

There's a wide range of accommodation available if you are looking to rent privately. You might be looking to rent a house, a self-contained flat or even just a room.

Whatever you're looking for, following our step by step guide can help you find the right place for you.

1. Start Searching

The best places to start looking for somewhere are:

- shop windows
- local papers
- renting websites
- letting agencies (or estate agents)
- asking friends if they know of anywhere (especially if you're looking for a room in a shared house).

2. Take and compare notes

Take down addresses, numbers and prices. Compare your notes and call up the best choices to arrange viewings. When you ring, remember to:

- ask for the exact location, how to get there and a time to meet
- check the rent and bills
- check the amount of deposit
- ask about flatmates (age, occupation, smokers etc) if it's a shared house
- work out what's important to you - price, size of room, number of flatmates, location etc.

3. Visiting places

When you visit houses, use the [getting a place checklist](#). Take notes, ask lots of questions. If you can, take someone with you, or otherwise let people know where you're going.

4. Making a decision

It's normally best to look at a few places so you can compare. If you see somewhere you like, you'll usually have to put a deposit down to keep it.

5. What to do when you move in

- check and sign the tenancy agreement
- make an [inventory of your house](#) or flat (this is a list, sometimes with photographs, of the condition of everything in the house. Get your landlord or agent to sign it and keep it safe, as an inventory can prevent disputes later on)
- establish any house rules (like smoking or cleaning)
- set up bills.