



YORK ST JOHN STUDENT'S UNION'S

# HOUSING GUIDE

YOUR GUIDE TO PRIVATE  
ACCOMMODATION IN YORK

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## Where to Start

### When Should I Start Looking?

York's student rental properties generally start being advertised in December. However, we encourage students not to rush into renting a house - houses are still available to rent in February! Some letting agents will not even release certain houses on their website, usually based on number of rooms, until later in the academic year. Our November Housing Fair marks where we advise the beginning of the student house-hunting season for the next academic year.

### Where Can I find Student Housing Agencies?

The traditional experience for YSJ students going into the private housing sector has been to rent a 4-8 person HMO (House Multiple Occupancy) as a group of friends using one of the local letting agencies. Many students will still be doing this! If taking this route, you would likely be engaging with the local York letting agencies with a focus on student housing. They will often manage a private HMO on behalf of a landlord, and advertise the let on their website.

Letting agents you might look at are:

- Sinclair Properties (Winner of RYL Best Letting Agent York)
- IGProperties (Runner up of RYL Best Letting Agent York)
- 2Let Agency (Runner up of RYL Best Letting Agent York)
- Edgell Properties (Winner of RYL Best Landlord York & Winner of RYL Officer's Pick York)
- Valley Properties (Runner up of RYL Best Landlord York & Winner of RYL Most Caring Landlord York)
- Blue Door of York
- Quantum Estate Agency
- Martin&Co
- Access Properties York (APYork)
- York Student Accommodation
- York Student Properties
- Modern Student Accommodation York
- Simpson's Properties
- Whistles of York
- Kendall Bailey
- StuRents

You might also look at generic websites that advertise lets such as:

- [Rightmove](#)
- [Accommodation for Students](#)
- [Student Crowd](#)
- [Reeds Rains](#)

On some of these sites, you can make an account and with it set up immediate alerts as soon as a new property within your parameters becomes available. The York housing market is extremely competitive, and viewings can quickly fill up for a property. If you are struggling to get booked in to a viewing, it may be worth having members of your group who are seeking a house to sign up for these alerts and call up the letting agency to arrange a booking ASAP.

If you don't yet have a group that you are planning to rent a private HMO with, but do want to use that route, you could use social media or simply ask around in places like your societies. There may be groups that have had people drop out who need to make up numbers. Similarly, sometimes individuals may have signed a contract for a room in an HMO and wish to drop out; they will be looking for someone to take over that contracted room for them. In the future, the SU may be able to work with Unipol to set up a forum to facilitate this.

## **PBSA'S**

If you're not looking for the traditional HMO experience, there are also Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) blocks. These mimic the feel of university accommodation, tending to be large blocks of ensuite flats and studios with on-site amenities. They are often on the more expensive side however. Many of the blocks (Brickworks, Coal Yard and Abode have partnerships with YSJ) have an assigned proportion of rooms to both YSJ and Uni of York for first years, but you are free to make a booking on any rooms that they have not filled and they will happily accommodate you. You need not sign up with a group, although many will accommodate putting a group of friends together in a flat if one has enough empty rooms.

Here are some PBSAs in York:

- Brickworks
- Student Castle
- Vita Student
- Hello Student
- Student Roost
- The Coal Yard
- Abode
- Student Source, Rathmell Hall
- Iconinc York
- Ypp Lettings

## Where Do Students Live in York?

There is no 'designated' student area in York, student houses are scattered throughout the city, although many YSJ students live in the Groves behind campus. When considering a place to live, it is worth considering the distance to campus, the rent, and the transport links. You may even want to also to live outside the city and commute in to save on rent costs.

Living Alone	House Sharing
Independence	Social
More expensive	More affordable
Privacy	Share bathroom and cooking facilities
Sole responsibility of rent, bills and condition of the property	Joint responsibility for rent, bills and condition of the property

## Being a Commuting Student

Increasingly students have been choosing to live outside of York and commute in to save money. This might mean living at home if you live nearby, or paying for cheaper private accommodation in nearby towns and cities such as Selby or Leeds or Hull. To give an example of how this can be cheaper even with commuting costs, a bills inclusive HMO may cost £189/wk in York. In Leeds, you could fairly easily find a room in a flat or house, bills inclusive, for about £115/wk. A train ticket to York from Leeds can vary in price from around £6 to £20 depending on how direct the journey is. Even at 3 days in a week and using the fastest trains you would still come in cheaper than York.

