

unipol

the home of student housing



The University of
Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

essential

HOUSE HUNTING GUIDE

2013-14

WHY IT PAYS TO WAIT

THE UNIPOL DASH CODE

Helping you find the best properties

TOO MUCH TO CHECK?

Ask all the right questions with our tear-out checklist

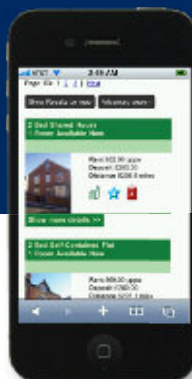
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UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

Contents

2013-14



TAKE UNIPOL WITH YOU WHEN YOU GO HOUSE HUNTING:
www.nottinghamstudentprs.org/m

Deciding where you want to live is one of the most important decisions you will make whilst studying in Nottingham. It's also one of the most costly, so it makes sense to do your research before committing yourself legally by signing a contract.

Unipol works in partnership with the city's universities, colleges, students unions and Council to help you make the best possible decision. We're a not-for-profit organisation and our services, including our property search database, are provided FREE OF CHARGE to students.

Inside this guide and on our website you'll find all sorts of useful information about house hunting and the student accommodation market. You'll discover that Nottingham has a surplus of student properties and that there's no need for you to rush into any decisions. Our advice is that you wait until the official start of House Hunting on:

MONDAY 21st JANUARY 2013

This way, not only will you be better prepared, but you'll be able to take advantage of Unipol's online property database, the largest selection of Nottingham student accommodation held anywhere.

Follow the advice in this guide and we're confident you'll find good quality accommodation that suits both your needs and your budget.

Good luck house hunting!

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Your 5 Step House Hunting Plan

1 Wait until the official start of house hunting on 21st January 2013

2 Be sure about where you want to live and who you want to live with

3 Use the Unipol website as a quick and easy way to search for properties

4 Make sure you get value for money by viewing a selection of properties

5 Get your contract checked before signing it



Who are Unipol?

If you are new to Nottingham then you might not have heard about Unipol... yet! We are a national not-for-profit organisation that is dedicated to improving standards of student accommodation and ensuring you get the best possible accommodation. In Nottingham we work with the two universities and the colleges of further education to help you find accommodation and make informed decisions.

Here are a few important things you should know about us:

- Unlike estate agents, we have no commercial interest in promoting particular properties, so our advice is always completely impartial
- We have the largest searchable online database of student accommodation in the city, containing properties from private landlords, agents and large developments. In 2011/2012 we advertised more than 12,000 bed spaces
- We don't deal with landlords who have a proven record of complaints
- We can help you meet students who are also looking to share accommodation
- We can help students with specific housing needs



WHAT IS THE UNIPOL DASH CODE?



In addition to our database of properties, we also run the Unipol DASH (Decent and Safe Homes) Code. This is Nottingham's official student accommodation accreditation service, which landlords and agents can voluntarily sign up to. The Code covers the physical conditions of properties as well as how landlords go about managing them. In short this means that Code landlords include certain features in their properties for your health, safety and security. They also have to deal with any repairs or maintenance within specified time frames.

Key benefits of the Unipol DASH Code:

- A clearly written contract with reasonable terms
- No demands for deposits or rent before signing up
- Accommodation and facilities that meet a set standard for comfortable living and studying
- Safe and secure accommodation, where reported repairs are completed quickly and efficiently
- A landlord who is courteous, professional and without prejudice in their dealings with you
- An established framework for dealing with complaints and resolving disputes
- A starred rating system that helps you identify the differing amenity levels for Code properties - ranging from 1 to 3 to 5 stars.

The Unipol DASH Code is endorsed by Nottingham City Council, the University of Nottingham and its Students' Union, Nottingham Trent University and both of the city's colleges of further education. The Code exceeds some current legal requirements and ensures that landlords are accountable and that you have enhanced protection.

Got a complaint?

If an accredited landlord is in breach of the Code you can challenge them by using our online complaints system or by contacting our Code Officer. If this doesn't resolve the matter it will then be referred to an independent Tribunal that ensures owners meet their written commitment to comply with the Code. However, in most cases complaints are normally resolved before reaching this point.



Large developments, such as privately owned halls, are covered by a separate accreditation code and the majority of developments in Nottingham are members of this Code. Before signing a contract you should check on the Unipol website to find out whether your development is a member.

