

Private Renting Guide | Bristol City Council

Finding and securing a home in the private rented sector can be a daunting task, especially for those who are experiencing homelessness or uncertain housing situations.

This guide will provide you with the essential information and practical advice you need to successfully navigate the complex world of private rentals and take the first steps towards a stable and secure living situation.

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Why Rent Privately?

Given the severe shortage of social housing in Bristol and the lengthy waiting lists, private renting can offer several advantages:

Increased Choice

There are significantly more privately rented properties available, providing greater choice in terms of **location** and **property type**.

Each month over 1,000 properties are advertised in Bristol on Rightmove but less than 100 are advertised on HomeChoice and the wait can be several years long.

Faster Process

Securing a privately rented property can often be achieved within a matter of weeks, rather than the years it may take to access social housing.

With over 23,000 households on HomeChoice, the length of time to get offered social housing is likely to be many years.

Flexibility

Private renting allows for greater flexibility should your circumstances change, as you are not tied to a lifelong tenancy.

Condition

Most private rental properties will come with **white goods, floor coverings** and **window coverings**. Generally private sector properties are ready to move in to.

Independence

Having your own privately rented property provides a sense of independence and a place to call home.

Protection

You are protected in your tenancy by housing law. You have the use of council services such as the Private Renting Team, Private Housing Team, and Homelessness Prevention Team to assist in maintaining your tenancy.

Security of Tenure

As long as you make sure your rent is paid on time and in full, and that you look after the property, most privately rented properties only end when you decide that you want to end it.

While private renting may seem costly and challenging, with the right support and guidance, it can be a viable and manageable solution. This guide will provide you with a step-by-step approach, highlighting the assistance available throughout the process.

Choosing Your Next Home: Embracing Opportunities

Finding a new place to live can be an exciting journey, but it's natural to have some concerns or preferences when it comes to the location, layout, or features of a property. However, it's important to approach the process with an open mind and a willingness to embrace new opportunities.

When you're offered a property, either by the council or a private landlord, it may not always meet your exact specifications. But before you dismiss it, take a moment to consider the potential benefits and possibilities that come with it.

Embracing New Opportunities

While the property offered to you may not be in your preferred location, it's an opportunity to explore a new area. Researching the local facilities and amenities can help you discover hidden gems and create a fresh start. Moving to a new neighbourhood can also lead to new friendships and social support networks.

Furnishing Your Home

Most private rental properties come unfurnished, but this is a chance to make the space truly your own. Support is available to obtain affordable furniture, and many local charities and social media groups offer items at low prices or even for free. If a property is offered furnished and you already have your own furniture, consider selling items to make some extra cash.

Adapting to Different Property Features

Properties come in various layouts and sizes. While a separate kitchen or a bathtub may be preferred, focusing on the positive aspects of the property, such as the benefits of open-plan living or the opportunity to teach children new skills like showering, can help you embrace the space you have.

Overcoming Challenges

Concerns about parking, stairs, or the location of bathrooms can be managed with a positive mindset and a willingness to adapt. Seek support from your housing advisor or the Private Renting Team to find solutions and make the most of your new home.

Exploring Affordable Options

Shared housing can be a more affordable alternative to renting an entire property. While it may not be your first choice, it can offer benefits such as bills being covered by your housing allowance, a sense of community, and potential friendships with housemates.

Prioritizing Safety and Well-being

When considering a new area, it's essential to look beyond crime rates and focus on the overall community. Visiting the area at different times, checking for neighbourhood watch schemes, and speaking with local residents can provide a more accurate picture of the area's safety and community spirit.

Assessing Your Situation and Needs

Before starting your search for private rented accommodation, it's important to take a step back and think about your current situation and specific needs. This will help you identify the key factors that will shape your search and ensure you find a rental property that fits what you need.

1. **Evaluate Your Financial Situation:** Check your monthly income, existing debts, and any benefits or support you may be eligible for. This will help you determine your realistic budget and the type of rental property you can afford, ensuring you don't overspend. If you need support with this, contact your support worker, your local authority or an independent advice centre like the Citizens Advice.
2. **Identify Your Housing Needs:** Decide how many bedrooms and what size property you need, as well as any accessibility and special requirements. Prioritise these factors to help narrow down your search and find a suitable home. Bear in mind that if you are in receipt of benefits, what you can claim towards the cost of your housing depends on the size of your household rather than the size of the property you move into. For more information on bedroom entitlement, please visit: <https://www.entitledto.co.uk/help/calculating-your-bedroom-entitlement>
3. **Determine Your Preferred Location:** Think about the area you'd like to live in, taking into account factors such as proximity to work, schools, public transport, and essential amenities. This will help you focus your search on neighbourhoods that align with your lifestyle and needs.
4. **Understand Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities:** Learn about tenant rights and the obligations of both tenants and landlords. This knowledge will empower you to make informed decisions and navigate the rental process with confidence.

