

# HOUSE HUNTING GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE



A handbook of advice designed to guide students in best practice when entering privately rented accommodation



**University of Brighton**

**springboard**  
grants programme

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# DEFINITIONS

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- Tenant** You! The person or people renting a property are known as the tenant(s). You'll sign a tenancy agreement to occupy a property.
- Guarantor** Often one of your parents, a guarantor is someone who vouches for the tenant and agrees to uphold their contractual obligations if the tenant is unable to do so (for instance, if they don't pay rent).
- Landlord** The person who owns the house. This is the person who receives the rent you pay for living in the property. They will be interested in looking after the maintenance of the house and expect you to be careful with their property.
- Letting Agent** The person in the middle. They'll show you around the house, answer questions and deal with the administration of moving you into your new home.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The advice in this Guide is based on his personal experience and observations.

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# SEARCHING FOR AND SECURING YOUR HOME

# WHO TO MOVE WITH

One of the most crucial things to think about!

Once you've got the keys you're stuck with each other, so DO consider if you're all going to be able to live with one another. It's one thing to be friends in halls, quite another to live with someone.

Some things to consider:

## How many people?

More people can mean more fun and cheaper bills. It can also mean more arguments, noise and competition for those big houses.

## What are the housemates relationships?

Is everybody friends? Are some people couples? This can affect how people expect to pay bills and share house resources.

## Tidiness!

If you're fanatically tidy or unbelievably messy, you know what to expect from yourself, but if your housemate(s) are the opposite, are you going to suddenly change your habits to match theirs? Do you expect them to do the same?



## Finances!

Resentment may creep in if your housemates can afford to party every night but you can barely afford a loaf of bread and the bus to Uni.

Consider how you will split the bills and buy food. A good idea might be to have a communal jar everyone pays into each week for basics like cleaning products and toilet roll.

## Friends staying

Having a few mates crash after a night out is all good, but if one person has their friend move onto the sofa for a month "while they look for somewhere to rent" is it going to go down well with everyone?

**TOP TIP:** When you start looking someone from the group may drop out of the search. Don't rush into filling a space with someone you barely know.

# DETERMINE BUDGET

Don't underestimate what it's going to cost you

It's easy to say you'll compromise on essentials like travel and food costs - not to mention money for a night out. Don't become unrealistic on what you'll need to pay on rent and bills, plus everything else you'll need!

[www.brighton.ac.uk/moneymatters](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/moneymatters) contains a budgeting calculator, plus typical costs for accommodation, travel and living costs as well as case studies and links to student funding to help you work out what you can afford.

If you and / or your housemates are planning on heading home in the summer, consider how long a tenancy contract you sign. You could find yourself liable for rent on a house that everyone's moved out of despite having a tenancy for another month or two.

# FINDING A PROPERTY

## You've plenty of options

Your first call should be your UoB Accommodation Office who can advise and guide you in the right direction.

### **Brightonstudentpad.co.uk**

The Uni's regularly updated database of property in Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings owned by private landlords. Get a password to use the online service from the accommodation office (see useful contacts section). Key info: No fees to pay! Properties are vetted by the University and all landlords have signed up to a code of standards regarding their housing and professional conduct.

### **Unihomes**

Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings properties managed by the University on behalf of private owners. Regularly updated database. Key Info: UoB is your landlord. No fees to pay! Shorter tenancy agreements. No guarantors needed. Bedroom door locks. Free contents insurance and broadband provided.

If after trying the above you're still searching, you'll need to start looking elsewhere for private sector rental accommodation – some suggestions are included below. Ensure you read up and get some advice before you start!

### **Word of mouth**

Like your friends house? Know they're leaving at the end of the year and they've had a good experience? Why not ask them to speak to their landlord / agent, or follow it up yourself.

### **Notice boards**

The Students Union. Supermarkets. Newsagents in the areas you're looking for property.

### **The local paper**

The Argus in Brighton on Wednesdays.  
The Eastbourne Gazette on Wednesdays or the Herald on Fridays.  
The Hastings and St. Leonards Observer.  
The Friday Ad covers Sussex in general.

### **Gumtree.co.uk**

Gumtree is popular – however! A word of caution: whilst there are some excellent landlords that advertise through this site, there's also a few bad ones. Exercise caution, and never send any personal ID info or money online before seeing a property and meeting the landlord/agent – be aware of scams involving transfer services like Western Union.

Use your common sense - If it's too good to be true, it most probably is.

### **Which leaves... Letting Agents**

This bunch get a bad press, but be assured there's plenty of good ones out there.

Currently there's no requirement for a letting agent to be registered with a regulatory body – however many are members of The Property Ombudsman (TPO) and/or voluntary paid members of the Association of Registered Letting Agents (ARLA) who must offer a scheme of redress and adhere to codes of professional practice respectively, so these are excellent signs to look out for.

You can visit their offices which can often be nice – meeting face-to-face can give you a quick impression of if they're someone you want to deal with or not.

Often this is time consuming though, so you can take yourself.....

### **Online**

Most letting agents advertise their property online. Sites like Rightmove, Zoopla and others all help you search the agent listings, based on criteria you set such as location, price and number of bedrooms.

Rightmove has a separate students section, which separates student property from those aimed / priced at the professional market, and also contains useful guides on aspects such as deposits and tenancy contracts.