The Code ensures that landlords are accountable and that you have enhanced protection.



WHAT TYPE OF PROPERTY IS BEST FOR YOU?

A range of different property types are available in Nottingham. However, before considering other options it's always worth reviewing what you already have. If you are happy where you are you might want to consider re-signing. The universities and developments are usually able to sign up groups and individuals and can often switch you to another hall if you wish. Check with your Accommodation Office.

The type of property you choose will also affect how much rent you pay.

Shared flats and houses are normally the cheapest option (see below for average rents and deposits in 2011/12). However, more expensive options such as living with an owner occupier or in a large development usually include additional benefits. The main thing is to make sure you know what you are getting for your money.



The most common sizes for properties in Nottingham are 4, 5 and 6 bedroom. If you are in a group that is struggling to find a property larger than 6 bedrooms you might want to consider looking for two houses that are on the same street or approaching your university/large development as they may be able to help.

Despite there being a surplus of student accommodation in the city, smaller self contained and studio type properties do tend to go quickly. So if you want a smaller property start looking soon after the start of House Hunting on 21st January.

Remember also that if you are happy where you are, you don't have to move.

	Average Rent (pppw)	Average Deposit
Shared Flats	£81.27	£217.74
Shared Houses	£65.04	£243.33
Owner Occupier/Home Stay	£77.63	£220.90
Self Contained Flats (1 or 2 bedrooms)	£83.39	£253.52
Large Developments/Private Halls	£88.88	£190.63
Studio Flats	£151.33	£191.66

With the exception of Large Developments/Private Halls and Owner Occupier/Home Stay the rates shown above are exclusive of bills. For further information on the cost of bills see pages 15 and 16.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NOTTINGHAM

Which area should you choose?

Students at **The University of Nottingham** tend to be interested in properties close to the University Park and Jubilee campuses, in areas such as Lenton, Dunkirk, Beeston and Wollaton. Students at the university's Sutton Bonington campus have the choice of finding properties nearby or commuting from the city using the shuttle buses.

Nottingham Trent University students,

because of the central location of the City Centre campus and the excellent public transport system, can live pretty well anywhere in the city. However, popular areas include the Arboretum, Forest Fields and Radford which are all close to the main tram route. Students based at the Clifton campus may prefer to live in Clifton itself, or commute from either West Bridgford or the city centre, both of which have frequent bus services to the Clifton campus.

Location	Average Rent	Average Deposit
NG7 1 Lenton 'The Drives'	£71.24	£267.11
NG7 2 Lenton 'Abbey Bridge'	£72.04	£253.91
NG7 3 Radford & Canning Circus	£68.96	£212.16
NG7 4 The Arboretum	£76.51	£244.84
NG7 5 Hyson Green	£62.54	£189.77
NG7 6 Forest Fields	£64.69	£230.70
NG9 2 Beeston	£64.63	£267.09
NG11 Clifton	£54.10	£208.61

Rents vary quite a bit between different areas so if you are conscious of your budget you might want to take a look at the table above before you start house hunting. The average rent figures shown are per person, per week (pppw) and relate to 2011/12.

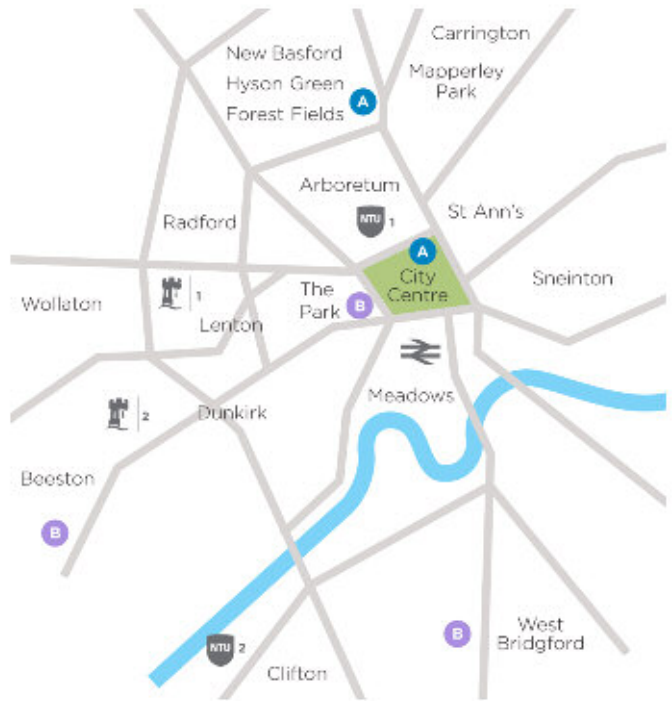
The atmosphere in these areas also can be very different so it's a good idea to check out properties in different places to make sure you are searching in the right area for you.







