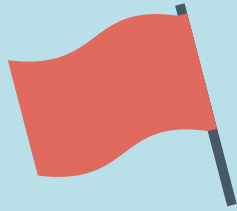
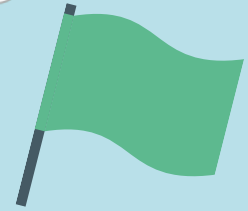


ready to rent



Viewing a property: Red & Green flags



make sure you're prepared and know what to look for when viewing your potential homes

promises of major renovations

the landlord will be extending the property to offer an additional bedroom and bathroom for the start of the tenancy.

landlords often complete works in between tenancies. if major works are to be completed, then a verbal commitment by the landlord is not sufficient. ask the landlord to confirm, in writing, the works they are completing and the completion date. this could be detailed in the tenancy agreement, a separate letter or email.

tenant fees act/admin fees

the landlord knows they are not able to charge fees for the setup of the tenancy agreement.

landlords were previously allowed to ask tenants to pay an administration fee for the setup of the tenancy agreement, for example, but this was banned when the tenant fees act was introduced in 2019.

landlords are also unable to charge referencing or guarantor fees.

deposit protection

the landlord is asking for a damage deposit but does not intend to use a deposit scheme.

the landlord is legally required to protect your deposit with one of the three government approved deposit schemes. the deposit must be protected within 30 days and you must be provided with specific information relating to the deposit (prescribed information).

there is also a cap on the damage deposit amount. this is the equivalent of five week's rent.

you might be asked to pay a holding deposit to reserve a property. there is also a cap on the holding deposit amount which is the equivalent of one week's rent. this amount might be used as a part payment of your damage deposit or first month's rent.

landlord not charging a deposit? this might sound great but the landlord can still pursue you for money at the end of your tenancy agreement if they think you have caused damage.

adequate furnishings

the landlord confirmed the furnishings they will provide but you should always check whether the furniture you see is the furniture that will be there when you move in.

single or double beds? are all desks a good size to allow you to do uni work in your room? not all properties will have a separate communal space. is this important to you and your housemates?

fire safety

the landlord talked about fire safety, confirming the property has smoke alarms and a fire extinguisher and fire blanket in the kitchen.

smoke alarms:

landlords must install at least one smoke alarm on every floor/storey which is used as living accommodation.

many landlords install additional smoke alarms, particularly if they are renting out a larger property with five or more occupants. these properties need to be licensed by the local council.

you might find that you have a smoke alarm in your bedroom which is interlinked with all other alarms. if one alarm is triggered, all alarms will sound to give you as much warning as possible to safely exit the property.

the landlord must check the alarms are in working order on the first day of your tenancy. after this, you should take responsibility for testing your alarms and let the landlord know if they are not working.

fire extinguisher & fire blanket:

these are also required in larger properties but are common in smaller properties too and recommended in the local council's guidance on fire safety.

signs of disrepair

the landlord has pointed out a crack in the wall in the bedroom, but they don't seem too bothered about it or looking to arrange for it to be checked.

landlords are responsible for many repairs in your rented accommodation (provided they are not caused by a tenant), including the structure and exterior of the building (walls, stairs, roof, external doors and windows).

the landlord should arrange for the crack to be checked.

outstanding maintenance

the landlord is aware that the oven is not working but arranging a repair does not seem to be a priority.

landlords are required to carry out repairs within a reasonable period of time, provided they are aware of the issue. timescales depend on how serious the problem is.

if a landlord demonstrates an unwillingness to arrange maintenance for the current tenants, think about how you will feel if this happens when you are living in the property.

safety certificates

the landlord has arranged the necessary safety checks. it is good practice for landlords to display safety certificates in the property.

gas safety certificates:

gas appliances and flues must be checked annually by a gas safe registered engineer to confirm they are safe to use. the engineer will issue a certificate to confirm whether the appliances are safe to use or not.

electrical certificate:

the electrical wiring and other fixed electrical parts in rented homes must be inspected and tested every five years and a certificate issued.

energy performance certificate (epc):

an epc gives a property a rating based on its energy efficiency. ratings are from 'a' which is the most efficient to 'g' which is the least efficient. the full certificate will confirm whether a property has features such as double glazing and insulation.

it is against the law to rent out properties with an 'f' or 'g' rating on the epc. epcs are valid for 10 years.

condensation/mould

the landlord has acknowledged that there is mould but they haven't committed to removing this before the start of the tenancy.

condensation, if not managed correctly, can lead to the development of damp and mould. you should try to control this because if problems are found to be caused by the way you lived in the property, you could be responsible for associated repairs.

even if mould has appeared due to tenant behaviour, the landlord should still ensure the mould is removed before the start of your tenancy and look to deduct costs for cleaning or painting from the previous tenants' deposit.

incentives/pressure to commit immediately

the landlord asked you to sign the tenancy agreement straight away and offered you an incentive to do so. ask yourself why they need to put so much pressure on you - if their property is as good as they say it is then it will let itself!

it's best to go away and think about whether a property is suitable for you and your housemates.

you should also be given the opportunity to review the tenancy agreement before you sign. you might want to show this to a parent, friend or seek independent advice from a service such as advice(su).

tenancy agreements are legally binding and once signed, you agree to rent the property for a fixed term. there's no going back!

all-inclusive rent

the landlord is offering a rent with all bills included.

all-inclusive rents are convenient but not always cheaper than arranging utilities directly with suppliers, so check things out first.

landlords may add fair usage clauses to the tenancy agreement to limit the amount they will pay for bills so if you exceed the limit, you will be liable to cover the costs.