

Bluestone



STUDENT GUIDE

Student Guide

We understand that it can be a daunting prospect moving to a new town, looking for a new property and perhaps living independently for the first time. There are so many decisions to make and ultimately, you will be entering into a contractual arrangement, so this guide has been designed to provide you with all the information you should need as you prepare to move; with some helpful hints and tips as well as useful contacts.



Finding the Right Property

When looking for the right property you might want to consider the following factors:

- Location – Is the property located close to transport links and local amenities?
- Rent – is the rent affordable for you? Unless otherwise stated you will normally be responsible for all bills such as gas, water, electric and council tax, so you will need to take this into account when budgeting.
- Specific Requirements – some landlords won't consider tenants with, for example pets.

Viewing a property

When you view any potential houses or flats, it can be useful to take someone with you or your guarantor for a second opinion. It is essential that all applicants view the property prior to the application being made to ensure that everyone is happy with the decision. It can be useful to have a checklist of items to look out for.



Referencing Process

If you agree to take a property but don't want to move in until the start of the academic year, you will be required to pay the application fee and deposit in order to secure the property. If you change your mind, this money will be non-refundable and may be paid to the Landlord. That is of course, unless the Landlord withdraws the property from the market. You will also be asked to complete a referencing form and provide us with identification and student identification.

Your guarantor will also be required to complete a referencing form and provide us with the following documents:

- Identification
- 3 months payslips
- 3 months bank statements

We will also need to carry out a credit check, and the guarantor will be required to sign an agreement prior to the tenancy commencing.

Guarantor

We require each applicant to have a Guarantor. The role of the Guarantor is to ensure that the Tenant abides by the terms of the Tenancy, including paying the rent as specified in your Tenancy Agreement.

A guarantor is a third party, such as a parent or close relative, who agrees to pay your rent if you can't or don't. As tenants are liable jointly and severally, all students are responsible for paying their share of any late fees. Ultimately, your landlord can take legal action to recover unpaid rent from your guarantor.

Preparing to Move

The first rental payment will be due on a specified day of each month and prior to the commencement of the Tenancy. When you receive a copy of the tenancy agreement, you are strongly advised to read it carefully and check any terms or points that you do not understand with a solicitor, prior to signing. The tenancy agreement is a binding contract between you and the landlord. It contains the rights and responsibilities of each party during the Tenancy.



There are obligations that you and your landlord have, which may not be set down in the agreement, but are provided by law and are implied in all tenancy agreements. These terms form part of the contract, even though they have not been specifically agreed between your landlord and you.

Tenants must arrange an appointment with us in order to sign the Tenancy Agreement; all tenants must sign this document. At this point, we will provide you with:

- A copy of a valid gas safety certificate (if applicable)
- Details of the property management department personnel, including instructions on how to report damages or maintenance queries.
- Manuals for any appliances in the property (where available)
- Sets of keys for each Student
- A copy of the Inventory and schedule of condition.
- Any other relevant information which is specific to the property.

Deposit

You should expect to pay approximately one month's rent as a deposit. If you decide not to take up the tenancy, you will forfeit the deposit at this stage. All Landlords and agents are required by law to register and protect your deposit within a government-approved scheme, your Tenancy Agreement sets out exactly how the money will be dealt with when you move out and what you can expect to happen. The fact that a deposit has been paid does not mean that a tenant can afford to ignore any other promise contained in the Tenancy Agreement. If there is a dispute at the end of a tenancy regarding any deductions, it will be resolved by the scheme protecting the deposit, which will be used to adjudicate and decide how the deposit should be returned.

This deposit will always be dealt with as one lump sum payment and not as individual shares. At the end of the Tenancy you and your fellow Students will be jointly responsible for any damage to the property, and this may be deducted from the whole deposit regardless of where in the property the damage has occurred. Normally, you will liaise with your fellow Students to decide who should receive what amount back after deductions have been made and the Tenancy Deposit Schemes can arrange for these individual payments to be made.



Insurance

Whilst your landlord is responsible for insuring the building that you are renting, you are liable for insuring your belongings against theft or damage, as they will not be covered by the landlord's insurance policy. We can offer you a personalised tenant's insurance quote; please speak to any member of staff to make sure you are covered. It is important that your landlord's furnishings are protected by the policy, in case of any mishaps during your tenancy.



Inventory

An Inventory or Schedule of Condition will be prepared prior to the start of your Tenancy. This will describe the condition of the inside and outside of the property, its contents and the garden, and any other outbuildings if applicable. You will receive a copy when you move in and will be asked to check and sign this. You have 7 days from the commencement of the tenancy to note any amendments and return it to the office to be checked.

Utilities

If your property is managed by us, we will inform utility providers that you have moved in and provide them with meter readings. You will be responsible for the payment of all utilities and council tax for the duration of the Tenancy, unless otherwise stated.