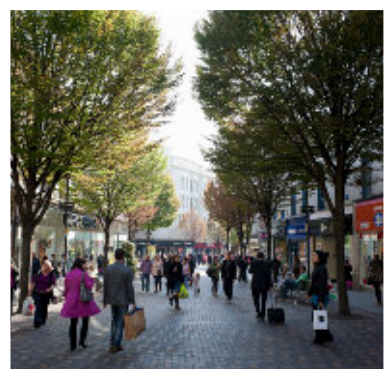
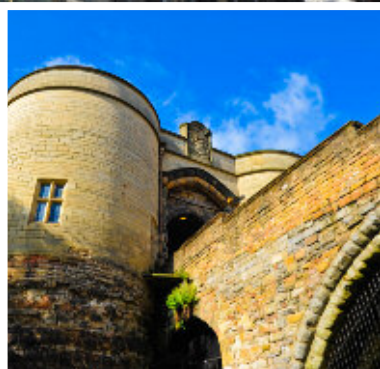
Nottingham has plenty of choices when it comes to student accommodation, so there should be something to suit both your taste and wallet.

YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Wherever you choose to live remember you are living in a community, take pride in your home and the area that you live in. You will find that there are advantages to being a good neighbour so introduce yourself, be considerate and respectful.



-  **University of Nottingham**
 - 1 Jubilee Campus
 - 2 University Park
-  **Nottingham Trent University**
 - 1 City Centre Campus
 - 2 Clifton Campus
- FE Colleges**
 -  New College Nottingham
 -  Centra / South Nottingham College



LANDLORD OR AGENT?

Something you may not have considered is whether you want to rent from a private landlord or a letting agent. Whichever you choose you need to keep in mind this is the person that you will deal with if you lose your keys or want something repairing, so choose carefully.

When you go for a viewing have a chat with the landlord or agent, as they show you around. Try and get an idea of how they operate. If the current tenants are around talk to them to see if they've had any problems.

If you are renting from a **private landlord** then this will usually be the person that you contact first if you have any difficulties during your tenancy.

If you choose to rent from a **letting agent** you need to check if you are signing for a 'let only' or 'fully managed' property. The difference between these types of property is that if you are in a 'let only' property, you will have no other dealings with the agent once you have signed the contract and a 'fully managed property' means that you contact the agent if you have any difficulties.

Remember:

- Prioritise properties that are covered by the Unipol DASH Code
- Check whether your landlord is accredited on the Unipol website
- If renting from a Letting Agent check whether your particular property is accredited. Agents who are "Supporters" of the Code don't have all their properties accredited.

Additional Charges

Private landlords and agencies can operate in different ways and some will ask for additional fees. Holding fees, signing fees and summer retainers are all common, so make sure you know what you are paying for. Get a receipt and if you are not happy paying, don't be afraid to try and negotiate or find somewhere else that doesn't charge.





FORM A GROUP OR GO IT ALONE?

Most properties in Nottingham are shared accommodation so it's generally easier to go house hunting as a group. Indeed some landlords and agents only let their properties to groups.

It's worth bearing in mind that the majority of properties in Nottingham, whether they be house or flats, are between 4 and 6 bedrooms so if you can get into a group that will fit into one of these properties you are likely to maximise your range of choices.

If you decide to go house hunting as a group you need to remember that you will be signing a legally binding contract to live together several months in the future, so be sure that you are happy with your group before signing the contract.

Don't worry if you are not in a group as many landlords and letting agents also let rooms on an individual basis. You can also use the notice board on the Unipol website to contact other students who may be looking for housemates.

The best thing to do before you consider looking for accommodation is to really consider what your priorities are and what you are willing to compromise on.

Don't be pressured into signing for something that isn't right for you.



BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

Wherever you choose to live you will find that there are benefits to being a good neighbour. Here are a few tips to help you get along in your community:

- Take an interest and a pride in where you live.
- Find out about any local groups or activities you could get involved in. It's a great way to link in with the community and get to know other residents.
- Introduce yourself to your neighbours. This can help to break down barriers and help to build mutual respect.
- Tell your neighbours if you are having a party and be considerate. Try not to let it get too loud or too late.
- Be careful not to make too much noise when coming back from a night out. Residents on your street are likely to keep different hours to you, especially if there are people who work, the elderly or young children in the area.



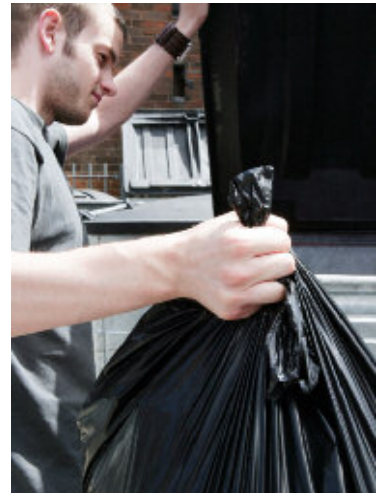
- Check your rubbish collection day and make sure you know what you can put in your recycling bins. Also make sure you take your bins in off the street once they have been emptied.

Remember, your house mates are also your neighbours:

- If you keep the noise down when you come in late your house mates are likely to return the favour. Be considerate and tolerant of your house mates and be willing to make compromises.

- Discuss in advance how bills will be paid. You might want to set up a joint account or have a lead tenant, either way you need to get everyone's name on the bill as they are a shared legal responsibility.
- Draw up a cleaning rota and clean as you go. It is much easier to get your full deposit back if you have looked after the house during the tenancy.

Both Nottingham Universities and the Colleges of Further Education take complaints made against students in the community extremely seriously, and will, where necessary, take appropriate action.



SEARCHING FOR PROPERTIES

When you're house hunting the golden rule is not to rush into decisions. You might be tempted to start looking straight away but it really is unnecessary, especially if you still have almost a year to go before you need to move in. Instead follow the advice of Unipol, the Nottingham Universities/Colleges and the City Council and wait until the official start of house hunting, on:

MONDAY 21st JANUARY 2013

By waiting you'll have a better idea of where you want to live in the city, who you really want to live with and how your studies are going. You'll also have a much bigger choice of properties. Last year Unipol listed 8,000 bed spaces on the official opening day of house hunting.

Some of the things you might want to look for in your ideal property include:

- Unipol DASH accreditation
- Closeness to campus and/or access to public transport
- Affordability
- Large bedrooms with double beds and broadband
- Kitchen facilities/fridge space
- Separate living room
- Access to shops, bars, restaurants
- Off-street car parking
- Security features and areas with low levels of crime
- Friends living nearby



Remember that contracts are legally binding and if you sign for a property and then decide to leave you will still have to pay the rent until you find a replacement.

USING THE WEBSITE



The Unipol Nottingham website is a one stop shop for everything related to student accommodation.

The website provides you with the biggest choice of Nottingham student properties available anywhere and allows you to easily compare properties to ensure you're getting the best possible value.

On the home page you will find a property search facility, a daily update on the amount of properties available in the market, the current average rent and relevant news items.

Search Properties

This is likely to be the part of the website that you will use the most and it is where we display adverts from many different private landlords, letting agencies and large developments. There are three different ways to search the database: Quick Search, Advanced Search and Key Word Search.

If you are looking for something particular, use the Advanced Search Function for more detailed results.

Remember, if your search hasn't found anything you're interested in, try to **prioritise** and if need be **compromise**.

The 3 most widely used features on the website are:

1. The Property Search Engine
2. The Notice Board
3. Student Advice Section

Before you start using the website it's a good idea to register. You can do this for FREE on the Property Search pages by clicking on the 'register' box. Registering makes it easier for you to save your searches and selected properties by using the clipboard. It also allows you to post on the notice board.

Searching before the start of house hunting

Before January 21st the only properties you will see on the Unipol website are those still available from the previous year. Check back again after the 21st January when there will be many more properties for you to choose from.

You can check on the website whether a landlord is a member of the Unipol DASH Code.





