



Renting Privately

Information for private tenants

Të marrësh me qira privatisht
Informacion për qiraxhinjtë privatë

প্রাইভেট (বেসরকারী) বাড়ী ভাড়া করা
প্রাইভেট (বেসরকারী) ভাড়াটীদের জন্য তথ্য

租用私人住宅
為私人住宅租戶提供的訊息

आनगी (प्राइवेट) रीते घर भाडे लेवुं
आनगी (प्राइवेट) भाडूतो माटे माहिती

प्राइवेट तरीके से किराये पर देना
प्राइवेट किरायेदारों के लिये सूचना

به کریگرتنی خانوو به ره ی پرایشیت
زانباریی بو کریچییه کانی خانوو به ره ی پرایشیت

Arrendamento Privado
Informações para inquilinos de
arrendamento privado

ਪ੍ਰਾਈਵੇਟ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਰਾਏ ਤੇ ਦੇਣਾ
ਪ੍ਰਾਈਵੇਟ ਕਿਰਾਏਦਾਰਾਂ ਲਈ ਸੂਚਨਾ

Ijaar Baraafit ahaan
Akhbaar loogu talagalay kiraystaha
baraafitka ah

نجی کرایہ داری
نجی کرایہ داروں کے لیے معلومات

Thuê nhà tư nhân
Tin tức cho người thuê nhà tư nhân

Wynajem prywatny
Informacje dla osób wynajmujących
lokale mieszkaniowe prywatnie

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Introduction: Welcome to the Private Rented Sector

What is the private rented sector?

The term 'private rented sector' means properties that are owned by private individuals, companies or organisations and rented out to single people and / or families. This is different from owning your own home, or 'social rented housing' which refers to properties that are owned and rented out by housing associations or the council.

Why rent a property from a private landlord?

There are many reasons why you may choose to live in the private rented sector. A few of the main ones are listed below:

Choice: there are a wide range of properties in different areas available to

you, and the private rented sector is expanding, which means there are more and more properties available in a wider range of areas.

Affordability: renting can be considerably cheaper than buying your own house.

Mobility: when renting in this sector you can usually get into and out of a tenancy fairly quickly, which means you can move around more easily should you need to do so.

Lack of social housing: there are a very limited number of properties to rent through the council or housing associations, and they might not be the type of property, or in the area, that you want.



Section 1: How to find a property

1. What sort of properties should I look at?

First of all you need to decide what sort of property you need, and where it should be. Think about things like the type of property (bedsit, flat or house), what floor (e.g. ground floor, first floor etc), which areas of Bristol you would like to live in, and how much you can afford to pay in rent.

If you are planning on claiming Housing Benefits to help you with your rent payments you will need to think about the level that you could be entitled to.

If your tenancy starts after the 7th April 2008 your Housing Benefit will normally be calculated using a new set of rules called Local Housing Allowance. With Local Housing Allowance your benefit is not usually based on the property you live in, but instead on the number of bedrooms you need, how much money you have coming in, and, what savings you have.

Housing Benefits can be complicated so it's a good idea to contact the Housing Benefit department to find out more information before you decide to move house.

You will also need to think about how much time you have to find somewhere to live, and how long the moving process might take. If you don't have much time to find somewhere new and move, you may want to widen the areas you'd be willing to

live in to give yourself more choice and a better chance of finding somewhere suitable.

2. Where do I look for properties?

Local press: The Bristol Evening Post, Trade It and the Western Daily Press regularly advertise rented properties.

Noticeboards: Local shop windows / community noticeboards / supermarket noticeboards or anywhere where people may advertise. Landlords often advertise available properties here.

Letting and management agents: Agents manage properties on behalf of private landlords. Agents should not charge you to just to look for a property. If you find a property through an agent you will often be charged a fee - for example one third of a month's rent plus VAT. This fee may be non-refundable. They will also require a deposit and up to two months rent in advance.

Bristol City Council cannot recommend individual letting & management agents. However some letting agents are voluntarily regulated by professional letting agents associations which have a code of conduct for all member agents, and they can give you a list of their members. Three of the main associations in Bristol are: The Association of Residential



Letting Agents*, the National Association of Estate Agents* and the Bristol Association of Letting and Management Agents*.

Websites: There are lots of websites that advertise properties and rooms to let. If you are looking for an accessible property there is a national accessible property register www.accessible-property.co.uk (please note this is a privately run site and Bristol City Council cannot vouch for the reliability or accuracy of the information on this website). You can get free Internet access at your local library.

If you are a student: Information is available on University* & Student Unions' websites* and also at University accommodation fairs.

3. How do I decide if it's the right property for me?

a Affordability

One of the first things to think about is 'Can I afford to pay the rent and bills?'. If you are intending to claim Local Housing Allowance, make sure you have checked how much benefit you will be eligible for before you move in. Some properties will have a rent lower than the amount of Local Housing Allowance, you can get. If you live in one of these, you can keep the extra Local Housing Allowance s up to a maximum amount of £15 per week. This will not affect any other social security benefits you get. If you are single and under 25 years old your rent will normally be restricted to the normal amount of rent payable for renting a single room within a house.

■ Deposits, fees and rent in advance

Most landlord / agents will ask you for a deposit (usually the same amount as one months rent), and will often ask for rent in advance to be paid as well. You will need to think about whether you can afford this, and remember that Local Housing Allowance is paid, normally directly to you, two weeks in arrears - so you will not be able to use this to pay any rent in advance.

You may also be asked to provide a guarantor, this is someone who is expected to guarantee paying the rent if the tenant, for any reason, does not pay. A guarantor is legally responsible to pay any rent payments outstanding and can be taken to

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

court by a landlord where a tenant has failed to meet any rent payment. Make sure that your guarantor reads the agreement they are asked to sign - this is a legally binding document. In the absence of a guarantor it might be possible to negotiate with a landlord about this and secure alternative guarantees about rent payments where you can provide references from employers and a credit reference check.

b Visiting the property and meeting the landlord / agent

One of the first things you should do is visit the property and meet the landlord / letting agent.

You are not obliged to take the property just because you have visited it - this is a chance for you to look at the property and decide if it is somewhere you would be happy to live.

It is also a chance for you to meet the landlord / agent, and see if you would be happy to deal with them. Likewise, it is a chance for the landlord / agent to meet you and see if they want you as a tenant. Remember that the landlord / agent is meeting you for the first time, and first impressions count!

c Health and Safety

To help you decide if the property is right for you you may want to complete the health and safety checklist included in the back of this booklet. This is not a guarantee

that the property is safe - it is just a guide of things to look for.

- If the property is furnished you should check that any soft furnishings are fire resistant. All new furniture will comply with current fire standards, and you can check for labels on second hand furniture. You should check items such as settees, chairs, bed bases, mattresses, headboards, dining chairs, sofa beds, cushions and pillows. If you cannot find the labels, talk to the landlord / agent about this.
- If the property has gas appliances, it is a legal requirement that the landlord / agent arranges to have them inspected once a year to make sure they are safe. You can ask to see a copy of the CORGI gas certificate to make sure this has been done. If they won't let you see this certificate you can contact the private housing teams* for advice. It is also good practice for your landlord / agent to arrange safety checks for electrical installations and appliances (if provided), you can ask if this has been done and ask to see the certificate (but remember there is no legal requirement for the landlord / agent to do this.)
- It's a good idea to try and view the property in the day time, so that if there are any faults and disrepair you will be able to see them more clearly. Also try and take someone with you. It's safer than going on your own and means you've got someone else's opinion as well.

