

Your Guide to Private Housing – Beyond University

What we will cover:

- Your housing journey, from house-hunting to signing an agreement and being a tenant
- How to make good housing choices
- What to look out for (do's and don'ts)
- How the WSU Advice Centre can support you

Meet the Advice Team!



Charlotte Cowdell
Advice Centre Manager



Heather Groves
Welfare Advisor



Vas Marinos
Welfare Advisor



Mollie Gates
Welfare Advisor

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Moving Out

Follow the Advice Centre's
moving out checklist -
you can find this on
our website!

Moving Out To Do List

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- Follow the landlord/agent's 'check out' procedure if they have one
- Clean **ALL** parts of the property **including** microwave, oven etc
- Take photographs/video to show condition of property
- Remove **ALL** belongings and rubbish
- Notify the utility companies you are leaving and give them final meter readings
- Inform Council Tax as soon as you have moved out
- Redirect your post

Top Tip: Check the SU's Move Out Checklist on the website

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Deposit Return

Contact the Advice Centre
if your deposit is not
returned or you want to
dispute any charges

End of Tenancy Deposit Return

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- You should have your deposit returned within 10 days once an agreement has been met

If you disagree with any charges being issued:

- Issue a dispute with your deposit protection scheme
- Include video/photo evidence to show condition of property which will strengthen your dispute
- An adjudicator will make an end decision based on evidence provided

Important: If your landlord/agent has not protected your deposit, you are able to take them to court

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Househunting

Make sure to do your
research and follow the
Advice Centre's
useful tips

What makes house-hunting successful?

Planning Ahead

House-Hunting Planning

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- **What type of tenancy do you want to sign?** – Joint vs Individual
- **Location-** where suits you best? Check local transport links
- **Type of property-** house, flat, houseshare
- **Budget-** consider costs you need to pay once you're not a student



Househunting
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research and follow the
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Top Tip: Don't panic! Take your time and don't rush into signing an agreement. Once signed, you will be liable for the rent.

House-Hunting

Where to look

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- **Rightmove**- Private renting
- **Spare Room**- Private renting
- Directly through local **letting agents**

Important: Do your research before making a final decision. Check for reviews

House-Hunting

Be aware of scams

Housing scams are becoming more common each year.

- Never pay a deposit or sign a tenancy before viewing a property. Some agents offer online viewings
- Be cautious when looking at properties advertised on social media
- **ALWAYS** check the property exists by putting the address into Google Maps or the Royal Mail website
- Never let a landlord/letting agent keep your ID passport or visa documents

Top Tip: If something doesn't seem right, contact The Advice Centre

House-Hunting

Choosing Accommodation

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- Variety of providers to choose from & wide range of conditions/styles to choose from
- All landlords are expected to meet legal standards. Make sure you know what these legal obligations are
- Seek a **recommendation** from former tenants and view the property before you sign the contract
- Consider length of tenancy – none student tenancies are often a minimum of 6 months

Found a property: First steps and tips

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- Read all the information about the property- rooms, communal spaces, costs
- Verify the landlords/agent details
- Check affordability
- Look at the Energy Performance Certificate
- Arrange a viewing
- Who will be managing the property?
- Do you need a Guarantor?

Found a property: Understanding the costs

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- Understand the cost before you pay anything!
Rent, bills (gas, electricity, water, internet), deposit
- The only legitimate fees agents can charge are:
 - Rent in advance
 - Tenancy Deposit
 - Refundable Holding Deposit (cannot exceed 1 weeks' worth of rent - terms apply)

Important: What needs to be paid and when?

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Tenancy Agreement Check

Get an Advisor to check
your tenancy agreement
before signing it

Found a property: Tenancy Agreement

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- A tenancy agreement is **legally binding**
- **Fixed term** – Check length of agreement
- Consider the type of agreement – Joint & Several V.S. Sole Tenant
- No break clause – Not permitted to leave the contract early. If you do – replacement tenant



Tenancy Agreement Check

Get an Advisor to check
your tenancy agreement
before signing it

Top Tip: If you're unsure about something- contact The Advice Centre

Signing an agreement: What happens after?

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- You should receive:
 - The Government's 'How to Rent' Guide
 - Energy Performance Certificate
 - Deposit Protection Certificate (this **must** be protected and provided within 30 days after paying the full deposit)
 - Gas Safety Certificate

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Moving In

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moving in checklist -
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our website!

Move In Day: To Do List

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- Check for the inventory & record the condition of the property – take photos/videos
- Report any damages that need repairing
- Check you have been given a gas safety certificate
- Take meter readings

Common Mistake! Not taking pictures/videos of property when moving in and/or not checking if the inventory is correct



Moving In

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Throughout the tenancy: To Do List

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- Report any maintenance issues to the letting agent straight away
- Take photos/videos & keep issues documented
- Communicate with letting agent in written format, e.g. emails

Common Mistake! Not reporting issues straight away.

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Accessing Help

Get advice as soon as
you start experiencing
any issues

If things go wrong...

- Attempt to informally resolve (if possible)
- If informal resolution not possible or successful, there may be more formal options
- Access professional support – WSU Advice Centre

Common Mistake! Not accessing support straight away. The sooner we know, the more we can help.



Accessing Help

Get advice as soon as you start experiencing any issues

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Tips for Housing Beyond University

- Do your research! Don't sign a contract without viewing the property or getting your tenancy agreement checked
- Lots of private landlords will ask for pay slips or guarantors – know your options
- Consider length of tenancy agreement – different timeframes compared to Uni accommodation
- Learn new costs – such as council tax, content insurance, utilities
- Make sure you access help!

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Myth Busting

My bills are capped so this means I won't have to pay anything towards bills during the tenancy

It's fine if I don't like my accommodation, I can just end my tenancy agreement!

I don't need to pay council tax as a graduate

Where can help me after University?

SU Advice Centre

SHELTER

Citizens Advice

How can The Advice Centre support you?

Independent advice, support & representation on issues affecting your student experience

- Impartial
- Confidential
- Professional
- Free
- Information & Empowerment Service

How to get in touch:

- Online Enquiry Form on the SU website



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Thank you for listening!

Good Luck House Hunting!