HOW TO RENT

ST ANDREWS STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Contents of the Talk

1. **How can the Union help?**
2. **What type of accommodation is best for you?**
3. **The Flathunter's Checklist**
4. **Your rights!**
5. **Picking your flatmate**
6. **Finding and visiting a property**
7. **Paperwork**
8. **Timeline**
9. **Money matters**



How can the Union help?



- We are the **Students' Association**, not a branch of the university
- We are here to represent you on all matters accommodation within St. Andrews
- We are also here to inform you about the options you have for accommodation for the next academic year
- **How to Rent guide**
- Lease checking and advice on tenant rights
- Can contact us at

srcaccommodation@



The accommodation you can choose from



1. Re-applying to Halls
2. Private Halls (sometimes referred to as a PBSA)
3. Private renting through a letting agent/landlord
4. Renting a university managed property

Re-applying to Halls



- Wardennial support, catering, all bills included
- You can apply for specific rooms
- Applying as a group
- Choices of catered, self-catered, ensuite or standard contracts
- Only pay for the academic year, and bills are all included
- Special initiatives:
  - *Alcohol-free accommodation is available in DRAFP*
  - *Gender specific wings in certain halls*
  - *Green building in DRAFP*

Private Halls



- Similar contracts to university halls
- Bills and wi-fi are included in the overall rent
- Various facilities and self-catered, usually have an ensuite
- Group applications to these halls are welcomed

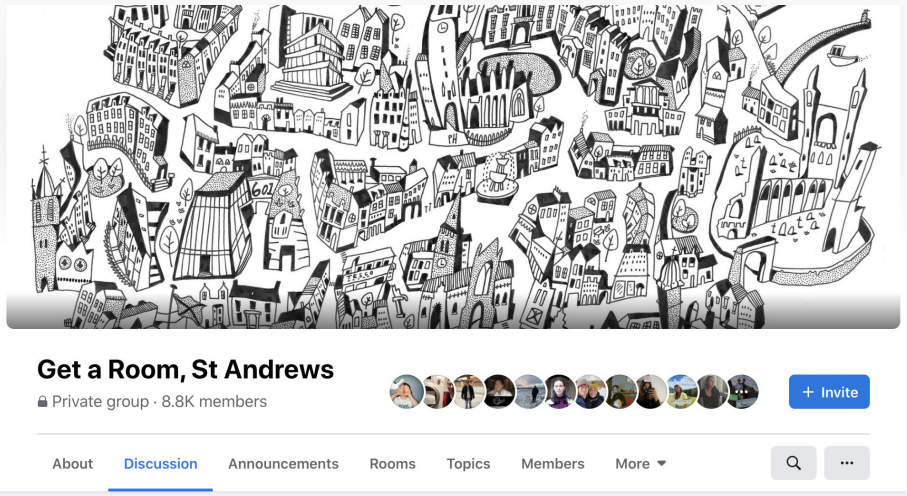
Ayton house is located on Abbey Walk
East Shore Housing is located on East Sands
SPACE is on Kilrymont Rd

Private letting



- Most of the private letting in St Andrews is done through a letting agency
- Each letting agency has a slightly different application process
- Properties can be released any time until summer so don't panic!
- Other properties can be found on through Facebook groups:
  - *Get A Room, St Andrews*
- A note on Zoopla and other sites

  Always get a landlord registration number and be careful with your money



University Managed Properties



- Privately owned properties let through the university
- Similar contracts to halls, similar living conditions to private
- 2-7 beds all around St Andrews
- Leuchars properties
- Same application window as halls

You can **either** apply for University managed properties or re-apply for halls!

Flat-hunters Timeline



- Budget
- List of wants and needs
- Pick your flatmates + measure expectations
- Find a property
- Fill out the paperwork
- Visit property
- Double check deposit, rent, utilities
- Get your lease checked by the Union: **unionadvocacy@**
- Accept offer and pay deposits

Picking your flatmates



Clearly discuss your expectations

- *Cleanliness*
- *Waking/working hours*
- *Budget*
- *Facilities*
- *Location*
- *etc.*
- *Music taste*
- *Hobbies*
- *Diets*

YOUR BEST FRIENDS MAY NOT MAKE THE BEST FLATMATES

Your Rights as a Tenant



- **Private Residential Tenancy (PRT) :** No fixed end date, you can leave with 28 days notice, landlord must give a legally recognised reason for eviction and proper notice
  - *Rent can only be increased once every 12 months, with 3 months written notice*
- **Protected Deposit:** Landlord must protect your deposit in an approved scheme within 30 working days
- **Notice of Entry :** Your landlord must give 24 hours notice before entering for inspections or repairs, and they must have a genuine reason for entering. They may only enter without notice in a genuine emergency or where the law otherwise permits
- **Repairing Standard :** Landlord has a legal responsibility to ensure your property meets key standards (working heating, hot water, plumbing, smoke and heat alarms, protection against damp

Where to go when things go wrong?



