

Understanding the UK tenant



A report by
MakeUrMove

**How landlords can make the
most of their rental property**

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Landlords in the UK have probably never felt under such pressure as they do right now. With the country facing a housing crisis, a potential no-deal Brexit looming and a raft of legislation being pushed through at a speed of knots, you can understand why they might feel uneasy.

Having worked in the industry for over 10 years, we know the problems faced by UK landlords. Our research shows that more than half of landlords only own one property, having inherited them or perhaps not having been able to sell them. They still have day jobs such as office workers and teachers. They aren't necessarily in it to make lots of money and are now facing real problems as a result of ineffective housing policy over many decades.

Furthermore, the relationship between landlords and tenants is becoming increasingly fractious, perhaps due to the onslaught of new, and potentially difficult to understand regulation and legislation, or maybe in part due to media portrayals of both parties.

Whatever the cause, it needs to be resolved quickly, much like the problems in the housing market.

The housing market is experiencing a complete failure. It doesn't adequately provide for social tenants, private renters, or home buyers. Costs are spiralling in all sectors due to a severe lack of housing supply, a banking sector that stifles investment and the lack of coordinated strategy from successive governments.

We don't believe that the wider housing market problems or the specific issues affecting the private rental sector can be solved at the click of a finger with the government's current approach.

We recently ran two sets of research. The first looked at landlords and their attitude to the market, including legislation. The second surveyed tenants, delving into their reasons for renting and their attitudes towards landlords.

In this report, we've analysed the findings to help landlords understand tenants in the UK, providing useful advice and tips along the way. We've spoken to industry experts including leading spokespeople for the National Landlords Association and Residential Landlords Association, and landlords and tenants alike, to get their first-hand viewpoints.

We hope that you find the contents valuable and would love to hear your feedback.



MakeUrMove was established in 2008 as the original online letting agent. The focus was simple; reduce costs for landlords and make the process more efficient. Since then we have worked with over 25,000 landlords and over 210,000 tenants. In that time, we have successfully let thousands of private residential properties for landlords all over the UK.

Our service is supported by an award-winning platform and our mission is to bring landlords and tenants together through people-focused technology. We provide expert advice and 24-hour access for landlords and tenants alike.

In 2012 we expanded our services to include a full property management and rent collection solution. With a wide network of partners, MakeUrMove can offer a full service across the whole of the UK, we are members of Safe Agent, ARLA Propertymark and the RLA.



The private rental sector (PRS) makes up a crucial part of the UK's housing market. Declining home ownership and a shortage of social housing have led to a surge in the number of people privately renting. Figures suggest that the PRS could grow by 24% by 2021, meaning that one in four people will be renting. The market has already doubled in the last 10 years, with 68% of current renters expecting to still be living in the rental sector in three years' time.

This rise has come for a number of reasons. The first being that younger workers are taking advantage of the increased flexibility of renting, enabling them to easily move locations. Affordability in the sales market is also preventing some people from purchasing. In addition, there has been large-scale investment in the Build to Rent sector, which is now worth £25 billion.

There are currently more than 4.7 million households in the PRS – 20% of all UK households. The total amount of rent paid by these tenants soared to more than £50bn in 2017, more than double the level of a decade ago. However, the private rental sector is in danger. Looming hikes in the Bank of England base rate, rising stamp duty for property owners, the tenant fees ban and loss of tax relief on buy-to-let properties could all add up to spell disaster for the UK's housing market.

Despite the increased demand from tenants, there is a distinct deficit in the amount of housing supply throughout the market, both for buyers and in the social and private rental markets.

Yet rather than trying to solve this lack of supply, the government seem to be expediting the problem. Figures suggest that two-thirds of landlords only have one property.

These landlords aren't necessarily in the market by choice. Many have struggled to sell their properties. Some have moved in with a new partner. Others have relocated for work purposes. They are adding stock to the private rental sector, supplementing their main income and not necessarily making a profit.

However, the private rental sector is undergoing significant changes at the moment, with the government bringing in a tenant fees ban, considering ending no-fault evictions and introducing new regulations relating to houses of multiple occupancy, all designed to improve the lives of tenants. With so many landlords having come into the role by 'accident' and owning only a small number of properties, it's vital that the important work of protecting tenants is balanced with the need to support small landlords who make up the backbone of the PRS.



