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# The Guildford Landlord's Guide to the May 2026 Renters' Rights Deadline

If you own a rental property in the Surrey Hills or manage a portfolio across Guildford, May 1<sup>st</sup> 2026, should be marked in your calendar. This day marks the most significant shift in the UK rental market in decades: the first major implementation phase of the Renters' Rights Act 2026.

For many Guildford landlords, the administrative burden of staying compliant is about to double. Read more for ways you can protect your investment and remain compliant with the law.

## 1. The End of Fixed-Term Tenancies

From May 1<sup>st</sup> 2026, all new tenancies must be periodic (rolling) from the first day. The traditional Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) with a six or twelve-month fixed term is officially a thing of the past.

For landlords in high-demand areas such as Guildford town centre or Woking, this means your administrative systems must be more agile. You can no longer rely on a "set it and forget it" annual renewal. Instead, your documentation must reflect a rolling structure that allows tenants to leave with two months' notice at any point.

## 2. Managing "Pet Requests" within 28 Days

One of the most talked-about changes in the 2026 Act is the tenant's right to

request a pet. While you cannot refuse a pet's request outright, the real challenge is the administrative timeline.

Under the new law, you have a strict 28-day window to respond to a pet request. If you need more information, you can extend this to 42 days, but you must provide a "reasonable" ground for any refusal. In the busy Surrey property market, missing this 28-day admin window could lead to disputes with the new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman.

### 3. The Shift to Section 13 Rent Increases

Gone are the days of "rent review clauses" hidden in the small print of a contract. In 2026, all rent increases must be managed via a formal Section 13 notice.

This requires a specific notice period and a clear understanding of the "market rate" in Surrey. A disorganised administration can lead to a rent increase that could be challenged or delayed, directly impacting your yield.

### 4. Preparing for the National PRS Database

Later in 2026, the government will launch the National Private Rented Sector Database. Every landlord in Guildford will be required to register themselves and their properties. You will need to upload valid compliance documents digitally, including:

- Gas Safety Certificates (CP12)
- EICR reports
- Energy Performance Certificates (EPC)

Failing to register or keep these documents updated on the portal could result in heavy local authority fines.

## Don't Let Compliance Become a Full-Time Job

The 2026 landscape requires more than just "property management"—it requires specialist administrative oversight. At Heighton Ltd, we help Guildford landlords navigate these transitions. We ensure your periodic

contracts are correct, your pet request responses are sent within the 28-day legal window, and your digital files are ready for the National Database.

Are you set for the change in 2026? Take our [2-Minute Admin Health Check](#) to identify the gaps in your portfolio before the May deadline hits.

[Book a 15-Minute Strategy Call with our Guildford Team](#)