

THE RENTERS' RIGHTS ACT

# 2025



# *Agent's* PLAYBOOK FOR SMOOTH TENANCY TURNOVERS

This guide provides operational guidance for letting agents and is not legal advice. For specific legal questions, agents and landlords should consult a qualified solicitor. All information is based on legislation and guidance current as of March 2026. For the most up-to-date official guidance, visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).





## WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

Starting 1 May 2026, the private rented sector (PRS) in England will move into the first phase of reforms under the Renters' Rights Act 2025<sup>1</sup>. For agents, that makes consistent documentation and market-ready conditions non-negotiable.

## WHAT CHANGES ON 1 MAY 2026

- Section 21 “no-fault” eviction ends for all tenancies (no two-tier system).
- Most existing Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs) convert to assured periodic tenancies.
- Fixed-term assured tenancies will be removed (with tenancies moving to periodic tenancies).
- Rent increases limited to once per year, using the statutory process, with at least 2 months’ notice before the increase takes effect.

*Source*

*1. UK Government Housing Hub – Renting is Changing*



## WHAT CHANGES ON 1 MAY 2026

- Discrimination against renters who have children or receive benefits will be illegal.
- Tenants can request pets; refusals must be reasonable.

In later phases of the reform, a PRS database, an ombudsman, Awaab's Law, and the Decent Homes Standard will all be implemented to improve rental standards.

Agents are the front line for landlord retention and tenant satisfaction. This means:

- With most tenancies moving to periodic arrangements and Section 21 ending, agents will see fewer clean, fixed-term exits and more negotiation at natural tenancy change points.
- Property conditions will face greater scrutiny, pet requests will require structured responses, and documentation standards should be flawless.
- Pressure to minimise voids will intensify in a market where tenants may stay longer.
- Landlords and agents will need to publish an asking rent in written adverts and must not invite or accept bids above that amount. This means marketing strategies must evolve to manage both landlord and tenant expectations.



## SOLUTION: A 3-STEP MAKE-READY SYSTEM

Agents must adopt an effective repeat process that cuts void time, reduces complaints, keeps landlords confident and protects tenants.

1. Evidence & compliance file (photos, inventory, works log, receipts).
2. Preventative checks & refresh (reduce emergencies + viewing objections).
3. Replacement-ready furnishing spec (durable, consistent, fast to deploy).





## THE 3-LAYER “NO-SURPRISE” TURNOVER SYSTEM

Rather than “nice-to-have” extras, this process is about reliable quality, quick setup, and avoiding last-minute issues that delay re-lets.

## EVIDENCE & COMPLIANCE FILE

Maintain a complete, dated record including photos, inventory comparisons, work logs and receipts to protect every re-let.

## WHAT YOUR CHECKLIST SHOULD LOOK LIKE

- CHECKOUT PHOTO PACK (DATE-STAMPED)
- INVENTORY WITH CONDITION NOTES
- WORKS LOG (WHAT WAS DONE, WHEN, BY WHOM)
- RECEIPTS FOR FURNISHING/REFRESH ITEMS
- GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SHEET (FOR EXISTING TENANCIES WITH A WRITTEN RECORD/TENANCY AGREEMENT) TO BE PROVIDED BY 31 MAY 2026



## PREVENTATIVE CHECKS & REFRESH

Carry out targeted snagging and light refresh works to reduce emergency callouts and eliminate viewing objections.

## STANDARD CHECKS DURING OR AFTER CHECKOUT

- WALLS (SCUFFS, MARKS, HOLES)
- FLOORING (STAINS, WEAR, DAMAGE)
- KITCHEN/BATHROOM GROUT & SEALS
- WINDOW DRESSINGS (TEARS, FADING, FUNCTION)
- SOFT FURNISHINGS (CUSHIONS, THROWS, RUGS)
- LIGHT FIXTURES & FITTINGS



## REPLACEMENT-READY FURNISHING SPEC

Use a pre-agreed, durable furnishing specification that is consistent, easy to replace and fast to deploy between tenancies.

## MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY AND SPEED THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS



PRE-APPROVED DURABLE FURNISHING OPTIONS



KNOWN LEAD TIMES



PROFESSIONAL INSTALLATION INCLUDED



ONE POINT OF CONTACT FOR LANDLORD APPROVAL



## STANDARD OPERATING TIMELINE *FROM CHECKOUT TO MARKET-READY*

To ensure readiness, a predictable and reusable timeline speeds up the process, and you can adjust it based on the property's size and condition.