“Not all landlords are in it to make masses of profit, some of us rent out our homes – which weren’t bought specifically to rent out – as it is the best option, and we make our tenants feel welcomed and happy.”

Quote from a landlord
questioned in the MakeUrMove survey.

This lack of supply, amongst other issues, has created a knock-on effect across the board, including rising rents in towns and cities across the UK.

The impending tenant fees ban, loss of mortgage interest tax relief and regulatory changes have all combined to create financial pressures on landlords.

As a result, our research revealed that 40% of landlords will have to increase rents in 2018, potentially leading to two million tenants across the UK being hit with rent rises costing them an extra £276 a year, totalling a huge £46 million per month.

This could be particularly worrying for tenants already struggling with stagnant wages and the rising cost of living, especially as the average monthly rent in the UK already stands at £918.

Top places tenants will face rent increases

% of landlords increasing rent	Average annual rent increase
71% in Walsall	£155
64% in St Albans	£424
61% in Portsmouth	£316
59% in Leicester	£227
50% in Bath	£417
50% in Dundee	£167
50% in Sunderland	£167

“Our study has shown that half of the UK’s landlords are small landlords who only own one property. These landlords operate on very tight margins and recent changes introduced by the government have put even more pressure on them. This means they will have no choice but to consider these rent increases in 2018 which will negatively affect tenants.”

Alexandra Morris

Managing Director at MakeUrMove

Can legislation help to rectify the problems?

The government has recently suggested and made lots of changes to the private rental sector, including the tenant fees ban and the proposed introduction of three-year minimum tenancies, in a bid to help tenants across the UK.

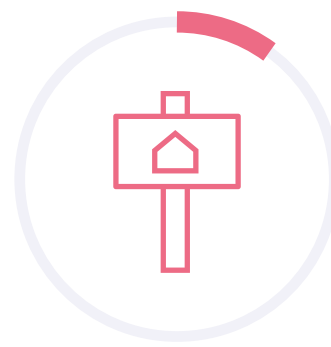
However, our research shows that more than half of the 4.7 million tenanted households across the UK don't understand their rights or the new laws the government has brought in to help them. More worryingly, it's some of the more common pieces of legislation associated with property rental that tenants are struggling to understand.



85% of tenants don't understand the upcoming tenant fees ban despite widespread coverage in the media



41% of tenants struggle to understand the Deposit Protection Scheme



10% of landlords would definitely have to sell due to these legislative changes

85% of tenants don't understand the upcoming tenant fees ban despite widespread coverage in the media.

41% of tenants struggle to understand the Deposit Protection Scheme, with 32% also not knowing their rights for getting their deposit back, potentially leading to issues at the end of a tenancy. 64% don't understand the costs for referencing checks and 59% don't understand their rights when it comes to decorating their rental property.

These statistics are alarming and show that the very legislation that is being brought in to protect tenants is, in fact, leading to confusion instead.

More worrying is the fact that three-quarters of the UK's landlords could be forced to sell their rental property due to the introduction of some of these legislations. Our research also revealed that 10% of landlords would definitely have to sell due to these legislative changes, potentially leaving 450,000 tenants homeless.

Alexandra Morris

Managing Director at MakeUrMove

“We’re staring down the barrel of a very real housing crisis. There is a major deficit in the amount of housing supply, both for buyers and in the social and private rental markets.

Coupled with the huge number of changes to the private rental sector, including the loss of mortgage tax relief for landlords, the impending tenant fees ban and the proposed introduction of three-year minimum tenancies, to name but a few, there appears to be a real lack of joined up thinking with regards to these changes.

The government is supposedly bringing in this legislation to protect tenants, but the unintended consequence will likely be landlords having to increase rents, especially if they are making a loss on their rental property. And this is the best-case scenario. In reality, it could be much worse.

Whilst we wholly welcome regulation which further professionalises the private rental sector – and we would welcome initiatives such as increasing empty property taxes and incentives to encourage landlords to offer longer tenancies or maintain rent levels for longer – by implementing piecemeal changes with little regard for the ultimate impact, the government is simply compounding the problem. The government’s current housing policies are just tinkering around the edges of the issue. We need to deal with the cause of the problem, not the symptoms.

What is needed is a comprehensive strategy to increase supply across the housing market, from properties for those looking to buy, to a greater availability of properties in the rental market. If the government could get to grips with this fundamental issue, then the problems of lack of security for tenants and an inability to save for a deposit would all be dealt with as a consequence.”