If you are considering this, there are several things you will want to think about:

- What is the transport like for getting to campus? How much will it cost? How much time will it take?
- Will this affect my ability to attend things like sports clubs and social events?
- Do I have a placement that this might affect?
- What might I need to bring with me while commuting?

The university issues guidance on this, and also has a dedicated advisor for supporting commuting students.

Other options:

- You may be able to return to a university managed house if you meet certain criteria.
- You could check out sites like SpareRoom for individual rooms to rent, although some might not be interested in students.
- Some letting agencies which aren't focused on student housing may still have properties available to rent that would fit your criteria. While some landlords will immediately rule out students, other may allow students on request.

## **Find the Right Housemates!**

You can sometimes forget how important it is to spend time and think about the people you are looking for a house with. You may find that a really good friend still doesn't make the best housemate. It's important to ask 'can I really live with this person?'. It is better to make tough decisions before you sign a tenancy agreement with someone! Remember that if you sign a joint tenancy agreement, you may not easily be able to leave that tenancy on your own with cancelling the whole tenancy if you fall out with someone.

## **Rate Your Landlord (RYL)**

In partnership with Unipol and the University of York, YSJ has joined the Rate Your Landlord scheme. This allows students to review their experience with landlords and properties in the city of York, leaving points scores on a number of measures as well as comments. When considering a property you have found on a letting website, consider checking the Rate Your Landlord site to see if any previous students have left reviews about it. This could give you vital information on whether it's the house for you, or whether you might feel let down.

## Viewing a House

When you view a house, it is important to pay close attention to the facilities and structure. Keep an eye out for signs of dampness, mould, electrical faults, and any signs of infestation. It is also a good idea to write everything that you are promised by the agency and/or landlord on paper. Keeping a record of what has been said will better support you in getting things replaced or repaired. It is also good to take photos of any defects you find upon moving in as evidence.

### Questions to ask when viewing a property:

- Who is the main manager of the property?
- Who do I report repairs or faults to?
- Is there an out-of-hours contact number?
- Are bills included?
- Are there any agency fees?
- What is the contract length?
- Is outdoor maintenance included?
- Can I park my car at the property?
- Are pets allowed?
- Where is the electric and water meter? (Upon moving in, always take a picture of the readings!)
- If bills are not included, if they know what the most recent average bills have been?
- What is the energy efficiency rating for the house? (The house will have a rating which represents how efficiently energy is used by things like heating/lights/etc)
- Check what facilities (i.e. washer/dryer/etc) are included

## Holding Deposits

After viewing a house, you will be asked to make an application if you wish to become a tenant in the property. If this application is accepted, you will likely be asked to pay what is called a Holding Deposit. This is to secure the property for you before the full rental process has been complete. Once it has been paid, a landlord or letting agent will not show the property to anyone else while they check things like your references/income/guarantors. A holding deposit cannot be more than one week's rent.

If the landlord or agency decides not to go ahead with renting to you, the deposit should be returned. However, if you pull out of the process, give false information, or do not pass a right to rent immigration check, the agency or landlord may keep the deposit. The holding deposit usually counts towards your first week's rent.

## Contracts

Once you have decided on the house you would like to live in for the next academic year, contracts are given to you. Before you sign anything, it is vital that you thoroughly read through all the small print. It is also a good idea to ask a parent or guardian to read through it as well, or you can have a look at it with an SU advisor.

### **What to look out for in a contract:**

1. Does the landlord own the property?
2. Are there any unfair aspects of the contract?
3. Does the contract reflect what you verbally agreed with the landlord?
4. Do you understand all aspects of the contract?
5. Is it a joint or individual tenancy contract?
6. Do you require a guarantor?
7. Are there any additional costs in the contract?

