



# Private Tenant Information Guide

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### Documents available in other formats:

You can request alternative formats of this document by contacting:  
[private.housing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing@bristol.gov.uk)  
or call 0117 352 5010

## Who is this guide for?

This guide is for people who are currently privately renting or seeking a privately rented home in Bristol.

The information is aimed at those who are, or will be, renting under an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST), either directly from a landlord or through a letting agency.

Find out about ASTs and other types of tenancy agreements on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk).

Most of this information will apply if you are in a shared property but in certain cases, your rights and responsibilities will vary.

This guide does not cover lodgers (people who live with their landlord) or people with licences (such as property guardians). It does not cover tenants where the property is not their main or only home.

Seek advice if you are unsure if any of the information in this guide is relevant to you.

If you believe this guide is in any way inaccurate or if you have any queries about the information or accessibility of this guide, please contact the Bristol City Council Private Tenant Liaison Officer on [private.tenants@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.tenants@bristol.gov.uk)

## Students

If you are not living in university accommodation, you are most likely renting privately and usually have an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. Students have the same rights as other private renters.

## Lodgers

This guide is not intended for lodgers. Your rights will be different if you are a lodger.

You are likely to be a lodger if you rent a room in your landlord's home and share living space with them.

Citizens Advice provide information on [what rights lodgers have](#).

## Bristol's private rented sector

There are around 121,714 people currently renting privately in Bristol.

The percentage of homes in the private rented sector across Bristol is 26.2% compared to the national average of 20.3%. ([Source: Census 2021 Office for National Statistics](#)).

## Why rent privately?

Finding a home that you can afford to rent doesn't have to mean finding council or registered social landlord housing. There are other properties in Bristol which are available to rent from a private landlord.

A private landlord is someone who owns one or more properties that they rent out to tenants.

There are advantages to renting privately:

- There are no waiting lists, so you will be able to move in quickly
- You can choose where you live in the city, and you can move to a different area if you want
- There are many different types of property available, from one-bedroom or studio flats to houses big enough for large families
- The properties often come with a fridge, freezer, cooker and washing machine
- If you're on a low income, you [may be entitled to benefits](#) which will cover some, or all, your rent

## Types of tenancies

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### Assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs)

The most common form of tenancy is an AST. Most new tenancies are automatically this type.

A tenancy can be an AST if all the following apply:

- the property you rent is private
- your tenancy started on, or after, 15 January 1989
- the property is your main accommodation
- your landlord does not live in the property

A tenancy cannot be an AST if:

- it began or was agreed before 15 January 1989
- the rent is more than £100,000 a year
- the rent is less than £250 a year (less than £1,000 in London)
- it's a business tenancy or tenancy of licensed premises
- the property is a holiday let
- the landlord is a local council

### Other tenancies

The GOV.UK website has information about **other types of tenancies** that are not as ASTs, including:

- excluded tenancies or licences
- assured tenancies
- regulated tenancies

## Before you start your tenancy

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### Finding a suitable property

You can find properties to rent by:

- searching for local letting agents online and on the high street
- checking websites, such as:
  - [Zoopla](#)
  - [Gumtree](#)
  - [Rightmove](#)
  - [Primelocation](#)
  - [Spareroom](#)
- checking local newspapers
- speaking to the accommodation offices at UWE or Bristol University, if you're a student
- speaking to friends and family

### Bristol City Council's Homelessness Prevention Team and Private Renting Team

If you're worried about where you're going to stay tonight, or if you're about to become homeless in the next eight weeks, you can approach Bristol City Council's **Homelessness Prevention Team**.

They will assess your situation and whether you need to be referred to the Private Renting Team who can help you find a home with a private landlord. You can approach them directly at the **Citizen Service Point** at 100 Temple Street or call them on 0117 352 6800.

The Private Renting Team can:

- give you advice on how to look for a property
- talk to a potential landlord on your behalf

- help you prepare for your appointment with the landlord to give you a better chance of getting a property
- help you find furniture

In some cases, they can:

- offer financial help with a deposit bond scheme - an interest free loan with repayment terms of up to five years
- help with deposit and rent in advance
- help to buy furniture essentials

If you'd like more advice, email [private.renting@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.renting@bristol.gov.uk) or see the Bristol City Council [website](#).

If you want to be considered for financial help you'll need to be referred by a Housing Advisor. They will check to see if you qualify for the deposit bond scheme.

## Homes to rent for older and vulnerable people

Bristol City Council also has information about [housing options available to you if you're an older or vulnerable person](#). These include supported and extra care housing.

## Finding student accommodation

Many students choose to live in privately rented accommodation. Renting privately provides students with a wider range of properties to choose from and allows students to live off campus and within the wider community.

The council's [website](#) has lots of useful information about living in Bristol as a student.

## When to start looking

Students starting a new course at a university in Bristol should start looking for accommodation as soon as their place has been confirmed.

Current students should start looking for accommodation towards the end of the first term for the following September, or when the university advises that you start looking.

## Purpose built student accommodation

In Bristol there are many large properties built specifically for students. These properties often offer tenancies with the length to suit term dates. Contact your university for further information on renting purpose-built student accommodation.

## Help with finding student accommodation

The [UWE Bristol Students Union Advice Centre](#) and [University of Bristol Accommodation Team](#) provide advice for students trying to find private rented accommodation.

## Shared housing

There are many privately rented properties in Bristol where you can share with other people. This can often be a cost-effective housing option.

Make sure you know exactly what access you will, or will not, have to any communal areas or facilities before you sign the tenancy agreement.

Make sure you know what type of tenancy agreement you have before you move into a shared house or flat. Tenants and lodgers have different rights.

Shared houses are usually referred to as houses in multiple occupation (HMO). Your landlord could have more responsibilities when it comes to repairs and safety if you live in an HMO.

[Citizens Advice](#) and [Shelter](#) have more information on their websites explaining what you need to be aware of when privately renting a shared house.

## Subletting

Subletting is when you (“the subtenant”) rent all, or part of a property, from an existing tenant (“the immediate landlord”) rather than renting directly from the existing tenant’s landlord (“the head landlord”). The subtenant does not have a direct legal relationship with the head landlord.



**Subtenant** – this is the tenant who rents from the immediate landlord and has a subtenancy with them



**Pays rent to**



**Immediate landlord** – this is the tenant who rents from the head landlord and has a tenancy with them



**Pays rent to**



**Head landlord** – this is the property owner

Most immediate landlords will need to have permission from the head landlord before they can sublet the property. If they sublet the property without permission, it does not make your subtenancy with them invalid. You will lawfully occupy the property under your subtenancy until your landlord decides to legally end your tenancy, or their tenancy with the head landlord comes to an end.

If the property has been sublet, and your immediate landlord has been legally evicted or ends their tenancy, you should seek independent legal advice.

## Property licences for rented properties



Some rented houses and flats need a property licence before they can be let out by the landlord. The landlord needs to apply for a property licence from the council. This is to make sure they meet the required standards of health, safety and welfare for the people living there.

There are three types of private property licences:

- mandatory house in multiple occupation (HMO) licence
- additional HMO licence
- selective licence (most other types of private rented accommodation)

### What is an HMO?

A property is a house in multiple occupation (HMO) if both of the following apply:

- at least three tenants live there, forming more than one household
- there are shared facilities such as toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities

### What is a household?

A household is a separate individual, co-habiting couple or a family. A family could include parents, grandparents, children (including foster children, stepchildren and children being cared for), grandchildren, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces or cousins.

For example, five friends are five households, even if they share a tenancy, and a co-habiting couple and a friend would constitute two households.

## Mandatory HMO licences

A landlord must have a mandatory HMO licence if the property has:

- five or more people from two or more households
- shared toilets, bathrooms or cooking facilities

This means that houses, flats or converted flats on any number of storeys are licensable.

## Additional HMO licences

Additional licensing applies to HMOs in some areas of the city where an additional licensing scheme has been declared.

It applies to privately rented flats or houses, where three or four unrelated people live in two or more households and share some basic facilities.

## Selective licences

Selective licensing applies to non-HMO properties in areas of the city where a selective licensing scheme has been declared. Most privately rented accommodation must have a licence in these specific areas.

## Further information on licensing

The council [website](#) has more information on:

- what [areas](#) (wards) of Bristol require landlords to have an additional or selective licence
- if a property currently has a property licence
- further information on property [licensing](#)

## Report an unlicensed property



If you think the property you live in should have a property licence, but doesn't, report this to the council. You can report this using the [online form](#), emailing [private.housing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing@bristol.gov.uk) or calling 0117 352 5010.

You may be able to claim back up to 12 months' rent if your landlord or agent has committed certain offences including letting or managing a property without a licence if a licence is required, or not complying with an improvement notice. More information is available about this in the 'Rent Repayment Order' section.

## Other things to consider before agreeing to rent



### Vehicle parking in Bristol

You should find out the parking arrangements before you agree to rent a property. If the property does include parking, find out the location and whether there are any restrictions.

Many properties in Bristol do not have driveways or allocated parking. If you have a vehicle you may need to consider parking on the street or renting a separate parking space or garage.

### On street parking

Central Bristol is a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ), where every street has some type of parking restriction at some times.

In other parts of the Bristol City Council area, parking restrictions are mostly on main roads and bus routes.

Find more information about [restrictions on parking in Bristol](#) on the council website.

## Residents' parking schemes

Some designated areas of Bristol operate a residents' parking scheme. A residents' parking scheme is a street or area where parking is controlled.

To park in a residents' parking scheme area during its hours of operation you'll need to have a valid:

- parking permit for that residents' parking scheme
- visitors' parking permit for that residents' parking scheme
- pay and display session and be parked in a pay and display bay or shared use bay
- Blue Badge

You can find out more about [residents' parking schemes on the council website](#).

## Furnished or unfurnished?

A property may be advertised as furnished, part furnished or unfurnished. You should confirm what furniture and appliances are included with the property before you agree to move in.

## Viewings

Once you find a suitable property, you'll need to go and have a look at it.

Never pay any money without seeing the property.

