



Web-based Letting Agents

The following guidance has been prepared by the UK Government Trading Standards department. It is very important that you read it before securing any private rented accommodation through an agent.

When you are planning your year of study in the UK, it might be tempting to find your accommodation using the internet before you come to the UK, and it is good to know that you will have somewhere to live when you arrive!

However there have been cases reported of letting agents advertising properties to rent online without meeting all the legal requirements for letting agents in the UK. This has led to students not getting their deposit back at the end of their stay, or not finding anyone to sort out any problems with their accommodation while they are in the UK.

There are a few simple checks you can do which will let you know if the letting agent you are using is operating legally and may help to prevent problems. If they can't answer a few straightforward questions, perhaps you should look elsewhere.....

- Does the letting agent have a business address in the city where you are studying? Will you be able to get in touch with them easily if you have to? If they only give you a mobile phone number it may be very difficult to get hold of them.
- Do they make it obvious on the website what fees you will have to pay on top of your rent? They should make it clear if there are holding fees, arrangement fees and so on, and exactly how much you will have to pay.
- How will they protect your deposit? Legally they must put your deposit in an official protection scheme, so ask them which one they will use. The official schemes are the Deposit Protection Service, MyDeposits and the Tenancy Deposit Scheme. If they can't tell you which one they use you may not want to trust them with your money.
- Do they belong to a property redress scheme? Legally they must belong to an official scheme which will help resolve complaints. It should say on their website which one they belong to – the three official schemes are the Property Ombudsman, the Property Redress Scheme and the Ombudsman Services: Property

Finally do some homework. Ask round and look on social media sites and groups, and see if people have had problems with particular letting agents. If possible use agents or accommodation recommended by the university or by your friends.



Support Advice Centre

Further Guidance

For further guidance on Web-based Letting Agents, contact the Advice Centre.

- 02380 592 085
- advice@susu.org

You can also visit us in Building 40, Highfield campus. Our opening hours are Monday–Friday 09.00–17.00.

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