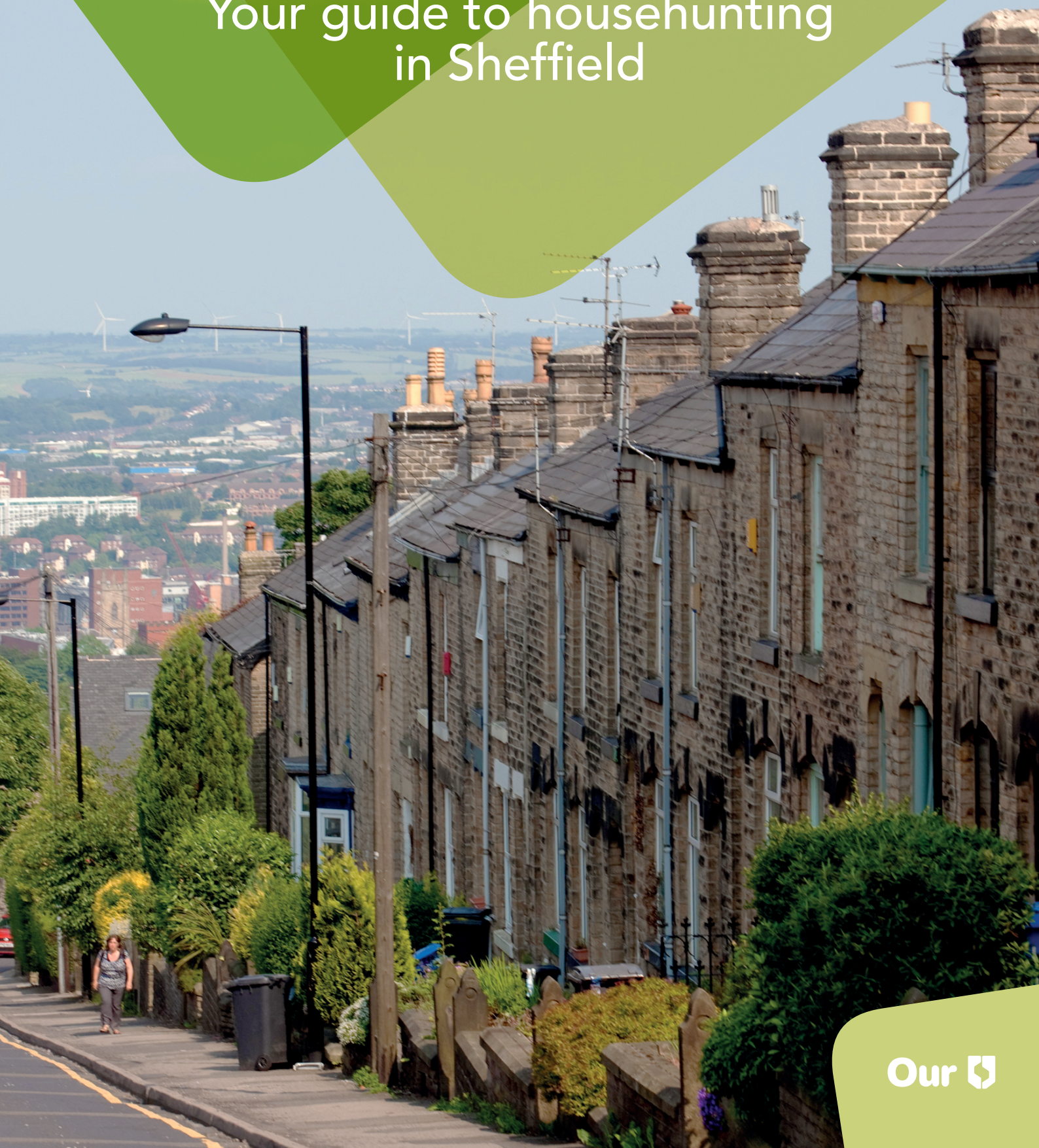




Smart Move

Your guide to househunting
in Sheffield



Our 

Introduction

If you are a student about to start looking for somewhere to live, this guide is for you. It should help you through the whole house hunting process and give you all the information you need to make a Smart Move.

If you have specific housing needs and require further advice, the Student Advice Centre is here to help. We have specialist housing advisers who can advise you at every stage of your housing journey, from checking over a new contract through to getting your deposit back when the tenancy ends.

