

good landlord & tenant guide

LIVE
WELL

how to spot a good landlord and how to be a good tenant

The relationship between a landlord and their tenants is a professional one. For landlords their properties are a financial investment and their source of income, which they want to safeguard. For students renting a home is their biggest outgoing.

The tenancy agreement defines both parties' rights and responsibilities and both tenants and landlords are bound by it. Because tenant and landlord responsibilities affect your experience of renting a house and your daily life for the whole period of the tenancy, a good relationship over and above the terms set out in the agreement can make a big difference to your student experience.

This guide looks at what a student tenant can expect from a good landlord and how to work towards a trouble-free tenancy. It is based on both legal requirements and good practice and is not an exhaustive guide.

what to expect from a good landlord

A good landlord will:

- Make a proper inventory of the property whenever new tenants move in. Both landlord and all tenants should sign and date it.

- Include date stamped photos of the interior of the property in the inventory at the beginning and end of the tenancy. Inventories and photos can be used as evidence if a dispute over a damage deposit arises.
- If the property is let on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy, protect damage deposits in an approved Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme and provide details to tenants of which scheme is being used within 30 days of the tenancy being signed and a deposit paid.
- Make sure that any reported repairs are dealt with quickly. Landlords must make repairs within a "reasonable time". A good landlord will keep tenants informed of how long it will take to do a repair. Tenants can call Environmental Health and repair orders can be placed on a property if a landlord doesn't deal with serious repairs within a reasonable time.
- Keep an eye on the exterior of the property: loose slates, broken gutters and rotten window frames cause swift deterioration of the property which can be costly to repair.
- Unless there is an emergency, give tenants at least 24 hours notice in writing if intending to visit or send work people round.

- Provide tenants with enough functional furniture for them to live comfortably and which meet the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1998.
- Ensure the property has a smoke alarm, fire blanket and/or extinguisher and that windows that might be used as escape routes open and are not painted closed.
- Budget to replace household items and to re-decorate and not let normal wear and tear turn into dilapidation.
- Allow time between tenancies to carry out necessary repairs, redecoration and any cleaning needed.
- Be ready to provide receipts and invoices to tenants and the appropriate Tenancy Deposit Protection scheme if planning to make a deduction from the deposit.
- Maintain a professional tone in all communications.

cleaned. If that happens you might lose some of your damage deposit to pay for new equipment or deep cleaning.

- Put the rubbish out on bin day to prevent infestation by rats and mice and maintain good relationships with your neighbours.
- Do not overload the electrical circuit, for example by plugging several adapters into one socket. Your landlord pays for the electrical circuits to be tested regularly to ensure that they are safe, but you are responsible for using the supply safely. Overloading sockets is a fire risk as it can overheat and you might be responsible for resulting fire damage. Make sure that any adapters or equipment you use are good quality and have the right fuses.
- Pay your rent on time - a standing order is usually best as it means you do not need to remember to make a payment and your money will come out of your account on the same date each month. Remember that if you have not paid rent for the period specified in your contract, your landlord can seek a Possession Order from the courts and try to evict you.
- Be considerate about noise. If noise from your house is too loud to talk over then it's probably a nuisance for your neighbours and they could report you to the council. If your neighbours' noise is a nuisance, then you have a right to report them. If you are concerned keep a record of the level and when the noise occurs. Ask advice(su) if you need help on this matter.
- Don't refuse to pay rent when there is a repair problem. Your landlord can take legal action against you and could possibly have you evicted. Contact advice(su) for assistance if your landlord is refusing to make repairs.

