**The Do's and Don'ts of Private Renting**

We advise you to book your accommodation through our Academy. However, if you prefer to find somewhere to live independently, please see the below tips:

Reliable landlords

* Use professional services to find your accommodation such as booking.com, <https://www.britanniahotels.com> or an agent that specialises in student lettings.
* Beware of rental scams. Fraudsters sometimes advertise properties that do not exist or were rented out. They ask money in advance and then disappear with your money [Rental fraud | Action Fraud](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z-of-fraud/rental-fraud)
* Do not transfer money before you see the property or haven’t met a landlord / landlady / agent. Get the receipt of your payment.
* When you go to see the property find the address and tell your friend where you are going to or better even if you take your friend with you.

Deposit

* Make sure you have your deposit. You might be asked to pay a tenancy deposit. If you have an assured shorthold tenancy, your deposit must be [protected in a scheme](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/tenancy_deposit_protection_rules) ([Tenancy deposit protection rules - Shelter England](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/tenancy_deposit_protection_rules)). If there is anything you do not understand check with your agent / landlord / landlady.
* You should get your deposit back at the end of the tenancy unless the landlord has reasons to make deductions from it ([What can a landlord keep from your deposit? - Shelter England](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/tenancy_deposits/what_can_your_landlord_deduct_from_your_deposit))

Tenancy agreement

* Don't just sign your tenancy agreement, but
* Always check for letting agency fees
* Check if you need to pay any extra bills such as council tax, gas, electricity or water bills.
* Ask for an inventory before you move in. Take photos and videos. This can help avoid disputes about return of the deposit when you move out.
* Read the paperwork and ask any questions before you hand over money or sign a contract.
* If you don’t understand anything about your contract, bring it to school and our Accommodation Officer will help you.

Property

* Unless you have made a prior written agreement with your landlord, you cannot decorate the property - this includes hanging anything off the walls, installing extra shelving.
* The home rent should be safe to live in and in good repair. Your landlord must repair things quickly when you report them.

The responsibilities include repairs to (these come from section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985):

* Electrical wiring
* Gas pipes and boilers
* Heating and hot water
* Chimneys and ventilation
* Sinks, baths, toilets, pipes, and drains
* The structure and exterior of your home, including walls, stairs, roof, external doors, and windows.
* You're responsible for looking after your home, reporting any repairs and allowing access to your home for inspections.
* You're also expected to do small jobs like changing light bulbs or testing smoke alarms if needed.

Paying rent

* Pay your rent on time. Always get a receipt of your payment.
* If you have any difficulties paying your rent, talk to your landlord / landlady / agent and they may be able to help you.