PRIVATE RENTAL GUIDE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST of SCOTLAND
UWS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO SOURCE, SECURE AND MANAGE A PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL TENANCY.



Student Services

Funding & Advice

Welcome to the UWS Private Rental guide. This is your one-stop shop of how to source, secure and manage a private residential tenancy, no matter which of our campuses you live near.

If you are thinking about taking on a tenancy, we want to make sure you have the information you need to make an informed decision. This guide will help you plan your living arrangements and understand your obligations and rights so that your transition to independent living is a smooth one.

If you already live independently this guide is for you too. You might not need the information about choosing a home or a flatmate, but you will want to know the relevant legal information and advice on how to effectively manage your tenancy.



Things we will cover...

Choosing a Home
Searching for Accommodation
What to Look for During Viewings
Flat hunt Safety & Avoiding Scams
Choosing a Flatmate
Planning Housing Costs

These sections are all about planning where you will live and who you will live with. This is important stuff that can often be overlooked and not given enough serious consideration.

A little thought and forward planning, can really save headaches later.

Checks Costs & Paperwork
Leases/Tenancy Types & Legal Obligations

Taking on a tenancy is a serious business. These sections will help you to understand the legalities of being in a tenancy agreement.

Managing Your Tenancy
What to do if things go wrong

Once you have secured your home, it is important that you fully understand your rights and responsibilities.
This section has all the details you will need to be an effective and happy tenant.

Choosing a Home

Before you start looking, it is helpful to consider the type of accommodation you want to live in. There are various types of accommodation available for rental. Have a look at the options below to help you to choose which is most suitable for you.

UWS Student Accommodation
This accommodation is provided by UWS, on certain campuses, and is a great way to meet and make friends with other students, particularly where you are a new student who is unfamiliar with the local area. UWS accommodation is fully equipped with furniture, kitchenware and onsite laundry facilities, and the rent prices include utilities, wi-fi and contents insurance. There is also a Residence Life Team at each site to help you settle in, and enjoy your experience.

This kind of accommodation is not suitable for families.

Private Student Accommodation
This is similar to University accommodation, but provided by a private company that usually has no link to the University. Private student accommodation can be a great way to meet and make friends with other students. The accommodation is normally fully equipped, with furniture, kitchenware and onsite laundry facilities. The rent prices can often include utilities, wi-fi and contents insurance, but it is important you find this out directly from the company. There is often a Warden or Residence Adviser on site to help you settle in.

This accommodation is usually not suitable for families.

Privately renting a property (as a group, family or on your own)
This is ideal if you have a group of friends wanting to live together in a shared flat or house, you are looking for accommodation for a family or you are searching for smaller property just for you. Two, three and four bedroom properties are common, but you can also find larger five-six bedroom properties if you start searching early.

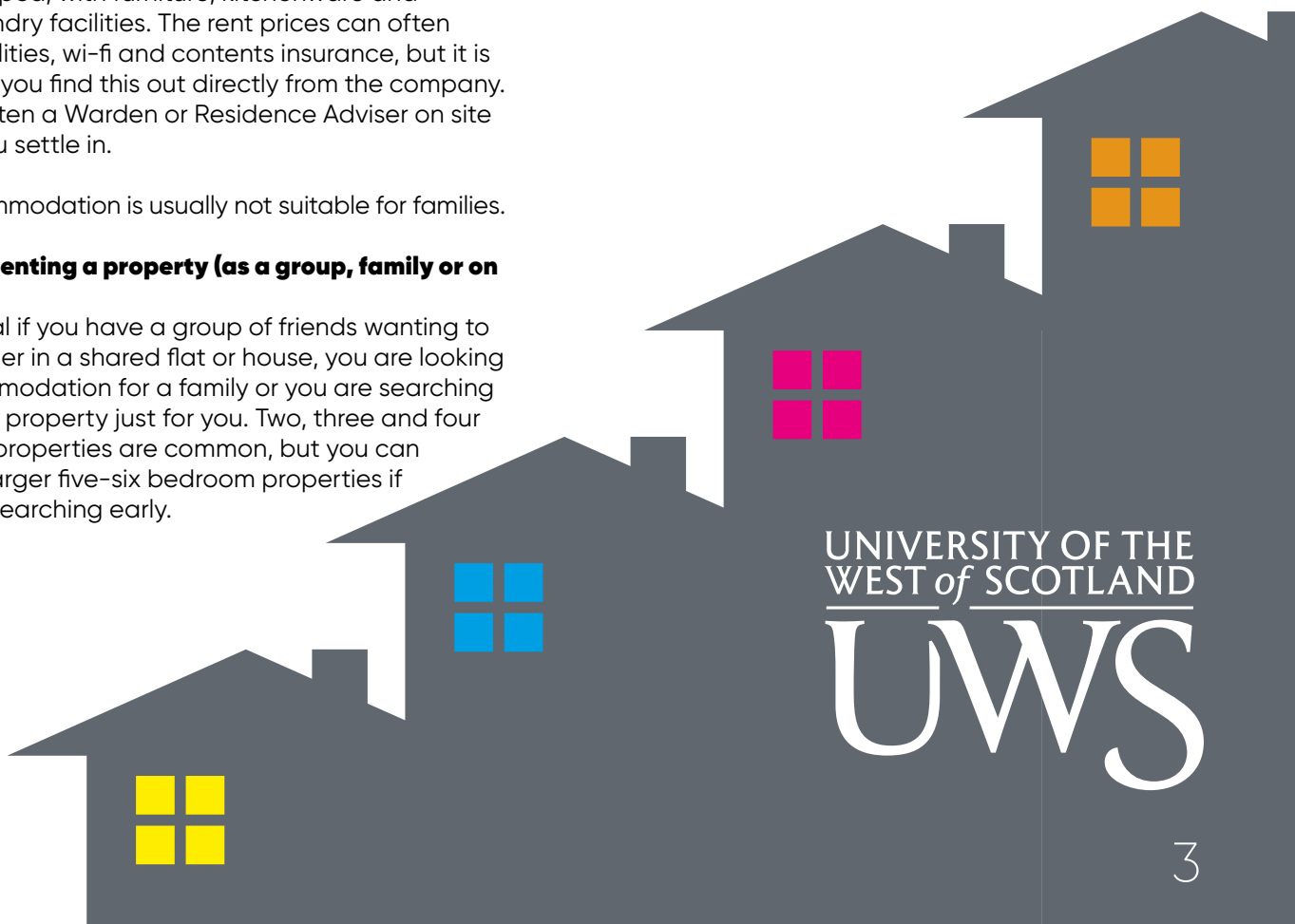
Rent is often advertised for the entire property so will need to be shared between flatmates if you are sharing. It is also unlikely that the rent price includes bills.

Accommodation will either be advertised directly by the owner of the property (called the "landlord") or by a company the landlord uses to manage their property (called a "letting agency"). The letting agent usually manages the rental process, including signing the lease, dealing with repairs and maintenance, and managing communications between you and the landlord.

Room in existing flat/Lodging
This generally means moving in with an existing group of flatmates, or renting a room in the home of the property owner (your landlord). If you are moving in with a group of people who are already renting the property, you will need to think about your rights and responsibilities, and whether your name will be added to a tenancy agreement etc.

There are no rules about what the rent price includes, so it is important to ascertain this in advance.

Short-Term Accommodation
If you need somewhere to stay for only a few days, perhaps while you are waiting to move into your longer term accommodation, it is best to search online for local options. Hotels can be expensive so search for local B&B's (Bed and Breakfast) or hostels, which are normally cheaper. Many students will use Air B&B (www.airbnb.co.uk) as a quick and easy way to find a short term place to stay.



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SEARCHING FOR A

This information will help you search for accommodation, whether that be student specific accommodation, or something in the private sector. There will be a limited amount of information available, so once you see something you like, you should contact the landlord/letting agency and arrange a visit to the property. This type of viewing is your opportunity to see the accommodation in more detail, and to make sure that it suits your needs. The landlord or a representative will be at the viewing with you, and can answer any questions you might have.

UWS Student Accommodation:
www.uws.ac.uk/university-life/accommodation/

Find out more about the official UWS Student Accommodation that is available, including the types of rooms available, and the costs.

Private Student Accommodation :
Find out more about the accommodation that is available through these private student accommodation companies, including the types of rooms available, and the costs.

