

**Student  
Mentor  
Scheme**  
Advice  
& Guidance

*Your*  
Students' Union  
University of Birmingham  
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HOUSES  
AVAILABLE

ROOMS  
TO RENT

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STUDENT  
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**YOUR**

# House Hunting Guide

Your essential guide to finding  
the right house from the  
**Student Mentor Scheme...**

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## **"Know More Before you Reach the Door"**

Some words and advice from your Housing & Community Officer:

"Getting a new house for the first time can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be! There's a reason why third years always get the best houses - it's because they know what to look for when going around Selly Oak in the depths of winter. But, if you know what to keep an eye out for, you'll be able to get yourself a house that suits you, your future housemates and your budget!

Here are a few words of wisdom to mull over before you take the plunge...

You'll be living with the people you choose for another year, so make sure you feel comfortable with them – you really don't want to be living with someone you don't want to and ruin your second year experience.

There are so many houses around the university, so don't feel pressurised into getting one that doesn't quite fit your criteria. Take your time and KEEP LOOKING! Just because the person doing your house viewing says there's free WiFi and that the 50" Curved, HD Ready TV with a built-in Blu-Ray player and Smart TV function is included in the price, it doesn't mean you should jump in their arms and let them carry you back to their office to put pen to paper. Remember to check for the essential stuff as well: i.e. fire alarms, a working boiler, and good house security. I know it may appear I'm being over-dramatic but these considerations could save your life - and that precious MacBook, whether you use it for study or for Netflix binges!

Remember to use all the services you've got right at your fingertips, too. We've got Guild Lettings (our very own in-house letting agency), the Advice & Representation Centre (ARC) that provides a contract-checking service, the Student Mentor Scheme and Living. USE THEM ALL!

Ensure that you give this booklet a good read through, and come along to our House Hunting Information Day, Guild Lettings On Tour events (coming to a hall near you) and our housing Grand Finale: the Guild Lettings Housing Fair.

Once you've gone to all the events – I'd say you'd be well on your way to getting the house of your dreams (or very close). Do you know why?!

***Because you'll know more before you reach the door!***

### **Robert Sorrentino**

Housing & Community Officer, Guild of Students

✉ [housing@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:housing@guild.bham.ac.uk)

🐦 @Guild\_Housing



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### The Student Mentor Scheme

The Student Mentor Scheme supports students living in university accommodation and provides information and guidance on a range of problems including: shared living and accommodation, finance, academic study and issues with general wellbeing. The Student Mentors and support staff will be happy to offer support and answer any questions you may have concerning house hunting.

Visit us: in the Hub, Vale (next to the Duck and Scholar), 4-8pm, Monday -Friday.

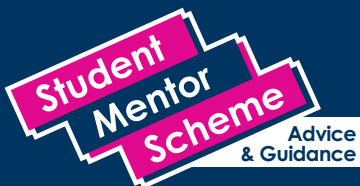
📞 0121 415 8568

✉ [mentorwelfare@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:mentorwelfare@guild.bham.ac.uk)

🌐 [guildofstudents.com/studentmentors](http://guildofstudents.com/studentmentors)

'Like' us on: [facebook.com/studentmentorscheme](https://www.facebook.com/studentmentorscheme)

Follow us on Twitter: @StudentMentors1



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## STEP 1: COME TO OUR HOUSE HUNTING INFORMATION DAY

**Wednesday 11th November 2015**  
**10am-3pm, Underground, Guild of Students**

Our House Hunting Information Day is your opportunity to find out everything you need to know about looking for a house. A number of services will be present at the event, including:

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### **Advice and Representation Centre (ARC)**

*How they can help you today:* The ARC are able to provide useful information for when you start looking for private rented accommodation and how to deal with issues that may arise both in University and private rented accommodation alike.

