

PRIVATE RENTERS: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

What can I do if my landlord wants a higher rent?

Applies to: England
May 2026

Your landlord can only increase your rent once every 12 months and must use a Section 13 notice, also known as Form 4A, giving you two months' notice before your rent increases. They cannot raise the rent in the first 12 months of the tenancy.

When you can challenge the rent:

- You may be able to negotiate a lower rent than what the landlord asks for. Your landlord may tell you informally that they are planning to raise the rent before serving the Section 13, but the rent increase can be changed or delayed with agreement in writing between the tenant and the landlord.
- Tenants are entitled to challenge a formal Section 13 notice at the First-Tier Tribunal, which will set a rent based on what the landlord could expect to get for the property if they let it on the open market. The Tribunal will need to receive the application before the date the proposed rent will take effect.

Registered rent:

If you have a regulated tenancy – normally one that started before 1989 – you may have a registered rent. Your **tenancy agreement** should include how and when the rent will be reviewed. This is sometimes called 'fair rent'. Visit www.gov.uk/private-renting/changes-to-a-regulated-tenancy for more information.

10 Steps to take if your landlord or letting agent wants to put the rent up:

1. Don't respond straight away. Check what your negotiating position is.
2. Check if you have your landlord's contact details. Letting agents are legally obliged to provide you with the landlord's name and address if requested in writing.
3. What rent are they asking for? Is it higher than what similar properties are being advertised for nearby? Make a note of any that are cheaper than the proposed rent. You can also find how your rent compares here <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/>
4. Is it affordable? If the rent goes up, is there a risk you'd get into arrears? Rent is considered affordable if it is less than a third of your income.
5. Have you been a reliable tenant, and could you move out easily? Threatening to move out is your strongest bargaining chip. Your landlord wouldn't want to take a risk on an unknown tenant, especially when they would have to pay to advertise the property and miss out on weeks of rent and cover the costs of a new tenancy.

6. If you've asked them to make repairs and they have not done them or have taken an unreasonable amount of time, then you shouldn't have to pay extra for incompetence. Remind them of this and make sure you have copies of emails/photos of disrepair in case they need evidence.
7. What will you get out of a higher rent? Make a list of things they should spend that extra money on: new carpets, fuel-efficient boiler, fixing the ignition button on the cooker, etc.
8. Now you've built your case, contact your landlord. Tell them you'll have to move out if they put up the rent and go through your list of reasons why they should keep it unchanged.
9. The landlord could refuse to reconsider. In this case make your demands for improvements.
10. The landlord may come back to you with a counter offer. Be prepared to compromise - and make those demands for something in return.

Challenging a rent increase at the First-Tier Tribunal

- If you don't reach an agreement, and the landlord serves a Section 13 notice with a proposed rent you think is too high, you might be able to challenge it through a tribunal. The First-tier Tribunal will determine what the market rate should be.
- To apply to the tribunal, you will need to apply for a market rent determination using Form Rents I. There will be a **fee of £47** to pay.
- Please be aware that the tribunal will decide if the rent rise is "excessive" by comparing it with rents on new tenancies in the local area. So, if you live in a two-bedroom home in moderately good condition, they will compare it to other homes of a similar size and condition that have recently been let or being advertised in your local area.

When applying for a determination, make sure you provide evidence of:

- Rents being advertised in the local area
- Any improvements you have made to the home, including appliances you had to provide yourself, and
- Poor conditions in your home, including a low Energy Efficiency Rating

The tribunal will often apply a discount on the basis of poor conditions or improvements the tenant has made. This would be one reason for the tribunal to carry out an inspection and/or hold a hearing, but you would need to provide reasons for this in your application.

Your landlord will be sent a copy of your application and will be given 28 days to respond. You will then get 14 days to respond to the landlord.

Thanks to the Renters Rights Act, the tribunal will not be able to charge you anything higher than what your landlord has asked for. This includes cases where the proposed rent would still be lower than similar properties in your area. Additionally, if a new rent is determined, this will now apply from the date of the Tribunal's determination, instead of being backdated to your landlord's notice. If you don't challenge the proposed rent, the new rent will be due from the date in the landlord's notice.

Further information about the Tribunal is available here:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/renting-privately/during-your-tenancy/challenging-a-rent-increase/>

If an unaffordable rent increase goes ahead

Think carefully about your options before giving notice to leave. If you're on a low income or get benefits you might be able to get Housing Benefit or rent support through Universal Credit. If you decide to move out, make sure you've found a new place to live before you leave, or seek help from your local council if you cannot find a new home you can afford. You might not be able to get any help from your local council if you leave a home that could have been affordable.

Helpful links

Form Rents I:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-market-rent-determination>

You can get an idea of what you can afford by using Citizens Advice budgeting tool:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/budgeting/budgeting/work-out-your-budget/>

<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

Check if you can get help to pay your rent.

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/renting-privately/private-renting/get-help-with-renting-costs/>