

House Hunting Guide



Not for profit.
For the student.

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Unipol is a not-for-profit organisation who can help with all things student housing.

We've been partners with the universities and Students' Unions in Leeds for 50 years so we know our stuff when it comes to housing and students' rights.

We provide free impartial advice, contract checking, can help with complaints, and we offer an accommodation search tool on our website where we advertise 1000s of student only properties – all of which are managed by verified landlords.

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This guide will equip you with all the info you need to find the best student home for you while studying in Leeds, so you can make informed choices and feel empowered as a renter.

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Things to consider



What is your budget?

Make sure you have looked at your finances and know what your budget is before you start searching. If you opt for a non-bills inclusive property, make sure you budget for bills on top of your rent. On average this should be £22-£35 per week depending on your group size.



Who would you like to live with?

Students in the last academic year told us that they felt pressure to house hunt early, before they were sure of who they wanted to live with.

Check out what other students said about house hunting in Leeds ([Unipol House Hunting Survey 2025](#))

There are plenty of properties available. By taking your time to house hunt you can concentrate on choosing the right housemates and create your property wish list. By waiting, you may also find cheaper rents later in the year.



Is it a Unipol Code property?

Rent with confidence when using Unipol. All landlords and agents listed on the Unipol website are Code accredited.

Find out more about the benefits of renting a Code property [here](#).



What area would you like to live in?

Do some research on different areas of Leeds and decide which is best for you. Consider distance from uni, nearest shops, gym etc.

Check out our area guide [here](#) to find out more about different areas and average rents.

Finances

Paying your rent will take up a significant part of your budget, however, there are some other expenses you will also need to factor in; food, transport, books, utilities (if not included in rent).

If you're struggling with any aspect of managing your finances you can contact your University and Students' Union Advice Services as they will have resources available to help you.

Here are some links that might be helpful for managing a budget:

Money Management app
[Black Bullion](#)

Rent Calculator
[Save the Student](#)

Food shopping
[Save the Student](#)



Save the Student!

Save the Student is an excellent resource for all aspects of student life and is well worth a look for tips, advice and offers.

Looking for part time work?

There are lots of employment opportunities throughout the city and some universities/SUs also offer access to a variety of part-time job opportunities for their students.

- [University of Leeds](#)
- [Leeds Beckett](#)

Council Tax

If you're a full-time student you will be exempt from paying council tax. To declare your student status you must complete a form online so that you don't get chased. Just visit the [Leeds City Council](#) website.

Finding the right home



Once you have figured out what your budget is and who you want to live with, follow these simple steps to secure the right student home for you.

Step One

Search on the Unipol website

- Unipol only lists Code verified landlords so you can be sure you're choosing a good one. [Unipol.org.uk](https://www.unipol.org.uk)

Step Two

Book your viewings and make sure you know what to look out for when looking round properties

- Try to view a few different properties with different landlords so you can compare them.
- Make sure you're prepared with a [list of questions](#).
- Look out for repair issues and any signs of damp and mould.
- Speak to the existing tenants (if they're in). This can give you a good indication of the landlord and their management of the property.
- Don't be afraid to ask if you feel unsure about anything – you're the paying customer so don't feel pressured into signing if something isn't clear or right for you.

Step Three

Look online to check other tenants' reviews

- [Rate Your Landlord](#) is a Leeds student landlord review site where you can read previous tenants' genuine reviews about your prospective landlord.
- Google reviews are also a useful tool to see how other people have found the landlord or agent.
- [StudentCrowd](#) is a popular review site for larger student accommodation buildings.

Step Four

Get your contract checked

- Unipol offer a [free online contract checking](#) service and we'll be happy to do this for you.

If you're happy with everything after following these steps, you're ready to sign and can start getting excited about your new home!

Don't forget!

Tenancy agreements are legally binding so you cannot back out once you have signed.





Look out for
our thumbs up!

The **Unipol Code** is a stamp of approval for landlords and agents who meet higher standards. They must fulfill certain criteria relating to:

Repairs

They must be carried out quickly within agreed timescales:

- **Priority 1**
Emergency repairs: things like floods, fire, structural issues that pose an immediate risk to health & safety - should be completed within 24 hours of being reported.
- **Priority 2**
Urgent repairs: things like boiler repairs, shower not working. Defects which affect the comfort and/or convenience of the tenants – should be completed within 5 working days of being reported.
- **Priority 3**
Day to day repairs: things like a damaged or broken wardrobe – should be completed within reasonable timescales (within 28 working days of being reported).