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

d Energy Performance Certificate

If your tenancy starts after the 1st October 2008, your landlord / agent is obliged to let you see the Energy Performance Certificate for the property before you move in. This certificate shows the energy efficiency rating for the property - the higher the rating the more energy efficient the home is and the lower the fuel bills will be. If your landlord / agent does not give you a copy of this certificate you can contact the Private Housing Teams*. Your landlord / agent may be liable for a fine.

For more information on Energy Performance Certificates go to the Communities and Local Government website*.

e Location, affordability, furnishings and contracts

You may also want to make your own checklist to help you decide. This could include things like:

- **Affordability:** can I afford the rent? (or will Housing Benefit cover the rent) and can I afford the bills? This is hard to know before you've moved in, but you may be able to ask the landlord or agent or even ask the existing tenants.
- **Location:** is the property in a suitable area for me? Are there shops and bus stops near by?

- **Furnishings:** is the property furnished or unfurnished? Can you fit any furnishings you already own in the property? If it's unfurnished, can you afford to buy what you need to furnish it? You may be able to get help to purchase furniture and items such as fridges etc. (see 'What to do when you first move into a new property' section).

- **Type of contract:** it's a good idea to ask your landlord / agent whether you will have a single or joint tenancy. If you sign a joint tenancy, you need to be aware that you will be "jointly and severally liable". This means that you could be held liable for the actions of the other tenants, in particular the non-payment of rent. You also might have a fixed term contract, which means that if you move in with a group of people (joint tenants) you need to be confident you can all live together for that fixed term - it might be very difficult to leave part way through the contract. It's a good idea to check before you sign the agreement what might happen if one person decides to leave - will you have to cover their rent? Are you or the landlord responsible for finding a replacement tenant? All these issues are important to consider. Your new tenancy will probably have a minimum fixed term, which means there will be a minimum amount of time that you will have to live there.

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

■ **Smoking:** Find out if there is a smoking clause in the tenancy agreement. Your new landlord may not want tenants to smoke in their property for health and safety reasons. Where there is a clause, the tenant is usually obliged not to smoke anywhere within the building.

Smoking can lead to a discolouration of upholstery and paintwork on doors, walls and ceilings. Cigarettes can easily start an accidental fire and are one of the main causes of fires in the home.

If you choose to smoke in a non-smoking property, you may be responsible for professionally cleaning or replacing curtains, furnishings, upholstery and carpets, and redecorating ceilings, walls, skirting boards and doors. You could also be asked to leave the property if you continue to smoke in the premises. If you are a smoker, you can always set up a smoking area outside in an area away from doors and windows.

■ **Discrimination and accessibility:** It's worth knowing that a Landlord / agent is not allowed to discriminate against you because of your gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, or disability.

Private landlords / agents are obliged to make 'reasonable adjustments' to

the property for disabled people. It's hard to say exactly what would constitute a 'reasonable adjustment', as this will depend on the type of property and the adjustment. You can get advice about this, and advice if you think you have been discriminated against, from the Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline*.

Disabled private tenants may be able to apply for help with making adaptations to the property to enable you to live there - you would have to get the landlords agreement before arranging for any works to be done. You can contact Bristol Care Direct* for more information.

■ **Accredited Properties:** An accredited property is a property that has been certified by Bristol City Council as being up to a good standard and well managed . The Landlord / Agent will probably advertise the property as accredited, or show you the certificate when you first visit the property. It's a good idea to check with Bristol City Council that the property is on their list of accredited properties, and also have a look at the accreditation information on the website so you can see what standards should be met. You can contact the private housing teams* for further advice.

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

■ **Licensed Properties:** If you are thinking of moving into a property and there are: three or more storeys and five or more other people who share facilities with you - the property may need to be licenced by council. The private housing teams* can let you know if the property has already has licence, or if it should have one. If the property is licenced this means that it must meet certain standards and the landlord or managing agent has signed a Code of Good Management Practice. If the property is licensable and the landlord has not applied for a licence they may be liable for a fine. You can also contact the private housing teams* if you think your property is licensable but the standards are not being met, or the management code is not being followed.

If the council investigate and find that the property should have a licence but the landlord has not applied for one in some cases tenants may be able to reclaim rent from their landlord, you will need to speak to the private housing teams* to find out more information about this.



4. What do I do when I've chosen my property?

■ **If you are happy with the property**

If you are happy with the property and are confident you can afford it, contact the landlord or agent and arrange the next steps with them. Don't forget that if you are already in rented accommodation you will need to give notice, usually one month (check your tenancy agreement and read the Section '**Moving Out Of Your Property**' for help). This means you will need to think about when you can move out of your old property and into your new one.

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

Section 2: What to do when you first move into a new property

1. Tenancy agreement, inventory and deposit

Just before moving in, most landlords will present you with a written tenancy agreement to sign. It will detail your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. You should read it carefully before signing. You will have to pay rent and bills from the start date on the tenancy agreement. It's a good idea to check with your landlord if there are any charges contained in the agreement - for example to replace carpets or cleaning the property when you move out.

Types of Tenancy

■ Assured Shorthold tenancies

The most common type of tenancy agreement is an 'Assured Shorthold Tenancy' (AST) which means the tenancy is for a fixed period - usually 6 or 12 months. Bristol City Council encourages landlords to let ASTs for a minimum 12-month period. When the fixed period runs out if no action is taken the agreement will become a statutory periodic tenancy, which means it will continue to run on a monthly or weekly basis (depending on how when you pay your rent).

■ Contractual Periodic Tenancies

You can have variations to this type of agreement. The landlord may prefer to offer a verbal tenancy or a written tenancy agreement without a fixed period. Both

these examples would create contractual periodic tenancies, meaning the tenancy runs from rent day to rent day i.e. week to week, or month to month, depending on the rental arrangement. Again you need to be sure of your rights and responsibilities, and don't be afraid to get advice if you need to.

■ Excluded Lettings

If the landlord lives in the same accommodation as you, this cannot be an assured shorthold tenancy, and will instead be an excluded letting. Again, you will need to read any written contract presented to you and understand your rights and responsibilities.

■ Regulated and Assured tenancies

If you moved in to your property before 1989 you might be a Regulated Tenant, and if you moved in between 1989 and 1997 you may be an assured tenant. Different rules apply to you if this is the case, and it's a good idea to make sure you understand what rights you have. More information about these types of tenancy can be found on the Shelter website*, or through the Citizens Advice Bureau*.

Inventory

It is recommended that you sign an inventory. This is a document which describes the condition of the property and any contents. It will be important for you to check against this inventory when you

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

move out of the property. By signing the inventory you are agreeing with everything that is written there, so make sure that you agree that the inventory is correct before you sign it. If your landlord / agent does not provide you with an inventory it's a good idea to take one yourself, and then send it to them to sign. We've included an example of what an inventory might look like in the 'Example Documents Section'. It can be a good idea to take photographs of the property to go with any inventory taken so you have evidence of what condition the property was in when you first moved in. You may want to get the photographs printed with a date and time, or find another way to prove when the photographs were taken.

Deposit

You will normally be asked for a deposit. If your tenancy starts on or after the 6th April 2007 your landlord/ agent is legally required to protect your deposit in a Tenancy Deposit Scheme. Your landlord / agent is obliged to tell you which scheme is being used. If you do not think your deposit has been protected, you can apply to your local county court. The court can order the landlord or agent to either repay the deposit to you or protect it in a scheme. For more help you can contact Shelter*, or check the Bristol City Council website* or the Direct Gov website*.

Shared Housing

If you move into a shared house (technically called a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)), or you move into a property as a group of individuals (rather than a family), you will probably have a joint tenancy. This will mean that you are all 'jointly and severally liable' - very simply this means that you are individually responsible to pay the rent, and jointly responsible - so if one person doesn't pay, legally the others will have to pay on their behalf.

