



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



Easy
Read

Guide to renting

Guide 1: Before you start renting



Easy Read

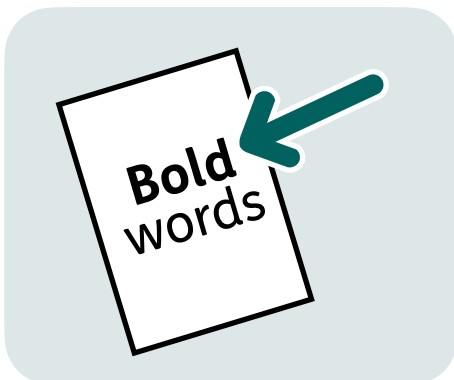


This is an Easy Read version of some information.

It uses easier words and pictures.



Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are **bold** to show they are important.



We explain bold words if they are hard to understand.

What is in this booklet

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What do you think about this Easy Read booklet?

Please fill in this survey to tell us what you think: www.easy-read-online.co.uk/easy-read-feedback-survey

About this guide



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

This guide is from the government.
It is about renting in England.



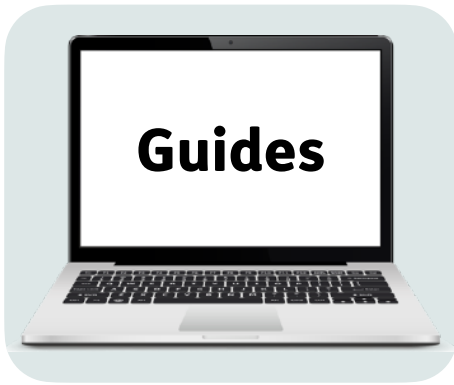
This is guide 1 of 3.
It will tell you what you need to
know before you start renting a
property.



Guide 2 explains what you must
do while you are renting a
property.



Guide 3 explains what will happen
when you move out of the home
you are renting.



You can find both guides here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/
publications/easy-read-private-
renting-in-england](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/easy-read-private-renting-in-england)

Important words and what they mean



This booklet uses some hard but important words.



Hard words that have been used a lot will be explained here, so you can look them up when you need to.



A **landlord** is a person or organisation that owns a property.



A **property** is a place where you can live, like a house or a flat.



Renting is when you pay money to a landlord so you can live in their property.



If you pay rent to a landlord to live in their property, then you are called a **tenant**.



A **tenancy agreement** is an agreement between you and your landlord.



An **assured periodic tenancy agreement** is a kind of tenancy agreement that does not have an end date.



A **joint tenancy** is when more than 1 person is on the same tenancy agreement.

This means that all the tenants on the tenancy agreement are responsible for paying rent.



A **letting agent** is a person or company that helps landlords rent out properties.



A **local council** is a group of people who make decisions about things like services in your local area.

Tenancy agreements



A **tenancy agreement** is an agreement between you and your landlord.



It says that you can live in the property if you follow certain rules, like paying rent.



Your tenancy agreement can be a written or spoken agreement.



If you have a spoken agreement, your landlord must also give you a written copy of the main rules of your agreement.



There are different types of tenancy agreements, depending on the type of tenancy you have.

Joint tenancy agreements



If more than 1 person is on the same tenancy agreement, this is called a **joint tenancy**.



This means that all the tenants on a joint tenancy agreement are responsible for paying rent.

Assured periodic tenancy agreements



An **assured periodic tenancy agreement** is a kind of tenancy agreement that does not have an end date.



Your landlord cannot put an end date on an assured periodic tenancy agreement.



If your landlord tries to do this, the end date will not apply.

If you have an assured periodic tenancy agreement, this means you can keep living in your home until either:



1. You decide to **end the tenancy**.

If you **end the tenancy**, this means you will move out of the property and stop paying rent.



2. You and your landlord both agree to end the tenancy.



3. Your landlord goes to court to make you move out.

This is called an **eviction**.



Your landlord must have a reason to evict you and tell you the reason why.

For example, if they need to sell the property.

Deposits and other payments



Holding deposit

Before you sign a tenancy agreement, you may need to pay a **holding deposit**.



A **holding deposit** is a payment you make so that your landlord will keep the property for you and not rent it to someone else.



A holding deposit can be up to 1 week's rent.



This can count towards your first month's rent or your tenancy deposit.



If the tenancy agreement does not go ahead, and it is your fault, your landlord can keep the holding deposit.

Security deposit



You may also need to pay a **tenancy deposit**.

A **tenancy deposit** is money that your landlord keeps safe until you move out.