**TOP TIP:** Register for free property alerts straight to your email or phone, or get into the habit of checking online each day and using the 'listed in the last 24 hours' option on the search screen. This'll show you the newest property on the market, so you don't waste time looking at property that's already gone / that's hanging around as it's overpriced or there's something wrong with it / and helps keep you ahead of everyone else looking!

# BOOKING A VIEWING

Before you make the call...



Before telephoning to book a viewing, take a moment to think:

Sometimes a landlord instructs more than one agent to market their property, so it's worth using a property search engine like Rightmove etc to see if that's the case – if so, one agents fees may be cheaper than the others, so you can compare tenant costs before booking a viewing.

Remember that the cheapest agent isn't necessarily the most professional, so you could check online for reviews of their service ([www.whichpad.com](http://www.whichpad.com) has reviews from students of the agents they've rented through which could be helpful).

Bear in mind, if people have a good service they'll post a review much less often than if they feel they've been treated badly, and there's

always two sides to a story so be objective if using reviews. Sometimes someone may have had unrealistic views that couldn't be met.

Many agents list the date a property is available to move into, together with whether it's furnished, a minimum length of tenancy contract and whether you need a guarantor. Be sure to double check this info with the agent when you call - turning up to view a house that's available too late for your move only wastes everyone's time!

If you're a group searching together, it's best practice to have just one / two people take the lead calling and arranging viewings, so that you don't all end up booking viewings under many different names and then on the day, realise you've booked 3 appointments on the same house!

# VIEWING A PROPERTY

## Be smart, stay sharp

The UoB accommodation team produce a very useful 'Househunting Checklist' to take with you, to help ensure you don't miss the important bits it's easy to overlook on a viewing, but which make a big difference to your enjoyment of living in a house. You can find this in the appendix, or grab a copy from the accommodation office on your campus.

It's a great idea to carry a checklist, to take time to look everywhere, and another good idea to take photos whilst you're in the property (make sure you check it's ok) as after you've seen a few houses it's easy to forget what each one looked like and how it was laid out.

Arrive promptly. If you don't know the area, streetmap it beforehand so you know where you're going.

Dress presentably - if you went for a job interview you'd dress smartly wouldn't you? This is no different. Whilst you're looking at the house, the agent might be looking at you and wondering if you'd be a good, responsible tenant for their landlord.

When looking round, do think about where you're going to work in the house - are there desks? Don't just look at its party potential! Consider other things too - for example if you're going to spend the most time together in the kitchen

and living room, is it more important that those rooms be large and comfortable rather than everyone have double beds?

Try to view as the whole group that will be moving together so you can discuss the house and ensure everyone is happy. Arranging for everyone to visit a house over a number of days can potentially mean you lose out to a group who was organised, went together and made a decision before everyone in your group had even seen the place.

When competition for houses is fierce, it's possible more than one group of people be interested in the same house. The landlord may ask the agent to decide who they feel would be the better tenant - and in that instance wouldn't you choose the people that showed organisation and responsibility by turning up on time, smartly dressed with intelligent questions?

As well as viewing the house, consider who lives next door. Does the neighbours' recycling have a load of beer cans and wine bottles in it? Could be you're next to a party house. If it looks like a family home, consider they could be working regular hours or have a small

child and won't appreciate late night music etc, just as you wouldn't appreciate a crying baby next door when you're revising!



You can ask the agent questions and a good one won't mind answering them or finding out for you if they don't know - if your questions

are avoided or they get angry being asked, ask yourself why that might be and do you want to be dealing with them as your agent?

If the tenants are home and you feel it appropriate, you could ask them a few quick questions about what it's like living there, have there been any issues and were they dealt with professionally by their landlord / agency?

**TOP TIP:** Once you've decided which house you'll go for, decide who will have which bedroom before you sign anything! This avoids arguments and resentment.



# FEES & REFERENCING

Get your head round this and you're sorted

Properties through UoB Accommodation site YourStudentPad don't charge agency fees so this is a great place to start - plus the properties are pre-vetted and the landlords have subscribed to a set criteria!

Going through a letting agent means paying agency fees. These can take some different forms such as administration costs, referencing charges, contract fees, or a combination.

Legal changes now require agents to display their charges online on property advertising - making comparison much simpler, so make sure you check! Don't resent an agent charging a fee - they're providing a service and deserve to be paid for it. However, some fees are excessive, so make sure you've asked what they are before viewing as this could influence your decision on whether to go for the house!

Once you've found the house you want, an agent will normally ask you to pay a non-refundable 'holding fee' to secure the property, so you can be sure you've got it, and they can be sure they've got commitment from you, to be able to stop other viewings

and confirm to the landlord a new tenancy will be starting.

You need to be certain that you're happy with the house, who you're moving with and that any questions asked have been answered before paying any money over. It's a good idea to get answers or promises of maintenance work that may be carried out in writing / email before paying the holding fee.

**Once you've paid it, you are committing to the tenancy and changing your mind or withdrawing most likely means you lose your deposit.**

Get a receipt when you pay your holding deposit. You may be given a sample copy of the contract you'll sign when you move in - if not, it's a good idea to ask for one so you can read through beforehand and not feel rushed on the day of signing. The UoB accommodation service can help look over your contract if needed.

Once you've secured your house, you'll all be referenced as new applicants, together with your guarantors (if applicable).

If you're unsure what a guarantor is check the

definition at the front of the guide, and ask the agent to explain their criteria for who / what a guarantor must be before you pay a holding deposit so you can be sure your guarantor fits the bill!

