

London Borough Camden Renters Forum.

Ben Reeve Lewis from Safer Renting

Who is this guy?

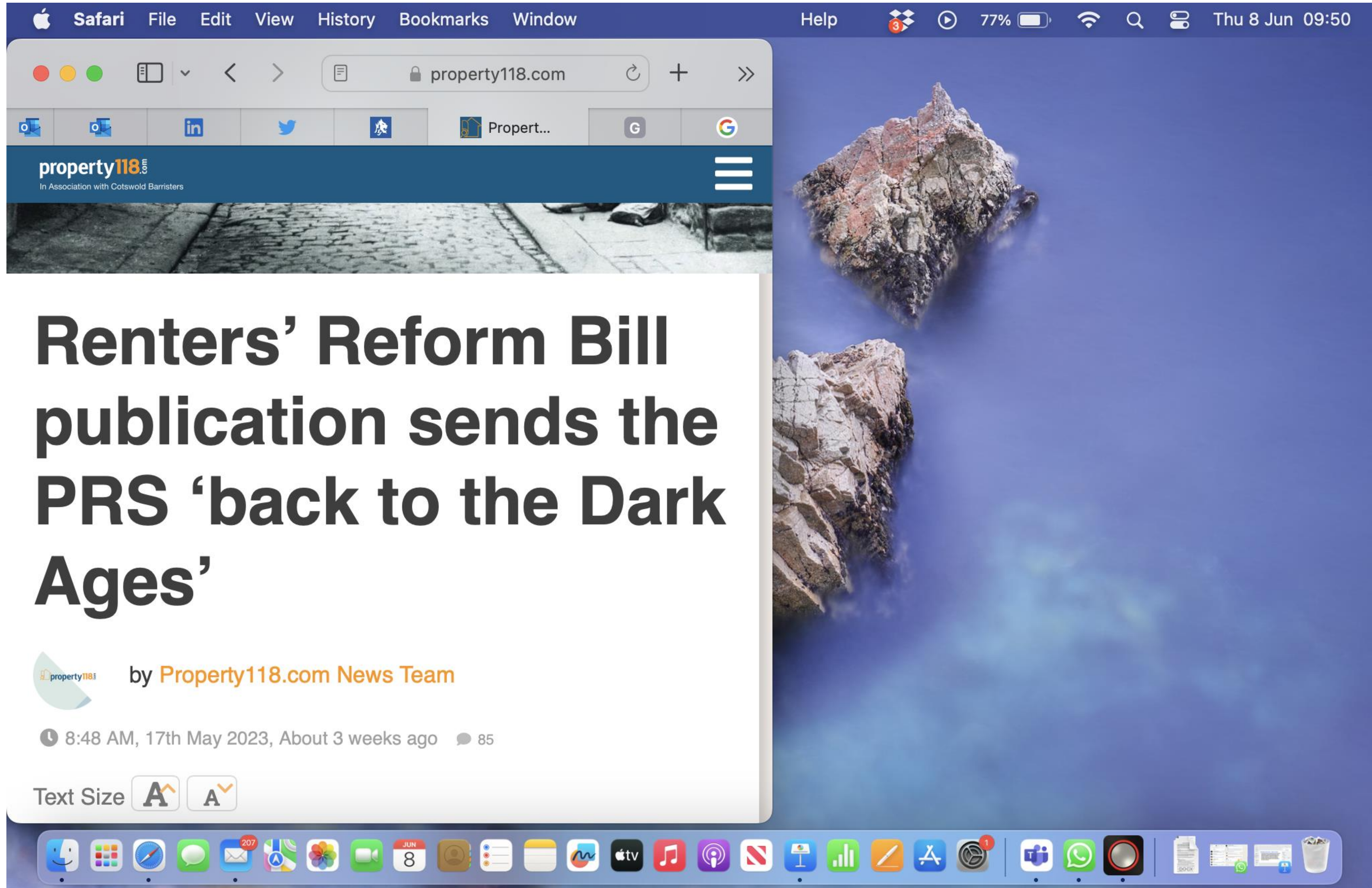
- **Safer Renting provides a Tenancy Relations service for 12 London boroughs.**
- **We deal with around 350 - 400 cases of serious harassment and illegal eviction each year.**
- **We only deal with the worst landlords and letting agents you can imagine.**
- **I've been doing this for 33 years.**

The Renter's Reform Bill

Is here!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The RRB from the landlord's perspective





Renters' Reform Bill publication sends the PRS 'back to the Dark Ages'

by [Property118.com News Team](#)

8:48 AM, 17th May 2023, About 3 weeks ago 85

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The RRB from the tenants perspective



The RRB from the local authority enforcement perspective



Our recommendations

- **Safer Renting were, at 2pm this very afternoon, in a meeting at the Home Office offering our recommendations for a range of proposals.**

The renting crisis ONS data January 2023

- Private rental prices paid by tenants in the UK rose by 4.4% in the 12 months to January 2023, up from 4.2% in the 12 months to December 2022.
- Within England, the East Midlands saw the highest annual percentage change in private rental prices in the 12 months to January 2023 (5.0%), while the West Midlands saw the lowest (3.9%).
- London's annual percentage change in private rental prices was 4.3% in the 12 months to January 2023.

