

The main things you need to know about a tenancy before you sign

- **You must stay for at least the length of the tenancy** – you will usually sign a six month Assured Shorthold Tenancy. This means that you agree to stay for six months, and the landlord must offer it to you for at least six months. **You can stay longer than the length of the tenancy** because it will automatically continue. You should read the tenancy agreement for the full terms and conditions.
- **You must live in the flat** - the tenancy agreement usually states that you must not leave the flat unoccupied for longer than 28 days without notifying your landlord in writing. Make sure you notify the landlord if you will be away for more than a few days – especially if you are going abroad. The landlord may take possession of the property if you have seemed to have abandoned the tenancy.

- **What the landlord should give you:**

[‘How to rent guide’](#)

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

- Tell your bank, phone company, etc., your new address and register with a new GP after you have moved if needed

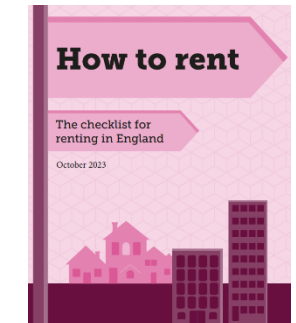
- **Getting to know people in the area** – you can find out about local community groups that you could join at your local library. You could also connect with a local faith group.



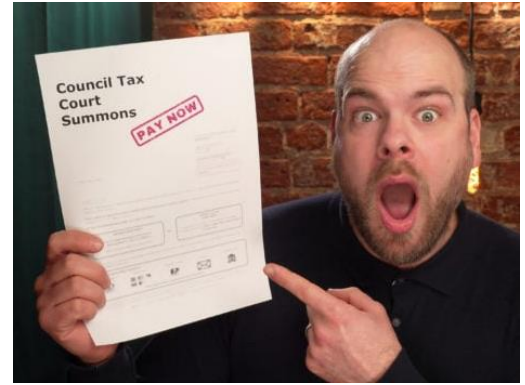
- **The Landlord must give you two months' notice** - the landlord must give you 2 months' notice if they want the property back and can only do this after the first 4 months of the tenancy.

- **Make sure the rent is paid** - to pay the rent you will apply for Universal Credit Housing Element. If you are not in receipt of Universal credit you will apply for this as well. **Pay towards the rent yourself if you are working** - if you start working after you move in, you need to let the Job Centre or UC know. You will need to pay towards the rent – do not spend all the money you are paid. To find out how much you will need to pay, you can go to <https://www.entitledto.co.uk/> Check your UC account at least monthly to make sure that you pay any shortfall in the rent from your earnings.

- **Do not leave without telling the landlord** – after 6 months you can give 1 month notice if you wish to leave. If you decide to leave after the first 6 months, please let us know. You should give the landlord at least 1 month notice, **hand back the keys to the agent or landlord** and let the council know so they stop charging council tax. **If you don't tell the landlord and council tax department you have left, you might have to pay the rent and council tax for the time after you left.**



- **Make sure you pay your council tax** - you will usually have to pay £10-20 per month for Council Tax. You must pay council tax, or you could be taken to court. Check your bill though so you are not paying too much. You would be entitled to both “Single persons discount” and also “council tax reduction” until you earn a significant amount.
- **WARNING:** If you don't tell the council tax department when you leave the property, you might have to pay council tax for the time after you leave.



- **Paying for electricity** – you will probably pay **£20-£30 per week for electricity depending on the time of year**. Ask at the viewing how you will pay for electricity. There is usually an average daily ‘standing charge’ of around 53p per day even if you don't use any electricity that day. After you get the keys, you will usually have to set up an account with the electricity company used in the building - this means there may not be any electricity right away. Check with the agent or landlord when you sign the tenancy agreement.

- **Take care of the property** - you agree to take good care of all the furniture that the landlord has provided. You also might need to unblock a sink, clean windows and change light bulbs. If an extra bin is needed, you could contact the council or ask the landlord to do this.
- **Reduce moisture in your property to help prevent mould** - you are responsible for dealing with moisture and damp from cooking, washing & drying clothes and from use of the bathroom to prevent mould from occurring. Please see '5 Step Guide to Prevent Damp and Mould Growth' at the end of this document.
- **Do not smoke inside the flat** - you are not allowed to smoke inside the property, you must only smoke outside the building.
- **Be a good neighbour** – we recommend that you be friendly towards your neighbours, and not do anything that could annoy them, e.g., making a lot of noise.



If you have problems with your neighbours, keep calm and try to sort them out.

If neighbours complain about your behaviour and you are evicted, we will probably not be able to house you again.