Our Role

If your property is managed by us, your Landlord will have authorised us to deal with any matters relating to his property and your Tenancy.

In certain circumstances, we may have to refer back to your Landlord for authorisation with particular matters. This would include, for example, any essential maintenance or repairs as instructed.

Tenant Responsibilities

- Remember that you will need to buy a TV licence if using a television.
- Ensure that all rubbish and recycling is disposed of in the appropriate manner. If you are living in a flat within a block, you should familiarise yourself with the location of the communal bins and not leave your rubbish in the communal areas.
- You will be responsible for any damage caused due to misuse of an appliance. Ensure that any filters are cleaned regularly and that the soap tray / washing machine/dish washer are kept clean.
- You have a duty to use the property in the proper manner and to take good care of it. You will also be responsible for minor repairs, such as replacing light bulbs, unblocking sinks and keeping the place clean.
- If you have a garden you will be responsible for maintaining it and returning it to the state it was in at the commencement of the tenancy.
- Familiarise yourself with the location of your utility meters, the gas control valve, the electric fuse box and stopcock in case of emergency.
- Refer to your Tenancy Agreement regarding permission to keep pets or animals at the property.
- You must not run a business from the property
- Obtain written permission from us if you plan to decorate or alter the property in any way; this includes picture hooks and drilling walls.
- Keep all keys that have been issued to you safe, including key fobs and any codes that have been issued to you. In the event of you losing any keys you will be responsible for the cost of replacing these keys.

Condensation and Ventilation

Condensation can be prevented or reduced in any property by controlling excess moisture in the following ways:

- Close your kitchen and bathroom doors to prevent steam going into other, colder rooms.
- Open the kitchen or bathroom windows (if applicable) when cooking or washing.
- Open windows in other rooms to allow for a change of air.
- Keep trickle vents open (these are small devices on new windows which can be opened without affecting the security to your property).
- Curtains and blinds should be kept open during the day as this will help to minimise any condensation in the property.
- Wipe down surfaces where moisture settles to prevent mould forming.
- Use the extractor fans if supplied in the property (do not isolate fans in bathrooms).
- Dry clothes outside wherever possible.
- Do not hang wet clothes over radiators (this will cause condensation and damage to the decor, which you will be responsible for rectifying).
- Ensure that tumble driers are vented outside.
- Maintain a low background heat- it is advised that the property thermostat is kept at a minimum of 13 degrees during cold periods to prevent the hot and cold effect, which causes condensation.

Failure to adhere to the above may result in damage to the property which in turn you will be responsible for. In this case, you will have to cover the cost of any repairs or work needed to rectify the problem.

Smoke Detectors

We will contact you on a monthly basis to ensure that your fire alarms are working properly. Please ensure that you test the detectors regularly and replace the batteries as necessary. Be aware of any potential fire hazards that you may create in the property such as burning candles, hot cooking oil, open fires and so on.




Maintenance/Repairs

It is your responsibility to promptly report any repairs or maintenance issues to us if we manage the property. If the Landlord manages the property, you will need to contact the Landlord directly; we will provide you with their details at the start of the tenancy.

Except for in a gas emergency, don't instruct any contractor to carry out any works to the property. If you do so, without prior approval from the Landlord or us, you may be liable to pay the contractor's invoice. If there are maintenance contracts or guarantees for any of the appliances or installations at the property, then we will leave copies for you. Again, if a different contractor is used in this case, you may be charged.

Your Landlord is responsible for ensuring that all furniture, which has been provided as part of the Tenancy, complies with The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988. Your Landlord is responsible for ensuring that all gas appliances, which have been provided as part of the Tenancy, comply with Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.





Your Landlord is responsible for ensuring that all electrical appliances, which have been provided as part of the Tenancy, comply with Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994, and with the Plugs and Sockets etc (Safety) Regulations 1994.


The Landlord is responsible for the structure of the building, drains, gutters, and down pipes. If the property is a flat then the Freeholder and its managing agent will ensure that these are maintained.

The Landlord is also responsible for maintaining the heating and hot water, sanitary appliances, and installation of gas, electric and water at the property, which will be repaired as necessary throughout the Tenancy, unless the fault has been caused by any neglect or misuse by the Tenants, in which case you will be responsible.

Inspections

It is our responsibility to carry out periodic inspections of managed properties on a regular basis in order to assess the condition of the property and to ascertain whether any maintenance or repairs are necessary. We will also look to ensure that you are conducting the tenancy in an acceptable manner. We will give you seven days written notice of the date and time of our planned visit. Whilst it is preferred, you do not need to attend as our management team will have keys to gain access to the property providing that you have given consent. If we find any issues at the property, we will write to you describing any damage, defects or areas that require cleaning or if we feel that the Tenancy is being breached in some way. At this point, you will be given a set period of time in which to rectify the issues and we will then re inspect the property.

