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The ultimate **Section 13** playbook

Steal the strategies elite agencies use to de-risk their rent review processes.

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THE SECTION 13 RENT REVIEW PLAYBOOK 3/29

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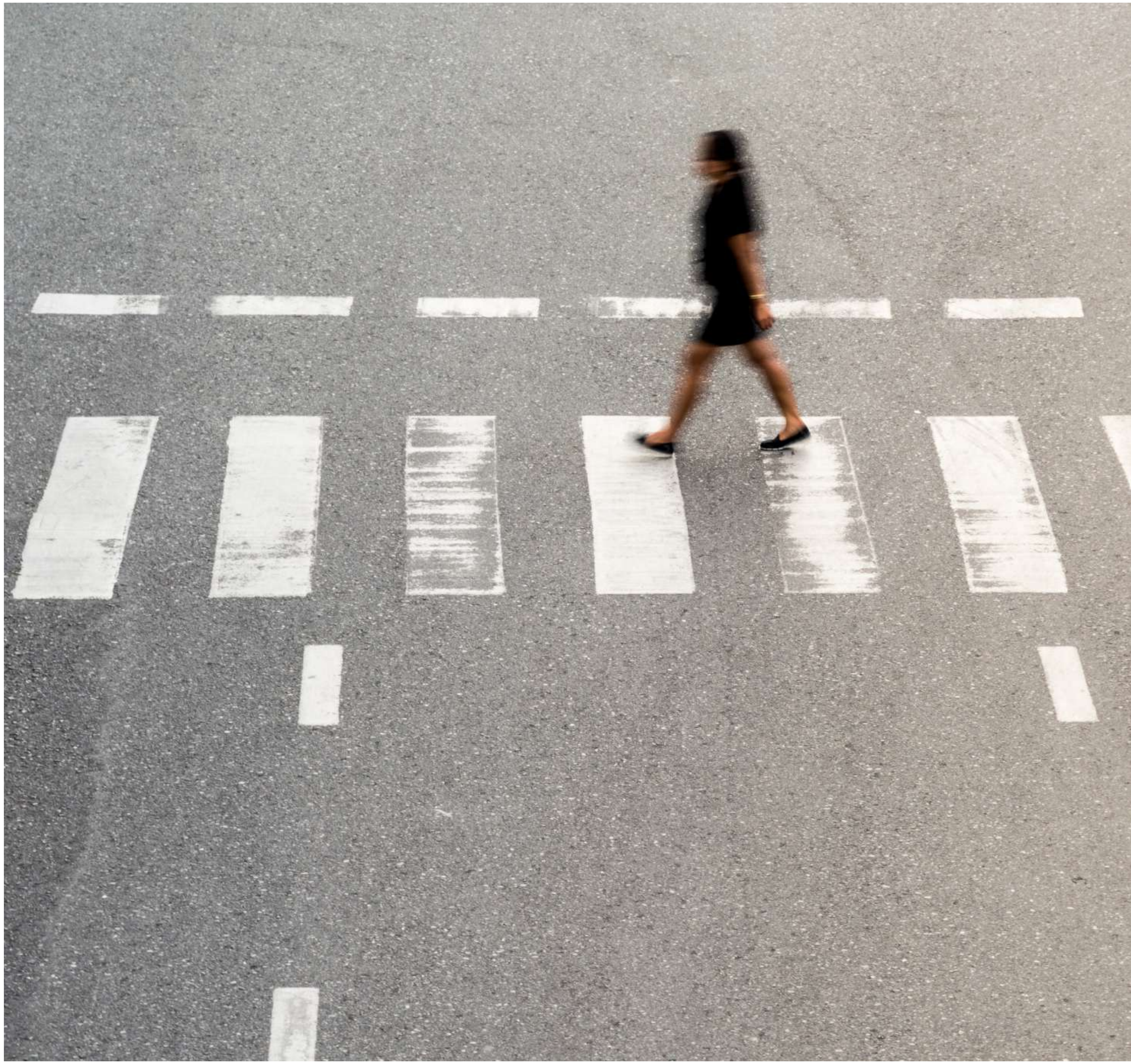

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Executive summary

Somewhere in your portfolio right now, a rent review is quietly running out of time.