✉ [thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk)

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### **Community Warden Scheme**

*How they can help you today:* The Community Wardens can provide advice concerning safety both within your property and whilst living in the community, waste disposal and recycling advice (including when your bin day will be, how to recycle, and how to deal with bulky waste), information on some of the 'Green' projects we are currently working on (including mini meadows) and housing advice should you have any concerns around housing, HMO licensing and being Gas Safe.

✉ [community@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:community@guild.bham.ac.uk)

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### **Guild Lettings**

*How they can help you today:* You will be able to preview a selection of Guild Lettings finest properties and find out about private rented accommodation. We will take you through the lettings process, answer questions and provide general information and offer advice. There will also be the opportunity for you to make a list of requirements so we can help you select the most suitable properties for you to view.

✉ [guildlettings@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:guildlettings@guild.bham.ac.uk)  
🌐 [guildlettingsbirmingham.co.uk](http://guildlettingsbirmingham.co.uk)



## Living, Accommodation Services

*How they can help you today:* 'Birmingham Studentpad' is the university's private sector search engine. You can use this service to help you find accommodation for the next academic year with landlords accredited with the Midland Landlord Accredited Scheme (MLAS). Along with the search engine you can register for alerts when new properties are added and also search for house mates via the Message Board. Living are here to help with all aspects of your private sector accommodation from searching, to living in the community and offer community advice and a contract reviewing service where no appointment is required.

 **birminghamstudentpad.co.uk**  
 **living@contacts.bham.ac.uk**

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## West Midlands Fire Service

*How can they help you today:* Firefighters from the local fire station will be on hand to answer any questions you may have around fire safety and how to stay safe. They will also be able to signpost you to where to get a Safe and Well Check once in your new house.

 **wmfs.net**

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## West Midlands Police (Selly Oak)

*How they can help you today:* If you have got any questions about living in Selly Oak around crime/safety or any rumours you might have heard, then come and speak to us.

 **sellyoak@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk**  
 **@sellyoakpolice**

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## Can't make our House Hunting Information Day?

If you are unable to make the event then do not worry, as you will be able to access Roberto's presentation online at **guildofstudents.com/studentmentors**. In addition the contact details of all the services present at the Housing Information fair can be found towards the end of this booklet.

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## STEP 2: WHO DO YOU WANT TO LIVE WITH?

**Before you start viewing houses, you need to make one of the most important decisions - who are you going to live with?**

There is a well-known saying 'you only truly get to know someone when you live with them'. It helps if you know people's habits, hobbies, routines and personalities before you think about moving in together. Best friends do not necessarily make the best housemates, so be honest with each other. There is no set rule to say that you must live with who you are living with now.

If you are still looking to meet people to live with next year, come along to one of our Mixing Events. The Student Mentor Scheme can help you meet some likeminded people in the same situation. This is when our Mixing Events are taking place:

*Monday 23rd November 2015, 6-8pm. Amos Room, Guild of Students.*

*Wednesday 27th January 2016, 6 -8pm. The Underground, Guild of Students.*

*Thursday 4th February 2016, 6-8pm. Pritchatts Park Social Centre*

*Wednesday 16th March 2016, 6-8pm. The Underground, Guild of Students.*

## STEP 3: WHAT TYPE OF HOUSE ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

**When your group is deciding upon the type of property they would like to rent, there are a number of important aspects to consider such as price, location and property size (for example, number of bedrooms, bathrooms).**

### Location

The main student areas are Selly Oak and Harborne. However students are also known to reside in Selly Park, Edgbaston, the City Centre and Moseley.

Community Wardens work within the community and aim to encourage all residents to get involved in, look after and feel proud of their local community.

### Community Warden Scheme

Community Wardens are students from the University of Birmingham who are trained to provide you with information, direction, advice and the contacts you need to deal with issues in the community.

🏠 **Ground Floor, Guild of Students (ask at the ARC)**

📞 **0121 251 2502**

✉ **community@guild.bham.ac.uk**

🌐 **guildofstudents.com/community-wardens**

📘 **facebook.com/ilovesellyoak**

🐦 **@ILoveSellyOak**

## Rent

Rental figures for properties vary from £55 – £120pppw, with the average rent around £80pppw. However, you may find that rent varies not just on quality, but also on location (possibly increasing the closer the house is to the University). Your rent will be stipulated in your contract and the best method of paying your rent is by monthly standing order.