Understanding your situation and needs will mean you are better equipped to navigate the private rented sector and find a suitable and affordable home that meets your requirements. This proactive approach will help you make informed decisions and increase your chances of securing a successful tenancy.

Understanding Your Budget: How Much Rent Can You Afford?

Before diving into your property search, it's crucial to have a clear understanding of your financial situation. Knowing how much you can realistically afford to spend on rent each month will help you focus on properties that fit within your budget, saving you time and energy in the long run.

Working out what you can afford to spend on rent each month depends on whether you are working, claiming benefits or a mixture of both.

Renting on Benefits

If you are claiming benefits, the current Local Housing Allowance rates in Bristol (the Housing Element contribution from Universal Credit) are:

Bedroom Need	Weekly Rate	Monthly Rate
Room in Shared House (Single under 35 rate)	£117.68	£509.95
1 Bedroom	£207.12	£897.52
2 Bedroom	£252.00	£1,092.00
3 Bedroom	£299.18	£1,296.45
4 Bedroom	£425.75	£1,844.92

It's important to remember that the Local Housing Allowance is different in other parts of the country. For more information on the Local Housing Allowance rates for different areas, please visit: <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/>

If you are claiming benefits or think you may be entitled to claim benefits, it is worth ensuring that you are claiming the correct amount of benefits, which you can check here: <https://bristol.entitledto.co.uk/home/>

Renting and Working

If you are working, you can work out how much rent you can afford by using the calculation below:

$$\text{Maximum Monthly Rent} = \text{Pre-Tax Annual Salary} \div 30$$

For example, if you are working and you earn £23,000 per year before tax the maximum monthly rental amount you should look up to is £766.

$$\text{Maximum Monthly Rent} = \text{£23,000} \div 30$$

Preparing to Search: Getting Documents Ready

Before beginning your search for a property, it's useful to gather all the necessary documents that landlords and letting agents typically require. Having these documents ready in advance can streamline the application process and demonstrate your preparedness and reliability as a prospective tenant. If you are able to visit letting agents in person, it will also show that you are prepared and reliable.



Proof of Identity

- ☐ Valid passport or driving license
- ☐ Birth certificate
- ☐ Letters from DWP, Probation, or Local Authority



Proof of Income

- ☐ Recent payslips (usually last 3 months)
- ☐ Employment contract or offer letter
- ☐ Self-employed: tax returns and business accounts
- ☐ Benefit statements or [EntitledTo](#) Calculation



Pet References (if applicable)

- ☐ Deep clean the property before fully unpacking
- ☐ Focus on kitchens, bathrooms, and high-traffic areas
- ☐ Consider asking friends and family for help service if needed



Right to Rent Documents

- ☐ Passport (for UK and Irish citizens)
- ☐ [Right to Rent Share Code](#) (for non-UK or Irish citizens)



Proof of Current Address

- ☐ Recent utility bill (electricity, gas, water)
- ☐ Bank or credit card statement
- ☐ Council tax bill



Reference Letters

- ☐ Previous landlord references
- ☐ Employer references
- ☐ Character references from (if no rental history) i.e. from a Support Worker



Guarantor Information

- ☐ Guarantor's proof of identity
- ☐ Guarantor's proof of address
- ☐ Guarantor's proof of income



Bank Statements

- ☐ Last 3-6 months of bank statements

Securing a New Tenancy: A Step-by-Step Guide

Property Search

Explore online listings, local letting agencies, and community groups to find suitable rental properties that align with your budget and requirements.

1

Request a Viewing

Phone, visit or email letting agents once you have found a property you are interested in.

2

Attend a Viewing

Visit the letting agent or landlord at the property to take a look around. You can ask the letting agent or landlord any questions you have.

3

Place a Holding Deposit

Express your interest in the property and place a holding deposit, usually the value of one week's rent.

It's important to check with the Private Renting Team before giving a landlord money as it is possible to be scammed by people pretending to be landlords. **Remember: Never give a landlord money without checking it with the Private Renting Team.**

4

Application Process

Prepare your paperwork, references, and pay your deposit and/or rent in advance. Remember to speak to your local Private Renting Team as there may be financial support to help towards these.

5

Tenancy Agreement

Thoroughly review the tenancy agreement, understand your rights and responsibilities, and negotiate any necessary terms before signing.

6

Move-in Process

Coordinate your move-in date, arrange utilities, and ensure a smooth transition into your new rental property.