Take someone with you when visiting properties, if you can. It's safer and they can help you make a decision.

**Take a list of things to check** so you don't forget about anything when you're there.

## Viewings when living overseas

If you live overseas and are unable to view a property in person, ask the agent or landlord for a live tour of the property online.

## Costs and affordability

You need to consider your income, budget and all the costs of renting before you commit to rent a property.

It might be useful to work out your estimated monthly outgoings, to help you understand how much rent you can afford.

## Rental price

The amount of rent charged will depend on the type, location and condition of the property. You should agree the rent with the landlord before signing the tenancy agreement. To see if the amount is reasonable:

- check other similar properties in the area
- find out if the amount charged includes tax, water rates, gas and electric

Before agreeing to take on a property, make sure it suits your needs, and you can afford the rent and bills.

## Rental price bidding wars

Try to avoid agents who encourage you and other prospective tenants to bid to rent a property. These agents use this tactic to push up the rental price by choosing the tenant that offers to pay the most.

This is often referred to as a 'bidding war'. It is not illegal, but it results in higher rents for all renters in the city and reduces tenant's options.

Never offer to pay more rent than you can afford.

## Rental scams

Unfortunately, there have been reports of rental fraud and scams operating in Bristol. These scams normally operate by making fake online, social media or property app adverts, where the people involved pose as landlords or agents asking for money for accommodation that does not exist.

Never pay money unless you are sure that the accommodation exists, and the landlord or agent is authentic.

It's a good idea to familiarise yourself with rental scams when you are looking to rent a new property. [Which?](#) and [Citizens Advice](#) have more information on rental scams and ways to protect yourself.

If you believe you have been scammed, you should [report this to Action Fraud](#) who will investigate and report to the police if necessary.

## Discrimination

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Under the Equality Act 2010, it is illegal for landlords and agents to discriminate against potential or current tenants on the grounds of their protected characteristics.

Protected characteristics include:

- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Age

### Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination is when you are treated unfairly or less favourably than others simply because of your protected characteristics. Sometimes it's obvious that your landlord or letting agent is discriminating against you.

#### Examples of direct discrimination

It is direct discrimination if a landlord or letting agent:

- rejects your application because you are disabled or due to your ethnic background
- refuses to rent to you because of your sexual orientation
- will not consider you as a tenant because you have friends or relatives with protected characteristics.

### Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination is when you are treated in the same way as everyone else, but this treatment has a particularly negative effect on you because of your protected characteristic, compared to others.

#### Examples of indirect discrimination

It could be indirect discrimination if a landlord or letting agent won't rent to you because you need a work permit.

This could be indirect discrimination based on race because the policy disadvantages people who do need a work permit, for example some non-British nationals.

If a landlord says you can't have a tenancy because you have a pet, this could be indirect disability discrimination if you need an assistance dog.

### Discrimination against tenants in receipt of benefits

Landlords cannot refuse to rent to someone simply because they are in receipt of benefits. This type of discrimination is often referred to as 'No DSS' discrimination.

### Discrimination against tenants with children

Landlords are unable to refuse renting to people with children, as it is more likely that women live with children than men do and this would count as indirectly discriminating against them.

## Action you can take against discrimination

You have a right to fair treatment when trying to rent a property, and there are steps you can take to tackle discrimination by letting agents.

### Seek advice

You may want to seek legal advice before taking action against a landlord or letting agent that has discriminated against you.

These organisations can help you understand your legal rights and advise. They might be able to help you gather evidence, assess the strength of your case, and advise you on what steps to take next:

- **Shelter - Bristol** – provide advice and guidance in all aspects of housing including rental discrimination. They have an emergency national helpline (0808 800 4444), **online advice**, **webchat** and a Legal Aid legal service to people who are eligible for Legal Aid (0344 515 1778 Monday to Friday 9am till 5pm).
- **Housing Matters** – provide housing advice, support and advocacy to people in Bristol including those who are experiencing rental discrimination. They conduct outreach work and longer term casework. They have a helpline (0117 935 1260 Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am till 4pm).
- **Bristol Law Centre** – provide legal support to people who have experienced discrimination whilst trying to rent a property.
- **The Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS)** provide free and confidential advice and support regarding discrimination issues. The EASS can provide you with advice on your rights and legal options. They may suggest various steps you can take, such as mediation, filing a complaint, or seeking legal representation, depending on the circumstances of your case.

You can contact the EASS through their helpline (0808 800 0082) or **online contact form**.

## Report discrimination

Reporting discrimination while privately renting is an important step towards seeking justice and resolving such issues. Your actions help contribute to creating a fairer and inclusive rental market. However, you should seek advice before reporting, as you should consider your individual circumstances and any potential repercussions before doing so.

If you are subjected to discrimination organisations such as **SARI** or **Bristol Refugee Rights** can help support you report these incidents.

Here is the action you can take against discrimination in more detail.

### 1. Ask for a reason why your application was unsuccessful

You can request information from the landlord or letting agent about the reasons why your application was unsuccessful. If they provide a reason, ask them to put this in writing.

If they refuse to give a reason, or their reason appears to be discriminatory, you may wish to take further action.

### 2. Gathering evidence

It is important to gather as much evidence as possible to support a potential claim of discrimination.

These are some steps you should take to gather evidence of discrimination:

#### Check the advertisement

If you found the property advertised online or in print and this states that the landlord does not accept tenants based on a protected characteristic, anyone in receipt of benefits or with children, take a screenshot or save a copy of the advertisement.

## Keep a record

Keep a detailed record of any conversations or correspondence you have had with the landlord or letting agent. Include dates, times, locations and descriptions of what was said or done. Note down any discriminatory remarks or actions, as well as the names of people involved.

Keep copies of any emails, letters or text messages.

If you experience any indirect or direct discrimination you may also wish to record it or take a photo/video of it on your smart phone. Only do this if it is safe. If you do decide to take a photo, video or record a conversation make sure you have consent from the person you are speaking to.

## Witness statements

If you spoke with the landlord or letting agent over the phone and there were any witnesses, ask them to write a statement to support your claim. This could be friends, family members, or other tenants who witnessed the discrimination.

## 3. Make a complaint

If your application was refused and you still wish to rent the property, ask them to reconsider your application.

Shelter have produced several letter templates to challenge landlords and letting agents who discriminate against people who are looking to rent a property whilst claiming benefits and people who are looking to rent a property with children:

- [informal viewing request after DSS discrimination](#)
- [formal complaint about DSS discrimination](#)
- [informal viewing request after renting with children discrimination](#)
- [formal complaint about 'no kids' rental policies](#)

## 4. Report to the Property Ombudsman or the Property Redress Scheme if you're trying to rent from a letting agent

All letting agents and property managers in England must be a member of either The Property Ombudsman (TPO) or the Property Redress Scheme (PRS). They should identify their membership by displaying either of these logos in their office, you can also search for members on their websites by clicking on the images below.



You can make a complaint to the scheme that your letting agent or property manager is a member of.

If they are not a member of either scheme you can report this to the Private Housing Service who may impose a penalty of up to £5,000. You can contact them by emailing [private.housing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing@bristol.gov.uk) or by calling 0117 352 5010.

If you are trying to rent from a letting agent or property manager and have submitted a formal complaint, they must supply you with a final response within eight weeks. If they fail to respond to you in eight weeks or you are unhappy with their response, you can look to resolve your dispute by contacting [The Property Ombudsman](#) or [Property Redress Scheme](#). Further information is available from [Shelter's website](#).

If you are trying to rent from a private landlord they should respond to your complaint within a reasonable amount of time. Though there is no specific guidance for landlords, up to eight weeks is considered to be acceptable.

Some private landlords may be a volunteer member of either scheme and are bound to the same conditions that letting agents and property managers are. If your private landlord is not a voluntary member then you can seek further legal advice.

The Property Ombudsman or Property Redress Scheme can also help with other complaints against your letting agent or property manager relating to incompetent service, infringement of your legal rights, unfair treatment, or failure to follow either The Property Ombudsman's membership obligations or the Property Redress Scheme's conditions of complaints.

Further information can be found on Shelter's website: [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk)

### Report to the Police

If you believe the discrimination you have experienced involves criminal behaviour, such as harassment or hate crime, you can report incidents to the police. They can investigate the matter and take appropriate action.

You can make a report to Avon and Somerset Police using an **online form**, calling 101 or in person at a police station. More information can be found on the Avon and Somerset Police [website](#).

Call 999 if a crime is in progress or someone is in immediate danger.

### Taking legal action against landlords who discriminate

If you decide to take legal action against a private landlord who has discriminated against you it is unlikely you would be able to resolve the dispute by contacting a redress scheme (unless they were a voluntary member). This is because private landlords are not regulated in the same way that letting agents and property managers are.

A person who has been the victim of any form of unlawful discrimination (direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation) is entitled to apply to the County Court for damages. The government website has further advice on [finding legal advice](#).



### Ask for a reason why?

Ask for a reason why your application was unsuccessful.



### Gather evidence

Check the advert, does it say 'No DSS' or 'No children' or anything else that is discriminatory?

Keep a record of contact with dates and times. This includes face to face and phone conversations, as well as emails.

Take a witness statement. Was someone else there who witnessed the discrimination?



### Formal complaint

Make a formal complaint to your landlord, explaining how you have been discriminated against and how you would like to see the issue resolved.



### What to do if your formal complaint is unresolved

If you are renting from a letting agent or property manager, you can contact the redress scheme they are a member of who will then look to resolve the issue.

If you are renting directly from a private landlord, it is unlikely they would be a member of either the TPO or PRS. In such cases you would need to [seek alternative legal advice](#).

## Questions to ask before agreeing to rent

Make sure you gather as much information as you can before you agree to rent a property. These are some questions to ask the landlord or letting agent:

- what is the weekly or monthly rent?
- what bills are included in the rent?
- are there any other charges or fees? Most tenancy fees have been banned. However, you might be charged for late rent payment, losing keys and changes to the agreement.
- how and when should the rent be paid?
- do you need to pay a deposit?
- how will your deposit be protected?
- how long is the initial tenancy period?
- will you be able to renew your tenancy or end it early?
- who will manage the property?
- does the landlord have a correspondence address in the UK?
- who can be contacted in emergencies?
- are there any specific restrictions to be aware of, such as being allowed to keep pets or smoke?
- what is the council tax band for the property?
- is there any allocated parking for vehicles, or restrictions to on-street parking in the area?