2. Rent, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

If you are going to claim Housing Benefit and / or Council tax Benefit you should apply before you move into the property if possible (or at the latest during the week you move in) as benefit is usually paid from the Monday after they receive the form. If there is a delay in making your claim benefit may not be paid from the date you moved in. Remember that Housing Benefit in the form of Local Housing Allowance is now paid in most cases to the tenant, two weeks in arrears. You will have to make an arrangement to pay your rent to your landlord. This is usually only paid from the date you actually move in to the property, so you should move in on the date your tenancy starts.

How to claim

There are a number of ways you can make a claim for Housing Benefit. You can

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

download a form from the council website, collect one from your nearest customer service point, call the council Customer Service Centre or write and request that a form be sent to you. Contact details are at the end of this booklet.

You will need to provide proof of your tenancy, your identity, your income and your savings. There is more information about this on the application form.

3. Telling people you have moved into a new property

Personal Benefits and Allowances

If you claim Income Support (IS) Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA) or Incapacity Benefit (ICB) you need to ring the Department for Work and Pensions* (DWP)

If you claim Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) or Child Tax Credit (CTC) telephone the Inland Revenue*.

Utilities

You will need to register with Bristol Wessex Billing services*. Be aware that your water bill may be seem quite high as you are usually billed for the whole year. Check if you are on a water meter, as you will need to provide Bristol Water with a meter reading when you first move in.

You will also need to let your electricity and gas suppliers know you have moved into the property and give them your meter readings. If you are not sure who your supplier is you can contact National Grid* and Western Power*. Contact the supply companies with the readings and arrange for the account to be put in your

name. It's a good idea to take these readings with your landlord / agent, and make a note of them on your inventory.

If there are key meters you will need to contact the supply companies and arrange to have the meters re-set. If you don't have a key you will need to ask the supply company to provide one for you. Don't use a key that's been left by the old tenant until you've spoken to the utility company - they may have left a debt on the key, and it can be complicated to sort this out after you've started using it.

It's a good idea to ask the landlord or agent where the stopcock and fuse box are in case of emergencies.

Bristol City Council

You will need to tell the Council Tax* office that you have moved house. If you live on your own make sure you tell the Council tax office this as you may be eligible for a reduction (single person allowance). Some people, such as full time students, are exempt from paying council tax, make sure you let the Council tax office know if you think you should be exempt.

The Council tax office will send you a bill and should also send you a form to register with Electoral Services. If you do not receive this you can call Electoral Services* directly to request one. If you are eligible to vote, filling this form in will mean you are registered on the electoral roll.

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

If you are claiming Housing Benefits you will also need to let the Housing benefit* department know that you have moved, and let them know your new address.

TV licence

If you have a TV licence for your old address, you need to contact the TV Licensing Authority* and ask them to transfer your licence to your new address. If you do not have a TV licence, you will need to purchase one for your new home if you wish to use a television. If you live in a shared house and have a joint tenancy you will only need one licence for the whole house, but if you have separate tenancy agreements you may need more than one licence. Failure to have the correct licence(s) may result in a fine.

Insurance

It is your responsibility to arrange contents insurance if you want to cover your personal belongings against damage or theft. If you had insurance at your old home, then you will need to contact your insurers to tell them you've moved. Your insurance premium may change depending on what area you live in.

4. Furniture

If your property comes part or unfurnished, and you do not have enough furniture, the Sofa Project* or Emmaus* may be able to assist you. They provide low cost furniture and safety-checked appliances to people on a low income.

If you receive Income Support or Income-Based Job Seekers' Allowance, you may also be able to receive financial assistance from the Social Fund at the Department of Work and Pensions*.

5. Rubbish and Recycling

As a resident of Bristol you have a legal responsibility for the waste you produce. This means that you are responsible for:

- Storing it on your property during the week
- Putting your recycling and rubbish in the correct containers
- Putting your recycling and rubbish containers on the edge of your property by 7am on your collection day
- Moving your containers from the kerbside as soon as possible after your collection.

Kerbside Collections

Most households in Bristol, with the exception of flats, receive a kerbside collection of their recycling (weekly) and rubbish (fortnightly). To find out your collection day, contact Bristol City Council* or visit the website.



* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

Recycling

■ Black Box



What goes in: All paper (including newspapers, magazines, catalogues, telephone directories, junk mail, envelopes etc), Yellow Pages, glass bottles and jars, cans and tins (including aerosols), aluminium foil, clothes and textiles, shoes, spectacles, household and car batteries, used engine oil (in a sealed container).

✗ Plastic bottles are not collected in the black box. If you put these in, the box may not be emptied.

✗ Cardboard is collected with your food waste (see below), so please do not put this in your black box.

You can put out as much recycling as you want, try to keep a tidy box separating materials if possible. Please place any recycling that does not fit in your box in untied carrier bags.

■ Food waste and cardboard

What goes in: All cooked and uncooked food waste.

Make sure that you have a food waste bin and a kitchen caddy. Keep your kitchen caddy in your kitchen, line it with newspaper, a paper or cornstarch liner and use it for all food waste. When your caddy is full, empty it into your larger food waste bin which can be kept outside - try to store your bin out of direct sunlight and keep it locked shut (push the handle forward) to avoid smells escaping.

On collection day, put your food waste bin and your cardboard together, put your cardboard under or beside the food waste bin. You can place small bits of cardboard in the bin.

Please contact Bristol City Council* or visit the website if you would like to order a free black box, food waste bin or kitchen caddy, have any questions regarding their use, or would like to report a missed collection.



* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

Recycling in flats

Recycling services in blocks of flats vary. Some blocks of flats have Mini Recycling Centres for recycling paper, glass and cans. Others have facilities for communal collection of food waste. Please speak to a neighbour, a caretaker or contact the council to find out what services you have access to.



Wheelie bins

Your wheelie bin is for any waste that cannot be recycled, including plastic packaging and polystyrene. The lid must be closed and no extra binbags will be taken. If you do not have a wheeled bin, you can place up to four black bags out for collection. If you live in a large household, contact the council to see if you qualify for an extra bin. It is your legal responsibility to make sure that your rubbish is not stored on the street.

Other Waste Services

Contact Bristol City Council* or visit the website* for further information.

Optional chargeable garden waste collection service, bulky waste collection for large items of furniture, and discreet confidential clinical waste collection.

BCC also offer assistance with collection. If you need help putting out your recycling and rubbish bins and boxes due to disability or infirmity you can request an assisted collection.

Other recycling services

Contact Bristol City Council* or visit the website* for further information

You can also recycle and dispose of other items including wood, electrical items, and hazardous waste at the household waste recycling centres and recycle plastic bottles and other materials at over 40 recycling centres in Bristol.



* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

Section 3: While living in the property

1. Paying bills and rent

You are responsible for paying the rent and bills from the date on your tenancy agreement. If you do not keep up to date with payments you may be putting your tenancy at risk. You should never withhold rent from your landlord / agent for any reason. If you do withhold rent your landlord / agent may take you to court.

If you are joint tenants and one person does not pay their rent the other joint tenants will be liable to pay that rent.

If you live in a shared house you need to think carefully about whose name is on each bill, and how you're going to make sure that the bills are paid in full and on time. If one tenant does not pay their share then whoever's name is on the bill is liable for ensuring that payment is made. If you have guarantors they may be liable for paying bills if you do not.

If you are claiming Housing Benefit you need to remember that this benefit is to help you pay your rent -it will not cover the cost of any of your bills.

2. Keeping your home warm and dry

One of the best ways to make sure your home stays warm and dry is to make sure that your home is not damp.