Miss the review window and the consequences can last far longer than a missed deadline. With rent increases now limited to once a year and subject to the formal Section 13 process under the Renters' Rights Act, a poorly tracked review can mean a landlord waits months before the next opportunity to increase the rent.

This is not only a missed opportunity for your landlords to cover rising costs and benchmark their properties against the market. It's a missed opportunity for your agency to proactively communicate its value.

Agencies are already fighting an uphill battle on this front.

According to Goodlord's recent "Is Renting Broken?" report, 59% of landlords cited high fees and poor value as their biggest frustrations. Only 6% were very satisfied with value for money.

This is not because agents aren't doing their jobs. It's because much of the value you deliver is hidden from your customers.

A clear and consultative Section 13 review process is one way to start bridging this gap. Plus, it also helps you fill the revenue gap left by renewals.

In this playbook, you'll discover:

1. What a successful Section 13 process looks like - We'll provide a framework for making every rent review a success.

2. How process changes work in practice - A comparison of old, manual systems and a more structured workflow.

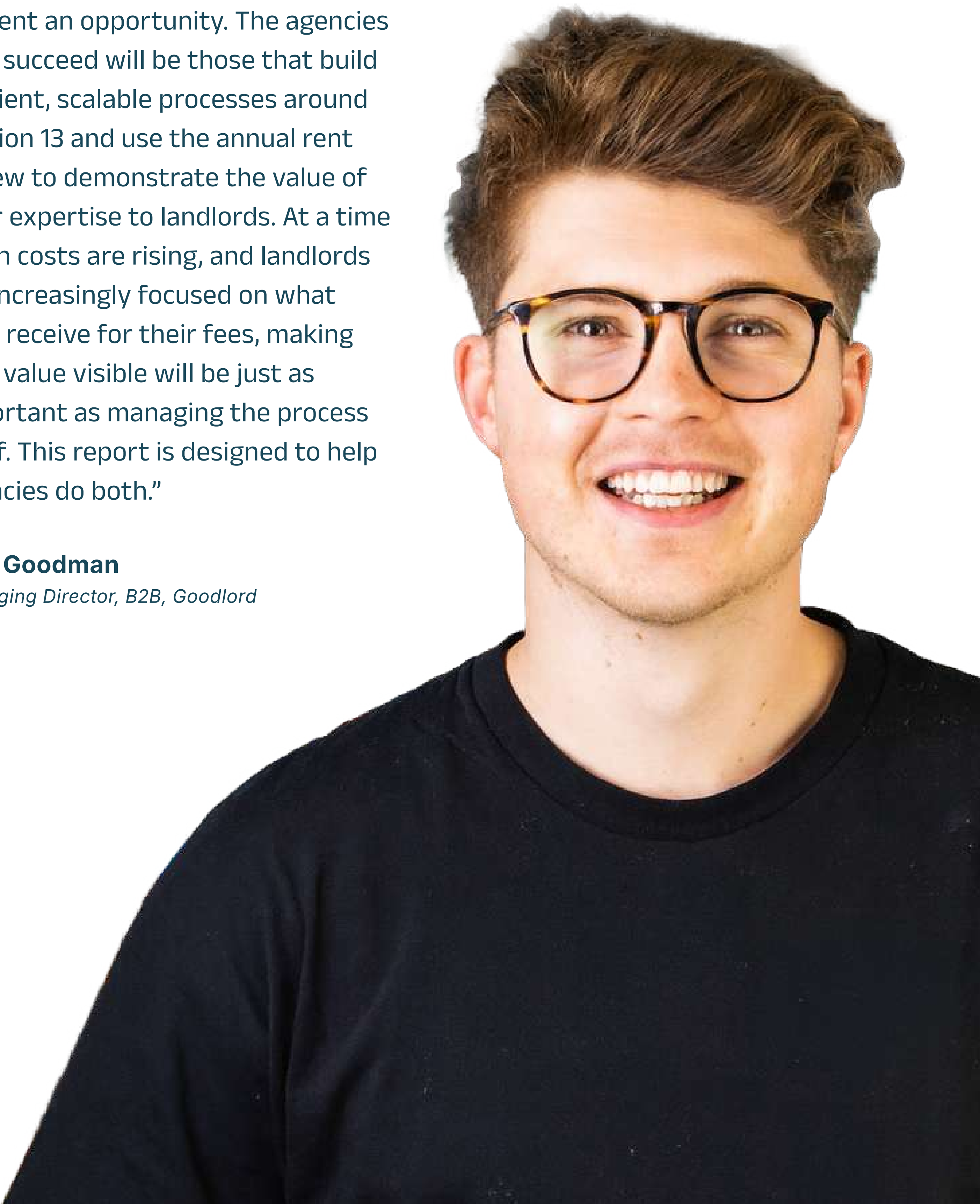
3. How to assess your opportunity -
A practical framework for understanding where your current rent review process is working, where it's failing, and steps you can take to improve it.

