# Renters' Rights Bill aims to end no-fault evictions but challenges remain



# The Rundown on the Renters' Rights Bill: A Critical Examination

The ongoing struggle within the UK rental market has prompted renewed efforts from the government to rectify a system fraught with challenges. Rising rents, lack of long-term security for tenants, and staggering levels of competition have led to an unsettling environment for millions who find themselves dependent on the private rental sector. With the anticipated introduction of the Renters' Rights Bill, there is hope for meaningful change, but experts caution that its success hinges on comprehensive reforms.

Rooted in years of stagnation under previous Conservative leadership, the Renters' Rights Bill is set to abolish the much-criticised ‘no-fault’ evictions and fixed-term tenancies, potentially transforming the landscape for tenants across the nation. The government's plans come in the wake of substantial pressure from advocates for renters' rights, as well as the growing number of tenants who may face a lifetime of renting due to skyrocketing property prices.

At the forefront of discussions is the pressing need for improved housing standards and fair rent practices. Charlie Trew, head of policy at housing charity Shelter, outlined the dire state of private renting, noting it is increasingly "not really fit for purpose". With private rental prices having surged approximately 29% since 2020, many tenants, particularly those aged over 35, find themselves trapped in a cycle of instability. Trew emphasised the "huge power imbalance" that exists between landlords and tenants, asserting that the forthcoming reforms should be part of a larger strategy focused on increasing the availability of affordable housing.

Joe Powell, a Labour MP and member of the Commons housing select committee, echoed this sentiment. He remarked on the overwhelming housing casework his office has handled since he took office, highlighting the urgent need for government investment in affordable housing. Powell is advocating for a "big slug of money" during the upcoming comprehensive spending review to stimulate affordable homebuilding, emphasising that better accessibility to housing could mitigate much of the systemic insecurity.

As if to demonstrate the deeply entwined relationship between rental issues and mental health, Roisin Lanigan, journalist and author, shared her personal experience of renting in London. Her observations have informed her debut novel, which portrays the "horrific" realities faced by tenants—dampness, mouldy conditions, and uncertainty over landlords. Lanigan describes the effect of this living situation on interpersonal relationships, noting that many people find themselves trapped in unhealthy situations for fear of not being able to find better accommodations.

While the Renters' Rights Bill represents a significant step forward, concerns do linger regarding its implementation. There is apprehension that increased regulations may deter some landlords from remaining in the market, potentially exacerbating the already strained supply of available rental properties. The introduction of penalties for landlords who fail to comply with higher housing standards aims to incentivise better conditions but could also result in higher operational costs being passed on to tenants.

As the rental market continues to grapple with escalating prices—over half of rented properties now exceed £1,000 per month—the situation remains precarious. Many prospective renters are caught in a raw deal with corporate landlords, and while the build-to-rent sector offers some stability, legal protections for tenants remain scant. This lack of security further compounds the challenges faced by an ever-growing cohort of renters, resulting in heightened fears of homelessness and economic instability.

The anticipated reform of the rental market is complicated by economic factors such as high interest rates, which contribute to rising rental prices as landlords, in turn, gorge on escalating costs. This economic climate stresses the need for integrated and collaborative solutions that not only address renters' rights but also promote enhanced building initiatives to create a more sustainable and affordable housing landscape.

Ultimately, the validity of the Renters' Rights Bill and its potential impact on the housing market will depend on the concurrent progression of broader housing policies and investment in affordable homes. The forthcoming months could hold the key to either a more equitable rental environment or a continued cycle of uncertainty and disillusionment for millions of tenants across the UK.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.politicshome.com/news/article/rundown-podcast-renters-rights-bill)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.politicshome.com/news/article/rundown-podcast-renters-rights-bill), [[5]](https://moneyweek.com/investments/buy-to-let/renters-rights-bill-landmark-reforms-to-put-an-end-to-no-fault-evictions)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/93fd5258-8648-49ed-b76f-44dace53df0d), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/6362d763-f389-4f97-b6cc-6c8298caf1be)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/5062594a-9f9f-462e-a1e4-d1fe448a7ae4), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/93fd5258-8648-49ed-b76f-44dace53df0d)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/business/british-estate-agent-foxtons-posts-marginal-rise-annual-profit-2024-03-05/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/6362d763-f389-4f97-b6cc-6c8298caf1be), [[5]](https://moneyweek.com/investments/buy-to-let/renters-rights-bill-landmark-reforms-to-put-an-end-to-no-fault-evictions)
* Paragraph 7 – [[5]](https://moneyweek.com/investments/buy-to-let/renters-rights-bill-landmark-reforms-to-put-an-end-to-no-fault-evictions)