Day	Action
Day 0	Checkout, quick assessment, photo pack
Day 1–2	Snagging + refresh scope agreed with landlord
Day 2–5	Furnishing/refresh delivered and installed
Day 3–6	Professional photos taken, listing goes live
Day 7+	Viewings and marketing begin, property move-in ready

*NOTE : Timings may overlap depending on property size, access, and whether photography is booked after final snag completion.*



## FAST-TRACK OPTION (URGENT RE-LETS)

For landlords who can't afford voids, compress to 3–4 days.

Day	Action
Day 0	Checkout and same-day refresh scope approval
Day 1–2	Express furnishing delivery and installation (within 24–48 hours, subject to stock availability and pre-arranged access)
Day 2–5	Photos/listings or move-in readiness

*NOTE : Timings may overlap depending on property size, access, and whether photography is booked after final snag completion.*



## PETS: HOW TO MANAGE REQUESTS WITHOUT CHAOS

From 1 May 2026, tenants can request pets in writing and landlords cannot unreasonably refuse. This does not mean automatic approval, but it does require a clear process so agents and landlords can assess the situation and act consistently<sup>2</sup>.

### EXAMPLES OF REASONABLE REFUSAL GROUNDS (BASED ON GOV.UK GUIDANCE)

According to GOV.UK guidance, examples of reasonable grounds to refuse include:

- Leasehold property where the superior landlord/freeholder does not allow pets
- Another tenant in the building has an allergy that would be affected by the pet
- The property is too small for the type, size, or number of pets requested
- The pet is illegal to own under UK law

Source

2. UK Government, *Renting out your property: guidance for landlords and letting agents – If a tenant wants a pet to live with them*



## OPERATIONAL CHECKS AGENTS MAY CONSIDER BEFORE RECOMMENDING APPROVAL (PRACTICAL, NON-LEGAL)

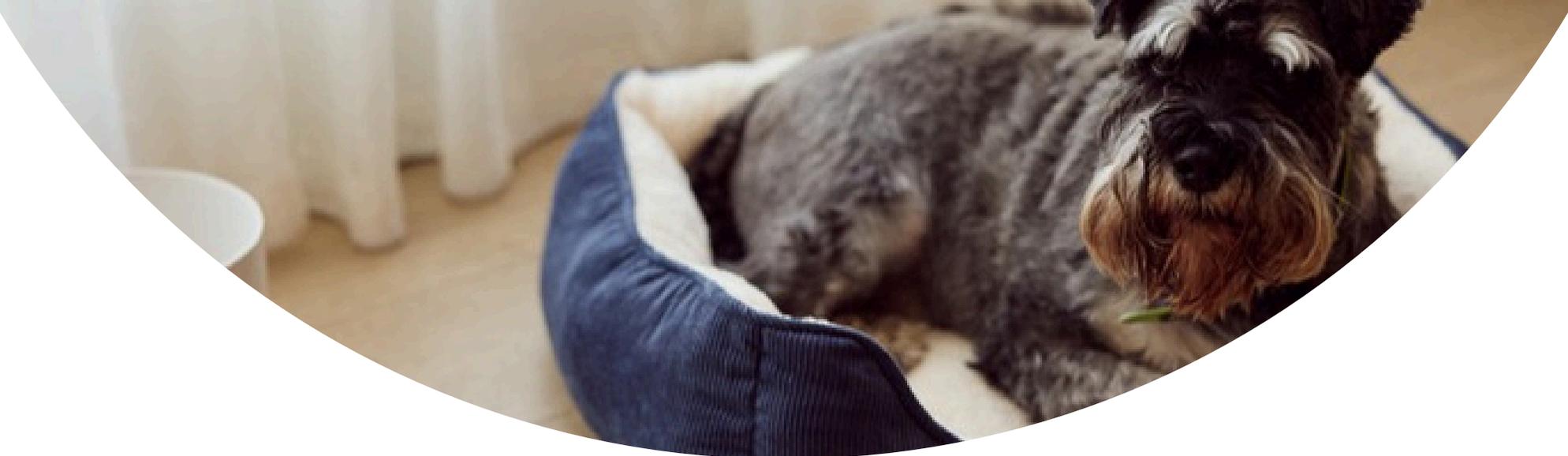
These checks can help agents and landlords make a more informed decision, but they should not be presented as automatic legal grounds for refusal on their own:

- Request basic pet details (type, breed, size, age)
- Ask whether the pet is house-trained
- Confirm vaccination and flea/tick treatment status (where relevant)
- Ask whether the pet will be left alone for long periods
- Consider whether the layout, access, or outdoor space is suitable for the pet
- Record any property-specific concerns clearly and factually

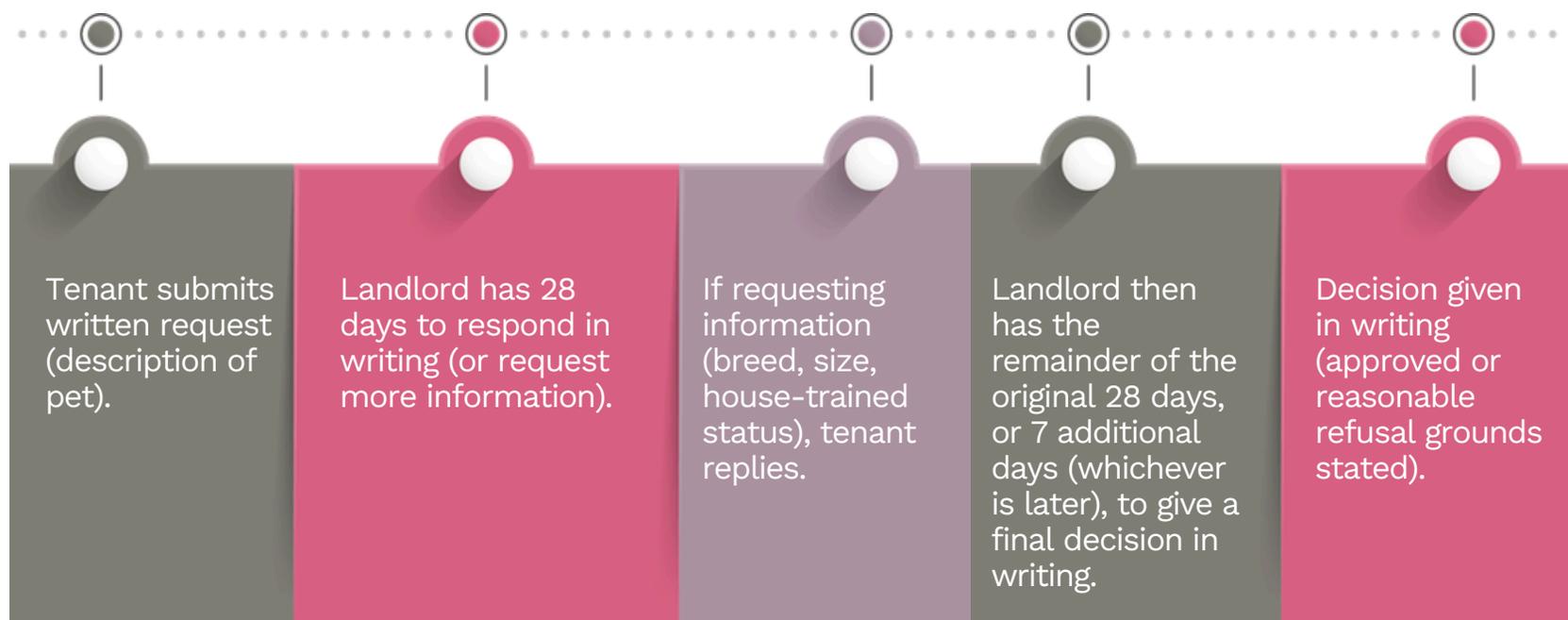
## EXAMPLES OF REFUSAL GROUNDS THAT ARE UNLIKELY TO BE REASONABLE

- Simply not liking pets
- General concerns based on previous bad experiences with pet-owning tenants
- Assumptions about possible future damage without property-specific evidence
- Concern that a pet may affect future rentals
- Refusing because the tenant needs an assistance animal (for example, a guide dog)

*NOTE: Any refusal should be provided to the tenant in writing with a clear explanation. Tenants may challenge a refusal if they believe it is unreasonable.*



## THE PROCESS (28-DAY TIMELINE)



Kindly note: Once consent is given for that pet, it cannot generally be withdrawn later for the same pet. If pet-related damage occurs, landlords may seek to recover reasonable costs through the tenancy deposit, subject to the usual deposit rules.

