

Appendix D – Preparing for Implementation: Housing Advice and Support

The Renter's Rights Act 2025 places new legal responsibilities on landlords of privately rented properties and provides increased protection for tenants.

In the period leading up to Part 1 of the Act coming into effect on 1st May 2026 and subsequently, the Council's Environmental Health & Licensing and Housing Options services have worked to:

- Promote the Act to landlords, providing them with information on their new responsibilities and where they can get advice to ensure that their rental business are operated in compliance with the legislation
- Promote the Act to tenants to raise awareness of their strengthened rights and protections under the Act, how they can report problems and where they can get further assistance.
- Review and update new processes to ensure that both tenants and landlords can access timely advice and support

Steps that have been taken include:

- Writing to all registered HMO landlords in Stevenage.
- Writing to local letting agents.
- Holding an online landlord forum with relevant presentations and a Q&A session.
- The development of new related webpages on the Council website providing information for both landlords and tenants, with links to further sources of advice and support.
- The publicising of landlord and tenant 'toolkits' and links to other online resources developed by government – e.g. via social media channels.
- Updating of online reporting links on the Council's website, so that tenants have a clear route to report concerns about housing standards, their landlord's conduct or compliance with the new rules applying to tenancies.
- Review of the Advice Aid tool accessed via the Council's Housing Advice website, which allows customers to receive information tailored to their own circumstances, which has now been updated to include information about the Renters' Rights Act.
- Working jointly with the Customer Service Centre management team to agree and implement referral routes where service requests relating to the new legislation are received.

In addition, the Housing Options service has:

- Reviewed the processes in place for monitoring any impact of the Act on homelessness presentations. As a result of this review, a new KPI is to be added which will enable the Housing Options service manager to report on presentations from those that have presented as homeless due to eviction from privately rented accommodation.
- Reviewed and updated the Homeless Prevention Action Plan for 2026/27, which sets out that the Council will:
 - Proactively respond to the implementation of the Renters' Rights Act by adapting prevention and advice services to reflect changes within the private rented sector.
 - Ensure staff are equipped to provide accurate, up-to-date advice.
 - Strengthen early engagement with tenants and landlords to resolve disputes before escalation.
 - Develop clear protocols for responding to revised possession grounds to ensure timely prevention activity.
 - Increase tenancy sustainment work to reflect longer, more secure tenancies and reduce avoidable tenancy breakdown
 - Monitor changes in homelessness presentations linked to new eviction grounds, rent increases or landlord withdrawal from the market. Utilise data trends to adapt prevention strategies and target interventions effectively.

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- Provide guidance and engagement forums to help landlords understand new legal duties, tenancy reforms, and dispute resolution processes
- Work with enforcement teams to identify and respond to non-compliant landlords, reducing unsafe or unstable tenancies.