Ayr: *Craigie Student Campus* – www.craigiestudentcampus.co.uk

Glasgow:
Unite - www.unitestudents.com

London:
Unite - www.unitestudents.com
Sanctuary - www.sanctuary-students.com

Paisley:
https://www.mypadpaisley.com

Lanarkshire: SOAB - https://soabstudentresidences.co.uk/



ACCOMMODATION

Searching Online
These websites are an easy way to search for accommodation, with a variety of flats or rooms advertised by letting agencies and private landlords. This is not an exhaustive list of the websites you can use, but you should definitely read our 'Flat Hunt Safety and Avoiding Scams' section to ensure you are searching for accommodation from a reputable source.

Accommodation for Students - **www.accommodationforstudents.com**

Lettingweb - **www.lettingweb.com**

Zoopla - **www.zoopla.co.uk**

Rightmove - **www.rightmove.co.uk**

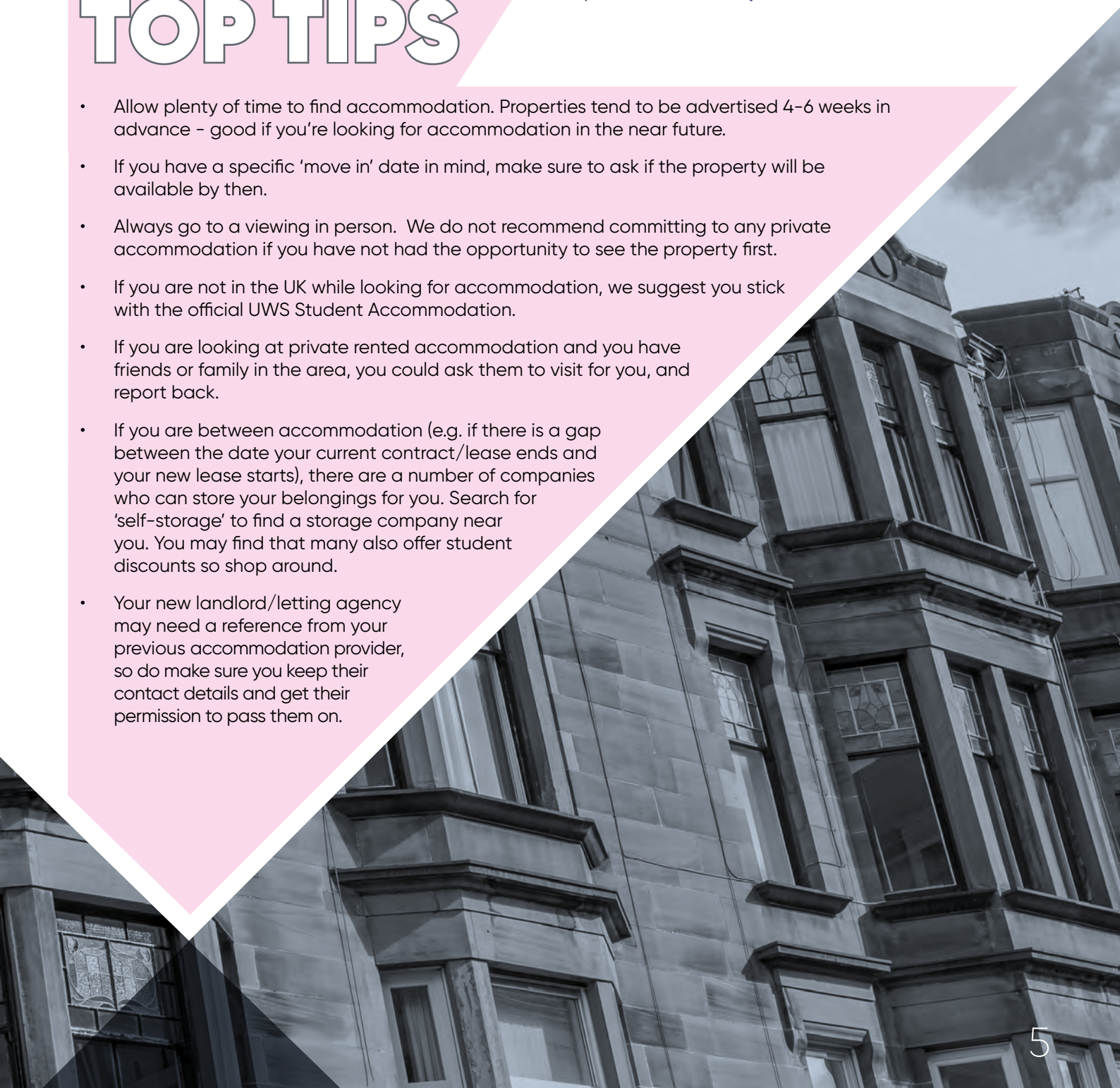
Room Searches
The websites below are specifically for those looking to rent a single room.

Roomgo - **www.roomgo.co.uk**

SpareRoom - **www.spareroom.co.uk**

TOP TIPS

- Allow plenty of time to find accommodation. Properties tend to be advertised 4-6 weeks in advance - good if you're looking for accommodation in the near future.
- If you have a specific 'move in' date in mind, make sure to ask if the property will be available by then.
- Always go to a viewing in person. We do not recommend committing to any private accommodation if you have not had the opportunity to see the property first.
- If you are not in the UK while looking for accommodation, we suggest you stick with the official UWS Student Accommodation.
- If you are looking at private rented accommodation and you have friends or family in the area, you could ask them to visit for you, and report back.
- If you are between accommodation (e.g. if there is a gap between the date your current contract/lease ends and your new lease starts), there are a number of companies who can store your belongings for you. Search for 'self-storage' to find a storage company near you. You may find that many also offer student discounts so shop around.
- Your new landlord/letting agency may need a reference from your previous accommodation provider, so do make sure you keep their contact details and get their permission to pass them on.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR DURING VIEWINGS

Before going to view a property, you need to know what you are looking for. Read the guide below for some useful tips on what to look for, and the types of questions to ask.

Amenities

You might think about being close to the University, but remember to also consider how close you are to the other places you might spend your time e.g. your work, supermarket, bank, gym, post office, doctor, dentist etc.

Gas/Electric & Heating

Check what type of heating the property has as some can be more costly than others. If there are key or pay-as-you-go meters for the gas and electricity, be aware that these can be very expensive. If the property is heated by gas, ask if the gas system has been given its annual maintenance service and has a Gas Safety Certificate.

Furniture & Appliances

Make sure the property has everything you need – bed, desk, washing machine, kitchen essentials, crockery etc. During the viewing don't be nervous about testing things out! Sit on the bed to check the mattress is okay, turn on the taps or shower to check they work, check the chairs and sofa to see if they are comfortable.

Space & storage

Does the property seem big enough for the number of people planning on living there? Does your room seem big enough to fit all of your belongings? Is there storage space for things like suitcases that can take up a lot of space but do not get used regularly.

Repairs & Condition

Check for signs of damp or mould - look for black or brown marks on the walls or a musty smell. Look for signs of water coming into the property on ceilings and/or around windows. Look at the general condition of the property and the furniture provided. Is everything useable and in good condition? If you do spot anything but decide to move in anyway, it is important to inform the landlord/letting agency of the required repairs and to ensure that they are carried out before you move in. Do not move in until the problems are sorted, or get a written agreement to carry out the repairs before you sign your lease.

Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Make sure that the accommodation has working smoke detectors, and carbon monoxide detectors if it has gas central heating. Also check for fire blankets/extinguishers, especially in shared flats or HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupancy – which are often subject to stricter safety standards).

Noise

Is the property on a quiet street or next to a busy road? If you are next to shops or traffic, this can be noisy and disruptive. Also be aware of any pubs, nightclubs, takeaways or shops that might stay open late. This can make it more likely that the area would be noisy later in the evenings. Make sure the noise levels are bearable for you. Check if the windows are double-glazed (this will reduce energy bills and also offer soundproofing).

Security

Ensure that the property has a secure entrance and that the locks are in good condition. If your accommodation is on the ground floor, you should ensure that windows close securely or have locks. Check that any back doors/ gardens are also secure. If you are viewing a flat, make sure that there is adequate hallway lighting - you don't want to come home at night and have to find your way to your front door in the dark.

Area

How does the general area look to you? Whether you are looking for quiet and peaceful or trendy and sociable, does it suit your lifestyle? Check the area during the day and at night if you can. Is it far from University and if so what are the transport costs? If you have a car, check to see if you have a parking space and consider how safe the vehicle will be if parked overnight, and whether this impacts your car insurance policy.