Customer service

They must be professional, transparent and fair, and they must respond to tenants' queries within reasonable timescales.

Safety

All rental properties must meet certain safety standards by law, but the Unipol Code is designed with students in mind and goes beyond the legal minimum.

Unipol inspects a sample of every Code landlord's properties to ensure they meet agreed standards, but if you feel they have breached any of the above, tenants have the right to [complain](#). In which case, Unipol will investigate and help you to resolve the issue.

Contracts

Deposits

Some landlords will ask for a deposit when you sign for a property. Legally, this can be no more than 5 weeks' rent equivalent. By law they must protect it under a government scheme. **The 3 government approved schemes are:**

- [Tenancy Deposit Scheme](#)
- [Deposit Protection Service](#)
- [MyDeposits](#)

Make sure you know which one your deposit is protected by.



Did you know?

Unipol don't ask for deposits for our own properties, so if you can't afford or do not wish to pay a deposit, check out **Unipol's own properties** [here](#).

Tenant Fees Act 2019

Landlords should not ask you to pay any additional fees when you sign a contract.

You can find more info on what landlords can charge [here](#).

Guarantors

A guarantor is someone who is asked to guarantee that the rent is paid and will take financial responsibility if it is not.

Some landlords will ask for a guarantor. If you don't have one you can speak to Unipol or your Students' Union for advice.

Alternatively, Unipol owned properties never require a guarantor so check out Unipol's own properties by scanning the code above.

The Renters' Rights Bill

What students need to know

The government is looking to make changes to how private renting works via the **Renters' Rights Bill**.

At the time of editing, it was still going through Parliament, and the finer details are subject to change before it becomes law.

When introduced, the reforms are expected to affect students in private rented housing by:

- Changing how and when tenancies can start and end
- Introducing new rules on notice periods and eviction grounds
- Setting clearer standards for property conditions and landlord responsibilities.

For now, nothing has changed - the tenancy agreement you sign today is still legally binding under current law. But keep an eye out: once the Bill is enacted, it may affect **future student contracts**.

Stay up to date

Unipol will provide updates as the Bill progresses to make sure you know what your rights are and what to expect. Please see [here](#) for the latest update.



Unipol websites

A quick guide

unipol housing

All of **Unipol's own properties** are listed on this website where you can book viewings and take virtual tours. **As a not-for-profit landlord we:**

- **Don't charge deposits**
- **Don't ask for guarantors**
- **Include all bills in the rent (this includes free to use washer dryers in all flats & houses and free contents insurance)**
- **Offer a Tenancy Support Service to all tenants**
- **Ensure all our properties are covered by the Unipol Code as standard**
- **Offer a wide choice of property types for all budgets to ensure student housing is accessible to everyone.**

Here to help

We hope these benefits make your student living experience as stress-free as possible. Check out **Unipol's own properties** [here](#).

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Search for a property from one of our many Code landlords at [Unipol.org.uk](https://unipol.org.uk). **Here you can also find lots of advice, tips and information about living as a student in Leeds.**

Unipol runs Flatmate Finder Social Events; keep an eye on our social media for upcoming events, guidance and top tips.



Find us on [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#) @unipolhousing



Looking to live with a group?

You can use the [Student Noticeboard](#) on our website to find spare rooms advertised by other students in shared housing.

Moving in

What to expect

Getting prepared to move into your new student home? Exciting times! Here are a few things to bear in mind before moving day:

- Check what your housemates are bringing with them – you don't need 6 air fryers!
- If you plan on bringing a car, check if you need a parking permit. Don't start the year with a fine...
- Download the [Leeds Bins App](#) to check when your waste will be collected and make sure you and your housemates agree on a rota for putting the bin out.
- If you're planning on moving in on 1st July, bear in mind that landlords and agents will have lots of tenants who have only just moved out the day before on 30th June. It might just take them a few days to attend all their properties. It's fine to politely check if they will be coming, but please be patient if it takes them a couple of days.

Happy living!

When you move into the community - usually this means into a student house - it won't just be students around you. You'll find yourself living amongst a wide range of people: families, elderly people, professionals.

Whilst the vast majority of students live happily alongside other members of the community, there are times when conflict can occur. Most tension of this kind can be avoided. Find tips on being a good neighbour and getting to know your community [here](#) and by following us on social media.



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Follow us
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