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## Proposed Renters' Rights Bill to Reshape the Private Rental Market

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The government's proposed Renters' Rights Bill, expected to be enacted by the end of 2025, is set to bring major changes to the private rented sector (PRS), with significant implications for both tenants and landlords. The legislation aims to strengthen tenant protections while introducing new compliance demands for property owners.

The Bill will replace the current system of fixed-term tenancies with rolling, or periodic, tenancies that renew on a monthly or weekly basis. Supporters say this will provide tenants with more flexibility, although landlords may face challenges in planning longer-term lets.

One of the most notable reforms is the removal of “no-fault” evictions under section 21 of the Housing Act. In the future, landlords will need to rely on specific grounds for possession through section 8 procedures, and all eviction cases will be determined in court. This is likely to increase both costs and delays, with the courts already under pressure from existing possession claims.

New rules will allow landlords to seek possession if they wish to sell the property, although they must provide supporting evidence. Notice periods will also be extended, with landlords expected to give between four weeks and four months’ notice depending on the grounds for eviction.

To curb competitive bidding, landlords will be required to advertise rents upfront and will not be permitted to accept offers higher than the advertised rate. Rent increases will be limited to once a year and must follow the section 13 procedure.

The Bill also proposes giving tenants the legal right to request pets, with landlords unable to unreasonably refuse. Parliament is still debating whether landlords can require pet damage insurance or request an additional deposit of up to three weeks’ rent. Discrimination against tenants with children or those claiming benefits will also be prohibited.

Quality standards will tighten under the legislation, with the Decent Homes Standard and Awaab’s Law, which currently apply to social housing, extended to private rentals. These measures are intended to ensure all rented homes meet safety and quality requirements.

Landlords must also register on a new database and join a mandatory Ombudsman scheme, offering tenants a free and impartial way to resolve disputes. Failure to comply could lead to substantial penalties, with fines ranging from up to £7,000 for initial breaches to £40,000 for repeat or serious offences, alongside the possibility of rent repayment orders or criminal convictions.

Industry experts have warned that the changes could considerably impact smaller and individual landlords, particularly in cases where tenants fall into arrears and court delays extend the recovery process. There are also concerns that the First Tier Tribunal, which will handle appeals against rent increases, could face backlogs once the Bill is in force.

Although many of the details, including the specific requirements of the Decent Homes Standard for the PRS, will be set out in secondary legislation, landlords are being advised to

prepare in advance. This includes budgeting for potential property improvements, tracking rent review dates, and responding promptly to issues such as damp or mould.

If passed as proposed, the Renters' Rights Bill will mark one of the most significant overhauls of rental housing laws in recent years. It will alter the way landlords manage their properties and strengthen the rights of millions of tenants across the UK.