If the property is a flat in a shared close (communal hallway and staircases) check the condition of the close. Is it well lit? Are the stairwells clear? Check the bin area to see if it is well maintained. The condition of the close and communal areas may well be a good indication of the general area and what the neighbours may be like.

FLAT HUNT SAFETY AND AVOIDING SCAMS

When you are searching for accommodation it is important to be aware that scams do exist and you need to be cautious. It is possible to lose a lot of money if you are the victim of a scam, and the impact of this can be significant. To help keep you safe, please read this information. If you are concerned or suspicious for any reason, you can find more information from Police Scotland (**https://www.scotland.police.uk/advice/scams-and-frauds/**) or the Action Fraud website (**https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/**), or you can contact Student Services for assistance.

Searching...

When looking at room/property adverts, if the price is much cheaper than similar properties in the same area, it is probably too good to be true and worth being cautious, particularly if you are looking via a free website, such as Gumtree. The websites we have noted are more reliable, but it is still always wise to be cautious. You should never be asked to pay any money before viewing accommodation. If asked to do this you should not pay, and should look for accommodation elsewhere.

Viewing...

- It's always best to take someone with you to a viewing.
- Ask lots of questions. An honest landlord is likely to know the answers.
- Never pay any money until you have decided that you want to rent the accommodation.
- If you are renting in Scotland you should only be asked to pay the rent and deposit once you are given a contract/lease.
- If you are renting in England you may be asked to pay a holding deposit to secure your accommodation while the letting agent completes reference checks. Do not pay the holding deposit unless you are sure you want to rent the accommodation.

Agreeing to rent...

After viewing a property you may decide you want to take the accommodation. It is normal for your new landlord/letting agency to be keen to finalise the deal and arrange for rent and deposit to be paid. However, you should be suspicious if your landlord/letting agency seems very keen for you to give them money, but is less keen to arrange to give you the information you need. Never allow yourself to be rushed into accepting. If your landlord/letting agency asks you to pay your rent and deposit in cash, you should be very cautious as this is unusual. Do not pay cash unless your landlord provides you with a clear receipt, or the payment of funds in cash is stated on your lease. You should also be cautious if your landlord asks you to pay via a transfer company (e.g. Western Union, MoneyGram). You should encourage your landlord/letting agency to accept a payment via bank transfer, or by credit/debit card at the letting agency office.

Make sure you check the following before handing over any money:

- Do you have your landlord's name, address and contact details?
- Have you checked your landlord's ID – they should be happy to show you their driving licence, passport or other ID?
- Have you checked your landlord is registered (more information below)?
- If you are sharing with 3 or more flatmates, have you checked for an HMO licence (more information below)?
- Have you been given a lease?

Landlord Registration

All landlords in Scotland must register their property unless they are letting a room in their own home. Landlord Registration ensures that landlords meet minimum standards, so it is in your interest to rent from a registered landlord. You can check if your landlord is registered by searching the Scottish Landlord Register - **https://www landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk/**

Landlords can also join further accreditation schemes. This is not a legal requirement but being part of an accreditation scheme indicates that your landlord might have higher standards compared to other landlords who do not have this. In Scotland, the scheme is called Landlord Accreditation Scotland (LAS) - **https://www.landlordaccreditationscotland.com/**

In England, landlord registration is not a requirement. However, membership with the National Landlords Association and their Accreditation Scheme - **https://www.nrla.org.uk/**, may indicate higher standards compared to landlords who are not members. You can check if your landlord is a member on their website.

House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO)

If three or more flatmates intend to share a property, you should ensure the property has an HMO licence. This licence is issued to landlords who maintain certain standards of repairs, services, fire safety, etc. More information on HMO requirements is available from your local council website. You can also check with your local council to find out if an HMO is required and if your property has one. More information on HMO's are available from the following links:

https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/tenants_rights/hmo

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/private_renting/houses_in_multiple_occupation_hmo

London Rogue Landlord Checker

If you are living in London, there is an extra check you can do if you are renting directly from a landlord. The worst landlords in London will end up on the Rogue Landlord Checker - **https://www.london.gov.uk/rogue-landlord-checker** If your landlord appears here, find somewhere else to rent.

CHOOSING A FLATMATE

One of the most exciting things about independent living is the freedom to choose who we do and don't live with. This can be an opportunity to build new relationships or to strengthen existing ones. However, it is a big decision and should be treated as such. It is really easy to rush into renting with friends only to find relationships stretched and boundaries tested.

Things to think about:

Living with friends from your course...might mean you all have similar deadlines and can focus/chill out on the same timescale. However, you may also end up overexposed and sick of the sight of each other.

Living with friends you have met in university halls...might mean a bit more variety and less chat about what happened in class that day. It may also be a way to build a wider social circle by meeting different types of people. However, you might also need to think about the comings and goings of people on different schedules. No one likes always queuing for the bathroom or being woken up at 3am every Sunday.

Living with friends from a sports team or society...might mean that you already have a strong bond with the people you live with. This can lead to a lasting friendship and some real fun times. However, much like living with people you study with you might end up feeling claustrophobic and some of the fun might get out of hand.

Living with your partner...might be really cost effective as you spend so much time together anyway. However, it is a big step to live as a couple and you need to be sure you are at that stage and not just moving in to save on the gas bill.

Living with strangers...could be a great way to meet some new people and find some new friends. However, you may end up with more than you bargained for. You will need to think carefully about how you deal with new people and how strict your own boundaries are. If you have very specific ideas about privacy, you may find living with an extroverted, bathroom door open kind of person a deal breaker.

No matter who you decide to live with you will need to review what is important to you in the first instance and have a serious conversation with your potential housemate(s) about what boundaries to set. You might want to think about whether gender, religious beliefs, culture, spending habits or sharing the same viewpoint is important to you. You will also need to be self-aware about your own bad habits and willing to compromise in some areas. The main thing is to be willing to discuss all of this in an adult and rational way, BEFORE signing a lease. Things to possibly discuss are:

- approaches to housework/cleaning
- views on privacy
- your idea of reasonable noise levels
- how you feel about visitors/pets and partners
- how you plan to split the bills etc.



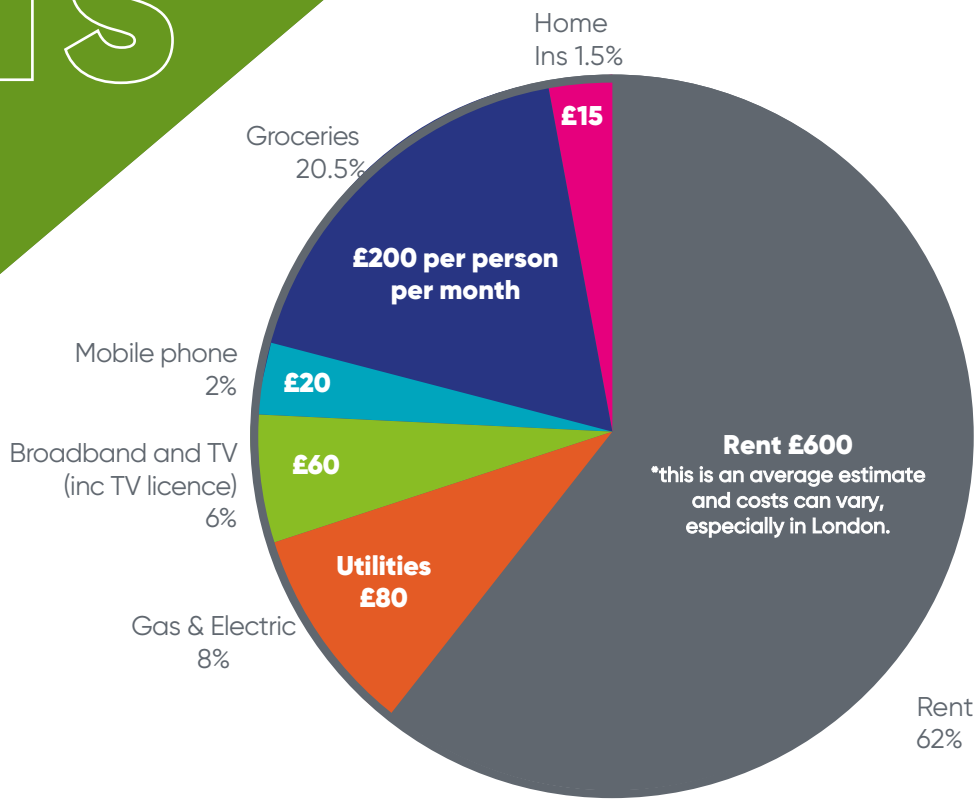
Living with your friends might be a obvious choice as you already know them and are already aware of their irritating habits. However, many of the issues that cause flat shares to break down are due to friends just assuming that living together will be one long party.

