

LANDLORD INSIGHTS

UK Landlord Compliance Checklist 2026

England — Updated for the Renters' Rights Act and all 2026 legislative changes

This checklist covers the key compliance obligations for residential landlords in England. Work through each section and tick each item once confirmed. Penalty figures are the maximum a landlord can face for non-compliance. Always verify requirements at legislation.gov.uk.

1	Tenancy Documents	2
2	Deposit Protection	3
3	Property Safety	4
4	Licensing	5
5	Renters' Rights Act 2025	6
6	Right to Rent	7
7	Ongoing Obligations	8

1 Tenancy Documents

- Written tenancy agreement provided**

Required for all new lets from April 2026 under SI 2026/324. Must include all prescribed terms — landlord details, rent amount, payment day, address and permitted occupiers.

Penalty: Up to £5,000 civil penalty
- How to Rent guide issued**

Current government edition given at start of tenancy and whenever a new edition is published. Download the latest version from gov.uk before each new let.

Penalty: Prevents service of Section 8 notice
- Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) provided**

Given before marketing begins. Minimum EPC E currently required. EPC C expected for new lets from 2028 — begin planning improvements now.

Penalty: Up to £5,000
- Gas Safety Certificate issued**

Annual inspection by Gas Safe registered engineer. Certificate to tenant within 28 days, and to any new tenant before move-in.

Penalty: Unlimited fine / criminal prosecution
- Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) provided**

Every 5 years or at change of tenancy. Copy to existing tenant within 28 days; to new tenant before move-in.

Penalty: Up to £30,000
- Deposit protection certificate and prescribed information issued**

In addition to protecting the deposit, the tenant must receive the scheme's certificate and prescribed information within 30 days of receipt.

Penalty: Up to 3x deposit amount

Reminder: How to Rent Guide

The government updates this guide periodically. If a new edition is issued during a tenancy you must provide it to your tenant. Failure to do so may prevent service of a valid Section 8 notice.

2 Deposit Protection

- Deposit protected in a government-approved scheme within 30 days**

Three approved schemes: Deposit Protection Service (DPS), MyDeposits, Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS). Custodial (free) or insured (fee-based) options available.

Penalty: Up to 3x the deposit amount
- Prescribed information issued to tenant within 30 days**

Written details of: the scheme, contact information, how the tenant reclaims the deposit, and the dispute resolution process.

Penalty: Up to 3x the deposit amount
- Deposit cap observed**

Maximum 5 weeks' rent (annual rent under £50,000) or 6 weeks' rent (annual rent £50,000+). Any excess must be returned immediately.

Penalty: Excess must be refunded
- Holding deposit rules followed if applicable**

Capped at 1 week's rent. Must be returned within 15 days unless the tenant withdraws, fails referencing, or provides false information.

Penalty: Up to £5,000
- Deposit re-protected at tenancy renewal if required**

If re-letting to the same tenant on a new agreement, confirm whether re-protection and new prescribed information are required under your scheme's rules.

Penalty: Up to 3x the deposit amount
- Deposit returned or ADR dispute raised within 10 days of agreement**

Once both parties agree the amount to be returned it must be paid within 10 days. If disputed, raise through the scheme's Alternative Dispute Resolution service.

Tenant Fees Act 2019

Only permitted payments may be charged. These are: rent, deposit (within cap), holding deposit (within cap), changes to tenancy at tenant's request, early termination at tenant's request, and default fees for lost keys or late rent. All other charges are unlawful.

3 Property Safety

- Smoke alarms on every floor**

At least one working smoke alarm on every storey used as living accommodation. Tested at the start of each new tenancy.

Penalty: Up to £5,000
- Carbon monoxide alarm fitted in all relevant rooms**

Required in any room with a fixed combustion appliance (boiler, gas fire, wood burner). In force since 1 October 2022. Must be in working order at the start of each tenancy.

Penalty: Up to £5,000
- Legionella risk assessment completed and recorded**

Landlord's legal duty. A straightforward written risk assessment is sufficient for most domestic properties. Review periodically and after changes to the water system.

Penalty: Unlimited fine
- Furniture and furnishings comply with fire safety regulations**

All upholstered furniture in furnished lets must comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 and carry the appropriate fire resistance label.

Penalty: Criminal prosecution
- Installations maintained in working order**

Under Section 11 LTA 1985 you are responsible for water, gas, electricity, space heating and water heating installations.

Penalty: Disrepair claim
- HHSRS hazards assessed and remediated**

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System requires landlords to ensure properties are free from serious hazards. Councils can issue Improvement Notices for Category 1 hazards.

Penalty: Improvement notice / civil penalty

Awaab's Law — Private Sector Extension Expected

Currently applies to social housing. Extension to the private rented sector is expected — requiring landlords to investigate and fix damp, mould and health hazards within strict statutory timeframes. Monitor landlordinsights.co.uk for the commencement date.

4 Licensing

- Mandatory HMO licence obtained if applicable**

Required for properties with 5+ occupants from 2+ separate households sharing facilities. Licence must be in place before letting. Time-limited (up to 5 years) — diarise renewal.

Penalty: Unlimited fine + rent repayment order
- Additional HMO licensing checked with local council**

Some councils extend licensing to smaller shared properties (3+ occupants). Requirements vary — check before letting any shared property.

Penalty: Up to £30,000
- Selective licensing checked for your area**

Over 60 councils operate selective licensing schemes. All private landlords in designated areas must hold a licence regardless of property type. Check landlordinsights.co.uk for your council.

Penalty: Up to £30,000
- HMO licence conditions complied with**

Conditions cover minimum room sizes, fire safety (doors, alarms, extinguishers), waste management, and standards of management. Non-compliance can result in licence revocation.