If you haven't got a guarantor, you may be asked to pay the whole rent for the contract period upfront. You could consider using a company that will act as a guarantor for you, though you'll have to pay a fee.

Most agencies use a third party to reference new tenants and you'll either be given a form to complete and return, or emailed an online application. Ensure you complete this quickly and fully - hold ups from any one person can affect everyone moving in!

The forms are pretty straightforward - they want to know who you are, where you've been living and for how long, what you do (student / working) and often will run a background credit search on you. Your guarantor(s) will do the same.

And if you only put a mobile number - that's no good to them because it could just be a mate you've asked to tell them how great you are when they call!

**TOP TIP:** You can make this easy and smooth for yourself, by putting yourself in the position of the person at the referencing company:

They don't know you. They don't know what you do. All they know about you is what you put on the form, and from that info they'll assess your application and determine if you're approved to move into a property or not.

For example, perhaps they'll need to call your previous landlord for a reference on if you paid rent on time - if you don't list the landlords name, address and landline number they can't do that.

So, complete the forms comprehensively, quickly, and you should have no problems.



MOVING IN

# ARRANGING MOVING DAY

## Thinking ahead

What time can you get keys to the house?

Using a van? Do you need to hire one, and where can you park? Do you need to pay for parking?

In more central areas of Brighton you'll pay to park – even finding a space is difficult. You can reserve a parking bay (called 'suspending' a bay) for moving day, arranged through the council, though its £40 a day and needs 7 days notice.

Consider how you're going to physically move everything in – if there's lots of stairs don't overfill boxes you can't then carry upstairs! If you've friends or family helping, politely remind them to be careful of knocking into / scratching walls etc when moving furniture – excessive chips / scratches can cause issues with deposit returns.

## AT THE AGENTS

### The important stuff to pay attention to

All the tenants and guarantors will need to have signed their parts of the contract before keys can be taken – if some tenants are moving in later than others, you'll all still need to have signed the contracts before the first people can get their keys!

You may need to bring ID with you so the agent can take a copy – they may already have asked you for this.

Normally on the day of the move, or before if pre-arranged, you'll sit down in the agent's office to sign contracts and go through the other administration:

**Contract** – you should have already read through this but if not, don't be rushed into signing. This is the important bit: **This is a legally binding document. Once signed you can't just walk away from your contractual commitments** – regardless if (for example) you decide to move out of the house due to a fallout with your housemates, or you change university courses / campus.

**Prescribed Information** – This concerns how your security

deposit is registered and the process at the end of the tenancy for its return.

**Standing Order** – This is an instruction to your bank to pay the rent. You may have decided to pay the whole rent from one joint account, or you may be paying individually.

**Paying the Balance of Money** – Check they accept a debit/ credit card beforehand if you want to pay this way.

Cash can be ok but they may charge a handling fee which makes it more expensive, so again, check with them.

You can ask your bank for a bankers draft, which is like a guaranteed cheque, though your bank might charge a small fee. Regular cheques take too long to clear!

It is often easiest to make an online transfer, but again ensure there's time for it to clear. A transfer from an overseas account usually takes longer and can incur transfer charges which affect the actual payment amount transferred.

You should also be told who manages your property. If the landlord is managing it you'll be given their contact details and from that point on, you speak with them over any questions, reporting maintenance or rent issues whilst a tenant at the house.

Alternatively, the letting agent may be acting as a managing agent. In this instance, you deal with them as you would a landlord and they liaise and arrange maintenance on the landlords behalf.

If this is the case, establish who at the agency deals with property management and speak to them directly going forwards with any issues during your tenancy.

**TOP TIP:** It's a great idea to report any issues by email and make sure you get a reply so you've got things recorded in writing if needed in the future. Always try to communicate directly with the person at the agency handling the property management / maintenance to avoid delays and bad communication.

# YOUR DEPOSIT

## What happens to your money

Part of your balance payment will be a security deposit (sometimes called a damage deposit). You hear stories of rogue landlords who keep tenants deposits, but this has been dealt with through legal changes requiring landlords / agencies to register these deposits in a government approved deposit scheme within 30 working days of a new tenancy beginning.

What this means for you is:

Your deposit is protected in a registered account the landlord / agent cannot touch. You'll receive a certificate or notification of which scheme it's registered with and a unique ID so you can identify it.

When your tenancy ends, this cannot be released unless there is agreement from both parties – tenant and landlord – over the condition of the property. So a landlord cannot 'just keep' the money.

If there's a dispute that can't be resolved between yourselves and the landlord / agency, the scheme offers an unbiased resolution service that will look at the evidence and decide if there should be a deduction from the deposit or not.

# THE INVENTORY

## Make this work for you

A powerful document that often isn't treated with the importance it deserves! If you're provided with one - pay attention to it!

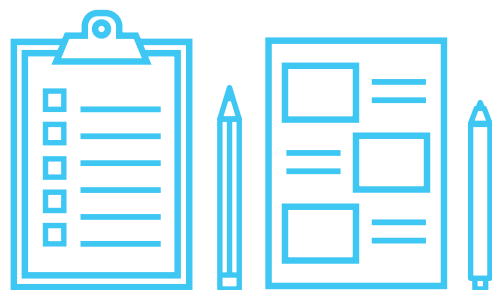
The inventory will list each room, together with itemising its contents and condition. Think of it as representing the value of your deposit.