Remember as soon as you sign the contract there is no going back! Letting agents may try and hurry you to sign a contract but stand firm until you are 100% sure. If you feel the contract is exploitative or unfair, don't be afraid to ask if elements of it can be changed or to back out before signing; although you may lose a holding fee.

Student housing contracts come in different variations. Therefore, it is important that before you sign it you read everything carefully. It is important to check the contract includes everything you have discussed with the landlord or letting agency.

### **What should your contract include?**

1. Your name, your landlord's name and their address
2. The address of the property you are renting
3. Start date of the contract
4. Length of the contract
5. How much you pay for rent, including the monthly rate
6. When your rent is due
7. If bills are included
8. What type of contract it is? (i.e. Joint Tenancy, Occupancy)



## Do you have any rights?

Most students will be signing assured shorthold tenancies. Under the joint tenancy agreement, you will have things that you are and are not entitled to.

These include:

- 1. Exclusive Possession** – Your landlord cannot come into your home without permission without 24-hours' notice.
- 2. A Set Term** - your tenancy will be for a set amount of weeks only
- 3. Tenancy Deposit Protection** – your deposit needs to be protected
- 4. Protection from eviction** – your landlord will need a court order before you can be evicted from your home
- 5. Notice period** – your landlord usually needs to give at least two months written notice on a standard form to end the tenancy, however, notice periods can differ.
- 6. Repairs** – your landlord will be responsible for carrying out repairs within a reasonable timeframe.

## What are my obligations?

These obligations should be set out in your contract, if they are not then you must bring this up with your landlord before signing the contract:

- Paying rent\*
- Keeping the property clean and tidy
- Reporting repairs to the agency or landlord
- Replacing light bulbs and smoke alarm batteries
- Preventing the property from sustaining damage

\*if your tenancy is a joint one, then all tenants are jointly liable for the rent rather than individually. This means if someone stops paying, others in the house (or their guarantors) are still liable to pay the rent.

## What else might be in the contract?

Depending on your landlord or letting agent, your contract may include additional clauses, or aspects within your rights and obligations. These could be:

- Describing your rights to have visitors stay over
- Whether you are allowed pets
- What to do if a significant other wishes to move in to your room
- Subletting
- When inspections might occur

- Vacant periods
- Modifications to the house (i.e hanging things from the walls)

## Break Clause

Most student contracts are a fixed 12-month contract, if you are wanting a shorter contract then you will need to negotiate this with the landlord and/or agency.

### What is a break clause?

A break clause allows either the tenants or the landlord to end the tenancy by giving an early notice. If this happens then we would advise you to seek advice on the wording of this, a break clause may be used unfairly and give the landlord greater flexibility and rights.

## Guarantors

### What is a guarantor?

A guarantor is a person who signs an agreement to pay the rent owed to the landlord or agent in the case of the tenant not paying it themselves. For most students, their guarantor is a parent or guardian. Not all landlords will require a guarantor, but it is a common element of a student let. If you do not have a someone to act as your guarantor, you should consider this when searching for houses and make sure to ask letting agents or landlords.

A guarantor is required to:

- Be a resident of the UK
- Complete a reference check

### What can I do if I don't have access to a guarantor?

If you are an estranged or care-leaving student and cannot access a guarantor, you can make an application to return to a University Managed House. Private guarantor companies DO exist; however, they are profit making organisations and you will have to pay to utilise their services. In a situation where you do fail to make a rent payment to your landlord, these companies will step in and make payment on your behalf. You will then be liable to pay the equivalent amount to them although they may not charge interest or fees on this. Some landlords or letting agents will not accept private guarantors.

## Deposits

Once you have properly signed up to your contract, you will need to pay a tenancy deposit. The purpose of this deposit is to ensure against any damage that may need to be repaired, items to be replaced or any cleaning to be done. The money is not held by your landlord or letting agent, but instead by a tenancy deposit scheme, of which there are 3:

1. Deposit Protection Service (<https://www.depositprotection.com/>)
2. Tenancy Deposit Scheme (<https://www.tenancydepositscheme.com>)
3. My Deposits (<https://www.mydeposits.co.uk>).

