

Students and private renting

This factsheet looks at some common problems experienced by students living in private rented homes.

Finding a place

Most students rent privately after their first year at university. Some landlords and letting agents are 'accredited', which means they should meet certain standards. Ask your student accommodation service for help finding an accredited landlord or agent.

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 financial support you could get.

Right to rent

A 'right to rent' check is carried out by most private landlords, who must check the immigration status of their tenants. You might be asked to show your passport or another document to prove your status. Some accommodation for students is exempt from a 'right to rent' check.

Agent's fees and deposits

Letting agents must tell you what fees they charge and what they are for. Most fees are banned. You can't be asked to pay an application fee. You can be asked to pay a week's rent as a holding deposit, but the agent can only take this from one set of tenants. You should get the holding deposit back if the landlord changes their mind and you're not at fault. If you move in, it can be put towards your tenancy deposit.

You'll probably be asked to pay a tenancy deposit, but the amount is capped at 5 weeks' worth of rent if the total rent is under £50k a year. If it's more, the deposit is capped at 6 weeks' worth of rent.

Protecting your deposit

If you rent privately with an assured shorthold tenancy, 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 deposit scheme decides how much you get back if you can't agree with the landlord. Joint tenants need to agree how to divide up the returned deposit. It's normally returned

in full to one tenant. 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 it in writing that this will happen before paying money to a departing tenant.

Joint tenants

You have a joint tenancy if you live with other people and you all signed the same agreement at the same time. The landlord can take you to court to repossess the property or make you pay the outstanding rent if one joint tenant isn't paying.

Guarantors

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

Changing bedrooms

If you are joint tenants, the landlord doesn't get a say about who sleeps in which room, or who can change bedrooms when someone moves out. You'll have to decide between yourselves.

Moving out early

You are responsible for the rent until your tenancy ends, 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, 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.



Note
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