

DUSA ADVICE

SIGNING A TENANCY AGREEMENT

TOP THREE THINGS TO THINK ABOUT
BEFORE SIGNING A PRIVATE TENANCY
AGREEMENT



1. DO NOT RUSH

Dundee has plenty of accommodation to offer students. Do not be pressured by a landlord into signing a lease quickly before you have had an opportunity to think about all of these things:

- Who will I live with?
- Can I afford this?
- Does the property suit my needs?
- Is it big enough
- Is it in the right location
- Is it clean and in a good state of repair?



2. CHECK THE TERMS

Make sure that the tenancy agreement meets your needs before signing. Most private renters should have a Private Residential Tenancy (PRT) meaning that you can end the tenancy at any time by giving 28 days notice. If you stay in halls or live with your landlord you will not have this type of agreement and your rights will be different. It is really important to check your tenancy type before signing, in particular your rights to stay and leave the property. Many landlords may try to impose a duration of stay, for example, a 12 month lease. This is not enforceable. The only way a PRT can be ended is by you or your landlord following the correct procedure or coming to a mutual agreement.



By signing a tenancy agreement you have made a legally binding commitment to your landlord. There is usually no reconsideration period after signing so you cannot easily change your mind. You will be responsible for rent until you or your landlord end the agreement. Therefore, make sure you are happy with the property, the landlord and your flatmates before signing the lease.

3. BE AWARE

What are the other cost involved in renting?

Consider insurance, utility bills, tv license, entertainment packages. You can speak to Student Funding about budgeting tips and advice.

Are you required to have a guarantor?

A guarantor is someone who signs the lease and agrees to pay the rent if you do not pay.

Having a guarantor is not a legal requirement however some landlords/agents insist on this. Often a guarantor will liable for the full rent amount, not just your share.

Is your landlord required to pay your deposit into a Tenancy Deposit Scheme?

Private landlords who are required to [register with the local authority](#) have a legal duty to pay a tenancy deposit into an approved tenancy deposit scheme. If a landlord uses a letting agent, the letting agent can pay the deposit into an approved scheme for the landlord. The landlord or agent must provide the tenant with information about the scheme and how it operates within 30 working days of the start of the tenancy.

Is your letting agent charging you unlawful fees?

[Check what counts as illegal fees and premiums](#)

Are you signing a joint tenancy?

A joint tenancy means that all tenants are jointly responsible for the rent. Below are some tips for avoiding problems with joint responsibility:

- Take your time to decide who you want to live with.
- Make sure everyone is happy with the property, the area, and all of the other flat mates before you all sign.
- Understand what you are signing and work out the total amount you could be responsible for under the contract - make sure everyone moving in can afford to pay the rent otherwise you may be responsible to pay what they cannot.
- Check any guarantors agreement limits your guarantor's responsibility to your share of the rent only - otherwise they could be responsible for paying your flatmates rent if they don't pay
- Sign together – if you sign first on one day and then others pull out, you could still be tied into the contract so always sign together.
- If you're really unhappy with signing a joint contract, you can negotiate with the landlord to see if they will give you individual contracts instead - this will mean you are not responsible if your flatmates don't pay and is therefore a better option than a joint contract.