
Report for: Homes Policy Development Group

Date of Meeting:	18 th November 2025
Subject:	PREPARING FOR THE RENTERS' RIGHTS ACT 2025
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jane Lock Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services
Responsible Officer:	Simon Newcombe Head of Housing and Health
Exempt:	Not applicable
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Annex A – Renters Rights Project Plan 2025

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

The Renters Rights Bill (formerly the Renters Reform Bill) has now been through all the parliamentary stages required and received Royal Assent on 27th October 2025.

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 (the Act) introduces significant changes to the private sector rental market in England, aimed at enhancing tenant protections and establishing new responsibilities for landlords. As such, it places new duties on local authorities and will have a direct impact on the regulatory activity of the Public Health and Housing Options service which is responsible for both private sector housing regulation and homelessness duties. This briefing provides an overview of the changes being introduced by the Act and the actions the service is taking in readiness.

Recommendation:

- 1. To note the contents of this briefing paper**

Section 2 – Report

1 Introduction

- 1.1** Formerly known as the Renters' (Reform) Bill this proposed piece of legislation had its first reading in May 2023. Following the general election in 2024 the Bill was re-named the Renters' Rights Bill which had its first reading in September 2024.

- 1.2 Having now been through the full parliamentary process the Bill received Royal Assent on 27th October and is now the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- 1.3 The new Act introduces several significant changes to the rented sector that will have an impact on the delivery of our services and to the rented sector as a whole.
- 1.4 This paper outlines the key changes and the expected impacts to service delivery.

2 Key themes of the Renters' Rights Act 2025

- 2.1 The Act is arranged across a number of parts covering tenancy reform, residential landlords and a new database, the decent homes standard including reference to Awaab's law, and enforcement provisions for the local authority.
- 2.2 The key changes being introduced are as follows (adapted from Gov.uk press release 'Historic Renters' Rights Act becomes law', published 27th October 2025).
 - a) **Abolish Section 21 evictions** and move to a simpler tenancy structure where all assured tenancies are periodic.
 - b) **Ensure possession grounds are fair to both parties**, giving tenants more security, while ensuring landlords can recover their property when reasonable.
 - c) **Provide stronger protections against backdoor eviction** by ensuring tenants are able to appeal excessive rents.
 - d) **Introduce a new Private Rented Sector Landlord redress scheme** that will provide quick, fair, impartial and binding resolution for tenants' complaints about their landlord.
 - e) **Create a Private Rented Sector Database** ensuring that all private rented properties are registered. This will be used to help landlords understand their legal obligations and demonstrate compliance, alongside providing better information to tenants to make informed decisions when entering into a tenancy agreement.
 - f) **Give tenants strengthened rights to request a pet in the property**, which the landlord must consider and cannot unreasonably refuse.
 - g) **Apply the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector**. The Standard is being reviewed and updated to ensure it is relevant as the original standard was last amended in 2006.
 - h) **Apply Awaab's Law to the private rented sector**, setting clear legal expectations about the timeframes within which landlords in the private rented sector must take action to make homes safe where they contain serious hazards. This will be introduced in future timeframe set out in new regulations.

- i) **Make it an offence for landlords and agents to discriminate against prospective tenants in receipt of benefits or with children** – helping to ensure everyone is treated fairly when looking for a place to live.
 - j) **End the practice of rental bidding** by prohibiting landlords and agents from asking for or accepting offers above the advertised rent. Landlords and agents will be required to publish an asking rent for their property and it will be an offence to accept offers made above this rate.
 - k) **Strengthen local authority enforcement** by expanding civil penalties, introducing a package of investigatory duties and powers, bringing in a new requirement for local authorities to report on enforcement activity.
 - l) **Strengthen rent repayment orders** by extending them to superior landlords, doubling the maximum penalty and ensuring repeat offenders have to repay the maximum amount.
- 2.3 It should be noted that the Decent Homes Standard already applies to social housing and Awaab's law applies to social housing from 27 October 2025.