This is also sometimes called a **security deposit**.



Your landlord can use money from your security deposit if you damage the property or do not pay rent.

A tenancy deposit can be:



- Up to 5 weeks' rent if the yearly rent is less than £50,000.



For example, if you paid £200 per week rent, that would be £10,400 per year.



This means a landlord could ask for a maximum of £1000 (5 weeks) tenancy deposit.

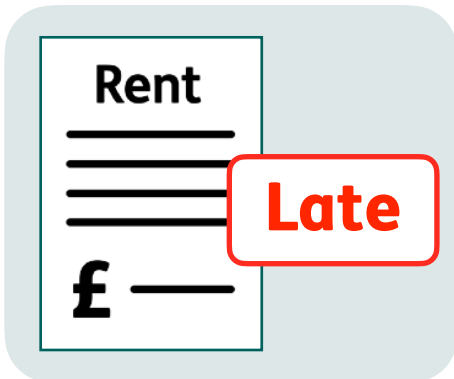


- Up to 6 weeks' rent if the yearly rent is £50,000 or more.



After you sign the tenancy agreement, you may also need to pay for things like energy bills and council tax.

After you sign the tenancy agreement, you may need to pay more money if:



- You pay your rent late.



- You change the tenancy agreement.



- You end the tenancy without telling the landlord early enough.



- You lose your keys.

If you are finding it hard to rent

Rental discrimination



Rental discrimination is when a landlord treats someone unfairly when renting a home because of who they are.

For example, people who may face rental discrimination include:



- People who have children.



- People who get **benefits**.

Benefits are money the government gives to some people to help pay for the things they need to live.

Rental discrimination can include:



- Not giving you enough information about a property.



- Making it harder for you to look at a property in person.



- Not letting you rent a property.

Rental discrimination can also come from either:



- The landlord's friends or family.



- Someone who works with the landlord, such as a letting agent.

If you think you are being discriminated against because you have children or get benefits, you can:



- Make a **complaint** to the landlord, the landlord's letting agent or the property manager. A **complaint** is when you say that you are not happy with a service.



- Contact the local council in the area where the property is.



- Make a complaint to the letting agent's **redress scheme**. A **redress scheme** is a service that helps fix problems between a customer and a business.



You can find which redress scheme the letting agent belongs to here:
www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/property-agent-checker/



Speak to Citizens Advice:
www.citizensadvice.org.uk



You should keep any proof of rental discrimination.

Proof of rental discrimination could include:



- Communication you have had with the landlord, such as text messages, voicemails or emails.



- Links to the advert for the property.



If you are worried about discrimination because of a **protected characteristic** in the **Equality Act**, contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service: <https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/>



Protected characteristics are things like your age, sex, disability or religion.



The Equality Act is a law that says everyone should be treated fairly and in the same way.

Rental bidding



Rental bidding is when someone offers to pay more rent to live in a property.



When landlords and letting agents advertise a property, this is called a **property advert**.



A property advert can be online, on paper, or sent by text or email.



The property advert must say how much the rent is.



Landlords and letting agents cannot **encourage rental bidding**.

This means that they should not:



- Try to get people to pay more rent than what is said in the property advert.



- Accept someone's offer to pay more rent than what is said in the property advert.



- Give a price range for the rent instead of an exact price.

For example, an advert cannot say a property is between £100,000 and £200,000.



If you think that a landlord or letting agent has encouraged rental bidding, you should make a complaint to your local council.



The council may make them pay a fine of up to £7,000.

Rent in advance



Rent in advance is when a landlord or letting agent asks you to pay rent before your assured periodic tenancy starts.



They can only ask for 1 month's rent or up to 28 days' rent in advance.



They can only ask for rent in advance after you have signed the tenancy agreement.



If they do this before you sign the tenancy agreement, you should make a complaint to your local council.

The landlord or letting agent can only ask you for more rent in advance if:



- The council found the property for you because you were homeless.



- The property is rented as **supported housing**.
Supported housing is housing that includes extra care and support from carers and support workers.

Advice and support

You also get more advice and support about renting by:



- Contacting your local council:

www.gov.uk/find-local-council



- Contacting your social worker if you have one.



- Contacting **Citizens' Advice**:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/contact-us/

You can also get more advice and support about renting by:



- Contacting **Shelter**:

[www.England.shelter.org.uk/
get_help](http://www.England.shelter.org.uk/get_help)



- Contacting a lawyer:

[www.find-legal-
advice.justice.gov.uk/](http://www.find-legal-advice.justice.gov.uk/)

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