THE LANDLORD'S MAY 1st SURVIVAL CHECKLIST

Prepared by [Your Name/Agency Name] – Your SW London Property Partners

The Deadline: May 1st, 2026

The Change: The Renters' Rights Act 2025 comes into full force.

The Goal: To transition your property portfolio smoothly, legally, and profitably.

🔴 PART 1: IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (Before April 2026)

Use this time to audit your current position. The "wait and see" window is closed.

[ ] Audit Your Fixed Terms

- Identify any tenancy ending *after* May 1st, 2026.
- **Note:** These will automatically convert to "Periodic" (rolling monthly) tenancies on May 1st. You do not need to issue a new contract, but you must be mentally prepared that the tenant can give 2 months' notice to leave at any time after this date.

[ ] Review Rent Arrears

- **The Change:** The eviction threshold for rent arrears is rising from 2 months to **3 months' arrears**.
- **Action:** If you have a tenant currently in 2 months' arrears, you must act *now*. Under the new rules, you will have to wait longer to regain possession.

[ ] Check Your "Leasehold" Rules (Crucial for SW London Flats)

- **The Change:** You cannot unreasonably refuse a pet request *unless* your head lease forbids it.
- **Action:** Dig out your Head Lease (or ask your managing agent). Look for the specific clause regarding animals.
- **Why:** If a tenant asks for a dog on May 2nd, you need to know *immediately* if you have a legal ground to refuse based on the building's rules.

[ ] The "Section 21" Decision

- **The Change:** Section 21 (No Fault Eviction) is abolished on May 1st.
- **Action:** If you were planning to sell or move back in this summer, you must serve a valid Section 21 notice **before April 30th**.

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- **Warning:** If you serve it, you *must* begin court proceedings by **July 31st, 2026**, or the notice becomes invalid.

🟡 PART 2: THE "PAPERWORK" PREP (April 2026)

Get your documents ready so you aren't scrambling on the bank holiday weekend.

[ ] Prepare the "Information Sheet"

- **Requirement:** By law, you must serve a specific government "Information Sheet" to all *existing* tenants by **May 31st, 2026**.
- **Action:** Download the latest version from GOV.UK (released March/April) and have it ready to email/post to all current tenants.

[ ] Update Your Rent Review Strategy

- **The Change:** Rent review clauses in contracts are now void. You can only increase rent once a year using the **Section 13 Notice** (Form 4).
- **Action:** Delete "automatic rent increase" clauses from your future contract templates. They are no longer enforceable.

[ ] Pricing Correction

- **The Change:** Bidding wars are banned. You cannot accept an offer higher than the advertised price.
- **Action:** If you have a property coming to market in May, re-evaluate the price. Do not price low hoping for a bidding war. Price it at the *maximum* market value you are willing to accept.

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🟢 PART 3: THE NEW "SECTION 8" GROUNDS (Reference Guide)

If you need your property back after May 1st, you must use one of these specific grounds. Keep this list handy.

Reason for Possession	Notice Period	Restrictions
Selling the Property	4 Months	Cannot be used in the first 12 months of a tenancy.
Landlord/Family Moving In	4 Months	Cannot be used in the first 12 months of a tenancy.
Rent Arrears	4 Weeks	Tenant must be in **3 months'** arrears (paid monthly) or 13 weeks (weekly).
Anti-Social Behaviour	Immediate	Requires proof. Proceedings can start immediately.

🔵 PART 4: FUTURE PROOFING (Awaab's Law)

Technically coming later in 2026/27, but smart landlords act now to avoid fines.

[ ] The "Damp & Mould" Protocol

- **The Change:** "Awaab's Law" strict timelines will apply to private rentals.
- **Action:** Create a simple process for your tenants: "If you see damp, report it here [Email/WhatsApp]."
- **Why:** You will likely have strict deadlines (e.g., 14 days to investigate) once this rule goes live. Being responsive now builds goodwill and prevents small leaks from becoming legal nightmares.

Need Help?

The rules are complex, let us take the pain away.

Call Property People on 020 8946 7171 to enquire about our 360 Management.

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