



### CRIC Guide to Private Accommodation Booking

Welcome to our CRIC guide to private accommodation booking. We hope you will find the information provided in the guide very useful. Below you will find information that should assist you in your accommodation search.

#### Type of property

It is always important to know what type of property you are getting.

- **Studio Flats** - generally one room with en-suite bathroom, bedroom and kitchen.
- **Self-contained flats** – separate living/kitchen area.
- **Halls of Residence** – are purpose built accommodation blocks specifically designed for students typically offering en-suite bedrooms, social spaces and reception services.
- **Shared student house** – students only rent a room and share kitchen and bathroom.

#### Where to look

- **Letting Agencies:** For further information, please refer to **The Agencies and Private Accommodation Providers List** provided by the College.
- **Host Family:** Some students choose to stay with a Host Family. Host families provide a safe, secure and happy home environment. You can find further information here: <http://www.homestayconsultancy.com/>
- **Websites:** Popular websites such as [www.rightmove.co.uk/students](http://www.rightmove.co.uk/students), [www.zoopla.co.uk](http://www.zoopla.co.uk), [www.primelocation.com](http://www.primelocation.com) and [www.accommodationforstudents.com](http://www.accommodationforstudents.com).

*Beware of scams*

*Don't send money transfers or Western Union transfers as they are not secure. Seek advice from our Accommodation Team if you're unsure.*

#### House hunting tips

- If you choose to live by yourself, make sure you look for studios, bedsits and one-bedroom flats.
- Many of the private halls will also have Studio Flats.
- For room shares, look for lettings that show individual room bookings or one room remaining.

#### Understanding costs

- **Rent:** Make sure you have an understanding of how much rent is and if bills are included. If bills are not included it is best to budget accordingly.
- **TV Licence:** If you or your housemates have a TV or stream on BBC iPlayer you will require a TV Licence. You can visit [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk) for more information.
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- **Insurance:** Landlord insurance does not normally cover your personal belongings for loss or theft, so it is best to make your own arrangements.
- **Council Tax:** If you move into a property where all rooms are occupied by full time registered students, you will be exempt from council tax. The landlord might ask for a tax

exemption letter which you can request from CRIC. If the property has a non-student you might be liable for council tax.

- Other charges might include a contract or admin fee, reference checking fee and finder's fee. Always ask for a full detailed list of charges from the landlord.

### Understanding deposits

Landlords will normally ask for a deposit before you accept the property. The amount will vary, but it is usually the equivalent of 4 to 6 weeks rent. Make sure you know exactly how much the deposit is and what it's for. Understand when it's payable, when you'll get the deposit back, and the reasons why the landlord could be entitled to keep some or of all the deposit.

**Damage deposit** are returned at the end of the tenancy. If you cause any damages or have arrears or outstanding bills at the end of the tenancy, then the landlord may be entitled to keep some or all of this deposit. If the landlord does keep some of the deposit they must fully explain why.

**Holding deposits** are usually a non-refundable sum paid to the landlord to hold the property for you. Generally, once you have paid a holding deposit, the landlord should not then show the property or offer it to anyone else. You should only pay a holding deposit if you are fairly sure you want the property. If you change your mind, you won't get your holding deposit back.

***Whichever type of deposit you pay, you should always get a receipt which states the amount paid and whether it is a returnable deposit. Keep the receipt safe as you may need to refer to it at a later date.***

### Understanding contracts

Many terms in written agreements for accommodation are laid down in law. Make sure you understand all the terms before signing the agreement. Make sure the contract includes the following and you understand and agree with them:

- The start date of the tenancy
- The end date of the tenancy
- The amount of rent
- If the rent varies between different rooms, make sure this is clearly documented
- The dates on which the rent should be paid
- Any terms which deal with reviewing the rent
- The length of the contract
- Deposit details
- Responsibilities and expectations of the tenants
- Responsibilities and expectations of the landlord



- Notice period and how this can be given

### Types of contracts

**Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST):** You'll find that the majority of properties are let under this type of contract, which can be made for a specific 'fixed' period of time; one academic year, for example.

You normally won't find one for a period of less than 6 months. You can't give notice to leave early during the period of the contract, unless there is a break clause in your contract. Once the fixed term has ended, ASTs normally become Assured Periodic Tenancies. This means they continue on a weekly or monthly basis until you, or the Landlord, gives notice.

**Joint Assured Shorthold Tenancies:** Most students have joint tenancy agreements which means that all the tenants sign the same contract rather than having separate agreements with the landlord. A joint tenancy means that each tenant is 'jointly and severally' liable for the rent of the full property, as well as the bills, deposits and other charges. If any tenants leave before the end of the fixed term, the remaining tenants will be liable for the ongoing rent.

**Individual Assured Shorthold Tenancies:** This means that you're only liable for the rent for your room but have a joint right of access to all the shared facilities of the property (i.e. bathroom, kitchen, etc)

**Verbal Agreements:** These are not recommended because without a written record it can be difficult to determine what was agreed at a later date.

### Guarantors

If you pay your rent in instalments, the landlord might ask for a guarantor. This is normally someone based in the UK who earns a certain wage. Guarantors can be parents, a family member, friend or guardian.

If you cannot offer a UK based guarantor, you can use guarantor companies as they are widely accepted by many accommodation providers. The most popular ones are <http://www.housinghand.co.uk/> and <http://www.crm-students.com/>. Please contact the accommodation provider beforehand to confirm they accept your guarantor company before you use their services.

We hope that this information will assist you in your accommodation search. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact the CRIC Accommodation team on [accommodation@cric.anglia.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@cric.anglia.ac.uk) or 01223 695700.