

Moving In

There can be a lot to think about when you move into a new property. We've set out the key things you need to do before and after moving into a new home.

A month before you move in:

Check your paperwork to make sure you've done everything you have to do to get the keys e.g.

- Paying deposit
- Paying first month's rent / rent in advance
- Providing signed guarantor form
- Completing standing order forms for future rent payments

If it's a joint contract make sure all of the other joint tenants have done what they need to do too, especially if you signed up several months in advance.

Move in day:

Make sure you have a record of the condition of the property and what's provided. It might feel like hard work to collect the info when you move in, but it will be crucial in the event of any deposit dispute when you move out.

The landlord should complete an **inventory** i.e. a list of what is in the property and importantly, what condition it is in. They should give you a copy to check and sign. Make sure you:

- Mark any changes.
- Sign and date.
- Send the amended version back to your landlord.
- Keep a copy.

If your landlord doesn't do an inventory, you could make your own. Shelter has [templates](#) you can use and Shelter Scotland have an inventory app called [HouseMate](#). Make sure you:

- Take photos of any damage.
- Report any issues in writing (e.g. email) to the landlord/agent and keep a copy. Even if the damage isn't bad or isn't something you need the landlord to fix, still make a note of it just to be clear that you didn't cause it.
- If things do need fixing/replacing, give the landlord a reasonable period of time to put things right after you've written to them.

Can I walk away if the property isn't up to standard?

- In most circumstances, problems with the condition of the property will not stop the contract being binding.
- Seek advice before walking away from a contract as you may remain liable for rent.

Sorting out the utilities

- Take meter readings and contact the utility suppliers to get the bills in your name (put all joint tenants on the bill if applicable). There is lots of helpful advice on how to find out your current supplier on the [Citizens Advice website](#).
- Even if bills are included in your rent, still take readings if you have access to the meters.

First week in the property:

- Find out from your local council when your bins get emptied and how your local recycling schemes work.
- Introduce yourself to your neighbours. This can help reduce risks of future disagreements and can also help reduce the risk of burglary.

Make sure you have also received the following legally-required information:

Within 30 days of paying your deposit (in England and Wales), 30 working days in Scotland or 28 days in Northern Ireland:

- Confirmation that your deposit has been protected and look for online information about how the protection scheme works.
- Write to your landlord/agent if you haven't received this information. Shelter has sample letters.

By tenancy start date (Scotland only)

- Tenant Information Pack
- Contact the Council if landlord/agent doesn't provide this.

Within 28 days of tenancy start date (Northern Ireland only)

- Statement of tenancy terms
- Rent book
- Contact the council if the landlord/agent doesn't provide these.