Contact details for the Student Advice Centre are at the back of this guide. Or, you can find loads more information about housing, and everything else SAC does, at su.sheffield.ac.uk/student-advice-centre



Message from Beren Maddison Welfare Officer 2019/20



Hi! I hope your first few weeks at Sheffield have been amazing, and that you're settled in and enjoying your life here. It's not even reading week yet, but you've probably seen the ads for next year's housing, or been told by your friends that you have to start looking now - but don't panic! Here in Sheffield we have an oversupply of student housing, so it's far better to take your time and be sure you're making a good choice for your next Sheffield home. I didn't sign for my house this year until April, and I couldn't be happier with it!

Before you start house-hunting, check out our Housing Information Fair on the 6th of November. Here you can find out loads of useful information on your rights as a tenant, key things to look out for when viewing properties, and the SNUG scheme here in Sheffield. This will help you spot any dodgy landlords, and make sure that you're getting the best value for money.

Really get to know your potential housemates before signing up to live with them, and make sure you agree on a budget for rent and bills that is affordable for everyone, as well as day-to-day things such as cleaning and hosting pre-drinks or parties.

House-hunting can be challenging and difficult to navigate, especially if it's your first time away from home, but there is so much help available here at Sheffield to help you get the most from your next home. The Student Advice Centre can check your contract before you sign and advise you on any housing issues; contact them at advice@sheffield.ac.uk! A good place to start house-hunting is at www.smartmovesheffield.com/AccommodationSmartmove. Here you will find Snug approved properties which should meet high safety and management standards.

I hope you have the best year, and when it comes to housing, remember - don't sign until you're sure, don't be afraid to ask for advice, and know that you're in control!

Beren

The Sheffield Student Housing Market - When to start looking?

- Around November each year in Sheffield, local letting agents will start marketing properties for the next academic year and the annual house hunting season begins. There really is no need to start house hunting this early, there are lots of good standard properties available throughout the year and Sheffield has a surplus of student housing!
- Most shared houses are for groups of four or five, so if you're in a group of six or more you may need to start looking before Christmas. If you have specific housing needs, such as disability access requirements, you may also find it beneficial to start house hunting earlier.

Top Tip - Take your time to sign - there is plenty of student housing available so don't start looking until you have been to the Housing Information Fair on 6th November 11am -3pm in the Students' Union.

Step One: Deciding who to live with

Friendships and personal circumstances can change over the course of a year, so take your time in deciding who to live with.

- Don't feel pressured into signing a contract for next year with people that you may have only known for a couple of months, make sure you are completely happy with your potential housemates before you sign a contract. Use Welfare Committee's housemate checklist to see if you've thought of everything.
- Getting out of a contract can be tricky and you will not normally be released from a contract unless you have found a suitable replacement tenant. If you find yourself in this position, you can get advice from the Student Advice Centre.
- Don't panic if you haven't found someone to share with! The Student Union Welfare Committee run Housemate Finder events throughout the year so you can meet people, you can check out the Smartmove Sheffield message board or look on websites such as spareroom.com. It's never too late to find a housemate!



How many people should I live with?

- The magic number for house-hunting is four, a group of around this size will offer you the widest choice of properties, and probably also the best value.
- If you are in a group of six or more you should start earlier, or think about splitting into two smaller groups in houses on the same street or flats in the same block.
- If you are a single person looking for somewhere, don't worry! There are always spare rooms available in shared properties in the summer, or there is a surplus on one-bedroom apartments in the city centre that are available up until September. Or come to one of our Housemate Finder events to meet people.

Top Tip: Finding the people to share with is as important as finding the right property, take your time in deciding who to live with.

Finding the right Housemate: Top tips from Welfare Committee



Cleaning

Housemates very often argue about cleaning up. Make sure you chat to potential housemates about cleaning habits, e.g. how frequently is reasonable to have a big clean?

Early Bird vs. Night Owl

If you like getting started early in the day, being woken up by housemates coming back from nights out will be a pain! If you love going out a lot, you might prefer to live with people who like late night socialising.

Rent

People have different expectations about how much rent should cost. Talk to your potential housemates about how much you're willing to pay for rent and whether you'd prefer to have bills included.

Bills

Housemates often fall out over how much money they should spend on bills. Talk about whether you'd rather pay more for heating and be more comfortable or wrap up and save money.

Number of Housemates

Some people prefer living with a large group while others feel more comfortable in a smaller crowd. Bear in mind that there's more choice of housing for groups of 4 or 5.

