

Deposits, Inventories, Council Tax and Utility Bills

Deposits are intended to provide reparation for landlords to offset against non-payment of rent or tenant damage. Deposits are normally between £150-£200 per person.

If you ask for too much, students may think twice about taking on the lease. This deposit should be held until the end of the tenancy and after a satisfactory inspection of the property it should be returned as quickly as possible.

Money should not be used against fair wear and tear, but only to recoup losses caused by willful neglect or damage. Receipts should also be provided as proof of any work or cleaning that has been carried out and set against a deposit.

Recent legislation has changed the way in which landlords have to manage deposits, for further information see:

www.direct.gov.uk/tenancydeposit

- A detailed inventory of the property should be issued to the tenants at the start of the tenancy. Décor, carpets, fittings and all furniture should be noted along with a description of their condition. One copy should be kept by yourself and another given to the tenants for them to check and note their comments on. Once the inventory is agreed it should be accepted as an accurate record and be referred to throughout the tenancy and when the property is finally inspected at the end of the lease. They are quick and easy to do and can go a long way to help resolve disagreements which may arise over the return of tenant deposits. This will in turn help reduce hassle and inconvenience for both parties.
- Properties that are occupied by full time students are exempt from Council Tax payments. All students should collect a Council Tax exemption form from the University and submit a copy of this to the landlord. This is something that you may want to confirm with your tenants. If a student is undertaking a part-time course, or drops out of their studies, this could have an impact on the entire group as they will then be responsible for paying a proportion of any council tax due. It is the landlord's responsibility to notify the council of any change in students status.
- Utility bills - It is the normal practice for students to accept responsibility for electricity, gas and telephone supplies and ensure that relevant readings are taken prior to moving in or out. Students now have a choice of utility suppliers. You may wish to be informed of which supplier they choose. Standing charges occurring in the gap between two groups of students occupying a property are usually the responsibility of the landlord. We recommend that landlords pay the water rates i.e. that rents are inclusive of water charges. If water rates in a rented property are not paid the Water company will pursue the owner for payment regardless of what the tenancy agreement states and therefore inclusive rents protect the owner from unexpected expense.
- Landlords are responsible for insuring their property and contents. Students are advised to take out their own insurance to cover their own belongings and we encourage landlords to advise them to do this.

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<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/your-home/deposits-inventories-council-tax-and-utility-bills.html>