

Implementing and monitoring the Renters' Rights Act in London

Generation Rent submission to London Assembly Housing Committee call for written evidence

February 2026

Generation Rent is the voice of private renters across the UK. We campaign for every private renter to live in a secure, quality and affordable home. We believe that renting can, must and will get better.

This written submission is building on the oral evidence provided to the committee by our Chief Executive, Ben Twomey, on Tuesday 20th January 2026.

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?

If the Renters' Rights Act does what it is supposed to do, then renters in London will have homes that provide stability in their lives, allow them to settle down if they want to, and help them thrive – rather than cause anxiety and ill-health, and drive inequality.

Section 21 evictions, a leading cause of homelessness, will finally be outlawed. In most cases, tenants who abide by their tenancy agreement can only be evicted if their landlord wants to sell, or move a family member or themselves into the property, and only after a minimum of 12 months. The notice period a landlord has to give tenants will double from two to four months. All of this means that we will have greater stability in our rented homes, and greater trust in dealings with our landlords, so we can plan our futures and complain if things go wrong.

Section 21 evictions are a leading cause of homelessness. Ending them will stop landlords evicting tenants in order to raise the rent or avoid carrying out repairs, so will reduce the number of families presenting as homeless. While landlords will still be able to evict tenants due to rent arrears or anti-social behaviour, the amount of rent arrears needed to trigger an eviction will be increasing from two to three months, giving renters more breathing space to try to settle debts before facing an eviction.

The reforms will also bring an end to fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies. With the new law, these will become a periodic tenancy which automatically renews every month until either the tenant provides a notice to quit, or a landlord conducts a valid and legal eviction. This change gives renters much more flexibility, meaning we can leave the property if our circumstances change or the home becomes unsuitable, anytime with two months' notice, while still having the new eviction protections mentioned above.

Under the new rules, landlords will have to issue a Section 13 notice to raise the rent, and will be limited to doing this once a year, giving renters two months' notice of the new rent. The scrapping of Section 21 evictions also reduces the risk of retaliatory evictions when renters choose to challenge rent rises.

Renters' existing powers to challenge rent hikes at the First-Tier Tribunal is strengthened, by postponing any eventual rent rise to the date of the tribunal's decision, and the rent set by the

Tribunal can be no higher than the landlord's proposed rent. These changes remove significant financial risks for renters in using the Tribunal, and should also encourage landlords to negotiate rather than impose rent increases, to reduce the likelihood of being taken to Tribunal.

The amount of rent in advance landlords can ask for will be limited to one month, reducing the upfront cost of renting. Bidding wars are also being banned. No longer will renters make an offer at the asking rent only to be pitted against someone else who has offered more. When advertising homes, landlords and agents must publish an asking rent and it will be illegal to accept offers above that rate. While this may not necessarily reduce rents that are charged, it will reduce the amount of renters' valuable time that is wasted in applying for tenancies they will never be able to afford. Moreover, blanket bans on tenants with children or those receiving benefits will finally be outlawed as discrimination.

This law will eventually apply the Decent Homes Standard (which sets minimum standards that homes must meet) and Awaab's Law (which sets strict timeframes for repairing dangerous hazards like damp and mould) to privately rented homes for the first time. However, the timeline for the Decent Homes Standard coming into force has recently been set as 2035. It is absurd to let landlords drag their feet for an entire decade, denying renters the most basic standards in our homes. It will mean millions of renters, including children, trapped living in poor quality homes with nowhere to turn. The timeline for Awaab's Law remains unconfirmed and we are awaiting a consultation on that.

Landlords will no longer be able to unreasonably refuse a pet in a privately rented home, while a new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman will provide a free, impartial and binding way to resolve disputes without the courts. In parallel, a landlord database is finally being introduced to give renters access to more information about their home and who they are renting from.

