

Infosheet | What Is Happening In The Courts?

The latest Ministry of Justice possession statistics, covering January to March 2026, provide the final full-quarter snapshot of court activity before the first phase of the Renters' Rights Act came into force on 1st May.

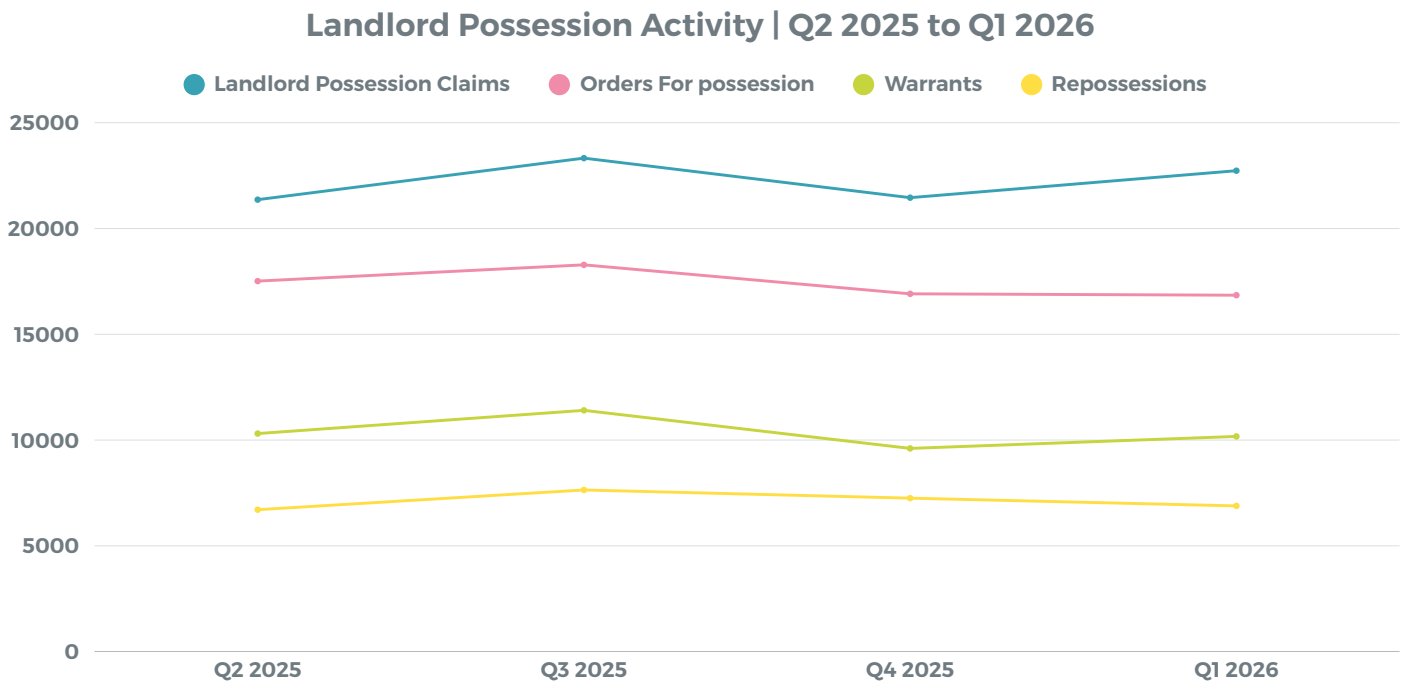
Overall, landlord possession activity has reduced compared with the same period last year. Landlord possession claims fell by 5%, orders by 10%, warrants by 7%, and repossessions by county court bailiffs by 6%.

Action	Q1 2025	Q1 2026	Change	% Change
Landlord Possession Claims	23,964	22,733	-1,231	- 5%
Orders for Possessions	18,674	16,848	- 1,826	-7%
Warrants	10,929	10,172	- 757	- 10%
Repossessions	7,345	6,888	- 457	- 6%

Whilst at first glance, this doesn't suggest there was a widespread rush to the courts immediately before the Renters' Rights Act came into effect, the picture across the final 12 months before implementation of the Renters' Rights Act tells a more nuanced story.



Rather than a single last-minute surge in possession activity, the data suggests landlord behaviour shifted gradually over the course of the year.



The First Quarter Before The Reform

This quarter is particularly significant because it captures the last full period before Section 21 was abolished for new and existing assured tenancies.

While the headline figures don't show a dramatic pre-reform spike, they may still point to landlords making more selective decisions. Some may have already acted earlier in the reform timeline, particularly where they already dealing with long-running issues with tenants, or had decided to sell or restructure their portfolio.