4. Where high-performing agencies excel - The habits, processes, and integrations that help them stay at the top of the heap.

5. How to turn insight into action - A 30-day action plan for auditing your current approach, defining ownership, standardising the process, testing it, and scaling what works.

"The changes to rent reviews will undoubtedly create new pressures for letting agents, but they also present an opportunity. The agencies that succeed will be those that build efficient, scalable processes around Section 13 and use the annual rent review to demonstrate the value of their expertise to landlords. At a time when costs are rising, and landlords are increasingly focused on what they receive for their fees, making that value visible will be just as important as managing the process itself. This report is designed to help agencies do both."

Tom Goodman
Managing Director, B2B, Goodlord



01

The rent-review opportunity

Before the Renters' Rights Act, renewals were a key source of recurring, long-term revenue. However, in many cases, the process surrounding them was more informal.

This was because agents and landlords had several levers to pull to raise the rent at different points in a tenancy, whether that be the end of a fixed term, a rent review clause in the contract, or an informal agreement with the tenant.

Whereas with Section 13 notices, there is a clear time pressure.

Tenants need to be given a two-month notice period before the Section 13 rise comes into effect. If your agency misses the point at which a Section 13 can be handed to the tenant, the review can't later be brought forward to make up for lost time.

That means analogue processes like sticky notes on calendars, a manually updated spreadsheet, or a property manager collecting market data by surfing through property portals, aren't up to snuff.

So how do you build a scalable and repeatable process that forms a clear part of your service offering to landlords?

Clear ownership

Depending on how your office is set up, it may seem natural to conclude that the branch or property manager owns the review. This might work for smaller agencies, but it falls apart at scale.

Each manager has their own way of doing things, which might not align with the rest of the branch. An office in Manchester and an office in London may as well be in different countries without a formalised process.

And inconsistent experiences for landlords are problematic. A bad experience in Manchester may cause that landlord to re-evaluate the properties they hold with you in London, and even take their business elsewhere.

Gathering market data takes time

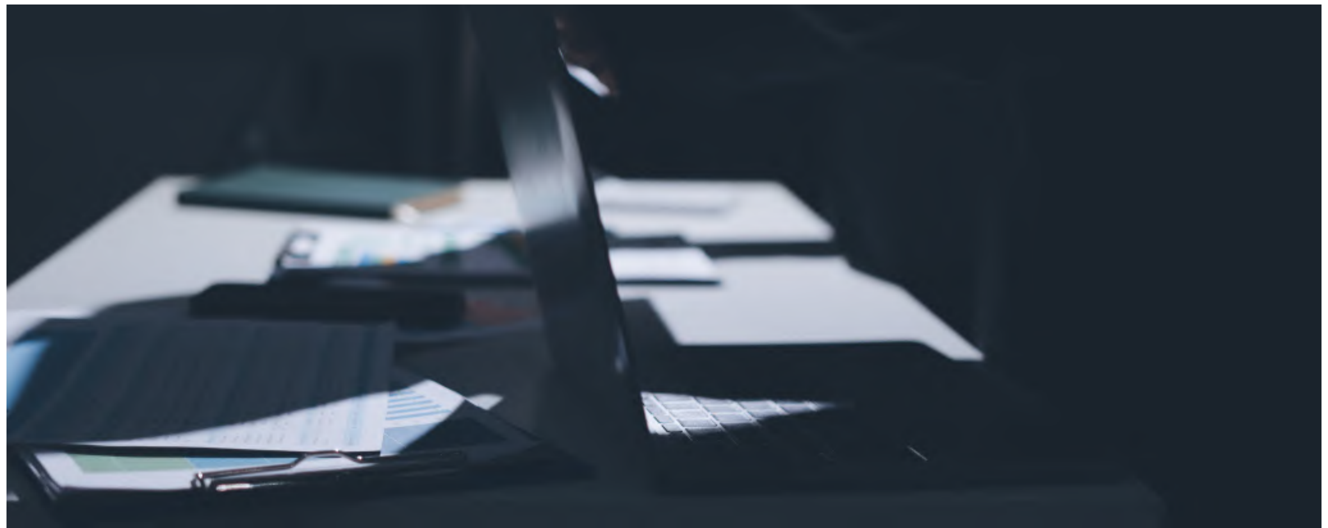
One new aspect of rent reviews under the Renters' Rights Act is that they must be in line with the local market rent value. If not, they can be challenged by tenants and thrown out by the FTT.