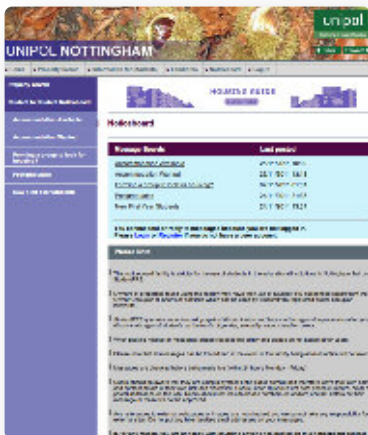
THE NOTICE BOARD

Our notice board is designed specifically for students to make contact with other students and is a great way of finding extra housemates. You can use the notice board to form a group to go house hunting with, find an extra person to fill a spare room or even find a spare room to fill yourself!

The notice board can be accessed by clicking the green notice board button on the homepage of the Unipol website and to post messages you will need to register. New messages are checked and updated approximately every six hours, so the board always has something new on it.

Information for Students

You will find information on all aspects of student housing in the "Information for Students" section of the Unipol Nottingham website. Some of this you may need during house hunting whilst other information will only become relevant during your tenancy. If you have a question that's not answered in this guide, you're likely to find the answer in this section of the website.



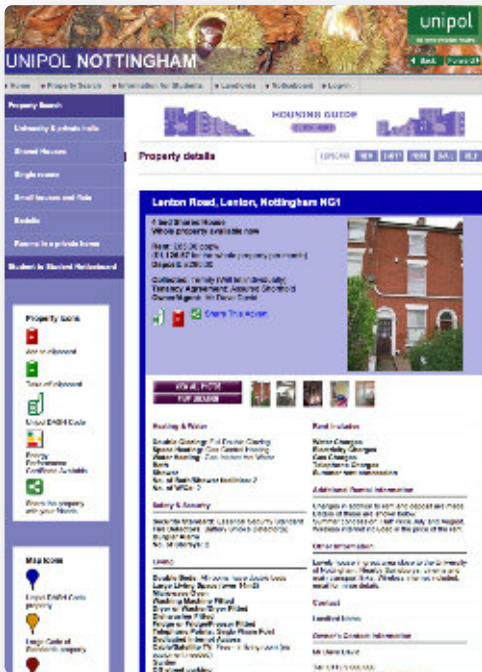
Take us with you

Scan the QR code below and take Unipol with you when you go house hunting.



PROPERTY ADVERTS

When you use the property search facility on the website a list of results that meet your specified requirements will be generated. These results will be shown as mini adverts and will be colour coded according to whether your selected properties are accredited or not - blue indicates that the property is accredited. To get further details about a particular property simply click on the appropriate mini advert and a full sized advert will appear. These provide the details shown opposite:



Location

Street and post code only (You will get the exact location when you contact the landlord)

Rent

How much it is going to cost

Collection period

How often the rent is collected

Deposit

Make sure you know what this covers

Agreement

The type of agreement used by property owners to let the property

Property type, size and availability

If it's shown as a whole property then the owner wants a group of students to take the property

Contact and viewing details

These could be the owner, letting agent or the current tenant/s

Features and facilities

Look out for details such as the type of heating or whether there is a living room

Advert icons

See if the property is part of the Unipol DASH Code and has an Energy Performance Certificate. Add the property to your clipboard and share with friends on social networks

WHAT'S IT GOING TO COST?



Rent

Rents are normally shown as per person, per week (pppw) but they can be collected on a monthly, termly or quarterly basis. When setting rents landlords take into account market forces, so usually the most popular areas are the most expensive. However, this isn't always the case, so remember:

- There are always "bargains" as well as "over-priced" accommodation
- Properties get cheaper later on in the year
- Check the duration of the contract as this will affect the total cost
- Some landlords may offer discounts on summer rent or shorter contracts

Use the Unipol Website to find the average rent in Nottingham and to gauge whether you are getting a fair deal.

If a landlord offers any discounts or improvements to the property, make sure you get this in writing so there's no confusion later.

Monthly rents

If you're paying rent monthly be aware that this works out at slightly more than four weeks' rent.

For example - A weekly rent of £65 will cost you £65 x 52 (weeks in the year), which works out at £3,380. But if you divided that by 12 (months in the year), the monthly rent level works out at £281.67 (not £65.00 x 4 = £260.00)

Deposits

Most owners will ask for a deposit when you sign for your accommodation. Deposits are usually about a month's rent and payable by each individual tenant. They are used to cover any damage you might cause, unpaid bills or rent and any end of tenancy cleaning the landlord has to do.

