# Single mother’s rent hike highlights urgent need for UK rental reform



Bridget Chapman, a single mother from Darlington, has recently found herself grappling with a startling 20% rent increase, prompting her to advocate for stronger rental regulations in the UK. With her landlord raising the rent by £100 with just a month’s notice, Chapman believes that such practices exacerbate the struggles faced by renters, particularly those in vulnerable positions.

Her predicament reflects a broader issue; a recent survey by the campaign group Generation Rent revealed that 61% of renters experienced requests for higher rent within the past year, with nearly a quarter feeling the burden of increases exceeding £100. While Chapman acknowledges the efforts behind the ongoing Renters’ Rights Bill in Parliament—aimed at curtailing no-fault evictions and empowering tenants to contest hefty rent hikes—she remains frustrated. "These reforms don’t do anything to stop shock rent rises," she states, reflecting a sentiment shared by many in similar circumstances.

The Renters’ Rights Bill seeks critical reforms such as preventing landlords from demanding more than a month's rent in advance and abolishing bidding wars for tenancies, but critics argue these proposals fall short of addressing the root causes of escalating rents. Chapman voiced her distress, noting how the rent surge compounds the financial strain of rising costs of living, revealing her struggle to provide for her adult children amidst dwindling disposable income. "This rent increase is a huge blow to my security," she asserts, highlighting the precarious balance many low-income families must maintain.

Interestingly, while Chapman and others are calling for stricter rent controls, there is a debate within political and economic circles regarding the efficacy of such measures. Historical evidence suggests that imposing rent ceilings can lead to reduced investment in the housing sector, ultimately exacerbating housing shortages in the long run. Some analysts advocate for alternative solutions, such as reforming property taxes, which might stimulate construction without hampering market dynamics.

Moreover, the UK government recently reaffirmed its position against implementing rent controls in England. Housing Secretary Michael Gove indicated that rents ought to be determined by agreement between landlords and tenants rather than through government mandates. This stance raises concerns among advocates who argue that existing market conditions favour landlords disproportionately, making it increasingly difficult for tenants to secure affordable housing.

Amidst these complexities, major investors, including firms like Aviva and Legal & General, continue to pour capital into the UK rental market, seemingly undeterred by potential regulatory changes. They are betting on the persistent demand for rental housing, which significantly outstrips supply, suggesting that while voices like Chapman’s are crucial in highlighting individual struggles, broader market forces remain in play.

In her pursuit for change, Chapman has launched a petition that has garnered over 45,000 signatures. She believes that for her and many others facing similar challenges, urgent government intervention is necessary—not only to control rent increases but also to address soaring energy costs. "It’s wrong that people are working full-time yet still turning to food banks," she lamented, calling attention to the disparity facing many in the workforce as wages stagnate amid rising living costs.

As the rent debate unfolds, it underscores the urgent need for a critical reassessment of housing policies that can protect tenants while also fostering an environment conducive to investment and sustainable growth in the rental market. As Chapman’s campaign continues to gain traction, it serves as a poignant reminder of the human stories behind the statistics and the pressing need for a balanced approach to addressing the ongoing housing crisis.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/cost-living/single-mother-landed-with-rent-increase-calls-for-rent-controls/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/cost-living/single-mother-landed-with-rent-increase-calls-for-rent-controls/), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/f064fc7f-6cbc-4292-be33-0874bf2a025a)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/cost-living/single-mother-landed-with-rent-increase-calls-for-rent-controls/), [[6]](https://www.lettingagenttoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2023/10/no-rent-controls-in-england-government-confirmation/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/major-investors-pile-uk-rental-homes-despite-regulatory-fears-2024-07-12/), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/ec8cc0c7-1dee-49be-9319-d7bf69fe198d)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/84172b27-6263-4202-8e94-a689b1ca99bf), [[6]](https://www.lettingagenttoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2023/10/no-rent-controls-in-england-government-confirmation/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/cost-living/single-mother-landed-with-rent-increase-calls-for-rent-controls/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/cost-living/single-mother-landed-with-rent-increase-calls-for-rent-controls/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/cost-living/single-mother-landed-with-rent-increase-calls-for-rent-controls/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/f064fc7f-6cbc-4292-be33-0874bf2a025a> - This article discusses the debate over rent controls in the UK, highlighting that while some political figures support them, historical evidence suggests that rent controls can lead to reduced investment in housing and market inefficiencies. The piece emphasizes the need for alternative solutions, such as reforming property taxes, to address the housing crisis effectively.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/major-investors-pile-uk-rental-homes-despite-regulatory-fears-2024-07-12/> - Despite potential regulatory changes, major investors like Aviva and Legal & General are increasing investments in the UK rental housing market. The article notes that while some investors are cautious about proposed rent controls, the demand for rental homes continues to surpass supply, making the sector attractive.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/ec8cc0c7-1dee-49be-9319-d7bf69fe198d> - Kate Henderson, Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation, supports the UK's Chancellor's plan to provide social housing providers with long-term income certainty via a 10-year rent settlement. This stability is crucial for rebuilding the sector's capacity following severe budget cuts.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/84172b27-6263-4202-8e94-a689b1ca99bf> - Labour plans to allow renters to bid 'voluntarily' above the asking price, a move that experts believe undermines efforts to prevent bidding wars that drive up rental costs. This strategy echoes New Zealand's 2021 policy, which critics argue contains a loophole leading to faster rental price increases.
6. <https://www.lettingagenttoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2023/10/no-rent-controls-in-england-government-confirmation/> - The UK government has confirmed that rent controls, as currently in force in Scotland and under consideration in Wales, will not be implemented in England. Housing Secretary Michael Gove stated that rents in the private rented sector should be agreed between landlords and tenants without government intervention.
7. <https://www.gmlaw.org.uk/2023/08/07/is-rent-control-the-way-forward/> - This article examines the introduction of rent controls in Scotland, noting that the Scottish government implemented a temporary cap on rent increases in October 2022, which was extended until March 2024. The piece discusses the aims of the act, including protecting tenants and reducing the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.