This means your agency will need to regularly collect market data, compare it with rents in its portfolio, and provide landlords with sufficient information to make informed decisions.

Where this is done manually, the process can involve:

- Finding comparable market information
- Moving between different sources
- Recording evidence
- Preparing a recommendation
- Presenting it to the landlord

This is a labour-intensive process at the best of times, and could quickly become unmanageable if landlords begin to expect yearly recommendations.



Notices and responses have nowhere to live

Processing a Section 13 notice doesn't end when the landlord has approved an increase.

There's admin to complete, a response from the tenant to collect, challenges to acknowledge and address, and a potential negotiation to mediate.

When each step in the process is managed through separate spreadsheets, emails, and computer systems, it can become near-impossible to get a bird's-eye view of what is happening.

This can easily delay rent reviews as forgotten tasks pile up.

Performance is hard to measure

A fragmented process makes it very hard to answer some of the basic questions you should be asking yourself. Questions like:

- How many reviews could we be carrying out?
- How many are actually being completed?
- How many are approaching the point where notice needs to be served?
- How many have been delayed because action was not taken in time?
- How many proposed increases are accepted?
- How much additional rent are reviews generating for landlords?
- What does that mean for our management revenue?

Without the answers, an agency cannot easily identify where its process is underperforming or quantify the opportunity to improve it.

The annual value opportunity

Section 13 is often viewed as a compliance and operational challenge. We've already discussed here how many agencies lack the structured approach that makes for a viable product.

While annual rent reviews may not fully replace the revenue lost to renewal fees, they do give agencies the opportunity to demonstrate the value of their management service to their landlords.

Think about what goes into a successful Section 13 rent review: local market knowledge, the right rent price recommendation, landlord and tenant communications, and management of the formal process.

These are all matters that most landlords would prefer to have taken off their hands. As agencies lose sleep over justifying their management costs, this is a recurring opportunity to demonstrate the value of a good agency.

02

What elite agencies do differently

Often, the agencies that manage their Section 13 process effectively aren't doing anything particularly radical.

But they have built a sustainable, consistent process for Section 13 notices, using technology for automation and refusing to let their rent reviews live anywhere but in one centralised system.

By incorporating Section 13 into their broader property management workflow, they've built a system that works for their tenants, landlords, and agents without requiring additional effort or increasing their headcount.

Over the next chapter, we'll break down their processes with tangible, real-world examples.

Successful habits of high-performing agencies

1 - They make rent reviews part of their ongoing service

In a pre-Renters' Rights Act world, our data showed that renewal fees accounted for 27% of revenue for the average agency.

With that source of revenue no longer available, many forward-thinking agencies have fundamentally changed how they approach rent increases with their landlords. Instead of taking a "we'll get to it when we get to it" mentality, these agencies are now integrating Section 13 notices into their day-to-day workflows.

This covers the agency's missing revenue while also ensuring their landlords receive the best possible rental price.

Forty-year veteran agency Duncan Yeardley is an excellent example of this:

"We use Goodlord to issue all our Section 13 notices and stay compliant. We have a duty of care to our landlords to review rents every year and protect their investment. We couldn't do that without Goodlord behind the scenes."

Hannah Stinga
Director of Lettings, Duncan Yeardley

Using a combination of Goodlord technology and decades of experience, the agency has taken the initiative by flipping its existing renewal process on its head, transforming it into an integrated rent review system.

This means a Section 13 notice isn't relegated to admin hell. Instead, it's an automated process that naturally comes around each year, netting landlords and agents a yearly revenue boost.

