

LEEDS HOUSING GUIDE 2024

ACCOMMODATION, ACCREDITATION, ADVICE

unipol[®]

the home of student housing

STUDENT

HOUSING

ALL UNDER
ONE ROOF



unipol

HERE TO HELP!

FREE
ADVICE
SERVICE



UNIPOL IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION HELPING THE STUDENTS OF LEEDS TO FIND THE BEST HOME FOR THEM WHILE STUDYING

Working closely with the Universities and Students' Unions in Leeds, Unipol offers impartial advice, empowering you to make informed choices.

Not only do we help you find the perfect house, but we can also help to support you with anything student accommodation related throughout your time at university.

This booklet can guide you through your House Hunting journey from start to finish.

Leeds' largest list of student only properties

becomes available on our website from 18th November 2023 for early access visit unipol.org.uk/leedshh or scan the QR code.



UNIPOL



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HOME OF STUDENT HOUSING

1 YOU CAN VISIT US

in person by popping into the Housing Hub which is on Woodhouse Lane between University of Leeds and Leeds Beckett University.

2 WE CAN OFFER

a wealth of advice, WIFI, and search facilities - all free to use.

3 SEARCH

over 20,000 student properties at www.unipol.org.uk from 18th November 2023.

4 IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO VISIT US IN PERSON

all our services are accessible via:
* Live Webchat * Phone * Social Media * Email
you can find these at the bottom of our website.

5 WE ARE AN INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION

who provides a range of accommodation for different needs. You can find out more about Unipol Housing on page 14.

6 OPENING TIMES

Our Hub is open Monday to Friday 9am to 4:45pm. Our hours are extended throughout busy periods to ensure the best service possible, and these will be updated on our website.

How many Code properties:

3,459

Properties with bills included:

48%

Average deposit studio:

£400 per person

Properties with washing machine included:

84%

Landlords asking for a guarantor:

86%

Average rent for a shared house:

£124
excl bills £100

Average deposit shared property:

£344 per person

Figures are based on the 2023/24 academic year rental rates, expect approximately a 4-8% rise for 2024/25 depending on the provider.

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU START YOUR HOUSE HUNTING JOURNEY

Who are you living with?

1 in 4 students in Leeds* change, or want to change the group they initially sign up with. Don't rush to rent with a group you're not certain you're happy living with.

If you are looking in a group, make sure you can agree on what you are looking for before you start.

If you haven't found a group yet but would like to, you can use the Unipol Student Noticeboard or join one of our Flat Mate Finding events. Find out more on page 16.

What is your budget?

Make sure you have looked at your finances and know what your budget is. If you go for a non-inclusive option, make sure you budget for bills on top of your rent. On average this should be £22 - £35 per week.

What is the Unipol Code?

Get clued up on the benefits of renting from a Unipol Code landlord. Find out more on page 8.

What area would you like to live in?

Decide which area is best for you. Think about distance from the Uni, nearest shop, gym etc. Find out more on page 10.

Do you have a guarantor?

Some landlords will ask for a guarantor. If you don't have one you can speak to Unipol or your Students' Union for advice. More information can be found on page 23.

* Based on results from a study of 800 students in Leeds in 2022.



STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO FINDING THE RIGHT STUDENT HOME

1 Search on the Unipol website

From the 18th November 2023 you will be able search 1000s of student properties on the Unipol website.

You can filter the results depending on what you are looking for. Find out more information on page 18.



2 Pick a Unipol Code Landlord

Renting with a Code landlord provides you with an extra safety blanket if anything goes wrong. Just look out for the green thumbs up!

You can find out more about the benefits of renting with a Code Landlord on the next page.

3 Be confident on viewings

Compare different properties with different landlords. Make sure you take a list of questions to viewings. Landlords shouldn't be pushy on viewings. Remember you are the paying customer. If you don't feel comfortable, don't be pressured into signing. Take a virtual tour of properties on the Unipol website.

4 Rate your landlord

Check out www.rateyourlandlord.org.uk to find out what previous tenants think about your potential landlord or property.



5 Get your contract checked:

by your Students' Union before signing. Once you've signed there is no backing out, so understand the commitment.



