

Understanding the Contract

BEFORE you move into your new accommodation you need to make sure that you and your landlord sign a contract (also known as a tenancy agreement or licence)

The contract is a legal document, which is there to protect your interests as well as those of the landlord.

By signing and dating the document you are agreeing to the terms stated within the contract. **Do not** sign the contract if you feel pressured into signing something that you do not understand or are not happy with.

You are at risk of losing the right to live in the property if you do not keep to the obligations outlined in the document.

The Housing Rights and Advice service or the Citizens Advice Bureau (see useful contacts for details) are probably the best people to take your contract to if you are unsure or have any queries.

The form of the agreement will vary. However, the main points of the contract will include information on:

the Property

*Tenancy
Start Date*

Inventory

the Tenant(s)

*Notice
Arrangements*

length of tenancy

Deposit

*Rent Amount
and
Payment*

You must make sure that YOU know and are clear about:

- Arrangements for payment of rent, water, gas, electricity, telephone, TV licence, Council Tax etc.
- Regulations about nuisance, noise, pets, racial and other harassment
- Use of the premises (you cannot run a business in the property), lodgers (the tenancy is for named tenants only), visitors (you are responsible for their behaviour)
- Decorating and changes to the property (what you may or may not be allowed to do)
- Reporting damage; your responsibilities for internal or external repairs or maintenance; access to, and maintenance of, communal areas, gardens

The landlord's rights and responsibilities are also included in the agreement.