THE HABIT:

Treat Section 13 as a regular part of portfolio management, rather than an occasional task.

2 - They create a consistent process

Once rent reviews become part of the furniture, maintaining consistency becomes increasingly important.

Elite agencies don't rely on individual property managers to remember and action every step of the process.

Instead, they build a repeatable workflow that keeps the team on top of:

- Which tenancies need to be reviewed
- When action needs to be taken
- What information is required
- How the landlord recommendation is made
- How the Section 13 is served
- What happens if the tenant makes a challenge

Building these processes is especially important in growing agencies like Gilbert & Rose.

In six years, Gilbert & Rose has grown from managing 36 units to 700, with its lettings and property management team ballooning from two people to ten. With this sort of growth, it's impractical to think that rent reviews should only live in the heads of individual property managers.

Goodlord's automation technology has allowed Gilbert & Rose to build a system that works for them:

Standardising the system gives agents time back and lets them maintain human oversight over their growing portfolio. As new team members join the business, their system needs to be easy to learn while remaining robust enough to best serve their customers.

Another Goodlord customer, Rampton Baseley, makes it clear how the platform has helped the agency:

"Goodlord is a no-brainer, it'll just make your life so easy. Without Goodlord, rent reviews would be time-consuming and admin-heavy, the kind of thing that drags you down; I'd need another person in the department. Goodlord acts like a colleague: it does the auto-populating and the admin, so I can focus on the rent reviews themselves."

Niall Murphy
Lettings Associate, Rampton Baseley

THE HABIT:

Build a consistent Section 13 process that makes the right steps easy to follow, regardless of who is managing the review.

3 - They use technology to minimise their admin

The best agencies aren't necessarily looking to reinvent the wheel when it comes to their Section 13 workflow.

Instead, they look to remove the repetitive work that bogs down their agents.

When handled incorrectly or inefficiently, a Section 13 can become a labour-intensive slog full of data-gathering, date-checking, notice-preparing, and a thousand and one other little tasks.

At Duncan Yeardley, Goodlord has helped cut through the clutter:

"Goodlord has really helped us streamline the business. We used to have lots of people doing bits and bobs of the job. Now it's one system, from start to finish for the whole customer journey."

Hannah Stinga
Director of Lettings, Duncan Yeardley

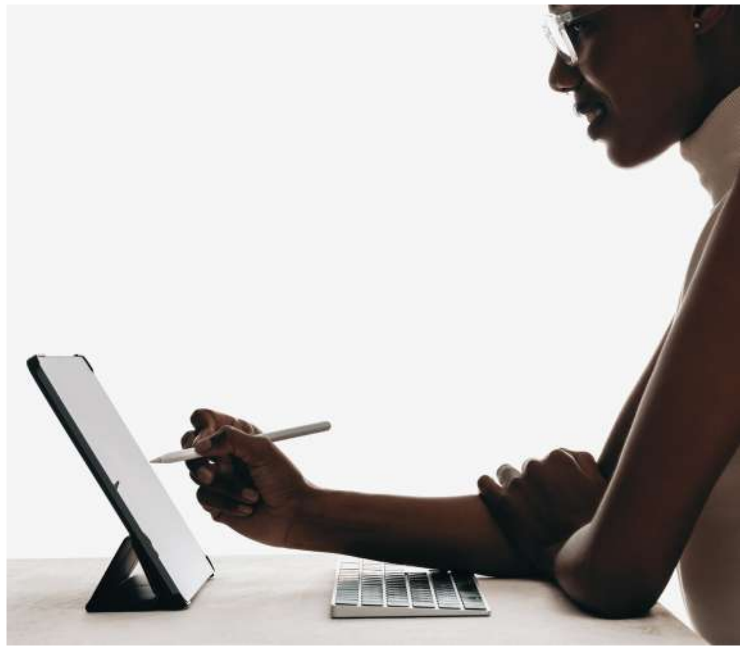
The important point is not simply the time saved on an individual review.

It is what that capacity means across a portfolio.

When the administrative burden of each Section 13 is reduced, a team can manage more reviews without needing to increase headcount at the same rate.

THE HABIT:

Use technology to make your processes simpler and easier to scale, while keeping your team at the centre of the landlord/tenant relationship.