If there is a dispute at the end of the tenancy over the condition of the property, the inventory can be crucial as evidence to support an argument from either the tenant or the landlord. So, it wants to be accurate!

Example: You move in and the hallway carpet has a stain on it. It's not listed on the inventory and you don't make a note of it on the inventory. At the end of the tenancy there's a dispute as the landlord believes you've caused the stain and wants to claim for a contribution toward replacing the hallway carpet – the inventory doesn't show it was there at the start of tenancy, so how do you support your argument to ensure you're not mistakenly charged?

On the day of moving in, you might meet an agent there who will check you into the house

and go through the inventory with you. Or you might be given it at the agents office and asked to check the house yourself before signing and returning it.



Eitherway, ensure you take time to do this and record any damage to structure and / or furnishings for the avoidance of doubt at the end of the tenancy. If something is a little unclear on the inventory it's ok to add more detail. If anything is missed, make sure it's added.

There may be a time period for allowing corrections to be added to the inventory when you start your tenancy, after which it will be assumed the inventory is accurate.

# SETTING UP UTILITY ACCOUNTS

## Don't forget the bills

Possibly this might be arranged for you through the letting agent / landlord, but you might need to do this yourself. You'll need meter readings for the gas and electric (your inventory might tell you where in the house the meters are) and to contact the utility companies to set up an account for the house to pay gas (if applicable), electric and water.



You'll usually be contacted by post within 6-8 weeks to confirm your account and set up the payment method.

Search engines like MoneySupermarket and Comparethemarket are great for comparing utility companies. You can make further savings on your bills by choosing things like an online tariff, and to pay by direct debit.

If some people in the house are full-time students you're eligible for a discount on council tax. If everyone's a full-time student you're exempt from council tax.

You'll need to contact the council to inform them, so they can record this on their register and not bill you. You can download a form to complete for this: Google '(your town/city) council tax - student reductions' for more info.

If you've one or more TV receivers (including laptops and consoles capable of streaming) you need a TV licence. Costs and different payment scheme info is here: [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk)

It is often your responsibility to set up internet and / or phone line services. Your agent or landlord can clarify this. However, you must not make or allow any contractors to make any structural changes or installations for these services (for example, attaching a Sky dish to a wall) without first checking with your agent or landlord. Not doing so would likely breach a clause in your contract.

There's a few companies that package everything together (utilities / services) to make things simple, and will view you as individual tenants rather than one house - you'll usually pay slightly more for these services but they can be great if there's concern about people moving out down the line / not being able to pay their share of the bills.

**TOP TIP:** After moving days over, if you are managed directly by your landlord (rather than through an agency etc) it's a nice idea to just call them and introduce yourself, so your tenancy 'gets off on the right foot'.

You can let them know a little about yourselves - like who it's best to contact if one of you is taking 'the lead', and the best way to reach you (e.g. mobile, email) plus it should also give the landlord some reassurance that you're considerate and be the start of a good relationship. This takes less than 5 minutes and can pay off hugely if something goes wrong down the line!



EASY LIVING AND CARING  
FOR YOUR HOME

# THINK ABOUT YOUR END OF TENANCY

Something to think about before it's too late

Something often forgotten: think about the reference you might need from your landlord when you leave the house! If you might move onto another property the next year, you'll be asked for a reference from your current landlord. A bad reference could prevent you from moving into a new house.

You could think of it as a 'property CV'. You want your employment CV to help you progress professionally, so you should try and make your property CV work for your future housing.

## INSURANCE

Most student occupied property will contain laptops, media and audio equipment, smartphones etc so it's important to ensure your stuffs protected. You can arrange students contents insurance fairly easily online, or might even find your parents home insurance will cover some things (but make sure you check, don't assume!).

## RECYCLING

Make sure you do your bit!

Depending on where you live, recycling might be done in large refuse bins on the street, or recycling boxes that you fill with separated waste (paper, plastic etc) and leave outside on certain days for collection. You can check this easily on the council website (search recycling and rubbish) by simply putting in your house postcode.



If you haven't got enough bins you can call your councils recycling service and order more / bigger bins and recycling boxes.

## CLEANING

Not everyone's idea of fun, but sharing the cleaning between the house is surprisingly easy and makes a huge difference to everyone's enjoyment of the place! You could try using a rota; all doing it on a certain day... whatever works for you.



Remember you have a contractual duty as tenant(s) to maintain your property's condition and not cleaning at all can potentially develop issues like condensation, blockages and stains that could disrupt your enjoyment of living in the house and affect your deposit return at the end of tenancy.

## NEIGHBOURS

Respect your neighbours and they should do the same. It's a nice idea to introduce yourself when you move in so you know who each other are. You could ask if they work unusual hours etc so you know when to try and keep noise down, and in return you might find that they do the same for you if you need to be studying for exams!

**TOP TIP:** The UoB Community Liaison Team acts as a bridge between the student population and the local community. If you run into difficulties, remember they can help you resolve things on a range of potential issues, even if you're not renting your place through the University. Just get in touch!