When we do not provide a fully managed service, the Landlord will make direct arrangements with you for inspection purposes and cannot access a property without your consent.



Shared Tenancy problems

Not knowing your other housemates well, can increase the likelihood of problems occurring. The following tips can help to avoid any disagreements:



- Decide how much everyone will contribute on a monthly basis for utilities and so on.
- Over estimate how much you will need to pay so that there is always a residual to act as a buffer.
- Be sure that everyone understands that they must pay their share of the rent into the group bank account in advance of the standing order being paid; failure to do so will result in late fees being applied to the account, which each and every tenant will be responsible for paying.
- Respect your fellow tenants' quiet enjoyment of the Tenancy.

Leaving the Tenancy early

Every person who is named on the Tenancy Agreement is committed to the fixed term of the Tenancy, that is, until the last day of the Tenancy as per the written agreement. However, there may be occasions when one tenant wishes to leave the property early. Everyone named, including Guarantors, are jointly and severally liable (including the Tenant who is leaving) for the rent which means that even if only one person doesn't pay their share, everyone else can be pursued for this outstanding amount.

End of the Tenancy

It is essential that the property and its contents are handed back in the same condition that they were in at the beginning of the tenancy, whilst allowing for normal wear and tear. Furniture must also be in the same rooms as they were originally in. By the last day of your tenancy, remove all your belongings from the property, and ensure that the property is clean, including kitchen appliances such as the oven. Also, remember to tend to the garden (if applicable) making sure that the borders are weeded and the grass cut.

You will not be able go back to the property after the end of the Tenancy to carry out any cleaning or gardening. If the property is not left clean, or the garden is untidy, you may be charged for carrying out work; this money will be deducted from the deposit.

Tips for ensuring that you receive your deposit in its entirety:



- All kitchen utensils, equipment and appliances should be cleaned; the oven, the fridge and freezer defrosted; food should be removed from all the cupboards, and all hard surfaces should be washed down and cleaned, including the kitchen floor.
- All bathroom/WC furniture and fittings should be thoroughly cleaned with an appropriate bathroom cleaner/disinfectant paying particular attention to any stains or marks.
- All the woodwork, skirting boards etc. should be washed down.
- All windows must be cleaned on the inside, and interior window frames and ledges must be wiped clean throughout.
- Ceilings and walls must be cobweb free.
- All items of furniture should be dusted, cleaned and left in the appropriate rooms.
- All electrical goods and appliances, including light bulbs and any garden equipment, should be in its original order.
- Gardens and patios should be free of weeds and lawns cut. The garden should be in the same condition as when handed to you at the start of the tenancy.
- No rubbish should be left on the premises and bins should be left in their original condition.
- All sets of keys must be handed over. Leave internal keys for cupboards and windows in their locks. Check your inventory to see what keys were handed to you at the start of the tenancy.

Final Bills

You should contact the appropriate offices for telephone, water rates, and council tax to arrange for final bills. For gas and electricity, it is generally easier to inform the company of the final meter reading after checkout. We will record these readings during the checkout and send letters on your behalf. We will also supply them with your forwarding addresses.

Mail Forwarding

You should also make arrangements with Royal Mail for your mail to be forwarded (please supply us with proof that this has been completed before your security deposit is released).





Testimonials

"Thanks for everything, you are very professional, and I can't believe that renting the property through yourselves has gone so smoothly and I have such lovely tenants!"

SUSAN PEAT, LANDLORD

"Thank you for the fantastic service you gave us right from the beginning to completion in selling our home on Oaklands Road. We've sold a number of properties in the past and I can say that you've managed to combine a professional service with a personal touch. The pictures, video tour and the attention to detail you paid to us was outstanding. I was especially impressed that you sold our home within a week of our instruction and also very impressed by your online case tracking which kept us up to date through to completion. Keep up the good work! I shall definitely be recommending you to my friends and family."

CAROL CHAPMAN, VENDOR

"Having worked with numerous local lettings agents and been continually disappointed, working with Bluestone has been a breath of fresh air. Bluestone manage to combine a professional service with a personal touch, using initiative and a prompt and pro-active approach in all aspects of the service they provide. Bluestone allow me the peace of mind that my investments are being protected and my properties run both efficiently and professionally."

MARK MCCROSSANT, LANDLORD



Thank you for taking the time to read our Student Guide.
Please call us on **01633 841805** to discuss any
queries that you might have.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Newport Council and Council Tax: 01633 656656

TV Licence: 0844 800 6790 www.tvlicensing.co.uk

Police Non Emergency General Enquiry: 101

TRANSCO (Gas Emergencies): 0800 111 999

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