



Know your rights

Our guide for private renters in England on facing homelessness, dealing with rent increases, getting repairs and much more.

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Are you renting in the private sector?

Then here's some good news. The **Renters' Rights Act (2025)** means you now have new rights to protect you if things go wrong.

We heard that the majority of tenants (82%) want more information about how the Renters' Rights Act affects them.¹ Because of this Crisis and the TDS Charitable Foundation have created this helpful guide with important updates and guidance about your rights as tenants.

Together, we're making the private rented sector work better for people facing homelessness. Some of these rights are coming in stages throughout 2026. Check the **[government website](#)** for more details.

1. TDS Charitable Foundation, (2025), [Tenant Awareness Around The Renters' Rights Act](#)



Protecting renters

If you privately rent your home from a landlord then you're not alone. So do over 4.6 million households in England.

Crisis, alongside many other organisations, have worked together to achieve new laws to protect renters. But we know there are times where you may need extra help.

In this guide we'll explain your rights and what you can do in common situations that might put you at risk of losing your home - like falling behind on rent or your landlord seeking to evict you.

Are you facing homelessness right now?

We know this can feel incredibly stressful. But you're not on your own.

Every year, many thousands of people are put at risk of homelessness when their landlords seek to change or end their tenancies. In 2023/24, nearly 80,000 households asked their local council for help when it happened to them.

And many more are anxious about it. A survey by TDS found that 40 per cent of private renters worry they'll be asked to leave their home at any time.²

Help is out there. Go to [page 12](#) now for organisations who can offer you support, guidance and advice.

Some of the words we use

A **tenancy** is a legal right to live somewhere for a set period of time.

A **tenant** is someone who rents their home.

Eviction is when a tenant is removed from a property.

Rent arrears are when someone is behind on their rent.

2. TDS Voice of the Tenant survey (March 2024).



I'm facing eviction – what can I do?

The law now gives people who rent stronger protections against eviction.

Landlords can't evict you on 'no fault' grounds anymore. This means they can't evict you without giving a reason.

People who rent can still be evicted – but only for certain reasons. For example, if you're consistently behind with your rent, or the landlord wants to sell the property or move in.

You can find a full list of reasons on the [government's website](#) under Tenancy Reform, Table 1: Grounds for possession.

Get advice

If you're facing eviction, you can get free legal advice and representation from the [Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service](#). Help is available from the moment you get a written notice that someone is seeking possession of your home (like an email from your landlord).

Facing homelessness now? [Crisis can help you work out what to do next.](#)



I'm behind on my rent

This is also called being 'in rent arrears'.

With bills and food prices rising, more of us are finding it hard to pay our rent.

But it's not just down to the cost of living. The housing crisis means that rent has become incredibly expensive. And everyday life situations like losing your job or leaving a relationship can force people into rent arrears. In fact, in 2024 one in five landlords had at least one tenant in arrears.³

If you're struggling to pay rent it's vital to tell your landlord now.

This can feel scary. But if they know your situation, landlords are more likely to give you options to pay, tell you where to get help, or agree to a repayment plan, than evict you.

Most landlords say they want to help tenants in trouble. After all, they want to keep long-term tenants.

Landlords may be able to offer flexibility and understanding. They may also tell you where to get advice on dealing with debt and claim benefits.

Remember that rent is a 'priority debt'. This means it should be paid before other debts. Even if you can't afford to pay your full rent, try and pay as much as you can, if you can.

Try Breathing Space

Breathing Space is a free scheme that can help give you up to 60 days to make plans to deal with your debt, without added pressure from the people you owe. Most interest and charges will also be frozen. You can only apply for the scheme by getting debt advice from an official debt adviser.

You can also get tailored debt advice from **StepChange**, plus advice on housing from **Citizens Advice**.

3. TDS Charitable Foundation's Voice of the Landlord 2024

How to tell your landlord you're behind on rent

Before the conversation:

Plan what you're going to say. There's lots of good resources to help you plan the conversation.

