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RENTERS' RIGHTS TOOLKIT

Student rental market: what letting agents need to know



Under the Renters' Rights Act 2025, student tenants will fall into different categories with varying levels of protection depending on where they choose to rent.

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What letting agents need to know

New periodic tenancies

From 1 May 2026, all tenancies in the private rented sector will automatically become assured periodic tenancies (rolling contracts running month-to-month or week-to-week without any fixed term).

This means that they continue indefinitely until ended by a notice from the tenant or a notice from the landlord for specific reasons. If there are joint tenants, then notice given by one will be effective for all tenants.

Tenancy agreements

For new tenancies created on or after 1 May 2026, landlords will need to complete and provide a Written Statement of Information form provided by the UK Government.

Landlords with existing tenancies will need to provide tenants with a copy of a UK Government published 'Information Sheet' on or before 31 May 2026. This document will inform tenants about the changes made by the Act.

End of the Section 21 eviction notice

The Renters' Rights Act abolishes Section 21 evictions, meaning landlords must instead use a Section 8 ground for possession – these are specific circumstances in which a landlord can regain possession.

New type of notice for landlords to serve on students

Under the new rules, landlords won't be able to give notice to tenants without a reason. The UK Government has created an exception to this, which will allow landlords renting Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to full-time students to gain possession.

Landlords will be able to give a notice to require students to leave the property at the end of the academic year. This is a Ground 4A notice.

However, this will only apply in certain circumstances:

- The tenants are all full-time students at the time the tenancy is granted, and Ground 4A will only be available to a landlord who intends to rent the property to a new set of full-time students (or the landlord reasonably thinks they will become so during the tenancy) in the next academic year.
- Landlords must serve at least four months' notice, and the date specified in the Ground 4A notice (when the landlord wants the students to move out) must fall between 1 June and 30 September.
- The notice will only apply to full-time students living in an HMO.

If the property is let on a joint tenancy, each tenant must be a full-time student when the tenancy begins, or when the tenancy begins, the landlord must reasonably think they will become full-time students during the tenancy, for the ground to be relied upon.

NB: If there are individual tenancies between the landlord and each tenant within an HMO, only tenants who meet the student criteria can be evicted.

Before the tenancy is entered into, landlords will be required to provide a written notice of their intention to use the ground on the basis that the current tenants are full-time students (or the landlord reasonably

thinks they will become so during the tenancy) and the landlord intends to relet the property to new full-time students. Unless a written notice is provided, landlords will not be able to regain possession using a Ground 4A notice.

NB: The UK Government has created the Ground 4A notice to allow the annual cycle of student letting to continue. Landlords will not be able to use the ground if the tenancy was agreed more than six months in advance of the tenancy starting (i.e. the tenant moving in).

A full-time student means a person receiving education provided by means of a full-time course at a prescribed educational establishment, such as a university or higher education college.

NB: Where the tenancy began before 1 May 2026, if the landlord gave the tenants written notice by 1 June 2026, they may evict them using Ground 4A.

What is an HMO?

A home is a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) if both of the following apply:

- at least three tenants live there, forming more than one household.
- the tenants share toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities with other tenants.

NB: A household is either a single person or members of the same family who live together. Family includes people who are married or living together, relatives or half-relatives as well as step-parents and step-children.

A home is a large HMO if both of the following apply:

- at least five tenants live there, forming more than one household.
- the tenants share toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities with other tenants.

NB: Large HMOs need a license from the local council.

Students living in university accommodation or halls

The new rules only impact tenants on ASTs. Students living in halls under licence agreements, or who have a non-AST tenancy granted by a university (i.e. houses or flats owned or operated by a university), will not be affected by the changes to notices or the new rolling contracts.

Purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) run by private companies

Accommodation offered to students in private student halls will be exempt from the new tenancy rules if the company managing the building joins an approved code of practice.

Rent in advance

Landlords and letting agents are banned from requiring or accepting any payment of rent in advance of the tenancy being entered.

Monthly rent payments

A landlord will only be able to require up to one month's rent (or 28 days' rent for tenancies with rental periods of less than one month) once a tenancy agreement has been signed and before commencement.

This is important to note because some students prefer to pay rent on a termly or quarterly basis to line up with their funding. Tenants will be able to pay rent in advance voluntarily but can't be forced to do so.

Guarantors and affordability checks

The restriction on rent in advance is likely to impact international students because paying upfront has been a common way to support referencing and mitigate a landlord's risk of rent arrears. Students in this position may need to sign up for a UK guarantor scheme.

Managing the changes

1. **Review tenancy agreements** - ensure agreements reflect the move to periodic tenancies and are clear about notice periods.
2. **Let HMOs by room instead of a joint tenancy** – this can minimise the risk that one tenant serves notice to quit for all.
3. **Plan for check-out alignment** - encourage landlords to align tenancy marketing and check-out processes with academic calendars as far as possible.
4. **Strengthen relationships with universities** - work with local institutions, student unions, and accommodation offices to anticipate demand and manage early departures.
5. **Advise landlords on risk management** - help clients understand how voids may increase and explore rent guarantees, insurance products, or more flexible tenant profiles.
6. **Diversify offers** - explore short-term, postgraduate, or summer rental opportunities that periodic contracts may make easier to manage.

Further information

Renters' Rights Act 2025

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2025/26/contents>

UK Government guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-renters-rights-bill/guide-to-the-renters-rights-bill>

Renters' Rights Act 2025 implementation roadmap

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/renters-rights-act-2025-implementation-roadmap/implementing-the-renters-rights-act-2025-our-roadmap-for-reforming-the-private-rented-sector>



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