

# Students and private renting

**This factsheet looks at some common problems experienced by students aged 18 and over living in the private rented sector.**

## Finding a place

After the first year, when you may be offered a place in halls of residence, you will probably need to find somewhere to live. Some landlords and letting agents are '**accredited**', which means they will meet certain standards. Ask your student accommodation service, if there is one, for help finding an accredited landlord or agent.

## Right to rent

Your landlord or letting agent must ask for evidence of your immigration status before renting to you. This is called a 'right to rent' check. Some accommodation for students is exempt from a 'right to rent' check. For more information see the factsheet [Right to rent](#).

## Agent's fees

A letting agent must tell you what fees they charge and what they are for. It is against the law to charge an upfront fee just to give you a list of places, but they can charge for things like drawing up a tenancy agreement.

## Protecting your deposit

If you are an assured shorthold tenant (and most private tenants are), your landlord or letting agent must protect your deposit in an official scheme within 30 days of you paying it, and give you details of the scheme.

## Getting your deposit back

The scheme decides how much you get back in the event of a dispute. Joint tenants need to agree how to divide up the returned deposit. If you paid your share of the deposit to a tenant you replaced (with your landlord's agreement), you are entitled to a share of whatever was originally paid. Try to get a written assurance that this will happen before paying money to a departing tenant.

## Joint tenant isn't paying

You will have a joint tenancy if you live with other people and you all signed the same agreement at the same time. Each joint tenant is responsible for the whole rent. The landlord can ask you for any rent owing if one joint tenant isn't paying. You could take that tenant to court for their share - get further advice if you need to do this.

## Need a guarantor

Your landlord may ask for a parent or other relative to guarantee that your rent will be paid. Make sure they carefully read what they sign up for, because if you are a joint tenant and another joint tenant stops paying, your guarantor could become liable for all that is owing, not just your share.

## Help with the rent

Rents in some areas are very high. Get advice from your student accommodation service about cheaper areas or about finding people to share with, and about any benefits or other support you may be entitled to.

## Getting repairs done

Your landlord must ensure that the heating, plumbing and electrics in your home are working and safe, and must fix problems with the structure of the building. Responsibility for other repairs depends on your renting agreement. Repairs should be carried out within a reasonable time of you reporting them.

## Want to change rooms

Who occupies which room in a shared house, and whether you can change room if someone leaves, is usually decided between the occupiers. Agree what you will do about changing rooms before you all move in.

## Moving out early

You are responsible for the rent until your tenancy ends. This applies even if you leave your course early. Most agreements are for a fixed term, so check it to see if you can end your tenancy early. If you are a joint tenant you will need the agreement of the other tenants. Otherwise, ask your landlord if you can find someone to take your place.

## Further advice

You can get further advice from [england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice](http://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice), local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice. If you have nowhere to sleep tonight, are at risk of harm or losing your home within the next 2 months, call Shelter Helpline on **0808 800 4444** for advice and information on your options.\*

\*Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.



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### Note

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