

Contract Checklist

Type of contract

- Is it an Assured Short-hold Tenancy (AST)? *If not or you aren't sure, seek advice before signing.*
- Do you know if you are signing a joint contract or individual contracts?
- If it's joint: does everyone understand that you could be asked to pay another housemate's share of the rent if they don't pay?

Check these basic details are clearly shown

- the correct address of the property or room you are renting
- full name and address / contact details of the landlord and the agent if there is one
- name(s) of the tenant(s) and contact addresses

If you require guarantor(s):

- Have all guarantors seen the guarantor form and the tenancy agreement? If not, ask for 24 hours to show them the documents before you sign.
- If it's a joint contract: is the guarantors' liability limited to an individual tenant's share of rent and damages? *If not, you might want to try to limit their liability using the Unipol template form.*

Length of the contract

- Do you know when the contract starts?
- Do you know when, why and how the contract can be ended?
- If it's a fixed term agreement: do you know how long the contract lasts and if there is a break clause (these are relatively rare)?

Check you can afford everything you have to pay

- Do you know how much the rent is, and are you and any joint tenants happy to pay it for the full duration of the contract?
- Do you know how often to make the rent payments, how, and to whom?
- Do payment dates align with your income dates?
- Are there any other bills included in the rent (e.g. utilities)?
- If yes, have you checked the terms of this arrangement (e.g. are there any 'fair usage' clauses or maximum amounts covered)?
- Are there any other charges to pay (e.g. signing/checkout fees)?
- Does the contract detail the deposit protection scheme being used and why money can be deducted?

Check other terms

- Have you read the contract in full and understood your rights and obligations?
- Are there any terms that you don't understand, or don't want to agree to, including undefined charges? If you're not sure, seek advice about your rights before signing!
- Have you been provided with an inventory showing what's included?
- Have you got all plans for refurbishment/promised changes/dates of completion written into the contract?
- Have you taken it to your students' union or local advice centre first for checking? Good landlords will let you take the contract away for 24hrs before signing.
- Have you seen a Gas Safety Certificate and HMO license (where relevant)?

IN A NUTSHELL:

Before you sign, are you happy with:

- The property?
- The landlord/agent?
- The people you are moving in with?
- The cost?
- The terms of the agreement?

It's easier to say 'no' before you sign...