As you are likely to pay your rent monthly, it is important to calculate exactly how much you will be paying each month. This can be done by doing the following calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Weekly rent} \times 52 \text{ weeks}}{12 \text{ months}} = \text{Monthly Rent}$$

$$\text{Example: } \frac{£65 \times 52}{12} = £281.66$$

Before signing for a property, think carefully about your budget and how much you can afford to spend. As well as the rent, remember you will have to think about the cost of bills, food and other living costs.

It's important to remember that contracts normally start from the 1st July – this means that, even if you don't plan to live there until September, you will be liable for rent over the summer period. Remember to build this into your budget. Also think about the cost of the deposit – read on for more information about this!

If you take on the property and then, for any reason, your rent is late, you may incur charges from your landlord/letting agent. If you fall into arrears, you may become liable for eviction.

Never withhold rent - whether you are unhappy in your property or struggling with your finances. In these circumstances it is advisable to seek advice from the Advice & Representation Centre (ARC) or LIVING.

## Property features

When you are looking for a house, don't just focus on your WANTS – you also have to consider your NEEDS. Don't pick a house that has a double bed, but as a consequence has very little study space or unsecure windows and doors. Don't focus on your desire to pick a house with a garden and then ignore the current tenants warning about its lack of energy efficiency as it will cost you more in bills - think carefully about the choices you make.

In this booklet you will find a housing checklist. This is for you to carry with you when you are viewing properties. We have broken the list down into 'essential' and 'desirable' items to help guide you with what you really should, and perhaps shouldn't be looking for.



### Utility bills

These range from £8-16pppw and depend on what is included in your rent and the number of people in the property. Utility bills to consider include: gas, electric, water, internet and TV licence. Some bills can be included in the rent. In addition, you need to apply for Council Tax exemption. This can be done with the Library Service or directly with Birmingham City Council. Normally, gas and electric will be set up with a provider, but it is possible to switch energy providers.

### Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing

Under the Housing Act 2004, any property housing five or more unrelated individuals over three floors with shared facilities is classed as 'a property more at risk'. Therefore the landlord has extra legal responsibilities to fulfil, including applying for a license from Birmingham City Council to ensure the safety of occupants before they look to rent it to you.

If you are sharing with five or more people and the house meets the above criteria, you must ensure your landlord has a HMO license for the house – if it doesn't, you could be at risk. You can check whether the property is licensed by either asking your landlord/letting agent, or by emailing the Community Wardens – **community@guild.bham.ac.uk**

If your property does require a HMO license, then we strongly recommend that you see a copy of it before signing for the property. If you cannot be shown the license then don't sign a contract!

## STEP 4: SEARCHING FOR ACCOMMODATION

### Take your time...

Don't rush to sign a contract simply because you are worried that there aren't enough properties. It is important to take your time to find the right house, and get all the information you need first.

Before you think about finding a property, come along to our House Hunting Information Day to find out everything you need to know about house hunting before you start looking! Get yourself along to a Guild Lettings Housing Fair too, to see a selection of houses for rent.

For students who do not wish to move into private accommodation next year, then there is the option to return to live in University accommodation. You can apply to live in any of our University accommodation sites from December 1st 2015 at **[www.birmingham.ac.uk/accommodation/apply](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/accommodation/apply)**. The application deadline is January 17th 2016.



## How to find a house...

Although it is tempting to head out into the local area and visit the vast array of agents, it is important to take time to attend the events we have set up for you throughout the housing season. Never go door knocking looking for a house!

## Living and Guild Lettings

In summer 2014, Living, the University's accommodation service, and Guild Lettings, the Guild of Students' lettings service, joined forces to create a single service based in University Centre to help students find the right accommodation for them throughout their time at Birmingham.