A tenancy deposit cannot be more than 5 week's rent. At the end of your tenancy, the landlord or agency will return your deposit, although they can take deductions if they feel there are any repairs or cleaning that needs to be done to the property. If you feel any deductions are unfair, or the product of what is called 'fair wear and tear', you can challenge them through your deposit scheme provider.

## Remaining in University Accommodation

If you are wanting a room in university accommodation you will need to re-apply. The number of rooms in halls is limited as priority is given to first-year students. There are a limited number of rooms in University Managed Houses that are held for returning 2nd and 3rd year students that are assigned based on need. Only certain students will be eligible to apply: a) Students requiring a physically adapted room that cannot be accessed in the private sector b) Students with visual impairment (with or without an assistance dog) c) Students with a registered disability who do not have appropriate support to assist in securing accommodation in the private sector. d) Care leavers and estranged students who are unable to obtain a guarantor in order to live in private accommodation. The final date to request 25/26 accommodation will be the 30th of November 2024. Speak to the accommodation team ([accommodation@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@yorks.ac.uk)) to find out more information.

## Bills and Budgeting Tips

It is important that when you are budgeting for a house that you take into account all your expenditures such as housing costs, bills, books & study costs, travel and socialising.

## Private Rented Accommodation Costs (including food, bills, household items etc)

Item	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Rent in a shared house (52 weeks)	£165-200	£165-200	£8,580-£10,400
Household Bills (52 weeks)	£13	£60	£720
Groceries (40 weeks)	£33	£144	£1320
Takeaways & Eating out (40 weeks)	£9.90	£43	£394
Health & Wellbeing (40 weeks)	£12.40	£54	£496
Internet	£7.50	£33	£390
<b>Estimated Total</b>	<b>£257.50 - £292.50</b>	<b>£1122 - £1274</b>	<b>£12,826 - £14,646</b>

These prices are averages suggested from data gathered from savethestudent and numbeo.

## Council Tax

### What is council tax?

Council Tax is a tax on residential properties by local authorities.

### Do students need to pay for it?

If you live in a property occupied only by full-time students, the property is exempt from council tax. If you are living in a house which is only partially students, you will not be eligible for a full exemption, but may be able to gain a discount. The university does provide the council with a register of students in November; however, you will still need to make sure to apply as a household for your exemption. If for some reason the council does not have you on the register they will notify you of this, and you would need to give them your exemption certificate available to download from your e:vision.

You and your housemates will need to apply for a 'Council Tax Exemption'. You can do this online at <https://www.york.gov.uk/student-council-tax/student-council-tax-discounts-exemptions/1>

If not everyone in your house is a full-time student, then they will have to pay council tax. If they are the only person living in the house who is not a student in full-time education, then they will be entitled to a discount on council tax. More information can be found at <https://www.york.gov.uk/student-council-tax>

## Safety

Like all cities there are unsafe areas, however, York is, according to official crime figures from 2023, the 2nd safest city in England and Wales. (<https://www.get-licensed.co.uk/get-daily/the-city-safety/>)

Here are some simple tips that will help you keep safe during your time in York.

- Stay alert. It is nice to listen to music whilst walking but this can make you less alert to things happening around you and harder for you to spot trouble.
- Acquire a personal alarm.
- Walk in well-lit areas. When it gets dark and you are walking alone, try to stick to main roads and those which are well-lit – even if it takes you on a longer route.
- Plan. Take time to think about how you will get to wherever you are going to but also how you will get back home. If possible, utilise the main roads or residential roads.
- Be aware of the precautions you need to take on cycling routes, as well as using things like lights and high viz, if you plan to cycle late at night.
- Don't go alone- make plans to walk home with housemates or other students who live near you.

## What safety elements should I consider when inspecting a house?

- The route. How far away is the property to campus or the nearest bus stop? Is the street well-lit or is it dark and isolated?
- Doors and windows. Are the doors and windows secure and lockable?
- The neighbourhood. What is the area like? Does the location make you feel uncomfortable about the prospect of living in the area?
- Does the house have an alarm? If so, do you know how to set it?
- Does it have a back garden and if so how secure is it?