“It’s time the government stopped implementing sticking plasters and pursued a wholesale transformation of the housing market.”

Moving in: Why tenants rent

Chapter Two

Despite government actions to make buying a home easier, our research that one in three tenants don't have any plans to buy their own home at any point.

Although the widespread myth is that everyone is forced into renting, many people choose to do so thanks to the flexibility and freedom it offers them.

37.6%

of tenants aren't planning to buy their own property at any point

19.7%

of tenants chose to rent because of the flexibility it offers in terms of moving at relatively short notice

12.0%

chose to rent to get a better quality property

9.1%

chose to rent to avoid unforeseen costs

86.7%

of tenants think of their rental property as a home (not a temporary solution)

42.6%

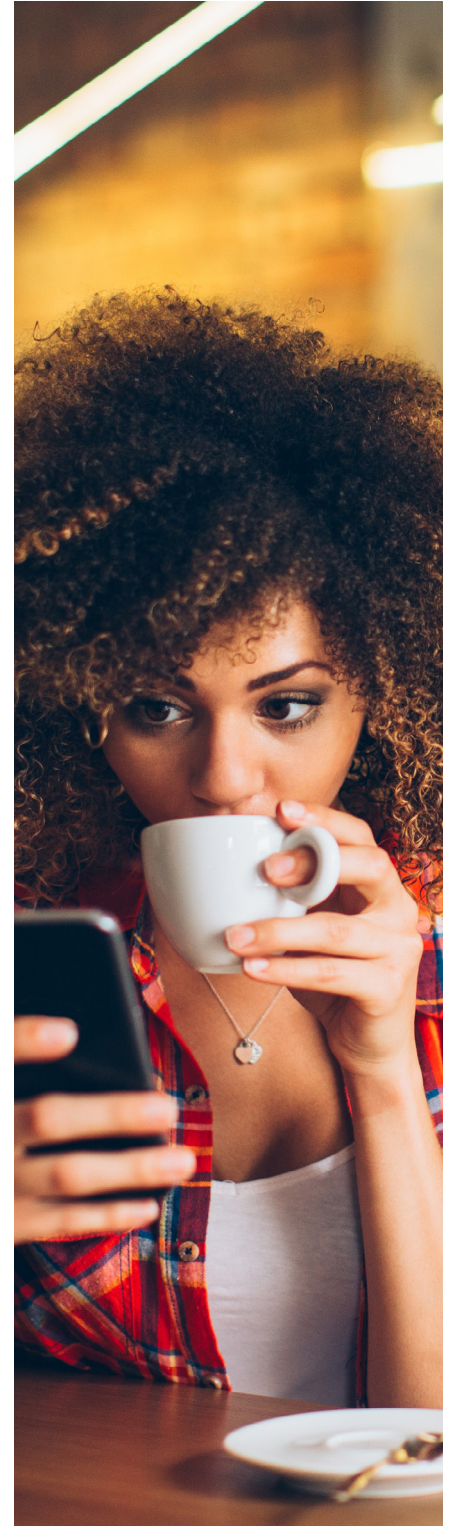
of tenants have spent more than five years in one rental property

44.8%

of tenants chose to rent because they can't afford to buy at all

44.4%

of tenants chose to rent because they couldn't afford to buy in the area they live in



Renting in the city is great

"Housing is unaffordable for loads of people so it's really easy to see why so many people focus on the negative side of things, but for me renting is a choice. For me renting is liberating. I'm not tied down to a specific property or area. I mean who wants to be buying somewhere and spend a fortune when they're not convinced they'll actually stay there?"

One of the things I love about renting is it's fairly hassle-free and offers flexibility. I recently moved from one flat to another flat in the building I live in. You'd never do that if you had bought somewhere but it was a great solution for my flatmate and I.

I don't want to be stuck fixing the roof if there's a problem. And even though people talk about buying a property being an investment, most of those people are going to be forced to sell their house to pay for their social care in their old age. So I don't see that as being a legitimate reason to buy anymore either.

I do intend to own my own place one day. At the moment, I can't afford to buy in the city but enjoy the lifestyle and also not having to commute by car/public transport. It's basically risk-free and I think of this as a kind of dry run to owning my own place. I'm a tenant but I'm practising ready for when I get round to becoming a homeowner."