# HAVING A PARTY

House parties happen. This guide isn't going to tell you not to have one, but here's some tips on how to avoid causing nuisance and upset to your neighbours, as well as making your life easier:

- Tell neighbours ahead of time – e.g. a note through the door a few days before warns them to expect a bit more noise late into the night. They might even make plans to be out – regardless, it's just courtesy. Sometimes neighbours will know the landlord and this avoids them reporting back negatively that you aren't being considerate.
- If it's wet outdoors, have somewhere people can wipe feet or leave their shoes to avoid dirty / wet footprints all over the house – or you could be paying for a carpet cleaner!
- Turn speakers away from walls and move off floors to avoid noise and vibration passing into next doors walls and ceilings.
- Turn the music down a bit later into the night – you don't have to turn it off but respect that some people want to sleep. Excessive noise could lead to the Councils anti-social behaviour team or the Environmental Health Service being called.
- Get people to smoke outside. Tenancy agreements don't allow smoking indoors, so carpet burns and smokey smelling rooms can cause you issues when it's time to get your deposit back.
- Be aware of who's coming into your house! Contractually you are responsible for guests in your home, including any damage or theft caused by them.

# DUTY OF CARE & REPORTING ISSUES

Your contract details your responsibilities as tenant(s) so do pay attention – you have a number of items called 'duties of care' that you need to ensure you follow.

These are items such as (for example):

- You agree to pay rent
- You agree to take care to protect the property and its security
- You agree to care for the property and report any issues promptly

You are responsible for minor repairs during your tenancy, such as light bulbs, batteries, fuses and unblocking drains. Be mindful – many contractors incur a call out charge to attend to reported maintenance, and if the issue they attend to is your responsibility you may be liable for their charge, not the landlord!

If you have any problems that you do not think are your responsibility to fix, you have a duty to advise the landlord / agent promptly.

You might find appliance manuals in your property to help you operate things like the boiler and washing machine. If not you can often find and download these online, by simply searching your appliance make and model. Please refer to 'Caring for Appliances' in the appendix.

**TOP TIP:** Note that if a contractor responds to a problem (such as with an appliance) you've reported to your landlord / agent, which has been caused by your misuse or neglect, you may well be liable for the cost!



## INSPECTIONS

Your landlord or agent may want to visit the property occasionally to inspect that it is being cared for and there are no unreported problems developing that might need attention. This is quite reasonable, but they should give you at least minimum notice (24 hours) that they will be coming – it should be in writing (post or email). You are not necessarily required to be present, but you may choose to be.

This is an aspect where it's useful to be easily contactable and on good terms with your landlord / agent for the purpose of arranging inspections when it's convenient for everyone!

Remember you won't necessarily all be contacted individually – if one of you is taking 'the lead' with the tenancy, make sure you pass on any messages to everyone in the house so they're not surprised when someone arrives!

## KEYS

If you lose your keys or lock yourself out – **DO NOT BREAK THE DOOR OR WINDOW TO GET IN!** Sounds obvious, but it does occur... and then what happens? You'll be charged for replacing the door / window, plus lock and frame if you've damaged those too (which is very likely).



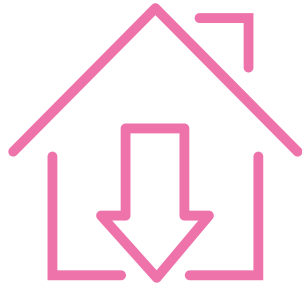
If you are locked out, try calling your housemates to see if you can borrow their keys, call the landlord to ask if they've a spare set you could borrow (or they might have left a set with a friend / neighbour in the city) or if you're managed by an agent, they should have a spare set of keys you could borrow.

## PREVENTING CONDENSATION

You should take an active role in the prevention of condensation build up.

This is a big one that can often causes students stress and problems during their tenancy, plus issues with their deposit return at the end of a tenancy.

For more information refer to 'Condensation, Damp and Mould Prevention' in the appendix.



MOVING OUT

# CLEANING THE HOUSE

You can clarify with your landlord / agent but the general rule is: the property should be left in the same condition as you received it, with FAIR wear and tear accepted.

That means if 5 people have lived in a house for a year, certain things can reasonably be expected to have gotten a little worse (example: wear on the hallway carpet) but some things will be above or beyond what is reasonable (example: burn marks on kitchen counter from placing hot saucepans directly onto it)

This is where you should get the inventory you were given when you moved in out of the cupboard, and read through it to see what's expected.

It's in your interest to replace any missing or broken items at this stage, as you may be charged for this after your check out, if required. Make sure the property and its contents are cleaned in line with your inventory. Plan enough time to clean - it can take longer than you think! It's easier once your belongings and any furniture are taken out. You'll probably need to vacuum the whole house, clean windows, wipe down all surfaces including the kitchen units and bathroom suite, empty cupboards and mop floors.

Here's some common items that get missed and can cause issues with deposit returns:

- ● Not clearing out kitchen cupboards
- ● Fridge / freezers not emptied of food and not defrosted
- ● Not cleaning out the washing machine soap tray
- ● Not replacing blown light bulbs
- ● Not cleaning light fittings, or wiping down skirting boards / doorframes

**DON'T** dump all your rubbish outside on the street because you run out of time on the last day and expect the binmen to pick it all up - excessive rubbish on the pavements etc can be fined by the council, which would be passed onto you. It also fuels a stereotype of students and reflects badly on the reputation of the University.

# PREPARING TO LEAVE

- Heating should be turned down to a minimal setting.
- Do a last check of the house to ensure you've removed everything that you've brought in.
- Take the final meter readings.
- Have you ordered something that's going to be delivered after you've moved out? Rearrange delivery.
- Remember to update your new address details with the University through StudentCentral.
- All give your forwarding addresses, contact numbers and account details to your landlord/agent so they can return your deposit and contact you if there's any issues.