Damp is often caused by condensation, which happens when warm air comes into contact with a cold surface - such as a wall

or window. Condensation itself is not harmful, but if it causes mould, this can make your home unhealthy. It can also lead to things like rotting window frames. Remember that you are responsible for maintaining the property while you live there, and you may be liable for any repairs needed to the property if the landlord or agent thinks you helped cause this damage.

There are lots of simple things you can do to keep condensation and damp to a minimum:

Heating

A lot of condensation is caused by a lack of heating. It will help if you can heat unused rooms to a low level, and / or keep internal doors closed. Having insulation in your home can help to reduce condensation as well.

If you do not have central heating, try not to use portable gas heaters as they give out a lot of moisture. Portable heaters should never be left on when you are not at home.

If you are in receipt of a means tested benefits like Housing Benefit, you may be able to have central heating installed free of charge. Contact WarmFront* for more details.

Produce less moisture

Kitchen: Put the lids on saucepans. Do not put more water in than you need to, and turn the heat down once the contents are boiling.

Keep the kitchen door closed when you are cooking to stop the steam escaping into the rest of the property.

If there is an extractor fan make sure it is on when you are using the room.

Bathroom: Make sure you do not get water on the floor of the bathroom or toilet. Any water left on the floor will penetrate beneath the covering and cause damage, this can be very expensive to put right and your landlord / agent might charge you for this.

When you are having a shower make sure the shower curtain hangs inside the bath. Use bath mats on the floor and try not to splash water outside the bath or shower.

Keep the bathroom door shut, and open a window so the damp air can escape.

If there is an extractor fan make sure it is on when you are using the room.

Ventilation

Try and keep a window open in kitchens and bathrooms when using them, and for at least 20 minutes after you have finished. Keep windows slightly open in any rooms you are using, including your bedroom at night, so that the air can circulate. Only do this if it does not cause a security problem.

Drying clothes

Whenever possible, dry your clothes outside. If you have to dry clothes inside do not hang them directly on radiators. Where possible dry clothes in the bathroom on a clothes horse and keep the room ventilated.

Other things you can do

If condensation and damp do become a problem and the above ideas do not help, you should talk to the landlord / agent. Devices such as dehumidifiers may help, and your landlord / agent may have other ideas to help stop the problem.

3. Security

You are responsible for keeping your home secure while you are living there. It is your landlord / agents responsibility to make sure that you have suitable locks on any doors and windows that need them.

Crime reduction advice

Basic though it sounds, the best advice is to make sure that doors and windows are kept locked. Have a quick check before you leave the house. Even when you are at home, keep doors locked and do not leave windows open in rooms that you are not in. 'Walk in' burglaries rise dramatically in the summer when people leave doors and windows open.

- Do not leave a spare key hidden outside. The standard places that they are hidden are the first places that a burglar would check.
- You might want to ask for new locks to be installed when you move in as you do not know who was given a copy of the keys by the previous tenant.
- Roughly 2/3 of burglaries are via rear ground floor windows and doors. Take extra care to secure them. Windows

above flat roofs are also very vulnerable.

- To make the front of your house less vulnerable, make sure that your doors and windows are easily visible from the street. Keep walls and vegetation down to under 1 metre in height.
- Install a viewer in the front door. Do not open the door if you are in any doubt as to who is knocking.
- Do not leave keys close to doors as burglars can use fishing rods or magnets to reach them through the letter box.
- Mortice deadlocks should be used where possible as they require a key to open from either side so mean that burglars can't let themselves out of the door if they've broken in another way.
- Gravel is noisy to walk on and can deter burglars if used around the perimeter of the home. Prickly shrubs planted alongside rear walls and fences give good added protection.
- Low wattage, energy efficient, dusk to dawn lighting is preferable in most cases to 'security' lights activated by sensors.
- You might want to insure the contents of your house, in case anything is stolen.
- Use timer switches to turn on lights, radios etc while you are away from the house. Ask a trusted neighbour or friend to check on your home while you are on holiday and to make the place appear occupied by removing the mail, opening curtains etc.

- Ensure that sheds and outbuildings are secure. Even if they contain little of value, tools and ladders stored there can be used to break into the main building.
- You can register all uniquely identifiable property (i.e. property with serial numbers) at www.immobilise.com. If recovered by the police, the owner of the property can then be traced by searching the database.
- Vehicles are safest if parked in a locked garage or on a drive, if there is one.
- For more advice, you could contact your Neighbourhood Watch scheme*, or visit the Crime Reduction website*

Trespassers and Visitors

Under the law you are entitled to use reasonable force in self-defence or to protect another person or your property. The force that it is reasonable to use in any situation will depend on the threat that you are facing. For example, the level of force that you can use to defend your life is greater than the force you can use to defend your property. The law does not allow you to retaliate. Punishing criminals is a matter for the courts and you must not take the law into your own hands by trying to punish an offender for a crime committed against you, your friends, or your family.

The Occupiers' Liability Acts (1957 and 1984) place a responsibility on occupiers to take reasonable precautions to safeguard those who are on their property. The earlier

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

act deals with legitimate visitors and the later act deals with trespassers. As an occupier, you have a duty of care to those legitimately on your property.

In theory, someone could take civil (NOT criminal) action against you if they injured themselves whilst on your property either as a trespasser or as a guest.

4. Energy efficiency

If your property is not energy efficient, this isn't only bad for the environment it also increases your fuel bills. If you are on benefits, you may be able to apply for a Warm Front* grant to make your property warmer and more energy efficient, by installing insulation, draft proofing etc. You will need to get permission from your landlord or agent before you have any works carried out. Even if you are not on benefits you may still be able to get assistance - contact the Energy Advice Centre* for information about any discount schemes available in your area, and to get advice about how to make your property more energy efficient.

5. Gas safety

It is the landlords responsibility to make sure that gas appliances are safe by arranging a CORGI gas inspection every year. If you are not sure if this has been done contact your landlord /agent and ask for a copy of the inspection certificate.

You need to make sure that you report any problems with any gas appliances supplied by the landlord or agent. If you find out that any gas appliances are not safe you must not use them.

6. Neighbours and being a good neighbour

If you have any problems with your neighbours while you are living in your new home, the best thing to do at first is to talk to them and see if you can find a way to resolve the problem. If this does not work, or you are not able to talk to your neighbours, there are agencies which may be able to help you. Your local Customer Service Point* may be able to help you work out who you need to contact.

Places to go for help:

Anti Social Behaviour

It's Your Call* or in an emergency: Avon and Somerset Police*

Blocked Drains

Private Housing Teams*

Noise

Noise pollution Team*

Rats, mice and other vermin

Pest Control*

Rubbish Collection

Waste Services*

You also have a responsibility to be a good neighbour, so make sure you think about how your behaviour might affect your neighbours.

Noise

Keep noise down - especially in the evenings and at night

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

7. Your responsibilities

As a tenant, you have certain responsibilities, most of which should be stated in your tenancy agreement. The list below gives an idea of the main things you need to be aware of:

- You must pay your rent and bills when they are due
- You must:
 - report repairs to your landlord / agent as soon as possible
 - not deliberately cause any damage
 - and not carry out any changes or decorate without your landlord's / agent's permission (it's best to get this in writing). If you do cause any damage to the property the landlord / agent is likely to withhold money from your deposit to cover the cost of putting this right
- You may also be responsible for the maintenance of the garden if you have one, check your tenancy agreement to see whose responsibility this is.
- You are responsible for the behaviour of any guests you have, so you must make sure that they do not breach any of the terms of your tenancy agreement.
- Follow any other conditions as mentioned in your tenancy agreement. For example not keeping pets and not allowing anyone else to stay in the property without your landlord's / agent's written permission. If your landlord / agent does agree that someone else can live in your property with you and you are claiming Housing Benefit this may affect your entitlement.