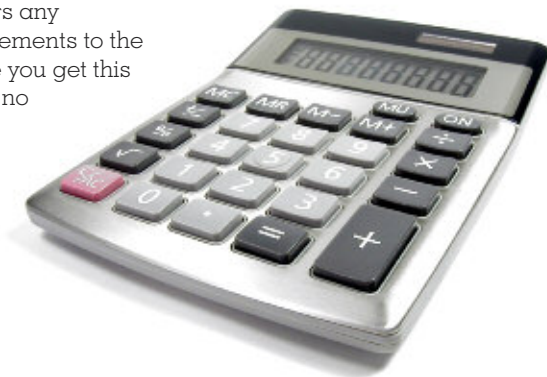
THE TENANCY DEPOSIT SCHEME

It is a legal requirement for your landlord to protect your deposit by registering it in a Tenancy Deposit Scheme.

There are three recognised schemes:

- **Deposit Protection Service (DPS)**
- **My Deposits**
- **The Dispute Service (TDS)**

Make sure you ask your landlord which scheme they are using and ask for a copy of the certificate. If, at the end of the tenancy, your landlord or agent makes any deductions from your deposit which you think are unfair you can then dispute these deductions.



OTHER EXPENSES

Bills

Keeping warm can be a major expense, so look out for gas central heating, gas instant hot water, fitted carpets and smaller room sizes, all of which will help to keep your heating bills lower. If your rent is inclusive of bills this should be clearly stated in your contract.

The type of property you choose will also affect the size of your bills. Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) assess how energy efficient a particular property is by looking at things such as double glazing and loft insulation. They also give an estimate of how much you might need to spend on energy bills.

Council Tax

If only full-time students occupy a property, you will usually be exempt from payment of Council Tax. However, if you want to live with someone who isn't a full-time student, they are unlikely to be exempt. Check with your landlord if you want to live with someone who is not a student.

To find out more about Council Tax visit www.direct.gov.uk

Budgeting

In shared houses rents are very often stated exclusive of utility bills. Its important that you allow for these additional costs but knowing exactly how much to allow will depend on the type of accommodation you are in and the extent to which you and your housemates use utilities.

The figures below from www.whatprice.co.uk (November 2012, based on a 4 bedroomed house) offer an approximate guide for weekly budgeting:

Gas/Electricity £5.93 per person per week

Water £2.22 per person per week

However, to be on the safe side set aside between £12 to £15 per week per person and you shouldn't be caught short.





VIEWING PROPERTIES

If you've never been on a property viewing before then you'll probably be wondering what you should be looking for. Good sized rooms and attractive décor are usually quite easy to spot but there are a whole host of practical issues you should also be considering whilst viewing.

OUTSIDE THE PROPERTY

Garden - If there is a garden, how well is it maintained and who's responsibility is it to look after it?

Roof - Look at the property from across the road. Check the roof for signs of damage as this can lead to damp inside the property.

Neighbourhood - Think about the type of neighbourhood the property is situated in. Will your neighbours be fellow students or permanent residents? Are there shops nearby and what are car parking and public transport like?

Security - How easy will it be to secure the property? If the accommodation is in a complex are their additional security measures.

INSIDE THE PROPERTY

Electrics - Check appliances work and that there is an electrical safety certificate.

Gas Appliances - It's a legal requirement for all gas appliances to be serviced annually. Ask to see the Gas Safety Record and check that all the gas appliances are listed as safe to use.

Central Heating - This can be the cheapest and most effective way of keeping warm and it reduces dampness and condensation.

Double Glazing - Are the windows glazed as described in the advert?



Damp - If you view a property in the spring/summer it could be in much better condition than during the winter. Check for signs of water penetration, especially in attic rooms.

Living Rooms - Check that the shared space and soft furnishings are sufficient for the number of people in the property.

Baths, Showers and WCs - Are there enough washing facilities and are they separate from the toilet? Does the shower work? Is there hot and cold running water? Does the toilet flush.



Kitchens - Make sure there's enough storage space, a large enough fridge and freezer and a working oven.

Washing Machines - Is there a washing machine installed?

Carpets and Curtains - If there's a bedroom on the ground floor, the curtains should preferably be thick or lined. Worn carpets, especially on stairs, are dangerous - ask the owner to replace them.