## Emergency Contacts

- Police, Fire, Ambulance (Emergency) – 999
- Police (Non-Emergency) – 101
- Medical (Non-Emergency) – 111

- Rape Crisis - <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/want-to-talk/>
- Drug Advice – 0300 123 6600
- York Nightline – 01904 323735
- York Street Angels - 07533 933 063

## Moving Into Your House

After all the paperwork has been completed and you've been handed the keys to your new home, there are still some things to bear in mind and make sure you have:

- Copy of the tenancy agreement
- Check-in inventory and schedule of condition
- Taken photographs of the conditions of the rooms in the property as evidence of the state of the property when moving in.
- Gas safety certificate
- Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)
- How to Rent booklet <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent>
- Deposit Protection Certificate and prescribed information

Make sure to keep copies of all paperwork that is given to you by the landlord or letting agency. After you have checked you have been given all the important information by the letting agency or landlord, you now need to sort out the following:

- Bills
- Council Tax (Full-time students are exempt from council tax but part-time students are not. If a part-time student or non-student lives with students, they are liable for council tax payments.)
- Internet
- Insurance
- Inventory (written record of what is there at the property and the condition it is in when you moved in)

If you are using a moving van or other vehicle which needs to park outside a property when you move in, check whether you need a permit. This even applies to University Managed Houses, which generally allow 20 minute drop-off periods! Be mindful of what possessions you plan to bring and whether they'll fit and be appropriate for shared living. You can work as a household to make sure you don't double up on items like toasters or irons. You should inform your housemates in advance if you bring anything that might make them uncomfortable.

## Your Housing Rights

Most students in an HMO will be signing a contract that is either an individual or joint assured shorthold tenant. This means you do not live with your landlord and that your tenancy has a fixed minimum term that you are locked in for.

Within an AST & an HMO, here is a simplified list of your rights as a tenant:

- Your landlord is responsible for repairs to the property, as well as gas and electricity safety checks. They should be done in a reasonable amount of time. This includes: structure, plumbing, wiring, heating, common areas.
- The property must be fit for human habitation as per the 2018 Homes Act. Your property might not be fit for habitation if it is neglected, unstable, suffering from serious damp, unsafely laid out, lacking in natural light, lacking in ventilation, has issues with drainage, difficult to prepare food in or not properly heated or kept cool.
- Your rent can only be increased by market rates, and in a fixed tenancy provision for this must be written into the contract
- Your property must have an energy efficiency rating of at least E, or the landlord must be taking steps to improve it to E.
- Your deposit should have been protected, and you should have received information on how.
- Not to be discriminated against.
- Live in the property undisturbed (see below).
- To know who your landlord is by name.
- Challenge excessively high charges.
- Be protected from unfair eviction (although Section 21 no-fault eviction does not require a reason, it can still be done unfairly, and requires a court order to be legal.)
- Your bedrooms must be a minimum of 6.51 square meters.
- You must be provided at least one shower and toilet for every four tenants.
- Adequate food preparation and cooking facilities (usually both a stove and oven).
- Waste disposal facilities which are regularly collected.
- Smoke alarms in every room.
- If you are paying bills separate to your rent, the landlord cannot control the thermostat.

## Advice (Repairs)

Your contract should outline whose responsibility it is for the different repairs you may have at your rented property. The law also implies that it is the landlord's responsibility to keep the property safe and in good condition. If you are unsure about who is responsible for certain repairs, then it is best to seek advice from the letting agency.

### Landlord's Responsibilities

- Heating, hot water and other water supply
- Basins, sinks, baths, and toilets
- External structure of the property
- Gas appliances
- Fixed electrical installations

### Tenant's Responsibilities

- To report any repair issues to the landlord or letting agent
- Change lightbulbs
- Test smoke alarms
- Keep the inside and outside of the property clean

## Advice (Reporting)

If you have an issue, then you must report it! You can do this over the phone, in person or via email. It is important to keep a record of what was discussed and the date and time. It is also useful to send a follow-up email to check on progress and put everything on the record.

### What details should I include in the report?

What is broken/faulty or not working?

When did the incident occur?

Is it affecting anything else on the property?

Provide evidence, photograph everything!

### How long should it take for a problem to be fixed?

A landlord should fix any problems as soon as possible. If you feel things are taking too long, then you should seek advice from your letting agency.