THE UNIPOL CODE: A STAMP OF APPROVAL FOR LANDLORDS WHO MEET HIGHER STANDARDS.

Code landlords go the extra mile to offer a great service:



* **Repairs**
are carried out quickly to agreed timescales.

* Landlords will be reliable and offer better
customer service.



* **Safety**
measures are in place to ensure
the house is protected from fire
hazards and burglary.



If things go wrong

Unipol can step in and help to resolve issues with Code landlords. If your landlord is not a member of the Code, unfortunately Unipol cannot intervene but will be able to signpost you for support.

* Did you know?

The Unipol code covers rooms in shared student houses and flats as well as rooms in student halls.

* Tip



When searching for a property on the Unipol website, look out for the blue or green pin. Alternatively, adverts from Code landlords will display the green or blue thumbs up.



* You can check if a specific property is covered by the Unipol Code by using the handy tool on our website. Visit www.unipol.org.uk/codesearch

Not all Code memberships are the same. For details on the different membership types visit www.unipol.org.uk/codeworks

If you are renting from a Let only agent, ask if that particular property is accredited by the Unipol Code. (Let only agents do not own or manage the properties, they only advertise the properties and perform viewings on behalf of the landlord).

Horsforth

Average rent Incl bills: £139

A popular location for professional and families, but not many student rentals are available. Leeds Trinity University has accommodation on campus and there is a direct train link to the city centre.

Headingley

Average rent Incl bills: £130

A great community feel with a wide variety of shops, bars and restaurants. It's only a 35 minute walk, or 15 minute bus journey to the city centre.

Average rent Incl bills: £133

Popular residential area with both students and young professionals. You won't be far from green space as it's home to Burley Park – a large green park with tennis and basketball courts.

Burley

Hyde Park

Average rent Incl bills: £129

A mixed residential area that is a short walk from both universities. It has a range of independent shops, takeaways, local supermarkets, popular pubs and the famous music venue: Brudenell Social Club.

LEEDS AREA GUIDE

Figures are based on the 2023/24 academic year rental rates, expect approximately a 4–8% rise for 2024/25 depending on the provider.

Average rent Incl bills: £124

Home to Hyde Park corner with its independent shops and cafes, and Woodhouse Moor Park, Woodhouse is a popular area near Leeds University and only 10 minutes' walk to the city centre.

Woodhouse

Average rent Incl bills: £218

A lively and expanding city centre by the River Aire, with a huge choice of shops, bars, restaurants, museums and galleries. From the City Centre there are excellent transport links via train and bus to Yorkshire and beyond!

Leeds City Centre

Chapeltown

Average rent: £122

Popular with students at Northern School of Contemporary Dance and medical students at St James Hospital. Here you can find lower rent costs and good transport connections to the city centre.



Living in the Community

When moving to more residential areas of Leeds you won't be living exclusively among other students and it's important to be considerate of your neighbours.

Read our guide on some practical steps you can take Unipol.org.uk/community

Claremont Avenue



Victoria Terrace

Oak House



Cardigan Road

DID YOU KNOW THAT UNIPOL IS ALSO A LANDLORD?

unipol housing

We have a huge choice of properties you can rent from us directly and we are the only non-profit student landlord in Leeds.

When you rent directly from Unipol you can get:

- * Bills inclusive rent
- * Free contents insurance
- * A personal Housing Manager and onsite Residents' Assistants*
*at larger developments
- * Individual rooms available to rent in shared properties
- * No deposits
- * No guarantors

See our available properties at UnipolHousing.org.uk



U Experience is Unipol's Tenant Social and Wellbeing Programme which includes free socials, events, and confidential support from the Tenancy Support and Wellbeing team.



HOW TO USE THE UNIPOL WEBSITE

* Search through thousands of student properties on the Unipol website

Our guide on how to search for properties effectively.

* Use the Student Noticeboard

which you can find under 'search for housing.'

* To see if a property is accredited

by the Unipol Code, click 'The Codes' heading and select the subheading 'is my property in the Code.'

* Rooms available

You will see how many rooms are available in this city.

