



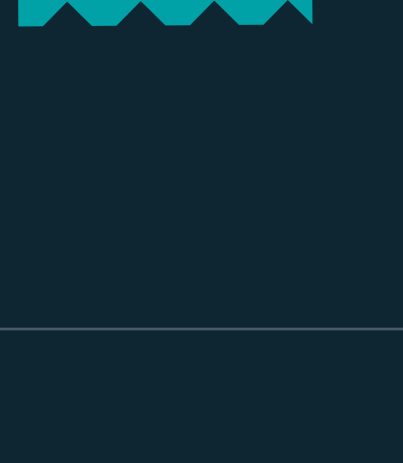
PREVENTING LANDLORD SCAMS: ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

Every year thousands of people fall victim to landlord scams and rental fraud. Something needs to be done. At Open Property Group, we have teamed up with industry experts to create a definitive guide to spotting and avoiding landlord scams, to make sure **you** don't become another statistic.

Jason Harris-Cohen
Director at Open Property Group

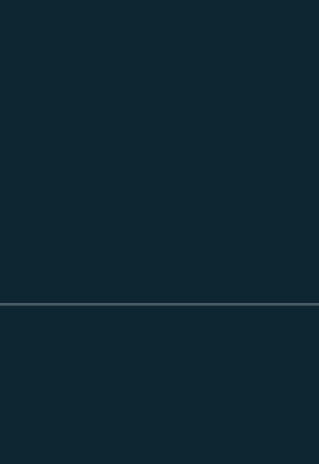


1 KEEP A RECORD OF ALL YOUR TRANSACTIONS



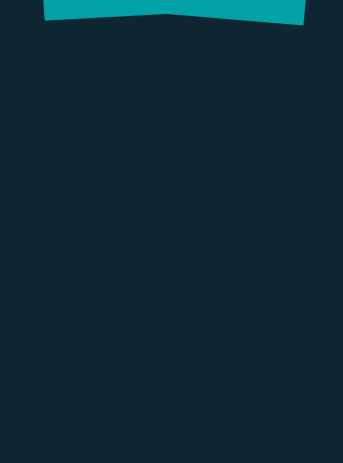
If the worst happens and you become the victim of a **landlord scam**, having receipts to prove you spent the money on specific services will help you win the case. After all, if you pay **£1,000** to your landlord for two months' rent, they have no right to remove you if they accepted your payment under this agreement. For this reason, it is highly recommended you **never pay with cash**.

2 AVOID SUB-LEASING



Don't try and make a bit of money on the side without the homeowner's knowledge or permission. If the contract you signed has your name as the sole tenant, **don't sub-let** to a friend or advertise a room for a lodger without asking. At the end of the day you have to remember you don't own the property and have no right to rent it out yourself. Should the matter go to **court** you would not be in a good position, even if the landlord was one of the worst you had ever encountered.

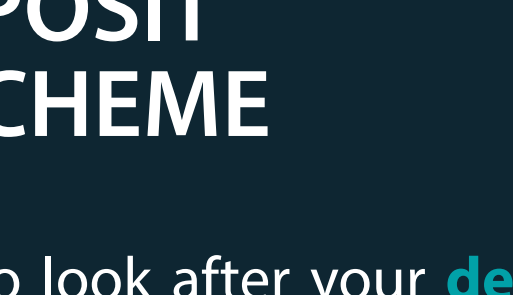
3 LEARN TO SPOT THE WARNING SIGNS



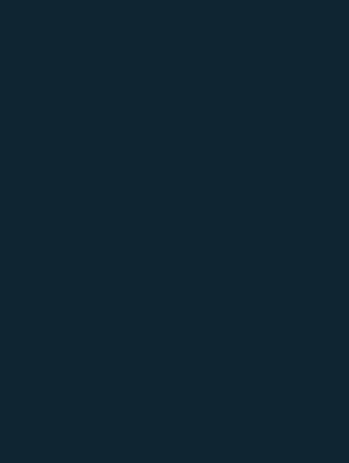
If the property looks too good to be true, then it probably is. **Don't rent blind without viewing** before-hand, and if upon your visit you notice a huge discrepancy between the advertised property and what you see before you, do not pursue it any further. This is the first warning of a rogue landlord trying to pull the wool. Who knows what other surprises he may have in store.

Also, if the Landlord is **pressuring** you to make a decision on the spot - walk away. Ask yourself why are they so desperate to get you to move in? What is it they don't want you to see or hear from others?

Mark Keepin
Volunteer at Advice 4 Renters



1 SIGN UP TO DEPOSIT PROTECTION SCHEME



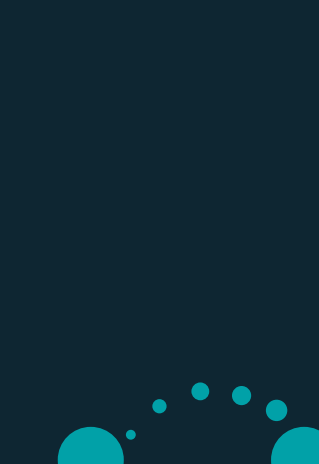
Your landlord is legally obliged to look after your **deposit for 30 days**. If they don't then the two following **sanctions** can apply:

- 1 They cannot end the tenancy or regain possession of your property under section 21 of the Housing Act 1998 until the deposit has been repaid or a court case has ended.
- 2 You can apply to a County Court to receive compensation between once and three times your deposit's value if:
 - you think your deposit is not protected
 - you've not received information about the scheme your landlord has protected your deposit with.

