

THE 2026 LANDLORD CHECKLIST

Get Ahead of the New Rules
(*Before Everyone Else*)



The 2026 changes are coming

(but this doesn't need to be stressful)

The Renters' Rights Act (RRA) is rolling out in May 2026, and a lot of landlords are already feeling the pressure.

More rules.

More compliance.

More noise online.

But here's the part most people miss:

If you prepare early, 2026 can actually make your life easier.

The landlords who stay organised, compliant, and proactive will not only avoid headaches, they'll stay ahead of everyone who leaves it to the last minute.

This guide gives you:

A simple, straight-talking checklist for everything you need to review

- ✓ What to fix now (before it becomes a problem)
- ✓ What changes in 2026 actually mean for you
- ✓ A clear action plan to keep your rental compliant, profitable and stress-free

No jargon.

No scare tactics.

Just the essentials, explained in plain English.

Because good landlords won't struggle in 2026.
Unprepared landlords will.

Let's make sure you're in the first group.

TENANCY DOCUMENTS & AGREEMENTS

Make sure you have:

1. A legally compliant tenancy agreement (updated for 2026 rules)
2. A signed Prescribed Information form for the deposit
3. A clear inventory & condition report
4. Copies of Right to Rent checks
5. How to Rent guide (most recent version)
6. Any addendums (pets, parking, gardening, appliances, etc.)
7. Evidence of rent increase notices served correctly
8. Renewal paperwork up to date

LUMOS NOTE:

This is the foundation.

If your paperwork is messy, outdated, “borrowed from Google”, or last reviewed when you still had a BlackBerry...
2026 will expose it.

Most landlords think they’re compliant, until something goes wrong.

Smart landlords audit their documents before tenants do.
Get this part right and you’re already ahead of 90% of the market.

CONDITION, SAFETY & COMPLIANCE

A) Safety Certificates

- Annual Gas Safety Certificate (CP12)
- EICR (valid 5 years)
- Smoke alarms tested & working on every floor
- CO alarms in every room with a solid fuel appliance

B) Property Condition

- No leaks, damp or mould
- Heating & hot water fully working
- Windows, locks and doors operate smoothly
- Appliances serviced & manuals available
- Any historic issues fully resolved, not patched

C) Presentation & Standards

- Property professionally cleaned before tenancy
- Garden/outdoor areas tidy
- Walls, carpets and décor in good order
- Property photographed in ready-to-let condition

LUMOS NOTE:

The RRA is going to make poor standards impossible to hide. Damp, mould, broken fittings and “I’ll sort it next month” jobs will become legal liabilities and not just small inconveniences.

A clean, safe, well-maintained home doesn’t just keep you compliant: It attracts better tenants, reduces voids and justifies stronger rents.

If the property wouldn’t pass your own “would I live here?” test... tenants will notice too.

PETS & TENANT REQUESTS (2026 Changes)

Pets are no longer an automatic “no”.

Under the new rules, tenants will have the right to request a pet. Landlords must consider it fairly, not reject it automatically.

Here's what you need in place:

1. A clear process for handling pet requests
2. A written response policy (landlords must reply within a fair timeframe)
3. Valid reasons prepared if you need to decline (e.g., lease restrictions, HMO licensing, allergies in shared homes)
4. Updated tenancy agreements to include pet clauses
5. Details of permitted pet insurance if required
6. Updated inventory process to include pet-related wear & tear
7. A clear cleaning/maintenance policy at end of tenancy

LUMOS NOTE:

Landlords resist this change, but it's not the disaster they think. Handled properly, pets can mean:

- Longer tenancies
- Happier tenants
- Lower voids
- A stronger applicant pool

Just saying “no pets, ever” won't be an option anymore.

Having a proper process keeps you compliant and in control.

Rent, Deposits & Money Protection

Are you handling money properly?

Checklist:

- Rent amount is set based on current market data (not vibes or what your cousin's mate got in 2019)
- Deposit protected in a government-approved scheme within 30 days
- Prescribed information issued on time
- Clear record of rent payments, arrears, and chase processes
- Late rent reminders are documented (email + text + call)
- Client Money Protection (CMP) in place and valid
- Property advertised with correct rent (and no sneaky hidden fees)
- Refundable holding deposit procedures followed correctly

Why this matters (and where landlords slip up)

Money is the fastest place landlords get fined... and the easiest place to stay compliant if you're organised.

Most penalties happen because:

- Deposits go unprotected (or protected late)
- Prescribed info never gets issued
- Rent increases aren't documented properly
- Landlords "keep track in their head" instead of using a system

2026 rules won't make money-handling easier. If anything, it'll get more scrutinised.

If you want to avoid the classic £3,600 deposit penalty... this section is your new best friend.

TENANT MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION

Checklist

- Do tenants know the correct contact route for repairs?
- Are repair requests logged and time-stamped?
- Do you respond to tenant messages within 24–48 hours?
- Are rent increases communicated fairly & with proper notice?
- Do you have a process for urgent vs. non-urgent repairs?
- Are inspection dates agreed in writing with 24+ hrs notice?
- Is all communication stored (email/WhatsApp/portal)?
- Do tenants receive a clear move-in info pack?

LUMOS NOTE:

Most complaints in the UK rental market aren't about legal breaches...

They're about poor communication.

If you want fewer headaches (and happier tenants), treat this like customer service.

Not crisis management.

EVICTIONS, NOTICE PERIODS & LEGAL RISKS (2026 Rules)

The rules are changing, but you're not losing all control.

What's changing:

Section 21 is going, and notice periods will shift under the new RRA. But landlords who manage properly will still be able to regain possession when needed.

Checklist

- Clear record of tenant communication (this becomes crucial evidence)
- All compliance documents served correctly (otherwise notice can fail)
- Tenancy agreements updated for 2026 grounds
- A process for rent arrears (stage 1 → stage 2 → formal notice)
- A process for anti-social behaviour or repeated breaches
- Evidence logs for any serious concerns
- Awareness of new minimum notice periods
- Understanding of mandatory vs discretionary grounds

LUMOS NOTE:

The headlines make this sound terrifying. It's not.

Bad landlords will struggle.

Organised landlords will still get possession when they need it.

The key is documentation.

If your tenant file is solid, you'll be fine.

If everything lives "in your head"... you won't.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

Be honest...how many boxes did you tick?

If you scored highly:

You're in a strong position heading into 2026.

If you left a few gaps:

Still fine. Fix them now, not later.

If you ticked very few:

You're at real risk of complaints, fines or long voids once the new rules kick in.

Either way, we can help.

If you want a second pair of eyes on...

- your tenancy
- your compliance
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- your documentation
- or your property condition

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