* Whole property required:

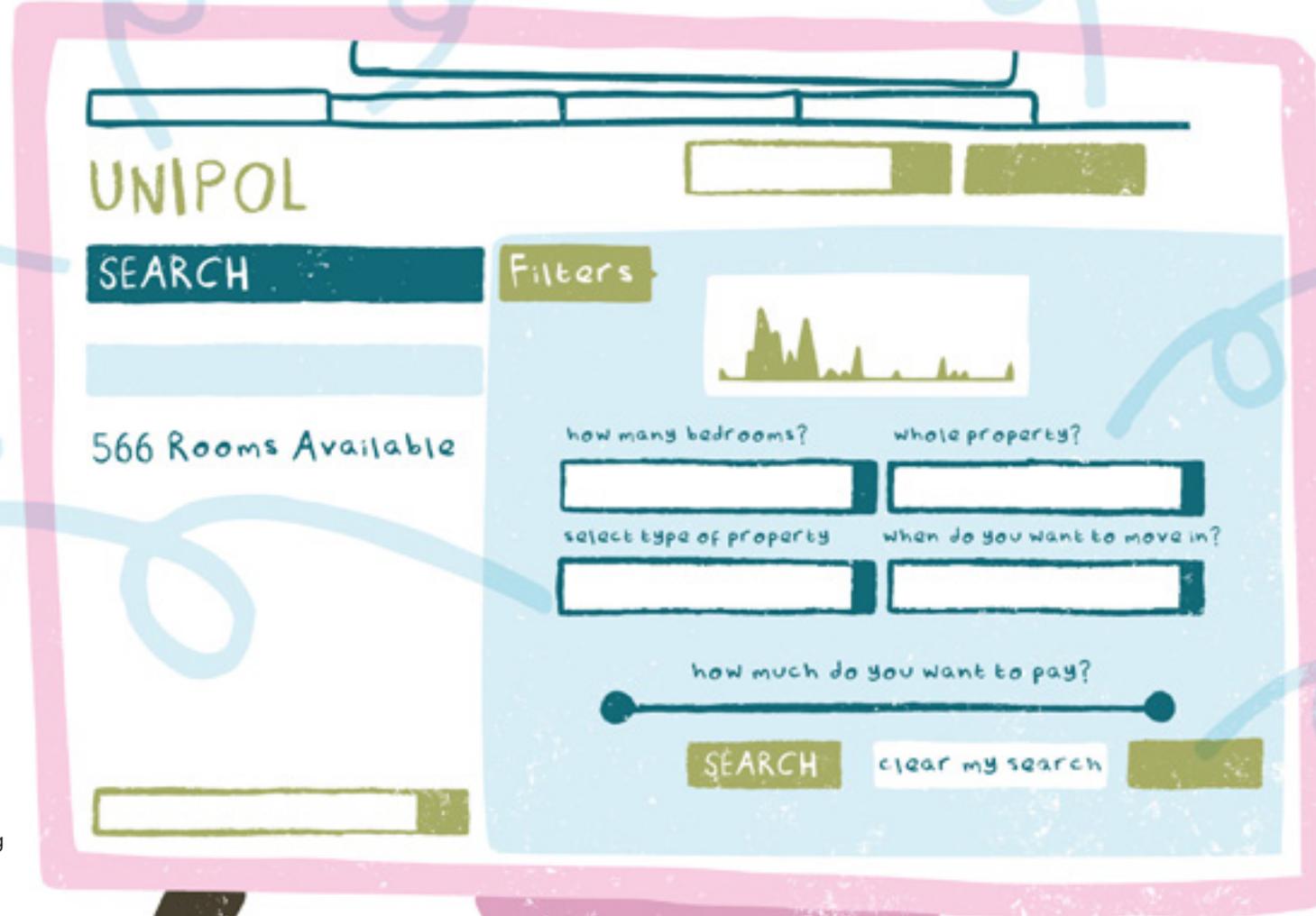
Here you can select whether you want a whole house for you and a group or an individual room within a shared building.

* Select Type of property:

Here you can choose whether you want a house, flat or apartment within a development.