# GuildLettings



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**Guild Lettings are the first point of call for students searching for private rented accommodation and can also offer you practical advice to help you find the right property.**

- No student fees
- MLAS Accredited Landlords Only
- Friendly student staff
- High quality accommodation
- Extensive knowledge and experience

## living

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**Living, the University's accommodation service, offers support and advice for students in both university and private accommodation.**

For students wanting to move into the private sector: Living, the University's accommodation service, hosts the official University of Birmingham private sector housing search engine via **[www.birminghamstudentpad.co.uk](http://www.birminghamstudentpad.co.uk)**. Living can help you find the best house for your needs and gives you peace of mind by only advertising properties from MLAS accredited landlords.

Contract reviewing service and advice: Living can review any contract for private sector housing, and will explain any parts you don't understand, before you decide to sign. We are also able to help with advice and information should you have any problems with your letting agent or landlord, or with any aspect of living in the community, all throughout your time at Birmingham.



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### **Online House Hunting Guide:**

This autumn, Living is introducing an online, interactive House Hunting Guide for students looking to move into private sector accommodation. The guide covers all you need to know about finding a house, tenancy agreements and overcoming any house hunting challenges you may face. The guide can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/UoBHouseHuntingGuide>

All students completing the guide in full will be entered into a prize draw. So make sure you complete yours today, for a chance to win exciting prizes for you and your future housemates!

### **Guild Lettings on Tour:**

*Thursday 12th November – Vale - 5-7pm The Hub Foyer*  
*Tuesday 17th November – Pritchatts Park – 5-7pm The Park*  
*Wednesday 18th November – Vale - 5-7pm The Hub Foyer*  
*Thursday 19th November – Jarratt – 5-7pm Jarratt Hall Lounge*

### **Guild Lettings Housing Fair:**

*Friday 27th November, 11am-4pm, Amos Room at the Guild of Students*

At these events you will be able to preview a selection of Guild Lettings finest properties and find out about private rented accommodation. We will take you through the lettings process, answer questions and provide general information and offer advice. There will also be the opportunity for you to make a list of requirements so we can help you select the most suitable properties for you to view.

### **Living's Housing Fair**

*Wednesday 2nd December 2015, 10am-3pm, Great Hall, Aston Webb*

We can help you with private sector advice and assistance with your search for that all important accommodation. There will be Landlords and Agents accredited with the Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme along with Private Providers all attending to give you the best possible opportunity to search all options before making the final decision on where to live.

### **Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme (MLAS)**

An accredited landlord/letting agent has signed a code of conduct which commits them to a number of good practices, for example, attending to repairs and defects promptly. Before you consider renting from a landlord/agent ALWAYS ask 'is the landlord accredited?' - This will be the best indication of whether you are signing a contract with a good landlord.

If you are letting through an agent you may be told they are an 'accredited agent', but this doesn't necessarily mean that the landlord of the property you are viewing through them is MLAS accredited. The agency accreditation simply

means that the agent will have to abide by a code of conduct, but this doesn't mean that the landlord does! This is especially important if it's the landlord managing your tenancy once you have moved in and not the agent (e.g. the one you call for repairs or problems during the tenancy).

To find out more about MLAS and to check whether a landlord/letting agent is accredited, please go to <http://mlas.org.uk> If a landlord or agent isn't accredited, ask yourself why that might be!

### **Information for international students ONLY – The Immigration Act 2014**

A new requirement for private landlords has been introduced. This stops landlords from letting a property to an individual who does not have the right to remain in the UK for the duration of their tenancy. You will need to prove your immigration status in order to secure a tenancy. For more information to understand whether this may apply to you, please visit [www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-rent-landlords-code-of-practice](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-rent-landlords-code-of-practice); or alternatively call 03000 069 9799. In addition, visit the ARC in the Guild of Students to seek further advice.