# END OF TENANCY

Some important things to think about!

The landlord or agent should perform a check-out of the property with you, where the end of tenancy house condition is compared to the original condition. It's not necessary for you to be there but you might like to be in case something isn't quite right and you want to do some last minute cleaning.

Keys will either be collected by the person checking you out of the house, or you'll need to arrange with the landlord / agent what to do with the keys - you might have to drop them back to the agent, or

possibly leave them in the house. Bear in mind until all the sets of keys are back you could be charged rent!



Contact utility companies with the date your tenancy will end, pass on the final meter readings and give them a forwarding address. You should give your landlords name as the next occupant.

Contact your service providers (internet etc) to close accounts

if you're not transferring them to your next place.

Remember to cancel your standing order with your bank for the rent payment! The landlord/agent can't do this for you.



Arrange for post to be redirected at the post office - don't expect the landlord / agent or next tenant to forward post on for you.

# RETURN OF YOUR DEPOSIT

One of the last and best parts of your tenancy!

Your deposit return procedure is detailed in the information provided to you at the start of your tenancy with your tenancy deposit certificate / emailed confirmation, or can be found online here (depending on which scheme your deposit is held with):

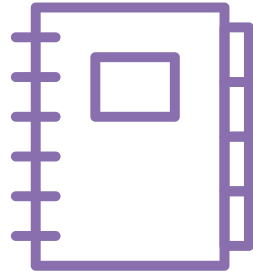
[www.mydeposits.co.uk](http://www.mydeposits.co.uk)

[www.tds.gb.com](http://www.tds.gb.com)

[www.depositprotection.com](http://www.depositprotection.com)

Deposit refunds will normally be made by online BACS payment within 10 working days of the end of the tenancy. In the event of a dispute however, refer to the deposit scheme guidelines, as the time frame can differ.

These payments must be made to the tenants named on the tenancy agreement, and cannot be made until the landlord / agent have confirmed your account details and forwarding addresses. They'll normally also require written confirmation of the outcome agreed between all parties (tenants and landlord).



# APPENDIX



**University of Brighton**

# househunting checklist

Take our checklist with you when you're househunting. Use it to compare different properties and it will help you to remember details from the viewings.

Property details and address	Property 1	Property 2	Property 3	Property 4
<b>Roof and guttering</b>				
Is anything broken, loose or missing?				
Are they overgrown with weeds or moss?				
<b>Doors and windows</b>				
Are they in good condition?				
Is there double glazing?				
<b>Walls</b>				
Are the walls in good condition?				
Are they free from signs of damp?				
<b>Other external</b>				
Is there storage for rubbish and recycling?				
Who is responsible for garden maintenance?				
<b>Furniture</b>				
Is there enough furniture in good condition?				
Is all the furniture you can see staying in the property?				
Is it fire resistant? (check labels)				
<b>Appliances</b>				
Are they in good condition?				
Is a washing machine provided?				

Heating and hot water				
Is it gas or electric?				
Is there heating in every room?				
Other internal				
Are there enough facilities for the number of tenants eg cupboard and fridge space, seating, bathing facilities etc?				
Are there any signs of damp or condensation?				
Can you hear noise from neighbours or outside?				
Gas safety				
Is there a valid safety certificate?				
Electrical safety				
Is there an electrical safety certificate?				
Are there enough plug sockets?				
Does the wiring look in good condition?				
Fire safety				
Are there smoke detectors? What type?				
Location				
Is the area convenient for your studies?				
Is the house close to public transport?				
Are the local shops and facilities adequate?				
Would you feel safe in the area on your own at night?				
Do any repairs need doing? If so make sure you get any promises in writing before signing a contract.				
Notes				

# CONDENSATION, MOULD AND DAMP PREVENTION ADVICE

Condensation is probably the biggest cause of damp inside homes. This information should help you identify and reduce condensation as well as help treat the mould growth that's often associated with it.

There's four main types of dampness. Understanding the difference between them allows you to treat the problem effectively.

## Condensation

By far the most common cause of dampness experienced by tenants.

Condensation is water vapour or moisture inside the home coming into contact with a colder surface like a window or wall. The resultant water drops (condensation) may then soak into the wallpaper / paintwork and over time, those damp areas attract black mould that grows on its surface.

Condensation mainly occurs during winter when it's cold - whether rainy or dry outside. Usually it's found in the corners of rooms, north facing walls and on or near windows. It's also found behind furniture (like wardrobes and beds) when they're pushed up against external walls and there's no air circulation.

*Note: Black mould is frequently seen on this type of dampness.*

## Rising Damp

This is water rising from the ground into the home, through or round a broken damp proof course (DPC) or passing through the brickwork if the property was built without one. (A DPC is a horizontal layer of waterproof material built into the buildings walls just above ground level).

Rising damp only affects basements and ground floor rooms. Normally it won't rise more than 12 - 24 inches (300mm - 600mm) above ground level and normally leaves a 'tide mark' low down on the wall with white salts on the affected areas.

Rising damp will be present all year round but is more noticeable in winter. Left untreated, it can cause wall plaster to crumble and paper to lift in the affected area.