Furniture - Find out which furniture belongs to the tenants and which to the owner. You should be provided with a bed, desk, wardrobe, chest of drawers and chair. Have a good look at the condition of the bed and mattress.

Television - If a TV is provided, remember you'll need a TV licence.

When you're at the property also ask plenty of questions and make sure everything works. If the existing tenants are there when you are viewing, it does no harm to ask them about their views on the property, the landlord and their reasons for moving out.

Remember the best time to negotiate is when you are viewing a property and if the landlord makes any promises make sure they are written into the contract.



YOUR TEAR-OUT PROPERTY CHECKLIST

To help you we've put together a checklist which identifies some of the key things you should be looking for. It's well worth taking this along with you when viewing properties, as you soon forget which properties had what features.



UTILITIES

Address

1 2 3

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Ask the tenants how much the bills are and if the property is easy to heat? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Do the electric/gas fires work? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Are there enough sockets in each room? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Is the property gas and electricity or only electricity? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Does the cooker work? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Is internet provided free of charge? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PLUMBING

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7. Does the shower work effectively? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Have you tried all the taps to see if they work? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Do all the sinks drain? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Does the toilet flush or leak? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SECURITY

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 11. Does the property have a working burglar alarm? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Is the property easy to secure? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Are all the external doors solid? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Does the property have double glazing? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Do all the external doors have five-lever mortice locks and do the downstairs windows have locks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

FURNITURE

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 16. Has the property got enough furniture for the occupants? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. Does any of the furniture belong to the existing tenants? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. Is all the furniture in good condition? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PROPERTY CHECKLIST

KITCHEN

Address

1 2 3

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 19. Is the kitchen big enough for the size of property? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Is there enough fridge/freezer capacity? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. Is the kitchen clean and hygienic? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

MONEY

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 22. Does the contract clearly state what the rent includes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. Do you know which tenancy deposit scheme your deposit will it be held in? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. Do you require a guarantor? (refer to page 21 for clarification) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. Does the rent include bills? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26. Are there any extra fees? (handling fees?) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27. Is there a summer rent concession? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28. Is the rent monthly / termly / quarterly? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 29. What is the holding fee? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 30. Do you need contents insurance? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

OUTSIDE THE PROPERTY

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 31. Is the roof in a good state of repair? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32. Have the gutters got plants growing out of them? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 33. Are the drains clear of debris? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 34. Is any of the woodwork rotting or unsafe? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 35. Is the garden maintained? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 36. Is there space for parking or secure cycle storage? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

AGREEMENTS

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 37. Do you know what type of contract your signing?
(refer to page 21 for clarification) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 38. Do you know when tenancy starts? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 39. Do you know if the property is managed by the landlord or letting agent?
(refer to page 7) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

OWNER

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 40. Is the landlord a member of the Unipol DASH code? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 41. Do you know the owner's name, address and phone number? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 42. Does the landlord / agent provide you with any extra services
(e.g. window cleaning, gardening, lighting of common parts,
dustbin and refuse disposal)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SIGNING CONTRACTS

The important thing to remember when signing your contract is that it is legally binding. For this reason we strongly recommend that you get it checked at your Students Union Advice Centre before you sign it (see page 23 for details of how to contact your Student Advice Centre). Most owners are quite happy to let you keep a proposed contract for at least 24 hours, before you have to decide whether or not to sign it, so that you can have it checked.

Will I be able to leave the contract if I want to?

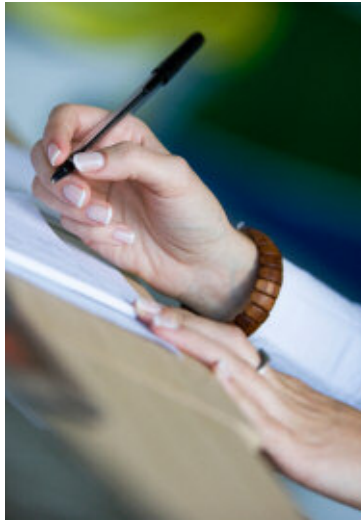
Specific clauses in contracts saying you can leave are rare. If you leave the property within the contractual term you'll be liable for the rent until the end of the contract. Of course, you can ask the owner if it's okay to leave. But if they refuse, assume you'll be held to the contract, through court action if necessary, which means paying rent until the last day of the contract. Most students who want to leave a property have to find someone else to take their place.