Take a look at the pros and cons below and think very carefully before signing that lease:

PROS	CONS
You will see your friends all the time, making juggling relationships, lectures, study, and part-time work all the more feasible	You might stay in (or go out) too much. Having your buddies on hand 24/7 might mean you never get down to study. Or you might get a bit lazy and stop making the effort to go out. This really reduces your opportunity to try new things or to meet new people
You can cook for others and they can cook for you, saving you all time and money	This might backfire if one of you is chef Gordon Ramsey while the rest of you specialise in pot noodle cuisine. You may also have different expectations in terms of budget, and this can lead to tensions.
You can motivate each other and keep each other's spirits up so you'll never be lonely or homesick.	Equally, this means you never get to be grumpy and sometimes we all just need to be in a bad mood. Also, sometimes people just need to be on their own and that's ok. Living with friends can put additional pressure on you to be 'on' all the time.
You can share your stuff and borrow theirs.	When it was just the odd outfit or book you borrowed, that might have been fine. However, people have very different ideas about what's acceptable. If you are someone who really values personal space, your flatmate drinking out of your "special mug" might just tip you over the edge.
You already know and sort of love their annoying habits.	Familiarity can breed contempt. Whilst you might have been well aware your best friend was a bit of a drama queen, living with this can be very challenging. One party assuming they know all about how the other will behave/react can also lead to conflict and relationship breakdowns.

The main thing is to discuss everything up front. In particular, be honest about the areas where you are least able to compromise and decide from there if signing a lease is a good idea. Some relationships will develop and some will fizzle out over time. Rushing into living with someone can accelerate this process, leaving you upset and struggling to understand what has gone wrong. As you are 'joint and severally liable' when signing a lease, the financial fallout from a bad flat share can be catastrophic, so proceed with caution and choose your flatmate wisely.

PLANNING HOUSING COSTS



Before you even start looking for a property, you should review your budget to see how much you can afford to spend on the likes of rent, utility bills, travel costs etc., and consider how this compares to the real costs associated with living independently.

You should also have an upfront discussion with your new housemate(s) about your needs and wants when it comes to household expenses and bills. While some people may feel that a TV package from the likes of Sky or Virgin is an essential, others may prefer not to contribute to such a cost. Discussing how you plan to approach household finances, and pay the bills is something best done in advance.

Working Out the Costs:

You can speak to the landlord or letting agent in the first instance to find out about the general costs involved in the property.

Money supermarket has a resource where you can input the property postcode to find general prices in the area for insurance, energy, and broadband. You can find this at https://www.moneysupermarket.com/home-bills-healthcheck/. We've also included a pie chart that shows how your household costs might break down, but remember that your choices can impact this significantly, and it's always a good idea to use comparison websites such as www.comparethemarket.com, www.moneysupermarket.com and www.broadbandchoices.co.uk to ensure you get the best deal.

As well as the costs associated with your new home, you will also have to include your normal outgoings in your budget. Remember to include groceries, travel costs, and any other financial commitments that you might have. Use the next page to start to calculate what these costs will be, and how this all adds up.

Up Front/One Off Costs:

As well as thinking about your household costs, moving home or taking on a new tenancy will also mean you have to plan ahead for up front or one-off costs.

In Scotland, you will be asked to pay a deposit which is usually around 1-2 months' rent over and above your initial rental payment. In England, you may also be asked to pay additional fees from the letting agent on top of these (these are unlawful in Scotland). These should be clearly advertised on the agents' website or in their office. There are minimal fees that are allowed so do be wary.

You might also need to put out costs on moving to the property. This could be renting a van, hiring a removal company or renting storage space. Save the Student have a useful guide to this at **www.savethestudent.org/accommodation/students-guide-to-self-storage.** As with all spending, we recommend you shop around to get a range of costings and find the best deal for you.

You should also read the sections on deposits, checks and guarantors for more details on these up-front costs.

Paying the Bills:

Now that you have an idea of the costs involved, you will need to give some thought to setting up utilities and arranging the payment of bills. Remember to use comparison websites, and check out the tips below to help you get the best deal:

- How long do you plan to stay in the property? Don't tie yourself to long deals if you might not stay long enough to benefit.
- What type of tariff or plan is the property currently on and can the existing provider improve this for a new customer?
- As soon as you move in, give energy companies meter readings and be sure there is no debt on the property from previous tenants.
- It's a good idea to take photos of the meters and keep the readings up to date. Citizens Advice have a guide of how to do this if you are unsure how to read a meter - **https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/your-energy-meter/how-to-read-your-energy-meter/**
- Pay your bills by direct debit (where it comes directly out of your bank account in regular amounts) as this often secures you cheaper deals and discounted rates.

Splitting the costs across flatmates:

Much like the washing up, no one is likely to queue up to sort out the bills for your new home. However, taking the time to do things properly and ensuring everyone understands their responsibilities will save time and money in the long run.
There are a range of ways to do this effectively. Think carefully about which method best suits your living situation and make sure everyone involved is on board before you sign up.
Like the idea of a bill splitting app? Try these out:
www.splitwise.com/
www.helloacasa.com/
www.splitthebills.co.uk/how-it-works/

Bill Splitting Methods

One Person Takes Responsibility for All Bills	Bill Splitting Apps	Joint Bank Accounts	Dividing Responsibility /Household Kitty
Pros: it keeps a single point of contact and means all the information is routed through the same source	Pros: can take the stress out of working out who deals with what	Pros: Everyone can see the money situation and has an invested interest in this	Pros: If everyone is responsible for a utility each, then everyone has to take an interest in the household finances and this can be monitored fairly to ensure bills are up to date
Cons: This is a lot of responsibility for 1 person and could lead to arguments if others don't pay on time etc.	Cons: some companies restrict which providers you can use, and there may be a fee for such services	Cons: Once you open a bank account with someone you are financially linked, and this can impact on your credit file	Cons: This relies on the person with the biggest bill having enough funds to pay until everyone else pays their share. Someone also has to keep on top of the admin to make sure everyone pays the correct amount

HOW MUCH?

If you are unsure which costs to start planning for, take a look at this guide for inspiration.

FOOD/ HOUSEKEEPING

How much it costs depends whether you cook fresh or eat out. Don't forget toiletries and cleaning products!

You say: £

We say: £200/month on average

RENT

Check carefully the cost of the rent before you commit, and be sure to check if this covers any other utilities.

You say: £

We say: It depends how big your flat is and how many people live with you.

STUDY COSTS

Depending on your course, you'll need to factor in money for books, stationary, printing, photocopying & other supplies.

You say: £

We say: Budget £30/month but expect to pay more in some months and less in others. Also think about one-off costs at the start of your course.

BILLS

Gas, electricity, TV licence, insurance, broadband, mobile phone. Think about what is included in your rent.

You say: £

We say: This is an area where the choices you make and the attention you pay to the details can have the biggest impact.

TRANSPORT

As well as getting to and from your lectures, you should also consider trips home. If you own a car, you also need to think about petrol, insurance and road tax – not to mention stashing cash for emergency repairs.

You say: £

We say: It depends where you live in relation to uni and how you travel.

ENTERTAINMENT

Gym, hobbies, socialising, cinema, music, gigs, nights out and anything else that takes your fancy.

You say: £

We say: It all depends on your lifestyle choices, but with lots of student deals and discounts, you could spend £50/ month on average.

PERSONAL COSTS

Clothes, shoes, fancy toiletries – it all adds up. How much this costs, will depend on your lifestyle choices.

You say: £

We say: It's possible to spend £25/month on average but expect to spend more in some months and less in others. You may also wish to reduce your entertainment budget to have more to spend on clothes.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Birthdays and Christmas come at the same time every year – why not save a little each month for gifts.

You say: £

We say: It depends how many people you buy gifts for!

ONE OFF COSTS

Moving home, a deposit on a flat, kitting out your digs, new laptop, holidays...The best way to prepare is to set a small amount aside each month.

You say: £

We say: Aim to have a savings pot of £500 that you can dip into when needed. If £500 is too much, anything is better than nothing!

CAN YOU AFFORD IT?

Remember, this is just an example of what your life at university can cost. Everyone is different, and your lifestyle choices have a big impact on how much things will cost. If you make extra money with a part-time job, then you might have more to spend on entertainment than someone who doesn't.