8. Your landlord / agents responsibilities and what to do if they don't meet them

Your landlord / agent also has responsibilities, many of which are outlined in the tenancy agreement you both signed. The list below gives you an idea of the main things you need to be aware of:

- They are not allowed to enter your home without permission except in emergencies

Your landlord / agent can enter your home to inspect the property and to carry out repairs, or under any circumstances set out in the tenancy agreement, such as to carry out viewings with prospective tenants. They must give you at least 24 hours written notice unless you have mutually agreed a visit at shorter notice, or if there is a genuine emergency. If your landlord / agent enters your home without the proper notice or without agreeing with you beforehand, then this can be considered as harassment which is a criminal offence. If this happens you should get advice from the Tenancy Relations Team*, Shelter*, or the Citizens Advice Bureau.*

- They must follow the correct legal procedure if they want you to leave

The correct legal procedure will depend on the type of tenancy you have. If you have an Assured Shorthold Tenancy they must issue you with a 'Notice Seeking Possession' or 'Notice Requiring Possession' (examples can be found in the Example Documents

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

Section). If you're not sure if the correct procedure is being followed you can contact the Tenancy Relations Team, Shelter, or the Citizens Advice Bureau for help. You may also want to get legal advice, the Bristol and Avon Law* centre provide free legal advice, and the Legal Services Commission can give you information about other organisations and solicitors in your area that may be able to help. You will often have to pay for legal service, so try to make sure that you have a case before employing a solicitor.

- They must make sure your property meets certain safety standards

There is a safety checklist at the back of this booklet to help you work out if those standards are being met. You can report any problems to the private housing teams*, but it's a good idea to talk to your landlord / agent first to try and arrange for any repairs to be done.

- They should arrange for repairs to be carried out within a reasonable time.

Repairs that present a danger to health and safety should generally be carried out within one to three days. Non-essential repairs might take up to a month. If this does not happen, you can contact Private Housing Service* for further advice.

9. Relationship between you and your landlord / agent

It's in your best interests to maintain a positive relationship with your landlord / agent if you can.

If you don't think your landlord / agent is keeping to their side of the tenancy agreement, you may want to get advice from somewhere like the Citizens Advice Bureau* or Shelter*, we have included a number of organisations who may be able to help in the Directory Section at the end.

If you are a student you may be able to get help from your Student Unions' advice centre*.

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

Section 4: Moving out of your property

1. Giving notice

If you wish to end your tenancy, you should firstly check your tenancy agreement to see if there is a clause stating how much notice you should give. If there is not a clause, then the standard rule is that you should give one months written notice, starting from a rent day i.e. if you pay rent on 1st of the month, give notice from this date. You are contracted to stay in your tenancy for the period of time stated on the tenancy agreement. You can only leave before this if there is a 'break clause' in your contract, or your landlord / agent agrees this in writing. If you are in a fixed term contract you will probably not be able to give notice before that fixed term ends. You should also keep a copy of your notice letter, and send it by recorded delivery so you have proof that it's been sent.

If you want to move out, and want the council to rehouse you, you should talk to a housing advisor first. The council may not have a duty to help you find alternative accommodation unless you have a very good reason for leaving your tenancy.

You are responsible for rent and bills until the last date of your tenancy, and you must not withhold your last months rent for any reason. If you do withhold your rent your landlord / agent may take you to court.

It is a good idea to speak to your landlord / agent to check they have received your notice letter, and also to speak to them about arrangements for you moving out.

You will need to agree when to hand over the keys - this will usually happen on the day you leave.

If you have to move at short notice, and as a result you are liable to make payments for both your old and new property, (due to the previous landlord requiring payment for a notice period), you may be eligible for Housing Benefit payments in respect of both homes for up to 4 weeks. Please contact Housing Benefits* if you need further information.

2. Final meter readings

On the day you move out you will need to take final meters readings and let your energy suppliers know. You will need to give them your new address or a contact address where your final bill can be sent. Try and take these final readings with your landlord / agent and make a note of them on your inventory.

If you have key meters you should tell your energy suppliers that you are moving so that they can re-set the meter for the new tenants. Make sure you leave the energy key with the landlord / agent so it can be given to the new tenant.

3. Other contracts

If you have other services in your property, such as cable or satellite TV, you may have to give notice to these companies. If you have entered into a contract for a fixed period of time you will need to check with the provider how you end the contract.

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

4. Changing address and re-directing post

You will need to tell several agencies that you are moving:

a Personal Benefits and Allowances

If you claim Income Support (IS) Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA) or Incapacity Benefit (ICB) you need to ring the DWP* to tell them you are moving and tell them your new address. If you claim Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) or Child Tax Credit (CTC), you will need to contact the Inland Revenue*



b Water

Call Bristol Wessex billing services* to tell them that you are moving and what your new address is.

c TV licence

If you have a TV licence, contact the TV Licensing Authority* to tell them you are moving and to ask them to transfer your licence to your new address. Failure to do so may result in a fine.

d Insurance

If you have contents insurance then you will need to contact your insurers to tell them you're going to move.

e Bristol City Council

You will need to tell the Council tax* office, that you are moving house. If you claim Housing and Council tax Benefits* you will also need to let them know that you are moving.

f The Post Office

You can ask the Post office* to automatically forward your mail to your new address, there is a charge for this and you can find out more at the Post Office.

5. Getting your deposit back

If you gave a deposit to your landlord / agent when you moved in, then you should be able to get some or all of this back when you move out. Money can be deducted from this if you have caused damage to the property that will cost the landlord money to put right. You cannot be charged for reasonable wear and tear to the property or contents.

You will need to make sure that the property and any outside areas are in the same condition as when you moved into the property. You can use the inventory to check this, and to make sure that anything provided by the landlord / agent as part of your tenancy is still there. You should leave the property and any outside areas clean

* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

and tidy and you must take all your belongings and rubbish with you.

You may have to wait to get this money back until the landlord / agent has inspected the property. The inventory you signed when you first moved in should be used by the landlord / agent to compare the current condition of the property or contents against how they were originally. If you can, it's a good idea to go through and agree the inventory with the landlord / agent when you move out.

If your tenancy started on or after the 6th April 2007 your deposit should have been protected by a government authorised tenancy deposit scheme. If you disagree with your landlord or agent about how much of your deposit you should get back at the end of your tenancy, you can ask the scheme to help you. Your landlord / agent should have given you the contact details of the scheme when you first moved in to the property. If your deposit has not been protected you can apply to your local county court. If your landlord or agent has not protected your deposit, they can be ordered to repay three times the amount of the deposit to you. You can get more information from Communities and Local Government* and you can contact Shelter for advice*.

6. During the notice period

During the period of your notice your landlord / agent may want to show prospective new tenants around the property. Your landlord / agent must ask your permission and give you reasonable notice of a visit. It is a good idea to try and keep the property tidy and presentable for when this happens.

7. Rent and bills

You are responsible for the rent and bills at the property until the final day of your tenancy. If you are claiming Housing Benefit you cannot normally claim on more than one property at once, if you wish to move before your notice expires you will need to contact Housing Benefit for advice.



* Contact details can be found in the Directory on page 32

Section 5: Example Documents

In this section we have provided some example template documents to give you an idea of what to look for.

Assured Shorthold Tenancy

This is just an example of a tenancy agreement - yours may look different

RENTAL AGREEMENT

(For an Unfurnished House or Flat on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy)

The PROPERTY

The LANDLORD

Of

Tel:

The TENANT

Tel:

The TERM months beginning on

The RENT £..... per month

The DEPOSIT **DEPOSIT BOND GUARANTEE HELD WITH BCC TO THE VALUE OF**
£.....

