

 BSU SUPPORT

# AN INTRODUCTION TO HOUSING



**BRIGHTON**  
STUDENTS' UNION

# WHERE TO GET SUPPORT & INFORMATION

## University of Brighton Housing Advice

For support and information on tenant and landlord responsibilities & disputes, rent deposit and general housing related issues. Appointments available. Contact Andrew Keefe at [a.w.b.keefe@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:a.w.b.keefe@brighton.ac.uk)

## Brighton SU Support

For information on rental contracts, getting your deposit back, housemate disputes and making complaints. Appointments available by contacting [bsusupport@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:bsusupport@brighton.ac.uk) or 01273 642876. Drop-ins available, [brightonsu.com/support](http://brightonsu.com/support)

## University of Brighton Student Homes

Property search scheme which connects students directly with landlords.

[www.studenthomes.brighton.ac.uk](http://www.studenthomes.brighton.ac.uk)

## Power Cut?

Call the National Grid on 105

## Smell Gas?

Call the National Gas Emergency Number on 0800 111 999

## Citizens Advice

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing)  
0870 120 2450

## Council Tax

Brighton:

[brighton-hove.gov.uk/counciltax](http://brighton-hove.gov.uk/counciltax)

Eastbourne:

[lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/counciltax](http://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/counciltax)

Hastings:

[hastings.gov.uk/council\\_tax](http://hastings.gov.uk/council_tax)

## Tenancy Deposit Protection Schemes

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

Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS):

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

Deposit Protection Scheme (DPS):

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

## Ombudsman Services

Support with disputes with landlords, energy suppliers, and telecoms suppliers.

[www.ombudsman-services.org](http://www.ombudsman-services.org)

## Marks Out Of Tenancy

Review, rate and search landlords, letting agents, rental properties, and neighbourhoods.

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

## Brighton Housing Trust (BHT)

Support across Sussex with homelessness

[www.bht.org.uk](http://www.bht.org.uk)

Brighton: 01273 234737

Eastbourne: 01323 642615

## Shelter

Support, advice and legal services with bad housing and homelessness

[www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk)

# WELCOME

At Brighton Students' Union we know there are many different factors to consider when deciding where to live in Brighton or Eastbourne.

We have put together this magazine to provide you with some top tips to make your house hunting journey as easy as possible. While there are many students looking for accommodation, there is no need to panic! Both Brighton and Eastbourne have plenty of options available, so take your time, consider your options carefully and **DON'T RUSH TO RENT!**

While house hunting can seem like a huge task, it doesn't need to be difficult. We hope that you find this guide useful when finding your ideal student house! There is always help and guidance available to you from both the Students' Union and the University - you can find their contact details on the opposite side of this page.

**Good luck!**

**Amy Jaiteh**  
VP Welfare & Campaigns

## Some key things to consider:

1. Decide the location within your city you want to live in (this will determine if you need to allocate travelling expenses in your weekly/monthly budgets).
2. Decide who you want to live with and how many housemates you'd like.
3. Decide how much you can afford for rent (considering whether your monthly rent will include bills or not).



# BEFORE YOU LOOK FOR YOUR NEW HOME...

## WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM A PROPERTY?

Having enough bedrooms isn't the only essential you should be thinking about. Will the people you want to live with want to share space in which to socialise, cook, relax etc.? More people can be more fun and cheaper bills. It can also mean more disagreements, noise and mess.

## HOW MUCH?

Deciding on what you can afford is important. Knowing your budget will help you with searching and deciding on where to live. When budgeting, do not forget to include bills, travel, food, socialising, and other weekly costs.

## WHO?

Think about who you want to live with. You may be best friends but can you live with their habits? Are some people in couples? How will this affect how bills are divided?

## WHERE?

Where your house is situated is one of the most important factors. How far are you willing to walk? Rental prices can be lower if you live further out of town but remember you'll need to add in the financial cost, as well as the time cost to your plans.

## WHEN?

Many letting agents and landlords may want you to sign contracts and put down a holding deposit as soon as possible. Don't get caught up in the pressure, there are many houses available. Only secure a property when you know it is the right place and everyone is happy.



# WHAT TO ASK AT A PROPERTY VIEWING?

## WHAT ARE THE TERMS?

Make sure you ask what is required from you to secure a property. What is the holding deposit? How much are the fees? What credit checks are required? Do you need a guarantor? What is the duration of the agreement? Always read the tenancy agreement and get someone you trust to do this as well before you sign.

## WHAT IS INCLUDED?

Understanding what is included in your rent is essential. Depending on the property, certain utility bills (e.g. water, internet) may be included but always double check.

## IS SOMETHING DIFFERENT OR MISSING?

Do you notice any differences between the advert and the property? Does the property description say that a washing machine is included but you can't find it? Does the bathroom have different fittings? Always ask why there are discrepancies. If you're not happy, don't sign.

## REPAIRS & RENOVATIONS

Check with the landlord or letting agent about what to do if anything goes wrong in the property. Is there an emergency number or do you have to wait until office hours? Also ask about any renovations that may be taking place during your tenancy and what disruptions there might be after you take up residency.



# MOVING IN CHECKLIST

# THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN MOVING IN

## BILLS

- Electricity, gas & water
- Broadband & landline
- TV – licence and digital services subscription
- Council Tax
- Insurance – home and personal items

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- Bank accounts
- Online delivery services
- Vehicle registration & insurance
- University
- Mobile Phone Provider

## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

- Tenancy agreement & property inventory
- Passport or driving licence
- Insurance documents
- Student loan documents
- National insurance number
- Council Tax Exemption Certificate

## REGISTER

- Doctor
- Dentist
- Electoral register

## PROPERTY CHECK

- Double-check the inventory & report any defects
- Photograph the property to record the condition
- Check deposit is secure in protection scheme

# LIVING IN YOUR HOME

## RUBBISH & RECYCLING

Different councils have different rules when it comes to rubbish and recycling. Check with the landlord/letting agent and they should tell you how to dispose of your general waste and recycling, or if they're unsure contact your local council.