## PET-READY PROPERTY STANDARD CHECKLIST

For properties likely to receive pet requests, recommend these practical upgrades to landlords:

- WASHABLE WALL FINISHES (WIPEABLE PAINT OR VINYL)
- DURABLE FLOORING (LAMINATE, VINYL, SEALED WOOD; AVOID CARPET IN HIGH-TRAFFIC AREAS)
- REPLACEABLE SOFT FURNISHINGS (RUGS, THROWS, CUSHIONS)
- PERFORMANCE FABRIC ON SOFAS/CHAIRS (STAIN-RESISTANT, MACHINE-WASHABLE COVERS)
- GARDEN ACCESS (IF GROUND FLOOR/OUTDOOR SPACE AVAILABLE)



## RENT POSITIONING: JUSTIFY ASKING RENT WITHOUT DRAMA

From 1 May 2026, rent increases for assured tenancies in scope will generally be made through the statutory section 13 process (using the new form), with at least 2 months' notice, and tenants can challenge an increase they believe is above market rent at the First-tier Tribunal.

## HOW CONDITION SUPPORTS RENT CONVERSATIONS

When a tenant challenges the rent at a tribunal, the key issue is what the property would achieve if it were advertised on the market today. Your evidence file is what supports your case.

Before submitting a Section 13 notice, assemble:

- CURRENT PROFESSIONAL PHOTOS SHOWING THE PROPERTY'S CURRENT CONDITION
- FURNISHING SPECIFICATION (WHAT'S INCLUDED)
- RECENT UPGRADES OR REFRESH WORK WITH UPDATED RECEIPTS
- COMPARABLE LISTINGS (SIMILAR PROPERTIES, SAME AREA, CURRENT MARKET RENT)
- INVENTORY HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT MAKES THIS PROPERTY STAND OUT



## THE AGENT 'MAKE-READY SPEC'

This can be your reusable one-page checklist. Please feel free to copy it, adjust room sizes as needed, and apply it to each property. The spec is designed for speed, durability, and photo-readiness.

### MINIMUM FURNISHING STANDARD (ROOM-BY-ROOM)

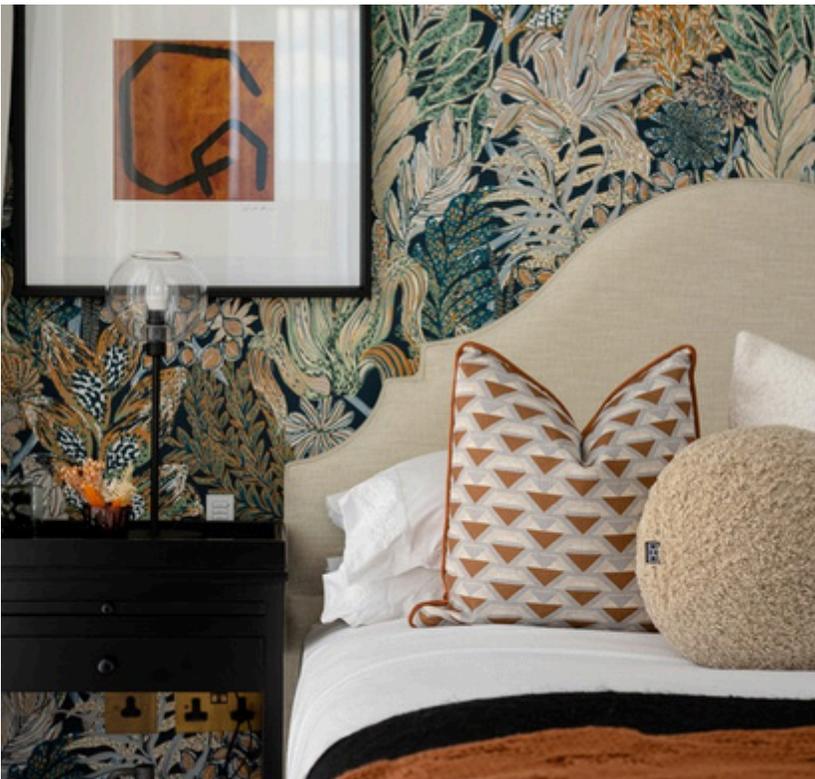


#### **LIVING ROOM**

- 3-seater sofa in durable, easy-maintenance upholstery.
- Coffee table with scratch-resistant surface.
- TV stand (if unfurnished, TV not included).
- Window dressings with curtains or blinds for privacy, increased functionality and temperature control.
- Rug (machine-washable or easily replaced).