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## Bibliography

* <https://www.politicshome.com/news/article/rundown-podcast-renters-rights-bill> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.ft.com/content/93fd5258-8648-49ed-b76f-44dace53df0d> - An article from the Financial Times discusses the challenges faced by middle-aged renters in the UK, highlighting the difficulties in achieving homeownership and the instability in the private rental sector. It notes that over 35s now make up a significant portion of renters, struggling with affordability and stability. The piece also mentions the role of corporate landlords and the growing build-to-rent sector in addressing this demographic by offering more stable, long-term tenancies. However, it points out that the UK rental market still lacks sufficient legal protections for tenants, contributing to ongoing instability and high costs.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/5062594a-9f9f-462e-a1e4-d1fe448a7ae4> - This Financial Times article examines the current state of the UK housing market, noting a record high in house prices with a 4.7% rise last year. It highlights the market's diversity, with areas like King's Cross outperforming prime central London due to developments such as Google's UK headquarters. The piece also discusses the impact of changing regulations, including the Renters' Rights Bill, on landlords' cash flow predictability, as tenants gain the ability to contest rent increases. Additionally, it mentions challenges like high interest rates and capital gains tax adjustments, which have made property rentals less attractive for landlords.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/6362d763-f389-4f97-b6cc-6c8298caf1be> - An article from the Financial Times reports that over half of UK rented homes now fall into markets with average rents exceeding £1,000 per month, indicating rising demand and strained affordability. It cites data from Zoopla showing that the number of such homes has nearly doubled in five years, with average UK rents increasing by 29% since January 2020 to £1,223. The piece also notes that the imbalance between supply and demand persists, with London's rental growth notably declining and similar patterns in Manchester and Birmingham. Factors contributing to this include easing mortgage rates, landlords' pricing adjustments due to rising living costs, and properties transitioning out of the long-term rental market.
* <https://moneyweek.com/investments/buy-to-let/renters-rights-bill-landmark-reforms-to-put-an-end-to-no-fault-evictions> - This MoneyWeek article discusses the Renters' Rights Bill, which aims to strengthen tenant protections in England by abolishing Section 21 'no-fault' evictions, limiting rent increases to once per year at market rate, and introducing penalties for landlords failing to meet housing standards. The piece also highlights concerns from landlords and some Lords about increased regulation and reduced control, which could drive landlords from the market, potentially decreasing rental property supply and raising rents. Exemptions are noted for student housing in larger HMOs, but smaller landlords feel excluded. Industry bodies like the NRLA and Propertymark warn that reforms could burden landlords further, raising costs and affecting student rentals and tenancy consistency.
* <https://www.reuters.com/business/british-estate-agent-foxtons-posts-marginal-rise-annual-profit-2024-03-05/> - Reuters reports that Foxtons, London's largest lettings agent, reported a slight increase in annual profit for the year ending December 31, 2023, with adjusted operating profit rising to 14.3 million pounds from 13.9 million pounds the previous year. The company's annual revenue grew by 5% to 147.1 million pounds, driven by a 16% increase in lettings revenue, which made up about 70% of the group's turnover. The strong performance in the lettings business helped compensate for weak property sales, which have been adversely affected by volatility in mortgage rates. Foxtons CEO Guy Gittins stated the company remains on track to achieve its medium-term target of delivering 25-30 million pounds in adjusted operating profit through both organic and acquisitive growth, supported by improving market conditions. A high demand for rental properties in London has led to a supply shortage and increased rents, further propelling the lettings market.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/b33c1d51-beb1-4d17-81ed-5ab407629b1b> - This Financial Times article discusses the Bank of England's recent interest rate cut, the first since the Covid-19 pandemic, due to meeting its 2% inflation target for two consecutive months. Despite this, the rate remains relatively high at 5%, causing debate on whether the Bank has acted too cautiously. A primary concern is the persistent services inflation, particularly in housing rents, which continue to rise even as goods inflation drops. Increased mortgage rates, driven by higher interest rates, contribute to rising rent costs as landlords pass these costs onto tenants, creating a Catch-22 situation. The article suggests that the Bank's restrictive policy, while intended to control inflation, may inadvertently entrench services inflation through rising rents. Given these dynamics, there is a call for the Bank of England to consider further easing of monetary policy to support economic growth and manage inflation more effectively.