## **STEP 5: ATTEND VIEWINGS TO FIND THE RIGHT PROPERTY**

**When you are viewing a property, there are a few important factors to consider that could help you to determine whether the house is right for you.**

It is a good idea to ask the current tenants about their experience of living in the house; for instance do they recommend the property? Their answers will be a good indication of whether or not you are likely to have problems with the house, landlord or letting agent. In addition, it may also be a good idea to ask the current tenants about the cost of utility bills to give a good indication of what potential running expenses may be. Page 18 provides a list of further questions you may want to ask the current tenants.

### **Security**

Security should be a priority when choosing a house. Student properties are especially vulnerable to burglary due to the high number of valuable items and sometimes poor security provision. Think about: 5 occupants = 5 laptops/ computers + 5 phones!

Think when you are viewing the property:

- Does the side gate lock and are keys available?
- Is the rear garden fence in a good state of repair?
- How secure is the front door and back door? If it is wooden, does it have a second lock?
- Does the house have a burglar alarm and do you know how it works?
- How do you feel in the area? Have you checked what it is like at night? Would you feel comfortable being home alone?

Check out [lovesellyoak.com](http://lovesellyoak.com) for further information.

Finally, make sure the property is in good condition. If any big repairs are needed or if it has damp, then don't sign a contract for the property until you've got these issues checked out!

### Gas Safety

Being a tenant means there's always a landlord responsible for the safety of the gas appliances.

Gas safety checks must be carried out annually by a qualified Gas Engineer, who must be registered on the Gas Safe Register.

Once the Gas Engineer has carried out the necessary checks and has agreed that the appliances are safe to use, they will then issue a Gas Safety Certificate.

A landlord/agent must supply you with an up to date Gas Safety Certificate, as proof that all safety checks have been carried out – you must ask to see this certificate before you sign a contract. If you don't, then you could well be putting yourself in danger and at worst, be at risk of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning. If you wish to check whether a property is Gas Safe Registered then please visit **[www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)**.

### Fire Safety

When viewing a property, it is important to think about fire safety. THINK - How safe would you be if there was a fire?

- Make sure that fire alarms have been fitted throughout the property and that they are not covered or obstructed in any way. Do they work? Don't be afraid to test them.
- Are there fire doors within the property? Fire doors slow the progress of a fire and they close automatically to ensure safety. Also, should you be in the house when a fire starts, they will allow you extra time to get help.
- Is there a quick escape route to get out of the property? Escape routes should be clear and free from obstruction.
- Do the plug sockets appear to be safe and working? Loose or overloaded plug sockets are a fire hazard. Make sure there are an adequate amount of plug sockets in each room to minimize the need to use an extension lead.



As soon as you move in to a new property it is recommended that you book a free 'home safety check' through West Midlands Fire Service. They will check your home, talk to you about fire safety and also fit free smoke alarms (if required). We will give you more information about this service later in the year, once you have moved in to your property.

### Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

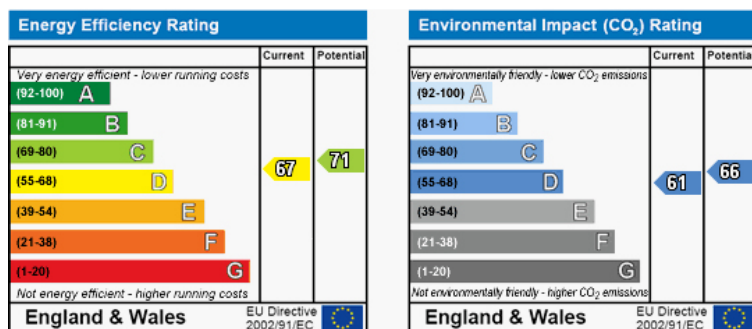
All students renting a private property should either be provided with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) or should be given a way of accessing this electronically. The EPC must be provided free of charge.

The purpose of the Energy Performance Certificate is to show you the energy performance of the property you are planning to rent.