7













Searching for Properties

There are several ways to search for rental properties. The most common method is to use online platforms such as Rightmove or SpareRoom. Additionally, word-of-mouth and networking within your community might lead you to potential rental opportunities. For example, posting a wanted advert on local community groups on Facebook.

It's also worthwhile visiting a local letting agent in person, with a reference in-hand, who can help match you with suitable properties based on your preferences and budget. In Bristol, there are several key roads that have letting agencies on:

- ☐ Church Road (BS5)
- ☐ Gloucester Road (BS7)
- ☐ North Street (BS3)
- ☐ Whiteladies Road (BS8)

Suggested Websites

	 www.rightmove.co.uk Rightmove UK's number one property website for properties for sale and to rent
	 SpareRoom SpareRoom Search for a room to rent or find a flatmate the fast, safe and easy way - we have thousands of ads all across the UK.
	 OnTheMarket OnTheMarket The most uncluttered, user-friendly property portal. Find hundreds of 1000s of properties for sale & to rent from leading UK estate agents OnTheMarket
	 www.zoopla.co.uk Zoopla Search for property with the UK's leading resource. Browse houses and flats for sale and to rent, and find estate agents in your area.
	 OpenRent OpenRent Rent property faster, safer and cheaper. Free advertising or paid advertising options including Rightmove, Zoopla & PrimeLocation, contracts,...
	 homefinderuk.org Homefinder UK We seek to find permanent social housing outside your local area for homeless households and other social housing applicants.

Suggested Letting Agencies in Bristol

Letting Agency Name	Website	Phone Number
Accommodation Unlimited	https://www.aul.org.uk/	0117 973 9394
Alexander May	https://alexandermay.co.uk	0117 974 4766
Andrews	https://www.andrewsonline.co.uk	0117 944 4400
Anthony James	http://antjam.com/	0117 965 0829
Attwoods	http://www.attwoodsonline.co.uk/	0117 958 2020
Blue Sky Property	http://www.bluesky-property.co.uk/	0117 932 8165
Bristol Property Centre	https://www.bristolpropertycentre.co.uk/	0117 907 3577
Campions	https://campionsletting.co.uk	0117 973 0041
CJ Hole	https://www.cjhole.co.uk/	0117 923 2888
Flatline	https://www.flatlineonline.co.uk	0117 973 2004
Gough Quarters	https://www.goughquarters.co.uk	0117 329 0039
Greenwoods	https://greenwoodsonline.co.uk	0117 977 7671
Gregory and Main	https://www.gregoryandmain.co.uk	0117 463 1619
Haart	https://www.haart.co.uk	0117 452 2350
Holbrook Moran	https://www.holbrookmoran.co.uk/	0117 954 0033
Hopewell	https://www.hopewell.co.uk	0117 911 8663
Hunters	https://www.hunters.com	0117 953 5375
Maggs and Allen	https://www.maggsandallen.co.uk	0117 973 4940
Ocean	https://www.oceanhome.co.uk/	0117 942 5855
Sarah Kenny	https://www.sarahkennyresidentiallettings.co.uk	0117 946 7171
Streets Ahead	https://bestreetsahead.co.uk	0117 952 0829
Temple Homes	https://templehomes.co.uk/	0117 407 2360
Bristol Residential Letting	https://www.bristolreslet.com/	0117 973 5237
The Letting Game	https://www.thelettinggame.co.uk/	0117 989 8215
The Property Outlet	https://www.thepropertyoutlet.com	0117 935 4565

Requesting a Viewing

When you're searching for a property, you'll need to talk with letting agencies and landlords. These conversations are crucial, as they can determine whether you secure a viewing or are offered a tenancy.

It's normal to feel nervous or unsure about how to approach these interactions, especially if you're new to the private rental market. However, by preparing yourself and understanding what information landlords and letting agencies are looking for, you can communicate effectively and make a positive impression.

Tips for Talking to Agents

It's best to visit letting agencies, but when you can't make sure you phone agents as they don't usually answer emails. You can usually find the number for the letting agency on the property advert.

Highlight your strengths as a tenant, such as any positive references from previous landlords or your commitment to maintaining the property.

If you are on benefits, emphasize that rent payments can be made directly to the landlord, providing them with a guaranteed income stream.

Ask relevant questions about the property, such as the length of the tenancy, bills included, and any specific requirements the landlord may have.

If you have a pet, be upfront about it and offer to provide references from previous landlords or a pet resume to demonstrate your responsible pet ownership.

Have all necessary documents ready, including ID, proof of income, and references, to provide to the landlord or letting agent when requested.

