# Generation Rent petition stalls below 50,000 signatures amid rising rent hikes and mental health crisis



An online petition initiated by the activist group Generation Rent, along with a private tenant, is currently facing challenges in achieving its goal of 50,000 signatures. The campaign, hosted on Change.org, has lingered around 45,000 signatures for several weeks, struggling to break the crucial threshold. Designed to advocate for reforms in the rental market, the petition underscores the urgent need for better protections for tenants against drastic rent increases.

The petition details the harrowing experience of a single parent who recently faced a £100 rent hike after only a month’s notice—an increase of nearly 20%. This case exemplifies a broader trend where tenants report sudden rent increases, often without justification. The statement articulates, “Right now, landlords can increase their tenants’ rent by whatever they want,” highlighting the distress pervasive among renters who live under the constant threat of significant financial strain.

Research from Generation Rent indicates that the mental health of renters is increasingly compromised, with nine out of ten respondents asserting that renting privately adversely affects their well-being. This concern echoes findings from a 2024 report released in collaboration with the National Survivor User Network, which revealed that a substantial portion of private renters—around 75%—worry monthly about affording their rent. Alarmingly, the report also found that nearly half of the respondents experienced anxiety related to their rental situation. This pattern of stress is not new; prior studies, like one led by Dr Kim McKee in 2018, showed that young people in the private rented sector frequently grapple with anxiety and depression stemming from financial insecurity and inadequate housing quality.

Further compounding these issues, a recent survey by Living Rent found that a significant number of tenants expect future rent hikes to follow the end of eviction bans, with many fearing increases of 10% or more. As landlords frequently cite "market conditions" as justification for rent increases, the disconnect from the realities faced by renters becomes evident. The average rent in the UK saw an 8.4% rise over the past year, starkly outpacing both inflation and wage growth.

There is also widespread concern regarding evictions; about 62% of private tenants expressed anxiety about the potential for eviction once the temporary moratorium was lifted. This dread often leads to a vicious cycle of poor mental health impacting tenants’ ability to secure stable housing, as families feel the pressure of impending financial crisis.

The Renters’ Rights Bill making its way through Parliament aims to reform some of these issues, including ending Section 21 evictions, which allow landlords to evict tenants without just cause. However, critics, including Generation Rent, argue that the bill fails to address the immediate crisis of shock rent increases. Although tenants may be able to challenge what is deemed an "unreasonable" rent hike, the criteria for such decisions are based on the premise of potential re-letting prices, rather than the actual financial circumstances of current tenants.

The plea from Generation Rent highlights a need for caps on rent increases, advocating that landlords should not be permitted to raise costs beyond the rate of inflation or wages. This reform is portrayed as essential to ensuring families retain their homes without falling into financial despair.