- ☐ Are you happy with the number of people in your group?
- ☐ Have you agreed how much you can all afford to spend on rent & bills?
- ☐ Do you agree on whether it's more important to have a warm house or to save money on bills?
- ☐ Do you all agree on how frequently people should do the dishes, take the bins out, etc...?
- ☐ Do you share similar interests, lifestyles, like going out or quiet nights in?

Step Two: Looking for Accommodation

- Your first starting point when looking for accommodation should be Smart Move Sheffield and you can search for accommodation online at smartmovesheffield.com. You can add properties to your hot list and even set up alerts so everything a new property which meets your requirements is added you will be emailed!
- All properties and landlords which are advertised on Smart Move Sheffield have to meet high property, safety and management standards and will be registered with Snug (see below).
- The Smart Move Sheffield team are located on the ground floor of the SU building and their contact details are on the back of this booklet.

Top Tip: Contact Smart Move Sheffield if you need help using their search facility or if you would like to talk to someone there about your housing options.

University Accommodation

- Many people will live in University accommodation in first year, but it's also an option for the rest of your time at uni. They have a variety of options in Endcliffe, Ranmoor and City, as well as a number of shared houses.
- You can express an interest in University accommodation from November onwards but you will not be required to sign a contract until early 2020.
- If you would like to live in University owned or managed accommodation, please get in touch with the Accommodation team who can answer all your questions - their details are at the back of the booklet.



SNUG

- This is a student accommodation standard run by Sheffield City Council in partnership with both Universities and Students' Unions in the city. Properties which are part of this scheme will have been inspected and assessed for fire, gas and electrical safety, security and amenity standards, repairs and maintenance. The landlord will also have to abide by a strict code of management.
- Look out for Snug certified properties and ask landlords if their properties meet the Snug standard, if they do the Snug logo should be advertised on their websites.
- Further details can be found at sheffield.gov.uk/home/housing/approved-student-housing-snug



Landlords & Letting Agencies

- Some landlords will advertise, let and manage their properties directly, others use Letting Agents to let and/or manage the accommodation.
- There are lots of Lettings Agencies in Sheffield, many of whom specialise in student housing. They tend to have offices close to the University, for example in Broomhill. They will all advertise online.
- Letting agents must be members of a redress scheme and abide by a code of practice. You can complain to a redress scheme and even get compensation, if you have a problem with a member agent.
 - The Property Ombudsman
 - The Property Redress Scheme
- All lettings agents should display a logo of the scheme that they belong to in their office and on their website and you can check directly with the redress scheme.

Top Tip: Do not use a letting agent who is not a member of one of these schemes.

Fees

- Most fees charged by landlords and letting agents are banned for accommodation contracts signed after 1st June 2019. This applies to most private tenancies, including assured shorthold tenancies, student accommodation and lodger agreements.
- From 1st June 2019, if you start or renew a tenancy you can only be charged fees in certain circumstances. In most cases how much a landlord or letting agency can charge you is capped.
- This law is new and was implemented very quickly, which may mean some private landlords and letting agencies might make mistakes. It is very important that you are fully aware of which charges your landlord or letting agent can make, which are banned and what you can do if you think you are being charged incorrectly. There is detailed information about permitted and banned charges on the Shelter England website: england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/private_renting/letting_agent_fees_for_tenants. You can also get advice from the Student Advice Centre.



Top Tip: Do not pay any money to an agent unless you are really sure you want the property and can meet the terms of the contract. Ask from the start what fees will be payable and get a written receipt for all monies paid.

Guarantors

- Some agents will require students to provide UK based guarantors, usually a parent, who will be accountable if you default on your payment.
- If you can't provide this, for example if you are an international student, you may be asked to pay large advance rent payments and this can be difficult to do.
- The University also has an Accommodation Guarantor Scheme for second and third year students who live in properties which are registered with Smart Move Sheffield. sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/finance/ags
- The University and SU also endorse a company called Your Guarantor. It can provide guarantees to both International and Home students. The company is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, see yourguarantor.com/university-of-sheffield/ for further information.