What to say when you call a letting agency or landlord. An example:

Letting Agent: Hello, Example Letting Agency. How can I help?

You: Hi, my name is [Your Name]. I'm calling about the one-bedroom apartment on [Street Name] that I saw advertised online. Is it still available?

Letting Agent: Let me check for you - - - Yes, the property is still available. Are you interested in scheduling a viewing?

You: Yes, I'd love to schedule a viewing please. The property seems to be just what I'm looking for, and I'm very interested in seeing it in person.

Letting Agent: Great! We have availability for viewings this Wednesday and Friday. Which day would work best for you?

You: Wednesday would be perfect. What times do you have available?

Letting Agent: We have slots at 2:30 PM and 4:00 PM on Wednesday. Which one would you prefer?

You: The 4:00 PM slot works well for me.

Letting Agent: Excellent. I've scheduled you for a viewing at 4:00 PM on Wednesday. Can I please have your full name and contact number?

You: My name is [Your Full Name], and my contact number is [Your Phone Number].

Letting Agent: Thank you. Before we proceed, I have a few quick questions. Are you currently employed?

You: Yes, I work full-time as a [Your Occupation]. I've been with my current employer for [Length of Employment] and I earn around [Your Annual Salary] per year.

OR I currently work part time due to [Childcare/Studying/Health/Career Change]. I receive [Your Annual Salary] from my employer and [Monthly Benefit Entitlement] from Universal Credit each month.

OR I am a [Your most recent job] by trade. I am currently looking for employment but I am in receipt of [Monthly Benefit Entitlement] from Universal Credit at the moment.

OR I am currently signed off of work due to ill health and I am in receipt of [Monthly Benefit Entitlement] from Universal Credit at the moment.

Letting Agent: Thank you. And do you have any pets?

You: No, I don't have any pets.

Letting Agent: Perfect. One last question, will you be the sole occupant, or do you plan to live with others?

You: I will be the sole occupant.

OR It will be me and my family living at the property.

Letting Agent: Wonderful. I've made a note of all the information you provided. We'll see you on Wednesday at 4:00 PM for the viewing and will send the full address by email and text in just a moment. Please arrive a few minutes early, and bring along a form of ID.

You: Thank you so much for your help. I look forward to seeing the property on Wednesday.

Remember, however the conversation goes with the letting agent or landlord to:

- Express a clear and positive interest in the property and be polite and professional throughout the call
- Be flexible with viewing times and arrangements
- Provide relevant information about your employment or income and living situation
- Ask any necessary questions about the property or viewing process
- Confirm the viewing details and requirements

Arranging a Viewing

A viewing is your chance to explore the property in person, assess whether it's suitable, and make a positive impression on the landlord or letting agent.

However, attending a property viewing can also be a bit daunting, especially if you're unsure what to expect or how to prepare. However, the tips below will help you make the most of the opportunity and increase your chances of securing the property.

1. **Be punctual:** Prepare to arrive a few minutes early for the viewing to show your reliability and ensure that you are not late due to traffic or getting lost.
2. **Dress appropriately:** Present yourself in a clean, tidy, and respectable manner to make a positive first impression. Think of office casual if you need inspiration of what to wear.
3. **Come prepared:** Bring a notebook and pen to jot down important details about the property, as well as a list of questions you want to ask.
4. **Bring references:** If you have previous references from a landlord or a character reference, it is good practice to bring this with you so you can provide it to the letting agent or landlord.
5. **Be polite and friendly:** Stay positive and be polite and respectful throughout the viewing.
6. **Be presentable:** Please don't smoke or drink prior to or during the viewing.
7. **Take your time:** Carefully inspect each room, paying attention to the condition of the property, fixtures, and appliances. Don't feel rushed, and take the time you need to assess the property thoroughly.
8. **Ask relevant questions:** Inquire about important aspects of the property and tenancy, such as the rent, bills, deposit, and any specific requirements or restrictions.
9. **Highlight your suitability:** Use the opportunity to showcase your strengths as a tenant, such as your stable employment, reliable income, and positive rental history.
10. **Express interest:** If you like the property, let the landlord or letting agent know that you're interested and would like to proceed with the application process.
11. **Follow up:** After the viewing, send a thank-you email or make a phone call to reiterate your interest and ask about the next steps in the application process.

By following these tips and approaching the viewing with confidence and enthusiasm, you'll be well-positioned to make a strong impression and increase your chances of securing your desired rental property. Remember, the viewing is not only an opportunity for the landlord to assess you as a potential tenant but also for you to evaluate whether the property meets your needs and expectations.

Placing a Holding Deposit

When you've found a property that you love and want to move forward with the application process, the landlord or letting agent may ask for a holding deposit.