David Quinn
Manchester

Renting is rubbish for young people

"I'm relatively young and this is my first home. But since I have started renting I'm increasingly aware that the amount my rents costs will make it hard for me to save to get onto the property ladder in the long run.

It feels like there's a huge difference now between income and rent and house prices that didn't apply to previous generations.

It's hard for me to balance day to day life with saving. There also doesn't seem to be much support for younger people who want to get on the housing ladder.

The housing market just doesn't work for young people any more. All the houses have been bought by older people to rent out. I understand that's not their fault because what else are they going to do with their money to get a return and fund their retirement? But it doesn't help me."

Becky Winstanley
Chorley

Alexandra Morris

Managing Director at MakeUrMove

There's always going to be a demand for rental properties in the UK and savvy landlords can capitalise on this by having the best possible offering for their tenants, whatever levels of rent they're paying. We've put together three top tips on how to make sure your tenants are happy:

Offer flexible tenancies

The outcome of the government's three-year tenancy plan is currently up in the air, which is probably for the best as our research revealed that just 7.2% of tenants would welcome a tenancy of that length.

30% of tenants that we surveyed stated that they would prefer a 12-month tenancy, with a further 20% saying that they want tenancies to last for no more than two years.

We believe that offering flexibility is much more important and our research backs this up. 30% of tenants said that flexibility was the most important factor when looking at the length of their tenancy.

29% of tenants stated that they'd actually like a tenancy to last significantly longer than three years, and over half of the tenants questioned had spent more than five years in their current rental property.

Explain any fees to prospective or existing tenants

The tenant fee ban is already making its way through Parliament and was born from concerns that tenants were being charged too much to perform reference and credit checks or when their contracts were being drawn up. However, our research revealed that a whopping 85% of tenants don't actually understand the ban, with 75% of tenants actually predicting that it will lead to rents increasing.

I don't necessarily believe in the ban but I do think it's important that landlords are transparent with tenants when it comes to fees and charges. Setting this out at the beginning of the process ensures that no one is subject to any nasty surprises, helping to keep relationships positive.

Allow tenants to put their own stamp on the property

87% of tenants we asked saw their rental property as a home, rather than a temporary solution. Most of the tenants we asked (86.7%) saw their rental property as a home, rather than a temporary solution.

Landlords are going a long way to helping with this, with 70.5% of those that we surveyed allowing their tenants to make decorative alterations to their properties. 12% also allow tenants to make structural alterations.

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During the tenancy: The expectations of tenants

Chapter Three



59% of tenants don't understand their rights when it comes to decorating their rented home



56% of tenants don't understand their rights when it comes to tending their home's garden



40% of tenants don't understand their rights when it comes to cleaning the property



Our previous chapter about today's rental market discussed tenants' lack of understanding about some of the legislation that has been brought in to help them.

However, this lack of understanding also extends to other rights that tenants should enjoy. Our research found that 41% of tenants don't understand the Deposit Protection Scheme, with 32 percent also not knowing their rights for getting their deposit back.

The survey also revealed that 59% of tenants don't understand their rights when it comes to decorating their rented home.

Other aspects tenants said they were unsure of who was responsible for undertaking minor replacement (45%), looking after their home's garden (56%), and even cleaning the property (40%).

What are the main complaints of tenants?

According to our research, a quarter of tenants in the UK believe they are being forced to wait too long for repairs on their rental properties thanks to unscrupulous landlords, while a worrying 44% claimed to have faced difficulties with their landlords.

Rogue landlords with poor standards are thankfully in the minority, but it's still important to have procedures in place to protect tenants, as well as maintaining the reputation of reputable landlords in the UK.

That being said, sometimes it's simply a case of lack of understanding. Many landlords have little understanding of the complex laws related to letting out property. Likewise, a large proportion of tenants have a limited understanding about their rental rights.

There are many factors that landlords and tenants need to be educated on. To truly spark change, the government needs to be prepared to invest in the education needed for both parties, especially when legislation is changing frequently.