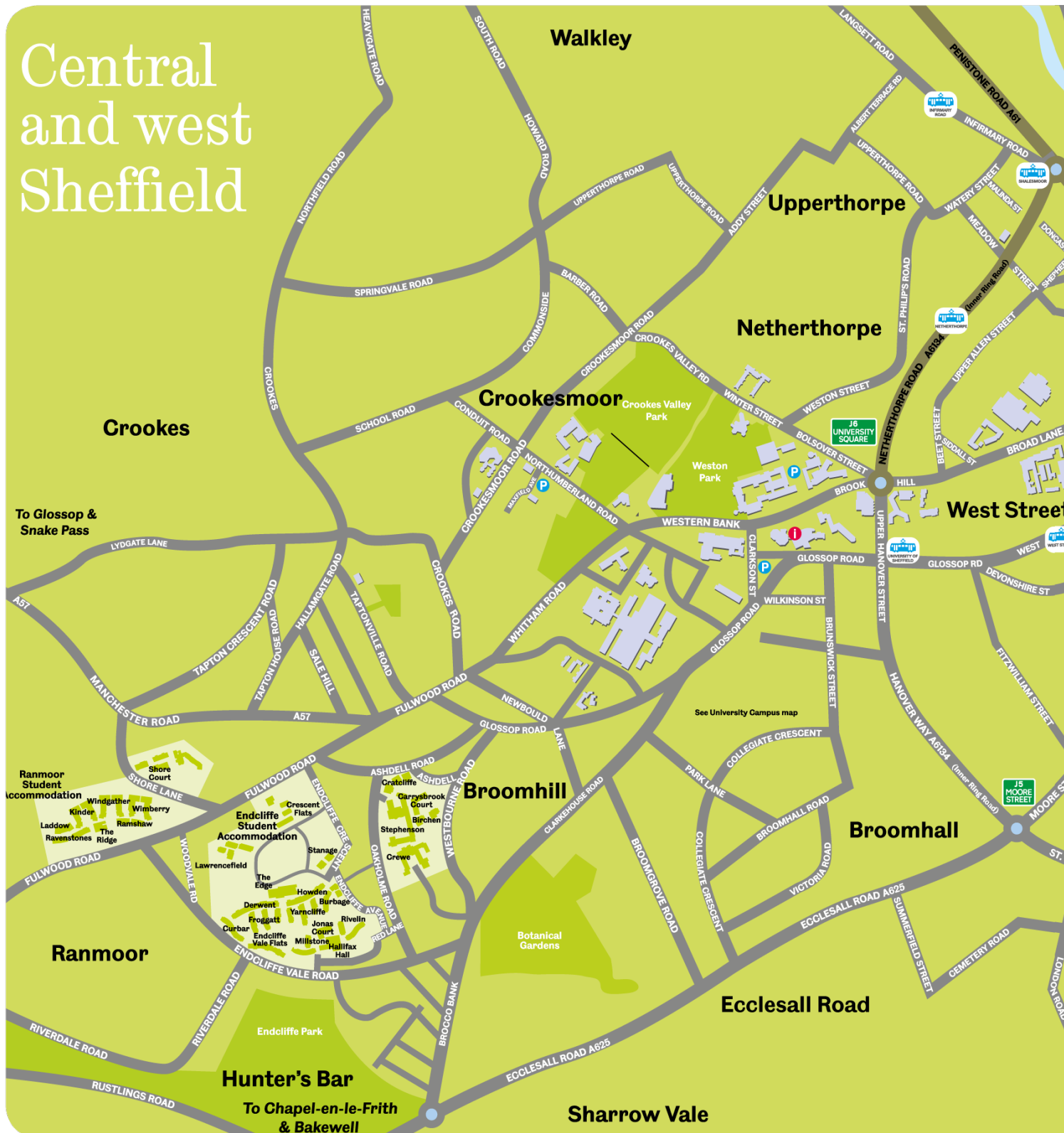
Right to Rent Checks

- Landlords have to carry out a Right to rent check, so you may be asked to show your passport, visa or other ID documents to prove your immigration status.
- Purpose built student residences and university owned accommodation are exempt from RTR checks. You can also request a RTR nomination letter from the University (via SSiD) to give to a private landlord. This means that the landlord does not need to carry out further RTR checks, as the property will be exempt.
- If you have problems in relation to Right to Rent, please contact the Student Advice Centre and further information can be found at su.sheffield.ac.uk/student-advice-centre/housing/right-to-rent

It is illegal for a landlord or agent to discriminate against you on the grounds of race, colour, gender or sexual orientation. If you believe this has occurred please contact the Student Advice Centre as soon as you can.



Step Three: Deciding Where You Want To Live



Luckily all popular student areas are relatively close to the University and it shouldn't take you more than 20 minutes to walk to lectures or make your way home after a night out at the Students' Union. There are also good public transport links. Below is a brief guide to the most popular student areas and you can also use the map to see where they are in relation to the main University Campus.