A holding deposit is a sum of money that you pay to the landlord or letting agent to reserve the property and take it off the market while your application is being processed. It demonstrates that you're serious about renting the property and **it is legally not allowed to be higher to one week's rent**.

It's always worth knowing your credit score ahead of time, before you go into the process so that you can avoid unexpected surprises. To check your credit score and ensure you don't have any County Court Judgements that you are not aware of as this could result in you losing your holding deposit. There are several free Credit Checking services, such as Credit Karma:



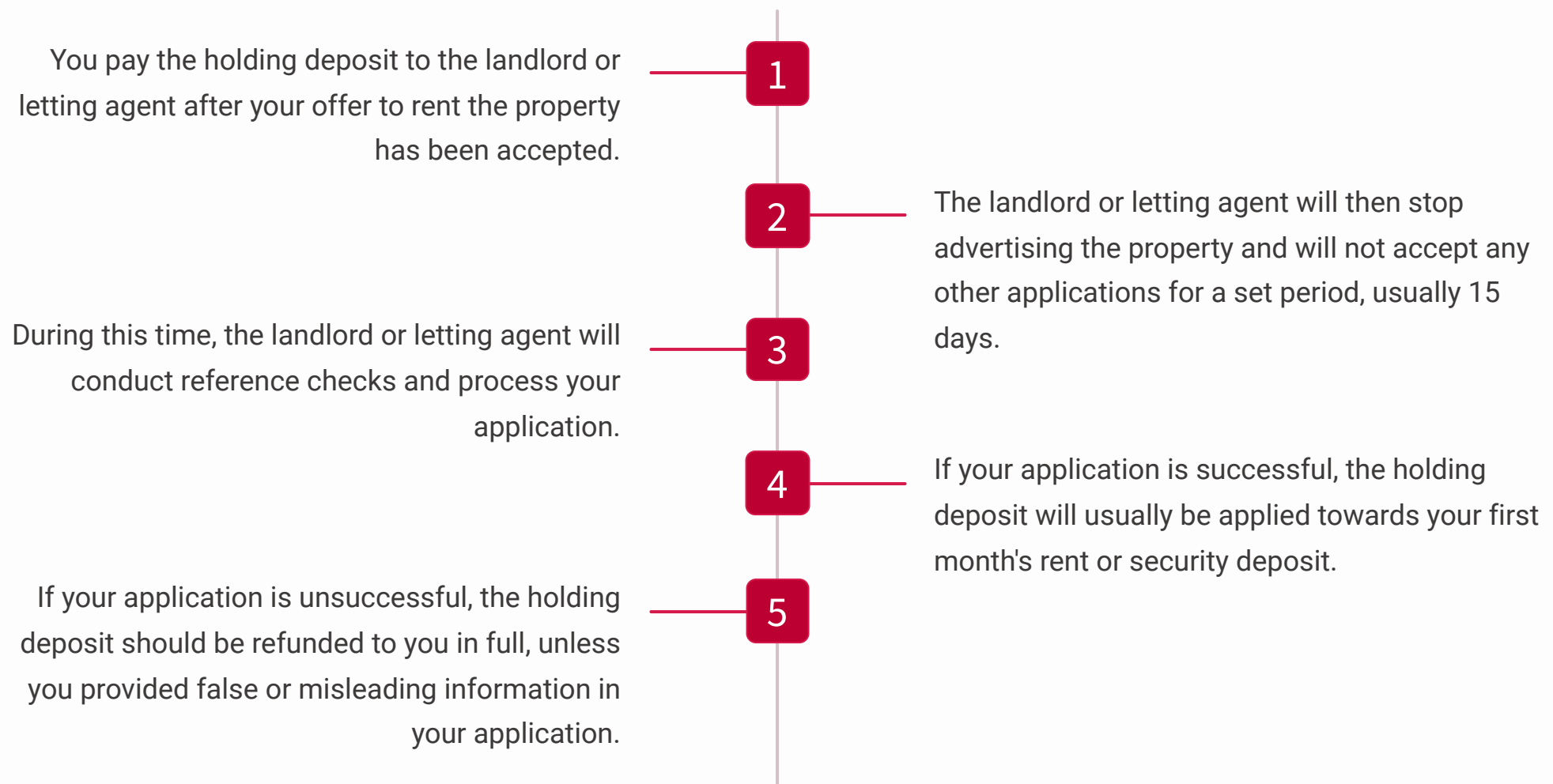
 www.creditkarma.co.uk

Credit Score & Credit Reports at Credit Karma™

Instantly get your free credit reports from Credit Karma and monitor your credit all year long. Your credit reports update often. No credit card needed.



