

PRIVATE RENTING

We've overhauled private renting in Scotland, introducing a new type of tenancy and a new regulatory framework for letting agents.

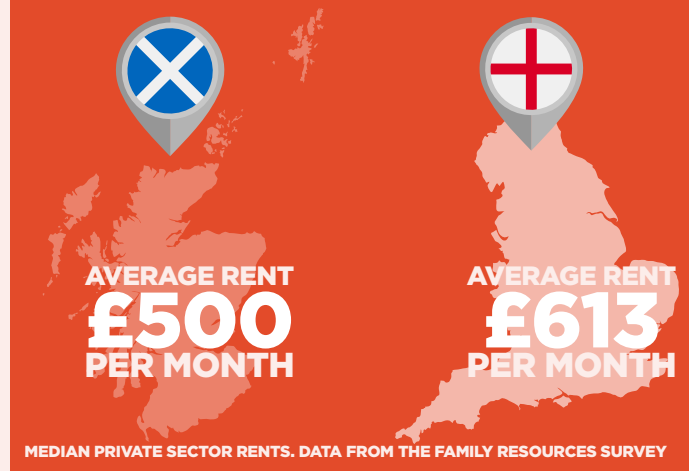
OVER THE LAST couple of years we have introduced some of the most significant changes in private renting in 30 years, giving tenants new rights and greater security, stability and predictability.

Since December 2017, every new private tenancy created in Scotland has been a private residential tenancy. These tenancies have no end date, offering greater security for tenants. They can only be ended either by tenants giving written notice to their landlord or by a landlord using one of 18 grounds for eviction. Wrongful evictions can be challenged in a specialist housing tribunal.

A tenant also has new rights in relation to their rent. Landlords can now only increase a tenant's rent once every 12 months, and must give at least three months' notice that they are going to do so. If a tenant thinks an increase is unreasonable, they can ask a rent officer to decide whether it is fair and what the rent for the property should be.

The new tenancy benefits both landlords and tenants in other ways. It's easier to set up new tenancies. There's less paperwork involved, and a new recommended model tenancy agreement is available online.

IN 2017/2018 HOUSEHOLDS RENTING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN SCOTLAND PAID AN AVERAGE RENT ALMOST 20% LOWER THAN THE EQUIVALENT FIGURE IN ENGLAND.



The 18 grounds for repossession include new grounds where a landlord intends to sell the property and where the property has been abandoned.

Other changes

There have been other big changes in private renting. Since the end of January 2018, letting agents have had to adhere to a statutory code of practice. Landlords and tenants can refer breaches of this code to the Housing & Property Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland. All letting agents must now be on the Scottish Letting Agent Register. It's a criminal offence to carry out letting agency work without being registered. Together, these

measures will give landlords and tenants confidence in the standard of service they should expect from a letting agent and give them a way to challenge poor practice where this arises.

Last year we published guidance on effective enforcement and prosecutions for those involved in dealing with poor standards in the private rented sector. This guidance supplements the statutory guidance on landlord registration for local authorities that we published in 2017.

In early 2019, we partnered Young Scot to deliver the 'New Digs' online resource, which

provides young renters with information and advice when moving into rented accommodation for the first time.

We have continued to develop the landlord registration IT system, introducing features to improve the user experience for both landlords and local authority landlord registration teams.

Last September we strengthened the application process for landlords when they apply for registration. Landlords are now asked to confirm they meet and understand the obligations involved in letting property in Scotland. This helps landlords understand what they should be doing, and where applicants can't confirm they meet, or need further information on, these obligations, councils can provide help and advice on what steps landlords must take before their registration is approved.

Following a review of the tenancy deposit schemes we have strengthened regulations to ensure they're working effectively.

Read more: www.gov.scot/housing

Guide for first-time tenants: www.young.scot/campaigns/national/new-digs