Source: <https://www.depositprotection.com/tenant-info>

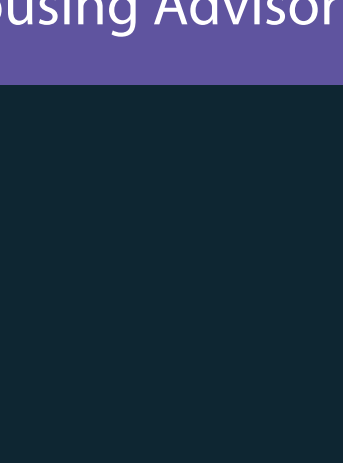
It makes sense to sign up for that extra peace of mind.

2 KEEP EVIDENCE OF EVERYTHING



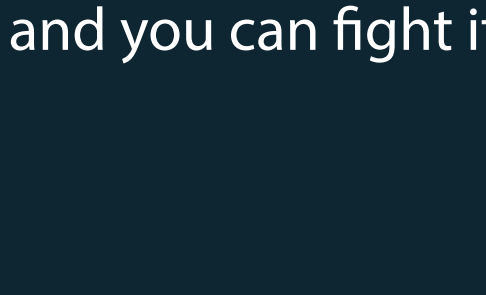
In times of major disrepair (e.g crumbling walls, sewage leaking, boiler broken) keep track of it all. **Photo everything, video everything**, write detailed notes and keep communication with the landlord on such issues frequent and civil. Even if your landlord gets abusive with you, do not retaliate. Communicate calmly and authoritatively and should the matter go to court (**provided you have the evidence to prove you have done nothing wrong**) you will win.

3 IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO GET ADVICE



It's never too late to get a friend, solicitor or family member to **check over your contract before you sign**. Of course, don't delay too long, but if you feel you need an extra day or two to get advice on the contract before you sign - do it. It is always recommended that at least **2 others** go through the contract before you sign, preferably a **family member** and a **legal expert**.

Shagufta Hanis
Housing Advisor at Leeds City Council



1 YOU DON'T NEED TO LEAVE ON THE DAY OF AN EVICTION NOTICE



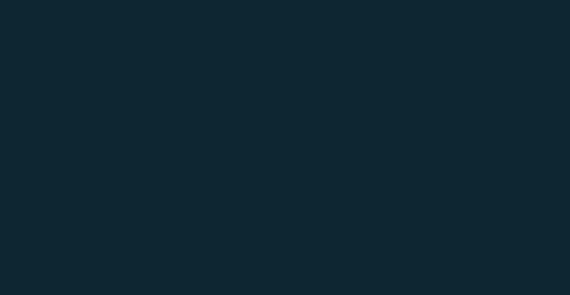
If you are served an eviction notice you don't have to leave on the same day. An Eviction notice has to be **60 days minimum**, anything less is invalid and you can fight it.

2 CONTACT YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL



Don't be afraid to **contact your local council**. There is a team in Leeds who inspect your rented property on your behalf. If you are struggling to convince your landlord that work needs to be done, they will come in and serve the landlord with a written notice and timescale to fix any problems that are found. This **service is free** and can be very helpful. Search for similar services in your area if you are having problems with a difficult landlord.

Harry Watkinson
Communications Officer at City of London Police



1 DON'T EASILY DEPART WITH YOUR MONEY



Do not send money to anyone advertising rental properties online until you are certain the advertiser is genuine.

2 BE THOROUGH, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE FROM OVERSEAS



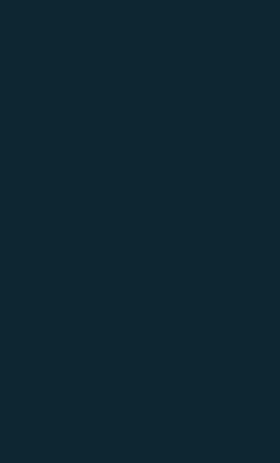
If you need to secure accommodation in the UK from overseas, **seek the help** of the employer or university you are coming to, or get a friend, contact or relative to **check the property exists** and is available.

3 BE SCEPTICAL OF HOW YOU'VE BEEN ASKED TO TRANSFER MONEY



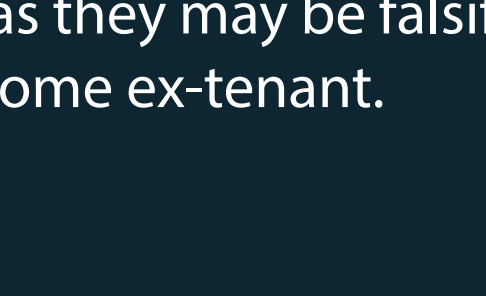
Do not be pressurised into transferring **large sums of money**. Transfer funds to a bank account having obtained the details by contacting the landlord or agent directly after the above steps have been followed. Be sceptical if you're asked to transfer any money via a money transfer service like Western Union.

4 EVIDENCE, EVIDENCE, EVIDENCE



Ask for **copies** of tenancy agreements and any safety certificates such as Gas Electricity or HMO Licence.

Martin Skinner
Property Investor



1 ALWAYS RESEARCH & LOOK FOR A REPUTABLE LANDLORD OR AGENT



It can never be said enough, look for **reviews** and **information online**, speak to previous (and if possible) **current tenants** to make sure you are going with a credible letting agent / Landlord. Be wary of some online reviews though, especially extreme ones, as they may be falsified by the Landlord himself or a troublesome ex-tenant.

2 PHYSICALLY VISIT THE LANDLORD (OR AGENTS) OFFICE



It can never be said enough, look for reviews and information online, speak to previous (and if possible) current tenants to make sure you are going with a credible letting agent / Landlord. Be wary of some online reviews though, especially extreme ones, as they may be falsified by the Landlord himself or a troublesome ex-tenant.