



Renters' Reform Coalition

Our policy principles

Over the last 20 years, the number of people renting from a private landlord has doubled. We call on the government to deliver on its promise to reset the balance of rights and responsibilities between landlords and renters. The upcoming Renters' Reform Bill is an opportunity to achieve fairness for renters through abolishing Section 21 no-fault evictions, and improving

the safety, security and conditions of privately rented homes for the 11 million private renters in England. The Renters' Reform Coalition, made up of 20 leading organisations that support renters, have developed principles that we believe set out the changes needed through the Renters' Reform Bill and beyond to ensure every renter has a secure home.

Stability & affordability

- 1. Section 21 'no fault' evictions must be abolished.** Renters deserve secure homes that they can call their own, where they can put down roots, free from the worry of the upheaval and cost of an unexpected house move. The new system introduced by the Government must provide tenants with security of tenure.
- 2. Once section 21 is abolished, tenancies should be open ended, providing** greater stability and preventing the continuous cycle of moving that many find themselves trapped in. Indefinite tenancies provide both security and flexibility, allowing renters to stay in their homes for as long or as short a period as they need to.
- 3. The intention of the Renters' Reform Bill is to abolish no-fault evictions. The new grounds for possession must ensure this intention is met and do not undermine renters' security of tenure.** Eviction causes renters untold financial hardship, an acute stressor which damages mental health. The new legislation must reduce these risks. No-fault grounds must be used only in extremely limited circumstances, where a landlord can produce a high level of evidence.
- 4. The Government must ensure that rent increases are not used to force tenants to leave, operating as a defacto unfair or retaliatory eviction.** If a landlord were to increase the rent suddenly to a level above which a tenant could afford, they would have no choice but to leave. The new system must introduce and strengthen measures to prevent this.
- 5. Notice periods should be increased from two months in all but the most serious cases.** Finding a new home can be challenging and expensive for tenants, and longer notice periods would minimise this difficulty.
- 6. The affordability crisis in the private rented sector should be addressed.** It is widely accepted that in order to be affordable, housing costs should not take up more than a third of someone's income. The government must act to bring rents down so that everyone has a home they can afford to rent where they can live and flourish.

Safety and standards

7. **The Government must ensure that private rented homes are safe and decent, through introducing a well-resourced national register of landlords.**

At present, there is no record of who owns the 4.5 million private rented properties in the UK, and no checks on who becomes a landlord. As a result, taking action against landlords who let out unsafe homes or break the law is extremely difficult. A national register of all landlords should be introduced, making it easier for authorities to target criminal landlords. The register should require evidence that landlords are meeting minimum standards as a condition of registration, with registration removed from landlords who break the law. This register should be adequately resourced, and should include temporary accommodation properties owned by private landlords.

8. **Illegal eviction is a crime and must be treated as such.** Tenants need to be protected from criminal landlords and letting agents who force them out of their homes. The Government must address the shortcomings in existing legislation that relate to harassment and illegal evictions in the private rented sector. Police forces must be directed to act in ways that are consistent with renters rights and to not assist with illegal evictions.

A just housing system

9. **The Private Rented Sector should be free of all discrimination.**

The Government's Right to Rent scheme, which requires private landlords to check the immigration status of tenants and potential tenants, should be scrapped. Right to Rent has been ruled as discriminatory, and has no place in a just housing system. Discrimination of tenants in receipt of welfare benefits, on low incomes or on zero hours contracts must be ended, both when tenants are looking for a new home and during the referencing process.

10. **To deliver a housing system that rebalances the power between tenant and landlord, access to justice is imperative.**

Any reform should be combined with better dispute resolution and mediation services relieving pressure from the courts. Improved access to justice should not focus solely upon digitisation but accessibility, and expanded legal aid, access to advice and representation of renters. The Government should guarantee all renters have access to legal aid should they need it.

Join the campaign

Everyone who shares our aims can join the campaign so together we can ensure the legislation secures the biggest tenancy reform for the PRS in England in a generation.

We welcome renters, individuals, politicians and organisations to work with us - this can be signing up for updates, joining campaign actions, endorsing and promoting our policies and much more.

For more information on how to get involved go to RentersReformCoalition.co.uk

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