*Note: Black mould is rarely seen where there is rising damp (and then only in the early stages) because rising dampness carry natural ground salts which prevent the growth of black mould.*

## Penetrating Dampness

This type of dampness will only be on external walls or if there's a roof leak, on ceilings. It only appears because of an external defect to the property, such as missing pointing to the brickwork, cracked rendering or missing roof tiles. These defects allow water to pass from outside to the inside surfaces.

This is far more noticeable after rain and normally appears as a well-defined 'damp-patch' which looks and feels damp to touch.

*Note: Black mould is rarely seen on areas of penetrating dampness, because the affected area is usually too wet and the dampness contains salts picked up when passing through the wall, which prevent black mould growth.*

## Defective Plumbing

Leaks from water and waste pipes (especially in bathrooms and kitchens) are relatively common. They can affect external and internal walls and ceilings. The affected area looks and feels damp to touch and remains damp whatever the weather outside.

A quick look at the pipes serving the kitchen and bathroom and the seals around the bath, shower and sinks; plus the external pipework (such as guttering) will usually find the source of the problem.

*Note: Black mould is rarely seen on this type of dampness because the area is usually too wet - and chemicals in a waste water leak will prevent mould growth.*



# HOW TO REDUCE CONDENSATION AND BLACK MOULD GROWTH

## 1. Produce Less Moisture

Everyday our activities – even breathing – add moisture to the air inside our home. The below table gives you some idea of how much moisture you could be adding:

ACTIVITY	MOISTURE GENERATED
2 people at home for a day	10.5 pints average
A person seated, working for 4 hrs	0.5 pint
A person sleeping for 8 hours	0.5 pint
A shower	1 pint a day
Washing clothes & drying indoors	3.5 pints a day
Cooking and use of a kettle	3.5 - 6 pints

**Source:** Typical Moisture Generation Rates for Household Activities, British Standards Institute

To reduce this:

- Always try to dry clothes outdoors.
- Avoid drying indoors – but if you have to, use a clothes airer in the bathroom, close the door and turn on the extractor fan, or leave the window slightly open.
- Vent tumble driers to the outside.
- Cover pans when cooking, don't leave kettles boiling and only fill with the water you need (this will also help reduce fuel bills).

## 2. Remove Excess Moisture

Wipe windows and window sills to remove condensation. This is especially important in the bedroom, bathroom and kitchen – just opening the window is not enough. Make this a part of your regular cleaning.

## 3. Ventilate - Getting Rid of Moisture

Ventilating rooms removes condensation and excess moisture.

You can do this without making draughts or cooling the room too much – open the window slightly or use the trickle vent that's often on new UPVC windows.

This allows warm (moist) air to escape and lets in cool (dry) air.

- Don't completely block chimneys, vents, air bricks and flues.

- Always ventilate or open a window when using the kitchen or bathroom and close the doors to prevent moisture spreading to other parts of the house. Continue ventilating these rooms for a short time after a shower, bath or cooking, and keep the door closed!
- Open bedroom windows after you've gotten up for the day (ideally for minimum 1 hour) and pull back the sheets to air the bedding. De-clutter your window sill if opening it is difficult.
- Leave gaps between the back of furniture and cold walls so air can circulate, and avoid overfilling cupboards and wardrobes as air cannot circulate.

## 4. Steady Heating

In cold weather, keeping low background heat on is the best way to warm rooms and avoid condensation – much better than short bursts of high heat.

Make sure you understand your radiator heating controls, thermostats and timers which allow you to control your heating and manage heating costs!

## 5. Black Mould and Dealing with it

Black mould can grow on walls, ceilings, furnishings – even clothes.

To kill and remove the mould:

- Remove excess mould carefully with a damp cloth (throw away after). Or use a vacuum and empty afterwards. Avoid brushing mould as this releases spores into the air.
- Wipe affected areas down with a fungicidal wash / diluted bleach (available from most DIY shops or supermarkets). Protect yourself with rubber gloves and safety glasses.
- Mildewed clothes can be dry-cleaned.

Dealing with condensation isn't easy, and you should try to carry out as much of this advice as you can each day so it becomes part of your habit and lifestyle – just doing one or two steps won't necessarily solve a problem.

## WARMTH VERSUS VENTILATION

Striking a balance between warmth and ventilation is important, and done correctly can be very effective.

A common thought is that by opening windows or ventilating you are losing heat - but what you're actually doing is allowing warm moist air to escape and cool dry air to enter your home. Dry cool air is actually cheaper to heat than warm moist air!

Many homes have double-glazing and experience problems with condensation and mould growth that didn't happen with old draughty window frames, because the natural draughts around the poorly fitted windows have been sealed. Using trickle vents or opening windows slightly achieves the necessary air circulation.

**Remember the point is to ventilate for an appropriate period of time, not to leave the windows open all day long!**

# CARING FOR YOUR APPLIANCES

Under the terms of your tenancy agreement you'll be looking after the landlords contents. Here's a few basic instructions for the care of appliances that may be present in your property, to help prolong their life and assist you in trouble free living.

Operating manuals can be found and downloaded online, for example here:  
<http://homeappliance.manualsonline.com/>

## Fridge / Freezer

A full fridge maintains its temperature better, so keeping your fridge fuller (even just with bottles/jugs of water) helps avoid food spoiling. Keep your freezer free from ice build-up to improve its efficiency, and keep running costs down.

You can also occasionally vacuum the coils at the back / underneath of the fridge to avoid dirt build-up, which helps improve efficiency.

