated with caution. If a landlord feels unable to meet their obligations under the Act, it is more appropriate for the home to be purchased by someone who is better placed to deliver safe and secure housing for their tenants.

Changes in the availability of homes for private rent can be monitored by collecting data on: use of the new possession grounds; changes in tenure following the sales of rented homes; and the volume of rental home listings. It will also be helpful to monitor homelessness rates and the number of people in need of temporary accommodation.