

Landlord Compliance Guide

Letting a property in England comes with a series of legal responsibilities. This guide summarises the key ones as they stand in 2026, including the changes brought in by the Renters' Rights Act. It's a practical overview, not legal advice — and we can arrange or manage any of these requirements for you.

Compliance at a glance

Requirement	What you must do	How often
Gas safety (CP12)	Have all gas appliances and flues checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer; give the tenant a copy of the certificate.	Every 12 months
Electrical (EICR)	Have the installation inspected by a qualified electrician; complete any remedial work within 28 days; give the tenant a copy.	At least every 5 years
Energy (EPC)	Hold a valid EPC of band E or above before letting (band C is proposed for new tenancies from 2028).	Valid for 10 years
Smoke & CO alarms	A working smoke alarm on every storey and a CO alarm in any room with a fixed combustion appliance; test at the start of the tenancy.	Tested each new tenancy
Deposit protection	Protect the deposit in a Government-approved scheme and serve the prescribed information.	Within 30 days of receipt
Right to Rent	Check every adult occupier's right to rent in the UK before the tenancy begins.	Before each tenancy
How to Rent guide	Give the tenant the current Government 'How to Rent' guide.	At the start / on renewal
Furniture fire safety	Ensure any furniture you supply meets the fire safety regulations.	Ongoing
Legionella	Assess and control the risk of legionella in the water system.	Risk assessment
Licensing	Hold any HMO, additional or selective licence your local council requires.	As required by council

1. Safety obligations

Gas safety

Where a property has gas, every appliance and flue must be checked for safety at least every 12 months by a Gas Safe registered engineer. You must give the tenant a copy of the Gas Safety Record within 28 days, and to any new tenant before they move in.

Electrical safety

The electrical installation must be inspected and tested at least every five years by a qualified person (an EICR). Any remedial work identified must be completed within 28 days, and a copy of the report given to existing tenants within 28 days and to new tenants before they occupy.

Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms

You must fit a working smoke alarm on every storey used as living accommodation, and a carbon monoxide alarm in any room with a fixed combustion appliance (such as a boiler or wood burner). Alarms must be tested and confirmed working at the start of each new tenancy.

Furniture and water safety

Any furniture you provide must comply with the fire safety regulations. As the person responsible for the water system, you also have a duty to assess and control the risk of legionella — usually a straightforward risk assessment for most homes.

2. Setting up the tenancy legally

Before and at the start of a tenancy you must: hold a valid EPC of band E or above; check every adult occupier's Right to Rent; protect the deposit in a Government-approved scheme within 30 days and serve the prescribed information; and give the tenant the current 'How to Rent' guide. Missing any of these can prevent you from later regaining possession, so getting them right at the outset matters.

3. Property condition and repairs

Your property must be fit for human habitation throughout the tenancy under the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, and free from serious hazards. 'Awaab's Law', which sets strict timescales for dealing with

damp, mould and other hazards, is being extended to the private rented sector, and a Decent Homes Standard for private lettings is expected later this decade. In short: keep the property in good repair and respond promptly to disrepair reported by tenants.

4. The Renters' Rights Act — now in force

The Renters' Rights Act made significant changes for landlords, most of which took effect on 1 May 2026:

Periodic tenancies & the end of Section 21

Fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies have been replaced by open-ended assured periodic tenancies, and 'no-fault' Section 21 evictions have been abolished. To regain possession you must now rely on a valid statutory ground under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1988.

Rent increases

Rent can be increased once a year to the market rate, using the statutory Section 13 notice procedure. Tenants can challenge a proposed increase at the First-tier Tribunal, and rental 'bidding wars' are no longer permitted.

Pets

Tenants have a strengthened right to request a pet, and you must not unreasonably refuse. Where refusal is reasonable, you must give your reasons in writing within the statutory timeframe.

The PRS Database and Ombudsman

A new Private Rented Sector Database (Property Portal) is rolling out from late 2026 — most landlords will need to register their properties, with significant civil penalties for non-compliance. A new Landlord Ombudsman scheme, which landlords will be required to join, is expected to follow.

5. Licensing

On top of national rules, many councils operate their own licensing schemes — mandatory HMO licensing for larger shared houses, and additional or selective licensing in particular areas. It is your responsibility to check whether your property needs a licence; letting without a required licence carries substantial penalties.

6. Tax and overseas landlords

If you live outside the UK, your rental income falls under the Non-Resident Landlord Scheme, and tax may be deducted at source unless HMRC approves you to receive rent gross (forms NRL1/NRL2). Making Tax Digital for Income Tax also applies from April 2026 to landlords with qualifying income over £50,000, requiring quarterly digital records.

How Bright Hill Properties helps

As part of our management service we track your certificate and licence renewal dates, arrange gas, electrical, EPC and alarm work on your behalf, keep your tenancy paperwork compliant, and keep you up to date as the rules change — so you stay legal without the worry.

This guide is a general overview for landlords in England and is correct to the best of our knowledge as at 2026. Rules change and individual circumstances vary — always check the current position on GOV.UK or take professional advice before relying on it. Bright Hill Properties is the trading name of Bright Hill Properties Limited, registered in England and Wales, Company No. 11566868.