

SELF STORAGE

Moving Out of Halls Part I: Finding Your First Student Flat

Posted on Feb 20 , 2015 in Latest Tips

With a little expert help, this blog talks you through the trials and tribulations of modern student flat hunting.



Who doesn't love university halls? The food's paid for, there are no bills to worry about, and you're in close proximity to all your friends. Sadly, it doesn't last forever. Second year beckons, and with a horde of baby-faced freshers lining up to occupy your beloved room, you're liable to be cast, shivering and afraid, into the daunting world of private rental accommodation.

Moving into halls is usually fairly straightforward: check a box here, sign a contract there, pay your deposit, and you're in. It's appealingly easy, but it doesn't properly ready undergraduates for the complications of renting – which is even harder with the current overflow of students.

Rob Hunter is managing director of Place Group and an award-winning student landlord. He's sympathetic to their plight and well-versed in the accommodation crisis. "The major problem is that there are more students than there are good houses", he says. "On one of our block viewing days, we can have up to seventy groups seeing one of our properties."

Moving out of halls and into rented digs can be an overwhelming process at the best of times, and the current climate doesn't make it any easier. Nonetheless, by stashing your stuff at one of our secure self storage units and using these expert tips, you can dodge some of the more common difficulties you might encounter while trying to land your first flat.

Be prepared

"It's understandable given their inexperience, but students don't always comprehend some realities of the market. They see viewings as a chance to poke around their potential new home – we tend to see it as more of an interview."

Rob advises would-be tenants to swot up on the landlord or letting agent's website. "Get an understanding of what they're likely to ask of a new tenant, and you'll save yourself time, energy, and disappointment", he says. "You can't determine whether or not they'll be a good fit unless you have some idea of their requirements."

It's also sensible to begin searching as early as possible, giving you the chance to work through any potential administrative quirks once you've found a place. "For an August let, you want to start looking in January/February", Rob says.



“Anything can happen before you move in: one of your housemates might have trouble securing the deposit, another might drop out of university entirely. Ideally, leave yourself as much time to solve these problems as you can.”

A room with a viewing

“Prospective tenants should treat their viewing like a first date”, Rob says. This doesn’t mean you

should invite your future landlord around for a nice steak dinner before settling in to watch *The Notebook*. Rather, it’s important that you try to present the best version of yourself.

For example, a little consideration goes a long way: it can be hard to keep track of paperwork, references, and other miscellaneous information, but if you have them ready, you’ll have a clear advantage over the majority.

“We ask attendees to fill out a form and give it to us at the viewing”, Rob says. “Five percent do so. We *always* let to the students who fall within this bracket. Not because they’re better than the other candidates, but for the simple reason that we’ve got their details and know what to expect.”

Finally, stress test your group: great friends don’t always make good housemates, and years of mediating disputes have left landlords and agents acutely aware of the types of dispositions that are liable to clash. Consider bringing a group CV with all of your information on it to the viewing: it acquaints them with your personalities, it shows initiative, and it saves them time – all valuable qualities when competing against a number of other students!

Don’t settle!



Searching for your first flat can be grueling, and after a certain amount of frustration, it’s understandable if you feel ready to take the first place that’ll have you. However, no matter how desperate your circumstances, don’t settle for any housing situation that makes you uncomfortable: it’s not worth the risk to your safety, your sanity, or your savings.

Demand is certainly outstripping supply at the moment, but Rob is sensitive to the predatory nature of some of his peers, arguing that first-time renters

should follow their instincts: "I'd always advise students to walk away if something seems wrong."

"It can sometimes feel like you'll never find the right place", he says. "But even with the current shortages, there'll always be another house."

Rob Hunter's Place Group own and operate student houses in the North London area.

We know you're itching to move into that fabulous first flat, but in the meantime, you'll need somewhere to put your things. Access Storage is always happy to help with storage.

Share this article

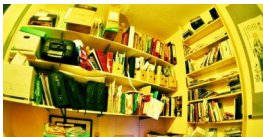
Related articles



New Year, New You – Keep that resolution to harmonise your home



Breaking down the cost of student storage: how you can SAVE money



Top tips on tackling clutter straight from a professional

More latest tips

Moving Out of Halls Part I: Finding Your First Student Flat

Don't Sell Yourself Short

One chance to make a great first impression

Breaking down the cost of student storage: how you can SAVE money

Keep in contact

Sign up for our monthly email newsletter with a digest of news and storage tips.

Subscribe

© Access Storage 2014