



Take this list with you while you are house hunting. If you have checked everything on the list, then you will have a reasonable survey of the houses you are viewing and it will also help you to compare different properties.

When you have found a house that looks suitable for you it is advisable to double check the list as it will probably be easier to resolve any problems now, before you move in or sign a contract.

### **Gas and Electricity**

1. Landlords are legally bound to have all gas appliances checked AT LEAST once every 12 months. They must supply a certificate to the tenant certifying that appliances have been checked and approved by GAS SAFE registered member.
2. Are all Gas and Electricity appliances in working order?
  - a. Check all switches
  - b. Are there any bare wires?
  - c. Any damaged plugs?
  - d. Does everything look 'fairly new'?
3. Enough power sockets? (At least 2 in each room)
4. Is the heating adequate in each room? (Including the bathroom)

### **Plumbing**

1. Check all the taps – open them!
2. Is there a hot water system? Is water hot?
3. Check that the toilet flushes and does not leak.
4. Are the pipes in cupboards and loft lagged?

### **Furniture**

1. Are there enough furniture for all the occupants especially in the communal areas? A desk and chair in each room?
2. Is the furniture in good condition? Check beds, chairs, desks, etc.
3. Is there enough cupboard space for all occupants?
4. Do the drawers and doors open properly?
5. These should be provided: cooker, fridge, vacuum cleaner, iron, ironing board, electric kettle, enough pots and pans and cutlery (in decent condition), toilet brush, dust-pan and brush, adequately sized kitchen bin. If garden has to be kept tidy, gardening tools should be provided.
6. Is there a telephone? Inform the telephone company that you are taking the phone on so that you don't have to pay re-connection charges.
7. Enough storage and preparation space in the kitchen?
8. Soft furnishings should be less than 10 years old and meet Fire Safety Standards.

### **Throughout the house**

1. Are curtains and carpets in good repair and/or adequately provided?
2. What is the state of decoration? Wallpaper?
3. Is the house dry? Look for stains and mould. Remember that if looking around in the summer, damp may not be evident.
4. Adequate lighting in each room especially in study bedrooms, including the hallway and stairs? Is it natural light?
5. Do doors and windows fit well e.g. no draughts? Do all windows open well, and close?
6. Is there adequate ventilation and heating especially in the kitchen and bathroom?

### **Can you afford it?**

1. Rent
  - a. How often do you pay rent?
  - b. How much do you pay for whole year?
  - c. Do you pay a summer retainer?
  - d. Are water charges included in rent?
  - e. Is house electrically heated? This is expensive unless on Economy 7 and/or night-storage heaters.
2. High fuel costs if:
  - a. Inadequate loft insulation
  - b. Draughts
  - c. High ceilings/big rooms
3. Travel – to campus and shops. Work out daily, weekly, annual costs. If a car is necessary, assume £1,000/year (about £20/week) just to keep it on the road.
4. Council Tax - If anyone in house is NOT a student, that person will attract Council Tax. Will he/she/they pay it all?
5. TV Licence - about £145.50 a year per household for colour TVs.
6. Laundry costs - If washing machine not provided, to rent one is approx. £15 to £25 per month –do check if plumbing is provided. Otherwise, laundrettes will cost about £4.50 per wash & dry.

### **Have a look at security/safety**

1. Is the house secure?
2. Check security of all outside doors and windows.
3. Do individual rooms have locks?
4. Has house ever been broken into? If so, when and where did they enter from?
5. Is the front entrance lit?
6. Are there smoke alarms fitted? Where are the fire exits?

### **Before you sign a contract or tenancy agreement remember...**

1. Have you had your contract checked by the Student's Union Advisor before you've signed?
2. Present tenants are the best people to advise you about what the house and landlord are like.
3. Have you paid a deposit and have you got the receipt, has your landlord given you details of which Tenancy Deposit Protection scheme they are using (for more information please see the FXU Advice Service's Tenancy Deposit Information Sheet).
4. Do you know your landlord's address?

### **When moving in**

1. Have you made an inventory of all furniture and has it been agreed with the Landlord? Damaged items should be noted so you don't get blamed.
2. Inform Utilities (water, gas, electricity) by phone of date you're moving in. Immediately check meters and inform companies.
3. Do you know where the gas tap is (usually near the meter) in case of a gas leak?
4. Do you know where the water stopcock is (usually under the kitchen sink) in case of a leak?
5. Do you have contents possessions insurance?
6. House not clean? Any repairs needed? Write to your Landlord (and keep a copy). If at all possible take photographs of any damage or damp (hopefully there won't be any!) and have someone independent (not a fellow tenant) to sign and date the back of them. Hopefully you won't need to use them however they would prove very useful if you need to go to a small claims court to get back your deposit if you have had some unfair deductions or it withheld etc...

### **FXU Advice Service**

**Help with:** Money, Hardship Fund (Access to Learning Fund),

Benefits, Childcare, Housing, Tenancy Agreements, Academic problems, student life!

We are here to help you!

FXU Advice Service Available (Term time only):

#### **Tremough**

Find us in the Annex (opposite the Refectory/Bar)

Ring: 01326 370447 for an appointment

#### **Woodlane**

Find us in the Library Building, Woodlane

Ring: 01326 213742 for an appointment

#### **Email**

[advice@fxu.org.uk](mailto:advice@fxu.org.uk)