# Single mother’s fight against sudden rent hikes highlights urgent need for legislative caps



Bridget, a single mother from Darlington, has become the face of a growing movement aimed at curbing excessive rent increases that threaten the financial stability of tenants across England. Her personal struggle mirrors a broader crisis affecting renters nationwide. Just recently, Bridget faced a staggering £100 rent hike, amounting to nearly 20%, imposed with only one month's notice. "I’ve been renting privately all my adult life, but getting a sudden rent hike still comes as a shock and has been very stressful," she expressed, highlighting the emotional turmoil and financial strain such increases can engender, particularly for single parents relying on a single income.

While Bridget's plight is emblematic of many renters grappling with similar issues, it also raises awareness about crucial legislation progressing through Parliament. The Renters’ Rights Bill aims to introduce vital reforms, including the abolition of Section 21 evictions, which allow landlords to evict tenants without reason. However, as Bridget pointed out, these reforms do not mitigate the shock of sudden rent increases, which can leave families in precarious situations. She argued that the government's proposals to enable tenants to challenge ‘unreasonable’ rent increases—a move presented as a safeguard—may fall short. Decisions at housing tribunals could rely more on market rates rather than tenants' actual financial circumstances.

This issue resonates beyond Darlington, as research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlights that over a third of private renters are living in poverty after housing costs are taken into account. Furthermore, a survey conducted by Generation Rent revealed alarming trends: almost 61% of renters reported demands for higher rents within a year, with nearly a quarter experiencing increases exceeding £100. Such figures illustrate a sharp escalation compared to previous years, signalling a pressing need for systemic change.

Bridget’s call for action is part of a larger, collective voice. Alongside her petition, which has amassed significant support—over 40,000 signatures and growing—various campaigns across the globe mirror her concerns. In the United States, for instance, multiple petitions advocate for caps on rent increases, citing alarming statistics such as over 30% of New Jersey renters spending more than half their income on rent. Similarly, calls for rent control have emerged in places like Ohio and Florida, highlighting a widespread recognition of the burdens faced by renters amid escalating costs of living.

The underlying issue, as Bridget articulates, is not just about individual hardships but a systemic failure that leaves tenants vulnerable. "While the government says tenants will be able to challenge 'unreasonable' rent rises at tribunal, decisions will be based on what the rent would be if your home was re-let—not what you can afford," she warns. This reflects a disconnection between rental policies and the economic realities faced by millions.

As Bridget continues her campaign, the need for a legislative cap on rent increases resonates strongly. "If renters are to finally feel secure in our own homes," she argues, "we need protections from shock rent rises." Her determination for reform underscores an urgent demand for government intervention to ensure that private landlords do not exploit market dynamics at the expense of their tenants’ well-being.

The conversations surrounding rental policies are pivotal as both economic conditions and housing shortages create an increasingly challenging landscape for renters. The combination of rising rents, alongside soaring costs of living, paints a stark picture of a rental market in crisis. As advocates like Bridget champion necessary reforms, the hope is that collective action will spark the changes needed to stabilise and protect tenants across the country.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1, 2
2. Paragraph 3
3. Paragraph 4
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7. Paragraph 8

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25168777.mums-rent-petition-signed-40000-people/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25168777.mums-rent-petition-signed-40000-people/?ref=rss> - An article from The Argus detailing Bridget's campaign to limit rent increases for tenants. Bridget, a single mother from Darlington, experienced a £100 rent hike, nearly 20%, with just one month's notice. She highlights the stress and financial strain caused by such sudden increases, especially as rents in County Durham are high and affordable options are scarce. The article also discusses the Renters’ Rights Bill passing through Parliament, which aims to make renting fairer in England by ending Section 21 evictions but does not address sudden rent hikes. Bridget advocates for a cap on rent increases to protect tenants from unaffordable hikes and potential homelessness.
3. <https://www.change.org/p/cap-rent-increases-to-protect-tenants-in-new-jersey> - A Change.org petition initiated by Jeannette Uceta, calling for a cap on rent increases in New Jersey. The petition highlights the escalating cost of living, with many residents struggling to afford rent, food, and bills. It emphasizes that landlords often raise rents beyond affordable levels, leading to financial distress and potential homelessness. The petition cites a U.S. Census Bureau report indicating that over 30% of renters in New Jersey spend more than half their income on rent. It advocates for rent stabilization laws to protect tenants from exorbitant rent increases and urges state lawmakers to institute a cap on rent increases to ensure affordable housing for all residents.
4. <https://www.change.org/p/implement-a-cap-on-annual-rent-increases> - A Change.org petition started by Shannon Evans, advocating for a cap on annual rent increases in the United States. The petition describes the personal experience of the petitioner, who has faced consistent rent increases year after year, with an 8% increase to renew the lease this year. It references a 2019 Zillow study indicating that 48% of renters moved due to rent increases, and an average rent increase of 5% in a city led to a 3% rise in homelessness. The petition calls for policymakers and rental authorities to consider implementing a cap on annual rent increases to provide stability and protect renters from increasing costs.
5. <https://www.change.org/p/implement-rent-caps-to-combat-rent-gouging-in-ohio> - A Change.org petition initiated by Thresa Crow, urging Ohio lawmakers to implement rent caps to combat rent gouging. The petition highlights the devastating effects of unchecked rent increases on families, neighbors, and communities, leading to financial distress and potential homelessness. It references the National Low Income Housing Coalition, stating that an average worker in Ohio must earn $15 an hour—nearly double the minimum wage—to afford a modest two-bedroom rental home at fair market rent. The petition calls for immediate action from legislators to enact a rent cap policy that protects tenants from unregulated increases and ensures affordable housing for all residents.
6. <https://www.change.org/p/cap-rent-increases-in-florida> - A Change.org petition by Michelle Jardine, advocating for a cap on rent increases in Florida. The petition argues that capping rent increases will allow families to afford necessities without the stress of escalating housing costs. It suggests that without a cap, residents may be forced to move out of Florida to find more affordable housing, leading to vacant units and economic repercussions. The petition calls for an emergency session to implement a cap on residential rent increases of 5% while legislators work on long-term solutions to assist families in raising their children in Florida.
7. <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/keep-oaktown-affordable> - An iPetitions campaign titled 'All Oakland Tenants Deserve Rent Control Protection - Stop Increases of up to 120%' by Afford Oaktown. The petition highlights the skyrocketing rents in Oakland, with increases up to 120% in the past year, making it the 2nd highest in the San Francisco/Bay Area and 3rd highest nationally in 2014. It points out that the last 32 years of rental development are not protected by Oakland rent control, leaving thousands of tenants vulnerable to unjustified increases. The petition calls for extending rent control protection to all Oakland renters, freezing and investigating all rent increases over 10%, and rolling back rents where increases cannot be justified under Oakland rent control laws.