4 - They give the whole team visibility

In a busy agency, it can be so easy to let processes fall into a "business as usual" mindset. Especially with specialist operations, like issuing Section 13 notices, you might hear a variation on: "Oh, Maya handles rent reviews, so I'll leave it with her."

This mindset leads to missed or delayed reviews, annoyed landlords, and stifled growth. As portfolios and teams grow, everyone involved in managing properties needs to be able to quickly see and understand where a tenancy is in its lifecycle.

Duncan Yeardley has used Goodlord to build visibility directly into their work and bring their teams together:

"It's one system used for so many things: property management, accounts, front-of-house and back-office all use it. It's rare to find a product that thinks about every part of the business like that."

Hannah Stinga
Director of Lettings, Duncan Yeardley

In a Section 13 process, where a tenancy will move through multiple stages, this visibility is especially important. If all the relevant information is held by one person, the process becomes increasingly difficult to manage.

THE HABIT:

Making Section 13 information visible across your teams, rather than allowing it to become siloed in one place.

5 - They plan for what happens after a notice

One of the difficulties with Section 13 notices is that they are only the first part of the conversation.

Once the notice is issued, any number of things could happen. For instance, the tenant may disagree with the proposed rise, and the landlord may decide that agreeing to a different (lower) rent is preferable to allowing the issue to escalate to the First-tier Tribunal (FTT).

Successful agencies minimise this issue by building flexibility into their processes.

As Rampton Baseley has found, Goodlord provides the tools needed to make this flexibility possible:

"The revised proposal form is really good. When a tenant doesn't agree to the increase, being able to put forward a revised figure and send it straight back out makes the whole negotiation so much simpler."

Niall Murphy
Lettings Associate, Rampton Baseley

The objective of an elite agency isn't to serve as many Section 13 notices as possible.

Instead, they aim to ensure that the entire rent review journey has the flexibility it needs to succeed.

THE HABIT:

Build a process that can accommodate negotiation and changing circumstances, rather than treating the initial Section 13 notice as the finish line.

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What this means for a scalable Section 13 operation

Taken together, these habits point towards a different way of managing rent reviews. The strongest agencies:

- Make rent reviews part of their ongoing landlord service
- Identify and plan reviews proactively
- Follow a consistent process
- Use technology to reduce administration
- Give the wider team visibility
- Manage the process through to its final outcome

The result is a Section 13 operation that is **repeatable, visible, and scalable.**

03

Before and after

As your portfolio grows, the risk of missing the window to initiate a Section 13 process accelerates. One property is easy to watch. A hundred properties, each running on a different clock, creates a growing number of opportunities to miss what matters.

By adopting a technology-enabled workflow, such as the one offered by Goodlord, your team can create a structure that better serves your portfolio from the outset.

The result is a consistent workflow that can be applied across the portfolio, while property managers remain responsible for the judgement, landlord relationships, and tenant conversations that matter.

Manual process	Automated workflow
Reviews triggered by someone remembering or checking spreadsheets	Automated notifications allow you to serve notices well ahead of the two-month deadline
Different processes across branches or property managers	One consistent workflow
Market data gathered manually	Market-rent data available within the process
Notices produced and tracked separately	Notices created and managed in one place
Limited oversight of progress	Central reporting and status visibility
Outcomes trapped in inboxes	Revised proposals, challenges, and outcomes recorded
Performance difficult to quantify	Portfolio-level performance measured

How high-performing organisations operate

That said, technology is only one part of the picture.

High-performing agencies will consistently centre their operation around efficiency and automated workflows. They establish clear ownership, regular reviews, and consistent ways of managing tenant and landlord comms.

Ownership

Who owns the rent review process?

Whether responsibility sits with a central team, individual branches, or the head office, defining the ownership structure is essential.

A defined structure keeps the process moving and means your team knows who needs to make things happen.

Cadence

How often are you reviewing your portfolio?

Now that rent increases are set on a yearly schedule, the process should be treated as an ongoing part of management. Whether or not the landlord chooses to issue a Section 13 notice each year is beside the point.

Establishing a consistent review cadence will ensure your agents stay on top of opportunities and are ready to act.

Governance

What requires landlord approval, and how are exceptions handled?