## Advice (Following Up)

### What can I do if the problem does not get fixed?

If your landlord or letting agency is not seeing to any repairs or maintenance within a reasonable time frame, they may be in breach of the tenancy agreement. It would be worth writing a follow-up letter/email to the landlord/letting agency. You can also reach out to the SU or the City of York Council for their advice on such matters. If you are unsure or how to draft a formal letter or email to a landlord, the SU can support you in this.

### Am I allowed to stop paying my rent if this happens?

We would not advise you to stop paying rent if you are having maintenance problems, your obligation to pay rent is separate from the landlord's obligation to carry out repairs. If you decide to stop paying your rent, your landlord is entitled to evict you. They can also take you to court for rent arrears. This is the most likely scenario as most tenancies are only one year long and the eviction process could take a long time. There is a possibility that it may affect your credit score if the landlord uses a debt collection agency.

### Am I allowed to carry out repairs myself?

It is extremely risky for you to carry out any repairs yourself. You would be responsible for any defects or further damage caused to the property; the landlord could also refuse to reimburse you for the money you have spent. You should never attempt to repair damaged electronics, call your landlord or letting agency immediately.

## Mould & Damp

Unfortunately, many student houses suffer from problems with mould or dampness. If you have stale smells, and discoloured walls or ceilings then these are signs that you could have mould in your house. If you experience any problems with dampness or mould you should report it to your landlord or letting agency. Letting agencies and landlords are very quick to blame the growth of dampness and mould on students.

### What causes dampness or mould?

- Condensation
- Lack of insulation
- Leaking pipes
- Rainwater coming through external walls
- Blocked guttering or overflowing drains

## Things you can do to prevent the growth of mould:

- Wipe down any condensation that is on walls or windows
- Check extractor fans are in working order
- Keep the property adequately heated and ventilated
- Don't dry clothes on radiators and ventilate (open windows). Most dampness is caused by condensation and not structural.

## Handy Tips:

- Try and tackle the mould. There are specific anti-mould sprays, but simply scrubbing the mould with bleach water then completely drying the area afterwards can be effective.
- Try and show that the size of the mould has grown and its location
- Inform the Landlord/Letting Agent about any changes or updates to the situation
- Keep taking photos to provide evidence

## Intrusive Landlords

If your landlord does not live at the property, then they have no right to enter the property without your permission. (This can vary if single occupancy contracts are issued.) Check your tenancy agreement on what your landlord or letting agent can do, most often they can come to the property to:

- Inspect the property
- Carry out repairs
- Show new tenants around

All of the above are allowed if the landlord or letting agent has given 24-hours notice. If the landlord or letting agent is not following these rules, then it is important that you write a formal complaint and seek advice from the SU or the City of York Council.

## Cost of Living Advice

### Energy Tariffs

Most likely, when you first move into privately-rented accommodation it will be your first experience of setting up an electricity and gas account. This can be daunting, and you can find advice on how to set up gas and electricity for the first time here:

<https://www.comparethemarket.com/energy/content/setting-up-gas-and-electricity-for-the-first-time/>

One of the main decisions you may have to make when setting up an energy bill is whether to opt for a fixed or variable tariff so it's important to know the difference.

**A fixed tariff** means that the amount you're charged for a unit of energy will stay the same for a set period (usually a year). The total amount you pay could still go up or down depending on how much electricity you use. When you come to the end of a fixed tariff, you'll usually be put onto the supplier's most expensive variable tariff, so remember to switch again before this happens.

**A variable tariff** means that your supplier can increase or decrease the amount they charge you for a unit of energy, providing they give you advanced warning. There is no charge for leaving a variable tariff.

It's important to weigh up the pros and cons of each tariff – I understand this is not simple in these times but websites such as [moneysavingexpert.com](https://moneysavingexpert.com) are great for advice.

## Water Bills

If you're residing in York during your time studying at YSJ, then you will be going through Yorkshire Water when it comes to water bills. If this is not the case, you can find out who your supplier is easily online.

If your house has a water meter, then you will be charged depending on the amount you use, and the rate will be specified in your contract. If this is not the case, then the company will provide you with a set bill for the year of the amount you are due to pay.