## Fees

From the 1 June 2019, a landlord or letting agent is only allowed to charge certain fees. These fees are:

- the rent
- a refundable tenancy deposit
- payments to change the tenancy
- a refundable holding deposit
- payments associated with early termination of the tenancy
- payments regarding: -
  - utilities
  - communication services
  - TV licence
  - council tax
- a default fee where required under a tenancy agreement for:
  - late payment of rent
  - replacement of a lost key/security device giving access to the housing

The [Tenant Fees Act guidance on GOV.UK](#) explains these charges in more detail.

Information can also be found on the [Shelter website](#).

## Challenging unlawful fees

If you have been charged an unlawful fee or payment you should follow this process:

### Write to your landlord or letting agent about unlawful fees

Write to your landlord or letting agent and ask them to return any unlawful fees. There are letter templates available on the [Bristol City Council website](#).

You should keep copies of any letters you send.

### If the letters don't work

If the first stage and second stage letters don't work you should:

- contact Bristol City Council and provide copies of the letters you sent

However, you also have the option to:

- go to a first tier tribunal yourself
- contact a redress scheme if you're dealing with a letting agent

### Use the First-Tier Tribunal

You could recover the payment using the First-Tier Tribunal.

You'll need to submit evidence to support any application you make.

### Complain to a redress scheme that deals with letting agents

If the unlawful payment has been taken by a letting agent or property manager then you can complain to the relevant redress scheme.

All letting agents must:

- belong to a Government approved redress scheme
- display the scheme information clearly on their website

If the scheme information isn't available, you should ask your letting agent which redress scheme they belong to.

### Contact Bristol City Council for help with unlawful fees

- Bristol City Council can investigate further to decide if we can take enforcement action against the landlord or agent, so they have to repay any unlawful fees.

You should contact Bristol City Council 10 working days after you've sent the second stage letter and haven't received your fee back.

Email [private.housing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing@bristol.gov.uk) with your contact details and with copies of the letters you've sent. Or call on 01173 525 010.

## Deposits

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### Types of deposits:

- **Holding deposit:** Your landlord or agent might ask you to pay this to reserve a property before you sign a tenancy agreement. Do not pay any money if you haven't seen the property. The landlord or agent can only take one holding deposit for a property at a time. This should be refunded if a landlord decides not to rent to you. They could keep this if you decide not to rent the property, provide the wrong information during your application or do not pass a 'right to rent' check.
- **Tenancy deposit:** Your landlord or agent might ask for this at the beginning of the tenancy. This is usually refundable at the end of the tenancy. Your landlord or agent can only keep money from your deposit if there is a problem.

Limits to the amount of deposit a landlord or agent can charge:

- **Holding deposit:** the equivalent of one weeks' rent
- **Tenancy deposit:** up to the equivalent of five weeks' rent

Further information on types of deposits can be found on the Shelter website.

### Deposit protection schemes

Your landlord must put your tenancy deposit in a government-approved tenancy deposit scheme if you rent your home on an assured shorthold tenancy that started after 6 April 2007.

Holding deposits do not have to be protected in a deposit protection scheme but letting agents or property managers who handle client money should have Client Money Protection (CMP) in place. There are three protection schemes your deposit can be registered with:

- **MyDeposits** - including deposits that were held by Capita
- **Tenancy Deposit Scheme**
- **Deposit Protection Service**

Your landlord or letting agent must put your deposit in the scheme within 30 days of receiving it. They must do this even if the deposit is paid by someone other than yourself, such as relatives or a deposit scheme.

The schemes ensure that your money is protected during the tenancy, but they also help resolve any disputes that might arise when getting your deposit back.

You may be asked to pay deposit replacement insurance or a guarantee through a private company instead of paying a deposit. This is sometimes known as a **zero deposit company**. Make sure you fully understand the terms and conditions of the scheme and seek advice if you're unsure.

Seek advice if you believe that your landlord or agent has not protected your deposit. Further information is available on the **[GOV.UK website](#)**.

## Utilities and household bills



You need to check what is and is not included in your rent. These are additional costs that you might need to budget for:

- gas, electricity and water
- TV licence
- phone and broadband
- council tax

### Council tax

Most private tenants will have to pay council tax. You can usually pay council tax in monthly instalments.

The amount you pay will depend on the **[council tax band](#)** of the property. Find out

who will pay the council tax and how much it is before you sign your contract.

Whoever is responsible for paying the council tax (i.e. you or your landlord) should **[inform the council](#)** when you move into the property and when you leave.

### Council Tax Reduction

There are two ways you could reduce your council tax bill:

- a discount – based on your situation, for example if you live alone, or if you are a student or live with other students.
- council tax support – if your income is low enough

Council tax support is also called Council Tax Reduction.

Find out if you can **[pay less council tax](#)** on the Bristol City Council website.

### Council tax in shared accommodation

Your landlord is usually responsible for the council tax bill if everyone living there has their own individual agreement for their room or bedsit.

If you have a joint tenancy for the whole property, then you'll usually be jointly liable for the council tax bill with the other tenants.

### Council tax for students

The property is exempt if everyone who lives there is a full-time student.

### Energy Bills

#### Notifying energy suppliers

You will be responsible for paying the gas and electricity bills from the date your tenancy starts, unless your energy bills are included in the rent.

Ask your landlord or letting agent to confirm who currently supplies the electricity and gas. If they are unsure, Ofgem has information on

their website on [how to find out who supplies energy to your property](#).

Take meter readings at the start of your tenancy. Talk to your landlord, letting agent or utility supplier if you are unsure how to access the meters to take a reading. Make a note of the reading and/or take a photo.

You will need to provide the energy supplier with your contact details, the date your tenancy started and the meter readings.

Citizens Advice has information about [dealing with energy suppliers when you move](#) on their website.

### Switching energy suppliers

You do not need your landlord's permission to switch suppliers if you pay the bills.

You can sometimes get a cheaper tariff if you claim benefits or are on a low income. Ask your supplier directly if they have a 'social tariff'.

Citizens Advice has information about [switching energy suppliers](#) on their website.

## Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)

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An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rates the energy efficiency and environmental impact of a property. It can provide you with an estimated cost for heating, hot water and lighting for that specific property.

The certificate shows:

- an energy efficiency rating. This is rated on a scale from A to G (where A is the most efficient and G the least efficient)
- the property's estimated running costs for heating, hot water and lighting
- a list of recommended energy saving improvements

Your landlord or agent should give you a valid EPC for the property before your tenancy starts. EPCs are valid for 10 years.

If you are renting a room in a house in multiple occupation (HMO) only, your landlord may not be required to do so.

[Check the EPC register by postcode](#) to see if there's already an EPC for the home you want to rent.

### Minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES)

The energy efficiency rating should be E or higher. If the rating is below an E your landlord may need to improve the energy efficiency of the property.

If your home has a rating of F or G and your landlord fails to act, please contact Bristol City Council's Private Housing Service on 0117 352 5010 or email [private.housing.MEES@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing.MEES@bristol.gov.uk)

## Affording and paying the rent

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Ask your landlord or letting agent if they wish for the rent to be paid monthly or weekly.

You will need to reach an agreement with your landlord or letting agent on how you wish to pay your rent. You might wish to set up a BACS payment or online banking.

Always ensure that you have proof that you have made a rental payment.

### Paying rent with cash

A landlord shouldn't demand that you pay rent by cash. Seek advice if your landlord is insisting that you pay by cash.

If you are paying by cash ensure that you are provided a receipt for payment.

### Sources of income

There are various sources of income you might use to pay for your rent.

## Income from employment

If you are in employment, you will likely wish to use this income towards paying for your rent.

Before committing to rent a property, make sure you consider whether the income from your employment is likely to decrease or stop during the period of the tenancy. For example, when working out your long-term affordability, consider the likelihood of your working hours changing or if you might have to take an unpaid leave of absence.

## Friends or relatives

If a friend or relative has offered to give or lend you an amount of money for your rent, carefully consider how, and if, you can afford to repay this debt, and what impact this could have on your relationship.

## Loans

You may be able to apply for a **budgeting loan** if you are in receipt of certain **benefits**.

Private loans will almost certainly charge interest. Pay day loans are very expensive and can cause unaffordable debt or make money problems worse.

Seek advice if you are considering paying your rent using a loan.

## Savings

You may wish to pay the rent using money you have in savings. The landlord or letting agent might wish to see proof of your savings before they agree to rent to you, particularly if you are relying on this money to pay the rent throughout the tenancy. Alternatively, they might ask you to pay rent in advance.

## Rent in advance using savings or other income

You might be able to afford to pay a few months' rent in advance using savings or other income. Make sure you are not paying any more months in advance than the length of your tenancy agreement.

## Benefits

### Universal Credit

If you're **eligible for Universal Credit** you can get help to cover your rent and some service charges.

For many people, Universal Credit covers housing costs, so you don't have to make a separate Housing Benefit claim.

If necessary, you can apply for **help with financial difficulties** from your main Universal Credit payment.

### Housing Benefit

Housing Benefit has been replaced by **Universal Credit**, but there are some exceptions. For many people, Universal Credit covers housing costs, so you don't have to make a separate Housing Benefit claim.

Housing Benefit or Universal Credit helps you pay part, or all, your rent if you are on a low income. It is usually paid direct to the person claiming and not directly to the landlord.

Before you apply, use the council's online **benefits calculator** to check you're entitled to claim housing benefit.

### Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is used to work out how much Housing Benefit or Universal Credit the council can pay for private tenants to rent their homes.

### What you'll get

The amount of LHA rate you get is based on the number of bedrooms your household needs.