3 Impact on the service

- 3.1 The most significant impacts for the service are the new offences and the expected enforcement of these. There are several new areas that the service has not dealt with before that will require new skills and resource. There is likely to be new burdens funding for local authorities, but the amount and the method for calculating this has not been announced
- 3.2 It is uncertain as to the volume of new work that will be generated by these changes. Based on the private rented sector in Mid Devon being estimated at 6,500 properties (2021 Census), it is likely enquiries will rise significantly and therefore the level of investigatory work required by the service will increase accordingly.
- 3.3 A number of the key themes mentioned above have corresponding offences that will require investigation. This will include a strengthening of powers around illegal eviction and harassment, and compliance with the various prohibitions on discrimination, rents and rental bidding and the correct marketing of properties. There are also contraventions associated with the new landlord database, as well as the non-compliance with the decent homes standard and the existing provisions of the Housing Act 2004 that relate to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.
- 3.4 The service already has experience of issuing financial penalties which places us in a strong position where these are required. There is already a policy in place that will need to be updated to cover the new contraventions introduced by the Act. However, the service does not have sufficient resource to accommodate the expected workload these changes represent.

- 3.5 In respect of wider implications, nationally we are expecting to see the private rented sector shrink as landlords decide to move out of the market. This movement has already been witnessed in several areas and the Act is expected to result in a further reduction of the private rented sector.
- 3.6 This is already having an impact on the availability of homes that are of a decent standard, at an affordable rent, resulting in more approaches from homeless households and an increase in applications to Devon Home Choice. We are expecting this upward trend to continue because of these changes, despite the intentions of the Act to provide greater tenant security.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 The next step is for a timetable to be published detailing the implementation dates for each part of the Act. This is likely to be done in stages and will allow us to prioritise the activities in an action plan.
- 4.2 An action plan has been drafted, setting out the actions that the service needs to put in place to ensure the successful implementation of the Act. As part of this plan, a small operational working group within Public Health and Housing Options has been put together to help deliver the actions and tasks that have been identified.
- 4.3 The plan includes a review of the resources required by the service and a change management proposal will be brought forward as soon as possible.
- 4.4 A copy of the draft plan can be found in Annex A. This is a live document and is being updated regularly as more information becomes available. The version attached to this report was current at the time of writing and any significant changes will be provided verbally at the meeting.
- 4.5 The working group will continue to deliver the activities needed to fully implement the Act. This will include ensuring suitable training for staff, working with other services that may be affected and developing policies and procedures.
- 4.6 An important aspect of the plan will be communication with stakeholders, this will include landlords, tenants and external agencies affected by the changes. The landlord event held in May 2025 made a start by including a presentation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government aimed at helping landlords get ready for the Act. The aim is to support landlords with compliance and provide tenants with access to advice.
- 4.7 Further work will be required to identify resources to support the private rented sector to mitigate against the risk of losing available accommodation in this sector.

- 4.8 Additional papers will need to be presented to Homes PDG and the Cabinet as policies are updated and developed.

Financial Implications

Additional staffing resource to deliver the requirements of the Act will add a pressure to the General Fund budget. There is likely to be new burdens funding for local authorities, but the amount and the method for calculating this has not been announced

Legal Implications

This is a new piece of legislation, amendments may be required to the constitution, and it is likely that delegated authority will be required to cover the provisions of the Act. Individual officer authorisations will also need to be updated.

Risk Assessment

A more detailed risk/impact assessment will be required as guidance is released about the provisions of the Act. The corporate risk relating to homelessness will require updating to monitor the impact on the private rented sector availability.

Impact on Climate Change

No direct impact on climate change, although changes to the Decent Homes Standard are likely to require improvements to the energy efficiency of homes which will have a positive impact.

Equalities Impact Assessment

No equality impact assessment has been undertaken at this stage. This will be undertaken as updated and new policies are brought forward for consideration.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

There is a direct relationship with the corporate plan and the themes of Community, People and Equalities - We will support the health, wellbeing, and safety of our residents, and Homes - We will support and respond to people presenting as homeless.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Date: 6.11.25

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 6.11.25

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 6.11.25

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 31/10/2025

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Tanya Wenham, Operations Manager for Public Health & Housing Options /
Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing and Health

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Background papers:

Government press release 27 October 2025

[Historic Renters' Rights Act becomes law - GOV.UK](#)