Compare how much money you have coming in with how much you are going to need to spend. Start thinking about how you will budget to manage this. Don't panic if things don't add up! Now is the time to review this and work out if you can save money or improve your spending habits.

CHECK COSTS & PAPERWORK

Before you sign on the dotted line it is really important to fully understand what to expect and what you are taking on. The next few sections deal with the legalities of taking on a tenancy, detailing what you will pay and what you are agreeing to.

Letting Agency Fees

Scotland:
If you are renting in Scotland, the Law prevents landlords/ letting agencies charging any money (apart from the rent and deposit) to set up a tenancy. However, in the past, these fees have commonly been charged by letting agencies. If you are asked to pay any fee other than rent and deposit, you should refuse.

England:
If you are renting in England, some fees can legally be charged. The most common is a holding deposit which an agent may charge to "hold" the property whilst they carry out your background checks. Do not pay the holding deposit unless you are sure you want to rent the accommodation.

The holding deposit that can be charged will be capped at the equivalent of one week's rent. You should make sure you get a written agreement confirming the payment of the holding deposit and the conditions, i.e. will your holding deposit be used towards your rent or deposit if your reference checks are satisfactory?

No fees other than the rent, holding deposit and deposit can be charged. The only situations that may incur additional fees are detailed below, but these will also depend on the terms of your actual agreement:

- If you request a change to the tenancy agreement
- You ask to leave your accommodation early
- You wish to pass your lease to a new tenant
- lost keys/fobs
- late rent payments

If you are asked to pay any other fee and you signed your lease on or after the 1st June 2019, you should refuse.

Guarantors

Some landlords/letting agencies will ask for a guarantor. A tenancy guarantor is a person that agrees to pay the rent if you don't pay, for any reason. Without a suitable guarantor, you may be asked to pay the full rent in advance (normally 6 months up-front, Scotland only.)

A guarantor either needs to be in full-time employment or own property. Accommodation providers almost always need a guarantor who is resident in the UK, making this difficult for international students. If you do not have a UK guarantor, make sure you have saved up enough money to pay the cost of your accommodation in advance.

Alternatively you can use a private company to act as your guarantor, such as Housing Hand - **https://www.housinghand.co.uk/** or UK Guarantor - **https://ukguarantor.com/about-us**

This can be an expensive option and you will still need a co-signer to agree to pay your rent if you do not, although the co-signer does not need to be resident in the UK.

Right to Rent Checks – England

If you live in England, landlords/ letting agencies are required to check that you have permission to live in the UK before they will rent accommodation to you.

If you cannot demonstrate that you have permission to live in the UK, your landlord/letting agency cannot rent accommodation to you.

- If you are British, you can show your passport (an expired passport is ok) or birth certificate plus UWS Student Status letter.
- If you are an international student you should show your visa or BRP.
- This is now most commonly done via a share code and more information is available from: **https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/private_renting/right_to_rent_immigration_checks**
- If you are waiting for a Home Office decision on an application ask the landlord/letting agency to request a 'Right to Rent' check from the Home Office. The Home Office should contact your landlord/letting agency within 2 working days.
- If you have temporary permission to be in the UK (i.e. your visa/immigration permission has an expiry date), your landlord/letting agency should contact you again before it expires to confirm that you continue to have the right to live in the UK.

Deposits

Most landlords/letting agencies will ask you to pay a deposit which is returnable at the end of your tenancy, provided you have not caused damage to the accommodation or left unpaid bills. The maximum deposit a landlord/letting agency can charge is twice the cost of your monthly rent in Scotland, and 5 weeks rent in England.

Most tenancy types require your landlord/letting agency to hold your deposit in one of the three Government approved tenancy deposit schemes. This ensures that your deposit is protected for the length of the tenancy. When you pay your deposit make sure you get a receipt. Within 30 days of signing your lease, your landlord/letting agency must give you (in writing):

- The name of scheme your deposit is held in
- The date they paid the deposit into this scheme
- Contact details of the scheme

If you do not receive this, you should contact your landlord/letting agency to ask for it.

If your landlord lives with you in your accommodation, your deposit does not need to be held in a scheme. However, it should still be returned at the end of your tenancy minus allowable deductions.

Your landlord/letting agency can keep some or all of your deposit if:

- You have caused damage to the property. However, the landlord/letting agency is not entitled to take money for 'fair wear and tear'. For example, they could not deduct funds for normal wearing down of carpets caused by walking on them but, if you have left a red wine stain on the carpet, money can be deducted to repair or replace the carpet.
- You have not kept the property clean and your landlord/letting agency needs to pay for cleaning services.
- You have left unpaid bills or you have not paid your rent.

One of the main reasons for landlord/letting agencies keeping all or part of the deposit is to cover the costs of cleaning. To best protect your deposit, you should leave your accommodation in the same condition (or better) as it was in when you moved in. Key cleaning areas are the cooker and oven, fridge and freezer, food cupboards, shower, toilet and carpets. Remember to remove all food, personal possessions and rubbish. If you broke anything small, such as glasses or plates, try to replace them with a similar item yourself.

Once you have left your accommodation, you must give your landlord/letting agency time to check the property before returning your deposit. There is no specific time frame for this, but if you have not heard from your landlord/letting agency within two weeks you should contact your landlord/letting agency to ask the reasons for the delay.

If your landlord/letting agency intends to keep all or part of your deposit, they should explain why they are doing this, i.e. cleaning bills or unpaid rent. If you feel that any of the costs being claimed are unreasonably high, you can dispute this with the assistance of your tenancy deposit scheme provider. You should submit any evidence you have and explain what, if anything, you feel is appropriate to let the landlord/letting agency keep.

If you have not received your deposit back within two weeks of leaving your accommodation, you can apply to your tenancy deposit scheme yourself to get your money returned. If you do not know your tenancy deposit scheme provider, check your lease or your emails - the deposit scheme provider may have emailed you once your deposit was registered. You can also contact your landlord/letting agency to find out. If you cannot find your tenancy deposit scheme, or if your landlord/letting agency has not put your deposit with a scheme, you can find more information on what to do on the Shelter website:

For Scotland: **https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/tenants_rights/deposits**

For England - **https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/tenancy_deposits/paying_your_tenancy_deposit**

(Example 1)
Your landlord/letting agency is trying to claim money for furniture they say you have damaged, but it was already damaged when you arrived. You should provide photos or inventory descriptions taken at the start of your tenancy as evidence. In this case, you would ask for your full deposit to be returned.

(Example 2)
Your landlord/letting agency wants to charge you for a stain on the carpet, which you were responsible for. The carpet was old, but your landlord/letting agency is charging you for the cost of a new carpet. In this case your landlord/letting agency is wrong as they cannot change you the full price to replace something that was already old and may have needed replaced without the stain. If this case, you may allow the landlord/letting agency to take a reasonable cleaning fee or a proportion of the current value of the carpet if the damage is substantial.

LEASES/ TENANCY TYPES & LEGAL OBLIGATIONS



What is a tenancy agreement?
A tenancy agreement is a contract between tenant and landlord that sets out the agreed terms of living in the property. Your legal rights are stronger than your tenancy agreement. This means that sometimes you will have more rights than what is written in the contract.

It is important to understand what should be in a tenancy agreement before you move in so that you are aware of your rights. If you do not have a written tenancy agreement, you will still have rights but they can be more challenging to exercise.

We would strongly advise against commencing a tenancy without a written agreement. Failure to do things properly may be an indication that your landlord is willing to cut corners.

What should I expect to see in a tenancy agreement?

Tenancies in Scotland

Private Residential Tenancy
Housing law in Scotland dictates that any tenancy which started after 01st December 2017 has to be a Private Residential Tenancy. The main features of this tenancy are:

- No fixed term.
- Restrictions on rent increases. Rent can only be increased once every 12 months and if you feel the proposal is unfair it can be referred on to a rent officer. You must also be given 3 months' notice of any increase
- Longer notice period. If you have lived in your property longer than 6 months, your landlord must give you at least 84 days' notice to leave, unless you have broken part of the lease agreement. The standard term of notice before 6 months tends to be 28 days.
- You must be given a specific reason for eviction and there are more details of these later in the guide
- A written or electronic tenancy agreement document must be given detailing the terms of the tenancy. The Scottish Government provides a "Model Private Residential Tenancy Agreement" for this purpose.
  If your landlord decides to use their own agreement, this must be compliant with the law and you must also be given the "Private Residential Tenancy Statutory Terms Supporting Notes"
- If you do have a dispute with your landlord this can now be referred to the First Tier Tribunal Housing and Property Chamber
- Point to note: The Private Residential Tenancy is the relevant tenancy even if you are only renting a room as long as it is let to you as a "separate dwelling". So if you rent a room but have use of a shared kitchen and bathroom (not student halls) the property will be treated the same as a separate dwelling.
- If you want any further information on this type of tenancy you can find this on both www.gov.scot and also https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/

Standard Tenancy Information

Landlord details	Mandatory
Tenant details	Mandatory
Rental address	Mandatory
Rent	Mandatory
How and when rent should be paid	Mandatory
Deposit contribution	Mandatory
Details on ending the lease	Mandatory
Type of tenancy	Best Practice
Anything else the rent covers	Best Practice
If you are allowed pets, lodgers or to sublet	Best Practice

Tenancies in England
As housing law differs across the UK, the type of tenancy you secure may be different if you are living in England.

