

New Enforcement Powers for LAs in the PRS

A Briefing Note

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Effective from 27 December 2025, the Renters' Rights Act 2025 (RRA) significantly expanded the investigatory and enforcement powers granted to local housing authorities in England. These new powers provide a proactive framework for LAs to regulate the PRS ahead of the tenancy reforms under the RRA to be implemented from May 2026. The primary objective is to enhance councils' capacity to identify, investigate, and enforce compliance with PRS legislation, transitioning away from reliance on tenant complaints and a more reactive approach.

Under the reforms, councils now possess greater authority to request documents and information, enter business premises, seize evidence, compel disclosure, and undertake proactive investigations into landlords and letting agents suspected of non-compliance. In particular, the ability to require landlords and agents to provide documentation and details regarding any private tenancy managed within the previous 12 months signifies a notable development in regulatory oversight. Crucially, these powers are intended not only to apply to forthcoming reforms but also to support the enforcement of existing housing legislation (such as Housing Act 2004, Housing Act 1988, Protection from Eviction Act 1977, and various regulations concerning safety, licensing, and landlord conduct.)

Central to the RRA reforms is the shift from a reactive to a proactive approach to enforcement. Historically, local authorities have relied on tenants to report issues or breaches, which frequently resulted in insufficient reporting and unresolved cases. With the implementation of the new powers, councils are now able to execute targeted compliance reviews and investigations, helping to identify systemic problems and patterns of non-compliance rather than merely responding to individual incidents as they occur. This strategy is anticipated to serve as a deterrent to landlords and agents who may otherwise contemplate non-compliance, given that councils now possess robust mechanisms for detecting and remedying violations independently of complaints.

Local authorities have been allocated £18.2m to implement their new enforcement powers in the PRS in 2025/26. Funding will be available from central government in subsequent years to support the new responsibilities of local authorities in this area. Also for many offences under the RRA fines/penalties of £7,000 can be levied from offending landlords/agents for initial offences. For serious breaches or where there has been persistent failure to comply with the law, fines/penalties of £40,000 can be imposed. Furthermore the monies collected in this way can be used by local authorities to support their enforcement work in the PRS.

This is an historic opportunity for councils to step up and oversee significant improvements in the PRS in their areas. The question is: will they take it?