For example, **TDS' My Housing Issue Gateway** can create a helpful form or letter or a script for a phone conversation. **Citizens Advice** can also help plan what you need to say.

During the conversation:

First explain your financial situation. And suggest ways you can solve the problem.

This can include:

- offering them an affordable amount you can pay back each month
- making a claim for benefits
- contacting your council to see if you can get financial help with your rent (like **discretionary housing payments**).

Let them know if your situation is set to change. For example, you might have a new benefits payment coming through, or a job offer.

Sadly, you might have to look at the future and work out if you can afford your current home. Start making a plan – which might include looking for somewhere cheaper.

After the conversation:

Follow up your conversation with an email confirming what you've talked about. This could include what you've offered to pay and when you'll pay it.

Know your rights

Your landlord can evict you because of unpaid rent. Under the new act, you will have more time before your landlord can use mandatory grounds to evict you. This is when the court has no choice but to order you to leave your home.

Before three months of unpaid rent (this used to be two), you can only be given notice for rent arrears on **discretionary grounds**. This means a judge has the power to decide whether it's reasonable to end the tenancy based on your circumstances. This should give you more flexibility and time to repay your arrears and stay in your home.

After three months of unpaid rent, your landlord could use a **mandatory ground** and you will be ordered to leave your home.

Your landlord can also give notice to evict you on discretionary grounds if you have delayed paying your rent multiple times.

Your landlord must give you proper notice before they issue a claim with the court to evict you. The end of the notice doesn't mean you have to leave your home. You will only need to leave your home at the end of the court process.

Remember, help is always available. You can get tailored debt advice from **StepChange**, plus advice on housing from **Citizens Advice**.



My landlord is selling my home / moving back in

Your rights on eviction

The good news is that your landlord can't evict you (force you to move out) to move in or sell the property in the first year of your tenancy. **But they can serve you notice after eight months.**

Your landlord will need to give you at least four months' notice so you have enough time to find a new home.

Your rights on viewings

Your landlord might have to arrange viewings at your home to sell it.

Check your tenancy agreement to see if there's information on how and when this will happen.

If there's not, talk to your landlord about when viewings would work for you.

What if someone new buys the home?

Your landlord might sell your home with you still living in it. If this happens your tenancy agreement will still stand, and your rent won't change.

After the sale, the new buyer will be your landlord. They should let you know their name and contact details, take responsibility for maintenance of the property and protect your deposit in an official scheme.

They may ask you to sign a new tenancy agreement. You can decide whether you want to or not. You may want to get advice before signing – **Shelter has information [here](#) on how to do this.**

What if the landlord wants me out?

If your landlord wants to sell the property without you in it, then they must legally evict you. You don't have to leave until that process is complete.



My rent's going up

Most landlords want to maintain a good relationship with their tenants and will think carefully about fair rent increases.

Your landlord can only increase your rent once a year.

The new act means that all tenancies for private renters will become 'periodic' (a rolling tenancy with no fixed end date – for example, month to month or week to week).

Tenants will no longer have to sign a new contract every year and instead all tenants will be on rolling periodic tenancies.

This makes it much easier to leave a substandard property should you want to. You also now get more flexibility if you need to move because your situation changes. For example, if a relationship ends.

Your landlord must give you at least two months' notice of a rent increase (it used to be one) using a section 13 notice.

What if I can't afford my rent increase?

Your rent increase should be fair and realistic, in line with average rents in your local area. If you think the new rent is unreasonable or unaffordable (or both) talk to your landlord and try to offer a compromise.

Here's some good **step-by-step advice** from Citizens Advice on challenging a rent increase. **My Housing Issue Gateway also has some good advice and information around rent.**

Remember you can also challenge unreasonable rent increases **at a tribunal.**



I need repairs for my home

Both you and your landlord have responsibilities for keeping your home clean and safe.