The Holding Deposit Process



Advice for Paying a Holding Deposit

Make sure you understand the terms and conditions of the holding deposit before you pay it, including the circumstances under which it may be withheld.

Obtain a receipt for the holding deposit that clearly states the amount paid, the date, and the property address.

Be truthful in your application and provide accurate information to avoid losing your holding deposit.

If your application is unsuccessful, ensure that you receive a refund of the holding deposit within 7 days.

Watch Out for Scams

Unfortunately, not all adverts are legitimate adverts and criminals can sometimes create fake adverts in an attempt to get you to pay a holding deposit or rent before you visit a property in order to secure it.

If you are in any doubt that someone is trying to scam you, contact the Private Renting Team immediately and do not pay any money until we have advised you.

The Application Process: Next Steps After Placing a Holding Deposit

Once you've placed a holding deposit, the rental application process kicks into gear. Here's what you can expect during this crucial stage and how it fits into the overall letting process.

It's likely the letting agent or landlord will ask for you to fill in an application form to support your application. If you need help with this, please ask your Support Worker, Housing Advisor or the Private Renting Team.

The Application Process

1

Reference Checks

The landlord or letting agent will conduct reference checks to verify your employment, income, and rental history. They may contact your employer, previous landlords, and request bank statements or proof of income.

2

Credit Checks

A credit check may be carried out to assess your financial reliability and ability to pay rent on time.

3

Right to Rent Checks

The landlord or letting agent will verify your legal right to rent a property in the UK by checking your identification and immigration status.

4

Tenancy Agreement

If your application is successful, the landlord or letting agent will provide you with a tenancy agreement outlining the terms and conditions of your rental. Read this carefully and seek clarification on any points you're unsure about.

5

Security Deposit

You'll be required to pay a security deposit, which **legally cannot be higher than five weeks' rent**. This deposit protects the landlord against any damages or unpaid rent during your tenancy and it should be placed in a Deposit Protection Scheme or Local Authority Bond Scheme.

6

Move-in Date

Once the tenancy agreement is signed and the security deposit is paid, you'll be given a move-in date and the keys to your new home.

Advice for the Application Process

Provide accurate and timely information for reference checks to avoid delays in the application process.

Review the tenancy agreement thoroughly and ask questions if anything is unclear. Ensure you understand your rights and responsibilities as a tenant.

Confirm that your security deposit will be protected in a government-approved tenancy deposit scheme, as required by law.

Schedule a condition report or inventory check when you move in to document the property's state and avoid disputes later.

Understanding Tenancy Agreements

When renting a private property, it's crucial to understand the tenancy agreement you'll be signing. A tenancy agreement is a legal contract that outlines the rights and responsibilities of both the tenant and the landlord. It will specify important details such as the length of the tenancy, the amount of rent, and any rules or restrictions that apply.

Understanding the tenancy agreement before signing it is essential. Look for clauses regarding rent increases, the handling of deposits, restrictions on property modifications, and the landlord's obligations to maintain the property. Understanding these terms will help you make an informed decision and avoid potential conflicts or issues down the line.

Understand the length of the tenancy and any break clauses.

Familiarise yourself with the rent amount, payment schedule, and any potential increases.

Review the deposit requirements, including the amount and the process for its return at the end of the tenancy.

Clarify the landlord's responsibilities for emergencies, repairs and maintenance, as well as your obligations as a tenant.

Ensure you understand any restrictions on property modifications, pet ownership, or subletting.

Discuss and negotiate any terms you're unsure about or feel need to be adjusted.

By properly understanding the tenancy agreement, you can enter into a rental agreement with confidence, knowing your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. This will help you avoid potential misunderstandings and ensure a smooth tenancy.

Support to Access Private Rented Accommodation

Renting a property in the private sector can be financially challenging, especially when it comes to upfront costs like rent in advance, deposits and getting what you need to settle in. However, there is support available to help you navigate this process and access the funds you need to secure your rental home.

Rent in Advance Loans

Bristol City Council's Private Renting Team offers interest-free loans to help with rent in advance payments. These loans can cover up to six month's rent and are repayable over an agreed period. To be eligible, you must be referred by a Housing Advisor and meet certain criteria.

Deposit Loans

The Private Renting Team also provides deposit loans to assist with the upfront cost of a security deposit. These loans are interest-free and cover up to five weeks' rent. Similar to rent in advance loans, deposit loans are repayable over an agreed period and are subject to eligibility criteria.

In order to access financial support, you will need to have created a membership with Great Western Credit Union before. To do so, please visit the link below and apply for an Easy Saver account.



