PLYMOUTH PROPERTY NEWS

September 2026 - Monthly Lettings Edition

MARTIN&CO

September's Market Overview

August can be a mixed month for the lettings market. On one hand, many families aim to move during the school holiday, so recorded completions often spike. The medical cycle renews, so in areas with major hospitals and health centres, you tend to see extra movement as medics move home, often to new areas. As A Level results land, there can be a scramble by students who apply to University through clearing.

On the other hand, the holiday period can mean time away as a family. Hot, sunny weather acts as both a distraction and, when oppressively hot, stifles activity. This August has seen rental growth cool, with Zoopla reporting rental inflation down to around 2-3%, and demand per property notably dropping. The question is, will September see this trend continue, or rebound?

Chris Whitaker
Managing Director

Rent increases challenged in record numbers, as tenants make use of the First-tier Tribunal

It was something many in the lettings industry predicted, and now the numbers appear to confirm it: rent increases are being appealed in record numbers.

In July 2026, the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) made 166 rulings nationally. That is almost four times the 44 recorded in July 2025. That isn't a one-off spike. Monthly cases have climbed steadily, from an average 42 decisions a month up to April 2026, rising to 109 in May, 129 in June and then, as mentioned, 166 in July (we await August's number).

So why now, and why is this something the industry had forecast? The reason is that it lines up squarely with the Renters' Rights Act, which came into force on 1 May 2026.

Two particular features of the Act explain the jump:

- **No more fear of retaliatory eviction.** With Section 21 abolished, tenants no longer have to weigh a rent challenge against the risk of being asked to leave.
- **The financial risk has been removed.** Previously, an upheld increase would backdate to the landlord's Section 13 notice implementation date, potentially leaving a tenant owing months of increased rent if they lost at tribunal. Now, any increase determined by the tribunal generally takes effect from the next rent period after the decision

Plus, tenants have become more generally aware of it as an option. Mainstream commentary will frame this as a straightforward swing in tenants' favour. But it cuts both ways: landlords proposing fair, market-evidenced increases shouldn't be penalised, and there should be an onus on the tribunal system to move quickly, so good and fair landlords aren't left waiting. Landlords should of course come armed with robust market evidence, including comparable local lettings, a record on condition, and a mindfulness about location and amenities. They should also demonstrate a strict adherence to the Section 13 process. For anyone using a professional managing agent, this kind of preparation should already be standard practice.

Nationally, affordability pressure adds context: a new report from Lomond last month suggests tenants are now spending close to a third of their income on rent. Locally, here in Plymouth, average rents stood at £989 in April – up 5.2% year-on-year, broadly tracking the South West's pace of growth. That is the kind of backdrop that makes evidence-led, well-justified increases more important still; landlords will increase rents, and should only do this in line with what the market would be likely to accept; but that said, tenants – who we know are stretched – are increasingly likely to find such increases unaffordable, and this plays into the number of cases being brought to tribunal.

Is the tribunal system keeping up with this new demand? There's reason for cautious optimism on that score. The average time from application to decision fell to 80 days in July, down from 113 in May and 172 in April, showing a steady month-on-month improvement, alongside a wider Ministry of Justice recruitment drive of around 1,000 new judges and tribunal members a year. Whether that keeps pace with a caseload still climbing is the open question; four months of falling wait times is encouraging, but still a short run of data.

If you're considering a rent increase this year, get in touch with our team for a proper market review before you serve notice.

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Market Statistics

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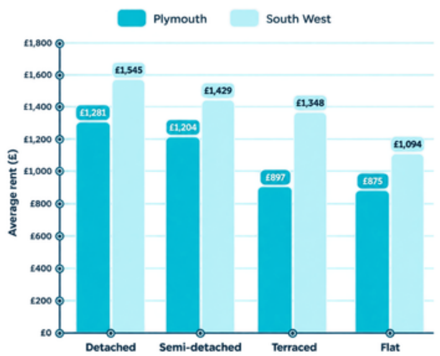
Plymouth Rental Market News

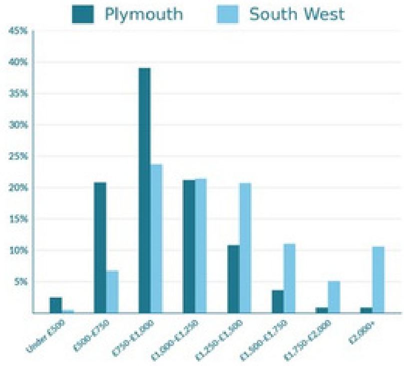
September 2026

Average Rent by Property Type



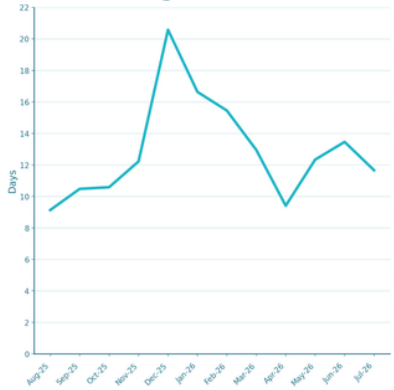
Currently Available To Let

Homes Let By Rental Price Band

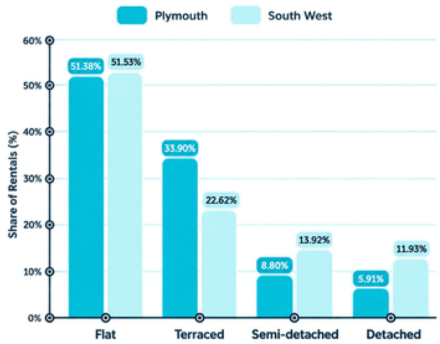


Gross Yields - Regional Comparison

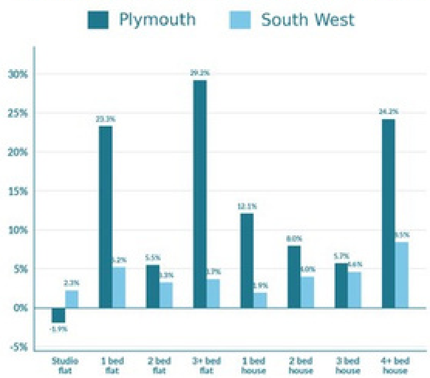
Average Time to Let



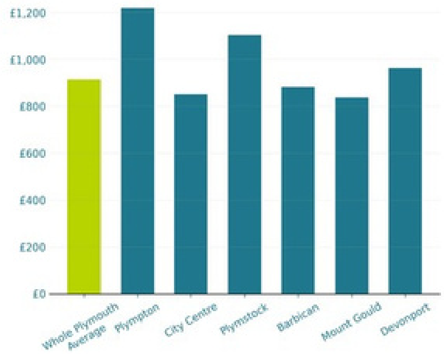
Regional Comparison of Rental Profile



Change in Average Rents by Property Type



Current Average Rents Across Plymouth



Local Factoids

1.2% Public green spaces

19.9% Homes near Ofsted Outstanding primary

87.7% Homes within 200 metres of bus or train

2,766 Number of residents per restaurant

Source: This report has been made by The Property Pen for Martin&Co Plymouth. The data in this report comes from HM Land Registry, Office for National Statistics and Dataloft by Pricehubble. This property market report is for informational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for conducting your own research when making a property purchase decision. Please consult with a qualified professional to ensure all factors are considered in your investment choices.

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