



My Rent My Rights

**Know your rights as a
student tenant**



Bristol SU Lettings

bristolsu.org.uk/myrentmyrights



Who?

Your housemates are the most important factor in your living situation. So try and make the right choice for you.

- How many people do you want to live with? Large groups can be fun and cheaper – but they can also cause arguments over noise or cleanliness. How about two smaller houses near to each other?
- Will everyone do their fair share of washing up and cleaning?
- Who are their friends, or partners? They will probably visit the house.
- Can you all afford the same rent & bills?
- Do you all have similar ideas about parties? Loud music? When to sleep?
- Do your courses all have the same academic demands?
- Will you feel able to discuss issues comfortably with your housemates?

Not sure who to live with?

Look out for
Find a Flatmate
events for meeting
new people to
live with

The big stuff

Happy with housemates? Now sit down and work out some of the key details.

Budget

- Deposit & holding deposit (no more than a week's rent) must be paid up front.
- Monthly rent costs.
- Bills bills bills - remember to add them too.
- Keep the Cost of Living increases in mind- make sure you have some room in your budget.

Location

- Distance from University.
- What area of Bristol suits you?
- Affordability- consider looking further from campus at more affordable areas.

Your deal breakers

- What are the features, above all else, you want this house to have? What are you prepared to compromise on? They could be things like room sizes, parking, bike storage, or a garden.

You can find a full viewing checklist on page 10.

You can also visit the private sector housing advice page:

bristol.ac.uk/accommodation/private-rented/advice/

When to start?

Bristol SU Lettings will begin advertising properties from November, with new listings appearing regularly.

Keep an eye on their website for the latest updates, as the market can get busy, so it's important to stay proactive. That said, there's no need to rush! Take your time to weigh your options and make sure everything is in order before signing any rental agreements.

If you don't find a suitable place straight away, don't worry - plenty of properties will become available in the new year.

Research your Lettings Options

Bristol SU Lettings

A great place to start your search, Bristol SU Lettings is run by the Students' Union, meaning they prioritise students! They have a fantastic 93% approval rating and provide excellent tenant support. Visit **bristolsulettings.co.uk** for more information.

Be wary of online rental scams

- Use a trusted letting agent or landlord.
Is the agency ARLA (The Association of Residential Lettings Agents) registered?
Is the landlord part of the NRLA (The National Residential Landlords Association)?
- Never wire money.
- Never pay a 'holding deposit', rent or any money without visiting or completing a thorough virtual tour of the property.

Check out online reviews

You might want to avoid letting agents or landlords with bad reputations.

You can also find detailed resources and house-hunting tips on the finding private rented accommodation webpages:
bristol.ac.uk/accommodation/private-rented/finding-private-accommodation/

Viewings

Whether you are viewing a property in-person or virtually, there are some important things to remember!

- Make sure everyone you are planning to live with is able to see the property, virtually or in-person.
- Make a list of questions to ask about the property.
- If viewing in-person, try not to go alone if possible. If this is unavoidable, be sure to let someone know where and when you are going.

DON'T FORGET

to read through our checklist on page 10

Things to remember before the viewing:



- Consider checking out the surrounding area. Take a look around using google maps if you aren't able to travel there.
- Think about whether you would feel safe at night there.
- Are you happy with the commute to University?
- Don't be afraid to ask the agent, landlord or tenants questions.
- If you feel unsafe at any point during an in-person viewing, trust your instincts and leave!
- Take lots of pictures, videos, or screengrabs to refer back to later.



Before you sign

- Get any promises or agreements in writing before you sign. Using email is a good way to do this.
- Make sure that your deposit is protected in a deposit scheme within 30 days of you paying it.
- Make sure you're comfortable with any guarantor agreement. Can't find one? Consider the Housing Hand guarantor service.