The landlord is responsible for repairing:

- Exterior of the property: walls, roof, foundations, drains, guttering and external pipes, windows and external doors.
- Basins, sinks, baths, toilet and their pipework
- Water pipes, electrical wiring, water tanks, boilers, radiators and fitted heaters
- **Report any repairs needed** or other issues e.g. pests to your landlord in writing in the way they request.

Other advice:

If you are a victim of crime whilst in the property, report it to the police and get a crime reference number. You should also report it to the landlord.

If you are being harassed by your landlord, please let us know. Harassment is any action taken by a person which is likely to make you want to leave your accommodation. It can include:

Changing the locks, visiting the property at unsociable hours, abuse, starting but not finishing repairs or building work, etc.

Other useful contacts:

Local authorities

Contact the local authority that your accommodation is based in for housing advice, pest control. Environmental Health, council tax and refuse collection.

Credit Unions & Advice Services

London Capital Credit Union (Low-cost loans and secure saving accounts)

T: 020 7561 1786 www.creditunion.co.uk

Advice UK (independent social welfare law advice)

T: 0300 777 0107 www.adviceuk.org.uk

National Debtline

T: 0808 808 4000 www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/>

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice

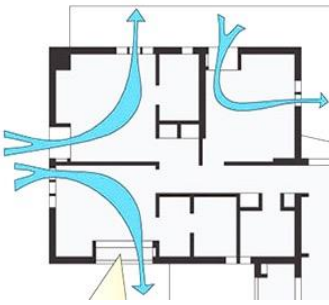


Preventing Mould

To help prevent mould:

Step 1: Ventilate your flat to remove moisture

Ventilate by creating a draught. Open a window on one side and a window or door on the other side of the flat. It is recommended that you air your flat for at least 15 minutes every morning, during cooking and after a shower by leaving the extractor fan running.



Step 2: Remove excess moisture

Wipe the windows and window sills of your home every morning to remove condensation.

A dehumidifier removes moisture from the air and is cheaper in the long run than paying more for heating to keep the flat dry.



A damp trap in your wardrobe helps prevent clothes getting mouldy.

Step 3: Use heating to help keep the walls dry

Use the heating to stop the flat getting too cold, which will help keep the walls dry.



Step 4: Reduce Moisture

Avoid drying clothes indoors but if you have to, dry them on a clothes rack close to a ventilator or an open window.

Cover pans when cooking and do not leave kettles boiling.

Having shorter showers and turning off the water while you are washing will also help reduce the amount of moisture in the air.

Step 5: Checking for and dealing with mould

Check regularly behind furniture for mould, especially if the furniture is against an outside wall. If you find some mould, the NHS advice is

‘Only remove mould yourself if it's caused by condensation and covers an area less than 1 metre squared (1x1 metre). Don't try to remove the mould yourself if it's caused by sewage or other contaminated water.’

If the mould has spread further, it is best to ask the Landlord to arrange for it to be treated. If the mould is caused by damp, ask for the landlord to deal with the damp.



To kill and remove mould:

Wear rubber gloves and open any windows. Close doors tightly to help prevent the spores being spread to other areas of the flat.

Leave windows open during and after the cleaning. Place any items that have mould on them in a plastic bag so that the spores do not spread.

Carefully remove mould with a damp cloth or sponge and throw it away afterwards.

Clean the area affected by mould using a cloth or sponge and some diluted washing up liquid or mould remover. **DO NOT USE BLEACH** as this feeds the mould.

Throw away the cloth after removing the mould.

Take a dry rag to wipe down and remove the moisture after the cleaning process.



Guidance for Viewings & Property Check List

- Please arrive early for the viewing and use this Check List.
- Please tick YES or NO for each point if you have time
- Take a photo or video of anything that needs to be sorted out.
- Let HOPE *worldwide* know anything that needs to be sorted out by sending a text (and pictures if possible) after the viewing. This will help the property to be reasonable by the time you move in, if the landlord agrees to offer you the property.
- Address of property viewed: _____

Please take Pictures



YES NO

Fire doors (see picture at the end) close & lock properly with a thumb lock



Window in flat opens & locks

Heating is installed - radiator fastened to the wall



Individual electric meter is not in deficit and key for meter is available if required

All lights work

Bed has clean or new mattress

Wardrobe is in good condition

Smoke alarm



Toilet flushes

Shower & sink works (hot & cold water)

Bathroom extractor fan works

Location of circuit breaker has been shown



Kitchenette and Kitchen: Do they function? Are they clean?

Storage cupboard

Worktop

Fridge

Sink (hot & cold water)

Communal Kitchen has enough space to cook



Any other issues e.g. layout, cleaning, rubbish to be removed, damp, mould, number of bins, trip hazards? _____

Fire Door

- 3 Hinges
- Thumb lock
- Smoke seal

