



Tenancy Agreements - Self-Help for Students

Signing a contract is legally binding!

Before you sign a housing contract, you can receive guidance from one of the team in the Student Housing Office. We do not provide legal advice, but we will explain what the terms and conditions mean so that you can make an informed choice. If you feel that you require legal advice, contact Shelter Wales or a solicitor.

However, it is important that you read your contract yourself too. Here are some things to consider - more details on each can be found in our Student Guide to Private Accommodation: www.bangorstudentpad.co.uk/Local

- Have you visited the property, is it safe, are you happy with it? Use our [House Hunting Checklist](#).
- Have you spoken to the current tenants without the landlord present?
- Is it a Joint or Single tenancy? This is important – see web links below for more info.
- Are you being asked for a guarantor? See web links below for more info.
- Make sure that the contract states the landlord and tenant addresses and phone numbers.
- Make sure that the contract states the correct property address.
- How much is the rent, how and when is it payable? Can you all afford it? Do the rent payment dates fit your financial situation, e.g. to coincide with student loan payments?
- What is included in the rent? Remember to take meter readings when moving into and out of the property, and try to put all names on bills.
- Are you all full-time students? Check your liability for Council Tax. Remember to update your new address on Bangor Portal when you move in.
- If you need to pay a deposit, check that the contract states this, and how it will be protected. Deposits must now be protected within 30 calendar days of receipt by the landlord, the required “prescribed information” should also be provided.
- At the end of the tenancy, ensure all bills are paid (and that you have evidence of this). Then contact the Tenancy Deposit Protection scheme, and you should get your deposit back within 10 days (or the scheme can help you resolve any dispute).
- Does the contract state that you will be given an Inventory? Make sure it’s accurate, and also take photos when you move in.
- Are you being asked to pay any other fees, and if so do you know what they are for, and are they refundable? Most landlords on our lists do not charge any non-refundable fees.
- When will the contract start and end? Does this fit in with your course?
- Is there a “Break clause”? i.e. can you (or your landlord) give notice to end the contract early? This is unlikely in a student contract – it is likely that you are agreeing to pay for the whole term of the contract.
- Are you being asked to pay a summer retainer? If so, what does it cover - can you leave belongings; can the property be let to others?
- Check your responsibilities re the garden, if there is one.
- Check for tenant and landlord obligations –are you happy with these? If there are any terms with which you do not agree, speak to the landlord and get them changed before signing.

- Make sure that everything you have verbally agreed upon is written in the contract. Don't sign the contract if it says anything that's incorrect.

Other things to consider:

- Always get a copy of the contract and always ask for receipts for any payments.
- Have you seen a copy of the Gas Safety Certificate yet? The landlord needs to renew it every 12 months so check the date.
- You have the right to "Quiet enjoyment" – i.e. the right of undisturbed enjoyment of the property.
- Take reasonable precautions to prevent damage from frost (e.g. burst pipes) – if you intend to be away from the property over winter, speak to your landlord about leaving the heating on low while you are away, and ensure that there is sufficient credit if you have a pay-as-you-go meter.
- Remember to inform your landlord of any repair issues in writing and keep copy.
- Visit our website or call into the office for copies of the House Hunting Checklist, Moving In Checklist, Moving Out Checklist, Rubbish Survival Guide, Damp Leaflet, Tenancy Deposit Leaflet and lots of others: www.bangorstudentpad.co.uk/Local

Useful websites to read for more information:

"Understanding your renting agreement" – includes info on differences between tenancies/licences; verbal agreements; types of tenancy; what to check for; unfair terms; joint tenancies, etc

http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/private_renting/private_renting_agreements/renting_agreements#rights_in_a_joint_tenancy_agreement

"Private rented housing for students" – includes info on students' rights; joint tenancies; deposits; guarantors, etc

http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/student_housing/private_rented_housing_for_students

"Signing a contract" – Advice from N.U.S.

www.nus.org.uk/cy/advice/housing-advice/signing-a-contract/