

## Renting a house from a private landlord

Cardiff University guarantee all first year students a place in student residences. After that you may want to rent a room in a privately owned house. You can pick up a private sector accommodation list produced by the University Residence Division from our reception, the Students' Union or any residences office. These are not inspected but Residences will have seen Gas/Electricity Safety Certificates.

### How much will it cost to rent in the private sector?

- Currently, average costs of rented housing in Cardiff are around £240 per calendar month (PCM) for a room in a shared house, but unlike in student residences, utility bills are usually extra.
- Landlords usually ask that tenants pay a retainer over the summer (usually half rent for two to three months) so if you sign the contract at the end of summer you save money.  
They also require you to pay a bond when you sign the accommodation contract. This is normally the same amount as one months rent or slightly more. Please check that your landlord is using a Tenancy Deposit Scheme.<sup>1</sup>
- Before you start looking for somewhere to live, work out what you can afford - not just for rent and bills but also for the up front payment to secure the accommodation.

### How soon do I need to find accommodation?

- It's very common for students to feel pressurised into signing contracts in the February before the academic year for which they want the accommodation. This is not necessary, as in recent years there has been ample accommodation for rent in Cardiff. The later you sign a contract, the later you part with your cash. Remember that once you sign the contract it is legally binding.

### What do I need to remember when viewing a house?

- Look around the property carefully, before you agree to sign a contract.
- Think about the external environment. Are there enough street lights around the house? Are there any clues to the noise level during the day and evening? Are you near a main road where thundering trucks are likely to wake you up in the middle of the night? Ask the current tenants any questions as their answers may be interesting.
- Ask to see a gas safety certificate.
- Take a good look at the outside of the property. Are there plants growing in the gutters,

- and missing down-pipes? Are the window frames rotting?
- When you go into the property you might think about: whether the front door is secure, that the furniture is adequate for your needs, the taps work properly. Do the toilets flush? Are there signs of damp or mould?
- Take an inventory with the landlord/agent and ensure any damage is noted. You may want to take a digital photograph of it.

You should also make sure that sufficient facilities are available for the number of people living in the house.

### **Will I pay Council Tax?**

For more information see our fact sheet on council tax (A2).

### **What if I want to move out?**

See our fact sheet on getting released from a tenancy contract (A6).

### **Do I need a TV Licence?**

- If you use a TV, or any other device to receive or record TV programmes, you will need a TV licence. You will not be covered by your parents' TV licence if you do not live in their house.
- If you have signed a joint tenancy agreement this would normally indicate that there is only one 'separately occupied place' and only one licence is needed.

### **Will I need insurance?**

- Tenants should take out insurance for personal belongings. It is a good idea to shop around to find a deal, which will suit your needs. Endsleigh Insurance offers specific student insurance. You may find that your parents' (home contents) insurance policy provides cover for students studying away from home.

### **If I have problems with my accommodation where can I go for advice?**

Contact an adviser at the **Student Support Centre** or visit the Students' Union Advice and Representation Centre to arrange an appointment.

Other good sources of advice information;

<b>Housing Help</b>	029 2087 1050	<a href="http://www.hhc@cardiff.gov.uk">www.hhc@cardiff.gov.uk</a>
<b>Shelter</b>	0808 800 4444/01792 469400	<a href="http://www.shelter.org.uk">www.shelter.org.uk</a>
<b>Cardiff Law Centre</b>	029 2049 8117	

1. **Tenancy Deposit Scheme:** From April 2007 all deposits paid in respect of an Assured short hold tenancy must be registered with a government approved TDS scheme within 14 days of payment. The landlord must inform the tenant which TDS the deposit is registered in writing within 14 days. If you think your deposit has not been registered please come in for advice.