The Rent Repayment Order system is also being strengthened. A Rent Repayment Order requires repayment of rent by a landlord or letting agent who has committed a specific renting offence against the tenant. Under the current system, these are mostly used when landlords need a licence but do not have one, something that is more common for large shared houses. The new law adds six new offences which renters can claim rent payments back for, including misuse of eviction grounds, re-letting in the 12 months after using a sale or moving in ground, and continued non-compliance after being fined by the council. Renters will be able to claim back up to 24 months' rent (instead of the previous 12) and have two years to bring claims, while superior landlords and company directors will also be held liable, closing off loopholes some have been exploiting to avoid accountability.

The law itself is a generational change but its impact will only be felt in our homes if renters know their rights, councils are enforcing the law, and landlords that disregard the law aren't allowed to get away with it. It's therefore critical that councils are able to robustly enforce the new laws as soon as they come into force, using the increased civil penalties to demonstrate to landlords what happens if they try to ignore them.

The success of the Act will be seen in reduced homeless cases arising from the end of private tenancies, longer tenancies as recorded in the English Housing Survey, and fewer unwanted moves which may show up in Ministry of Justice court claims or deposit scheme data on tenancy turnover. The result of more renters having the confidence to exercise their rights should appear in higher numbers of market rent assessments and RRO applications taking place at the First-Tier Tribunal. We would also expect to see more councils reporting

enforcement activity as a sign that quality of homes is improving. The number of landlords and properties registered with the database and ombudsman will be an important figure to monitor once those institutions are set up.

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

The two key challenges are empowering renters to be aware of our rights and confident in asserting them, while robustly enforcing the law as a priority. These challenges must be addressed together, and will be greater than the sum of their parts if addressed effectively.

Polling that Generation Rent commissioned with Opinium in April 2025 found that 2 in 5 (39%) renters in London said they would not be confident in taking action against their landlord due to disrepair or concerns over illegal behaviour. The sample size was 347 people. In reality, those renters are right not to feel confident. Councils are the most important enforcement body but they simply don't have the resources they need to enforce effectively, which right now is leaving landlords across the country not fulfilling their obligations, and renters living in awful conditions that impact their physical and mental health.

While many landlords will educate themselves on the new regulations and seek to abide by them, others will be watching keenly to see what they can get away with after 1st May 2026. We are already hearing tales of letting agents, not necessarily in London, trying to pull the wool over renters' eyes. A recent example was the demanding of a 'statement of intent' from prospective tenants to commit to remaining in the property for 12 months with no break clause. This statement has no legal basis, but it does effectively trick renters into thinking that they do not have the flexibility in their home that the new law provides. It could even put renters off from taking a tenancy just because they can't commit to that period.

Councils will have many other enforcement duties under the Act, but there are some offences under the Act that renters will be better placed than councils to identify – the question is whether renters will check and report. This intelligence arising from tenant reports will be crucial for councils enforcing the Act more widely.

Simon Mullings, a brilliant housing lawyer at the Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre who sadly passed away just over a year ago, used to talk about an "army of tenants" who, with the right support, would be able to spot where things have gone wrong and be incentivised to bring their landlord to justice if needed. Rent Repayment Orders are central to this, as the ability for renters to get some of their rent back is a strong reason to not tolerate any more bad behaviour. New offences under the Renters' Rights Act include if a landlord provides false or misleading information to the new Private Rented Sector Database, or if they breach the no re-let period after claiming to be evicting in order to sell or move in. Renters could be crucial in monitoring these areas, but will only do so in large numbers if incentivised to check because of a widely-known connection to Rent Repayment Orders.

It will therefore be important that councils do as much as they can to encourage and facilitate tenants to check for non-compliance, and do what they can to maximise the tenant's chance at getting compensated. Otherwise the deterrent effect will be very weak.

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

A new law without enforcement to back it up is just empty words. Early council enforcement will help have a deterrent effect against unlawful practice, as will Rent Repayment Orders if renters are aware of them and supported to pursue them.

The UK Government in November 2025 announced £18 million in "burdens funding" to help councils prepare for enforcing the Renters' Rights Act. But councils have already stated that this doesn't go far enough, and that they need sustained and predictable funding to make the reforms work.