The INVENTORY means the list of the Landlord's possessions at the Property which has been signed by the Landlord and the Tenant

DATED

SIGNED

(The Landlord)

(The Tenant)

THIS TENANCY AGREEMENT comprises the particulars detailed above and the terms and conditions printed overleaf whereby the Property is hereby let by the Landlord and taken by the Tenant for the Term at the Rent.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO LANDLORDS:

- 1) The details of 'The LANDLORD' near the top of this Agreement must include an address for the Landlord in England or Wales as well as his/her name.
- 2) Always remember to give the written Notice to Terminate to the Tenant two clear months before the end of the Term.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO TENANTS:

- 1) In general, if you currently occupy this Property under a protected or statutory tenancy and you give it up to take a new tenancy of the same or other accommodation owned by the same Landlord, that tenancy cannot be an Assured Shorthold Tenancy and this Agreement is not appropriate
- 2) If you currently occupy this Property under an Assured Tenancy which is not an Assured Shorthold Tenancy your Landlord is not permitted to grant you an Assured Shorthold Tenancy of this Property or of alternative property

Inventory

This is just an example of an inventory - yours may look different

INVENTORY 123 Imaginary Road, Bristol, BS99 1AB

Hallway

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Condition</i>
Carpet	Plain Blue	Good condition
Walls	White wallpaper	Some small marks
Lampshade	Cream, paper	Good condition

Living Room

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Condition</i>
Carpet	Cream	Slight wear and tear near door way
Walls	White (painted)	Good condition
Sofa	3 seater, green	Good condition
Shelves	Set of 3, wooden	Small marks on top shelf

Kitchen

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Condition</i>
Flooring	Grey Lino	Small marks near back door
Kitchen cupboards	10 x white fitted double	1 inner shelf missing, scuff marks on lower cupboards
Kitchen surface	Grey marble effect	Good condition
Gas cooker	Hob + oven combined	Good condition

Bedroom (front)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Condition</i>
Carpet	Cream	Small marks near window
Walls	White (painted)	Good condition
Bed	Double divan bed	Excellent condition (new)

Bedroom (back)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Condition</i>
Carpet	Cream	Good condition
Walls	Pink wallpaper	Good condition
Bed	Single frame + mattress	Small marks on frame

Signed (tenant):.....

Name:.....Date:.....

Signed (Landlord):.....

Name:.....Date:.....

Notice

Depending on the type of tenancy agreement you have, there are different documents that your landlord needs to serve in order to ask you to leave. The most common of these are:

Section 8 - this is the document your landlord needs to give you if you have an Assured Tenancy

HOUSING ACT 1988

Section 8 as amended by Section 151 of the Housing Act 1996

Notice Seeking Possession of a Property Let on an Assured Tenancy or an Assured Agricultural Occupancy

- Please write clearly in black ink.
- Please tick boxes where appropriate and cross out text marked with an asterisk (*) that does not apply.
- This form should be used where possession of accommodation let under an assured tenancy, an assured agricultural occupancy or an assured shorthold tenancy is sought on one of the grounds in Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1988.
- Do not use this form if possession is sought on the "shorthold" ground under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 from an assured shorthold tenant where the fixed term has come to an end, or, for assured shorthold tenancies with no fixed term which started on or after 28th February 1997, after six months has elapsed. There is no prescribed form for these cases, but you must give notice in writing.

(1) Name(s) of tenant(s) or licensee(s).

1. To⁽¹⁾:

(2) Address of premises

2. Your landlord/licensor* intends to apply to the court for an order requiring you to give up possession of⁽²⁾:

(3) Give the full text (as set out in the Housing Act 1988 as amended by the Housing Act 1996) of each ground which is being relied on. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

3. Your landlord/licensor* intends to seek possession on ground(s) in Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1988, as amended by the Housing Act 1996, which read(s)⁽³⁾:

(4) Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

4. Give a full explanation of why each ground is being relied on⁽⁴⁾:

Notes on the grounds for possession:

- If the court is satisfied that any of grounds 1 to 8 is established, it must make an order (but see below in respect of fixed term tenancies).
- Before the court will grant an order on any of grounds 9 to 17, it must be satisfied that it is reasonable to require you to leave. This means that, if one of these grounds is set out in section 3, you will be able to suggest to the court that it is not reasonable that you should have to leave, even if you accept that the ground applies.
- The court will not make an order under grounds 1, 3 to 7, 9 or 16, to take effect during the fixed term of the tenancy (if there is one) and it will only make an order during the fixed term on grounds 2, 8, 10 to 15 or 17 if the terms of the tenancy make provision for it to be brought to an end on any of these grounds.
- Where the court makes an order for possession solely on ground 6 or 9, the landlord must pay your reasonable removal expenses.

[PTO]

(5) Give the earliest date on which court proceedings can be brought

5. The court proceedings will not begin until after⁽⁵⁾:

- Where the landlord is seeking possession on grounds 1, 2, 5 to 7, 9 or 16, court proceedings cannot begin earlier than 2 months from the date this notice is served on you (even where one of grounds 3, 4, 8, 10 to 13, 14A, 15 or 17 is specified) and not before the date on which the tenancy (had it not been assured) could have been brought to an end by a notice to quit served at the same time as this notice.
- Where the landlord is seeking possession on grounds 3, 4, 8, 10 to 13, 14A, 15, or 17, court proceedings cannot begin earlier than 2 weeks from the date this notice is served (unless one of grounds 1, 2, 5 to 7, 9 or 16 is also specified in which case they cannot begin earlier than two months from the date this notice is served).
- Where the landlord is seeking possession on ground 14 (with or without other grounds), court proceedings cannot begin before the date this notice is served.
- Where the landlord is seeking possession on ground 14A, court proceedings cannot begin unless the landlord has served, or has taken all reasonable steps to serve, a copy of this notice on the partner who has left the property.
- After the date shown in section 5, court proceedings may be begun at once but not later than 12 months from the date on which this notice is served. After this time the notice will lapse and a new notice must be served before possession can be sought.

6. Name and address of landlord/licensor*.

To be signed and dated by the landlord or licensor or his agent (someone acting for him). If there are joint landlords each landlord or the agent must sign unless one signs on behalf of the rest with their agreement.

Signed:

Date:

Please specify whether: landlord licensor joint landlords landlord's agent

Name(s) (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Address

Telephone: Daytime:

Evening:

What to do if this notice is served on you.

- This notice is the first step requiring you to give up possession of your home. You should read it very carefully.
- Your landlord cannot make you leave your home without an order for possession issued by a court. By issuing this notice your landlord is informing you that he intends to seek such an order. If you are willing to give up possession without a court order, you should tell the person who signed this notice as soon as possible and say when you are prepared to leave.
- Whichever grounds are set out in section 3 of this form, the court may allow any of the other grounds to be added at a later date. If this is done, you will be told about it so you can discuss the additional grounds at the court hearing as well as the grounds set out in section 3.
- If you need advice about this notice, and what you should do about it, take it immediately to a citizens' advice bureau, a housing advice centre, a law centre or a solicitor.

Notice - continued

Section 21 – this is the document your landlord needs to give you if you have an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. There are slightly different documents depending on whether its the end of a Fixed term contract, or a period contract

HOUSING ACT 1988

Section 21(1)(b)

Assured Shorthold Tenancy: Notice Requiring Possession: Fixed Term

(1) Name and address of tenant.

To⁽¹⁾

of

(2) Name and address of landlord (Note 2 overleaf).

From⁽²⁾

of

(3) Address of dwelling.

I give you notice that I require possession of the dwelling house known as⁽³⁾

(4) Date of expiry (Note 3 overleaf).

after⁽⁴⁾

(5) Note 3 overleaf

Dated⁽⁵⁾

Landlord

(6) Name and address

[Landlord's agent]⁽⁶⁾

[PTO]

HOUSING ACT 1988

Section 21(4)(a)

Assured Shorthold Tenancy: Notice Requiring Possession: Periodic Tenancy

(Note 1)

(1) Name and address of tenant.