Easy Saver | Great Western Credit Union

GWCU's Easy Saver account makes it easy to put your spare money aside for the things that make life better.



How to Request Support from the Private Renting Team

As long as you have been referred and accepted onto Bristol City Council's Private Renting Scheme, you can contact the team for support with your tenancy application, including the rent in advance and deposit. In order to access support, please visit the link below and complete the online self-serve support form.



Microsoft Forms



Private Renting Team Self-Serve Support Form


Please click this link and complete the attached form to request support from the Private Renting Team with a property you have been offered.






Support Available for Settling In



Moving into a new home is an exciting milestone, but it can also be overwhelming, especially when it comes to furnishing your space. The costs of furniture, appliances, and household essentials can quickly add up, making it challenging to create a comfortable living environment. However, there are numerous organizations, charities, and initiatives in Bristol that can help you access affordable or free furniture and appliances, ensuring that you have the essential items you need to start this new chapter of your life.


The links below are a list of resources for finding free or low-cost furniture in Bristol. Remember, it's always worth reaching out to family, friends and your local community first to see what support they might be able to help you with.






www.freecycle.org
Freecycle: Front Door
The Freecycle Network is a private, non-profit organization. TFN coordinates a worldwide network of "gifting" groups to divert reusable...






www.facebook.com
Facebook Marketplace
Buy or sell new and used items easily on Facebook Marketplace, locally or from businesses. Find great deals on new items delivered from shops to...




sofa-project
SOFA Project
Two shops in Bristol that offer good quality furniture at affordable prices, including fridges, freezers, sofas, and beds.





grants-search.turn2us.org.uk
Turn2us Grants Search
A website with a grant search function that may offer support for getting furniture and other items, often without needing to be paid back.





[Bristol Charities](#)
Bristol Charities
Offers grants for furniture and white goods, but you need to be referred by a professional body such as a Citizens Advice worker or health and social...



[Emmaus Bristol](#)
Emmaus | Homelessness Charity in Bristol
Helping people out of homelessness and poverty by providing a home, support, training and work experience.



[British Heart Foundation](#)
The British Heart Foundation
Stores located throughout the city that offer cheap furniture and may provide delivery.



[Bristol City Council](#)
Local crisis and prevention fund
Get help if you can't afford the basics like food, gas, electricity or household goods. The LCPF can offer an award for furniture and white goods once...



[Bristol Waste Company](#)
Reuse Shops
Shops at Avonmouth and Hartcliffe Recycling Centres that sell low-cost goods, including furniture, diverted from the waste stream.

Moving-In Checklist: Setting Up Your New Home



Inspect the property

- ☐ Walk through the property with the landlord or letting agent
- ☐ Note any existing damages or issues
- ☐ Take photos for your records



Organise Rental Payments

- ☐ Set up a standing order for your full rent payment to ensure payments are made on time and in full
- ☐ If you are in receipt of benefits, update your Universal Credit journal with your new address and tenancy details



Update your address

- ☐ Notify relevant parties of your new address (bank, employer, DVLA, etc.)
- ☐ Arrange for mail redirection from your previous address if necessary



Set up internet and TV

- ☐ Research and compare internet and TV providers and set up payment for Licence Fee
- ☐ Choose a package that suits your needs and budget
- ☐ Schedule installation and set-up



Unpack and organise

- ☐ Prioritise essential items (bedding, toiletries, kitchen essentials)
- ☐ Unpack room by room, starting with the most frequently used spaces
- ☐ Dispose of packing materials responsibly



Introduce yourself to neighbours

- ☐ Say hello to your new neighbours
- ☐ Build positive relationships within the community
- ☐ Consider joining local groups or organisations to meet new people



Prioritise safety and security

- ☐ Ensure all windows and doors lock securely
- ☐ Consider purchasing renters insurance to protect your belongings
- ☐ Familiarise yourself with the building's fire safety procedures and evacuation routes



Sign the inventory

- ☐ Review the inventory report carefully
- ☐ Ensure it accurately reflects the condition of the property
- ☐ Sign and date the inventory, keeping a copy for yourself



Set up utilities

- ☐ Contact utility providers (electricity, gas, water) to set up accounts in your name
- ☐ Provide meter readings to ensure accurate billing and take photos of the meters



Arrange council tax

- ☐ Contact the local council to set up council tax payments
- ☐ Apply for any applicable discounts or exemptions



Organise cleaning

- ☐ Deep clean the property before fully unpacking
- ☐ Focus on kitchens, bathrooms, and high-traffic areas
- ☐ Consider asking friends and family for help service if needed



Locate important information

- ☐ Find the main stopcock for water and the fuse box for electricity
- ☐ Identify the location of gas and electricity meters
- ☐ Locate the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, testing them if possible