- **Shelter Scotland:** Provides support on private letting, social housing, and homelessness. They have a specific page for student accommodation which covers reporting repairs, your rights as a student, ending your tenancy early, and eviction.
- **Citizens Advice Scotland:** Provides housing advice, and focuses on private letting in order to create sustainable housing systems for tenants. You can have a look at information about how to rent, housing, deposits, council tax, etc.
- **Living Rent:** A union of tenants fighting for better rights and protections for renters. While there is not a Fife branch, there is one in Dundee!
- **Scottish Government:** Ultimate resource for all written policies as well as handy letter templates and guides for different situations.

Money Matters:
Advice from Student Services



- Rent
- electricity/gas (dependent on season and property)
- Telephone/mobile costs
- Contents insurance
- Food and other household expenses
- TV license
- Study costs
- Travel costs
- Social
- Other costs – holidays, birthdays
- Emergencies

Money Matters
Advice from Student Services



- Income
  - *Funding – from SFE/SFW/SFNI/SAAS or other sponsor*
  - *Wages*
  - *Family contributions*
  - *Other funds*
- Discretionary Fund
- International Student Hardship Fund
- Accommodation Award
- Funding portal



Finding Properties

There’s more than just St Andrews: Cupar, Guardbridge, Dundee

Finding Properties



- There's more than just St Andrews: Cupar, Guardbridge, Dundee
- Don't be afraid to look outside the town centre
- Look at the distance to lectures, supermarkets, recycling points, sports centre, beaches
- Also consider:
  - *Number of bathrooms*
  - *Relative sizes of rooms* – ***decide on a difference in rent NOW***
  - *Storage space*
  - *Dishwasher, washer-dryer, communal space*

Important paperwork



1. Collect your paperwork before looking
   a. *Request your halls reference from accomreferences@ before the winter break!*
      - Wardens no longer give accommodation references!
   b. *Collect character references over the break*
2. Sort out your guarantor
3. Make photocopies/scans of everything!
   Visa, proof of address, proof of matriculation, copy of ID
4. Pre-fill application forms

Visit the property



- Property checklist: during and after
- Don’t be shy - Ask about the appliances, living costs and neighbours when viewing the property
- Being shown around by a student has perks!
- Virtual tours

Follow up!

PROPERTY CHECKLIST

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY.....

If you are looking for accommodation, there are a few things you will need to consider.
Take this checklist with you when you view a property, it should help you decide whether the property is in fair, reasonable or good condition. It will also help you keep track of the properties you view!

Date of viewing..... Landlord/Agent..... Contact.....
Type: Flat/Semi-detached/Detached Location: (Basement) (Ground) (1st) (2nd) (3rd) (Top floor)
No. of bedrooms..... Distance from services: ……. mins.
Overall condition inside ..... Overall condition outside.....
RENT PER MONTH..... DEPOSIT.....
LEASE DATES FROM..... LEASE DATES TO.....

Note: an asterisk (*) denotes legal or licensing requirements

OUTSIDE

Is there dedicated parking?	Yes / No	_____
Does the entrance/stairway show obvious signs of damage or disrepair?	Yes / No	_____
Is there a security/entry system?	Yes / No	_____
Are there obvious external signs of damage to the building fabric (loose tiles, cracked masonry, etc.)?	Yes / No	_____
Are there obvious signs of draughts, leaks etc.? (eg cracks in windows or doorframes)	Yes / No	_____
Are there any signs the external door may not be secure?	Yes / No	_____
Is there a garden?	Yes / No	_____
Do you have to maintain the garden? (check lease)	Yes / No	_____
Does the landlord provide gardening equipment?	Yes / No	_____

KITCHEN

Are there any fire extinguishers or fire blankets? *	Yes / No	_____
Any signs of damage to kitchen units (look inside if possible)?	Yes / No	_____
What type of hob is there and does it show any signs of damage?	Yes / No	Electric/gas
Do the oven shelves and doors, grill etc. show any signs of damage?	Yes / No	_____
What other white goods are there? Are any damaged?	Yes / No	W/mc, fridge, freezer, d/washer Dryer, microwave
Are there signs the sink/taps may not be in good condition (eg dripping tap, corrosion)?	Yes / No	_____