Useful contacts

Bristol SU Lettings
bristolsulettings.co.uk

University of Bristol Student Accommodation
bristol.ac.uk/accommodation/privately-rented

Housing Hand
housinghand.co.uk

Shelter
shelter.org.uk

For more information, visit
bristolsu.org.uk/myrentmyrights

Agency fees

Since 1 June 2019, lettings agents can no longer charge agency fees. The only charges you may encounter are:

- A holding deposit (no more than one week's rent)
- A tenancy deposit (no more than five weeks' rent)
- Rent in advance and utilities

If you think you've been charged for something you shouldn't have, report it to local tradings standards and the University.

And remember, if you're not 100% comfortable with an agent's behaviour or their documents, don't sign anything and hand over any money!

Your safety who's responsible?

In association with Avon Fire and Rescue



Landlords are responsible for:

- Any furniture they provide - upholstered furniture should be fire resistant.
- Electrical wiring.
- Any electrical appliances they provide.
- The gas supply.
- Any gas appliances they provide - they have a legal duty to have these checked each year by a gas safe engineer.



You're responsible for:

- Checking the fire and smoke alarms, and CO2 detectors work after you move in. If an alarm stops working, check if it needs new batteries or contact the landlord to arrange a replacement alarm.
- You should allow your landlord access to your home to fit or repair smoke alarms.

Viewing checklist

Use this to help you ace your viewing!

Outside the house

- ☐ Is anything broken? Look for cracks in guttering, the roof, windows and doors.
- ☐ Are all walls in good condition?
- ☐ Is there somewhere secure to store a bike?
- ☐ Is the garden well maintained and clean?
- ☐ Who's responsible for the garden?

Inside the house

- ☐ Is there enough shared living space?
- ☐ What furniture is included?
- ☐ Are the bedrooms all big enough?
- ☐ Does it look well maintained?
- ☐ Are there signs of damp or mould?
- ☐ Are there enough toilets and showers?
- ☐ Are there enough radiators or heaters?

Location

- ☐ Is the property in a good area for you?
- ☐ Are there transport and shops nearby?
- ☐ Do you feel safe in the area?

Your landlord

- ☐ Do you have the landlord's full name and address?
- ☐ Does the landlord have an HMO license suitable for the property?
- ☐ Shop around - compare this with at least three other properties with other landlords.
- ☐ Which deposit scheme will your landlord use to protect your money?

Safety and security

- ☐ Does the landlord have a current gas safety certificate, provided by a Gas Safe engineer within the past 12 months?
- ☐ Are there smoke alarms/CO2 detectors and do they work?
- ☐ Are plug sockets free from cracks and other damage?
- ☐ Are there enough plug sockets in each room?
- ☐ Are all windows lockable?
- ☐ Are there suitably strong locks on front and back doors?
- ☐ Does the property have a carbon monoxide detector?
- ☐ Has the property been burgled? If so what has been done to reduce the risk?

Questions for the current tenants

- ☐ Are they happy with the state of the property?
- ☐ Is the landlord professional and quick to fix issues?
- ☐ Does the heating work?
- ☐ Do they like living in the property?
- ☐ Why are they leaving?

Contract

- ☐ Have you thoroughly read and understood the contract? Don't be afraid to ask the landlord or agent if anything is unclear.
- ☐ Have you confirmed the dates of the contract?
- ☐ Do you know how much the monthly rent is?
- ☐ And how much will house bills cost?
- ☐ Do you need a UK based guarantor?
- ☐ If you've had an agreement to fix things/refurbish is this confirmed in writing with a deadline?
- ☐ Who's responsible for extra shared item costs, like locks, on bedroom doors and appliances?
- ☐ Remember, you can't be charged for referencing, administration or credit/immigration checks. You can be charged for late payment of rent, lost keys/fobs, ending your tenancy early or changing/assigning your tenancy.

For more helpful advice check out bristolsu.org.uk/myrentmyrights



Student listings

New listings start appearing in November and will continue throughout the next year. Make sure to read all the details in the advert carefully before booking viewings to ensure the price and availability work for you and your housemates.

Virtual viewings are still available for those who can't attend in person, but if you're in Bristol, we strongly recommend attending in-person viewings for a better understanding of the property.

For more details, visit **bristolsulettings.co.uk**.



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