

## INSIGHT

# 5 Things Every Commercial Landlord Must Know in 2026

A practical guide to compliance, rent reviews and void management for commercial property landlords

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## 1. Stay on top of compliance

Commercial property compliance is more demanding than ever. EPC ratings, fire safety, asbestos surveys, electrical and gas certifications — each has its own renewal cycle and consequences for non-compliance.

The most common mistake we see is landlords assuming compliance is "handled" by tenants under FRI lease terms. It often isn't. Even where the lease assigns responsibility, the landlord remains exposed if work isn't done or evidence isn't kept.

Build a compliance register for every asset. Diarise renewal dates. Audit annually. The cost is minimal — the cost of getting it wrong can be enormous. A single serious fire safety breach can result in unlimited fines and criminal prosecution of directors.

The MEES regulations (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards) require all commercial properties to have an EPC rating of E or above to let lawfully. From April 2027, this is expected to tighten to B — meaning properties rated C, D or E will become unlettable without upgrades. Plan your upgrades now.

## 2. Plan for rent reviews early

Rent reviews are one of the highest-leverage moments in a commercial lease. Get them right and you can step rents to market. Get them wrong — or miss the window — and you can lose years of growth.

The key is preparation. Start gathering market evidence at least six months before the review date. Identify comparables. Understand your tenant's position. And don't assume your tenant will remind you the date is coming.

With 2025 prime office yields stabilising and rental growth of 8–10% across the Big Six regional cities (Savills data), many landlords have significant headroom at review. But evidence wins reviews, and evidence takes time to gather.

## 3. Treat voids as a strategic risk

Void periods are often treated as bad luck. They're not. They're usually the predictable consequence of decisions made months or years earlier — lease structure, presentation, marketing strategy, pricing.

The best way to minimise voids is to think about them well before a lease ends. Engage your tenant early about renewal intentions. Have marketing materials ready. Know your re-letting strategy.

Even a 3-month void on a £60,000 p/a unit costs you £15,000. Do the maths: a small investment in proactive tenant engagement pays for itself many times over.

#### 4. Don't over-commit on lease length

Long leases feel safe but can lock in below-market terms or problematic tenants. Shorter leases with clear break clauses give you flexibility — and the option to step rents more frequently.

The right balance depends on your asset, the market, and your investment horizon. There's no universal answer. In 2025–2026, given the rental growth environment, shorter leases with market review provisions may outperform long fixed-rent leases.

#### 5. Have a fast escalation path for arrears

Arrears are normal. What separates well-managed assets from poorly managed ones is the speed of response.

Day one, day seven, day fourteen, day twenty-one — have a clear, documented escalation process. The longer arrears are left, the harder they are to recover. The best time to chase an unpaid invoice is the moment it becomes overdue.

A tenant who pays three days late once is not a problem. A tenant who pays three days late every month is a process problem that needs solving now, before it becomes a recovery problem.

##### About Levin & Whitmore

We are commercial property specialists operating across the UK from offices in Glasgow, Dundee and London. We manage portfolios for private landlords, family offices, investors and businesses — protecting income, reducing voids, and improving asset performance. For a free portfolio audit, call 0141 255 0742 or visit [levinandwhitmore.com](https://levinandwhitmore.com).