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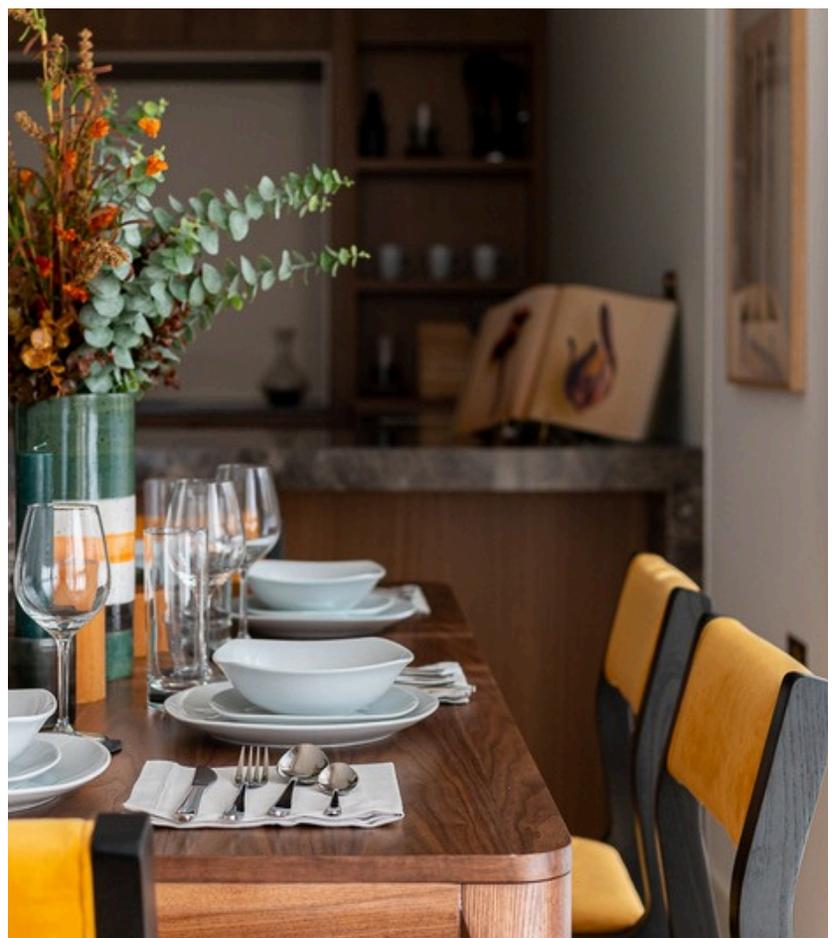


### **BEDROOM**

- Durable bed frame + quality mattress.
- Wardrobe.
- Bedside table.
- Window dressings (blackout option preferred).

### **KITCHEN**

- Table and chairs.
- Essential appliances (fridge, oven, hob — washing machine if space permits).
- Basic crockery/cutlery set (if fully furnished).





## 'PHOTO-READY' CHECKLIST

Before photos, every property should tick:

WALLS CLEAN, NO SCUFFS OR MARKS

WINDOWS CLEANED INSIDE AND OUT

FLOORING HOOVERED OR MOPPED, WITH NO VISIBLE STAINS

LIGHT FIXTURES WORKING

SOFT FURNISHINGS PLUMPED OR ARRANGED (E.G., CUSHIONS, THROWS)

PERSONAL ITEMS REMOVED (NO TENANT BELONGINGS IN SHOT)

## REPLACEMENT CYCLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Item	Typical Lifespan
Sofa (to support high traffic)	3-5 years
Mattress (durable quality)	5-8 years
Rugs/soft furnishings	2-3 years
Window dressings	5-7 years
Dining chairs	5-8 years

*Kindly note : Lifespans vary by tenancy type, usage level, material quality, and maintenance.*



## EPC C BY 2030: SEPARATE BUT RELEVANT

While the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) pathway is separate from the Renters' Rights Act, it remains highly relevant to long-term rental readiness and landlord planning. The government has confirmed its policy direction to raise minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector to an EPC C standard (or equivalent under updated EPC metrics) for all tenancies by 2030, subject to legislative changes and implementation of updated regulations<sup>3</sup>.