To⁽¹⁾

of

(2) Name and address of landlord (Note 2 overleaf).

From⁽²⁾

of

(3) Address of dwelling.

I give you notice that I require possession of the dwelling house known as⁽³⁾

(4) Date of expiry (Note 3 overleaf).

after⁽⁴⁾

Dated

Landlord

(5) Name and address

[Landlord's agent]⁽⁵⁾

[PTO]

Directory of useful contacts

Letting & Estate Agent Associations

Bristol Association of Letting and Management Agents (BALMA)

www.balma.co.uk

0117 949 4943 or 01275 840 610

The Association of Residential Letting Agents

www.arla.co.uk

0845 345 5752

The National Association of Estate Agents

www.naea.co.uk

01926 496 800

Bristol City Council

General enquiries

www.bristol.gov.uk

Tel: 0117 922 2000

customerservicesnhs@bristol.gov.uk

Anti-Social Behaviour - It's Your Call

www.bristol.gov.uk/asb

Tel: 0845 605 2222

To report incidents of anti-social behaviour - the case will be referred to the police and the council

Benefits: Housing and Council Tax Benefit

www.bristol.gov.uk/benefits

Tel: 0117 922 2300

Email: benefits.enquiry@bristol.gov.uk

PO Box 43, Bristol, BS99 1BF

Care Direct

www.bristol.gov.uk/caredirect

Tel: 0117 903 6684

Email: adult.care@bristol.gov.uk

Information for older people and disabled adults in their care

Council Tax

www.bristol.gov.uk/counciltax

Tel: 0117 925 0981

Email: council.tax@bristol.gov.uk

Amelia Court, Pipe Lane, Bristol BS99 1ZG

Customer Service Points: Council drop in centres for face to face advice about housing and council services.

- Central
Phoenix Court, Bond Street (Opening Spring / Summer 2009)
- Ashley
Ashley House, 98-100 Grosvenor Road, St Pauls, Bristol BS2 8YA (closing spring 2009)
- Bedminster
Waring House, Redcliffe Hill, Redcliffe, Bristol BS1 6TB. (Closing Spring / Summer 2009)

St Catherines Place (Opening Spring / Summer 2009)
- Easton
Guild Heritage House, Braggs Lane, St Judes, Bristol BS2 0DN (Closing Spring 2009)

- **Fishponds**
Robinson House, Hockeys Lane,
Fishponds, Bristol BS16 3HL
- **Hartcliffe**
Symes House, Peterson Square,
Hartcliffe, Bristol BS13 0BD
- **Knowle**
Salcombe House, 147 Salcombe Road,
Knowle, Bristol BS4 1AB (Closing Spring
/ Summer 2009)
- **Ridingleaze**
Ridingleaze House, Ridingleaze,
Lawrence Weston, Bristol BS11 0QE
- **Southmead**
Southmead House, 256 Greystoke
Avenue, Southmead, Bristol BS10 6BQ

Noise Pollution

www.bristol.gov.uk/noise
Tel: 0117 922 2500
Out of hours service: 0117 922 2050
Email: pollutioncontrol@bristol.gov.uk

Pest Control

www.bristol.gov.uk/pestcontrol
Tel: 0117 922 2500
Email: pest.control@bristol.gov.uk
Pest Control Office, 7 & 8 Feeder Road,
St Philips Marsh, Bristol BS2 0SB

Private Housing Teams

www.bristol.gov.uk/privatehousing
Private Housing Teams (LIPS), PO Box 595,
Bristol, BS99 2AW

- **North Team covering:**
Avonmouth, Bishopston, Brentry,
Fishponds, Frenchay, Henbury,
Henleaze, Horfield, Lockleaze, Lawrence
Weston, Sea Mills, Southmead,
Shirehampton, Sneyd Park, Speedwell,
St Andrews, St George, Stapleton,
Westbury on Trym, Westbury Park,
Tel: 0117 903 8704
Email: ehhousing.north@bristol.gov.uk

- **South Team covering:**
Bedminster, Bishopsworth, Brislington,
Clifton, Cotham, Hartcliffe, Headley
Park, Hengrove, Hotwells, Kingsdown,
Knowle, Redland, St Annes, Stockwood,
Whitchurch, Southville, Withywood
Tel: 0117 377 2532
Email: ehhousing.south@bristol.gov.uk

- **Central Team**
Barton Hill, Easton, Eastville, Lawrence
Hill, Montpelier, Newtown, Old Market,
Redfield, St Agnes, St Judes, St Pauls,
St Phillips, St Werburghs, Whitehall
Tel: 0117 903 8980
Email: ehhousing.innercity@bristol.gov.uk

Rubbish

www.bristol.gov.uk/rubbish
Tel: 0117 922 2100
Household waste and street maintenance

Housing and Council Tax Benefit

See Benefits section

Tenancy Relations

www.bristol.gov.uk/tenancyrelations

Tel: 0117 914 1206/7

tenancy.relations@bristol.gov.uk

Trading Standards

www.bristol.gov.uk/tradingstandards

Consumer Direct

www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

Tel: (local rate call) 08454 040 506

For consumer enquiries

Crime and Safety

Avon and Somerset Police

[www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/
community_safet](http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/community_safet)

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 456 7000

Neighbourhood Watch Administrators

www.crimereduction.gov.uk

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 456 7000



Benefits

Housing and Council Tax Benefit

www.bristol.gov.uk/benefits

Tel: 0117 922 2300

Email: benefits.enquiry@bristol.gov.uk

PO Box 43, Bristol, BS99 1BF

Income Support, Jobseekers' Allowance, or Incapacity Benefit

Tel: (free phone number) 0800 0556 688

Department of Work and Pensions

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Tel: (free phone number) 0800 0556 688

Social Fund

Tel: 0117 953 6000

Financial assistance for those on benefits

Working Families Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit

Inland Revenue

www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 300 3900

Rent Service

[www.therentservice.gov.uk/online-
services/room-calculator](http://www.therentservice.gov.uk/online-services/room-calculator)

Work out how many rooms you may be eligible for under Local Housing Allowance (housing benefit)

Winter Fuel payments for people over 60

www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 9 15 15 15

Utilities

Bristol Wessex Billing Services (Water)

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 600 3600

Email: customer.services@bwbsl.co.uk

National Grid

www.nationalgrid.com/uk

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 605 6677

Western Power

www.WesternPower.co.uk

Tel: (free phone number) 0800 052 0400

Advice Services

Citizens Advice Bureau

www.bristolcab.org.uk

or

www.adviceguide.org.uk- online service

Tel: (premium rate line) 0844 499 4718

12 Broad Street, Bristol, BS1 2HL

Free, independent and confidential advice on legal, money and other matters. Also provides welfare rights and money advice services.

Shelter

www.shelter.org.uk

Tel: (free phone number)

0808 800 4444 (8am–8pm)

Free, confidential advice for those in housing need. Free housing advice helpline.

Mondays: 10am–12noon

Drop in session at Symes Community Building, Peterson Avenue, Hartcliffe

Thursdays: 10am–12noon

Drop in session at Filwood Hope Centre, Filwood Broadway, Knowle

Appointments available at Kenham House, Wilder Street, Bristol - ring 0844 515 1414

Appointments available at North Bristol Advice, Gainsborough Sq, Lockleaze - ring 0117 9515751

Advice Centres for Avon

www.advicecentresforavon.org.uk

Listing of all local advice centres

North Bristol Advice Centre

www.northbristoladvice.org.uk

Tel: 0117 951 5751

Email: team@northbristoladvice.org.uk

Free advice and advocacy service in debt, employment, housing and welfare benefits for people living in North Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

Avon & Bristol Law Centre

www.ablc.org.uk

Email: mail@ablc.org.uk

Housing Advice line: 0117 916 7730

Monday 1pm–4pm

Appointments are available via Reception on 0117 924 8662.