being a good tenant

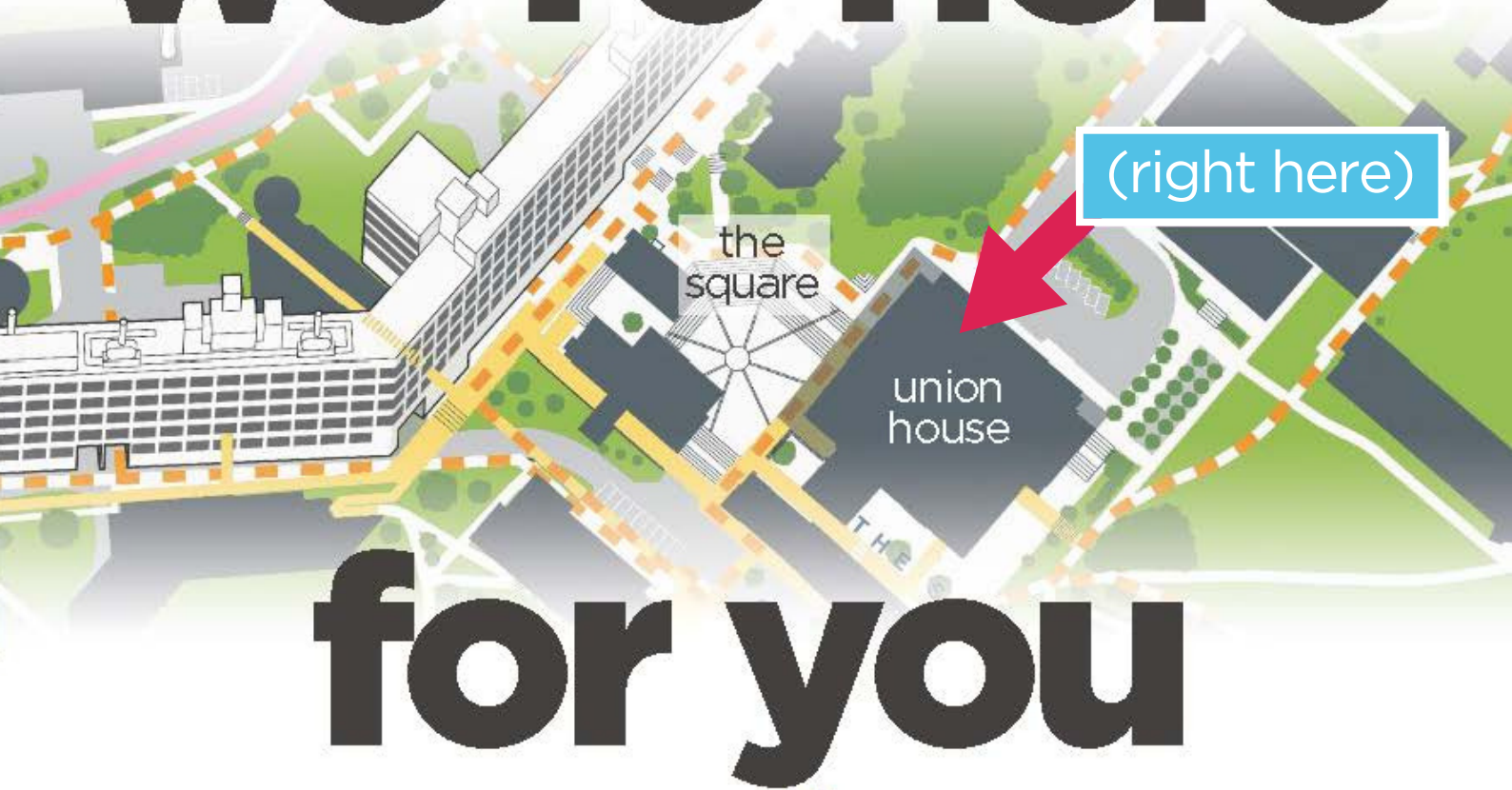
- To avoid disputes at the end of the tenancy, take photos of the interior of the property on the day on which you are given the keys. Date-stamped photos are even better.
- Notify your landlord or their agent of any repairs required as quickly as possible and follow up texts and phone calls with an email. Many tenancy agreements require you to notify your landlord in writing. Keep a copy of any messages you send. If ignored, a leaking bath could cause the ceiling to come down, which would be expensive for your landlord and inconvenient for you.
- Little and often is best as far as cleaning goes. If left uncleaned parts of the house and equipment such as fridges or cookers can get past the stage where they can be properly

- It's better not to use your damage deposit to pay for the last month's rent. If the landlord succeeds in a court action against you for deductions, you will have to pay back the money and it could affect your credit rating for the future.
- Make sure your communications with the landlord are always businesslike and polite. It's the best way to get a good result!
- At the end of the tenancy, review your house, agent, and landlord on Marks out of Tenancy.

We wish you a successful tenancy!

www.uea.su/livewell

we're here



for you

**free, confidential,
impartial advice**

mon - fri
10.00 - 16.00

advicecentre@uea.ac.uk
uea.su/wellatuea