Broomhill

- The area between Endcliffe/Ranmoor and Uni, this is a very popular area for students due to its close proximity to the University and has excellent local facilities, including lots of pubs, a variety of shops and plenty of take-aways.
- Mainly flats and shared houses for larger groups of five or more.
- Typical rent: between £75-£92 + bills.

Crookesmoor

- is also very popular due to close proximity to the University and U sport. There is a good range of shops nearby.
- mainly flats or shared houses for groups of four or more, plus a few bedsits and studio flats.
- Typical rent: £75-£92 per week + bills.

Broomhall

- is extremely close to the University with a few small corner shops nearby.
- Mainly flats or shared houses for larger groups of five or more plus some bedsits and studio flats.
- Typical rent: £65-£85 per week + bills.

Crookes

- is popular as it is quite close to the University and has excellent local facilities with plenty of shops, takeaways, pubs and an excellent bus route if you don't feel like walking up the hill.
- mainly terraced houses for groups of three or four.
- Typical rent: £60-£80 per week + bills.

Top Tip: If you have never really ventured out of your local area in your first year, it is worth exploring other areas - they are probably not as far away as you think.

Walkley

- is a little further from the University but offers a good range of shops and pubs.
- mainly terraced houses for groups of three or four.
- Typical rent: £58 to £67 per week + bills.

Netherthorpe/Upperthorpe/St Georges

- is an area growing in popularity with students. Has local shops but main attraction is proximity to main campus.
- There is a mix of accommodation, including shared houses but also purpose built student halls and apartments.
- Typical rent: vary depending on property type from £65 to £125 per week. This may include bills.

Ecclesall road

- is slightly more popular with Sheffield Hallam students and is about a 20 to 25 minute walk from Western Bank. The area is very vibrant and offers excellent local facilities with plenty of pubs, shops, cafes, restaurants and takeaways.
- The accommodation is mainly terraced houses for groups of three or four with a number of flats.
- Typical rent: £65 to £85 per week + bills.

West Street/Devonshire Quarter/City Centre

- is very close to the University but also has all the amenities of the city centre close at hand.
- The accommodation is mainly purpose built en-suite flats of a high standard.
- Typical rent: £105 to £135 per week per person. This may include bills.

Top Tip: In general the closer to the University you live the more rent you will pay. You may get more for your money if you are willing to live a little further out. Don't sacrifice quality for location.



Step Four: Viewing and Choosing a Property

- Where possible try and find accommodation that is registered with Smart Move Sheffield or Snug. This means the property should be of a good standard.
- If the property will be occupied by five people it is a HMO (House of multiple occupation) and it must be licensed by the council. You can check to see if the property is licensed at www.sheffield.gov.uk/hmo. If the property does not have a licence, be cautious about signing a contract, as it may mean the property and/or landlord is not of a good standard.
- Ask the current tenants if there have been any problems with the house or the landlord or agent. This may be difficult if the landlord or agent is present but tenants can usually warn you of any pitfalls or reassure you that it would be a good move.
- You can check reviews and this year the SU is encouraging all students to leave reviews, good and bad, at www.marksoutoftenancy.com/
- For your own safety, never view a property alone and preferably visit the property in daylight so you can have a good look around the outside and the area in general.
- If you are part of a group, make sure everyone views the property and agrees that it is suitable before a contract is signed or you pay a deposit.
- Set a budget that you can afford and stick to it. Remember to factor in things like utility bills, TV licence, contents insurance, food and other living costs. Check out the University's Money Planner at ssid.sheffield.ac.uk/money-planner/ which can help you work out your budget.
- Ask to see the Energy Performance Certificate for the property which will give you an energy rating for the property and give you an idea of how much it could cost to heat. You can check online but the landlord should provide a copy.

Top Tip: Do not rush into taking the first place that you see, view a selection of properties and take your time. Use the checklist at the back of this guide to help compare houses, get answers to important questions and choose the right property for you.



Step Five: Signing The Contract

Never sign a contract unless you have read and understood it. Contracts can be confusing and full of legal jargon. Most reasonable landlords will give you a copy of a contract to look over and not rush you into signing it.

Top Tip: Get your contract checked at the Student Advice Centre or pick up a copy of our Contract Checklist.

It is important that you check your contract includes the following essential details.