How the council work out how many bedrooms your household needs:

- a bedroom for each person or couple over 16
- a bedroom for two children under 16 of the same sex

- a bedroom for two children under 10 regardless of sex
- any other child
- an extra room for a disabled tenant or partner who needs a non-resident overnight carer

Use the [bedroom calculator on GOV.UK](#) to work out how many bedrooms your household needs.

You can find out the current LHA rates for Bristol on the [council website](#).

## Discretionary Housing Payment



Bristol City Council may make a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) when Housing Benefit or Universal Credit doesn't provide enough money to pay your rent.

### Who can get a DHP

You can only get a DHP if you receive Housing Benefit or the housing costs element of Universal Credit.

### What DHPs can help with

You may be able to get a DHP for:

- a spare room that housing benefit won't pay for
- your benefit entitlement being capped resulting in reductions to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit
- your benefit being reduced because there's a non-dependent in the household
- a rent deposit or rent in advance
- removal costs, however, if you have savings over £1000 we may ask you to contribute towards your own removal costs
- a shortfall between the amount of Housing Benefit or housing costs in Universal Credit you get, and the amount of rent you have to pay

### When to apply for a DHP

You should only apply for help with rent in advance or a rent deposit when you've found a property and the landlord has agreed you can rent it. You shouldn't commit to a tenancy until your DHP has been agreed.

### What DHPs can't cover

You are not able to receive DHPs for:

- service charges not covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit
- increases in rent because you're in arrears
- rent costs when your benefit has been reduced by the Department for Work and Pensions, normally because of a sanction
- when your rent is reduced due to recovering a Housing Benefit overpayment
- council tax
- usually rent in advance for moves to housing association properties

You are also not able to receive DHPs if you get Universal Credit, but not the housing costs element.

### Apply for a DHP

If you get Universal Credit you will need to show evidence of your:

- Universal Credit award, such as screenshots of your award summary from your [online journal on the GOV.UK website](#)
- rent commitment, unless you're a local authority tenant, such as tenancy agreement or a letter from your landlord

You can find the DHP application form and the DHP for moving costs application form on the [Bristol City Council website](#).

If you need advice or guidance when applying for a DHP you can contact the Bristol City Council's Benefits Team on 0117 922 2300 or email [benefits.enquiries@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:benefits.enquiries@bristol.gov.uk)

## Applying to rent a property



When you have found a suitable property you need to inform the landlord or letting agent that you wish to apply to rent the property. They should let you know what the process is to apply for the property and what information or documents they need from you.

### Application fees

Landlords and letting agents are not allowed to charge fees for:

- viewing a property
- reference checks
- administration, such as setting up a tenancy agreement
- credit checks
- immigration checks
- renewing your tenancy

See the “Fees” section of this guide for more information on what fees a landlord or agent is permitted to charge and what you can do if you are being charged unlawful fees.

### Reference checks

When you apply to rent a property the landlord or letting agent will usually ask you to provide information to prove that you can afford the rent and will be a reliable tenant.

Make sure that you have the landlord or letting agent’s name and contact details before you provide them with any of your personal information or documents.

### Income checks

Landlords and agents usually want to check that you can afford the rent and will ask for information and documentation to prove your income.

### Employment checks

You might be asked to provide details of your employment, such as contact details or a contract of employment. This is so they can confirm that you are employed, and that income from this employment is going to continue during the tenancy.

### Bank statements

You might be asked to provide bank statements to prove your income. Cover your account numbers for security purposes.

### Self-employment

If you are self-employed you might need to provide copies of your business accounts.

### Benefits

You might be asked to provide proof of your benefit entitlement. Contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) if you need proof of a benefit claim.

### Credit checks

Landlords or letting agents may wish to carry out a credit check to find out if you have had issues paying bills in the past. They must have your permission to do this.

They can only do a ‘soft search’. This means they will only see information about you that is already publicly available, such as any County Court Judgments, an Individual Voluntary Agreement or bankruptcy.

### References from previous tenancies

You might be asked for a reference from your current or previous landlord or letting agent.

This is for them to check that you have been a reliable tenant in the past.

## Document and 'right to rent' checks

Landlords and agents will need to confirm your identity, immigration status, credit history and possibly employment status.

They also must carry out a 'right to rent' check on all people aged 18 or over, before the start of the tenancy. Landlords cannot discriminate against you for being an immigrant, if you feel you have been discriminated against you may wish to use this [Shelter letter template to complain](#).

There are three types of right to rent checks:

- a manual document-based check
- a check using identity verification technology via the services of an identity service provider
- or a check via the Home Office online checking service

Your landlord cannot insist which option you choose. Further information on how to prove your right to rent to a landlord can be found on [GOV.UK](#)

## Failing reference checks

If you are unable to prove your income, or if you do not pass a credit check, you could offer to pay rent in advance or provide a guarantor.

## Guarantors

A landlord or letting agent might ask for you to provide a guarantor if they are not satisfied by your income or reference checks.

A guarantor is someone who agrees to sign an agreement making them liable for some of your tenancy, such as paying the rent if you don't.

Your guarantor might also be asked to prove their income and be credit checked.

Landlords usually require guarantors to live in the UK.

Some charities have guarantee schemes that might be able to help you if you are unable to provide a guarantor. Shelter has information on these [schemes](#) on their website.

## Setting up a tenancy and moving in



### Tenancy agreements

A [tenancy agreement](#) is a contract between you and a landlord. It lets you live in a property as long as you pay the agreed rent and follow the rules. It also sets out the legal terms and conditions of your tenancy. It can be written down or spoken.

A tenancy agreement should include:

- the names of all people involved. Even if the property is managed by an agent, you should still have your landlord's name and address on the agreement
- the landlord's address
- the legal name and address of a limited company, if the property is owned by a company
- the rental price and how it's paid
- information on how and when the rent will be reviewed
- the deposit amount and [how it will be protected](#)
- details of when the deposit can be fully or partly withheld (for example to repair damage you've caused)
- the property address
- the start and end date of the tenancy
- any tenant or landlord obligations
- an outline of bills you are responsible for

It can also include information on:

- whether the tenancy can be ended early and how this can be done

- who's responsible for minor repairs (other than those that the landlord is legally responsible for)
- whether the property can be let to someone else (sublet) or have lodgers

The terms of the tenancy must be fair and comply with the law.

Your tenancy agreement cannot have anything in it that may indirectly discriminate against you.

Read the agreement carefully before you sign it. Get **legal advice** before signing if you're unsure of any terms. Only sign the agreement when you are happy with it and make sure you get a copy of it.

Citizens Advice has a useful guide on **tenancy agreements**.

## Property inventory

You and your landlord or letting agent should agree on the condition that the property is in before you move in. This may be useful when you move out.

Most landlords and letting agents will provide you with an inventory, sometimes called a check in report. This will detail the contents and condition of the property. You should check this carefully to make sure you completely agree with this before you sign it. Make sure you keep a copy.

You can also take your own photos of the condition of the property before you move in.

Shelter have information on how to **check and agree an inventory**.

## Meter readings

Take meter readings on the day you move in and contact the suppliers.

Take a photo showing the meter reading and the date and time, if possible. This will help make sure you don't pay for the previous tenant's bills.

## Contact details

Make sure that you have the correct contact details for the landlord or agent, including a telephone number you can use in case of an emergency. You are legally entitled to know the name and address of your landlord.

## Documents the landlord must give you

At the beginning of your tenancy, the landlord or agent should provide you with copies of these documents:

- A copy of the GOV.UK guide, '**How to rent: the checklist for renting in England.**'
- An Energy Performance Certificate unless you are renting a room in a house in multiple occupation (HMO) only.
- An Electrical Installation Condition Report.
  - This should have been carried out within the past five years.
- Deposit paperwork
  - If you pay a deposit, the landlord needs to provide you with specific details about the deposit. This needs to be in writing.
  - Keep this information for when you want your deposit back.
- A valid gas safety certificate
  - This must be dated within the past 12 months.
  - This must be carried out by a registered Gas Safe engineer. You can check if an engineer is registered on the **Gas Safe website**.
  - This only applies when there is a gas installation or appliance in the property.

## Renters insurance

Consider getting renters insurance. This is also sometimes called tenant insurance or contents insurance.

It is not a legal requirement, but it can protect you against the cost of repairing or replacing your belongings if they are stolen or damaged.

Insurance plans can vary on what they do or do not cover. Look around to find an insurance plan that suits your needs and to find the best deal.

Your landlord is responsible for obtaining their own buildings insurance.

## Waste and recycling

Make sure you find out how to correctly sort and dispose of your waste and recycling before you move in.

**Bristol Waste** are Bristol's local recycling, waste collection and street cleansing company, they also run the **recycling centres** in the city. See their website for details on **how to sort your waste** or contact them on 0117 304 9580.

For **more information, find out your collection dates** or **order new bins, boxes or lids** use the council website or telephone 0117 922 2100.

## During your tenancy

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### Tenant rights

As a tenant you have the right to:

- know the terms of your tenancy agreement
- know your landlord's name and address
- live in a property that's safe and in a good state of repair
- **reasonable notice** if the landlord needs to visit the property, normally 24 hours' notice
- notice if your landlord wants you to leave the property altogether
- **quiet enjoyment of the property** - your landlord, or anyone acting on their behalf, cannot take any action which is likely to cause you alarm or distress

### Tenant responsibilities

As a tenant you have certain responsibilities:

- pay your bills and rent on time
- report repairs to your landlord as soon as possible
- don't deliberately cause damage to the property
- don't make any changes to the property without your landlord's permission
- make sure your property is kept clean and tidy and take care of the garden to the standard it was when you moved in, if the tenancy agreement says it's your responsibility
- make sure your guests don't break your tenancy agreement
- don't make a lot of noise
- testing the carbon monoxide and fire alarms during the tenancy. You should contact the landlord if the alarm stops working or requires repair. You should replace batteries when necessary. Your landlord may be responsible for testing the alarms if you live in a house of multiple occupation (HMO)

### Landlord responsibilities

#### Repairs

Your landlord is responsible for repairs to:

- the structure and exterior of your home
- sinks, baths and toilets and their pipework
- the heating and hot water
- gas appliances provided by them
- electrical wiring
- chimneys and ventilation
- any damage they cause by attempting repairs

## Electrical safety

Your landlord must make sure the property's electrical installation is safe. They must:

- have it inspected at least every five years
- give you a copy of the inspection report
- fix anything that's unsafe within 28 days of the report
- make sure any appliances they provide are safe

Appliances owned by the tenant are the responsibility of the tenant.