You're responsible for:

- reporting any repairs you need to your landlord or letting agent. You need to do this soon after you notice the problem and make sure you're available so someone can come in and do the repair
- making sure your home is well ventilated (if possible), to help avoid condensation and damp
- carrying out minor maintenance (like checking smoke alarms work and changing light bulbs)
- getting rid of all your rubbish and keeping your home reasonably clean.

Find out more about your **rights and responsibilities on renting a home**.

Your landlord is responsible for:

- utility maintenance (making sure the water, gas and electricity works) including annual gas safety checks
- making sure your home's structure is safe and secure – like walls, the roof and windows
- keeping the property free from serious health and safety hazards (like checking the electrics are safe and keeping fire evacuation routes clear)
- repairing your home – including problems with plumbing, electricity and heating
- installing smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

How to get repairs from your landlord

Don't ignore anything that needs to be fixed. It's essential you tell your landlord about any problems as soon as possible.

Ideally do this in writing – in an email, letter or message. Include photos so they can see what needs to be repaired. Remember that you should carry on paying rent while waiting for repairs.

Once your landlord knows you need repairs they must do them 'in a reasonable period'.⁴

For example:

- they should repair anything serious (like damp, or burst pipes) in 24 hours
- broken heating should be repaired in days (especially when it's cold)
- repairs to windows might take weeks, or longer
- cracks on the walls caused by subsidence might take months to fix.

How long is reasonable can partly depend on:

- the effect on you
- how complex the work is
- the cost of the work.

What happens if repairs aren't made?

If your landlord doesn't respond to your request, try asking what's causing the delay. Keep a record of your contact.

If this doesn't work try contacting your local council's environmental health department, **or get government advice.**

The government also has some good advice on how to get repairs done in your home.

The Decent Homes Standard

The government has introduced a Decent Homes Standard setting the minimum standard for the condition of a renter's home.

Your landlord could be fined up to £7,000, or prosecuted, if they don't comply with it. You or your local council can also apply for a rent repayment order through tribunal if your landlord doesn't comply.

We'll update this guide when we know more about it.

4. Some of the rights this section won't come into effect until later in 2026.

Where else can I get help?

Try the TDS Charitable Foundation's My Housing Issue Gateway. It's a **free online tool** to help private and social tenants solve housing problems.

You can use it to:

- find the right way to make complaints and solve problems
- learn more about your rights
- find out your options.

These organisations can also help you:

Crisis can provide practical one-to-one support to help you access benefits, healthcare, employment opportunities and more. There's a dedicated 'get help' button on the home page.

StepChange offer free, flexible debt advice to anyone who needs it. They can provide tailored advice based on your situation through their website.

Breathing Space is a free scheme that can help give you up to 60 days to make plans to deal with your debt, without added pressure from the people you owe. You can apply for Breathing Space by getting debt advice from an approved provider (like StepChange).

Citizens Advice offer free advice on housing, the law, debt and benefits. You can put phrases like 'rent arrears' into the website's search bar to get useful information.

Mind provide advice on self-care and managing your mental health. Their free support line offers a voice on the end of the phone when you feel there's nowhere else to turn. Call them on 0300 102 1234.

Entitled To is a free, anonymous online benefits calculator. Use it to check you're getting everything you're entitled to.

Shelter can give advice on housing law, tenants' rights and more plus a free helpline if you're facing homelessness on 0800 800 4444.

Can your employer help?

Some employers have policies to support employees if they have problems with housing. These can include time off for viewings and going to appointments, flexible hours and financial help.

Crisis head office

50-52 Commercial Street, London E1 6LT
Tel: 0300 636 1967

www.crisis.org.uk

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Crisis UK (trading as Crisis)
Registered Charity Numbers:
E&W1082947, SC040094. Company
Number: 4024938

TDS

West Wing, First Floor, The Maylands
Building, 200 Maylands Avenue,
Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7TG.

www.tdsgroup.uk

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