



# It's Time to Fix Private Renting

The Private Rented Sector (PRS) in England is home to 11 million people, including 2 million children and 745,000 older people. Legislation has failed to keep pace with the changing market. Section 21 'no fault' evictions mean that most private renters could be evicted at any time for no reason whatsoever.

- Government must bring forward a comprehensive Renters' Reform Bill to overhaul the sector's outdated legislation, providing renters with security of tenure.
- The Renters' Reform Bill must abolish Section 21 and ensure that landlords can only evict when they can prove a legitimate reason
- The Bill must also create a centralised National Landlord Register to improve accountability and ensure legal standards are met.

## The Renters' Reform Bill

The last piece of comprehensive legislation to affect the private rented sector (PRS) was introduced in 1988. Since then, the PRS has changed beyond recognition. It has **doubled in size** and is now home to households of all ages, backgrounds, and sizes. This exponential market growth, made possible by financial incentives for landlords and a lack of regulation, has resulted in **11 million people now living in a PRS home**, which is characterised by insecurity, poor conditions, and high prices.

Acknowledging that legislation must be updated and conditions for renters must be improved, the government have rightly committed to introducing a Renters' Reform Bill.

## Section 21

A Section 21 is an eviction notice that landlords can serve which provides no reason for the eviction, giving the renter just two months to leave their home. It can be served at any time after a fixed term has expired. As a result, renters constantly live in fear of eviction.

**SHELTER**

Research shows that **nearly one in five (18%) of renters hasn't complained about poor conditions for fear of being evicted.** They'll also accept anything from negligence to harassment from their landlords, because they're too scared of being served a Section 21 if they raise an issue. Citizens Advice research in 2018 revealed that this fear is justified; **tenants who had received a Section 21 eviction notice were twice as likely to have complained to their landlord, five times more likely to have gone to their local authority and eight times more likely to have complained to a redress scheme prior to receiving the eviction notice.**

## **National Landlord Register**

England is currently the only nation in the UK which does not have a register of private landlords. This means that, if something goes wrong, some renters have no way of knowing who their landlord is to hold them to account. **Local authorities are also left without the information they need to take action against negligent landlords,** to share information across local authority lines, or to understand the private rented sector in their area.

A national landlord register would require all private sector landlords to register themselves, their properties, and any letting agents they work with onto a central register. Landlords and housing management agents would also need to upload essential safety information about the properties they manage to the register – eg. gas safety certificate, electrical safety certificate and Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). **This will give renters vital information they need to know their homes are safe.**