You can read the full **guidance for tenants:** electrical safety standards in the private rented sector on GOV.UK

## Fire safety

Your landlord must:

- follow safety regulations
- make sure all the furniture and fittings they provide are fire safe
- provide at least one smoke alarm on each floor of the property used for living accommodation
- provide a carbon monoxide alarm in any room used as a living accommodation which contains a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers). This also includes gas boilers
- carry out a written risk assessment and take any action necessary, if your property is a licensed house in multiple occupation (HMO)

Avon fire and rescue service have information on their website on **fire safety in rented accommodation**.

## Gas safety

Your landlord must:

- make sure that any gas equipment they supply is safely installed and maintained by a Gas Safe registered engineer. You can check if an engineer is registered by looking at their ID card
- give you a copy of the gas safety check record before you move in or within 28 days of the check
- arrange for a gas safety check to be carried out at least once a year, by a Gas Safe registered engineer

If you smell gas and are **concerned about a gas leak** contact the 24 hour National Gas Emergency Helpline on 0800 111 999. You should also contact your landlord or agent.

## Furniture safety

Landlords must ensure that any furniture and furnishings provided meet **fire safety standards** and are made from fire-resistant materials. Some items do not have to meet these standards, such as mattresses, bed-bases, pillows, cushions and bed covers.

## Safety in your property

Your landlord has responsibility to ensure that the property is safe, secure and fit for human habitation. Always contact your landlord or letting agent if you are concerned about safety in your rented property.

If you are worried that your landlord is not doing enough to ensure your safety, **contact Bristol City Council's Private Housing Service**.

## Rent increases

Your tenancy agreement might include a review clause which describes how and when the rent will be reviewed. If it does your landlord must follow it.

If it doesn't, and you have a fixed term tenancy, **your rent can't be increased** during the fixed term unless it's agreed by both you and the landlord.

If you don't agree with a rent increase in a fixed term but pay the proposed amount anyway, you are legally accepting the increased amount and would be responsible for continuing to pay your rent at this level. You would also be unable to legally dispute the increased amount in the future.

If you have a periodic or rolling tenancy, on a week to week or month to month basis, your landlord can increase your rent if your contract has a review clause.

If your contract doesn't contain a review clause your landlord can increase your rent by giving you a section 13 notice, but only once a year. If you do not agree with this notice it can be **challenged at a tribunal**.

At the end of the tenancy the landlord can propose a different rent and you can then decide whether to renew or not.

If you refuse to pay a proposed rent increase your landlord or letting agent may decide to evict you by applying to the courts for a section 21 eviction notice. This is a legal process which means that your landlord or letting agent can apply to evict you from the property without a reason, the basic process is detailed in the diagram to the side.

If you receive a section 21 eviction notice from your landlord or letting agent this does not mean you are expected to leave the property straight away. Your landlord or letting agent will need to give you at least two months' notice period to move out.



### Section 21 notice

Receive a valid **section 21** notice from your landlord/letting agent with **at least two months' notice** (after first four months of tenancy).

### Section 21 notice period expires



### Apply to court

Landlord/letting agent is required to apply to court for a possession order (can take several weeks to process).

### Court issues possession order

Usually giving the occupiers **14 days to leave**.



### Apply to court

Landlord/letting agent is required to apply to court for a warrant of possession (can take several weeks to process).

### Court issues warrant of possession

Landlord employs bailiff to carry out eviction.



### Bailiffs

Bailiff provides notice of eviction date, this is **usually 14 days though can be less** in some cases. High Court bailiffs may evict with no notice.



### Eviction date

**Eviction date**, Bailiffs visit to secure the property, **occupiers must leave by this date**.

Your landlord or letting agent is not permitted to issue you with a section 21 eviction notice in the first four months of your tenancy.

If you decide to remain in the property, your landlord or letting agent can apply to the court for a possession order and employ bailiffs to evict you, this process can take several months.

It is worth noting however that you may have to pay for your landlord or letting agent's court costs if they successfully apply for a possession order or employ bailiffs to secure the property.

Whilst a section 21 eviction notice means your landlord or letting agent does not need to give a reason to evict you in court, they must complete the application process correctly.

Shelter have a useful [Section 21 validity checker](#) which can give you an indication as to whether a section 21 eviction notice is valid.

If you are considering making a defence against possession proceedings, you should seek appropriate legal advice from organisations like [Shelter](#), [Housing Matters](#) or [Bristol Law Centre](#).

If you receive a section 21 eviction notice and you are unable to pay your rent you can approach the council's [Homelessness Prevention Team](#). They can give you advice, signpost you to the council's Private Renting Team and assess whether there is a legal duty to rehouse you.

## Resident landlords and rent increases

If your landlord lives in the property with you, you don't have the same rights when it comes to rent increases.

Increases to your rent are normally determined by the tenancy agreement you have with your landlord. If you don't have a contract, your landlord may need to give you notice in writing to increase your rent. The notice period normally must be at least as long as how often you pay rent and no less than 28 days.

There is no restriction on how often a resident landlord can increase your rent. If you are claiming housing benefit whilst living there you will not be able to apply for an increase in benefit within a year of the last increase, or since the rent was agreed at the start of the tenancy.

More information about rent increases can be found on the [GOV.UK website](#). There are also two fact sheets available on the [Bristol City Council website](#).

## Rent arrears

Seek advice if you are worried about affording your rent, ideally before you start to miss rent payments.

Your landlord can evict you if you fall behind with your rent. Don't ignore the problem, you may be able to agree a repayment plan with your landlord which could result in you avoiding eviction.

If your landlord or letting agent decides that they want to evict you due to rent arrears they can apply to court to get a section 21 notice; they can also apply to court to get a section 8 eviction notice and in some cases may apply for both.

If your landlord or letting agent does decide to apply for a section 8 eviction notice they will need to select the reason, or grounds, they are seeking possession and prove this in court.

If your landlord is seeking possession on ground 8 (owing at least two months' rent if you pay monthly - or eight weeks if you pay weekly) then the notice period is a minimum of two weeks.

This is only a mandatory ground (where the judge must order possession in the landlord's favour) if the relevant rent arrears exist both at the point the section 8 notice was served, and at the time of the possession hearing.

Your landlord can rely on as many grounds as they wish when they apply to seek possession, however discretionary grounds are decided by the judge who decides whether they are justified.

Here is a simplified diagram of the section 8 (grounds 8, 10 and 11) eviction notice process for rent arrears.



### Receive section 8 notice for rent arrears

Receive a valid section 8 notice. Could include any, or all, of **grounds 8, 10, or 11** for rent arrears (with **at least two weeks' notice**).



### Section 8 notice period expires

#### Mandatory ground for possession

Landlord/letting agent **successfully prove ground 8**, tenant owing at least two months'/8 weeks' rent **to judge in court**.

#### Discretionary grounds for possession

Landlord/letting agent **successfully prove ground 10**, owing some rent, **and/or ground 11**, repeated late payment of rent. **Judge decides if this is justified in court**.



### Judge grants possession order

Usually giving occupiers **14 days to leave**.



### Warrant of possession

Landlord/letting agent is required to apply to court for a warrant of possession (can take several weeks to process).



### Court issues warrant of possession

Landlord employs bailiff to carry out eviction.



### Bailiffs

Bailiff provides notice of eviction date. You usually get 14 days to leave though can be less in some cases. High Court bailiffs may evict with no notice.



### Eviction date

Eviction date, bailiffs visit to secure the property, occupiers must leave by this date.

This does not mean that you must leave the property either straight away, or at the end of the notice period. If your landlord or letting agent has submitted the application correctly then they will still need to prove the grounds in court at a 'possession hearing'.

If you do decide to challenge a section 8 notice in court you should seek early legal advice, this is free, and you can find details on the [GOV.UK find a legal aid adviser](#) website.

It is worth noting that if your defence is unsuccessful, your landlord may claim for rent arrears and court costs, this is called a 'money judgement' or 'money order'. If this is granted it can be treated as a County Court Judgement (CCJ) which may have a negative affect on your credit rating.

If your defence is unsuccessful and you have not moved out by the date specified on the possession order; your landlord or letting agent must again apply to court for a warrant of possession and appoint bailiffs to carry out the eviction. County Court bailiffs must give you at least two weeks' notice of the eviction date whereas High Court Enforcement Officers (High Court bailiffs) aren't required to provide any.

Make sure to read any letters you receive from your landlord, they may contain information about the action they plan to take.

The Bristol City Council's [money advice webpage](#) may be able to help you with advice on reducing household bills and see if you are entitled to a discretionary housing payment. You could also use the [benefits calculator](#) to see if you're entitled to [housing benefit](#) or a reduction in council tax.

You can also get advice from:

- [Money Helper](#)
- [Shelter](#)
- [Citizens Advice](#)

## Accessibility adaption or adjustments

If you are disabled or have a long-term condition, you can request reasonable adjustments from your landlord or agent. This could include changes to the terms of your agreement, or home adaptations and adjustments to common parts of a building to make your home accessible.

Your landlord or agent should respond in a reasonable timeframe, and if they refuse a request, they should explain why they do not consider it reasonable.

Your landlord can ask you to pay for the changes you asked for. However, you can check to see if you are eligible to apply for a [Disabled Facilities Grant](#) to help with the cost of adaptations. Your landlord can also apply for funding on your behalf.

## Harassment and unlawful eviction

If your landlord wants you to leave their property, they must follow strict procedures. Details are available on [GOV.UK](#). If they don't they may be guilty of harassing or unlawfully evicting you, which are criminal offences. We can investigate, and if necessary take legal action.

### Harassment

Harassment is anything your landlord does, or fails to do, that makes you want to leave the property.