The EPC shows the energy efficiency rating (relating to running costs) and the Environmental Impact rating (relating to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) of the property. They are shown on an A – G rating scale similar to those used for fridges and other electrical appliances. The certificate is accompanied by a recommendation report that contains recommendations on how to improve the property's energy efficiency. However, there is no statutory requirement for the landlord to carry out any of the recommended measures.

It is worth asking about the EPC before signing a contract. If the property falls into a low category, for example F-G, then it may turn out to be expensive to heat and therefore your energy bills may be high.

This is what an Energy Efficiency rating chart and Environmental Impact rating chart look like:



For more information about EPCs, please visit the Guild Lettings website [guildlettingsbirmingham.co.uk/EPCs.wik](http://guildlettingsbirmingham.co.uk/EPCs.wik)

In order to help you in your search for a house we have produced a checklist, which we hope will make that final decision a little bit easier.

Room	Essential	House 1	
General	Accredited landlord		
	HMO licence (property with 5+ people over 3+ stories, with shared facilities)		
	Smoke alarms (non HMO minimum of 1 per floor/HMO more specific fire safety requirements)		
	Up to date Gas Safety Certificate		
	Up to date Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)		
	Electric meter (with access to read)		
	Electric storage heating (if not gas)		
	Up to date PAT on portable appliances		
	Heater timer		
	Burglar alarm		
	Internal window locks		
	Central heating		

Room	Essential	House 1	
Outside	Lockable gated alleyway (if there is side gate)		
	Adequate fences, not broken (if there is a garden)		
	External lighting/security lighting		
	Area to store rubbish/recycling		

#### NOTES







Room	Essential	House 1	
Kitchen	Cooker		
	Fridge		
	Freezer		
	Washing machine		
	1 cupboard per person (storage)		
	Fire blanket/Extinguisher		
Living area	Sofa (enough space for everyone?)		
	Internet access (cable or phone point)		
	Curtains/Blinds		
Bathroom(s)	Bathroom/Ensuite		
	Shower (over bath/cubicle)/Bath		
	Toilet		
	Sink		
Bedroom	Single/double bed		
	Desk		
	Desk chair		
	Wardrobe		
	Chest of drawers		
	Curtains/Blinds		



House 2	House 3	Desirable	House 1	House 2	House 3
		Tumble drier			
		Dishwasher			
		Kitchen bin			
		Microwave			
		Toaster			
		Kettle			
		Curtains/Blinds			
		Coffee table			
		TV			
		Sky/Cable TV point			
		Dining table			
		Dining chairs			
		Storage space			
		Ensuite			
		Mirror			
		Curtains/Blinds			
		TV			
		Storage cupboard/Shelving bookcase			
		Bedside table/Cabinet			
		Sky/Cable TV point			
		Plug sockets (check there are enough!)			

Checklist continued overleaf...

Questions for current tenants	House 1	House 2	House 3	
Have you been happy living here?				
Would you recommend the property?				
Do you feel that you have a good landlord?				
Do they respond quickly to queries/ maintenance issues?				
Is it easy to get in touch with them?				
Do they give you notice (at least 24 hours) before they enter the property for any reason?				
Can you give me an idea of how much the bills will be?				
Do you feel safe living here?				

3 Additional Comments


## STEP 6: GET YOUR CONTRACT CHECKED

When you think you've found the right house, it may be tempting to sign the contract immediately so you don't lose the property. However, once you have entered into a contract you will be legally bound to it. It is too late to make changes, cancel the contract, or get your deposit back if you change your mind. Once it is signed, you cannot go back.

Contracts are usually long, complex and arduous documents that you may not fully understand - therefore you may not know what you are agreeing to!

The Guild and the University have an approved Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) agreement, which can be found on the Guild's website, under the ARC's Housing section. It is a good idea to take a look at this and familiarise yourself with its contents - not only because many landlords in the local area use these, but also it will give you a good idea of what a standard contract should look like.

Please note, while this is the endorsed contract for use with University of Birmingham students, we recommend that students get their contract checked before signing so that they can understand their rights and responsibilities as good tenants and check any additional terms included.

