

Finding a Private Rented Home

Advice for people who need somewhere to live

Why rent privately?

Renting privately can provide a wider choice of available property types and locations. It is fast becoming the main viable housing option, particularly as there are not enough social rented properties for everyone who would like to rent one. At first the idea of finding a private rented home may seem daunting but once you have some basic knowledge about how everything works it will be much easier to begin your search.

Can I afford it?

If you are out of work or on a low income, you may be able to claim housing benefit to help with your rent. If you are single and under 35 you will only be able to rent a single room in a shared house. You can check the maximum rent, or Local Housing Allowance (LHA) that housing benefit can cover on the Direct.gov website: [Check your LHA rate on Directgov](#)

Ways to find a private rented home

Internet - start your search on the internet for a place to rent. You can have free use of the internet at your local library. We have five libraries in Bedford Borough.

Popular websites that advertise house shares and homes to rent are:

- [Rightmove](#)
- [Zoopla](#)
- [Spareroom](#)
- [Gumtree](#)

Newspapers and Magazines - check the property section of local newspapers advertising houses, flats or rooms to rent or share. Some adverts will be from letting agents and some will be from private landlords.

Noticeboards in shops and community centres - Landlords will often advertise vacant properties in newsagents or other local shops.

Ask friends and family to check local noticeboards for you.

Advertise that you need a place to rent –

You can describe the type of place you want where you would like to live and how much rent you can afford. You can put an advert on websites such as [Spareroom](#) or [Gumtree](#). If you use Facebook or Twitter, let your contacts know you are looking for a place. Ask friends and family to ask their contacts too.

Using a letting agent - You can use a letting agency to help you find a property. You have to pay agency fees and charges if they find you a place. All letting agencies in England must display the fees they charge in their advertisements. Most letting agents have offices in and around the town or you can find them in listings such as [Yell.com](#).

Preparing to view your home

Be on time for any viewing arranged. If you can't get to the appointment for any reason make sure you contact the Landlord or Agent so that they know you are serious about renting from them.

Dress to impress – remember, whilst you are considering if the property is suitable, your landlord will be considering whether you will be a suitable tenant. How you present yourself will be an important factor in whether your landlord decides to rent to you.

Ask the right questions to understand your tenancy (see below). Remember your landlord does not need to know if you receive housing benefit or universal credit which you use to pay your rent. Your Landlord will want to know that you can afford the rent. Offering to pay by direct debit may provide your landlord with some reassurance that you will be a good tenant.

Understand your obligations to be a good tenant, particularly in relation to noise and behavior.

Ask the right questions....

How much is the rent and can you afford it?

Check if you have to pay a deposit and any rent in advance. Ask about the monthly bills such as gas, electricity, water and council tax, how much they're likely to be and what's included.

How long is your tenancy agreement? Is it a fixed-term contract for a set period of time (usually six months to a year)? Ask if there is a break clause and check the procedure for renewing or ending your tenancy. For further information about your tenancy agreement you can access the [shelter](http://www.shelter.org.uk) website.

How do you report any repairs when they are needed? Make sure the outside of the property is in good condition. Look for loose roof tiles, leaking pipes and gutters and crumbling brickwork. If you see any problems, check if they will be repaired before anyone moves in.

Is the inside of the property in good repair?

Make sure you and your landlord note any defects present when you accept the tenancy so that there is no argument about your responsibility when you move out.

Is furniture provided? Check what furniture and appliances are provided (for example white goods such as fridge, freezer and washing machine) and if they are in a usable condition. If you have furniture that you need to bring in, make sure the property is big enough for it. Your Landlord will usually provide you with an inventory to record the condition and contents of the property, make sure you check that it is correct.

Have the electrics and gas safety been checked? Your landlord is required by law to make sure that the wiring and any appliances provided are safe. If your home is a room in a multi-occupied property your landlord must

have the electrics checked every five years. All gas appliances such as boilers, cookers and heaters need to be checked every 12 months and certified by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

What do I need to know about my home?

Make sure you find out the location of the electrical fuse box, the gas supply tap and the stop cock so you can turn off services if there is a problem. Make sure you take the meter readings for the gas and electricity before you move in and when you move out. Make sure you know how the heating works and how to set time clocks and thermostats.

Other Sources of Information

Shelter – is the national housing and homelessness charity offering advice and support through its website and advice line. Their website contains a wealth of information about preparing to rent a property

www.shelter.org.uk Advice line 0808 800 4444

Bedford Borough Council Housing Options Service - The Housing Options Service can advise regarding the Housing Options that are available in your circumstances. The Council must provide advice and assistance to everyone who seeks advice. This does not mean that the Council can provide accommodation for you, even if you become homeless. The Housing Options Service can discuss your situation with you and tell you what the law says about the assistance available to you.

Telephone; 01234 718058

Email; housingadvice@bedford.gov.uk

Contact us...

Për Informacion Per Informazione Za Informacije
المعلومات للمعلومات كئى তথ্যৰ জন্য
Za Informacja

ब्राय اطلاع
Za Informacja

by telephone: 01234 718058

by email: housingadvice@bedford.gov.uk