## Washing Machine

Remove items from clothes pockets before washing to avoid denting the drum or causing a blockage, which can lead to the machine not emptying. Keep the soap dispenser clean and free from blockages. Cleaning the rubber seal inside the door prevents build-up of grime and deterioration of the rubber.

## Tumble Dryer

Remove items from clothes pockets before use. Make sure the filter is kept free from fluff and fibres. Using the machine when the filter is clogged can result in burnt clothes and the seizure of the motor. If it is a condensing dryer, the waste water compartment needs regular removal and emptying.

## Dishwasher

The machine will need regularly filling with special dishwasher salt, and 'rinse' fluid – both can be bought from most supermarkets. Ensure the filter is cleaned regularly. Waiting until the machine is full before using will help improve water efficiency. You should check yourself that your cutlery / crockery etc are suitable for dishwasher cleaning.

## Waste Disposal

Operation varies depending on the unit, however nearly all require running water

during use. Do ensure that only food waste is disposed of – paper, cutlery or anything plastic or metal will jam (and potentially break) the appliance.

## Radiators

Don't place damp / wet clothing over the top of radiators! As well as causing condensation and mould, this can cause radiators to rust and wallpaper behind to peel.

## Smoke Alarms

Battery operated smoke alarms have a removable cover so batteries can be easily changed. It's your responsibility to test the smoke alarm. Mains operated smoke alarms (such as in blocks of flats) are maintained by the managing agent for the building; in this instance please contact the landlord / agent if there's a fault so they can follow it up.

## Intercom

Intercom systems are maintained by the managing agent for the building. Report any issues to your landlord / agent so they can follow this up.

## Boiler / Heating System

It's relatively simple to reset or re-pressurise a boiler, which would avoid a call out charge for this simple task. Instructions in the operating manual should tell you what to do, or you could try calling your landlord / agent for advice if unsure.

You should not attempt to make any significant repairs or changes to the boiler and / or heating system; this would be something for a certified gas engineer to carry out.

**Should you suspect a gas or carbon monoxide leak at any time ring TRANSCO immediately on 0800 111999**

# USEFUL CONTACTS & RESOURCES

Remember if you want advice or have any concerns or issues about your tenancy, the University of Brighton Accommodation Team are there to help you.

## University Accommodation Offices:

Brighton  
01273 644100 (Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)

Eastbourne  
01273 643848 (Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)

Hastings  
01273 644631 (Mon-Weds 10am-4pm)  
01273 643848 (Weds - Fri 10am - 4pm)

## Housing Advice & Community Liaison Officer

Andrew Keeffe provides advice to UoB students in the private rental sector  
01273 641894 / A.W.B.Keeffe@brighton.ac.uk

## Sussex Police Liaison Officer – Lee Cook

Provides advice and assurance for UoB students and staff. He works closely with the Community Liaison team  
07947 722924 / L.cook2@brighton.ac.uk

## Brighton & Hove Council

Private Sector Team – 01273 293164  
Recycling & Rubbish - 01273 292929

## Eastbourne Council

General for Housing and Recycling & Rubbish  
01323 410000

## Hastings Borough Council

General advice – 01424 451066  
Housing advice – 01424 451100  
Recycling and Rubbish - 01424 451077

**www.whichpad.co.uk** – Student reviews of Brighton & Hove lettings agents

## Shelter (National Housing Advice)

0808 800 4444  
(freephone Mon – Fri 8am – midnight)  
www.england.shelter.org.uk

## SHOPS & HARDWARE STORES

### BRIGHTON

**Dockerills** (Tools, Ironmongery, DIY, Locksmiths)  
3 Church St, Brighton, BN1 1UJ  
01273 607434

**Screwfix** (Trade Merchants)  
Freshfield Industrial Estate, Stevenson Rd,  
Brighton, BN2 0DF - 01273 697165

**Robert Dyas** (Domestic Home Appliances and Parts)  
74 Western Rd Brighton and Hove, BN1 2HA  
01273 324881

**Kemp Town Tools** (Tools, Paint, DIY)  
46-47, George Street, Brighton, BN2 1RJ  
01273 672202

**B & Q** (DIY Superstore)  
Lewes Rd, Pavilion Retail Park, Brighton,  
BN2 3QA - 01273 679926

### HASTINGS

**B&Q** (DIY Superstore)  
Rye Rd, Hastings TN35 5DG - 01424 456300

**Robert Dyas** (Domestic Home Appliances and Parts)  
Unit 5, Queens Square, Priory Meadow  
Shopping Centre, Hastings, TN34 1PH  
01424 438746

### HOVE

**Wickes** (DIY Superstore)  
Peacock Industrial Estate, Davigdor Rd, Hove,  
BN3 1SF - 01273 207766

**Homebase** (DIY Superstore)  
182, Old Shoreham Rd, Hove, BN3 7EX  
0845 640 7076

**Robert Dyas** (Domestic Home Appliances and Parts)  
96 George St Hove, BN3 3YE  
01273 220763

**PartPoint** (Domestic Home Appliances, Spare  
Parts and Repairs)  
55 Queen Victoria Avenue, Hove, BN3 6XA  
01273 653000

### EASTBOURNE

**Wickes** (DIY Superstore)  
1 Hammonds Dr, Eastbourne, BN23 6PW  
01323 431631

**Homebase** (DIY Superstore)  
27 Lottridge Drove, Eastbourne,  
BN23 6QD - 0845 640 7126