Discrimination advice line for goods, services, facilities and housing 0117 916 7704 (Tues 10am to 12 noon)

Free legal advice and advocacy service for unwaged and low paid people and for people experiencing unlawful discrimination.

St Pauls Advice Centre

Tel 0117 955 2981

Email: stpaulsAdvice@btconnect.com

Advice centre providing legal advice on welfare benefits, and generalist advice on debt, housing, consumer and basic immigration issues.

St Pauls Unlimited

www.stpaulsunlimited.org.uk

Tel: 0117 903 9934

St Pauls Unlimited was formed by active and interested people who wanted to make positive changes to the environment, community and lives of the residents in St Pauls and St Agnes. They work on all aspects of community life including housing, community safety, schools and cleaning up the streets plus lots more! If you have got a problem or a good idea they would like to hear from you.

South Bristol Advice Service

Tel: 0117 985 1122 (24 hour ansa machine)

Email: admin@southbristol.org.uk

Advice service for residents of BS3, BS4 and BS13. They run drop ins at various venues across South Bristol and can also do Home Visits.

Community Legal Advice

www.clsdirect.org.uk

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 345 4 345

Free, confidential and impartial advice paid for by legal aid

Health & Safety

Fire Safety advice – Avon Fire and Rescue Fire Safety

www.avonfirebrigade.gov.uk

0117 926 2061

Fire Brigade Headquarters, Temple Back, Bristol BS1 6U

Health & Safety Executive Gas Safety Advice Helpline

Tel: (free phone number) 0800 300 363

Energy Advice Centre

www.est.org.uk/myhome/localadvice

Tel: (free phone number) 0800 512 012

NHS Direct

Advice on staying healthy

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 4647

Furniture

Emmaus

www.community@emmausbristol.org.uk

Barton Manor, St Phillips, Bristol BS2 0RL

Tel: 0117 954 0886

Sofa Project

www.sofaproject.co.uk

48-52 West Street, St Phillips, Bristol BS2 0BL

Tel: 0117 9413322

102 Queens Road, Withywood, Bristol, BS13 8PQ

Tel: 0117 935 9995

TV Licensing

www.tvlicensing.co.uk

Tel: (local rate number) 0845 7289 289

Communities and Local Government

www.communities.gov.uk/tenancydeposit

Information about tenancy deposit scheme

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/epcsrentingtenants

Information about Energy Performance Certificates

Warmfront

www.warmfront.co.uk

Tel: (free phone number) 0800 3162814

Grants for private tenants on certain benefits to install central heating and insulation.

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Freepost RRLL-GHUX-CTRX, Arndale House, Arndale Centre, Manchester, M4 3EQ

Tel: (Local rate number) 0845 604 6610 - England main number

Tel: (Local rate number) 0845 604 6620 - England textphone

Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 9:00 am-5:00 pm; Wed 9:00 am-8:00 pm (last call taken at 7:45pm)

DirectGov

www.direct.gov.uk

Information about Public Services provided by the government.

Universities

Bristol University

Accommodation Office:

www.bris.ac.uk/accommodation

Tel: 0117 954 5740

Students Union:

www.ubu.org.uk

Tel: 0117 954 5800

University of the West of England

Accommodation Office:

www.uwe.ac.uk/accommodation

Tel: 0117 328 3601

Students Union: www.uwesu.org

Tel: 0117 328 2577

Housing Health and Safety Checklist for Tenants

This checklist has been written to help you find out if the property you are looking at is safe and suitable for you to live in.

Some things you will have to ask the Landlord about, and some you will be able to find out by looking around the property. If the answer to any of the questions is no, it doesn't mean you can't move in, but you may want to get advice from someone at the council, or you could speak to the Landlord.

Question				
Fire	Is there a fire alarm system or smoke detectors in the hallways?	Yes	No	If they are battery operated make sure that there are batteries in them.
Gas	Is there a current CORGI Gas safety certificate?	Yes	No	You should ask the Landlord to provide this.
Electricity	Is there a current NICEIC, or similar, certificate?	Yes	No	You should ask the Landlord if there is one.
Heating	Is there a heating system that means you can heat the bed-sit or bedrooms and any lounges?	Yes	No	Look for central heating, or heaters fixed to walls.
Hot water	Is there running hot water in the bathroom and kitchen?	Yes	No	
Insulation	Is there loft insulation and double glazing?	Yes	No	You might need to ask the landlord about this. If there is no insulation, you may be able to get a grant to pay for this – call Warm-Front on 0800 316 2814
Security	Are there locks on the doors and windows and do they look secure?	Yes	No	

Condensation	Can you ventilate the bathroom and kitchen?	Yes	No	This could be an extractor, fan or windows that can be opened.
Hygiene	Is there a kitchen, shower and/or bath, toilet and wash hand basins with hot and cold running water?	Yes	No	
Trips and falls	Are there serious trip hazards, steep stairs, low window sills or raised areas without handrails / guards	Yes	No	Look for things which you think might be dangerous and cause you to fall, like stairs without a handrail.
General	Is the general condition of the property good?	Yes	No	

This is not an official check – it is just a guide to help you think about things to look for before you sign a tenancy agreement.

For additional copies of this booklet, please contact the Private Sector Support team:

Telephone: **0117 353 3866**

Email: **private.housing@bristol.gov.uk**

or download further copies from **www.bristol.gov.uk/privatehousing**

If English is not your first language and you need a translation, we can get one for you.

ALBANIAN

Nëse anglishtja nuk është gjuha juaj amtare dhe keni nevojë për një përkthim, ne mund t'ua sigurojmë atë.

BENGALI

ইংরেজী আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হলে এবং আপনার কোন অনুবাদের প্রয়োজন হলে আমরা তা প্রদান করতে সক্ষম।

CHINESE

如果英文不是您的第一語言，而您需要翻譯的話，我們可以為您安排。

GUJARATI

જો તમારી પહેલી ભાષા અંગ્રેજી ન હોય અને તમને ભાષાંતરની જરૂર હોય તો અમે તમને તે આપી શકીએ છીએ.

HINDI

यदि अँग्रेज़ी आप की पहली भाषा नहीं है और आप को अनुवाद की आवश्यकता है तो यह हम आपको प्रदान कर सकते हैं

KURDISH

Heke îngilîzî zimanê we yê yekem nîne û pêwîstîya we bi wergêr heye, em dikarin yekî ji we re bibînin

POLISH

Jeżeli język angielski nie jest Twoim językiem ojczystym i wymagasz tłumaczenia, możemy to zapewnić.

PORTUGUESE

Se o Inglês não é a sua língua materna e precisa de uma tradução, nós podemos obtê-la.

PUNJABI

ਜੇਕਰ ਇੰਗਲਿਸ਼ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਬਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

SOMALI

Haddii Ingiriisku aanu ahayn afkaaga kowaad oo aad u baahan tahay turjumaad, annagaa kuu samayn karra.

URDU

اگر انگریزی آپ کی پہلی زبان نہیں ہے اور آپ کو ترجمہ کی ضرورت ہے تو ہم آپ کے لئے فراہم کر سکتے ہیں۔

VIETNAMESE

Nếu quý vị không thạo Anh văn và cần bản dịch, chúng tôi sẽ giúp quý vị một bản.

If you would like this information in a different format, for example, audio tape, large print or computer disk, or in community languages, please contact 0117 353 3866