Robinson Jackson Group Lettings The Seasoned Investor is published for our buy-to-let community and is written quarterly by our director Andy Powell. If you wish to no longer receive this newsletter, click here.

The SEASONED INVESTOR

Invest Smarter | Live Better

Spring Edition

Introducing...

The Seasoned Investor

"As a seasoned landlord of successful buy-to-lets and a keen eye for the next opportunity, I'm delighted to write for The Robinson Jackson Group to help others navigate the ever-changing world of BTL investments."

Andy

Hello again, fellow landlords,

If your first reaction to seeing the words *Renters' Rights Act* is to sigh and think, "not this again!", you're not alone.

Thankfully, with the first phase now arriving on 1 May 2026, the conversation can finally change. If you're like me, you're not looking for more speculation. So, in this extended Spring edition I share what landlords need to know in practice and the actions you should take next.

Since the legislation first came into public attention back in 2024, I have covered it regularly through The Seasoned Investor. Interviews, myth-busting videos (featured here) and practical guidance have all been part of helping our investor community separate what has often been noisy and sometimes a confusing debate.

During that time, one group of people was at the end of the phone for me. My lettings team at The Robinson Jackson Group, who have been answering questions from landlords, talking through concerns and helping investors maintain a level head while the detail of the legislation slowly emerged.

It is now that experience really matters. Not in amplifying the noise, but in providing clear guidance and reassurance when landlords simply want to understand what the changes mean for their property and their plans.

Now that the legislation is confirmed, we can focus on the practical steps my fellow landlords will need to take as the new rules arrive. As always, please read this as it's intended. One landlord sharing the advice that matters most, so you can invest Smarter to Live Better.

Andy – Your Seasoned Investor

Did You Know?

The Renters Rights' Act is being introduced in phases, with stage one taking effect from 1 May 2026. For each point below we have translated the legal wording into plain English, so you understand what the change means in practice.

If you would like guidance on any of the points below, simply quote the number when speaking to a local letting's consultant across The Robinson Jackson Group.

1. All tenancies become periodic

From 1 May, fixed-term Assured Shorthold Tenancies will disappear and all tenancies will become rolling periodic tenancy (often referred to as an Assured Periodic Tenancy or APT). This applies to both new and existing tenancies.

You can no longer rely on a tenancy naturally ending after six or twelve months. Tenancies will continue month-to-month unless the landlord serves a valid Section 21 notice (see below). The months notice can in effect be given on day one but the earliest this would take effect is the next rent due date so that shorter tenancy will be three months.

2. Section 21 will be abolished

Landlords will no longer be able to use "no-fault" eviction. At the same time, several Section 8 grounds have been strengthened to allow landlords to regain possession where there is a legitimate reason.

You must have a clear legal reason if you want your property back. These include situations such as serious rent arrears, the landlord wishing to sell the property, or the landlord or their family moving back into the home.

Because possession must now rely on specific legal grounds, landlords should ensure records such as rent statements, communication with tenants and tenancy documentation are well maintained should court action ever be required.

3. There is a short transition window for existing Section 21 notices

If a Section 21 notice was served before 1 May 2026, court proceedings must normally begin within the transition deadline later in the summer, expected to be around the end of July 2026.

If you were already planning to use Section 21, the clock is ticking. The 30 April 2026 is the final date a Section 21 notice can legally be served.

4. Rent increases will be limited to once per year

Landlords can still increase rent to market levels but only once every 12 months using the correct notice procedure.

Rent increases will still be made using a new Section 13 notice (Form 4), but the period is moving from one month to two. Plus, and this is the key detail, a proposed increase must reflect the current local market conditions. So, keeping rent competitive remains the best way to avoid a dispute. Tenants can still refer to the First Tier Tribunal where you must be able to demonstrate the proposed rent reflects the true market level for comparable properties in the same area.

5. Rent bidding will be banned

Landlords and agents will not be able to invite or accept offers above the advertised rent.

