

# RENTING CHECKLIST

Great news! You've found a property, and you're keen to move in. Use our checklist below to help you understand your contract, and make sure that you are clear on what's in it before you sign.

## BEFORE YOU SIGN ANYTHING:

- Make sure you've viewed the property and are happy with its condition
- Check the property for adequate heating, any signs of damp and mould, any disrepair, and any signs of pests, as these can cause a problem later on
- Get any extra things or repairs promised agreed in writing
- Make sure you are given the name and address of the landlord
- If you're using a letting agent, check they're a member of a **redress scheme**
- You will need to provide 'right to rent' documents (passport, ID card, BRP, etc.)
- Read all of the tenancy agreement and make sure you're happy to sign it, getting advice if you need it

## YOUR CONTRACT:

- Your contract will likely be an **Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)**, this is the most common option for students renting in London
- If your contract is not an AST, for example you are a **lodger**, check you are happy with what this means for you
- Your contract should state how much your rent is, and when it should be paid
- Check the term of your contract:
  - Is it a fixed term contract?
  - How long is the term?
  - Do you have a break clause if you want to **leave early**?
- Check how much notice you have to give the landlord if you want to move out

## WHEN YOU MOVE IN:

- Make sure the landlord gets an **inventory** done - you need to check and agree it
  - Take photographs when you move in and out of the property
- Check your deposit is protected – your deposit must legally be protected within the first 30 days of your tenancy by one of the following schemes:
  - Deposit Protection Service**
  - MyDeposits
  - Tenancy Deposit Scheme**

## SAFETY AND REPAIRS:

- Your landlord is **responsible for most repairs** in your home, including gas and electricity repairs, heating and hot water, and structural issues
- You should allow your landlord to enter the property to make repairs, but they must give you 24 hours' notice to do this (unless it is an emergency)
- You are responsible for minor repairs like cleaning mould, or changing lightbulbs
- Your landlord should supply gas and electricity safety certificates, and smoke and carbon monoxide detectors (if needed) throughout the property
- You should take out a tenants contents insurance policy to cover your personal belongings – this will not be covered by your landlord's building insurance

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Make sure you are clear exactly when your rent is due, how much is due, and how to pay it
- Check whether smoking, pets, or fixing pictures and posters to the wall are allowed (they usually aren't)
- Ensure that the property is adequately heated and ventilated to prevent damage caused by freezing or mould
- If bills are not included, you will have to open gas and electricity accounts – you will need the opening meter readings to do this
- You will be responsible for managing your council tax payments
  - As a full time student you may be eligible for a **discount, or an exemption** (if all people in your property are full time students)
  - To get this discount or exemption, you will need to register for council tax with your local council, then provide them with a Statement of Student Status – you can do that through your **Portico account**
  - You should not ignore any council tax bills that you receive, even if you think you should be exempt, as there may have been a mistake that needs correcting
- If you choose to watch television (even on a computer or device) you might need to get a **TV licence**

If you have any more questions about your contract, or are still unsure about anything in it after using this guide, you can arrange to speak to one of our advisors by completing our **contact form**.