44.0%

claimed to have faced difficulties with their landlords

28.3%

of tenants that we surveyed complained of damp & mould

26.2%

of tenants that we surveyed complained of noisy neighbours

13.8%

complained the property was dirty when they moved in

26.8%

complained of broken fixtures and fittings

20.9%

landlords are slow to respond when you contact them



How to avoid tenant issues



“Make sure you meet the applicants and ask them open questions that give them an opportunity to volunteer revealing information. For example: who will live at the property? Does their answer concur with the information given to you by the agent, does it sound likely that they may move other people in? This is important for helping to combat unsolicited subletting. Sometimes I ask to meet people in their existing home to get a sense of how they currently live before I hand over the keys to my asset to virtual strangers. Thorough referencing also goes without saying. In the past, I have often had one heart sink tenant who doesn’t look after the property and I can feel the refurbishment bill clocking up the longer they live there. Having said that most of my tenants have worked out really brilliantly and I think much of that has been down to having clear policies and good management systems in place and having a reliable maintenance team.”

Richard Blanco

NLA London Representative, Landlord, and Broadcaster



“A calm commercially-minded approach is vital. Landlords often get upset about ‘points of principle’. Being a landlord is a business and while principles come into that so does commerce.

Fighting tenants because they have upset you when there is no commercial value in doing so and criticising government policy because you feel unappreciated is ultimately a waste of time and likely to cause you a lot of stress with little ultimate value.”

David Smith

Policy Director of the Residential Landlords Association

Moving on: Tenants leaving a property

Chapter Four

Despite recent media coverage perhaps sensationalising the issue of eviction, our research revealed that just 3% of tenants were evicted by their landlord during their last tenancy. Meanwhile, 59% of tenants had been the ones to give notice.

On the contrary, 47% of landlords have had issues with tenants who don't pay the rent on time. 15% have faced the situation where tenants refuse to leave at the end of a tenancy.

This is leading to a third of landlords saying that they could be forced to sell due to these problems.

A quarter of landlords have also faced large bills when tenants have left properties in a state of damage and

disrepair. Many have had to pay thousands to restore their property after a tenant has moved out, with one landlord surveyed left with £16,000 of damage. Landlords say damage caused by tenants far outstrips the sum of the deposit usually taken at the start of the tenancy and held in the government-backed Deposit Protection Scheme. Recent reports have even suggested an insurance-backed deposit scheme so that tenants don't pay an upfront deposit to ensure that they don't lose out on the interest they would have accrued.

Legislation is currently swinging towards tenants, so landlords need to be careful about who they choose to move into their property, ensuring that the relevant checks have been carried out and good references obtained.



47% of landlords have had issues with tenants who don't pay the rent on time



15% have faced the situation where tenants refuse to leave at the end of a tenancy



“I’ve had first-hand experience of a rogue tenant who I had a great deal of difficulty evicting, partly because I was trying to do the right thing and help someone who needed a home out.

During the reference checks, it was flagged that the tenant had a CCJ but it was put down to an admin error. I initially refused the tenant but after a long conversation and a detailed review of their bank statements, they’d done enough to convince me and they moved in, in December 2017.

Really this is when the problems began. They paid the first month’s rent late, which was obviously a big concern to me. They then paid £1,000 towards the second month’s rent – just three-quarters of the total due. The payments then stopped and it became clear they had no intention of paying further rent.

The tenant was served with a Section 8 eviction notice due to rent arrears but they refused to vacate the property during the notice period and didn’t pay any further rent. I then had to apply for a possession order from the court to force the tenant to leave the property. All in all, this process took five months during which time no rent was paid. They were finally evicted on 15th May 2018.

Along with the £4,500 in unpaid rent, I also had to pay over £1,000 in court costs to regain possession of the property and it’s not over yet. I have to go back to court, for an additional cost of course, to get a CCJ for £4,500 against the tenant and hopefully prevent them from repeating the process with another unsuspecting landlord. I honestly don’t believe that it will help me recoup any of the money that I’m owed.

While I do fully understand the difficulties of renting, I truly believe I’ve been punished for trying to be kind to a tenant. It’s a perfect example of how the rules don’t work. I had to wait five months to evict a tenant who was uncooperative and refusing to pay the rent, which is far too long.”

Maurey Lancaster

Landlady with a flat in London





“Deciding when to issue notice is a commercial call for a landlord. But from my perspective, you should be considering it as soon as you become aware there’s a problem. After all, this is a business.

Sometimes there can be specific concerns on when to time notices and start evictions – for example the Christmas period and taking into account the risk of a longer term void. My experience is that generally landlords can be too understanding and can delay based on false promise or a hope the situation will just naturally improve. That can lead to larger arrears and delays in obtaining possession, and worst case a property suffering from more disrepair than if the issues had been tackled earlier.