It is important to understand what you are signing before you sign, as you may be subject to legal action or need to take legal action at a later date, which can be both stressful and costly.

### **Do not sign a contract until:**

- You have had your contract checked by the Advice and Representation Centre (ARC – located on the ground floor of the Guild), or LIVING (University Centre). Both places have professional advisors, staff or volunteers that are able to check your contract;
- You have seen the exact property you will be living in. If the landlord/letting agent says 'it's the same as this one', but shows you a different property, then DON'T sign;
- Everything you have talked about with an agent/landlord is written into the contract. For example, it is not unheard of for a landlord to promise that 'by September you will have a brand new sofa and a newly fitted kitchen'. Verbal agreements are not enough!
- You have seen the original copy of the Gas Safety Certificate and Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) relating to the property;
- You are sure that you want to stay in the property for the term of the contract and can afford to pay for the rent throughout the whole of that period;
- You are happy with the group of people you have chosen to live with. Most student tenancies are 'joint', which means you are jointly liable for the total cost of living in the property. This is especially important to understand if things were to go wrong;
- You have a total figure of what it will cost you to live there, including your deposit. Also be aware of any hidden charges, such as 'signing fees' and charges for damages. You can avoid being caught out by getting your contract checked;

- The landlord/letting agent's contact details are written into the contract. It is important you know whose house you are living in as you never know when you may need to contact them.

## **Deposits**

Since the 6th April 2007, whenever you pay a deposit for an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST – the most common private tenancy), the landlord/letting agent must protect your deposit by paying it into one of four government authorised tenancy deposit schemes. Paying into a Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS) will ensure that you get your deposit back when you are entitled to it and that any disputes which do arise about the deposit, are easier to resolve.

The deposit, typically 4-6 weeks rent, is paid to the landlord or agent to provide them with security against any damage that you may cause in the property or rent arrears during your tenancy. The deposit is normally paid when you sign your contract – so make sure you budget for this as it is a considerable sum of money.

If you are an international student then you may have to pay a higher deposit of around 8 weeks or 2 months' rent. This is because the vast majority of international students will not be able to get a guarantor to underwrite their rent payments and their liabilities under the tenancy agreement.

The next obvious question is "What's a Guarantor?!" – for many students this will be a parent, and basically they will agree to cover your costs in relation to the property if you can't. The important things to remember are that the guarantor should normally be someone that lives in the UK that they have understood what is expected of them in any "guarantee agreement" they are asked to sign, and that they only guarantee your share of the rent (and obligations).

Obviously, for many international students it may be impossible to get a guarantor, and for some home students too, so you are going to have to consider the state of your budgets! If you are asked for more than 2 months' rent, you need to consider why that might be.

If you are unsure about guarantors or higher deposit requirements, then it is advisable to seek advice from the Advice & Representation Centre (ARC) or LIVING.

When you pay your deposit make sure you get a receipt. Within 30 days of paying your deposit, your landlord or agent must provide you with details of where they have protected your deposit, including:

- A Certificate, with contact details of the relevant TDS & landlord/letting agent as proof that your money has been paid into one of the schemes
- Information on how to apply for release of the deposit
- The purpose of the deposit and what to do if there is a dispute

If you do not receive confirmation of where your deposit has been paid into, or if the deposit amount you have been requested to pay seems unusually high, please seek advice from the Advice & Representation Centre (ARC) or LIVING.

## Where to get help...

### The Student Mentor Scheme

The Student Mentors and support staff will be happy to offer support and answer any questions you may have about house hunting. Pop in or make an appointment at the Student Mentor Scheme Office located in the Hub (Vale Village).