The rent you advertise will need to be realistic from the start because tenants will no longer be able to compete by offering more. If a property is advertised in more than one place, the advertised rent must be consistent. Listing a higher price elsewhere would be a direct breach.

6. Large upfront rent payments will no longer be permitted

Advance payments beyond the normal monthly cycle, such as six or twelve months' rent upfront, will be prohibited.

Tenants paying large sums upfront will become rare, making affordability checks and referencing even more important. If a tenant chooses to pay additional rent voluntarily after the tenancy begins they may do so, but landlords cannot request or require it.

For existing tenancies where rent has historically been paid in advance, tenants may choose to continue paying on this basis if they wish. However, this must be entirely voluntary and cannot be requested or required by the landlord under the new rules.

7. Tenant discrimination rules will tighten

Refusing tenants purely because they have children or receive benefits will become unlawful. Advertising a property as "No DSS", or "No children" will therefore no longer be permitted under the new rules.

Tenant selection is becoming more structured, with greater emphasis on fairness. Rather than applying blanket rules, landlords will need to assess applicants based on affordability, reliability, and the suitability of the property, the size and number of bedrooms. This creates a clearer, more consistent approach to choosing the right tenant for your property.

8. Pet requests must be considered properly

Landlords will need a legitimate reason to refuse a tenant's request to keep a pet.

You may see more tenants asking for pets, but landlords can still refuse where there is a valid reason such as lease restrictions. Landlords can still ask for Tenants to obtain the insurance but by no means does that guarantee the tenants will maintain that cover!

9. Phase 2 expected late 2026 introduces further changes

A national property portal held by government will record landlords and their properties to demonstrate compliance with legal requirements. Plus, a new ombudsman scheme is expected to follow later in the implementation programme.

Landlords will shortly need to register their properties and comply with a formal dispute resolution system. Ombudsman decisions are expected to be binding and fee for tenants.

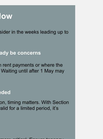
10. Phase 3 is implemented later and includes decent homes standards

Details of phase three yet to be confirmed. Still, privately rented properties will need to meet minimum standards and landlords will be expected to address health-hazards quickly.

Stricter guidelines and timeframes are expected covering issues such as damp, mould and other serious hazards under the extension of Awaab's Law into the private rented sector. Properties must be investigated and emergency hazards addressed within 24 hours.

The Government is also reviewing the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) with proposals to simplify the current framework. This includes reducing the number of hazard categories from 29 to 21, making the system easier for landlords, agents and tenants to understand and apply in practice.

Note: The rules currently apply to standard private residential tenancies in England, with some specialist arrangements such as purpose-built student accommodation and company lets remaining outside the scope of the Act.



Back in October 2024, when the legislation worked its way through Parliament, I created a series of short-format video lacking common misunderstandings surrounding the proposed changes.

We have refreshed the content to reflect the final rules. Click to watch the updated 3-minute myth-buster.

What Landlords Should Do Now

Here are the important steps landlords should consider in the weeks leading up to 1 May.

1. Review any tenancy where there may already be concerns

If you have tenants who are already struggling with rent payments or where the relationship has become difficult, take advice now. Waiting until after 1 May may reduce the options available to you.

2. Consider whether Section 21 action is needed

Where landlords are already considering possession, timing matters. With Section 21 being phased out, and notices only remaining valid for a limited period, it's important to review your position now.

3. Audit your paperwork

In the new system, documentation becomes even more critical. Ensure tenancy agreements, safety certificates, deposit registration, rent statements and tenant correspondence are up to date and easily accessible.

4. Prepare to issue the Government information sheet

Tenants and any Guarantors must receive a government-led 4-page pamphlet explaining the new rules. If your property is fully managed, good news. The Robinson Jackson Group will email your tenants and if applicable the Guarantor on your behalf.

5. Review tenants paying rent in large upfront sums

If any tenants currently pay six or twelve months' Rent In Advance (RIA), these arrangements should be reviewed before the new rules take effect.

