

Ban on evictions extended by 2 months to further protect renters

- Suspension of evictions from social or private rented accommodation extended by 2 months
- New court rules will ensure vulnerable renters will be protected when the suspension of evictions ends
- Government committed to ensuring that no one is evicted from their home this summer due to coronavirus.

Millions of renters across England and Wales will receive greater protection after the government extended the suspension of new evictions until 23 August.

The extension announced by the Housing Secretary today (5 June 2020) takes the moratorium on evictions to a total of five months to ensure that renters continue to have certainty and security.

Ministers are also working with the judiciary, legal representatives and the advice sector on arrangements, including new rules, which will mean that courts are better able to address the need for appropriate protection of all parties, including those shielding from coronavirus. This is to ensure that judges have all the information necessary to make just decisions and that the most vulnerable tenants can get the help they need.

Where tenants do experience financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic, the government is clear that landlords and tenants should work together and exhaust all possible options – such as flexible payment plans which take into account a tenant's individual circumstances – to ensure cases only end up in court as an absolute last resort.

Over the coming weeks, the government is taking careful steps to ease lockdown measures, alongside decisive steps already taken to unlock the housing market so people can move if they need to – for example where they may need to move for work or for family reasons.

While the government is taking unprecedented action to protect tenants and landlords during these times, the ultimate ambition is to transition out of these measures at the end of August to allow the market to operate while ensuring people have appropriate access to justice.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

We have provided an unprecedented package of support for renters during this pandemic. Today, I am announcing that the government's ban on evictions will be extended for another 2 months. That takes the moratorium on evictions to a total of 5 months.

Eviction hearings will not be heard in courts until the end of August and no-one will be evicted from their home this summer due to coronavirus.

We are also working with the judiciary on proposals to ensure that when evictions proceedings do recommence, arrangements, including rules, are in place to assist the court in giving appropriate protections for those who have been particularly affected by coronavirus – including those tenants who have been shielding.

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

Protecting vulnerable people has been our priority throughout this pandemic. Extending this ban will give people invaluable security in these turbulent times and work continues at pace to ensure vulnerable renters remain protected long after the ban ends.

Today's announcement builds on the radical package of measures taken during these difficult times to protect both renters and landlords affected by coronavirus, including:

- The introduction of emergency legislation so landlords won't be able to start proceedings to evict tenants for at least a 3 month period which will remain in place until at least September;
 - Extending mortgage payment holidays to include landlords whose tenants are experiencing financial difficulties due to the pandemic;
 - Supporting businesses to continue to pay their staff through the furlough scheme, as well as strengthening the welfare safety net with a nearly £7 billion boost to the welfare system and increasing Local Housing Allowance;
 - Delivering £180 million in Discretionary Housing Payments to councils across the country to support renters with housing costs in the private and social rented sectors;
 - Guidance which helps landlords and tenants to work together to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity.
- On request of the Lord Chancellor the Civil Procedure Rule Committee has today agreed to extend the ban on eviction proceedings by a further 2 months. The CPRC is an advisory non-departmental public body, made up of judges, barristers, solicitors and lay advice members, which makes rules to set out the practice and procedure to be followed in the Civil Division of the Court of Appeal, the High Court and the County Court.
- The two month extension will come into force on 25 June, ensuring there's no gap between the existing ban and the extension, and also applies to home owners, commercial and leasehold.
 - The Master of the Rolls, as head of civil justice, has convened a judiciary-led, cross-sector, task-and-finish working group to consider

and to address so far as practicable matters affecting litigants and the courts when the present stay on possession proceedings is lifted. This group has the support of the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government;

- The focus of the group is on preparing the courts for the lifting of the suspension including how best to support parties, including vulnerable renters. The group will also include rules, guidance (including to private landlords as well as social landlords), the provision of information and the sharing of best practice.
- Membership includes representatives from the judiciary, government, advice sectors, legal profession, Legal Aid agency, charities and pro bono organisations;
- These changes apply to England and Wales.
- Guidance for landlords and renters is in the process of being updated to reflect these changes