BATHROOM

Is there is a bath?	Yes / No	(Check around for damp/mould)
Is there a shower?	Yes / No	(Check around for damp/mould)
If there are tiles, are there signs of any damage?	Yes / No	(Check that the grout is clean)
Does the toilet flush properly?	Yes / No	(Check)
Any possible signs of damp around floor coverings eg warping, mold, stains?	Yes / No	(Check floor coverings)
Other features eg heated towel rails?	Yes / No	

BEDROOMS

What storage space is there?	Yes / No	(Check inside cupboards etc.)
Number of beds?	Single_____	Double_____
Additional facilities?	Yes / No	En-suite, sink, walk-in storage

LOUNGE/COMMON AREAS

Is there additional heating eg a fireplace?	Yes / No	Gas, electric, solid fuel
What seating is there?	Yes / No	_____
Is there a dining table etc.?	Yes / No	_____

GENERAL

Does the property have central heating?	Yes / No	(Gas, electric, oil, solid fuel)
If gas, check Gas Register Certificate is available *	Yes / No	(If not, check TIP)
If gas, check Carbon Monoxide Detector fitted *		Legal requirement if HMO
If any, check smoke detectors fitted and serviced *	Yes / No	(Check fire book)
Does the landlord have a fire risk exit plan? *	Yes / No	_____
Does the furniture comply with all regulations? *	Yes / No	_____
Energy Performance Certificate displayed? *	Yes / No	
Are there signs of damage to any of the following? *	Yes / No	(Taps, sockets, light switches)
Any signs of damage to the floor coverings? *	Yes / No	(Carpets, laminate, rugs, etc)

UTILITY BILLS

Are tenants responsible for all bills?	Yes / No	_____
Can tenants request to change suppliers?	Yes / No	_____
HMO properties only: is there an active phone line?	Yes / No	
Does the property have internet access?	Yes / No	_____

CONTRACT DETAILS

How much is the total rent?	£ _____	
Payable per person per room	Yes / No	£ _____
Payable jointly	Yes / No	£ _____
When? 1st or last day of the month?		_____
How? (e.g. standing order, cheque, cash)		_____
How much is the deposit? *	£ _____ (max 2 months rent)	
When do you pay the deposit?		_____
What tenancy deposit scheme is used?		_____

FINAL DECISIONS

Can you afford the rent and bills?	Yes / No	_____
Have you sought independent advice?	Yes / No	Contact Students' Association
Do you understand the terms of the lease?	Yes / No	Contact Students' Association
Do you need references?	Yes / No	_____
Do you need guarantors?	Yes / No	_____
If sharing, do you get on well with co-tenants?	Yes / No	_____
Is this property suitable for you needs?	Yes / No	_____

ACCEPTING THE LEASE: *What you need from your landlord/agent*

* Private Landlord Registration number	_____/250/_____
* HMO Licence Number	_____ (only if 3 or more persons)
* Lease	Check
Inventory	Check and note (poor, reasonable, good condition) Check again at exit. Take photographs on entry and exit.
Holding deposit agreement	Yes / No (exempt from Deposit Scheme)
Receipts for payments	Request written and date-stamped receipts
* Copies of all certificates to be in property	Yes/No
Meter readings	Always check on first date of entry and leaving date.
* Fire safety book	Always check on first date of entry

If you need any additional help or have any suggestions how to improve this checklist please contact the Students' Association on union@st-andrews.ac.uk. Thanks!

Offers and contracts



- The letting agency or landlord MUST give you time to review the lease and consult outside help – fixed term contracts are illegal
- Check the start date, and when/how often the rent is due
- What you should get:
  - *Energy certificates*
  - *(approximate) Inventory*
  - *Electrical safety certificates*
  - *HMO if applicable*
- Please remember:

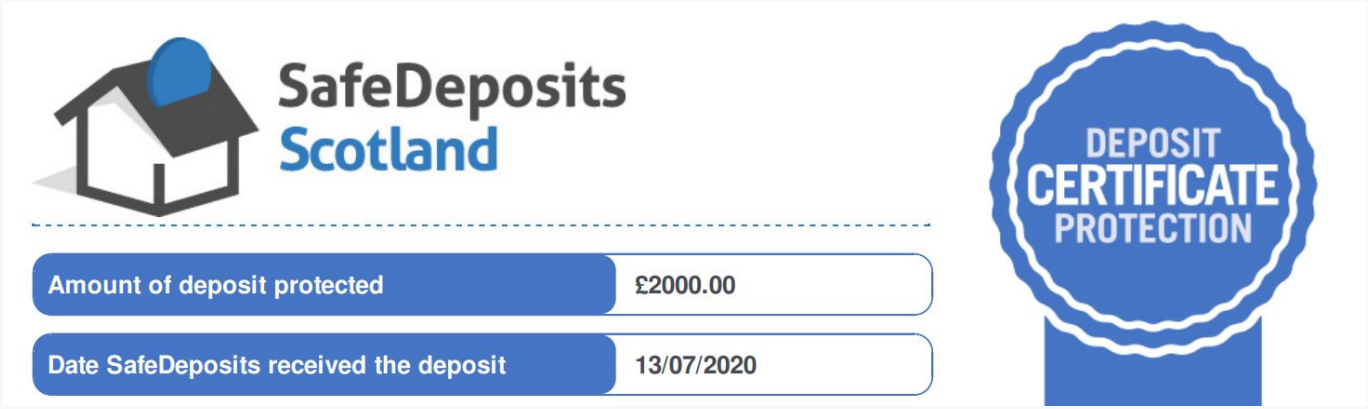
YOU CAN SAY NO

Deposit



- Equal to max 2 months rent
- Must be paid into an accredited deposit scheme

DON'T PAY YOUR DEPOSIT UNTIL YOU HAVE A SIGNED CONTRACT



Timeline of house hunting



Now:

- Budget
- Find flatmates
- Decide on accommodation
- Get a landlord reference
- Research the paperwork and deadlines
- Like the letting agents' Facebook pages
- Get a character reference

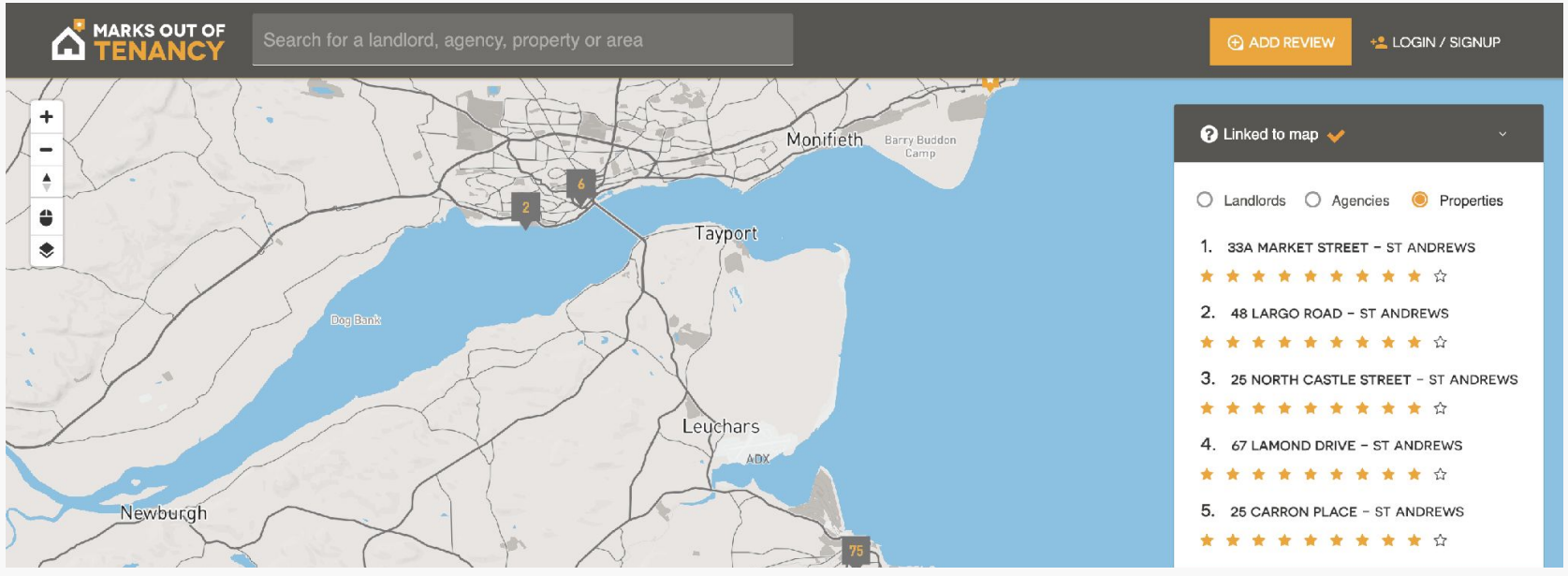
January – August:

- Properties released

It's a marathon, not a sprint! Preserve your energy

Marks out of Tenancy

- Independent review service
- “Yelp for housing”
- Allows current tenants to share their experiences on anything from landlords, to noise, to neighbours
- Good tool in assessing a landlord, letting agency or property



Get in touch



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Please ask any questions!