



# Landlord Fines Under the Renters' Rights Act: Civil Penalties & Rent Repayment

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Looking for guidance on landlord fines being introduced under the Renters' Rights Act?

Under the new framework, civil penalties allow local authorities to issue fines of up to £40,000 for non-compliance. While the Government says high fines are only for serious offences or repeat offenders, every landlord must understand how to protect themselves.

On this page, we'll break down the changes, so you know what to expect.

You'll find:

- 9 key changes every landlord should be aware of
- A full overview of the new civil penalties – and the minimum sanction
- Answers to the most common questions landlords are asking

Whether you're reviewing existing tenancies or preparing for the new ones, this guide will help you protect your position, avoid penalties, and stay fully compliant ahead of the 2026 rollout.

## 9 Key Changes Under the Renters' Rights Act 2025

The most significant update is the introduction of financial sanctions tied to compliance.

Under new rules, landlords may face penalties of up to £7,000 for a "breach" and up to £40,000 for an "offence". Local housing authorities (LHAs) will gain enforcement powers, including the ability to issue sanctions against company directors, managing agents, and superior landlords.

On the next page, you'll find the 9 key changes that landlords must prepare for under the new regime and keep reading for the Government's proposed "starting point" penalty figures for each type of breach or offence.



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## 1. Increased Enforcement Powers for Local Housing Authorities

- LHAs now have a legal duty (not discretion) to investigate breaches.
- They will issue civil penalties directly to landlords and managing agents.
- LHAs **must** take action where there is evidence of non-compliance.

## 2. Enforcement Funded Through Penalties

- LHAs can retain the fines they issue.
- Funds must be reinvested into compliance and enforcement activity.
- This model is intended to increase monitoring and reduce non-compliance.

## 3. Tenant-led Enforcement

- Tenants can pursue claims independently if a landlord breaches the law.
- Rent repayment orders (RROs) can be triggered without LHA involvement.
- Tenants may now recover up to two years' rent, depending on the offence.

## 4. Civil Penalties for "Breaches"

- Fines may be issued up to £7,000 for minor breaches.
- Criminal prosecution remains an alternative route in serious cases.
- Government guidance confirms these are maximum penalties, not typical starting points.

## 5. Civil Penalties for Serious Offences

- Fines may reach £40,000 for serious or persistent non-compliance.
- Unlimited fines may be issued if criminal proceedings are pursued.
- These penalties apply to both individual landlords and corporate entities.

## 6. Rent Repayment Orders (RROs)

- Tenants and LHAs may apply for repayment of up to two years' rent.
- RROs can apply where a breach continues after a civil penalty is issued.
- This builds on previous Housing Act rules which capped repayment at one year.



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## 7. Personal Liability for Company Directors and Officers

- Directors, managing officers, and superior landlords may be held personally responsible.
- Delegating responsibility to a managing agent will not prevent enforcement.
- This change means landlords must understand compliance requirements directly.

## 8. Criminal Prosecution for Repeat Non-Compliance

- LHAs may pursue criminal action instead of or after civil penalties.
- Courts may impose unlimited fines following a conviction.
- Offenders may face multiple types of sanctions for the same conduct.

## 9. Expanded Council Powers to Enter Properties

- LHAs may enter private rented properties to gather evidence.
- In certain compliance scenarios, no warrant will be required.
- These powers are intended to speed up enforcement and improve safety oversight.

## Landlord Fines & Civil Penalties: Complete Overview

Under the Renters' Rights Act, financial sanctions are divided into two categories:

- Breaches (up to £7,000 civil penalty)
- Offences (up to £40,000 civil penalty)

On the next page, we detail the key areas where landlords may face penalties.

The first table covers breaches, which may result in civil penalties of up to £7,000. The second table outlines offences, which carry higher sanction levels of up to £40,000, and in some cases may lead to criminal prosecution.