A scalable process needs clear points at which property managers make recommendations, landlords approve proposed increases, and exceptions or changes are addressed.

This creates consistency without removing professional judgement from the process.

Performance management

What gets measured?

Once Section 13 activity is managed through a structured process, agencies can start to look beyond individual reviews and understand what is happening across the portfolio.

That could include:

- Reviews identified
- Reviews completed
- Reviews overdue
- Proposed increases
- Successful outcomes
- Portfolio performance

This creates the visibility needed to identify where the process is working well and where your team is missing opportunities.

04

From insight to action

Your 30-day Section 13 action plan

One theme that has come up again and again in this report is that many agencies have allowed their Section 13 processes to stagnate.

Fixing that issue doesn't have to happen all at once.

With our 30-day action plan, you can take everything you've learned from this report and create opportunities for action.

Week 1 - Audit

In the first week, you need to understand where your agency stands.

- **Establish your methodology -** Work out how your team will operate and your goals for this Section 13 push.
- **Audit your portfolio -** Take a wide look at your agency's portfolio and identify missed and waiting rent review opportunities.

Week 2 - Define

Use the second week to decide how the process should work.

- **Define eligibility criteria -** What opportunities are worth pursuing? What makes a property eligible for review?
- **Assign ownership -** Which team is going to lead the process? Who will they work with?
- **Establish a review process -** Work out how you can use platforms like Goodlord to streamline your workflow.

Week 3 - Standardise

The idea this week is to remove any friction in your old process and build a structure that works.

- **Open up the conversation -** Build effective communication channels between your teams and branches.
- **Centralise your negotiations -** Ensure that each negotiation is recorded and actioned within your system. Goodlord can automate this for you.
- **Test, test, and test again -** Take a sample section of your portfolio and test your new process against it.

Week 4 - Scale

You're almost there! Use what you learn from last week's testing phase and roll it out across your agency.

- **Review your results -** See what worked and what didn't in your testing phase and apply your learnings to the process.
- **Roll it out -** Take the new process to every team and branch and ensure they know what they're doing.
- **Grow -** Watch as your new process keeps your landlords happy and nets you new business.
- **Automate with Goodlord -** Goodlord can automate this entire process.

The Section 13 checklist

In addition to the action plan, you need to be checking what's working and what's not in your process. It's the best way to make sure you're on the road to growth.

You can use the checklist below as part of your ongoing workflow to ensure you're operating at the top of your game.

Portfolio

- ☐ Do we know which tenancies are eligible?
- ☐ Can we see the whole portfolio in one place?
- ☐ Do we know how many reviews are currently being completed?

Process

- ☐ Is ownership clearly defined?
- ☐ Is there a consistent review cadence?
- ☐ Is market evidence readily available?
- ☐ Are notices and responses tracked?

Commercial

- ☐ Do we measure rent uplift?
- ☐ Do we measure management fee impact?
- ☐ Do we know the cost of administration?
- ☐ Can we identify missed opportunities?

Performance

- ☐ Do branches follow the same process?
- ☐ Can management see progress?
- ☐ Do we track outcomes over time?

If you said no to more than three of these, Goodlord can help.

Conclusion: **The opportunity is bigger than you think**

The private rented sector is more process driven than ever.

Without the right technology, that process can mire you in admin and make your life miserable. Reviews missed. Market data gathered by hand. Notices and responses scattered across inboxes and spreadsheets.

But the challenge is also the opportunity.

We started this playbook by pointing out an uncomfortable truth: landlords are questioning what they're paying for.

Much of that comes down to a simple problem — the work agencies do well often goes unseen.

A structured, automated, scalable Section 13 process changes that.

It takes something landlords assumed was happening quietly in the background and turns it into something they can see: local market knowledge applied, a clear recommendation made, a formal process managed properly and on time.

That visibility is what builds trust. And trust is what lets you have a conversation that's much harder to start cold: raising your own fees, without landlords immediately wondering what they could get for less elsewhere.

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Calculate your Section 13 opportunity

The first step is understanding what the opportunity looks like across your own portfolio.

Book a 30-minute portfolio review with Goodlord.

We'll help you estimate your portfolio's potential and explore how a more structured, automated process could help you identify, manage, and scale it.

Your portfolio already contains the opportunity. The question is how much of it you can take advantage of.

Book your free review today

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