

Things to consider when viewing properties you're thinking of renting



Cost

- How much is the rent?
- Will you have to pay a deposit?
- Can you afford it?
- Does the landlord accept housing benefit?
- How much council tax will you have to pay?

Location and transport

- How far is it to your place of work/study?
- How far is it from family and friends?
- Are there useful shops close by?
- How far away is the nearest supermarket?
- How about other amenities, such as pubs, a leisure centre, cinema or library?
- Is the property on a bus or train route?
- When's the last bus home?
- Is there enough parking? Is parking safe?
- What's the local GP's surgery like?
- Can you register with a local NHS dentist?
- If you have special health needs, are there suitable facilities and practitioners nearby?
- Are there good nurseries/schools nearby?
- Is the area well lit?
- Will you feel safe coming home at night?

General condition of the property

- Is it big enough for you and your household?
- Is the property big enough for your furniture?
- Are there signs of dampness/condensation, such as mould on the walls or carpets?
- What form of heating does the property use?
- What's the average monthly heating bill?
- Where is the meter?
- Do all the lights work?
- Is there hot and cold running water?
- Are any of the gutters broken?
- Do any roof tiles look loose?
- Is the brickwork crumbling at all?

Furniture and fittings

- What (if any) furniture is provided?
- What condition is the furniture in?
- Is there enough storage space?
- Is there a washing machine?
- Is a vacuum cleaner provided?
- What condition are the curtains/carpets in?
- Are any kitchen utensils and pans supplied?
- Does the cooker work?

- Does the fridge work?
- How clean is the kitchen?

Safety

- Is the wiring safe? Look out for any fittings, plugs, etc, are loose from the wall.
- Are the electrical appliances safe? Your landlord should get them checked every 12 months. Usually the electrician will put a sticker on the plug of each appliance saying when they were last checked.
- Is there sufficient ventilation? Check especially near any gas appliances.
- Can your landlord show you a certificate of gas safety provided by a Gas Safe Register engineer within the last 12 months?
- Are there working smoke alarms?
- Is there a fire blanket in the kitchen?
- Are there any fire extinguishers?
- Is there an alternative escape route in case the front door is blocked?
- Does the furniture comply with safety regulations? Items such as sofas and mattresses should have labels on them to show they pass the regulations.
- How secure are locks on doors/windows?
- Does the door have a bolt or chain?
- Is there a spyhole to check who's outside?
- Is there an entry phone system?

Outside space

- Are there any communal areas, such as an entrance hall or stairwell?
- If so, who is responsible for cleaning them?
- Is there a back yard or garden?
- If so, who is responsible for it?
- Are the outside areas secure?
- Who else has access to outside areas?
- How/when is rubbish collected?
- Is there a wheelie bin or bin house?

The landlord

- Do you feel intimidated by them?
- Would you feel able to approach them if anything went wrong, for example if the property needed repairs done or if you were going to be late with your rent?