Review the tenancy agreement

- ☐ Familiarise yourself with the terms and conditions of your tenancy
- ☐ Note any specific requirements or restrictions
- ☐ Clarify any questions with your landlord or letting agent including who to contact for repairs and emergencies

Maintaining Your Tenancy

Once you've secured a private rental property, it's crucial to maintain your tenancy and avoid the risk of eviction. Here are some key tips to help you stay in your home:

1. **Pay your rent on time** - Ensure you make your rental payments by the due date each month. Late or missed payments can lead to eviction proceedings, so set up direct debits or standing orders to automate the process.
2. **Update Universal Credit Journal** - Make sure you report a change of circumstances on Universal Credit Journal with your new address, rental amount and landlord's details. You will also need to provide your Tenancy Agreement and a utility bill or supporting letter from your landlord.
3. **Keep the property well-maintained** - Carry out regular cleaning and minor repairs to prevent damage. Notify your landlord promptly of any major issues that require their attention. This demonstrates you are a responsible tenant.
4. **Communicate with your landlord** - If you're facing financial difficulties or personal challenges that may impact your tenancy, be upfront with your landlord. Many are willing to work with you to find a solution, rather than resort to eviction.
5. **Understand your rights** - Familiarise yourself with tenancy laws and your rights as a tenant. This will help you identify and address any unlawful actions by your landlord.
6. **Seek support if needed** - If you're struggling to maintain your tenancy, reach out to local housing advice services or charities for guidance. They can provide valuable assistance to help you sustain your home.

By taking a proactive and responsible approach, you can increase your chances of maintaining a successful and long-term private rental tenancy. Remember, open communication and a willingness to work together are key to avoiding eviction.

House Sharing: Tips for a Positive Experience

House sharing is an increasingly popular and affordable housing option in Bristol, particularly for single people. While it may not be everyone's first choice, house sharing can offer several benefits, such as companionship, shared living costs, and the opportunity to make new friends.

To help you navigate the world of house sharing and have a positive experience, here are some key tips to keep in mind:

Respect: Treat your housemates and their belongings with respect. Be considerate of their privacy, space, and personal items. Always ask before borrowing or using something that isn't yours.

Communication: Open and honest communication is crucial for a harmonious household. Discuss expectations, boundaries, and any issues that arise in a calm and respectful manner.

Cleanliness: Everyone has a role to play in keeping the shared spaces clean and tidy. Establish a cleaning schedule, including bins and recycling to ensure everyone contributes equally to household chores.

Finances: Consider setting up a kitty to cover shared expenses like household essentials, bills, or communal food. Keep accurate records and ensure everyone contributes fairly.

House Rules: Agree upon a set of house rules that cover topics such as guests, noise levels, bathroom usage, and kitchen etiquette. Having clear guidelines can help prevent misunderstandings and conflicts.

Personal Space: Respect each other's personal space and boundaries. Be mindful of noise levels, especially during late hours, and avoid invading your housemates' privacy.

Conflict Resolution: If conflicts arise, address them calmly and openly. Listen to each other's perspectives and work together to find a solution. If necessary, seek mediation from a neutral party or your landlord.

Socialise: While you may not become best friends with your housemates, making an effort to socialize and build positive relationships can greatly enhance your living experience.

Maintenance and Repairs: If you notice any maintenance issues or damages in the property, inform your landlord or letting agency. Don't attempt to fix things yourself unless you have the necessary skills and permission.

Remember, house sharing is about compromise, communication, and consideration. By following these tips and maintaining a respectful and positive attitude, you can create a comfortable and enjoyable living environment for yourself and your housemates.

Getting Support from The Private Renting Team

To access support from The Private Renting Team, you will need to have been referred by your Housing Advisor or Support Worker and accepted onto the Private Renting Scheme.

If you have not been referred but you have an open homelessness application with Bristol City Council, you will need to speak to your Housing Advisor or your Support Worker and request that they refer you. Please note, in order for them to do so, you will need to have provided them with the documents below:



ID for all adults on the application



Bank statements for each account for all adults on the application for the previous three months



A completed income and expenditure form

If you have not started a homelessness application yet, we advise that you refer to our website on how to access support if you are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, where you can find more information on how to open an homelessness application.



www.bristol.gov.uk



Bristol City Council

Registering for Homelessness Support

Please note that if you do not have a local connection to Bristol or are not homeless or at risk of homelessness we may not be able to assist you. For more information on what is deemed as a local connection, please visit [here](#).

If you have any queries about anything in this guide, please feel free to contact the team on:

Private.Renting@bristol.gov.uk