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## Landlord Fines for Breaches (Up to £7,000 Civil Penalty)

| Breach                                                                                      | Legislation                                        | Civil Penalty |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Attempting to let the property for a fixed term                                             | Housing Act 1988 – s16E(1)(a)                      | £4,000        |
| Attempting to end the tenancy by service of a notice to quit                                | Housing Act 1988 – s16E(1)(b)                      | £6,000        |
| Attempting to end the tenancy orally, or requiring it be ended orally                       | Housing Act 1988 – s16E(1)(c)                      | £6,000        |
| Serving a possession notice outside of the prescribed Section 8 process                     | Housing Act 1988 – s16E(1)(d)                      | £6,000        |
| Relying on a ground without reasonable belief the landlord could obtain possession          | Housing Act 1988 – s16I(1)(e)                      | £6,000        |
| Failure to provide prior notice where a ground requires it                                  | Housing Act 1988 – s16E(1)(f)                      | £3,000        |
| Failure to issue a written statement of terms within 28 days of an assured tenancy starting | Housing Act 1988 – s16D                            | £4,000        |
| Failure to provide an existing tenant with prescribed Renters' Rights Act information       | Renters' Rights Act 2025 – Schedule 6, Paragraph 7 | £4,000        |
| Discriminating against applicants on benefits or with children                              | Renters' Rights Act 2025 – s33 & s34               | £6,000        |
| Failure to specify proposed rent clearly in advertisement or offer                          | Renters' Rights Act 2025 – s56(2)                  | £3,000        |
| Inviting, encouraging or accepting rent above the advertised rate (rental bidding)          | Renters' Rights Act 2025 – s56(3)                  | £4,000        |



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### Landlord Fines for Offences (Up to £40,000 Civil Penalty)

| Breach or Offence                                                                                           | Legislation                                       | Civil Penalty                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Unlawful eviction and harassment                                                                            | Protection from Eviction Act 1977 – s1(2) & s1(3) | £35,000                                                |
| Relying on a ground knowing possession cannot be obtained (or being reckless as to this)                    | Housing Act 1988 – s16J(1)                        | £30,000                                                |
| Reletting or remarketing property during the 12-month no-let restriction after selling or moving-in grounds | Housing Act 1988 – s16J(2)                        | £25,000                                                |
| Continuing or repeat breach within 5 years of a previous penalty                                            | Housing Act 1988 – s16J(3) & (4)                  | Double the starting level of the two breaches combined |
| Failure to comply with an improvement notice                                                                | Housing Act 2004 – s30(1)                         | £25,000                                                |
| Mandatory HMO operating without a licence                                                                   | Housing Act 2004 – s72(1)                         | £17,000                                                |
| Additional HMO unlicensed                                                                                   | Housing Act 2004 – s72(1)                         | £17,000                                                |
| Knowingly permitting over-occupation of an HMO                                                              | Housing Act 2004 – s72(2)                         | £20,000                                                |
| Property requiring selective licensing but unlicensed                                                       | Housing Act 2004 – s95(1)                         | £12,000                                                |



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|                                                                    |                                          |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------|
| Failure to comply with an overcrowding notice                      | Housing Act 2004 – s139(7)               | £20,000 |
| Failure to provide occupier information                            | Housing Act 2004 – HMO Mgmt Regs (Reg 3) | £3,000  |
| Failure to take safety measures                                    | Housing Act 2004 – HMO Mgmt Regs (Reg 4) | £20,000 |
| Failure to maintain water supply & drainage                        | Housing Act 2004 – HMO Mgmt Regs (Reg 5) | £10,000 |
| Failure to supply/maintain gas & electrical safety or certificates | Housing Act 2004 – HMO Mgmt Regs (Reg 6) | £12,000 |
| Failure to maintain common parts                                   | Housing Act 2004 – HMO Mgmt Regs (Reg 7) | £7,000  |
| Failure to maintain living accommodation                           | Housing Act 2004 – HMO Mgmt Regs (Reg 8) | £7,000  |
| Failure to provide adequate waste disposal facilities              | Housing Act 2004 – HMO Mgmt Regs (Reg 9) | £7,000  |
| Breach of a banning order                                          | Housing and Planning Act 2016 – s21(1)   | £35,000 |





# Landlord Fines Under the Renters' Rights Act: Civil Penalties & Rent Repayment

## Rent Repayment Orders (RROs)

The Renters' Rights Act expands situations where a landlord may be required to repay rent to a tenant or to the LHA.