As the petition struggles to gain momentum, it reflects a wider societal issue within the private rental sector—one that demands government intervention to protect renters from market volatility that jeopardizes not only their financial security but also their mental and physical health.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.landlordtoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2025/05/generation-rent-petition-struggles-to-reach-key-milestone/), [[5]](https://www.change.org/p/introduce-caps-on-how-much-landlords-can-raise-rent-protect-struggling-families-like-mine)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.generationrent.org/2024/10/04/private-renting-mental-health/), [[4]](https://www.stir.ac.uk/news/2018/08/generation-rent-suffer-mental-health-issues/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.livingrent.org/pushed_to_the_edge), [[6]](https://www.generationrent.org/2024/11/21/link-between-homes-and-health/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.landlordtoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2025/05/generation-rent-petition-struggles-to-reach-key-milestone/), [[5]](https://www.change.org/p/introduce-caps-on-how-much-landlords-can-raise-rent-protect-struggling-families-like-mine)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.generationrent.org/2024/10/04/private-renting-mental-health/), [[4]](https://www.stir.ac.uk/news/2018/08/generation-rent-suffer-mental-health-issues/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://www.generationrent.org/2024/11/21/link-between-homes-and-health/), [[7]](https://www.citylets.co.uk/blog/mental-health-and-the-private-rented-sector/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.landlordtoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2025/05/generation-rent-petition-struggles-to-reach-key-milestone/), [[6]](https://www.generationrent.org/2024/11/21/link-between-homes-and-health/)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.landlordtoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2025/05/generation-rent-petition-struggles-to-reach-key-milestone/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.generationrent.org/2024/10/04/private-renting-mental-health/> - In October 2024, Generation Rent and the National Survivor User Network (NSUN) released a report detailing the devastating impact that renting privately has on tenants' mental health. The survey, conducted between June and July 2024 with 814 submissions, found that nine in ten private renters stated that renting privately had negatively affected their mental health. Additionally, two in five stated that renting privately had impacted their physical health. Over three-quarters worried about affording the rent each month, and almost half worried about this 'a lot'. Over four in five private renters worried about being evicted. The report also highlighted that renters felt stressed when reporting repairs to their landlord or letting agent, with 88.1% reporting so. Around half of all respondents stated that a landlord or letting agent had behaved in a way towards them that made them feel physically or psychologically unsafe. The research underscores the urgent need for a better, fairer system where families and households can feel fully in control of their lives in safe, happy, healthy homes. The report calls for fundamental changes to make private renting fit for purpose for the millions of people and families living in these homes. The full report is available on Generation Rent's website.
3. <https://www.livingrent.org/pushed_to_the_edge> - In April 2024, Living Rent published findings from a renters survey titled 'Pushed to the Edge'. The survey revealed that 62% of private tenants were worried about eviction once the ban on evictions ended on 31 March 2024, with almost all saying this prospect negatively impacted their mental health. The survey also found that 19% of private tenants had experienced at least one eviction previously, with more than half of these evictions involving the landlord claiming they needed to repossess the property to sell it. Of these previous evictions, more than half had a negative impact on their mental health. Additionally, 49.5% of private tenants had experienced a rent increase since January 2023, with 73.5% of these increases limited to 3%, while the rest went up by an average of 25.7%. The survey highlighted that 84.2% of tenants were concerned that their landlord would increase the rent when the rent cap ended on 31 March 2024, with the majority expecting it to go up by 10% or higher. The findings also revealed that 73% of tenants said that worrying about rent increases had impacted their mental health, with 46% stating it had a huge impact. The survey underscores the need for reforms to address the challenges faced by private tenants, including concerns about eviction, rent increases, and housing quality.
4. <https://www.stir.ac.uk/news/2018/08/generation-rent-suffer-mental-health-issues/> - In August 2018, a study led by Dr Kim McKee from the University of Stirling found that being forced to live long-term in private rented housing negatively impacts young people's mental health. The term 'generation rent' refers to the growing number of young people living in the private rented sector for longer periods due to high house prices. The study highlighted issues in the private rented sector, such as insecure, expensive, and poor-quality housing, which contribute to feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression among young people unable to realise their housing aspirations. For those on the lowest incomes, these issues can even lead to homelessness. The study underscores the need for reforms to address the challenges faced by young renters and improve housing conditions.
5. <https://www.change.org/p/introduce-caps-on-how-much-landlords-can-raise-rent-protect-struggling-families-like-mine> - A petition on Change.org titled 'Introduce caps on how much landlords can raise rent: Protect struggling families like mine' highlights the issue of sudden rent hikes by landlords. The petition describes the experience of a single parent who faced a £100 rent increase with just one month's notice, nearly a 20% increase. The petitioner expresses concerns about the financial strain and the impact on mental health, stating that the rent rise will put even more strain on them. The petition calls for the government to introduce a cap on how much landlords can raise the rent, stating that private landlords should not be able to raise the rent higher than inflation or wages. The petition has the full backing of Generation Rent and aims to demand the government introduces a cap on rent increases.
6. <https://www.generationrent.org/2024/11/21/link-between-homes-and-health/> - In November 2024, Generation Rent published a report titled 'Government must put homes at the centre of public health', highlighting the link between housing and health. The report found that worrying about paying the rent each month was extremely common among participants, with almost 4 in 5 (78.7%) indicating that this was a concern, and almost half (45.5%) stating that they worried 'a lot' about covering their monthly rent. The report also highlighted that rents continue to spiral at unprecedented and unsustainable levels, outstripping inflation and wages. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), average private rents in the UK increased by 8.4% in the 12 months up to September 2024, while inflation increased by 4% in September and wage growth by 4.8% between July and September. The report underscores the need for the government to act to stop unfair and unaffordable rent rises, which are causing distress and physical harm to renters. It also calls for the government to unfreeze Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to help private tenants pay their rents amidst spiralling rises.
7. <https://www.citylets.co.uk/blog/mental-health-and-the-private-rented-sector/> - In December 2024, Citylets published a blog post titled 'Mental Health and the Private Rented Sector', discussing the impact of private renting on mental health. The post references a report by Generation Rent released in October 2024, which highlighted that 9 out of 10 respondents say private renting negatively affects their mental health. The report also found that 3 out of 4 respondents worry about paying their rent each month, with 1 out of 2 worrying a lot about this. Additionally, 86% of respondents with a disability say private renting has negatively impacted their disability or mental health condition. The post also references the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which found that private renters are twice as likely to suffer from anxiety compared to homeowners. The blog post underscores the need for reforms to address the challenges faced by private renters and improve mental health outcomes.