



## Parish Briefing Note

### What Parish PCCs Need to Know

#### Introduction

1. The purpose of this briefing note is to provide PCCs and parishes with a clear and practical overview of the changes introduced by the [Renters' Rights Act 2025](#) and what those changes mean for parish-owned residential property.
2. The Act represents the most significant reform of residential landlord and tenant law since the Housing Act 1988 (the "HA 1988"). It fundamentally alters how and when landlords can recover possession of property, strengthen tenant security, and increase compliance and regulatory oversight.
3. Many parishes within the Diocese own houses or flats which are let to private tenants. These arrangements have often operated for many years under the previous regime. However, on 1 May 2026 the Government implemented changes to the legal framework governing such lettings in fundamental ways. The ability to recover possession through the court process without fault is removed, fixed terms of tenancies will no longer exist and the grounds for recovering possession will be amended.
4. This note is designed to:
  - Highlight the key implementation dates
  - Explain the main legal changes in straightforward terms
  - Set out the practical implications for PCCs
  - Identify the compliance standards that must be met
  - Encourage early engagement with lawyers or Diocesan Property Team



### Renters' Rights Act 2025

**This is not intended to replace legal advice. It is intended as a high-level guide to assist parishes in understanding risk and planning appropriately.**

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## Key Dates You Must Know

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### 1 May 2026 – Main Change Date, from this date:

- Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 (“HA 1988”) is abolished
- All Assured Shorthold tenancies will convert to assured periodic tenancies
- Only assured periodic tenancies can be granted
- There will be no more fixed term tenancies
- To obtain possession, service of a section 8 notice setting out a “ground” in schedule 2 of the HA 1988
- The grounds in schedule 2 of the HA 1988 have been amended and extended, as have the time periods required for grounds.

### By 31 May 2026

- Provision of information in writing to existing tenants in writing. The information sheet should be downloaded directly from the [UK Government website](#) and is appended to this note.
- If there is an oral tenancy, then a Statement of Terms is needed by 31 May 2026.

### 31 July 2026

- Final date for requesting the court to issue court proceedings based on any Section 21 notice served before 1 May 2026

### Late 2026 – Onwards (to be confirmed)

- National landlord database introduced
- Registration required before marketing or letting
- Landlord ombudsman scheme introduced



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## What Changes Mean for Parishes

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### From 1 May 2026:

- Fixed terms in tenancies will no longer exist
- All agreements will be periodic assured tenancies (with no guaranteed end date)
- You will have to provide your existing tenants who have written or partly written agreements with a prescribed Information Sheet by 31 May 2026
- For any new tenancies, a prescribed written statement of terms must be provided before the tenancy commences
- You will have to follow the new statutory process to increase rents (the contractual method in your tenancy will no longer apply)

- All tenancies will include an implied right to request a pet
- Tenants can serve a Notice to Quit at any time by giving 2 months' notice
- You cannot recover possession by serving a section 21 notice (ie. without a reason)
- You will have to show you satisfy one of the grounds in schedule 2 of the HA 1988 when serving a section 8 notice
- If a tenant does not leave voluntarily after the date given in the notice, court proceedings are required
- Possession will take time if contested, as there will likely be significant court backlog. (likely 9 months or longer).
- Letting parish property is now a long-term legal commitment and should be seen as such.

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### Court Process Is Key

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#### For any possession claim:

- Serve a valid section 8 notice relying on one of the relevant grounds in schedule 2 of the HA 1988
- Give the relevant statutory notice period for the relevant ground
- If tenant does not leave by the date given in the notice, once the notice has expired, issue court proceedings
- Obtain possession order
- Bailiffs may be required if refusal to comply with possession order

**DO NOT attempt an eviction without a court order. This is unlawful and exposes trustees (PCC members) to serious risk.**

**There are numerous grounds in Schedule 2 of the HA 1988 but two grounds which might be particularly relevant, have been amended and are set out below.**

#### 1. Rent Arrears

A mandatory ground for possession still exists, but:

- Arrears threshold must exist when notice served
- Arrears threshold must still exist at hearing
- If arrears reduce before hearing, the mandatory ground fails
- If the tenant does not leave after the date in the notice, issue court proceedings to obtain a possession order which can also include a monetary judgment

#### 2. Housing Clergy

Possession may be available if the property is held for use by a minister of religion to perform the duties of their office and the property is required for their occupation, but we do not know yet how this will be interpreted by the courts.

Likely includes:

- Ordained clergy
- Licensed lay ministers

Unlikely to include:

- Youth workers
- Church employees
- Administrators

**Important:** Intention must be genuine and evidenced

- Notice must be compliant
- Court proceedings will be required if tenant does not leave after period in section 8 notice has expired
- Plan at least 9–12 months ahead

If ministry need is foreseeable, think carefully before letting.

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### Compliance Checklist

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Compliance matters more than ever.

Every parish landlord must ensure:

- Annual Gas Safety Certificate (GSC)
- Valid Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)
- Valid EPC
- Deposit correctly protected and prescribed information served after the deposit has been protected and received
- Licensing requirements of the local authority are complied with
- Property free from serious hazards
- Repairs dealt with promptly
- Complaints from tenants dealt with promptly
- Information as required by RRA is given to tenants for existing tenancies by 31 May 2026 and prior to entering into the tenancy agreement

Failure may lead to:

- Financial penalties
- Rent repayment orders
- Enforcement action
- Problems when undertaking possession proceedings.

Maintain a compliance file for each property.

### 3. Immediate PCC Actions

If your parish lets property, it is highly advised:

- Review all tenancies now
- Consider clergy housing needs for next 3–5 years
- Check compliance documents
- Confirm deposit protection
- Do not enter into new tenancies without advice
- Do not serve notices without advice
- Do not take court proceedings without advice
- Add residential property as an annual PCC governance item

### 4. Where to Seek Advice

If unsure:

- Contact the Diocesan Property Team first
- Seek legal advice from Winckworth Sherwood or your nominated parish solicitors before serving notice or granting new tenancies.

Early advice reduces risk and protects PCC trustees.

### 5. The Key Message

From 1 May 2026:

- No more “no fault” eviction
- No more AST’s
- Possession requires proving a statutory ground
- Court involvement required if tenant does not leave
- Compliance is essential

Letting parish housing must now be treated as a regulated, strategic decision, not a short-term income solution.

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**If in doubt, speak to the Diocese or your nominated solicitors before acting.**

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