London renting crisis number crunching

The number of London households privately renting has passed one million after rising by 25 per cent in a decade, new census data shows.

Centre for London analysis of the latest Office for National Statistics figures found that 1,025,533 households in the capital were leasing from a private landlord in 2021.

Rents and the new Renter's Reform Bill

Plans are to abolish quarterly and 6 monthly tenancies. All rental periods will be either 28 days or 1 month.

As assured shorthold tenancies will be axed, along with the ability of a landlord and tenant to mutually agree an increase, so rent increase mechanisms are to be adjusted.

Annual rent increases will be only through service of a s13 notice, for which the tenant will have 2 months to refer to the rent tribunal, who will look at price comparisons between the proposed increase and the current market level for similar properties in the area.

Rents and the new Renter's Reform Bill

- Tenants will have 2 Months to appeal during which the rent can't be increased **BUT**
- Tribunal backlogs can easily be up to 6 months so any tenant would be advised to refer to tribunal **BUT**
- Current practice is for increase to be tied to date of service on the s13, which could put the tenant in 8 months rent arrears if approved and the rent level almost a year lagging behind current market level.
- Will landlords then propose an increase much higher to allow for the delay, thus putting up market levels further?

Safer Renting recommendation

- **Tribunal decisions to take effect from date of hearing, not backdated to service of s13.**

Abolition of no fault eviction???????

- **Nonsense, s21 never meant the abolition of no fault eviction.**
- **There are to be even more no fault eviction grounds added and some of them quite nasty.**
- **All of them requiring policing and involvement by the local authority.**

Possession Ground 1 and Ground 1A

- **Mandatory grounds.**
- **Landlord wants him or a member of his family to occupy.**
- **Landlords wants to sell.**
- **Both grounds prohibit the landlord from re-letting for 3 months on pain of a £5,000 fine, to be policed, monitored and punished by.....local authority enforcement.**

Safer Renting recommendation

- In his 2018 report *“Staffing levels in housing enforcement”*, Dr Stephen Battersby assessed, based on size of PRS at the previous census in 2012, that in London there are approximately 2.4 Environmental Health Professionals for every 10,000 PRS properties.
- Remove local authority duties to monitor and prosecute breaches of ground 1 and 1A & replace with ability to do RRO
- Sanction far more likely to be enforced against.
- Potentially a lot more than £5,000
- Money goes into tenant’s pocket.

Our wild card recommendation

- **Landlords getting caught getting mandatory possession and merely re-letting.**
- **Compulsory purchase by social landlord for property to be used as social housing**

Mandatory ground 6A - The devil

- **Landlord has breached a banning order.**
- **Landlord has ignored an improvement notice for overcrowding.**
- **Property is under a prohibition order.**
- **Landlord's licence application has been refused.**
- **Number of occupants exceed number permitted on licence.**

Mandatory ground 6A - What it means

- **A landlord who has breached the law, ignored enforcement notices and licencing is to be allowed mandatory possession against his innocent tenants in order to avoid being further prosecuted by the local authority.**
- **Families made homeless to be rehoused by the local authority.**

Mandatory ground 6A - What it means

- **Tenants may be reluctant to report problems to the council for fear of eviction.**
- **Enforcement officer might be wary of serving notices for the same reason.**

Safer Renting recommendations

- **Plan A** - Get rid of this altogether
- **Plan B** - Amend **s37 & s39** of the **Land Compensation Act 1973** to require the landlord to pay home loss compensation to the tenant, starting at £6,700.
- **Plan C** - all the grounds in 6A are covered by the council duty to take over management control from the landlord for 12 months

Dealing with illegal evictions

- **Safer Renting are compiling our second annual illegal eviction count.**
- **Illegal evictions April 2021 - April 2022 - 7,778**
- **Local authority prosecutions 2020 -2021 112**
with 29 successful convictions
- **Illegal evictions April 2022 - April 2023 - 8,034**
- **Prosecution figures not available yet.**

Interesting anomaly

- Accelerated possession orders **April 21 - April 22** **6,089**
- So illegal evictions that year outnumbered lawful possession under s21 by **1,689**

Dealing with illegal evictions

- **Tenancy Relations Officers very hard to find in local authorities.**
- **Lack of staffing and resources due to 37% cut in central government funding.**
- **Fines of just a few hundred pounds or community service are the norm**
- **In the time it takes to get a case into court the tenant gets on with their life and you lose contact with them as the chief witness.**

Safer Renting's Recommendation

- **Widen use of Civil Penalty Notices (CPNs) to include harassment and illegal eviction.**
- **Fortunately this actually made it into the RRB.**
- **They're faster - they can be up to £30,000 - council can keep the award to fund further enforcement activities.**
- **More money means better punishment and better deterrent.**

Roundup of the RRB

- **Some genuinely good ideas in it.**
- **Some dreadful ones,**
- **Some incomplete ones that might be good if they are put together properly.**
- **Plenty more to come**
- **The RRB as published has a long journey through parliament to get through yet.**
- **A high number of MPs from all parties are landlords.**