## KEYS

Always keep your keys safe. If you've lost or misplaced them, don't break into the property as you will be liable for the damages, which can be quite expensive. If your keys get lost or stolen or you want to make a copy of them, ask the letting agent/landlord first.

## ALARMS

Test your fire alarm and carbon monoxide alarm monthly and every time you change the batteries. Don't remove the battery from alarms for any period of time. If your alarm sounds when you are cooking, it can be silenced by holding the test button. This is safer than removing the battery when you cook.

## INSPECTIONS

Your contract will include how often the property will be inspected by the agent/landlord. You should be told in advance when this inspection is due to take place. It is a good idea to make sure the property is clean and tidy. If you clean regularly, you do not need to worry about giving the property a deep clean ahead of the inspection.

## BILLS

By submitting monthly meter readings to your supplier your bills will be more accurate. By doing this you'll be less likely to receive an unexpectedly large bill when you leave. It is also worth knowing, some utility companies offer a discount for paying by direct debit and online billing.

## ELECTRICITY CARDS & GAS KEYS

Regularly check how much you have left on your meters so that you don't run out. You can activate the emergency setting that puts your meter in debt up to a certain amount.

# LEAVING CHECKLIST

## BILLS

- Claim back credit on electricity key and/or gas card at a local PayPoint
- Notify the local council
- Notify utility companies that you're leaving
- Take final meter readings
- Pay closing bills or claim back overpayments

## NEW ADDRESS

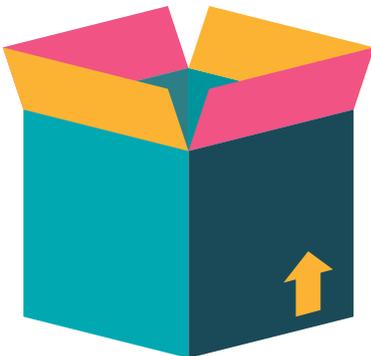
- Bank accounts
- Electoral register
- Mobile Phone Provider
- Online delivery services
- Set up Royal Mail re-direct
- University
- Vehicle registration & insurance
- Doctor
- Dentist

## PROPERTY CHECK

- Check none of your personal items are left in the property
- Check the property using the inventory
- Deep clean the property
- Photograph the property to evidence the condition
- Turn down heating to minimum setting

## AND FINALLY

- Return keys to letting agent/ landlord
- Request your deposit refund
- Check deductions that are being made to the deposit and question the ones that you don't agree with
- Cancel standing order with bank for the rent payment



# JARGON BUSTER

## **Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)**

Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) is the most common type of agreement used by landlords to let residential properties to private tenants. ASTs are typically given for a period of six months but can be for longer. After this initial agreed period, the landlord is able to evict the tenant without a legal reason.

## **Council Tax**

A tax charged to the residents of a property. If all residents in a property are students, that property does not need to pay council tax. If any of the residents are not students, council tax will need to be paid.

## **Deposit**

A deposit is a returnable sum of money which you pay to the landlord/agent and is held in a protection scheme. This money is returned at the end of the tenancy after any necessary deductions (e.g. unpaid rent, damages, cleaning) are made.

## **Fixed Term**

A contract which has a fixed amount of time for tenancy. This is usually stated in months on the contract. If you leave before the end of the term, you will probably have to pay a fee for leaving.

## Gas Safety Certificate

Also referred to as the landlord's gas safety record, this is required by law to be held for all rental accommodation in the UK where there are gas appliances present. All gas appliances in a rented property need to be checked annually, with a gas safety record being completed and a copy provided to tenants.

## Guarantor

A person, usually a close relative, who is financially liable for the tenant which includes paying rent if the tenant stops. If you have one guarantor for a shared property with one tenancy agreement, they are financially liable for all people in that property.

## Holding Deposit/Fee

A fee which secures a property before the tenancy agreement is signed. This will usually be used for administration fees and form part of the deposit. If you choose not to take on this property after paying the holding fee, you will not get it back.

## Individual Contract

This is where each tenant has a separate contract in a property. If another tenant in the property leaves or doesn't pay their rent, you are not liable for the money owed.

## Joint Contract/Tenancy

This is where some or all of the tenants are on one contract. If one of the tenants in the contract leaves or doesn't pay rent, everyone named on the contract is jointly liable for the money owed.

## Letting Agent

A person or company who carries out the main functions on behalf of the landlord and tenant. This includes collecting rent, organising repairs, and advertising the property.

## Periodic Tenancy (Rolling Contract)

If you are able to continue to rent a property under a fixed term contract past the end of the contract, you may be put on a rolling contract with no end date. The contract will end when either the tenant or landlord gives notice to quit. There will be a notice period.

## Tenancy Deposit Schemes

When you pay your deposit for a property, the landlord is legally required to put your deposit in a Government authorised scheme which will make sure the money is safe and will offer an independent and unbiased resolution if there are any disputes with the deposit during and at the end of the tenancy.



# MAKING STUDENT LIFE BETTER

 @BRIGHTONSTUDENTSUNION  
 @SUBRIGHTON  
 @SUBRIGHTON  
 BRIGHTONSU.COM



BRIGHTON  
STUDENTS' UNION