How long should I expect the contract to be for?

Most owners now use fixed-term contracts for a set period of time. Some owners may make rent concessions (normally half rent) for July and August. Raise this with them - it's always worth negotiating about the precise date you start paying full rent.

Single or joint tenancy agreements

You could be asked to sign a single or a joint tenancy agreement. The main difference between these types of contracts is that if you sign a single tenancy then you will only ever be responsible for your share of the rent where as if you sign a joint tenancy then the landlord can hold you jointly responsible for any unpaid rent.



Guarantors

Approximately half of the landlords and letting agencies on the Unipol Nottingham website ask for guarantors. If your parent signs a guarantor form they become liable for your financial responsibilities under the terms of the contract. That means they'll have to pay your rent if you don't. If you're signing a joint contract with other students, your guarantor could also be asked to pay the rent of another tenant if

they default (unless the agreement they sign specifically mentions that they're only responsible for their son or daughter's liability). Many students don't like asking their parents to sign guarantor forms. If you're not happy about finding a guarantor, rent somewhere else. Unipol produces a standard guarantor agreement form, which your landlord can use, that limits a parent's liability to only their child's rent arrears and not those of other joint tenants.

International Students

Sometimes a landlord will specify that your guarantor must be based in the UK. You should check whether a UK based guarantor is required before signing a contract or paying any money. If you haven't got a UK based guarantor then you might be able to pay some or all of your rent in advance instead of providing a guarantor. Remember that there are landlords who don't require a guarantor and if you're not able to find a guarantor then you can look elsewhere.





USEFUL CONTACTS

GENERAL HOUSING ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Unipol Student Homes

0115 846 8599 www.unipol.org.uk/nottingham

COUNCIL TAX, REFUSE COLLECTION, PARKING, PEST CONTROL AND NOISE CONTROL

Nottingham City Council

0115 915 5555 www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Broxtowe Borough Council

0115 917 7777 www.broxtowe.gov.uk

Newark & Sherwood District Council

0163 665 0000 www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

Rushcliffe Borough Council

0115 981 9911 www.rushcliffe.gov.uk



TENANCY DEPOSIT SCHEMES

My Deposits

0844 980 0290 www.mydeposit.co.uk

The Deposit Protection Service

0844 472 7000 www.depositprotection.com

The Dispute Service

0845 226 7837 www.thedisputeservice.co.uk



EMERGENCY SERVICES

Nottinghamshire Police

999 for emergencies, 101 for non emergencies
www.nottinghamshire.police.uk

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

999 for emergencies, 0115 967 0880 for non emergencies
www.notts-fire.gov.uk

NEED TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE?



The University of
Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM • CHINA • MALAYSIA

The Accommodation Office

Information about all accommodation options can be found at the University of Nottingham's Accommodation Office in Room 17, B Floor the Portland Building, University Park Campus.

The Accommodation Office is open **10am to 4pm during weekdays**. You can also contact them on 0115 951 3697 or at www.nottingham.ac.uk/accommodation/contactus.aspx



Students' Union
UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

If you need any extra advice when you're house hunting, the University of Nottingham Students' Union has a wealth of resources and experience for you to use.

Contact the friendly advisors in the Student Advice Centre for contract checking and general housing advice. All their contact details are on the University of Nottingham Students' Union website:

www.su.nottingham.ac.uk/helpadvice/

You can also contact your Accommodation & Community Officer, who is elected by students. Their job is to represent and support you, whether you live on or off campus. You can email the Accommodation & Community Officer at sucommunity@nottingham.ac.uk if you need some friendly advice during house hunting.

NEED TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE?



Unipol DASH Code Complaints

If you need to register a complaint about a landlord who is a member of the Unipol DASH Code you can do so by visiting the Unipol Nottingham website.

The University of Nottingham and Unipol Student Homes work in partnership to assist students to find accommodation in the private sector and are committed to raising accommodation standards through the Unipol DASH Code.



Find Unipol at:
www.facebook.com/unipolnottingham



or follow us
[@unipol](https://twitter.com/unipol)

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HOUSE HUNTING GUIDE

2013-14

www.unipol.org.uk/nottingham

T 0115 846 8599

E info@nottingham.unipol.org.uk



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