

## **Dr Monica White – Finding accommodation in Nottingham**

### **Where are you living and how did you pick where you wanted to live?**

Well, I'm currently living in an area called The Park in a privately rented flat. But when I first arrived, I contacted the Accommodations office and they offered me a house on the campus that I stayed in for about four months until all the stuff arrived from the States. Which was really convenient because it allowed me to have a look around Nottingham, get to know different areas and decide where I wanted to live, and I think a lot of people don't know about the accommodations office but they do have houses and flats that can be made available, and they have a minimum lease of three months which is a lot shorter than most other rented accommodation.

### **Why did you choose to live in rented accommodation rather than private?**

I didn't think I could afford to buy a place where I wanted to live which was in The Park, and I decided I would rather live where I wanted to live, get to know the city a bit more and wait for the financial crisis to sort itself out before I got too involved with big investments.

### **How did you actually find your property?**

There is a website called [rightmove.co.uk](http://rightmove.co.uk) which covers everywhere in the UK, and all, most of the major letting agencies. And, I just focussed my search on the area where I wanted to live and that came up with about ten or twelve possibilities so I just contacted the agencies and set up appointments to see the different flats.

### **Did you have to sign any contracts for your accommodation and what did that involve?**

Oh yes, it's a very paperwork intensive process. You have to provide, I think it's similar for most letting agencies and they'll want to see information about the previous place where you live, and if you're coming from overseas, that's another reason why living on the University campus can be helpful because then you have a British landlord who can vouch for you. Otherwise you might be dealing with overseas communications which can be difficult. They also want proof of the past three to five places where you have lived, which can include gas bills or bank statements so hang on to those.

**Do you see any pros or cons about living in rented accommodation?**

Well, I appreciate the flexibility of it.

If you have furniture coming over from overseas, and you want an unfurnished place, a lot of rented accommodation is furnished, so I would recommend getting everything in writing especially if it involves moving furniture in and out of a place. But on the other hand, if anything breaks, you don't have to pay for it, the land- the letting agency has been pretty good about fixing things and they take care of anything that goes wrong. So I do like that because I, I don't like the idea of being in charge of my own plumbing!

**Can I ask you about your view of the cost of accommodation in the UK?**

Rents in the East Midlands are a lot more reasonable than in the South.

If you rent a flat, you almost never find a place that includes bills in the rent, whereas that's fairly common in North America so you always have to be paying for gas, electricity, the local tax called the Council Tax and any other, you know, phone bills obviously, but any other utility bills are almost always the responsibility of the tenant.

**Are there any other tips you would give to international staff who would be trying to find accommodation in the UK?**

I would say don't feel pressured to buy a place at first and do contact the Accommodations office if, see if they can find a new place to set you up especially if you have children.