

CHECKLIST FOR VIEWING PRIVATE TENANCIES

Once you've signed a tenancy agreement you've entered into a legally binding contract. Before you agree to take on a property, have a really detailed look around and make sure that the property meets all your needs.

CHECK THE ADVERTISEMENT

- Can you afford the rent?
- Does the rent include rates and utilities? If not, how much extra will this be each month?
- Are there any fees to pay for credit checks, references etc?

CHECKING THE EXTERIOR OF THE PROPERTY

- Are the roof and gutters in good condition?
- Does the building seem structurally sound? Check for cracks and damage to walls and windows.
- Does the property have double glazing?
- Is there any outdoor or garden space? Who is responsible for looking after this? Will tools be provided?
- Does the property appear to be secure? Is there a burglar alarm?
- What are the neighbouring properties like?
- Is the property close to any buildings or services that are likely to cause noise at night, e.g. train tracks, police station, nightclubs and pubs?
- Is there somewhere for you to park your car or is the property close to a stop for public transport?

CHECKING THE INTERIOR OF THE PROPERTY

- Check for signs of damp on walls, inside cupboards and behind wardrobes
- Check for any signs of damage or disrepair in the property, especially faulty wiring
- What type of heating does the property use? Is it billed or prepay? Are there enough radiators in each room to heat the property fully? Check that the radiators heat up quickly.
- Is there enough room in the property for your family and all your possessions?
- Is there somewhere to store bulky items like bicycles or prams?

CHECKING THE INTERIOR OF THE PROPERTY

- What white goods are provided with the property? Check that these come with the property and do not belong to the current tenant
- Is there a connection for a phone line or internet?
- Does the property have smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors?
- Test that light switches and taps work and that toilets flush
- Can you get mobile phone reception inside the property?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Who will manage the property, the landlord or an agent? How will you report repairs and how quickly will the landlord respond?
- Which items are included with the tenancy and which belong to the current tenants?
- Will you be allowed to redecorate and, if so, are there any restrictions on what you can do?
- Where is the rubbish bin for the property and when is rubbish collected?
- Will you be allowed to install a satellite dish if you want to?
- Why are the current tenants leaving the property?

DON'T FORGET...

- Once you've signed your contract you've committed to pay rent for the full term of the agreement.
- Don't allow yourself to be rushed by the person carrying out the viewing. This is your one chance to check the property's condition so take your time and be thorough.
- If you are taking the property on conditions that certain works, changes or improvements are carried out make sure this condition is written into your tenancy agreement.
- Make sure you know that you can afford the property - don't forget to do a proper household budget and work out how much your bills and groceries will cost on top of the rent and rates.
- Try to talk to the current tenants, if possible, to find out what it's really like to live in this property and in the area.