It includes:

- cutting off services, like gas and electricity
- visiting the property at unsociable hours
- refusing to carry out repairs
- starting, but not finishing, disruptive repairs or building work

- trying to take away your legal rights as a tenant
- being violent or threatening violence
- abusive behaviour
- opening your post or removing your belongings

If you think you are experiencing harrasment, write down the details of everything that happens including dates, times and what was said. When you see your landlord, ask them to confirm anything that was said verbally in writing. Try and have someone with you to give you support and be a witness. Shelter has produced a useful **guide** on how to deal with harassment from landlords and letting agents.

## Unlawful eviction

You may have been unlawfully evicted if:

- your landlord doesn't give you the right notice to leave the property
- you find the locks have been changed
- you're evicted by someone who isn't a bailiff executing a lawful warrant

If you live with your landlord your rights will be different and the above may not apply.

**Seek advice** if you are unsure.

If the property is repossessed by the landlord's mortgage lender, the lender may not give you a notice period to find somewhere else to live. If they don't, you can apply to delay possession of the property **through the courts**.

## Getting back into a property

If you have been evicted from a property that you have a right to occupy, the council's Private Housing Service can try to negotiate with the landlord to let you back in.

If this fails you can contact a private solicitor. They can arrange for proceedings to be brought before the court. The court has the power to order the landlord to allow you back into the property, this is called an injunction.

You may also be entitled to compensation (called 'damages') if you have been a victim of an illegal eviction or harassment. This requires a court application and it is best to seek independent legal advice.

## Report an illegal eviction or harassment

Tell Bristol City Council if you think you're being illegally evicted or harassed. Inform the Private Housing Service using the **online form**, email at **[private.housing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing@bristol.gov.uk)** or call on 0117 352 5010.

If you are worried about where you will stay for the night or if you're about to become homeless in the next eight weeks please refer to the Homelessness section at the back of the guide.

## Pests and vermin



Issues in your rented property can lead to problems with pests and vermin, for example rats, mice, cockroaches, fleas and bedbugs.

It can be difficult to know who is responsible for dealing with issues of pests and vermin in a rented property.

Advice can be found on the following websites:

- **[GOV.UK: Pest control on your property](#)**
- **[Shelter: Pests and vermin infestations in rented homes](#)**
- **[Citizens Advice: Repairs - infestations of pests and vermin](#)**

Seek advice or contact the council for advice if you are unsure who is responsible for dealing with an issue you have with pests or vermin.

Your landlord is normally responsible for dealing with problems if:

- repairs to the property are needed to stop pests getting in. For example, holes in external walls, broken vents, damage to doors or windows or other cracks or gaps in the structure of the property

- an infestation makes your home unsafe to live in and the infestation was already there before you moved in.

If the landlord is taking too long or refuses to carry out repairs, contact the council's **Private Housing Service to make a complaint.**

### Prevent pests and vermin

It is your responsibility to ensure that you do not attract pests and vermin.

These are some practical steps you can take to avoid attracting pests and vermin:

- do not leave food out
- clean recyclable food and drink containers after use
- store recycling, general waste and food waste in suitable containers, preferably with lids
- use wheelie bin lids, close refuse bags and place lids on boxes.  
**Order replacement containers** if they are missing or broken
- don't forget to put out your waste for collection. Use the council's online **collection day finder** if you are unsure of your collection day
- regularly use flea and tick treatments on your pets
- keep your property clean
  - vacuum carpets regularly, cleaning under furniture when possible
  - clean woollen clothes and other items before storing them
  - thoroughly clean inside cupboards and storage areas a few times a year

### Pests from neighbouring properties

If you believe that pests are coming from your neighbour's property, or from within the property's boundary, you should ask them to deal with the problem. **Contact Bristol City**

**Council** if they are taking too long or refuse to deal with the problem.

### Bristol City Council pest control services

Bristol City Council has **pest control services** that can provide services to vulnerable citizens in Bristol. To book council pest control services email **pest.control@bristol.gov.uk** or call 0117 922 2500. You'll need to let them know:

- the type of pest control job
- if you're tenant of a Bristol City Council property
- your age
- if you're a vulnerable citizen
- if you have any disabilities (mental or physical) or illnesses

If you email, provide your phone number so they can call you back.

### Damp and mould



#### Types of damp and what causes it

Too much moisture causes damp and mould. There are three types of damp:

- penetrating damp
- rising damp
- condensation

#### Penetrating damp

Penetrating damp happens when water seeps into a building.

This can happen when:

- the roof or rendering is damaged
- the gutters are blocked
- pipes are leaking or plumbing is damaged
- areas around sinks, showers or baths are damaged, such as cracked grouting or worn out sealant

## Rising damp

Rising damp happens when water rises from the ground through the floor and into the walls of the building. You can often see rising damp because it leaves a tide mark low down on affected walls.

If you think your home has penetrating or rising damp, tell your landlord as soon as possible. Damp can cause a lot of damage if you ignore it.

## Damp in new homes

If you live in a new or recently built property, it may not have dried out from water left from the building work. It can take between nine and 18 months to dry completely. If you're worried, contact your landlord.

## Condensation and mould

Condensation happens when warm humid air hits a cold surface, such as windows and external walls. Warm humid air is made by activities such as showering or cooking.

Condensation is common in areas where there is little air movement, such as:

- behind furniture
- in cupboards
- under work surfaces
- on north facing walls
- in corners

If a property doesn't have good ventilation and heating, condensation can cause mould. Mould is a type of fungus which grows in damp conditions. Its spores can make some medical conditions worse, including:

- respiratory infections, such as bronchitis
- allergies
- asthma

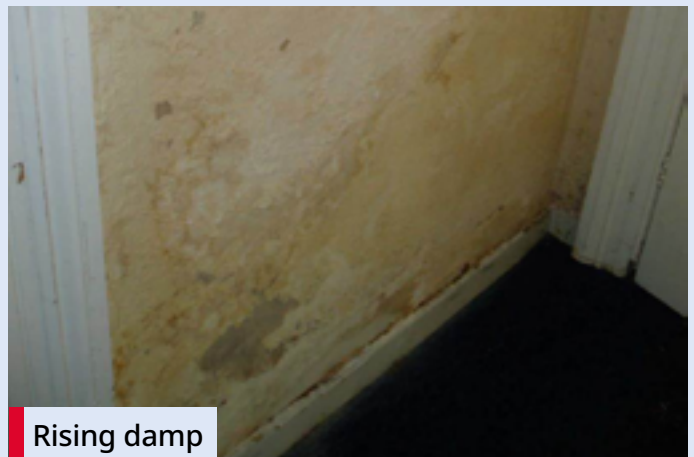
## Examples of damp



Rising damp



Condensation



Rising damp



Penetrating damp

## How to prevent condensation and mould growth

Reduce moisture by wiping any damp or wet windows, sills, walls and surfaces with a paper towel.

### Heating

- keep low, background heating on all day if possible and a window slightly open (warm air can hold more moisture so you're less likely to have condensation)
- try not to put the heating on for short periods of time (this will make the problem worse because the air heats and cools quickly)
- avoid using liquid, propane gas or paraffin heaters because they produce a lot of water vapour

Bristol City Council can signpost and provide advice on **cost of living support** if you cannot afford to heat your home.

### Help air move around

- leave doors open unless you're cooking, having a shower or bath, or drying clothes
- keep furniture away from walls, particularly external walls, if possible
- don't overfill cupboards and wardrobes
- don't block airbricks or vents
- don't completely block chimneys, leave a hole and fit an air vent
- keep a window slightly open, if possible, because this will help moisture escape.
- keep trickle vents open if you have them. A trickle vent is a small slot above a window or door that allows air in and out when the door or window is closed

It might seem strange to keep the heating on with a window slightly open, but it helps because you're letting air that's full of moisture out and dry air in. Dry air is easier and cheaper to heat.

## Cooking

- close the kitchen door
- open a window or put the extractor fan on
- cover pans with lids
- don't leave pans or the kettle boiling longer than needed

## Having a shower or bath

- close the bathroom door
- open a window or put the extractor fan on
- leave the window open or fan on until all the moisture has gone from the windows and walls
- when you have a bath, put some cold water in the bath first and then add hot water. This will reduce the amount of steam produced

## Drying clothes

- dry clothes outdoors if possible
- if you have to dry clothes indoors:
  - put them in a room with the door shut and heating on
  - open a window (or put the extractor fan on if they're in the bathroom)
- If you use a vented tumble dryer, make sure it has a hosepipe taking the moisture outside

## Remove mould

- remove any mould as soon as you see it
- clean the area with soapy water or a fungicidal wash (follow any instructions carefully)
- don't brush or vacuum the area because it can disturb mould spores
- dry the area thoroughly
- paint the area with a fungicidal paint. Don't use ordinary paint or wallpaper

## If you still have damp or mould in your home

Contact your landlord or agent to report the issue if you:

- have followed the advice above
- cannot follow the advice above because of an issue with your home (for example, the heating doesn't work or the extractor fans are broken)

Clearly describe the problem and ask your landlord or agent to investigate and do the necessary repairs or improvements.

The landlord must investigate and fix the damp or mould if it's caused by disrepair, for example:

- no working heating
- broken extractor fan

Do this in writing in case you need to prove that they knew about the problem at a later date.

Do not stop paying your rent because there's damp or mould in your home. This could put you at risk of being served an eviction notice.

If your landlord or agent do not investigate or do the necessary repairs within a reasonable amount of time, fill in this [online form](#), email [private.housing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing@bristol.gov.uk) or phone 0117 352 5010.

## At the end of the tenancy



### Ending the tenancy

A tenancy will continue until you or your landlord ends it. If you want to end your tenancy, make sure you give the correct notice to the landlord. Your tenancy agreement should say how much notice you need to give your landlord before you leave the property. If you don't do this, your landlord may make a deduction from your deposit and claim for loss of rent.