Assured Tenancies
From 1st May 2026 the Renters Rights Bill changed the law. Private tenancies in England will now be most commonly Assured Tenancies

Key Features of this change are:

- Tenancies are now rolling with no fixed end date.
- Rent increases cannot occur in the first 12 months and thereafter can only occur annually with 2 months notice of the change.
- You need to be given written details of your tenancy whether it is a new or existing tenancy.
- You can only be evicted for a "lawful reason" and this must be done with proper paperwork and notice.

If you want to read more depth on this topic you can find all the changes at - https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/private_renting/assured_tenancies



Lodgers

Lodgers are people who share all or part of their landlords' home. A lodger may have a private room but share a kitchen and bathroom. Lodgers have fewer rights than private tenants, however, lodgers can, and should, ask for a written tenancy agreement, which can be for a fixed term or be rolling/periodic.

A landlord can ask a lodger for a deposit but this is not protected by any deposit scheme.

If you make a fixed term agreement with your landlord, the rent cannot be increased during the fixed period. Otherwise your landlord can increase the rent at any time. If your landlord wants you to leave, they only need to give you reasonable notice and they do not require a court order to evict you.

Point to note: Some tenancies in England are written up as a "licence" this still gives your rights and responsibilities as a tenant but may not include as much protection against eviction.

More information on your rights if you are a "lodger" is available from

https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/tenants_rights/resident_landlord

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/private_renting/lodgers

Joint Tenancies

Rent and responsibilities
When you sign a tenancy agreement, it is LEGALLY BINDING so you will need to be extra careful when entering into a joint tenancy. Joint tenants are all equally responsible for meeting all the terms of the agreement. If one person does not pay their share of the rent, the other tenants are legally obligated to meet the cost.

Joint and severally liable means that the landlord can pursue one or all of you for any unpaid rent, so you need to be sure you trust the person you are planning on living with.

Deposits for joint tenancies

Any deposit due should be paid to the landlord/agent to put in the appropriate scheme. While you might pay a share of the full deposit, you are all joint and severally liable for this, so you may find yourself paying for others' messy or careless behaviour.

Any tenant leaving/joining the tenancy should manage their share of the deposit directly with the landlord/letting agency.

Ending joint tenancies

If someone wants to leave, all tenants need to consent to this in writing, which would end the tenancy for everyone. If not all the tenants want to leave, you can negotiate a new tenancy with the landlord or you can ask if you can replace the lost tenant with a new person. If a new person replaces your old flatmate (or if you are that new person) the tenant leaving the property needs to assign their tenancy to them. The new tenant then signs an agreement with the landlord to take this on.

It is important to get any changes agreed in writing so you have evidence of this.

Think carefully

As you can see, having a joint tenancy is a very serious commitment and should not be taken lightly. Take a look at our sections on "Choosing a flatmate" and "Planning Costs & Splitting Bills" to make sure you have really thought of everything before agreeing to sign a joint tenancy.

INVENTORIES, SAFETY, METER READINGS AND POST

Now that you are ready to move in, there are a few small but very important tasks to undertake.

Inventories

If you are renting from a letting agent, especially a larger one, they may have an inventory clerk who will go to the property prior to you receiving your keys and carry out a full inspection. This will allow them to produce a detailed document of each room, complete with photographs, which they will send to you for input.

They will comment on the general cleanliness of the property, any imperfections they notice such as a scratch on the skirting board or scuffs on the paint. They will also make reference to more technical items such as smoke and CO2 detectors, meter readings and electrics. They will also mention any furniture or furnishings in the property and the condition that you are receiving them in.

This record is so that both parties have a mutual agreement of the properties' state before the tenancy commences, so it is important that you take the time to go through the inventory in detail, point out anything additional you notice, and evidence this with photographs. This will help to ensure that you get your deposit back at the end of the tenancy. If you are renting from a smaller agency or private landlord, they may not have such a robust process in place but it is still really important to carry out this procedure. If your landlord does not or will not do this with you, you can download a template from Shelter Scotland and undertake this process yourself. Make sure to get it co-signed by someone who will not be living in the property and take lots of photographs as evidence.

https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/tenants_rights/deposits/paying

Shelter Scotland Inventory

Inventory for (address):_____

Use this template to keep a record of the condition of your new property, room by room. Enter the details of any aspects of the property which you feel are in need of repair, and get the landlord to sign it. Do this within the first week of moving in. If you attach any extra pages, ensure the landlord signs these as well. Keep a copy of this document safely with your lease agreement.

Hall	Flooring		Bedroom 1	Flooring	
	Furniture			Furniture	
	Fittings			Fittings	
	Walls/ceiling			Walls/ceiling	
	Electrical goods/ gas appliances			Electrical goods/ gas appliances	
Sitting room	Flooring		Bedroom 2	Flooring	
	Furniture			Furniture	
	Fittings			Fittings	
	Walls/ceiling			Walls/ceiling	
	Electrical goods/ gas appliances			Electrical goods/ gas appliances	
Kitchen	Flooring		Bedroom 3	Flooring	
	Furniture			Furniture	
	Fittings			Fittings	
	Walls/ceiling			Walls/ceiling	
	Electrical goods/ gas appliances			Electrical goods/ gas appliances	
Bathroom	Flooring		Outside	Flooring	
	Furniture			Furniture	
	Fittings			Fittings	
	Walls/ceiling			Walls/ceiling	
	Electrical goods/ gas appliances			Electrical goods/ gas appliances	

Signed (landlord):	**Date:**	**Signed (tenant):**	**Date:**

DOWNLOADED FROM http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/get_advice © 2010 Shelter

Shelter Scotland

Safety Checks

Landlords are responsible for providing and maintaining fire and CO2 detectors, and ensuring that electrical appliances have been properly PAT tested, which stands for portable appliance testing and would ensure they are working as they should. It is also best practice for landlords to have all electrics (plugs, wires, switches etc.) tested by a qualified person every 5 years. Known as a Periodic Inspection Report (PIR).

If you live in Scotland, legislation was introduced in 2022 that says you must have interlinked heat and smoke alarms in the most utilised rooms (e.g. kitchens, lounge, bedrooms and every hallway/ landing). For more information see **https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/repairs_and_bad_conditions/home_safety/fire_safety**

If there is gas in the property the landlord must have a Landlord Gas Safety Certificate that should be renewed annually.

You should ask about all of these checks before you move in.
The tenant is then responsible for ensuring that these things remain functioning during the tenancy and for reporting any issues in a timely manner. This means you will need to make sure that there are batteries in the smoke alarms (if applicable) and that electrical equipment provided (such as a kettle) are looked after.

If you would like further advice on keeping your home safe you can find more information on the following webpages:

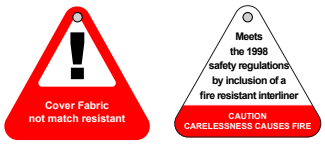
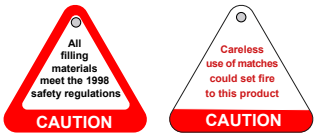
London - **https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/home-fire-safety-checker-hfsc/**

Scotland - **https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/at-home/**

Scotland: https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/repairs

England: https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/repairs

If your landlord has provided furniture as part of your tenancy, they must ensure that it is compliant with the Furniture and Furnishings Fire Safety Regulations 1988. Look at the symbols in our image for examples of what to look out for. You should also find out where the stop cock (mains water), trip switches, fuse boxes, and mains gas valves are. If an emergency did occur, you would then be able to ensure a relevant tradesperson locates these quickly. If you do find that your water is off or you have a power cut, check on the appropriate service website for any disruptions e.g. Scottish Water. If there are no known disruptions, you should contact the appropriate organisation to report the issue and get advice on what to do next.