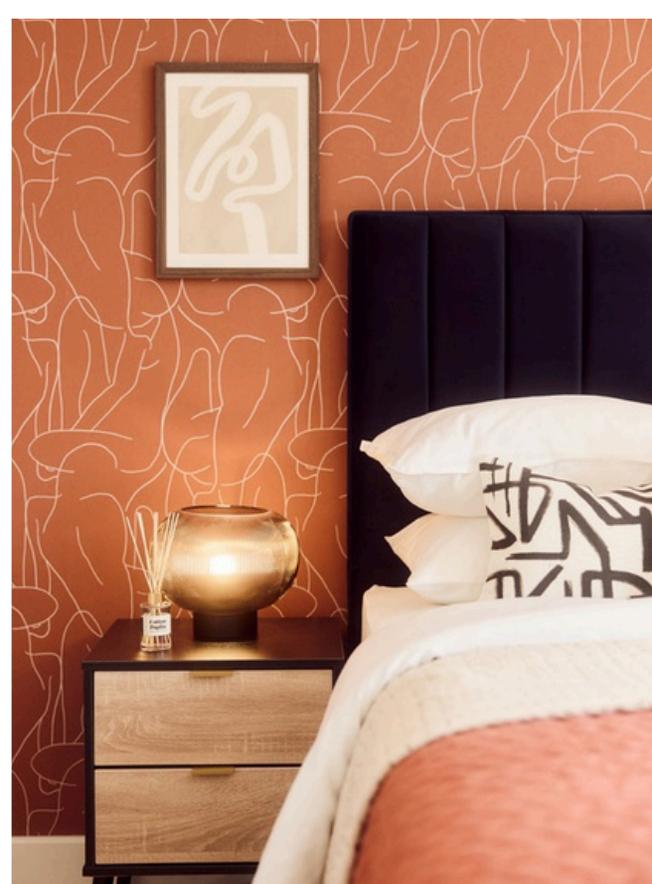
For agents, this means more landlord conversations around property upgrades, energy performance, and long-term rental readiness. Aligning refurbishment plans with insulation improvements, efficient heating systems, and practical layout updates can help landlords protect rental value and keep properties competitive as standards evolve.

The government response states the intention is for private landlords to comply with the higher standard from 1 October 2030, while the current minimum standard (EPC E) continues to apply until updated regulations take effect.



## BEST PRACTICE FOR AGENTS

- Direct landlords to accredited EPC assessors or retrofit specialists for formal assessments and upgrade recommendations.
- Avoid providing technical energy advice outside your professional remit; instead, direct landlords to appropriate official guidance and qualified specialists.
- Encourage landlords to keep furnishing, condition, and refurbishment plans aligned with long-term asset value and tenant expectations.



Source

3. UK Government, *Warm homes and cheaper bills as government accelerates Plan for Change*



## HOW INSTYLE DIRECT HELPS

We are your one-stop furnishing partner, taking care of all property transformation needs – from furnishing and refurbishment to complete TLC – *delivering style, speed, and efficient turnaround times to help reduce void periods and attract high-calibre tenants.*

Our in-house delivery and installation model simplifies your role by providing single-point accountability for all furnishing elements. Our flexible logistics and in-house delivery models adapt to every change, ensuring quality, cost control, and timely handovers.

## WHY AGENTS CHOOSE US



20+ years of furnishing experience



85% properties furnished by us let within a week



Over 100 years of combined expertise in property market



<1% return rate in first year



In-house fleet for faster deliveries



10,000 sq ft London warehouse that allows quick deployment



Turnkey project management



An exceptional track record of furnishing properties within 24 to 48 hours (subject to stock availability)

## WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS SAY



Outstanding experience! The furniture arrived quickly, and the quality of the materials exceeded all expectations. I'd definitely recommend!



Chloe Burgess - Agent

Our company has used the services of InStyle Direct to furnish two buy-to-let apartments with an excellent and timely result. They worked with professionalism and delivered results to our full satisfaction. As an overseas client we appreciated the close cooperation of Mark Parry, Associate Director, to deliver the best results. We highly recommend them.



Maria Lacovides - Landlord

As an overseas home buyer, it is not easy to manage furniture installation remotely without a let agent. James and Alex are super efficient. They help me liaise with my concierge and confirm back and forth when things aren't moving on. Nicole from the designer team got excellent tastes and made my home looking very cozy. A real money-worth-the-value package. Excellent experience!



Katrina WJ Hu - Landlord



READ MORE





## MAKE YOUR NEXT LET SEAMLESS WITH US

Speak to our team and learn how we help agents and landlords transform properties from furnishing to final presentations that are ready to market and let.

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