

“How to Rent” Guide Compliance for UK Landlords

What is the “How to Rent” Guide?

The “**How to Rent**” guide is an official publication produced by the UK Government to help tenants understand their rights and responsibilities when renting a property in England.

Landlords are legally required to provide the **most up-to-date version** of this guide to tenants at the start of a tenancy. It is part of the legal framework for private rental properties and supports transparency and compliance.

Why Providing the “How to Rent” Guide Matters

For landlords, supplying the guide:

- Is a **legal obligation** under the **Housing Act 2004**
- Ensures tenants understand their **rights and responsibilities**
- Protects landlords from claims of mismanagement
- Supports lawful eviction notices (particularly **Section 21 notices**)
- Encourages clear communication and reduces disputes

Failure to provide the guide may **invalidate certain eviction notices** and leave landlords vulnerable to legal action.

How to Provide the Guide

Landlords can provide the guide:

1. **Directly as a document**
 - Provide a printed copy or PDF of the most recent government version.
2. **Online version**
 - Share the official link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent>
 - Ensure the tenant can access it **before signing the tenancy agreement**.

Key Points

- Only the **current version** of the guide satisfies legal requirements
 - The guide must be provided **before the tenancy begins**
 - It applies to **assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs)** in England
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When the Guide Must Be Provided

- **At the start of the tenancy:**
Every tenant must receive the guide **before signing the tenancy agreement**
 - **For renewals or extensions:**
If the guide has been updated, provide the latest version to tenants
 - **For new tenants moving into an existing property:**
Ensure the new tenant has the guide **before they take occupation**
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Satisfactory vs Unsatisfactory Compliance

Satisfactory

- The most recent version of the guide is provided **before tenancy starts**
- Tenants acknowledge receipt (either verbally, by signature, or digitally)
- Records are kept of provision

Meaning: Landlord is legally compliant; tenancy notices such as Section 21 are valid.

Unsatisfactory

- The guide is **not provided**
- An **outdated version** is given
- Tenant records are not maintained

Meaning: Landlord is in breach of the law; Section 21 notices may be **invalidated**, and legal liability increases.

Remedial Actions for Unsatisfactory Compliance

If the guide was not provided or was out-of-date:

1. **Provide the current version immediately** (PDF, print, or link)
2. **Record that the tenant received it**
3. **Keep a copy** for your compliance records
4. **Confirm tenant acknowledgment** (optional but recommended)

Remedial action ensures that eviction notices and other tenancy actions remain valid and legally enforceable.

Legal Responsibilities for Landlords

Landlords must:

1. Supply the **most recent “How to Rent” guide** to all new tenants
2. Ensure it is provided **before tenancy begins**
3. Keep proof of provision for **legal and compliance purposes**
4. Update tenants with the latest guide when **new editions are released**

Failure to provide the guide may result in:

- Invalid Section 21 notices
 - Legal disputes over compliance
 - Increased risk of tenant complaints or tribunal claims
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What This All Means for UK Landlords

- Providing the “How to Rent” guide is **mandatory** for all ASTs in England
- Compliance ensures **tenants are informed** and **your legal rights are protected**
- Records of provision protect landlords in disputes and enforcement actions



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- Part of a wider landlord compliance package, along with EICR, GSC, EPC, Legionella, Deposit Protection, and Right to Rent

In Summary

The “How to Rent” guide is an essential compliance document for UK landlords. To stay legally compliant:

- Provide the **latest official version** to every tenant **before move-in**
- Keep **records of receipt** for all tenants
- Update tenants with new editions when applicable
- Ensure all tenancy actions, including evictions, are supported by proof of guide provision

Compliance protects your tenants, your property, and your legal rights as a landlord.