Explanation for label	Label illustration (front and back of label)
Appropriate for new furniture which meets the filling requirements and is both cigarette and match resistant.	
Appropriate for new furniture with a limited range of cover fabrics. The cover fabric is not match resistant, but the furniture has an interliner which passes the specified test. The furniture meets the filling requirements and is cigarette resistant	
Appropriate for new furniture which meets the filling requirements and is both cigarette resistant, (i.e. baby nests). The word "product" may be substituted for the word "furniture" on the second side of the label.	

Meter readings

On the day that you move in, locating the gas and electricity meters should be a priority. You should take meter readings and contact the provider to confirm you have taken over the tenancy, and to pass these meter readings to them.

If you don't know how to read a meter or what one looks like, Citizens Advice have a useful guide, complete with pictures on **https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/your-energy-meter/how-to-read-your-energy-meter/**

Meters can often be in cupboards or up high so be sure to be careful when obtaining readings and if you cannot find the meter, speak to your landlord. If your landlord hasn't explained who supplies your electricity or gas (which they should) you can find this information on the following sites:

Gas - **https://www.findmysupplier.energy/**

Electricity - **http://www.energynetworks.org/info/faqs/who-is-my-network-operator.html**

Taking these simple steps will ensure you are billed correctly and help you to ensure that no issues arise with regards to previous tenant's debt or supply termination.



Updating records

When you change address, you will need to ensure that you tell everyone who needs to know, such as your bank, insurance providers, creditors, employer and any companies with whom you have a subscription. You should also tell the university.

If your address will only be for term time and you have a permanent UK address elsewhere, this is less of an issue.

You can arrange for for Royal Mail to redirect any mail sent to your old address for 3, 6 or 12 months. While this does cost money, it can be difficult to remember who needs to know your new address, and this will ensure you don't forget anyone.
Visit the Royal Mail website for information: **https://www.royalmail.com/personal/receiving-mail/redirection**

If you are on the UK voters roll, updating this will also be important as keeping this up to date can improve your credit score. You can do this at **https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote**

Drivers are legally obliged to keep the DVLA up to date with their address and ensure that their car is registered to the correct property. However, if your address will only be temporary and your permanent UK address still stands as your contact address, you do not need to do this. See **https://www.gov.uk/tell-dvla-changed-address for full details.**

MANAGING YOUR TENANCY

Once you have your keys you are now a responsible householder. The information in this section will help you to manage this new responsibility and help you to understand what to do if something does go wrong.

Landlord/Letting Agency Access

You are entitled to live in your accommodation without unnecessary interference so your landlord/letting agency cannot just let themselves into your accommodation. Normally, if your landlord/letting agency want access to the property, they must give at least 24 hours' notice if you live in England and 48 hours' notice in Scotland. The only exception to this is if they need access urgently to carry out repair work or assess what repair work they are obliged or entitled to do. Your landlord/letting agency should not enter the accommodation without your consent, except in an emergency.

If you are leaving the tenancy, you should expect your landlord/letting agency to need access to show prospective new tenants around, but they should still let you know about this in advance.

Rent Increases

Your landlord/letting agency can only increase your rent in certain circumstances, check your tenancy for more details.

Repairs and Maintenance

Your landlord/letting agency is responsible for keeping your accommodation structurally sound and fit to live in, and to ensure that appliances and furniture that were provided when you moved in are kept in good working order. If they do not work properly or become unsafe, your landlord/letting agency has a responsibility to fix or replace them.

If items become damaged but are still safe and usable, your landlord/letting agency does not need to replace them, unless this is specified in your lease. Be aware that, if repairs are needed because of damage you have caused, your landlord/letting agency has the right to deduct these costs from your deposit. If you cause damage to the property that costs more than the amount you paid for the deposit, your landlord/letting agency is entitled to pursue you for payment.

If something in your accommodation breaks or stops working, contact your landlord/letting agency straight away using the details that should have been provided to you when you arranged your tenancy. If you report the problem over the phone, make sure you also send a letter or email, so you have a record of reporting the problem. Your email/letter should say what the problem is when it happened and what effect it is having on you. You might want to take a photo of the problem if you can.

Your landlord/letting agency should contact you reasonably quickly to arrange a time for the repairs, but the time it will take to be fixed depends on the urgency of the repairs. If it is not urgent (e.g. broken furniture) expect to wait up to a month for it to be fixed. Urgent repairs that mean you cannot enjoy your accommodation or pose a danger to your health (e.g. heating not working, broken washing machine, shower not working) should be completed within a few days.

If you have requested repairs, allowed time for them to be fixed and your landlord/letting agency still has not fixed them, you should take the following steps, which can differ depending on where you live.

Please note that withholding rent to encourage your landlord/letting agency to complete a repair is very risky, as it can lead to you being evicted from your accommodation. If you are considering withholding rent, please contact an adviser at Shelter before taking any action.

Scotland

You can apply to the First Tier Tribunal to force your landlord to carry out repairs.

Scotland: The first Tier Tribunal can only help if your accommodation does not meet the 'repairing standard'. Your accommodation does not meet the repairing standard if it is not fit to live in, i.e. your water, heating, gas or electricity is not working, or fixtures, fittings or furnishings are not in working order.

You cannot apply if you are looking for improvements to be made to your accommodation or the repairs you require are minor. To apply to the First Tier Tribunal you must fill in a short form, provide evidence of your tenancy, and evidence you have told your landlord that repairs need to be completed. You can find out more about the process, including the relevant forms, at **https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/advice_topics/repairs_and_bad_conditions/repairs_in_private_rented_accommodation/first_tier_tribunal_for_scotland**

Contact Shelter Scotland if you need help with this process - **https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/about_us/contact_us**

England: If you are renting your accommodation from a letting agency, and you are concerned that the letting agency has not passed your repairs request onto your landlord, you can complain directly to the letting agency via a redress scheme. All letting agents are legally required to have registered with a redress scheme, and you should be able to find the name of the scheme on their website. It will either be:

- The Property Ombudsman (TPO) - **https://www.tpos.co.uk/**
- The Property Redress Scheme - **https://www.theprs.co.uk/Consumer**

If the repairs are serious, you can arrange for the local council's environmental health team to inspect your accommodation. The environmental health team have the power to order your landlord to complete repairs. This involves writing a letter to your landlord, but you can find advice and templates on the Shelter England website at **https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/repairs/complain_to_environmental_health_about_rented_housing**

Contact Shelter England if you need help with this process - **https://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help/webchat**

Your Responsibilities as a Tenant

Pay your rent

Make sure you pay your rent on time every month. The easiest way to do this is to set up a direct payment from your bank account to your landlord/letting agency. If you are unable to pay your rent, read our section on what to do if things go wrong.

Look after the property and report repairs

Make sure you clean your property regularly and look after the furnishings provided. If something goes wrong, report this to your landlord as soon as you can, even if the problem isn't bothering you, e.g. signs of damp, washing machine breaking etc. Some problems can be more expensive to fix if they are left untreated, and your landlord/letting agency can deduct money from your deposit if your delay in reporting has cost them extra money.

Alterations and decorations

If you want to make permanent alternations to your accommodation, such as painting or redecorating, you must ask your landlord/letting agency first. If you make permanent alterations and your landlord doesn't like your style, they may charge you to return the accommodation to its original condition. Temporary alternations or redecorations are fine, for example, moving furniture around.

Being a Good Neighbour and Noise Complaints

You have a responsibility to be a good neighbour to those around you and should expect your neighbours to treat you with this same respect.

Some of the most common complaints are loud music, doors slamming or loud chatter when returning home late at night. Be respectful towards your neighbours by keeping music and noise down, and being aware of how your actions might affect them. If you are the one suffering from noisy neighbours, try talking to them. Often, neighbours are genuinely unaware of your discomfort as they won't appreciate how easily sound travels.

If you have shared space, such as a close/entry, garden, or space to keep bins, keep this clean and tidy. A big complaint that neighbours can have is when other flats have their bins, so make sure you have the set of bins you are supposed to have, and know when these should be taken to the kerb to be emptied.

Sub-letting

If you are planning on being away for a long period, you may be thinking of letting someone else live in your accommodation and pay your rent. This is not normally possible. If you want to sub-let make sure you have the written permission of your landlord. You will also need to register as a landlord.