- The landlord's name, address and telephone number or other emergency contact
- The name of every tenant
- The address of the property
- If you are in a group and the contract you are signing is a joint tenancy for the whole property, it is not necessary to specify individual rooms. If you are signing separate contracts, rooms should be specified.
- The start date of the contract and if it is fixed term, the length of the contract and/or the end date. Most student private sector housing contracts are fixed term. This means they last for a fixed period of time, typically twelve months.
- The amount of rent, what is included in the rent (if bills included is there a cap?) and frequency and method of payments. (Check when the first rent installment due it can be before you move in!)
- Details of any deposit paid and the Deposit Protection Scheme which the landlord/agent uses. Further Deposit information can be found at **su.sheffield.ac.uk/student-advice-centre/housing** or pick up a Deposits Handbook from the Student Advice Centre.

Make sure that you have read and understood what is expected of you and what charges may apply. Be wary about signing a contract which is full of high charges or has contract terms which could be 'unfair' or lacks basic information about the landlord.

- Most written contracts include only a brief list of the landlord's obligations and a long list of tenant conditions. For more information on landlord obligations, contracts and tenant rights and responsibilities go to <http://su.sheffield.ac.uk/student-advice-centre/housing>
- If the landlord promises to improve the house, for example redecorate before you move in, ask for this to be written in the contract. Try to agree a deadline date for the work and what will happen if the work is not completed on time. This could be compensation or provision of alternative accommodation if you are unable to move in. Do not rely on verbal agreements. This is very important if the property is currently under construction or undergoing a major refurbishment.

Top Tip: Be cautious about signing for a property which is under construction, needs or is undergoing major works before you move in, as it may not be ready on time

Checklist

This list provides a guide to some of the things that you should consider when looking for houses to rent. They are not all legal requirements.

Property 1 _____

Property 2 _____

Property 3 _____

General Condition of the Property

	Property 1	Property 2	Property 3
Is the roof and exterior in good repair?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there double glazing and are the windows in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are inside walls free from damp, mould and cracks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there adequate heating in all rooms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any signs of problems with the plumbing, leaking pipes etc?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there sufficient electrical sockets in each room?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there adequate facilities and communal space for the number of people sharing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check what furniture will be provided, is it adequate and fire resistant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Safety and Security

Is there a current gas safety record for the house?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there instruction manuals for appliances?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there any working fire detection equipment, such as fire/smoke alarms and a fire blanket in kitchen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there an electrical safety certificate or has wiring been checked within the last 5 years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there adequate security – solid doors with			

	Property 1	Property 2	Property 3
good locks, window locks, external lighting, burglar alarm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Contract

Who is the landlord and/or agent and is their address on the contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it a joint or sole contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a copy of a contract available to look over and get checked by the Student Advice Centre?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any fees? (if so get details in writing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How long is the tenancy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is the rent, how is it paid?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the bills included? Is there a cap?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much is the deposit, and in which scheme is it protected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any extra charges a landlord might make?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the landlord provide an inventory when you move in?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the landlord intend to carry out any improvements/repairs before you move in?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If so, can this be written into the contract with details of compensation if not completed on time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the property have a HMO licence? (applicable if the property has 3 storeys and 5 or more people)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What redress scheme does the agent use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Useful Names and Addresses

The Student Advice Centre

Tel: 0114 222 8660

Email: advice@sheffield.ac.uk

Website: <http://su.sheffield.ac.uk/student-advice-centre>

Smart Move Sheffield

Tel: 0114 222 6058/6042

Email: smartmove@sheffield.ac.uk

Website: smartmovesheffield.com

The Student Advice Centre and Smart Move Sheffield are both located on Level 3 in the Students' Union building on Western Bank, S10 2TG.

Accommodation and Commercial Services

The Edge

34 Endcliffe Crescent

Sheffield

Tel: 0114 222 8800

Email: accommodationoffice@sheffield.ac.uk

Website: www.sheffield.ac.uk/accommodation

Sheffield City Council Private Housing Standards

Tel: 0114 273 4680

Email: phs@sheffield.gov.uk

Private Housing Standards are based at Howden House, 1 Union Street, Sheffield S1 2SH.



Start your search at the

HOUSING INFORMATION FAIR

Make Yours a Smart Move

Wednesday 6th November
11:00 - 15:00
Foundry, Fusion & Studio, Students' Union

Our

Logos: su, Welfare Officer, student advice centre, Smart Move Sheffield

student · advice centre ·



The
University
Of
Sheffield.



Sheffield
Students'
Union



Smart Move
Sheffield



Welfare
Committee



Welfare
Officer