Penalty: Up to £30,000
- HMO management regulations followed**

The Management of HMOs (England) Regulations 2006 — ongoing duties covering communal areas, fire safety, water and drainage, waste facilities, and structural maintenance.

Penalty: Up to £30,000
- Rent Repayment Order (RRO) exposure understood**

Tenants or councils can apply to the First-tier Tribunal for repayment of up to 12 months' rent where a landlord has let without a required licence. No criminal conviction required.

Penalty: Up to 12 months' rent

Check Your Council Area

Selective and additional licensing schemes are introduced and renewed regularly. Check directly with your local council or use Landlord Insights — we cover 140 authorities and flag new licensing schemes as they are introduced.

5 Renters' Rights Act 2025

- Section 21 abolished — possession strategy reviewed**

Section 21 "no fault" notices are abolished. All possession proceedings now require a valid statutory ground under Section 8. Review your strategy before any tenancy ends.
- Section 8 grounds and notice templates updated**

Updated grounds include: rent arrears (Ground 8 threshold remains 2 months), anti-social behaviour, and landlord or close family member moving in. Use current compliant templates.
- No new fixed-term tenancies**

Fixed-term assured tenancies can no longer be created for new lets. All new tenancies are periodic from day one. Existing fixed-term agreements continue until natural expiry.
- Rent increases via Section 13 only — review clauses no longer effective**

Increases limited to once per year via Section 13. Minimum 2 months' written notice on the prescribed form. Contractual rent review clauses are no longer effective.
- Pet request policy in place**

Must consider written requests; cannot unreasonably refuse. May require pet damage insurance as a condition of consent. Respond in writing within a reasonable timeframe.

Penalty: Compensation claim risk
- Source of income discrimination prohibited from 1 June 2026**

Unlawful to refuse a tenancy because the applicant receives housing benefit, Universal Credit housing costs, or any other welfare payment.

Penalty: Discrimination claim
- Decent Homes Standard — private sector extension**

Government has indicated this will be extended to the private rented sector. Begin assessing your properties now. Monitor landlordinsights.co.uk for the commencement date.

6 Right to Rent

- Initial check completed for all adult occupiers before tenancy starts**

All adults aged 18+ must be checked before the tenancy begins. Check in person or via the Home Office online service. Not required for properties in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Penalty: Up to £20,000 per occupier (first offence) / £60,000 (repeat)
- Correct documents checked or share code used**

List A documents (UK passport, ILR) confirm permanent right — no follow-up needed. List B documents (biometric permit, limited leave visa) confirm time-limited right — follow-up required. Use share codes for all non-UK/Irish nationals.
- Document copies and date of check retained for tenancy duration plus 1 year**

Retain copies of all documents checked (or online check records) and the date the check was carried out. Must be available for Home Office inspection.

Penalty: Loss of statutory excuse
- Follow-up checks diarised for time-limited leave to remain**

Where a tenant holds a List B document, a follow-up check is required before their leave expires — or within 12 months if sooner. Diarise this at the time of the initial check.

Penalty: Up to £60,000 per occupier
- EU, EEA and Swiss nationals checked via EU Settlement Scheme**

Since 1 July 2021 a physical EU passport alone is not sufficient. Check via the Home Office online service using the tenant's share code.

Penalty: Up to £60,000 per occupier
- Home Office notified if tenant's leave expires during tenancy**

If a follow-up check shows a tenant no longer has the right to rent, notify the Home Office. Failing to report removes your statutory excuse even if you do not evict.

Penalty: Up to £60,000 per occupier

Statutory Excuse

A correct right to rent check gives you a statutory excuse — protection against a civil penalty even if it later transpires the tenant had no right to rent, provided you had no reasonable cause to believe the documents were false. Keep records meticulous.

7 Ongoing Obligations

Repair obligations met within a reasonable timeframe

Under Section 11 LTA 1985 you are responsible for structure, exterior and key installations. Respond to reports promptly and in writing. Log all requests and actions — critical evidence if a disrepair claim is made.

Penalty: Disrepair claim / rent repayment order

Annual gas safety certificate renewed and tenant notified

Diarise renewal 6-8 weeks in advance. Certificate must remain valid throughout the tenancy. Copy given to tenant each time a new certificate is issued.

Penalty: Unlimited fine / criminal prosecution

EICR validity monitored — renewal diarised

Valid for 5 years. Arrange a new inspection in advance. Remedial work required by an inspection report must be completed within 28 days.

Penalty: Up to £30,000

Rent arrears process followed before court action

Issue a rent statement at first sign of arrears, serve notices on correct statutory grounds, and follow the Pre-Action Protocol before issuing a court claim.

Penalty: Claim dismissed / wasted costs

Damp, mould and hazards reported by tenants addressed promptly

HHSRS Category 1 damp and mould hazards require urgent action. Councils can issue Improvement Notices without waiting for a tenant complaint.

Penalty: Improvement notice

Specialist landlord insurance in place

Standard residential insurance is typically invalidated for let properties. Ensure you hold landlord buildings, public liability and ideally loss of rent cover. Notify insurer if a property is vacant.

Stay Compliant Year-Round

Landlord Insights monitors 140 local authorities across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland for regulatory changes, enforcement actions and legislative updates — delivering a weekly briefing every Monday morning so you never miss a deadline.

Plans from £9.99/month | landlordinsights.co.uk

Disclaimer: This checklist is for general guidance only and does not constitute legal advice. Legislation changes frequently — always verify current requirements at legislation.gov.uk or seek professional legal advice before taking action.