

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a residential street. In the foreground, there are pink cherry blossom branches. Behind them is a row of terraced houses with grey roofs and brick chimneys. A tree with yellowish leaves is visible in the middle ground. The sky is clear and blue.

leaving your student housing

2020/21



hello, from your advice team

We prepared this guide to help you during this confusing time. Although we want you to take your legal and financial obligations to your landlord seriously, we must emphasise that your personal wellbeing and mental health must always be your priority.

If for health reasons you cannot follow the guidance we've offered, please get in touch with our Advice Centre for alternative guidance specific to your situation. Unfortunately, under current government guidelines, if your landlord doesn't want to cancel your contract then they are under no legal obligation to do so. Please see our FAQs page for further guidance:

upsu.com/advice/accommodation

If you are experiencing Financial difficulty, please contact us so we are able to explore your options and signpost you to the University's [Financial Support Fund](#)

cleaning

Cleaning is the most common reason for deductions from security deposits. The charges were known to be very high, which led to a change in legislation. If your tenancy started after 1 June 2019, the Tenant Fees Ban 2019 means you can opt to clean the property yourself, even if your contract states you have to pay for professional cleaning or your landlord's cleaning service. As a general rule, you should leave the property as clean as you found it. If you've kept on top of the cleaning, this shouldn't be too difficult. If you haven't, then we recommend that you get some bleach, drain unblocker (for kitchen and bathroom), etc. on your next shop. If you're not known for your cleaning prowess, you may still wish to hire a professional cleaner.

checklist

- ☐ Deep clean all areas, especially kitchens and bathrooms.
- ☐ Clean all appliances, especially oven and fridge (defrost and switch off once emptied).
- ☐ Clear all rubbish out of the house and into bins.

bills and money

If you are named on the accounts you will need to contact the utilities companies to let them know when you're leaving (or that you've left) and provide them with any final meter readings as well as a forwarding address. If you can't get a meter reading, you may get an estimated bill for now instead, which will be adjusted once you get the reading.

Your landlord can deduct any unpaid bills from your deposit, so you need proof that you've paid everything and closed the accounts. It's really important to settle all outstanding bills as failure to do so can have a serious impact on credit score ratings - this would affect both you and your guarantor(s).

Utility companies can, and do, pursue outstanding debts, sometimes using bailiff companies. If you have problems paying a bill, contact your provider who can usually help by creating a manageable payment plan with you. You can also get support from the SU Advice Team if you are worried about what your financial situation will be like at the end of term.

checklist

- ☐ Contact all utility companies to tell them you're moving out.
- ☐ Provide meter readings on the day you move out.
- ☐ Make sure everyone settles their fair share of the bills.
- ☐ [Fighting UK Poverty - Turn2us](#) can advise you about financial help available after you graduate.
- ☐ You can use online Benefits calculators now to see what government funds you're eligible for after the last day of your course - [GOV.UK](#). Shelter can help you with any housing problems in your next home after graduating. [Home - Shelter England](#)



rubbish and recycling

Make sure you plan ahead. All your rubbish will not fit in the bins in your final week, so slowly start throwing away things you don't want about a month before your move-out day. Over-filling bins and fly-tipping lead to fines from the council and deductions from deposits.

It's easy to underestimate the amount of rubbish and unwanted items you have accumulated during your tenancy, so we've come up with some handy tips to help you ditch them.

checklist

- ☐ Fill and return the charity bags posted through your letterbox.
- ☐ Donate to food banks, details can be found online.
- ☐ Bulky waste – arrange for Plymouth City Council to collect items, appliances and furniture. Charges apply. Advance booking required.

moving day

If possible, plan at least two weeks in advance how you're going to move all your belongings to your next home. Explore vehicle hire and temporary storage options and their costs if you might need them. Read reviews or ask for recommendations before using a service.

Even if you found it easy to move all your stuff in one go before, a year has passed and you've probably accumulated more stuff. Try to start moving out things you don't regularly use a few weeks beforehand to save you stress on the last day.

checklist

- ☐ Put moving dates into your calendar (and share with your moving helpers).
- ☐ Calculate moving budget and dates.
- ☐ Research and book transportation and storage options. - NOTE, you could be charged by your landlord for the removal of any items left in or outside the property.

garden

If the garden was tidy when you arrived (check inventory), then you are responsible for tidying the garden at the end of the tenancy. Make sure you have cut the grass and trimmed anything overgrown to avoid gardening charges being deducted from your deposit.

If you were given no tools, then you will have to explain to the landlord that you cannot obtain them under the current situation and apologise for the inconvenience.

check-out inspection

At the start of your tenancy, an inventory of everything in the house should have been completed. Now that you're moving out, you will need to find your inventory (or ask for a copy from your landlord/estate agent) to check that nothing has gone missing or been broken. If your contract started after 1 June 2019, you cannot be charged for the inventory process, even if the charge is listed in your contract.

Remember that 'fair wear and tear' is acceptable, so small marks and scuffs are ok. If anything is missing or broken, look into the cost of getting it replaced or repaired and make sure the landlord is ok with it. Ask when the check-out inspection will be done and ask the landlord/agent to share the check-out inventory with you. Due to the current situation, you might not be there, so make sure you take lots of photographs before you leave, just in case you're challenged.

checklist

- ☐ Find check-in inventory.
- ☐ Compare inventory to the state of the property/contents.
- ☐ Replace and repair what you can.
- ☐ Return furniture to its original location.
- ☐ Take lots of time-stamped photos before you leave.
- ☐ Complete the check-out inventory before leaving - this is your last chance to gather evidence of how you left the house.



who needs your new address?

- ☐ University of Plymouth.
- ☐ Plymouth City Council Tax Team.
- ☐ Your GP and any medical services they have referred you to.
- ☐ Your employer.
- ☐ Your banks (and PayPal).
- ☐ Your utilities providers.
- ☐ Your online shopping accounts.
- ☐ Your insurance providers.
- ☐ TV Licensing.
- ☐ DVLA.
- ☐ Friends and family.

You may want to leave a forwarding address at the property or with your landlord/agent, so your post can be redirected. However, they are not under any obligation to do this, so it's best to update the relevant companies and contacts yourself.

Royal Mail Redirection is a service you can pay for to have all your mail forwarded to your new address for a set time.

getting your deposit back

Your deposit should have been placed in a tenancy deposit scheme by the landlord/agent, meaning no deductions can be made without your consent.

To start the process, the day you leave, you must email/text the landlord/agent asking for the return of your deposit. This will give them **10 days** to respond to you with any proposed deductions. Assuming there is nothing wrong with the property or its contents, and it's been cleaned where possible, then you should get your deposit back. We don't advise you agree to any deductions before checking with us as we have found that most proposed deductions are over-inflated or illegal.

If you find out your deposit wasn't protected, you disagree with any proposed deductions, or your landlord/agent doesn't respond within 10 days, email us at the SU Advice Centre for guidance on your next steps. If you were living with a resident landlord, a deposit scheme can't assist you and you will need to negotiate with the landlord, providing proof and explaining why you think the deductions shouldn't be made.

checklist

- ☐ Check if your deposit is protected.
- ☐ When you leave, ask your landlord/agent (in writing) to return your deposit.
- ☐ Negotiate disputed deductions proposed.
- ☐ Settle unresolved deposit disputes through your deposit scheme.
- ☐ You can contact the Advice Team if you need support.



good

luck

Moving out can be stressful, but we are here for you! If you encounter any problems during the moving out process, please feel free to contact the Advice Centre and we will be more than happy to help you.

upsu.com/advice

advice@su.plymouth.ac.uk