Usually we advise landlords not to rely on rent arrears when issuing possession claims because those claims can take longer and can be more complex. Often there are other grounds in your claim which can be focused on to recover possession as quickly and as painlessly as possible. We usually advise landlords to focus on regaining possession as soon as possible first, and then consider issuing a separate claim to recover money/arrears, costs and damage.”

Alex Cook

Partner at Helix Law



How landlords can address the challenges?

The media focuses on tenants being forced to vacate properties at very short notice by landlords. In reality, our research has shown that more often landlords face a difficult struggle to remove challenging tenants from their properties.

With the increased scrutiny on Section 8 and Section 21 evictions, and Generation Rent calling for a complete ban on 'no fault' evictions, it's possible the eviction process will become more complex and time-consuming.

To meet these challenges head-on, landlords should closely monitor their property and act decisively as soon as possible.

Rent arrears

In the case of rent arrears, it should be a simple matter to prove arrears. Bank statements and a payment schedule should suffice, but you could also include copies of communications with the tenant, such as arrears notices, emails or text messages. Anything to prove you made the tenant aware of the arrears and did everything you could to give the tenant a chance to respond or make payments.

Damage

If a tenant is causing huge damage to a property, regular inspections will highlight this, and allow action to be taken swiftly. Landlords should then be able to avoid the difficult situation faced by people like Maurey Lancaster.



When claiming for damage three points of evidence are essential; inventory, photographs and invoices.

Your inventory is arguably the most compelling evidence you can present, ensure the tenant signs and dates the document as being a true representation of the property. Similarly, you should ensure an independent clerk prepares the check-out documentation and the tenant has the opportunity to be present during the check-out inspection. Many won't attend but keep a record of the invitation.

Before and after photographs are ideal evidence. Make sure they are date stamped and accompany each photo with a written description stating exactly what they are showing.

To support your claim for costs submit all relevant invoices, estimates or quotes. Make sure all items are clearly itemised. Your evidence must support any invoices submitted for costs.

Section 8

If you want to remove a tenant because of rent arrears or damage, a Section 8 notice must be served to prove 'grounds for possession'.

There are both 'mandatory' and 'discretionary' grounds. Mandatory include rent arrears of at least two months while discretionary grounds include damage to the property or breaking other terms of the lease.

The tenant does have the right to contest the landlord's grounds for possession and the judge could dismiss or suspend the case if the tenants challenge is successful.

If the court agrees with the landlord that it is reasonable to evict a tenant, they will order the tenant to leave the property, usually within 14 days.

Section 21

If you want to remove a tenant due to a change in your circumstances, for example, you want to move back into a property or sell the property, the most common way is by serving a Section 21 notice.

To be a lawful eviction, the landlord must serve a written notice giving the tenant two months before they need to vacate the property. Further action only needs to be taken if the tenant does not leave by the date set out in the notice.

In those circumstances, the landlord must apply to the court for a possession order. Unfortunately, this can take several months but you cannot force the tenant to leave before the court has ruled.



Staying ahead of the game: Legislation and regulation

Chapter Five

We recently asked 2,000 tenants whether they understood government legislation relating to the private rental sector and the results were particularly worrying.

More than half (53%) of tenants across the country don't actually understand their rights or the multiple laws the government has brought in to help them.

Furthermore, it's not just the complex pieces of legislation that tenants are struggling to get their heads around, but some of the most common pieces of legislation associated with property rental.

85% of tenants don't understand the upcoming tenant fees ban, despite widespread coverage of the impending policy.

The survey also revealed that 64 percent of tenants don't understand the costs they have to pay for referencing checks, highlighting the need for greater clarity in the industry.

Even more alarmingly, 41 percent of tenants said they don't understand the Deposit Protection Scheme, with 32 percent also not knowing their rights for getting their deposit back, meaning out on nearly £700 at the end of their tenancy.

Other aspects tenants said they were unsure of included who was responsible for looking after their home's garden (56%), decorating their rented home (59%), undertaking minor replacements (45%) and even cleaning the property (40%).



Is legislation helping tenants?

Chapter Five

While the government may be adamant that certain legislation have been brought in to protect tenants, the reality is it's leading to additional confusion among tenants, many of whom already don't understand their current position. The fact that such a high percentage of tenants still don't understand the implications of the impending tenant fees ban, despite it potentially coming into effect within the next few months, is particularly worrying.