Once it's time to leave

Once you have decided to leave your accommodation, make sure you give your landlord the correct amount of notice. The amount of notice you need to give depends on your tenancy type, so refer to our 'Leases/Tenancy Types' section for more information. Remember, you cannot normally leave your tenancy early unless you have agreed this with your landlord.

WHAT TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG

Flatmate issues
Even the best of friends can have differences of opinion from time to time, but when you are living together, this can be amplified and seem overwhelming. The negative impact of having a dispute with someone you share a property or tenancy with can be significant, so it's always best to try and resolve things at an early stage before they get to big to handle.

Stage 1: Open Communication
Always try to sit down and discuss anything that is bothering you face to face, BEFORE it becomes a big thing. Most people don't like confrontation, but leaving notes or sending texts can make others feel undervalued and angry and can quickly escalate tensions. Remember, taking on a tenancy is a serious commitment, so if you feel mature enough to do that, you should be mature enough to have a conversation with your flatmate if something is bothering you.

Try and start a conversation with a cup of tea, stay calm and think about how the other person might be feeling. For example, if your flatmate is late with their share of the rent, ask them if something has happened to stop them from paying their share instead of being reproachful.

Solutions can be more quickly sought and agreed with an amicable approach.

Stage 2: Advice and Arbitration
If you have tried Stage 1 and the offending behaviour continues or gets bigger, you could ask someone external to the situation to mediate, such as a neutral friend. You may also be able to seek advice or arbitration from a specialist service such as Shelter.

Stage 3: Formal Processes
Landlords will seldom get involved in tenants' disputes unless this starts to affect the property or lease. However, there will be situations when escalating the issue to the landlord or letting agent is the most appropriate course of action.

If one tenant is continually not paying the rent or causing damage to the property, you should report this to the landlord. The landlord can then decide if they wish to evict the offending tenant. On a joint tenancy, this will end the lease for all of you, but the landlord may be willing to give you a new lease without the errant tenant. If you all have separate leases with the landlord, they should be able to remove the tenant without affecting your individual rights.

If any tenant is behaving aggressively or violently towards you, you should speak to the police. If you are in immediate danger ring 999. If the issue is ongoing, local police stations will normally have a community police officer who you can chat to.

Personal issues
You may be the tenant that your flatmates are unhappy with, and are not sure how to resolve your issue. Everyone gets into difficulty sometimes, but the best action is to deal with issues quickly instead of avoiding them. Student Services has a range of specialist advice and guidance that will allow you to discuss your issues and work out the best plan of action. You can access Student Services through The Hub or Student Link on your campus.

If your issue is financial and you are struggling to meet your rent, you can access the support available through the Funding and Advice Team, and can find out how to access this via **https://www.uws.ac.uk/money-fees-funding/**

Evictions and Complaints

Doing everything you are meant to do should ensure you are secure in your home, but sometimes being asked to leave your home is unavoidable. The eviction process, and where you can seek support, differs slightly depending on where you live and what type of tenancy you have. Here we outline the main processes and regulating bodies but if you are being threatened with eviction, you should get specialist advice as soon as possible.

Scotland: Private Residential Tenancies. There are specific grounds for eviction in Scotland under the Private Residential Tenancy.

- Landlord intends to sell within 3 months of you vacating the property
- Let property to be sold by the lender i.e. the landlord's mortgage company
- Landlord intends to refurbish the property, and the level of disruption would be too great to maintain a tenant
- Landlord or their family member wants to move into the let property
- Landlord intends to use the property for non-residential purposes i.e. to open a business
- Tenant has a relevant criminal conviction or engages in antisocial behaviour. This also applies to any tenants or visitors
- Tenant is no longer occupying the let property
- Tenant no longer needs supported accommodation (community care only)
- Tenant breached a term of the tenancy agreement
- The landlord has had their registration reviewed or revoked
- Landlord's HMO license has been revoked
- An overcrowding statutory notice has been served on the landlord
- Tenant is in arrears for more than 3 consecutive months
- Tenant has stopped or failed to become employed (Only applies where the tenancy was given on the grounds that the landlord would be the employer.)

To find out more about the grounds for eviction in Scotland visit **https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/eviction/eviction_of_private_tenants/grounds_for_eviction_for_private_residential_tenancy_tenants**

England: If you live in England, the Renters Rights Act governs evictions. So landlords can only evict you for specific grounds and must follow the correct process to do so. To find out more about evictions in England, take a look at the following link: **https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/eviction**

Making a Complaint - Scotland No matter which grounds are being used for an eviction, the First Tier Tribunal Housing and Property Chamber must be satisfied that the grounds exist and that an eviction is appropriate. You can find out more about the First Tier Tribunal Housing and Property Chamber at www.housingandpropertychamber.scot/ If you feel that your landlord has acted unfairly or if you wish to dispute an issue, you do so through the First Tier Tribunal Housing and Property Chamber.

As well as disputes over the dissolution of your tenancy, this would also be to the body to consult if you feel that your landlord/letting agent hasn't met the repairing standards, or 'Letting Agent Code of Practice', which you can read at **https://www.gov.scot/publications/letting-agent-code-practice/**

This more formal body is for when you have tried and failed to reasonably communicate and resolve issues with your landlord/ letting agent, so try and resolve things independently, before going through these more serious options.

Making a Complaint - England In England, there isn't such a specific body to regulate the industry. Instead, you can make an initial complaint via the agents' or landlords' complaints process. If they do not have a process, simply make a written complaint directly to them. You should state that it is a complaint, directly to them. You should state that it is a complaint, what your issue is and how you would like to see this redressed. You can escalate the complaint to your local council if your landlord does not respond appropriately. You can read more on this here - **https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/private_renting/complaints_about_private_landlords**

As the eviction process will always involve a referral to a court, there isn't a specific complaints process for eviction. Tenants have the scope to demonstrate any breach of process to the court.

Letting Agents: If your property is rented via a letting agent, they should be registered with an official redress scheme. Agents who fail to do this can be fined by the local council. The agent should display the details of which scheme they belong to: The Property Ombudsman (TPO) - **www.tpos.co.uk/** The Property Redress Scheme - **www.theprs.co.uk/Consumer Issues** you are able to complain about include rudeness, hidden fees, avoidable delays or failure to explain things properly. However, you cannot complain about issues which are the fault or responsibility of the landlord, unless the agent has somehow contributed. You can read more depth about complaints against letting agents - **https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/legal/court_action_and_complaints/complaints/complaints_about_letting_agents**

Landlords: As there is no official body to complain about your landlord, you can raise a dispute through a range of other bodies who may be in a position to help. If your issue relates to repairs or standards within the property, report the issue to the Councils' Environmental Health team. Some Councils have a Tenancy Relations Officer (TRO) to assist private tenants in the local area. You can also find advice about the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) via the Citizens Advice website - **https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/Solve-an-25 ongoing-consumer-problem/** or can ultimately take the landlord to court.

SUPPORT THROUGH STUDENT SERVICES & UWS STUDENTS' UNION



While Student Services or UWS Students' Union do not provide specialist housing advice, there is a lot of support available to help you. Whether you are starting to consider the affordability of taking on a tenancy, find yourself dealing with a landlord who is not making necessary repairs, or are being asked to leave your home, it is always best to contact the team in Student Services or UWS Students' Union in the first instance. We'll do whatever we can to support you, and will refer to specialist advice where we feel it is needed.

Find out more about the services on the following links, and access Student Services through the Hub or Student Link on your campus.

Find out about the support services available via www.uws.ac.uk/current-students/
Find out more about the funding you might be entitled to help you meet the cost of housing, and how to best manage this via https://www.uws.ac.uk/money-fees-funding/

Find out more about the services available through UWs Students' Union, and how to access these via https://www.uwsunion.org.uk/advice/

OTHER HELPFUL LINKS

Scottish Water
https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/Help-and-Resources/Contact-Us
T - 0800 0778778

Thames Water
www.thameswater.co.uk/

SP Energy Networks
www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/power_cuts.aspx
T – 08000929290

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
https://www.ssen.co.uk/
Emergencies call: 105

National Grid
www.nationalgrid.com/uk/safety-and-emergencies

Gas emergency:
0800 111 999

Electricity emergency
Call 105

Scottish Gas Network
https://www.sgn.co.uk/help-and-advice/keeping-gas-safe/gas-safety
National Gas Emergency Number – 0800111999

Police Scotland
www.scotland.police.uk
T – 999 emergencies or 101 non-emergencies

Met Police
www.met.police.uk/
T – 999 emergencies or 101 non-emergencies

Scottish Fire & Rescue
www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/for-householders.aspx

London Fire Brigade
https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/

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