You are responsible for paying rent for your entire fixed-term tenancy. You may be able to end your fixed-term agreement early, or end your tenancy entirely if:

- the break clause has been activated in the same way it is outlined in your tenancy agreement
- your landlord agrees to end the tenancy early. It is advisable to get this agreement in writing

At the point your fixed term tenancy ends, it becomes a periodic or 'rolling' tenancy. This means the tenancy will continue beyond the fixed-term and that you are liable to pay rent until the tenancy comes to an end which normally corresponds with when you or your landlord gives a valid notice to end it. Your tenancy usually becomes periodic regardless of whether a [renewal agreement](#) is in place.

If you share the property with others and have a [joint tenancy](#), and an individual or several tenants decide to end the tenancy then this will apply to all tenants regardless of whether they agree or not. If you are unable to mutually agree you may be able to negotiate an end to the joint tenancy with your landlord or find a replacement joint tenant with your landlords' permission. Landlords can charge £50 or reasonable costs to administer the request.

Shelter has information about [how to end your tenancy](#).

## When moving out:

- make sure the property is left **clean and tidy**, you do not need to get the property professionally cleaned so long as it is cleaned to the same standard as when you moved in
- clean fixtures and fittings, such as the cooker and fridge
- remove any rubbish
- remove anything that you own
- take the gas and electricity meter readings and contact your suppliers to cancel your account

Read about what happens if you move out and leave some things in the property on the [Bristol City Council website](#).

## Landlord wishes to end the tenancy

If your landlord wants you to leave, they must give you notice in a particular way.

Your landlord may need to have given you specific documents for your notice to be valid. This depends on the type of tenancy agreement and its terms.

Your landlord can take back their property without giving any reason if you have either:

- a periodic tenancy (sometimes called a 'rolling tenancy')
- a fixed-term tenancy that has ended

To do this, all of the following must apply:

- they've protected your deposit in a deposit protection scheme, if the tenancy began or was renewed on or after 6 April 2007
- they've given you at least two months' written notice that they want the property back (a Section 21 6a notice).
- the date you must leave is at least six months after your original tenancy began (the date you moved in)

Your landlord must also have given you:

- a copy of the GOV.UK leaflet '[How to rent: the checklist for renting in England](#)'
- an energy performance certificate
- a gas safety certificate (if there are gas appliances)

In England, your landlord must serve you notice using the correct form. Shelter has information on their website on [checking if your eviction notice is valid](#).

## Getting your deposit back

You should receive a full refund of your tenancy deposit as long as you:

- meet the terms of your tenancy agreement
- do not damage the property
- pay your rent and bills

There is no fixed timescale within which your landlord must return your deposit, this can vary depending on your situation and what deposit scheme your money is in, though 10 days is considered reasonable.

If you're in a dispute with your landlord, then your deposit will be protected in the tenancy deposit protection scheme until the issue is resolved.

If you need help with a dispute over deductions from your deposit, further information is available on the [Citizens Advice](#) and [Shelter](#) websites.

## Retaliatory eviction

If your tenancy started or was renewed after 1 October 2015, your landlord cannot evict you using the 'no fault' eviction procedure and cannot serve a section 21 notice for six months, if the council has served an improvement notice or an emergency works notice on the landlord and you have followed the following process:



## Complaint to landlord



Tenant makes complaint to the landlord. If the landlord carries out a satisfactory repair within a reasonable time, this is the end of the matter.



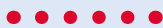
## 14 days' notice



The landlord must respond to the tenant's complaint within 14 days and describe the action they will take to fix the problem. If the landlord carries out the repair according to the specified timetable, this is the end of the matter.



## Response



If the landlord does not respond, the response is inadequate, or the landlord responds by issuing an eviction notice, the tenant should approach their local authority and request an inspection to confirm the need for repair..



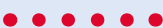
## Local authority verifies the need for a repair



If the local authority verifies the need for a repair and serves a relevant notice, the protection against retaliatory eviction applies and the landlord is not permitted to evict the tenant for a period of six months.



## Repairs



The landlord carries out the repair.

## If you've been asked to leave during the fixed term

Your landlord can only ask you to leave during the fixed term if they have certain reasons. For example, if:

- you're behind with your rent payments
- you've used the property for illegal purposes, like selling drugs
- you've damaged the property

Your landlord will need to apply for a section 8 notice (see the rent arrears section of this guide for more details) giving the reasons, or grounds for possession, and prove this in court, though you are able to challenge this. If you do decide to challenge the section 8 eviction notice you should seek legal advice.

The notice period your landlord gives you will depend on the reason.

## Break clauses

If there's a break clause in the tenancy agreement then you or your landlord can terminate the fixed term contract earlier, though if your landlord decides to, they still need to serve a lawful eviction notice to end the tenancy.

## If you do not leave the property

Your landlord cannot remove you by force. If the notice period expires and you do not leave the property, your landlord may start the process of eviction through the courts.

See the 'Housing advice' section at the back of this document for organisations that may be able to provide advice and guidance, if you have been served an eviction notice and do not wish to vacate the property.

## Report a rogue landlord

A rogue landlord is a landlord who doesn't meet their legal obligations to provide safe accommodation and carries out unlawful activities. This could include:

- harassing or illegally evicting a tenant
- renting a property that doesn't meet basic legal standards, such as a property in a poor state of repair or with a low EPC rating
- renting a property without a licence, when a **licence** is needed
- renting unsuitable accommodation, such as a shed, garage or garden shelter, which may not have planning permission or building consent (known as a '**bed in a shed**')
- charging **unlawful fees** (this also applies to letting agents)
- providing tenants with false or misleading information that would affect their financial decision
- failing to disclose important information that would affect a tenant's financial decision

The council can take action against rogue landlords or letting agents so that:

- tenants aren't exploited
- tenants' homes are well managed and safe to live in
- they meet the necessary legal requirements

### **Tell us about a rogue landlord or letting agent**

You can:

- tell the council's Private Housing Service if you're being **harassed or illegally evicted**
- find out how to get your money back if your landlord or letting agent has **charged unlawful fees**
- tell us about someone renting a '**bed in a shed**'
- use our **problems with your property form** to see if we can help with properties in a poor state of repair or with a low EPC rating
- use our **unlicensed property form** to tell us about a property that you think should have a licence, but doesn't

Email **[private.housing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing@bristol.gov.uk)** or call 0117 352 5010 to tell us:

- your letting agent is not a member of a **redress scheme**
- your letting agent is not a member of a client money protection scheme: find out about **client money protection schemes** on GOV.UK

### **Rent repayment orders**



A rent repayment order allows you to claim back up to 12 months' rent if your landlord or letting agent has committed at least one of the following offences:

- **illegally evicts or harasses** you to make you leave the property
- using or threatening violence to enter the property
- not making improvements to the property after the council has served a legal notice telling them to do so (not complying with an improvement notice)
- letting or managing property after they've been banned from doing so (being in breach of a banning order)
- letting a property, or parts of property, after the council has served a notice telling them not to, or letting it to more people than we've said they can (not complying with a prohibition order)
- letting or managing a property without a **licence** in an area where a licence is needed
- letting or managing a house in multiple occupation (HMO) without a **licence** if a licence is needed

## Who can apply for a rent repayment order

You can apply for a rent repayment order if:

- you're a private tenant
- the offence took place while you were living in the property
- the landlord or agent committed the offence in the past 12 months

## How to apply for a rent repayment order

To apply for a rent repayment order, download and fill in the [application form](#) from GOV.UK

You'll need to provide evidence that the offence happened. The landlord doesn't have to have been convicted of the offence. To help you provide evidence, you can fill in one of our supplementary evidence sheets and include it with your application:

- [breach of banning order: rent repayment order supplementary evidence sheet](#)
- [breach of improvement order or prohibition order: rent repayment order supplementary evidence sheet](#)
- [illegal eviction or harassment: rent repayment order supplementary evidence sheet](#)
- [unlicensed properties: rent repayment order supplementary evidence sheet](#)
- [violence to secure entry: rent repayment order supplementary evidence sheet](#)

Send your completed application form to the First Tier Tribunal at the address on the application form

## Cost of applying for a rent repayment order

It costs £100 to apply for a rent repayment order. You'll need to send the fee when you apply. You can pay by cheque or postal order. Find out about [help with court fees](#) on GOV.UK

The First Tier Tribunal may decide to hold a hearing. If there is a hearing, you'll need to pay another £200.

## Get help to apply for a rent repayment order

We may be able to help you apply for a rent repayment order:

- email: [private.housing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing@bristol.gov.uk)
- call: 0117 352 5010

We give initial advice free of charge. If we assist with your application, for example helping you fill in the application form or helping provide evidence, you'll need to pay us a fee if a rent repayment order is granted.

The fee depends on how many months' rent the rent repayment order is granted for.

See the [table of fees](#) on the council website.

For more information and a check list for your application, view our [tenant's guide](#) on the council website.

## Further advice for private tenants



### Keep it professional

Try to maintain a good relationship between you and your landlord or letting agent. The property you rent is your home. You might feel emotional or angry when issues arise during a tenancy, especially if issues are not being resolved in a reasonable manner or time frame.

Try to keep calm and professional. This will help when dealing with your landlord or agent in the future.

### Keep a record

Keep a record of all correspondence with the landlord and agent throughout your tenancy. This might be useful if you have any issues during or after your tenancy.

## Know your rights and responsibilities

Understanding your tenant rights and responsibilities will help you avoid potential issues and ensures that your landlord complies with the law. It will also help ensure that you are treated fairly and reasonably by your landlord.

Remember that legal rights and responsibilities change. Keep up to date with any changes and always seek advice if you are unsure.

## Be considerate of your neighbours

Being mindful of your neighbours will contribute to a positive community where Bristol citizens can enjoy living in a positive and harmonious environment.

These are some things to consider:

### Be mindful of noise

Especially during the night and early morning. Avoid loud parties or loud music that might disturb neighbours. Excessive noise is unreasonable.

### Park considerately

Park your vehicle in designated areas where necessary and respect your neighbours' parking spaces and driveway access.

### Dispose of waste and recycling properly

Ensure you store and dispose of your waste and recycling properly. Remove your waste bins, containers or bags from the street once they have been collected.