Under the new framework, RROs can apply to a wide range of breaches, including those relating to tenancy management and compliance failures. The First-tier Tribunal may now order repayment of up to two years' rent, depending on the severity and duration of the breach, and whether the landlord has previously been sanctioned.

This represents an increase from the former 12-month limit under earlier housing legislation.

### **RROs may be triggered where:**

- A civil penalty has been issued and the breach continues.
- A landlord commits a serious or repeated offence.
- Required tenancy documentation is not provided.
- The property is let or remarketed during a restricted period.
- The landlord fails to register with or comply with the PRS Ombudsman or Database.

## Common Questions Landlords Are Asking

### **Can a landlord be fined for illegal eviction?**

Yes.

Unlawful eviction or harassment is a criminal offence under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977. LHA can issue a civil penalty of up to £35,000, and in serious cases may pursue criminal prosecution, which can result in unlimited fines.

Penalties apply whether the eviction was intentional or due to failure to follow the correct legal process – including issuing proper notice and obtaining a possession order where required.



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## **Are there exceptions to the 12-month no-let rule?**

Yes.

Exceptions apply if the property is occupied as a main residence by the landlord or an eligible family member, or if the new tenancy being marketed or granted will last more than 21 years.

## **How can landlords or letting agents challenge a civil penalty?**

Before issuing a penalty, the local authority must serve a notice of intent. The landlord or agent then has 28 days to submit written objections.

If a final notice is issued, it can be appealed to the First-tier Tribunal, which will re-examine the decision. The Tribunal may confirm, vary, or cancel the penalty but can only increase it up to the statutory maximum. Further appeal may be possible to the Upper Tribunal, with permission.

## **Will previous history affect the level of the fine?**

Yes.

Local authorities can adjust penalty levels based on aggravating or mitigating factors. Higher penalties apply where there is a history of non-compliance, multiple properties, demonstrated harm to tenants or delayed remediation.

Penalties may be reduced where issues were promptly corrected, responsibility admitted or where risk or harm was low. Authorities are encouraged to apply a consistent framework to ensure proportional and fair penalty outcomes.

## **How will LHA decide whether to issue a fine?**

LHA will apply one of two below legal tests when determining whether to impose a civil penalty.

For most breaches, they must be "satisfied beyond reasonable doubt" that a landlord has failed to meet their legal obligation. This is the same standard used in criminal cases and requires strong evidence.

However, some breaches – including rental discrimination and failing to state the proposed rent – use the lower civil threshold of "balance of probabilities," meaning it must simply be more likely than not that a breach occurred.





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## 4 Key Ways to Protecting Yourself Before New Rules Take Effect

Landlords should now be preparing their processes to minimise risk and demonstrate compliance. Taking practical steps early will make it significantly easier to defend your position if a dispute, inspection or enforcement action arises.

### Key steps to take now include:

- **Organise documentation for every tenancy.**  
Keep tenancy agreements, notices, correspondence, inspection notes and statutory documents together. A complete record makes it far easier to evidence compliance if challenged.
- **Map key dates and deadlines.**  
Track notice periods, tenancy anniversary dates, document issuance deadlines and any possible use of Grounds 1 or 1A. A calendar-based system reduces the risk of technical breaches.
- **Strengthen your possession planning.**  
Consider which grounds you may rely on over the next 12–24 months and ensure notices, evidence and expectations are aligned early.
- **Implement written communication.**  
Verbal agreements now create risk. Use written templates for notices, renewals, terms, proposed rent changes and statutory information sheets so communication is consistent and defensible.

## How Strikes Can Help You Prepare

**Strikes Property Services Group** specialises in helping landlords navigate the legal and procedural changes shaping the private rented sector. Our team provides possession planning, compliance support and tailored guidance to help landlords prepare for the new enforcement landscape and avoid costly mistakes.

Whether you need help reviewing tenancy documentation, assessing future possession strategy, or establishing compliant notice and record-keeping systems, our specialists can support you at every stage.

If you're unsure where to start, now is the time to act. [Book a free consultation](#) with our Managing Director, Chris Bane, to discuss your situation and the steps needed to stay compliant and protected.