

## **Before You Rent – 10 things to bear in mind before you start a tenancy**

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1. Take your time when viewing a property and make sure it meets all your requirements – this is particularly important for a house-share. Ideally all tenants should view the property before making a decision.
2. Take photographs to record the condition of the property, particularly any existing damage such as cigarette burns, stains or cracked windows.
3. When viewing the property, check that all electrical and gas appliances are in good working order.
4. If there are outstanding repair issues in the property, get it in writing from the landlord or letting agent that these problems will be rectified before handing over your deposit.
5. Avoid paying a deposit in cash and insist on a receipt.
6. Request a viewing prior to the move in date to ensure that all outstanding issues have been rectified.
7. Insist that a Building Energy Rating (BER) Certificate is provided prior to signing the contract. This will help you know how cold the house is likely to get and give you an idea of the likely cost of heating the property.
8. Ensure you are clear on the duration of the tenancy and review any contract carefully. If you sign a fixed term contract you should be aware that you can be held liable for the rent for the duration of the contract even if you leave before it ends. Insist that gas and electricity meter readings are recorded and an inventory is taken.
9. Take out contents insurance as the landlord's policy will not include cover for your personal possessions.
10. Make sure you get a rent book, particularly if you will be paying your rent in cash.