



THE  HOMES

**STUDENT-FRIENDLY  
GUIDE TO  
RENTING**



# LOOKING FOR A PROPERTY

## Is the rent affordable?

- ▶ Does it include bills?
- ▶ Do you have to pay extra for parking?

## Where is the property?

- ▶ Is it where you want to live?
- ▶ Is it lit well at night if you're walking home?
- ▶ Are there regular buses?

## If you're a student you'll need a guarantor:

- ▶ Do you have a UK based guarantor – working full time?
- ▶ What are your options if not?
- ▶ Do you have to pay for alternative services?
- ▶ Can you afford it?

## Right to Rent (legal requirement):

- ▶ Do you need a VISA to live in the UK?
- ▶ Is your VISA valid and in date?

## YOUR DEPOSIT

You'll need to pay a deposit – usually when you sign your Tenancy Agreement. The amount can be anything from 1 month's to 6 weeks' rent. Your deposit can't be used as rent.

Your deposit needs to be registered with a government scheme. Landlords or agents will do this and provide proof they have - either with a certificate from them or notification from the scheme.

Rent is due at the start of your Tenancy Agreement. If you don't pay in time you could jeopardise your move in date and key collection.

## FEES

Most agencies charge fees. Make sure you know and understand what they're for. It's a legal requirement for fees to be clearly displayed in an agency's office and on their website.

# CHARGES DURING YOUR TENANCY

**Read your Tenancy Agreement carefully.**

- Do you get charged for late rental payments?
- Do you get charged to call out an emergency contractor at weekends?
- Do you get charged to leave the property early? (This is normally called a Break of Contract Fee)
- Are you charged to replace yourself with another tenant if you want to leave early?
- Do you have confirmation from the landlord that you can replace yourself? Is it in writing?

## INSURANCE

It's always a good idea to take out contents insurance for your personal belongings.

Check if your insurance covers you for accidental damage to the landlord's property e.g. iron burn marks to the carpet, hair straightener burn marks, knife marks on the work top.



# MOVING IN

**You must be issued with;**

- **Gas Safety Certificate (if there's gas at the property)**
- **Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)**
- **How to Rent booklet**
- **Inventory – Schedule of Condition**

A check in should be scheduled and you should be met at the property by the Landlord, Agent or a Representative with the Inventory and keys.

The Inventory forms part of your Tenancy Agreement, so keep it safe. If you agree with the inventory and the Schedule of Condition sign it and keep a copy for your records. This is used at the check-out and helps get your deposit back.

If you're paying for your own utilities (gas electricity, and water) take meter readings.

You're responsible for all bills from the start of the tenancy to the end – even if you leave earlier than the arranged check out.

## Check all keys issued to you work. Think about:

- ▶ **Window keys**
- ▶ **Back door keys**
- ▶ **Garage keys**

Check the certificates you've been given are valid and up to date

Do you have an emergency contact number if you need help out of office hours?

## SETTING UP YOUR ACCOUNTS

Contact the existing utility suppliers and open your account giving them the meter readings you took at check in. If you want to change supplier you can do this after you've opened your account. Read your Tenancy Agreement carefully – make sure you have permission to change suppliers.



# DURING THE TENANCY

Here are some things to be aware of when you're renting:

**You're entitled to "quiet enjoyment of the property"**. Your landlord has to give you 24 hours' notice before entering - they can't just walk in!

**Report any maintenance issues** as quickly as possible to the landlord or agent and then agree access for contractors to repair them.

**Your landlord must repair maintenance issues** with appliances, and deal with any problems with gas, electricity and water.

**You're not allowed to sub-let or take in a lodger unless you've got permission (get it in writing).**

**Pay your rent on time.** Don't hold your rent back if repairs aren't being done. You'll be in breach of your contract – instead follow the agent's complaints procedure, and find out what property redress scheme the agent or landlord is part of.

**Be considerate of your neighbours.** If you have parties or are loud at night, you could find yourself being evicted. Try to build good relationships.

**Expect regular visits from your Landlord's agent.** They're checking that there's no breach of contract (things like extra tenants in the property, pets, evidence of smoking). They're also checking the condition of the property, reporting back to the landlord if there's anything they need to do.

**Expect a Gas Engineer/HMO Inspector.** It's a legal requirement that some things are checked.

**Treat the property with respect** – don't cover smoke/fire alarms with plastic bags, keep it tidy and hazard free.



# RENEWING YOUR CONTRACT

Arrange an appointment with the agent or landlord if you want to renew your Tenancy Agreement.

- ▶ **Check if the rent has been increased**
- ▶ **Check if there are any fees you need to pay to renew your contract**
- ▶ **Check deadlines to make this decision, and make sure you receive confirmation you can stay before you sign a new agreement.**

# MOVING OUT

You should receive 2 months' notice to leave the property at the end of the tenancy term.

**A check-out should be arranged by the landlord or agent. They'll:**

- ▶ **Check the property against the Inventory**
- ▶ **Collect keys back from all tenants**

Everything in the property should be handed back in the same condition it was handed to you at the beginning of the tenancy.

Make sure you've left by the check-out date and time. Take all your belongings with you as the landlord has the right to throw them out 14 days after the check-out.

# THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU MOVE OUT

- ▶ **Put furniture back into the rooms it originally came from** (if you moved anything).
- ▶ **Clean the property throughout** (if your Tenancy Agreement says the property was professionally cleaned provide receipts).
- ▶ **Get the oven cleaned properly**
- ▶ **Make sure your rent is paid up to date**
- ▶ **Take final meter readings and close your accounts with the utility companies** – pay any outstanding balances for your bills, or you might have money due to be refunded.
- ▶ **Return all keys** You could be charged for key if the keys aren't returned in time.
- ▶ **Leave a forwarding address and contact number** so you can be contacted if there are any issues.
- ▶ **Be at the check-out.** This will also help minimise the time in getting your deposit returned to you, or escalating to a dispute, as some issues arising at check-out could be resolved there and then.

# NEED HELP?

Whether you're renting through SUHomes or a High Street agency, SUHomes and SU Advice can give you advice on renting, or on specific issues.



**SUADVICE@ESSEX.AC.UK**



**SUHOMES@ESSEX.AC.UK**



**SU RECEPTION, SQUARE 3**

**FIND OUT MORE AND SEE ALL OF OUR  
PROPERTIES AT:**

**ESSEX.SU/SUHOMES**

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

STUDENTS\*  
UNION