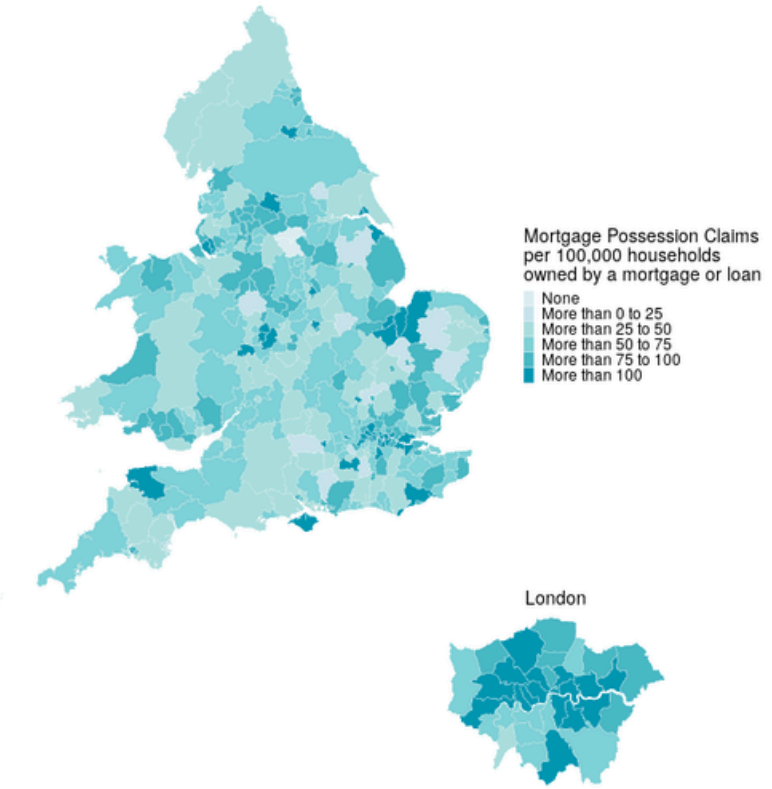


Regional Possession Action

While the national possession activity slowed down overall, the regional picture continued to show significantly higher levels of landlord possession activity across parts of London.

According to the data, London boroughs accounted for 8 of the 10 local authorities with the highest rate of private landlord claims. Barking and Dagenham had the highest rate for private landlord claims, followed by Newham and Enfield.

Source. Gov.uk



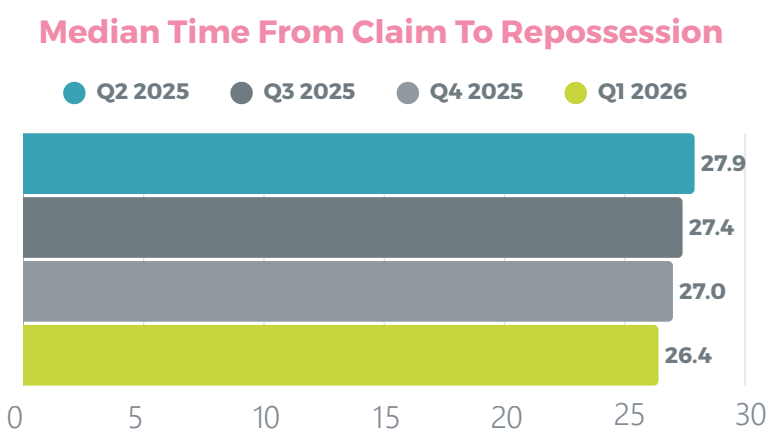
Court Timelines Remain A Key Concern

Even with fewer cases entering the system overall, court delays remain one of the most significant operational pressures facing landlords and agents.

The median time from landlord possession claim to repossession is now 26.4 weeks, slightly higher than the same period in 2025 which was 26.7 weeks; however across the final 12 months before implementation of the Renters' Rights Act, the median time from landlord possession claim to repossession has dropped slightly.

But for landlords, that can still mean:

- Around six months before possession is recovered;
- Continued mortgage, insurance and service charge costs;
- Further exposure to rent arrears;
- Delayed ability to re-let, sell or restructure the property.



The Impact Of The Renters' Rights Act



The Ministry of Justice is clear that the impact of the Renters' Rights Act will not be visible in this dataset. Because the Act came into force at the beginning of May, the first partial impact will appear in the April to June release, with the first full quarter of operation not published until December 2026.

However, the direction of travel is already important.

From 1st May, landlords can no longer rely on Section 21 in the same way. Possession will now depend on the relevant Section 8 grounds, with greater emphasis on evidence, process and compliance.

Many commentators have warned that the abolition of Section 21 and the accelerated possession route means possession claims are more likely to require court hearings, with potential for longer timelines and increased expense.

The latest possession statistics demonstrate that landlords are still facing lengthy delays in recovering possession overall.

With possession claims under section 8 requiring a hearing, there is understandable concern across the sector that possession timelines may come under even greater strain. That said, it will likely be some time before we see the true impact of the Renters' Rights Act filtering through the court system.

The statistics also reinforce the importance of ensuring notices and evidence are prepared correctly from the outset. With possession claims continuing to take many months to progress through the courts, any defect in the notice or supporting documentation can result in significant delay, additional cost and, in some cases, the need to restart the process entirely.

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What Agents Should Consider Now

For letting agents, the message is not that the courts are suddenly overwhelmed by a pre-RRA rush. The message is more practical: possession is entering a more evidence-led era.

Agents can support landlords by:

- Setting realistic expectations about court timelines.
- Ensuring tenancy records are complete and compliant.
- Undertaking robust tenant referencing.
- Keeping clear arrears and communication records.
- Offering Rent & Legal protection to your portfolio of landlords.
- Introducing Professional Guarantors where suitable.



The next release expected in August will be especially important. It will be the first dataset to include the early post-implementation period, and may begin to show whether the new possession regime changes landlord behaviour, claim volumes, or the pace at which cases move through the courts.

BOX FROM THE LETTINGS HUB
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At The Lettings Hub, we're always here to support you through the ever-changing lettings landscape. With the Renters' Rights Act introducing new regulations, staying updated is crucial. That's why we offer a variety of resources to help you navigate these changes smoothly. From webinars and blogs to tailored guides, our platform is packed with expert insights. Be sure to follow us on LinkedIn and bookmark our Renters' Rights Hub for the latest updates, tips, and advice.