**Visit us: in the Hub, Vale (next to the Duck and Scholar),  
Monday - Friday, 4-8pm during term time.**

- 📞 0121 415 8568
- ✉️ [mentorwelfare@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:mentorwelfare@guild.bham.ac.uk)
- 🌐 [guildofstudents.com/studentmentors](http://guildofstudents.com/studentmentors)
- 📘 [facebook.com/studentmentorscheme](https://www.facebook.com/studentmentorscheme)
- 🐦 @StudentMentors1



### ARC (Advice & Representation Centre)

The ARC is an impartial, free, and confidential service for all students of the University of Birmingham run by the Guild of Students. They specialise in five main areas: academic, employment, finance, housing, and immigration. You can access support via the ARC's weekday drop-in service, an online enquiry service, or from the website resources.

- 🏠 **Ground Floor, Guild of Students**
- 📞 0121 251 2400
- ✉️ [thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk)
- 🌐 [guildofstudents.com/thearc](http://guildofstudents.com/thearc)



### LIVING

Living, the University's accommodation service, offers support and advice for students in both University and private accommodation.

**University accommodation applications:  
[birmingham.ac.uk/accommodation/apply](http://birmingham.ac.uk/accommodation/apply)**

- 🏠 **University Centre (ground floor)**
- 📞 0121 414 8000
- ✉️ [living@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:living@contacts.bham.ac.uk)
- 🌐 [birminghamstudentpad.co.uk](http://birminghamstudentpad.co.uk)
- 📘 [facebook.com/birminghamaccommodation](https://www.facebook.com/birminghamaccommodation)
- 🐦 @livingatbham





## Guild Lettings

Guild Lettings are the first point of call for students searching for private rented accommodation and can also offer you practical advice to help you find the right property.

- 🏠 **University Centre (ground floor)**
- ☎ **0121 415 8376**
- ✉ **guildlettings@guild.bham.ac.uk**
- 🌐 **guildlettingsbirmingham.co.uk**

## GuildLettings

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## Community Warden Scheme

The Community Wardens aim to encourage all residents to get involved in, look after and feel proud of their local community. Community Wardens are students from the University of Birmingham who are trained to provide you with information, direction, advice and the contacts you need to deal with issues in the community.

- 🏠 **Ground Floor, Guild of Students (ask at the ARC)**
- ☎ **0121 251 2502**
- ✉ **community@guild.bham.ac.uk**
- 🌐 **guildofstudents.com//community-wardens**
- 📘 **facebook.com/ilovesellyoak**
- 🐦 **@ILoveSellyOak**



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## MLAS (Midlands Landlord Accreditation Scheme)

- ☎ **0121 288 2008**
- ✉ **talk@mlas.org.uk**
- 🌐 **mlas.org.uk**



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**Student  
Mentor  
Scheme**  
Advice  
& Guidance

# Table of events during the housing season 2015/16

Event	Day & date	Time	Location
House Hunting Information Day	Wednesday 11th November 2015	10am - 3pm	The Underground, Guild of Students
Guild Lettings on Tour	Thursday 12th November 2015	5 - 7pm	The Hub Foyer, Vale
Guild Lettings on Tour	Tuesday 17th November 2015	5 - 7pm	Pritchatts Park Social Centre
Guild Lettings on Tour	Wednesday 18th November 2015	5 - 7pm	The Hub Foyer, Vale
Guild Lettings on Tour	Thursday 19th November	5 - 7pm	Jarratt Hall Lounge
Guild Lettings Housing Fair	Friday 27th November 2015	11am -	Amos Room, Guild of Students
LIVING Housing Fair	Wednesday 2nd December 2015	10am -	Great Hall, Aston Webb building
Mixing Event	Monday 23rd November 2015	6 - 8pm	Amos Room , Guild of Students
Mixing Event	Wednesday 27th January 2016	6 - 8pm	The Underground, Guild of Students
Mixing Event	Thursday 4th February 2016	6 - 8pm	Pritchatts Park Social Centre
Mixing Event	Wednesday 16th March 2016	6 - 8pm	The Underground, Guild of Students
Virtual Q&A Session	Monday 16th November 2015	12 - 4pm	birmingham.ac.uk HouseHuntingVirtualQ&A
Virtual Q&A Session	Thursday 3rd December 2015	4 - 7pm	



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living

GuildLettings