

Hull University Union Advice Centre

Housing

Know your stuff

The Advice Centre

We are on hand to provide free, impartial advice and information on all aspects of housing from house hunting to dealing with landlord/ housemate disputes.

We can also help if you are having problems with your mortgage or if you don't rent from a student landlord - simply if you have a housing related problem, we can help!

Who to live with?

The most important thing is who you live with. Our best tip is to wait until after the exams in January before you start looking or sign up for somewhere to live. We say this because it is only after all the stress of deadlines, exams and having less money before Christmas that you truly know who are your friends at university. Remember there is no rush for housing as the majority of students wait til February anyway.



OPENING HOURS:

Semester:

Monday 9.30am-3pm
Tuesday 9.30am-6.30pm
Wednesday CLOSED
Thursday 9.30am-3pm
Friday 9.30am-3pm

Vacation:

Tuesday 9.30am-3pm
Thursday 9.30am-3pm

Tel 01482 466263

Email hull-advice-centre@hull.ac.uk



When you're looking....

Landlords will tell you that all their houses are going and FAST. Think things through and believe us when we say there is way more choice out there than you're led to believe.

If a landlord is promising you the world before you sign the contract, get them to write it down. They may promise you a fully refurbished house before you move in but, in reality, if it's not written down you probably won't get it.

Deposits: All deposits are protected. Your landlord has to inform you within 14 days of receiving the deposit which scheme they are using. Beware some landlords are asking for **NON REFUNDABLE ADMIN FEES**.



And remember...

The best recommendations are from current or previous tenants. So talk to older members of the course you study or societies or clubs you are a member of, or if you visit a house to look around and there are current tenants, ask them for a private chat away from the landlord or lettings agency.

You never really know someone until you live with them and a lot can change over the summer. My biggest tip is to make a cleaning rota; most of the problems we hear about are to do with squabbles over who took the bin out last. Don't let this happen to you, you were friends when you moved in, keep it that way

The most important thing when you're house hunting – make sure you think it through, rash decisions only lead to trouble. The second most important thing is following this checklist:

AREA: Is it safe, convenient for amenities, good transport links, close to uni? You know what you want, make sure you get it.

GAS & ELECTRICITY: Has it got adequate heating (TEST IT!), is there a safety certificate, does the cooker work, can you get hot water – you need to check these things before you move in. Use the money doctors budget calculator that can be found on <http://hullmoneydoctors.co.uk/>

SECURITY/SAFETY: Does the property have a security system, is there a security chain, are there any broken windows or 'weak spots' in the security, are the fire safety provisions adequate?

FURNITURE: Is there enough furniture for the amount of people, is it in good condition, does it meet with fire regulations, and is it clean - get an inventory!

OUTSIDE THE PROPERTY: Not enough people check this – have a GOOD look around the property - make sure that everything looks ok, again are there any weak spots in the security of the property, do the walls look like they have had damp?

REPAIRS: Any there any repairs that you notice as you walk around - make a note of these and ask for them to be done before you move in, get an agreement of this signed by the landlord.

CONTRACT: Is everything written down, are the amounts correct, if bills are included then are they capped, are you jointly liable. If you agree anything with the landlord verbally, make sure you write it down and get the landlord to sign the agreement. DON'T sign unless you are 100% happy – don't let the landlord pressure you!

LOCATION: There are some student locations such as Princes Avenue that can be a bit away from the university. Remember the further you are away from university, the more travelling time and sometimes cost there will be in order to get onto campus. The route between town and campus can be especially busy.



Value for money?

Most importantly when in doubt bring the contract to us and we'll read through it for you. We always check that a contract includes the following:

1. How much the rent is and when and how it should be paid. (Check that the rent adds up and that there are no extra charges.)
2. The landlord's and tenants' names and the address of the property being let.
3. The date the tenancy began and its duration.
4. Who is responsible for the fuel bills, water rates and council tax?
5. Details of whether other people are allowed the use of all or part of the property, and if so, which part.
6. Whether the landlord will provide any services (i.e. laundry, cleaning), and whether there are service charges for these.
7. The length of notice which the landlord or the tenant needs to give, if the tenancy is to be ended. (There are statutory rules regarding this dependent on the tenancy and it's extremely difficult and often costly to end a tenancy early without just cause.)
8. The landlord's and tenants' repair obligations.
9. The landlord's right of access, which should be at a reasonable time and after 24 hours written notice.