For existing tenancies, tenants may choose to continue paying rent in advance if they wish. However, this must be entirely voluntary and cannot be requested or required by the landlord under the new rules.

It is important to keep a clear record of when any advance payment periods are due to end, as the usual prompt of a tenancy renewal will no longer apply.

6. Strengthen tenant referencing

With Section 21 removed, the importance of selecting reliable tenants increases. Affordability checks and robust referencing will become even more important.

However, it is not just about the numbers. Understanding a tenant's circumstances, including their reasons for moving, how long they intend to stay and whether the property suits their longer-term needs, will play a key role in selecting the right tenant.

Taking a more considered approach at the outset can significantly reduce the risk of issues later. The Robinson Jackson Group's lettings team can be a strong agent who has access to advanced referencing tools and the experience to assess both the financial and practical suitability of an applicant.

7. Start gathering comparable rental evidence

Future rent increases must reflect current market levels and may be subject to challenge through the First Tier Tribunal. Keeping clear and accurate evidence of comparable local properties will therefore be essential.

As part of the Robinson Jackson Groups' commitment to our landlords, we will carry out a rent review of each 12-month anniversary of the tenancy (or from the start of a new periodic tenancy). This will ensure we have a comparable rental evidence report, produced using the data from the major property portals, to demonstrate how the proposed rent aligns with the local market.

This ensures that any proposed increase is both evidence-based and compliant with the new requirements.

8. Think carefully before granting new tenancies if your plans may change

If there is a possibility you may wish to sell or move into the property in the near future, take advice before committing to a new tenancy. Certain possession grounds cannot be used during the first year.

9. Decide how hands-on you want to be

With regulation becoming more detailed, many landlords are reassessing whether they want to manage compliance themselves or rely on a professional team.

The financial consequences of getting things wrong are also increasing. Civil penalties for non-compliance can run into thousands of pounds, with initial fines often starting at several thousand pounds and rising significantly for repeat breaches.

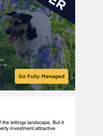
Managing a property now involves more than just collecting rent. Staying compliant requires keeping up to date with changing legislation, maintaining accurate records and responding to issues within strict timeframes.

For many landlords, the decision is becoming less about cost and more about time, risk and peace of mind

10. Consider rent insurance for added protection

For landlords looking to protect their rental income, it may be worth considering rent protection and legal expenses cover, particularly as possession processes become more structured.

While at the Robinson Jackson Group are not authorised to advise on or arrange insurance products, we can introduce you to a third-party provider who can discuss suitable options with you directly.



GO FULLY MANAGED

12 months for the price of six

plus, a free rent review!

As legislation becomes more detailed, many landlords are choosing fully managed lettings to protect income, their time and avoid unexpected or falsified costs.

Go Fully Managed

Looking Ahead

The Renters' Rights Act will reshape some parts of the lettings landscape. But it does not remove the fundamentals that make property investment attractive.

In reality, property investment continues to reward the same qualities it always has. Organisation, professionalism and a long-term outlook. This is a moment in time. There will be bumps and a few wrong turns. Still, market forces tend to smooth things fairly quickly.

Strong tenant demand remains. Well-presented homes continue to let quickly. And investors who run their portfolios professionally tend to come through periods of change in better shape than those who react late.

For landlords in our investor community, the key message is simple. Stay informed but surrounding yourself with good people who understand the detail. If at any time you feel unsure about the changes, speak to one of the teams across The Robinson Jackson Group.

Until the next edition, my fellow landlords, take action now so you continue to Invest Smarter to Live Better.

Warm regards,

Andy.
The Editor, Seasoned Investor.

Three investment opportunities that caught my eye

Lynsted Road, Gillingham
£280,000
Potential Rental Income : £ 1,350 pcm
Yield - 6%

Jarrett Avenue, Rochester
£325,000
Potential Rental Income : £1,600 pcm
Yield - 6%

Rainbow Road, Erith
£195,000
Potential Rental Income : £1,050 pcm
Yield - 7%

Contact for more details

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