

## Renters reform – what next?



The new Prime Minister has moved into No10 Downing Street and the cabinet has been appointed. New government ministers are making early announcements as to their plans which will be set out in the King's speech on 17 July.

### Where does this change of government leave the private rented sector?

The Renters Reform Bill did not make it through “wash up” and so if the new government wish to make changes to the law in this area, they will need to begin the whole process again with a brand-new Bill. It is widely anticipated that this will be high on the new government's agenda, but we wonder if that will be the case.

We know that Labour wants to abolish Section 21 no fault evictions. Angela Rayner the new Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities openly said that this would be done on their first day in office. That is not legally possible as it will take time for a Bill to go through both Houses, but they could announce it in the King's speech and make it a priority.

We can anticipate that their proposals will go further than the now defunct Bill. The new Minister, Matthew Pennycook has been the shadow minister for housing, so unlike some he won't have to start from scratch. He was responsible for leading the Renters Reform Bill through the Commons for the Labour Party and proposed a number of amendments including preventing a landlord from selling a property within two years of the commencement of a tenancy. Whilst he will be keen to have a Bill in the House as soon as possible he knows that the county courts are under pressure and that they need to be reviewed before anything further can be done which is likely to delay any bill.



The Labour Party manifesto set out their intention to propose new rights to challenge rent increases. It is also widely anticipated that the new government would like to institute greater rent controls. Any applications to oppose a rent increase or to set rents would be handled by the First-tier Tribunal and this could put more pressure on an already beleaguered system.

The most important change Labour wants to effect relates to energy efficiency. They have previously stated that they would want a minimum efficiency standard of C or above in an EPC. The question here is whether they have given any consideration to flat owners who do not necessarily have the right under their leases to change windows or to install insulation. These measures would put a burden on the industry as a whole but especially on small independent landlords and there would likely be significant challenge to this proposal.

The government also wants to raise housing standards but do not give specific examples as to how they will do this, but it is widely thought that they will extend Awaab's law to the private sector.

The inclusion of measures to prevent anti-discrimination, presumably against those who are on benefits or with young families sounds a little like a last-minute proposal but is well intentioned.

It appears from the news today that the new government is kicking off with plans to build more homes and recruit new teachers before renters' reform comes to the fore, but we will be watching the King's speech next week with interest.

## How we can help

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