

## Renters' rights v Renters' reform: what is the difference?

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In our last article on [9 July Renters reform – what next?](#) we said we would be watching the King's speech with interest to see if legislation relating to the private rented sector would be high on the new government's agenda.

As anticipated, and in accordance with its manifesto, the government set out its plans as follows: "legislation will be introduced to give greater rights and protections to people renting their homes, including ending no-fault evictions and reforming grounds for possession".

The newly named Renters' Rights Bill is only in headline form at the moment and here we examine what it might contain and how it varies from the Renters (Reform) Bill of the previous government.

The Renters' Rights Bill will abolish Section 21 no fault evictions. This was a major part of Labour's manifesto and thus no surprise that it is included but Angela Rayner had promised to abolish S20 notices "immediately". Instead of introducing a short bill in the King's speech that could have been passed through both Houses before the summer recess it has been included in a longer bill which will not come before the House until the autumn and is unlikely to come into force until 2025 at the earliest.

The only other major difference from the previous bill and which we had anticipated is the inclusion of Awaab's law; providing that landlords must fix health hazards within a specific timeframe. This is likely to mirror the obligations on social housing providers.

The government will also expand the grounds which allow landlords to recover possession under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1988. Proposals are likely to be similar to the Renters (Reform) Bill but may significantly advantage tenants. For example, it is expected that landlords will be able to recover possession if they intend to sell the property but the government are likely to insist that they cannot sell within the first year of a tenancy.



This is a significantly longer time period than was in the previous bill but in line with what Matthew Pennycook saw as a key amendment. That is a long time to wait for a landlord who may be in financial difficulties or need to free up their equity.

There is no mention of how the government will modernise the court system to allow for more possession cases that will need to be heard by a judge rather than being dealt with on paper and this has always been a barrier to reforming the private rented sector.

Most of the other proposals mirror or are very similar to those in the Renters (Reform) Bill, for example the right to request a pet, some form of digital database, ombudsman and investigatory powers for councils. We do not know whether they also plan to abolish fixed term tenancies at the same time as abolishing S21 evictions and we will have to wait for the draft bill.

We will continue to monitor progress and update in the autumn when we know more about the

## How we can help

Contact our [real estate team](#) for further advice.



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