## Mental health and private renting

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Experiencing issues whilst privately renting, such as financial concerns, disrepair issues or discrimination, can have a significant impact on mental health. It is important to seek support and assistance if you need it.

There are many organisations that provide advice, help and support with mental health. These are some organisations that offer help and advice:

- [Mind](#)
- [Mental Health Foundation](#)
- [NHS](#)
- [Womenkind Bristol](#)
- [Missing Link – Help When You Need It](#)

## Domestic abuse and private renting



If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic or sexual abuse, help is available. If you need urgent help then you should call 999, if you are unable to speak you can press 55 when asked and the call handler will transfer you to the police.

If you have experienced domestic or sexual abuse and need to access emergency or safe house accommodation [Next Link Plus](#) can help you arrange this. You can find more details on this, and other domestic abuse support, by visiting the [Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership](#) website.

## Cost of living advice and support



The rising cost of living is affecting everybody in the city in different ways, including those who have not faced financial challenges before.

Cost of living pressures can affect our mental health and wellbeing, making us feel stressed, anxious or low. Talk to friends and family about how you're feeling. There are local organisations that can also help.

[There is a guide on the Bristol City Council website](#) which provides advice and guidance to help you through the rising cost of living.

## Homelessness

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If you're worried about where you're going to stay tonight, or if you're about to become homeless in the next eight weeks, you can approach Bristol City Council's **Homelessness Prevention Team** directly at the **Citizen Service Point** at 100 Temple Street or call 0117 352 6800.

If you need help when our office is closed (after 5pm on weekdays, at weekends, or on public holidays), call the Emergency Duty Team on 01454 615 165 or go to your nearest police station if you believe that you're in danger, at risk, or vulnerable.

If you urgently need a bed for the night and our Citizen Service Point is closed, see our list of **night shelters** or advice for **people currently rough sleeping**.

## Bristol City Council, Private Housing Service

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The Bristol City Council's Private Housing Service works to maintain and improve conditions within private rented accommodation in the city.

The service may be able to help you with issues with your tenancy. You should contact the Private Housing Service if you have issues such as:

- Problems in your property, such as disrepair, damp, poor housing conditions or unsafe conditions
- You think you might be living in an unlicensed property
- You are being harassed or unlawfully evicted by your landlord
- You have been charged unlawful fees

The Private Housing team does not deal with issues with:

- Council housing
- Commercial properties and land

### Contact the Private Housing Service

Email: [private.housing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing@bristol.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0117 352 5010

Address: Bristol City Council, PO Box 3399  
Bristol, BS1 9N

## Further help and advice

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### Accessibility and home adaptations

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#### WECIL (Independent Living)

phone: 0117 947 9911

web: [www.wecil.org.uk](http://www.wecil.org.uk)

#### We Care Home Improvements

phone: 0300 323 0700

email: [info@wecr.org.uk](mailto:info@wecr.org.uk)

web: [www.wecr.org.uk](http://www.wecr.org.uk)

### Bristol City Council

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#### Private Housing Service

phone: 0117 352 5010

email: [private.housing@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing@bristol.gov.uk)

web: [www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/housing/private-tenants](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/housing/private-tenants)

#### Private Renting Team

phone: 07785 660 718

email: [private.renting@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:private.renting@bristol.gov.uk)

web: [www.bristol.gov.uk/privaterenting](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/privaterenting)

## Homelessness Team

phone: 0117 352 6800

email: [homelessnessadvice@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:homelessnessadvice@bristol.gov.uk)

web: [www.bristol.gov.uk/homeless](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/homeless)

## Cost of living support

web: [www.bristol.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/costofliving)

## Energy efficiency

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### Warmer Homes Advice and Money - Centre for Sustainable Energy

phone: 0800 082 2234

email: [info@cse.org.uk](mailto:info@cse.org.uk)

web: [www.cse.org.uk/my-home/advice-projects/wham-warmer-homes-advice-and-money/](http://www.cse.org.uk/my-home/advice-projects/wham-warmer-homes-advice-and-money/)

## Food banks

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### Trussell Trust

phone: 01722 580 180

email: [enquiries@trusselltrust.org](mailto:enquiries@trusselltrust.org)

web: [www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/](http://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/)

## General advice and support

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### We Are Bristol helpline (signposting)

phone: 0800 694 0184

web: [www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/people-and-communities/cost-of-living-support](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/people-and-communities/cost-of-living-support)

### Citizens Advice (general advice)

phone: 0800 144 8848

web: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

### 1625 Independent People (young people)

phone: 0117 332 7111

email: [enquiries@1625ip.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@1625ip.co.uk)

web: [www.1625ip.co.uk/get-help](http://www.1625ip.co.uk/get-help)

### Age UK (older people)

phone: 0800 678 1602

web: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

### SARI (hate crime)

phone: 0117 942 0060

mail: PO Box 2454, Bristol, BS2 2WX

web: [www.saricharity.org.uk/contact-us/](http://www.saricharity.org.uk/contact-us/)

### Avon and Somerset Police

phone: 101

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

### Action Fraud

phone: 0300 123 2040

web: [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

### Avon Fire & Rescue Service

phone: 0117 926 2061

web: [www.avonfire.gov.uk](http://www.avonfire.gov.uk)

### Bristol Refuge Rights

phone: 07526 352 353

email: [advice@bristolrefugeerights.org](mailto:advice@bristolrefugeerights.org)

web: [www.bristolrefugeerights.org](http://www.bristolrefugeerights.org)

## Housing advice

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### Shelter

phone: 0808 800 4444

web chat: [england.shelter.org.uk/get\\_help/webchat](http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help/webchat)

web: [england.shelter.org.uk](http://england.shelter.org.uk)

### Housing Matters

phone: 0117 935 1260

email: [advice@housingmatters.org.uk](mailto:advice@housingmatters.org.uk)

web: [www.housingmatters.org.uk](http://www.housingmatters.org.uk)

### Bristol Law Centre

phone: 0117 924 8662

web: [www.bristollawcentre.org.uk/get-help/](http://www.bristollawcentre.org.uk/get-help/)

### ACORN

web: [www.acorntheunion.org.uk/contact](http://www.acorntheunion.org.uk/contact)

## Local advice services

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### North Bristol Advice Centre

phone: 0117 951 5751

minicom: 0117 952 7681

email: [team@northbristoladvice.org.uk](mailto:team@northbristoladvice.org.uk)

web: <https://northbristoladvice.org.uk/help-and-advice/>

### South Bristol Advice Service

phone: 0117 985 1122

web: [www.southbristoladvice.org.uk/contact/](http://www.southbristoladvice.org.uk/contact/)

### Wellspring Settlement

phone: 0117 955 6971

web: [www.wellspringsettlement.org.uk](http://www.wellspringsettlement.org.uk)

## Mental health support

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### Mind

phone: 0117 980 0370

email: [info@bristolmind.org.uk](mailto:info@bristolmind.org.uk)

web: [www.bristolmind.org.uk](http://www.bristolmind.org.uk)

### NHS

web: [www.nhs.uk/mental-health](http://www.nhs.uk/mental-health)

### Womankind Bristol

phone: 0117 916 6461

email: [helpline@womankindbristol.org.uk](mailto:helpline@womankindbristol.org.uk)

web: [www.womankindbristol.org.uk/helpline/](http://www.womankindbristol.org.uk/helpline/)

### Missing Link Housing

phone: 0117 925 1811

email: [enquiries@missinglinkhousing.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@missinglinkhousing.co.uk)

web: [www.missinglinkhousing.co.uk](http://www.missinglinkhousing.co.uk)

### VitaMinds (NHS Talking Therapy Service)

phone: 0333 200 1893

web: [www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk/nhs-services/nhs-mental-health/bristol-north-somerset-and-south-gloucestershire-mental-health-services/](http://www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk/nhs-services/nhs-mental-health/bristol-north-somerset-and-south-gloucestershire-mental-health-services/)

### The Samaritans

Phone: 116 123

web: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

## Money and debt advice

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### WRAMAS - Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service

phone: 0117 352 1888

web: [www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/benefits-and-financial-help/welfare-rights-and-money-advice-service](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/benefits-and-financial-help/welfare-rights-and-money-advice-service)

### Talking Money

phone: 0800 121 4511

email: [mail@talkingmoney.org.uk](mailto:mail@talkingmoney.org.uk)

web: [www.talkingmoney.org.uk/get-support/help-me/](http://www.talkingmoney.org.uk/get-support/help-me/)

### Entitled to (benefits calculator)

web: [bristol.entitledto.co.uk/home/start](http://bristol.entitledto.co.uk/home/start)

### Turn2us (benefit advice)

web: [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)

## Neighbouring local authorities

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### South Gloucestershire Council

web: [www.southglos.gov.uk/housing](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/housing)

### Bath and North East Somerset Council

web: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/housing>

### North Somerset Council

web: [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/housing](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/housing)

## Pest control services

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### Bristol City Council Pest Control Services

phone: 0117 922 2500

email: [pest.control@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:pest.control@bristol.gov.uk)

web: [www.bristol.gov.uk/pestcontrol](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/pestcontrol)

### British Pest Control Association

web: [www.bpca.org.uk/find](http://www.bpca.org.uk/find)

## Refuse and recycling

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### **Bristol Waste**

phone: 0117 304 9580

email: [hello@bristolwastecompany.co.uk](mailto:hello@bristolwastecompany.co.uk)

web: [www.bristolwastecompany.co.uk](http://www.bristolwastecompany.co.uk)

## Student advice services

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### **University of Bristol**

web: [www.bristol.ac.uk/accommodation/private-rented/advice](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/accommodation/private-rented/advice)

### **University of Bristol Law Clinic**

phone: 0117 394 0082 (voicemail)

email: [bristol-lawclinic-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:bristol-lawclinic-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk)

web: [www.bristol.ac.uk/law/law-clinic/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/law/law-clinic/)

### **University of the West of England**

phone: 0117 328 2676

email: [advice@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:advice@uwe.ac.uk)

web: [www.uwe.ac.uk/life/accommodation/private-accommodation](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/life/accommodation/private-accommodation)

