

PRS Database & Landlord Ombudsman

Tenant FAQ

Q: What is the PRS database and how does it affect me?

A: It's a new national register, "Register your rental property", which all private landlords will need to join, registering both themselves and each property they let. It's rolling out region by region from late 2026 and is expected to cover the whole country during 2027. Registered landlords will get a Landlord Registration Number and a Property Registration Number, which should appear on adverts and paperwork for the property - giving you a concrete way to check your landlord is properly registered, once that checking function is live. Some information on the database is expected to be publicly visible to help tenants make informed decisions, though not everything held on it will be public.

Q: What is the Landlord Ombudsman?

A: It's a new independent scheme, free for tenants to use, that will let you bring a complaint about your landlord's conduct without needing to go to court. Its decisions will be legally binding on landlord members, and it will be able to order a landlord to apologise or explain, take remedial action, or pay you compensation - up to £25,000 under the current draft rules. You'd normally need to go to your landlord first, and only escalate to the Ombudsman if that doesn't resolve things.

Q: When will these become mandatory for landlords?

A: The PRS database rollout begins from late 2026. Membership of the Landlord Ombudsman is expected to become mandatory for all landlords during 2028.

Q: How will I know if my landlord is registered or a member?

A: As the systems roll out, there will be ways to check your landlord's registration and membership status. It's also worth knowing that an unregistered landlord will be restricted in what they can do - for example, they won't be able to rely on most Section 8 grounds for possession - so registration isn't just a formality, it has real consequences if a landlord skips it. In the meantime, if your property is managed by a Winkworth office, you can be confident these requirements are already being built into our processes.

Q: What should I do if I have a dispute with my landlord now, before the Ombudsman is up and running?

A: Speak to your local Winkworth office in the first instance - they can help resolve most issues directly. If the problem is serious, such as a safety issue in the property, your local council also has separate powers to step in now, without needing to wait for the Ombudsman scheme to launch.