To understand what the current absence of enforcement can look like in London, we have been given permission to share Sarah's recent experience. Sarah rented a flat in Croydon for around a decade, leaving in March last year. She is a retired and receiving disability benefits after having a stroke. She said the flat she was privately renting had 96 points of disrepair. She constantly raised the issue with Croydon Council, who she says "did nothing" despite her supplying lots of evidence of the issues she was facing.

This experience is all too familiar in Croydon. From 2022 to 2025, the Guardian found that Croydon council received 4,461 tenant complaints. These are thousands of people potentially in a similar situation to Sarah. But during that time the council did not prosecute a single landlord. It issued only three civil penalty notices, all of which were in 2022 and nothing since.

This is a council area that includes part of the Secretary of State for Housing's parliamentary constituency. Neighbouring Lambeth, which includes the other part of that constituency, also reported just three enforcement actions in the last three years, despite handling 3,207 complaints.

To zoom out to all London Boroughs, the GLA's Rogue Landlord Checker is leading the way in the country for showing where renters can look up landlords to see records over the last three years of any fines, prosecutions, revoked licenses or even banning orders in their area.

Having viewed the Rogue Landlord Checker on Friday 16th January 2026, it is clear that enforcement is not widespread, it is not a reliable tool for renters to use, and its existence is monitoring some activity by councils but not necessarily promoting more.

The earliest enforcement dates on the Checker were from 2019, implying there could be almost seven years of data available (the GDPR policy says records will be removed after ten years), and yet the information available is inconsistent. This could be because it is not mandatory for local councils to update the Checker, and also presumably because enforcement actions are so infrequent that there is little to report.

14 of the 32 London boroughs are not even listed on the Checker, because they are not sharing a single successful formal enforcement outcome. These are Barnet, Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames, Merton and Sutton. Some of these councils may claim not to use the Checker, but levels of enforcement are made more pronounced by the statistics reported by those that are using the Checker.

Four London councils recorded only one enforcement action. These were Haringey, Islington, Lambeth and Richmond upon Thames. Then we begin to see slight increases from Lewisham (3), Wandsworth (4), Tower Hamlets (6), Ealing (8), Southwark (12), Kensington and Chelsea (15), Havering (15), Newham (18), Barking and Dagenham (18), Enfield (20) and Westminster (22). The most active enforcers according to the Checker are Camden (42), Redbridge (52) and Waltham Forest (65).

To give context to these figures, we can choose any type of offence that does appear on the Checker. For example, enforcement against illegal evictions should be included. The housing charity Safer Renting found that almost 9,000 cases involving illegal evictions across England were logged in 2022, and they claimed that less than 1% of cases resulted in any enforcement action. On the Rogue Landlord Checker, only one conviction of a landlord has ever been recorded for illegally evicting their tenant.

The UK Government are in the process of implementing a new mandatory collection of private rented sector enforcement data from local housing authorities, which will include the number of full-time equivalent staff responsible for enforcement in the private rented sector. The GLA and Mayor should work with them to strengthen and expand how the Rogue Landlord Checker works in this context.

4. 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 Mayor of London's manifesto promised to "support renters to take dodgy landlords to tribunals to get up to 24 months of rent refunded". The GLA's Property Licence Checker, launched in 2020, is useful to allow renters to find out if they might be owed a Rent Repayment Order because their property should have a licence but does not.

However, there remains a great deal of non-compliance. In 2024, local authorities estimated there were a total of 146,600 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in London, of which 31,066 were mandatory licensable properties (i.e. HMOs with more than 5 people). According to the GLA Housing in London 2025 report, the number of HMOs actually holding a mandatory licence in 2024 was 19,896 – less than two thirds of those that should legally have a mandatory licence. The Property Licence Checker could help renters to pursue their rent to be returned to them, including the tenants of 11,000 large HMOs without a licence, but it has not yet achieved a tipping point of awareness among renters and deterrence for landlords, and so would benefit from further promotion, and ideally integration with councils' licensing registers.