The impact of these new regulations and lack of understanding of tenant rights is also making life much harder for landlords, particularly the accidental and smaller landlords that make up a large proportion of the private rented sector. They regularly have to seek advice when they and their tenants don't understand requirements, and they are being forced to pass on their increased costs to tenants through rent rises.

How landlords can prepare for legislative and regulatory changes

Unfortunately, the UK is experiencing market failure in housing and because of a rush to try to fix it, with piecemeal and ill-thought-out policy changes rather than a whole of market strategy, tenants have been left confused and bearing the brunt of the impact. To truly give every tenant a good home, the private rental process needs simplifying and professionalising, so it works for everyone, and to ensure both tenants and landlords understand their roles and responsibilities.

In the interim, landlords need to ensure that tenants understand the various legislation and rights that apply to them so that tenancies run as smoothly as possible.



Opportunities for UK landlords

UK landlords are facing a degree of uncertainty. Our study has shown that pressure is increasing for many landlords, with some considering raising rents, or even selling their rental property as margins become ever smaller.

Government legislation is currently not adequate to support these landlords or their tenants. With complete market failure in housing, the Government urgently needs to act to overhaul the housing market, injecting significant investment in new homes, building new infrastructure and overhauling the banking system to make buying a home or renting a property sustainable for everyone.

However, our research also shows that with a good understanding of tenants and their requirements, there are still many opportunities for landlords in today's market. With the insights we have gained, it's clear that landlords who understand what motivates tenants, and can adapt to this, will still be able to thrive.

There is a continued appetite for renting among many tenants, which is underestimated by many property commentators. Despite a consistent suggestion that everyone would buy a house if only they had the means, many tenants told us that they enjoy the flexibility of renting. Landlords who can position themselves to take advantage of this can weather the current housing storm.

We've also discovered that in many areas, tenants are drawn to renting due to the higher standard of living they can enjoy in a rental property. Tenants enjoy the mod-cons and added extras they can get in a rental property that they wouldn't be able to afford in a first property. There is a real opportunity for landlords who are able to make an initial investment in good quality appliances and fixtures and fittings to enjoy a good return on their investment.



Contrary to popular opinion, the majority of tenants and landlords also have a good relationship. Working in collaboration with your tenants, to find compromises and solutions that work for both of you during the tenancy period, can ensure a long and happy relationship. Whether this is through a direct relationship with the tenant, or the employment of a trustworthy and reliable property management provider, having regular dialogue with tenants and working in partnership with them will always be beneficial.

Our research has also shown that misunderstandings over roles and responsibilities lie at the heart of many landlord and tenant disputes. From those tenants who don't know they are responsible for maintaining the garden, to others who call the landlord to replace a light bulb, small issues can spiral if left unchecked. Set out responsibilities in the tenancy agreement and educate tenants on these when queried.

When it comes to moving on, whether it's the tenant giving notice, you giving notice, or you bringing an end to the tenancy early, clear communication and education for the tenant on their rights and responsibilities is hugely beneficial.

Ultimately, for landlords to thrive, the rental market needs to be professionalised. Landlords need to view their property for what it is, a business. This way tenants will get a consistent and fair service, and landlords will be able to closely monitor and spot any issues that arise before they become a major problem.



Top tips to make the most of a rental property in today's market

- 1** Seek expert advice - if you're unsure or don't have the capacity to manage your property yourself, seek support
- 2** Invest in rent protection - this can be a financial lifeline, helping to ensure you aren't left out of pocket
- 3** Utilise featured listings - making sure your property stands out in a busy marketplace is key
- 4** Photography is vital - both to letting your property and when it comes to ensuring you are compensated for any damage
- 5** Take out comprehensive landlord insurance - it pays to be prepared!
- 6** Make your property as desirable as possible, based on what tenants in the area expect
- 7** Keep detailed records - when you're communicating with your tenant always keep a record, even if it's just a text message!
- 8** Educate your tenants on all their responsibilities as early as possible
- 9** Maintain a good working relationship with your tenants
- 10** Research rental prices in the area for your kind of property

MakeUrMove

The home of good landlords

MakeUrMove Ltd., Abbey House, 32 Booth Street, Manchester, M2 4AB