LightWork AI

The January rush

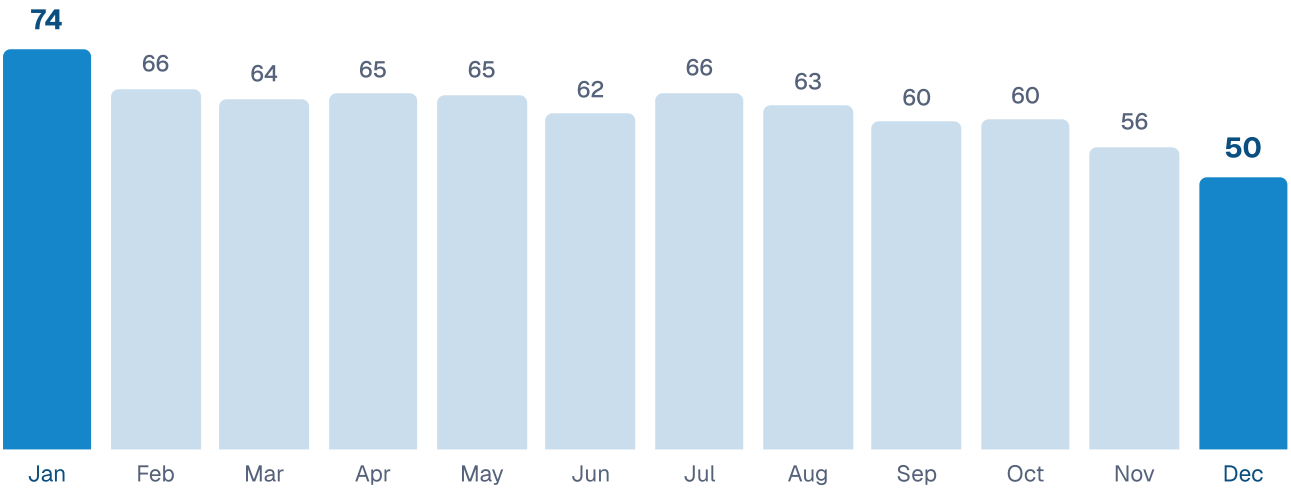
A letting agent's guide to the busiest weeks for tenant searches

2027 edition

From December to January, searches jump by almost half

On average, December is the month when people in the UK search Google least for a home to rent, and January the month when they search most. The quiet weeks before Christmas are the time to get ready.

"Houses to rent", average search interest by month



Google Trends, United Kingdom, weekly index from 17 October 2021 to 18 October 2026, averaged by month (262 weeks), on a scale of 0 to 100.

Up 47% for houses

Average index of 50 in December, 73.5 in January. For "flats to rent" the rise is 32%, from 29.5 to 38.9.

Often in the first two weeks

The year's busiest week fell in January in four years out of the last five, three times between 7 and 12 January. In 2026 so far it was early May.

How far to trust it. These are searches, and some come from people looking for social housing. Your own enquiries may peak at another time: student towns and summer move-ins have their own season, and July is the second peak here. Check last winter's enquiries in your CRM before you plan around it.

Before you close for Christmas

Ten jobs for the week of 14 December, while the phones are quiet.

Your homes

- [ ] **Refresh every live listing.** Remove what is let. Correct the available-from dates.
- [ ] **State one rent on each advert.** A single amount, in writing. A range or "offers over" is not allowed in England.
- [ ] **Write down what applicants always ask.** Pets, parking, bills, furniture and broadband, home by home, in one place.
- [ ] **List the homes that come free in January.** Agree photos, access and rent with the landlord now.

Your diary

- [ ] **Block viewing slots for 4 to 16 January.** Include two early evenings and Saturdays, with tenants told in advance.
- [ ] **Group viewings by street or area.** Three homes on one trip is better than three trips.

Your phones and inboxes

- [ ] **Name who answers on each closed day.** If the answer is nobody, say when someone will.
- [ ] **Record a new voicemail greeting.** Give the date you reopen and another way to ask for a viewing.
- [ ] **Set the same message on email and WhatsApp.** Ask for the home, a move date and a phone number, so you can ring back ready.
- [ ] **Clear the December backlog.** Reply to each open enquiry before you lock up.

A greeting you can copy

"You've reached [agency]. We're closed until 9am on Monday 4 January. To ask about a home or a viewing, email [address] with the property, when you'd like to move and your number. If you're a tenant with an emergency, ring [number]."

Seven weeks, step by step

14 to 18 December	Work through the ten jobs. Tell landlords what you expect in January and agree how you will show each home.
21 to 24 December	Last replies and last viewings. Test the closed-day message yourself: ring, email and message your own office in the evening.
25 December to 3 January	Bank holidays are Friday 25 and Monday 28 December, and Friday 1 January. Whoever is on duty checks enquiries once a day and offers viewing slots for the first week back.
4 to 8 January	First full week. Start with the enquiries that came in while you were shut, oldest first. Keep one person on new enquiries and one on call-backs, all day.
11 to 15 January	Historically among the busiest for searches. Hold a ten-minute meeting each morning: enquiries waiting, viewings today, homes with no viewing booked.
18 to 29 January	Ring the applicants who viewed and did not apply: they may suit the next home. Fill in the scorecard on page 6 and keep it for next December.

If you can only do three things

1. Have viewing slots ready to offer before 4 January.
2. Make sure an enquiry sent at 8pm gets a useful reply.
3. Write down what every applicant asks, so anyone can answer.

Ask the same five questions, every time

A short, identical list makes the first call quicker and keeps it fair. Ask, then offer two slots.

1. Which home are you asking about?
2. When would you like to move?
3. How many people would live there?
4. Is there anything you need from the home: parking, a pet, step-free access?
5. Have you seen the rent and the deposit, and do they suit you?

What the rules in England say

The first January under the Renters' Rights Act: its tenancy reforms started on 1 May 2026.

On the phone	The rule
Rent offers	Written adverts state a specific rent. You may not invite or accept more than that amount.
Children and benefits	You may not stop someone enquiring, getting information or viewing because children would live with them or visit, or because they receive benefits. The Act sets narrow exceptions.
Pets	An applicant can ask to keep one. The landlord needs a valid reason to refuse.
Holding deposit	One week's rent at most, one per tenancy. Held for 15 calendar days unless agreed in writing.
Rent in advance	None before signing. After signing and before the start date, one month at most.
Registration	Landlords register each home, region by region: West Midlands from 15 December 2026, East of England from 15 January 2027, every landlord in England by 15 November 2027. £65 a year per property, adjusted during the rollout.

Read on 29 November 2026: Renters' Rights Act 2025, sections 33, 34 and 56 (legislation.gov.uk); "Renters' Rights Act: an overview for landlords", "Fees you can charge as part of a tenancy" and "Register your rental property service" (gov.uk). A summary, not legal advice. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own rules.

Keep score, and plan the next one

One line a week, from your CRM and your call log.

Week starting	4 Jan	11 Jan	18 Jan	25 Jan
New enquiries				
Of which after 6pm or at the weekend				
Answered the same day				
Viewings booked				
Viewings attended				
Applications				
Enquiries nobody answered				

Two figures tell you most: the share of enquiries answered the same day, and the share that became a viewing. If the second is low while the first is high, look at the slots you offer.

Where Felicity helps

Felicity is LightWork's AI front desk for UK agencies. She answers phone, email, WhatsApp and SMS, day and night, asks the questions you choose and books the viewing in your diary. She says exactly what you want her to say, and hands over to your team when you tell her to.

See her take an enquiry in a 15-minute demo: lightwork.co

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