The frequency at which you pay the water bill can be flexible, ranging from monthly, quarterly, every 6/8 months, or annually so make sure to discuss with your housemates which payment plan suits you all.

As students, you will be on yearlong contracts which you will leave at the end of the tenancy. It is important to let the water company know when you will be moving out as they can then give you an accurate bill based on this information. If you have been overcharged, the company will refund you after the termination of your business with them.

## Wi-Fi Bills

Good Wi-Fi will be an important factor in your home when studying at university, both for academic and recreational reasons. It's important that, if you can, you get Wi-Fi with appropriate speeds for the number of people living in your house – nothing will cause arguments quite like slow Wi-Fi!

If you go to <https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/en-gb/broadband-coverage> you can check the current Wi-Fi speeds capable at your home and it will give you a good idea of what to go for.

Once you have established the speeds you can receive in your home, it's important to shop for deals on price comparison websites to ensure you get the best deal available to save you the most money during your time in York. You also need to ask yourselves "how fast of a broadband package do I need?". You can go overkill on this which will cost you more money – sometimes people go for the fastest option when, from experience, speeds in the region of 65Mbps are ample for a household of 4 who streams, games, and downloads regularly. At the other end of the scale, if you can avoid it, don't skimp, and get too slow a connection.

It is also important to look into the terms of the contract before you decide on a package and to be wary of factors such as the length of the contract and any early exit charges you may encounter.

### **Tenancy Agreement Tips**

The cost-of-living crisis has made it more important than ever to check through your tenancy agreements and be fully aware of what you are agreeing to before you sign anything. Below are some quick bullet points of tips that you should be aware of when it comes to tenancy agreements.

- Make sure you read your tenancy agreement thoroughly before you sign it, and, if possible, have a parent, guardian or friend read it over for you just to be sure. This is more important now because:
- Certain landlords have been sneaking in clauses that limit certain aspects of their responsibility due to rising energy prices – for example, if your house comes with 'all inclusive' bills they may put a clause stating that this is up to a certain monetary amount and anything beyond that will be your responsibility.
- Some landlords have been reported to be sneaking changes into 'new' agreements. If you have already signed a tenancy agreement and your landlord asks you to sign another one – be very wary and read through it extra carefully. Keep a copy of the previous one to compare.
- Take photos of any defects with the house when you move in and raise this with the landlord immediately as proof. It is also worth 'Bcc'ing (blind carbon copying) a parent, guardian, or friend into these emails in case the landlord states they never received such emails – you can show the other person receiving it as proof.
- Check the inventory as stated when you move in, the landlord must provide a stock of everything that is already in the house.

## Where Can You Get Advice?

### The Students' Union's Advice Service

Here at the SU we offer advice about most common housing issues and the best way to resolve them. Feel free to book in with our advisor for a chat about whatever you need.

### Shelter

Shelter is a housing and homeless charity. Their website is full of useful information and advice, including an online deposit checker to make sure your deposit is protected. They also provide template letters around deposit and repair issues.

For more information: <https://england.shelter.org.uk/>

### Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice provide excellent resources on its website. For more information visit <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>.

### City of York Council

The council can point you in the right direction. If you cannot get through to their phone line, you can also start a web chat on their website. <https://www.york.gov.uk/>.

## Key Contacts

- York St John Students' Union – 01904 629816 / [su.advice@yorksja.ac.uk](mailto:su.advice@yorksja.ac.uk)
- York St John Accommodation Team (University Accommodation only) – 01904 876 660  
  \ [accommodation@yorksja.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@yorksja.ac.uk)
- City of York Council – 01904 551550 / [york.gov.uk](http://york.gov.uk)
- Citizens Advice – 0808 2787895 / [www.citizensadviceyork.org.uk](http://www.citizensadviceyork.org.uk)
- Deposit Protection Service – 0330 303 0030 / [contactus@depositprotection.com](mailto:contactus@depositprotection.com)
- Tenancy Deposit Scheme - (<https://www.tenancydepositscheme.com>)
- My Deposits - (<https://www.mydeposits.co.uk>)