The Mayor's manifesto also promised to "end rough sleeping for good by 2030". Section 21 evictions are a leading cause of homelessness, so ending them with the Renters' Rights Act could begin to turn the tide for the more than 90,000 children living in temporary accommodation right now in London, and contribute towards the goal to end rough sleeping.

The Mayor also pledged in his manifesto to "back renters to defend their rights, with advice and guidance, including funding for groups such as renters' unions". It appears that such funding has not yet materialised. With 2026 ushering in the biggest changes to renting in a generation,

renters groups would be very grateful if such support could be made available as soon as possible. This could support efforts such as the development of resources and events to raise awareness among renters of new rights and protections under the Renters' Rights Act.

A wider point to make is about a gap in the Renters' Rights Act, in that it does not meaningfully address the soaring cost of renting, which is the primary concern for renters. The Mayor has been on the record for a number of years now wanting powers to be devolved so that he can take action to limit rent rises in London. However in September last year, the Housing Minister said in Parliament that the Government had not received direct representations from the Mayor in respect to rent controls, and that they have not discussed their introduction at a local level. We think it is long overdue that the Mayor started making those representations on behalf of London's renters.

Limiting rent rises is essential to making housing affordable, secure and fair. By stopping unaffordable rent hikes, regulation would give renters more stability, reduce poverty, and allow people to keep more of their income for living, not just surviving. Lower rents strengthen communities, reduce homelessness, and give tenants the confidence to demand safe, decent homes without fear of retaliation. Rent control also shifts power away from landlords, ensuring wage rises benefit workers rather than being swallowed by rent, and helps prevent displacement through gentrification.

Rent regulation is in force across much of Western Europe. The exact nature of the regulation varies a great deal, but two main types are limits on rent increases within tenancies (found in Germany, France and Switzerland) and limits on rent increases between tenancies (such as Denmark, Sweden and Austria). A recent report by the Swedish Union of Tenants (available in Swedish [here](#) but English translation available) examined outcomes in each of these countries to understand how well-founded common objections to rent regulation were.

In terms of "supply" of homes, this could mean several things: the size of the private rented sector, the number of homes built in relation to the population, and how easy it is to move to another rented home. The report found no relationship between the existence of rent regulation and a reduction in supply across these definitions:

- Germany and Switzerland have proportionately larger private renter populations than the rest of the countries examined (2023).
- France, Switzerland and Austria had building rates around twice that of England in 1991-2021.
- Renters in Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland were more likely than renters in the UK to have moved home in the previous five years according to a 2012 study.

5. 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 and GLA should expand the Property Licence Checker to support tenants understanding new offences that will be eligible for Rent Repayment Orders, as explored above. Councils will have different individual approaches, and the GLA could provide either a convening role on this, or a backstop for renters whose council support is lacking.

We also think the Mayor should create a legal fighting fund to support local authorities. Councils tend to be risk averse when it comes to taking on bad landlords. A collective legal fighting fund for councils in London could help overcome timidity, particularly where a criminal landlord is operating across council borders. It requires a lot of money up front to build up a self-sustaining enforcement mechanism, which the government envisions for councils through the use of larger fines. However the advantages of early resourcing are significant in protecting renters, bringing the worst offenders to justice, communicating action for a deterrent effect, and bringing money back into enforcement efforts. Early robust enforcement would therefore be the best deterrent against future unlawful behaviour.

This enforcement will not be perfect right away. As we have already discussed, its low level of activity and capacity is the starting point. Therefore, the Mayor and GLA should be monitoring enforcement to enable continuing improvement and the sharing of best practice. Councils should have to justify inactivity not only to the UK Government, but to local leaders and residents alike. The success of the legislation should be monitored in terms of how it is impacting the lives of private renters in London. Where it is not having the desired impact, that will likely be the result of a failure in enforcement or awareness-raising rather than in the law itself.

