

# Rights of Student Tenants in the UK

Knowing your rights as a student renter is essential for ensuring a safe and fair living environment and for having a positive renting experience.

## 1. Key Rights of Student Tenants

- **Safety Standards:** Landlords must ensure the property is safe, including annual gas safety checks and electrical inspections every five years. This ensures that all appliances and installations are safe to use.
- **Fire Safety:** Properties must have adequate means of fire escape, smoke alarms on every floor, and carbon monoxide detectors where necessary. These measures are essential for the safety of all occupants.
- **Privacy:** Landlords must give at least 24 hours' notice before entering the property, except in emergencies. This right to privacy is protected by law.

## 2. Tenancy Agreements

- **Types of Tenancies:** The most common type of tenancy for students is the Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST). Some students may also have a joint tenancy agreement or license agreement, particularly in university-managed accommodation.

Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) - A fixed-term tenancy agreement commonly used in residential rentals in England and Wales, where the tenant has the right to live in a property for a specified period, usually a minimum of six months

Joint Tenancy Agreement - A rental agreement where two or more individuals sign a single contract, making them collectively responsible for the property and its obligations

License Agreement - A legal contract between a property owner (licensor) and another party (licensee), granting permission to use the property under specified conditions without transferring ownership. Fewer rights than a tenant.

- **Key Clauses:** Tenancy agreements should clearly outline the rent amount, deposit, duration of the tenancy, and the responsibilities of both the landlord and the tenant.
- **HMO Regulations:** Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) have additional requirements, such as more stringent safety standards and licensing by the local council.

Your home is likely to be an HMO if other people live there and:

- they are not part of your family or household
- you share a kitchen, toilet or bathroom with them

Your landlord needs an HMO licence from the council if you share with 4 or more people. Some of these people might be part of your household.

Some councils make all HMO landlords get a licence even if less than 5 people live there.

### 3. Rent and Deposits

- **Rent Increases:** Landlords can increase rent once per year to market rate, provided they give proper notice. This notice period is typically one month for periodic tenancies and six months for fixed-term tenancies.
- **Deposit Protection:** If you sign an Assured Shorthold Tenancy deposits must be protected in a government-approved scheme, such as the Deposit Protection Service (DPS), MyDeposits, or the Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS). This ensures that deposits are returned fairly at the end of the tenancy.
- **Getting Your Deposit Back:** To ensure you get your full deposit back, document the condition of the property at the start and end of the tenancy, and address any issues promptly.

### 4. Repairs and Maintenance

- **Landlord Responsibilities:** Landlords are responsible for structural repairs, heating, hot water, and the safety of gas and electrical appliances. They must ensure the property is habitable and safe.
- **Tenant Responsibilities:** Tenants are responsible for minor repairs, such as changing lightbulbs, and for keeping the property clean and free from damage.
- **Mould Issues:** Mould is a type of fungus that grows in damp, humid areas, often appearing as black, green, or white spots. It can cause health problems such as respiratory issues and allergies, so it's essential to address it promptly.

Landlords must ensure the property is free from damp and mould at the beginning and throughout the tenancy, including:

- Structural Repairs: Fixing leaks in roofs, walls, or plumbing.
- Ventilation: Providing adequate ventilation like extractor fans.
- Heating: Offering a functioning heating system to prevent condensation.
- Insulation: Ensuring proper insulation to avoid cold spots.

Tenants can help prevent mould by:

- Ventilation: Opening windows and using extractor fans to lower humidity.
- Heating: Keeping the property warm to prevent condensation.
- Cleaning: Regularly cleaning prone areas and wiping away condensation.
- Reporting Issues: Informing the landlord of any mould or damp signs.

### 5. Dealing with Issues

- **Pest Control:** If pests were present before moving in or due to property disrepair, it is the landlord's responsibility to address the issue. Tenants should report any pest problems promptly.
- **Disputes:** If disputes arise with landlords, tenants can contact local authorities, seek advice from tenant rights organizations, or consider legal action if necessary.

## 6. Recent Legal Changes

- **Renters' Rights Bill:** Recent changes include the abolishment of Section 21 'no fault' evictions, the introduction of periodic tenancies, and stronger protections against unfair rent increases. These changes aim to provide greater security and fairness for renters.

## 7. Resources and Support

- **Where to Get Help:** Students can seek help from The [Students' Union Advice Centre](#)
- **Useful Websites:** Government guidelines and housing advice websites offer comprehensive information on tenant rights and responsibilities.

**GOV.UK - Private Renting:** This site offers detailed guidance on your rights and responsibilities as a tenant, including information on rent, deposits, repairs, and dealing with disputes.

**GOV.UK - Landlord and Tenant Rights and Responsibilities:** This guide provides consolidated information for both landlords and tenants in the private rented sector, ensuring both parties understand their legal obligations.

**Shelter:** Shelter is a housing and homelessness charity that offers extensive advice on renting, including your rights as a tenant, dealing with landlord issues, and what to do if you're facing eviction.

---

**Final Tips:** Always read your tenancy agreement carefully before signing, ask questions about anything you don't understand, document the property's condition, and know you can seek help from the [Advice Centre](#) if issues arise.

---

**For free, friendly, non-judgmental and confidential advice on the issues that matter to you.**

Advice Centre | The Students' Union at UWE | Frenchay Campus |  
Coldharbour Lane | Bristol | BS16 1QY

☎ +44 (0) 117 32 82676

✉ [advice@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:advice@uwe.ac.uk)

🌐 [thestudentsunion.co.uk/advice](https://thestudentsunion.co.uk/advice)

Opening times: Monday to Friday: 10:00–16:00.

Rate & review your landlord, agency, property and neighbourhood via

**Marks Out Of Tenancy:**

[www.marksoutoftenancy.com](http://www.marksoutoftenancy.com)

**UWE Find a Flatmate Facebook Group:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/UWEFlatmate/>

**UWE Studentpad:** <https://www.uwestudentpad.co.uk/Accommodation>