



Housing Glossary

Contracts

Fixed-term contract – states when the tenancy begins and when it will end. Most of the local student landlords use a 40 to 42 weeks fixed-term contract. This also means that if you leave the tenancy before the end date, you are likely to be liable to pay the rent until the end of the contract or find a replacement tenant.

Rolling contract – should you continue to rent the property past the end date on a fixed-term contract, or have a contract with no end (rare), your contract will end when either the landlord or tenant give notice to quit (at least four weeks).

Individual contract – if you have a separate agreement between you and the landlord/agent, and another tenant leaves, the landlord/agent cannot ask that you cover their rent.

Joint contract – If you and your housemates all sign the same contract, you are 'jointly and severally liable' for money owed. For example, if someone leaves the contract early – or damage is caused in communal areas.

Deposit

A deposit is a returnable sum payable to the landlord/agent. It is normally held against any end-of-tenancy rent arrears, wilful damage and any essential cleaning. By law, deposits must be held with government-approved deposit protection schemes.

Dwelling

Your main place of residence.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

A document detailing to prospective tenants the energy performance of the building potentially being rented.

Eviction

The legal process of a landlord removing a tenant from their property, and can only happen through proper court procedures. Without court approval it is illegal to evict a tenant. A landlord also cannot evict a tenant if they have not protected the tenant's deposit (where applicable).

Gas Safety Certificate

A Gas Safety Certificate is a certificate that is required by law to be held for all rental accommodation in the UK where there are gas appliances present.

HMO Licence

This is documentation which tests the property's physical standards through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and confirms that the landlord is a 'fit and proper' person. Licences may cost a landlord a few hundred pounds, and if the landlord is found to be letting a licensable HMO without one, they can be fined up to £20,000. HMO Licences are issued by the Local Councils.

Landlord

A landlord is a person who rents land, rooms, apartments or houses to others. There are also live-in landlords who reside at the same premises as the tenants, licensees or lodgers.

Letting Agent

It is an organisation or an individual who carries out functions on behalf of the landlord and tenant. This may include letting properties, collecting rent or managing the property on behalf of the landlord.

Private Rented Sector (PRS)

The Private Rented Sector (PRS) is defined as accommodation that is privately owned, that is, not by a social landlord, and rented out, usually at a profit. The PRS covers all forms of accommodation and varies in quantity and quality from place to place.

Purpose –built accommodation

This is accommodation – usually large – which is let specially to students. It may be 'halls of residence' type of accommodation, and may be catered or 'cluster flats' where smaller groups cook their own food. Individual rooms may have en-suite bathrooms or share facilities. They may be run by a university or college, or by a private supplier.

Tenancies

Assured short-hold tenancy (AST) – this is the most common type of tenancy in the private rented sector. Key points about the AST include that the tenant has six months guaranteed possession, and agreed rent, and legal entitlement to tenancy deposit protection (TDP).

Excluded Tenancies – are those where a tenant lives in accommodation with their landlord, and share facilities such the kitchen or living space. Lodgers are an example of excluded tenants.

Licenses – this type of tenancy is related to where a tenant does not have exclusive use of their accommodation; for example, if a service such as cleaning is offered.

Tenancy Deposit Scheme

Landlords entering into new tenancy agreements are required to place any deposit with a government authorised scheme, which will safeguard the money and offer independent adjudication in the event of any dispute.