

# Housing Guides

## Contract Release

### How this guide helps

Our Contract Release guide provides information and guidance for when you want to leave your accommodation before the end of the tenancy. This guide outlines steps you can take when considering leaving your contract early as well as providing information on further help.

As set out in our guide to [accessing help remotely](#) – you can access key information and resources immediately. The information and resources in the guide to remote help may either answer your questions or help give them a further focus.

### Contract type and early release

When and how you leave your accommodation early partly depends on the type of contract you have.

If you're unsure what type of contract you have you can use the Tenancy Checker Tool [here](#).

Some contracts, like 'licenses', may allow you to give 'notice' to the landlord before the end of the agreement - they may be easier to 'break'. Others (most Assured Shorthold Tenancies) may require a 'break clause' within the tenancy agreement, negotiation with the landlord, or finding an agreed replacement tenant.

### 'Break clause'

If your contract has a 'break clause' (a term allowing you to move out earlier than the end of the original fixed term), then you may be able to end your contract early. Very often a break clause requires you to inform the landlord in writing that you want to leave - and giving the landlord a specific timeframe ('notice'). For example, it may require *1 months' notice*, at the end of which you will be able to leave the accommodation and no longer be liable for rent.

If your contract does not contain a break clause, you may need to negotiate with the landlord and obtain any agreements for leaving earlier in writing. For an example of an Early Release from Contract letter please click [here](#). (*add link to example early release letter for students*).

Alternatively, with the written permission of your landlord and agreement of your housemates, you may be able to advertise the property and find a 'replacement tenant'. A replacement tenant would be someone who would take over your contract releasing you from your obligations. (*add link to our Advertising your Property Advice Centre Guide*)

**IMPORTANT** – Until you get an official confirmation of being released from the contract and/or a new tenant takes over your contract, you are still liable for rent, bills and any other terms and conditions of the tenancy.

### Purpose Built Student Accommodation

If you have a contract with a Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) and are unable to take up residency due to Covid-19 restrictions, you can access this link (*insert link to*

*PBSA late arrival template*), for a template email to formally request delay of your move in date and rent payment.

## **Halls**

The University of Southampton halls contract is usually fixed for a specific time period. The University has a discretion (not an obligation) to release students from their halls contract, however you usually must provide justification and evidence supporting your early release request. For example, if you are in financial hardship, you are ill or have any other 'crisis', which requires you to move out early, make sure you write to [accommodation@soton.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@soton.ac.uk) and provide as much detail and evidence as possible.

## **Next steps**

- Read your contract and try to identify what type of contract it is and whether it contains a 'break clause'.
- If your contract has a 'break clause', contact your landlord/agency in writing and provide them with the required notice.
- If you don't have a 'break clause' in your contract, speak to your landlord and ask whether they will be willing to release you early.
- Any agreements for early release, including permission to find a replacement tenant, should be made in writing (email is fine).
- If you need help with advertising the property, contact us on [advice@susu.org](mailto:advice@susu.org).

## **Further help**

If you have any other questions about leaving your contract early, please contact The Advice Centre, Tel: 02380 592 085 Email: [advice@susu.org](mailto:advice@susu.org).

## **Useful links**

For more information on early release from a contract please see following useful guides:

- Shelter: [Ending a Fixed Term Tenancy Agreement](#)
- Citizens Advice Bureau: [Ending Contract in Halls](#) [Ending your Tenancy](#)
- Unipol: [Contracts](#)

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