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

One opportunity for London is that there are so many renters and the Mayor knows where they are concentrated, so will be able to use local physical advertising to reach them. Similarly the Transport for London (TfL) network is something a majority of renters will use so that is an opportunity for the GLA to reach them with materials, particularly tailored to a London audience, and pointing to further resources. Meanwhile, local councils should also be encouraged to consider their own public spaces such as libraries or newsletters.

Generation Rent would be very happy to advise on those materials, or for our own rights-awareness resources to be promoted or used. It will be important to get the right information to renters at the right time to minimise the potential for confusion, i.e. the risk that a renter believes that a section 21 is invalid before the ban comes into force. Over the next couple of months, renters will have questions about the status of their fixed term and what that means for their risk of being served notice..

Generation Rent is also looking to amplify these messages in the build up to our annual Renters' Rights Awareness Week, which this year we will be holding from 27th April to 3rd May 2026 to cover the Act's implementation date. We will be doing webinars, attending events, and producing as many resources as possible for as many stakeholders and partners as possible to reach renters. We are already discussing this with the GLA and have invited every local council to take part, but any promotion or coordination with the Mayor would be helpful.

Renters often depend on information from their landlords or letting agents alone, leaving them vulnerable to misinformation or withheld rights from particularly unscrupulous housing providers. The Mayor should consider how their online tools can be further promoted, or how the "new deal for renters" promised in their manifesto might include ways in which renters can access good independent information and legal support.

The new law introduces changes to the First Tier Tribunal in order to challenge rent increases that are above the market rent. Tribunal is a daunting word, so there is an obstacle to giving renters the confidence that it is worth at least considering an application to. Polling we did with Opinium last year found that just 9% of London's renters reported knowing a lot about the First-Tier Tribunal, while 64% said they have never heard of it. On the government's roadmap for implementing the Renters' Rights Act, they have said they are exploring introducing fees for renters to access the Tribunal. There is not currently a fee for challenging a rent increase, so any support from the Mayor or GLA in resisting this new barrier to justice would be very welcome.

A small note on purdah (the pre-election period) is that most of the Renters' Rights Act comes into force on 1st May 2026, which is just six days before local elections. We would urge everyone to not treat rights awareness as a political issue. The Mayor, the GLA and every council should be pulling out all the stops around 1st May to make people aware of their rights.

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

We do not anticipate a long term impact by the Renters' Rights Act on the supply of rented homes. When homes are sold by landlords they do not fall into the ground, but instead are often bought by other landlords or allow renters to become first time buyers, directly or via a chain. This does not take away from the fact that not enough homes have been built in recent decades however. We need more homes to be built, particularly social homes, but this is outside of the scope of the Renters' Rights Act. If politicians are interested in reviving home ownership then they must accept that this will involve the private rented sector getting smaller as a proportion of tenure types.

When Wales ended Section 21 in December 2022, there did seem to be a short-term spike in those evictions in the six months leading to the changes coming in. This means that if there is going to be a spike in England, we might see an uptick in the 12th February data release. The transition in Wales happened when rents were rising there at 12% so many landlords would likely have been evicting in order to re-let for a higher rent.

Renters could be supported through this with use of discretionary housing payments, which are coming to an end, or the new crisis resilience fund which replaces them, to protect renters from being driven into homelessness, poverty or debt because of the cost of an unwanted move. It is also important to note that not every Section 21 is valid, for example if the landlord hasn't protected the deposit properly or hasn't provided a valid gas safety or energy performance certificate. This means good rights awareness and access to legal advice would still enable some tenants to challenge those evictions leading up to 1st May.

Notably, if this does happen it will be a short term challenge that ought to be followed by a new and better system. The number of private renter evictions in Wales over the past 24 months has fallen compared with the 24 months before covid by 9% - rent arrears evictions have gone up 14% as the cost of living crisis continued but no-fault evictions are down 35%. In the same period England saw increases of about 25% and 50% for the equivalent eviction types respectively.

There is also no indication that county court eviction cases will take longer – Section 8 eviction grounds already make up nearly half of the landlord possession caseload, and the time taken

between claim and possession is very similar between Section 21 evictions and other types, at a median of about six months.