* Blogs:

new blogs are published weekly and these contain useful advice and interesting info for students. Just search Unipol Blog.



* Advanced options:

for a more thorough search, use the advanced filters.

* Guarantor Required?:

You can search for properties where a guarantor is not required.

HOW TO USE THE UNIPOL WEBSITE: ADVERTS



* Map

You can also search by location using the map. A green thumbs up is a property managed by Unipol and a blue thumbs up is a property managed by a Unipol Code landlord.

* Advert:

Adverts will show up in the left column. You will be able to see how many bedrooms are available, cost per week, inclusive of bills and deposit amount.

* Interested?

If you are interested in a property, you can see more by clicking on the advert. You will also be able to contact the landlord by clicking the 'book a viewing' green button at the top of the advert.

DON'T HAVE A GROUP TO LIVE WITH?

Although many students choose to share with friends, other students choose to live on their own in a 1 bed flat or studio.

If you want to search for a 1 bedroom property, there are many choices on the Unipol website.

Students who would like to share but haven't yet found a group have a number of options and these include:



* The Unipol Student Noticeboard

You can find potential flatmates or a spare room within a shared property on the noticeboard. Read others' posts or set up a new thread.



Unipol Flatmate Finding events

Find out when our next flatmate event is on the Unipol website within the advice section.

Your Students' Union may also run similar events so get in touch with them to find out.



* The Unipol website

On the Unipol website you can select individual rooms within a shared property. Just look out for 'will let individually' on adverts.



* Social media

Unipol and your Students' Union set up Facebook groups for people to meet other potential flatmates. Just ask and we can send you the link.

If you already in a group and need advice, please don't hesitate to contact us.

COST OF LIVING

The cost of living is getting higher and higher as the rate of inflation is still causing the price of just about everything in our day to day life to get more expensive. This is a big problem for students particularly, so it's more important now than ever that you make sure to budget effectively when house hunting. Take into account that although your rent may stay the same each month, everything else is likely to become more expensive as the year goes on. Just because you can afford it now might not necessarily mean you can afford it in 6 months' time. If you are struggling with the cost of living, contact your Students' Union Advice Service as they will have resources available to help you.

Here are 3 cost of living tips:

- 1. Check your bank account regularly** - things can go wrong quickly with money so keep an eye on your accounts and don't ignore it if things are getting worse.
- 2. Keep a budget** - be mindful and aware of what you're spending. Try allocating a portion of your money to things like socialising or eating meals out each month and try not to exceed your budget.
- 3. Keep takeaway meals to a minimum** - try meal prep instead, it's a cost effective way to cook your meals on a budget.

WWW.UNIPOL.ORG.UK/
LEEDSADVICE

YOUR PROPERTY CHECKLIST

Take this on a viewing with you

Address:

Address:

Address:

Doing a virtual viewing?

Here are a few tips:

- 1 Look at all photos in detail before viewing to ensure you've got a list of questions you may need to ask
- 2 Make sure you ask to see all rooms.

- 3 If possible try and screen record the viewing so you can refer back to it.
- 4 Ask to see any outside space in the property.
- 5 If the landlord is unable to answer any questions follow the viewing up with an email so they don't forget.

Utilities

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Are bills inclusive? If not, find out how much they will cost a week | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Does the tenancy agreement have a fair usage policy? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Is WIFI provided free of charge? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Plumbing

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. Does the shower work effectively (you won't want a trickle)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Are there enough showering/washing facilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Security

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6. Does the property have a working burglar alarm? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Are all the external doors solid? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Does the property have double glazing? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Do the downstairs windows have locks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Furnishings and general

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 10. Does any of the furniture belong to the existing tenants? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Are there any signs of damp? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Are there enough sockets in each room? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |





Kitchen

13. Is there enough storage space?
14. Is there enough fridge/freezer capacity?

Money

15. Does the contract clearly state what the rent includes?
16. Do you know which tenancy deposit scheme your deposit will be held in?
17. Do you require a guarantor?
18. Is there a summer rent discount?
19. Is the rent paid monthly / termly / quarterly?
20. Is contents insurance included?



Outside the property

21. Is the garden maintained by the landlord?
22. Is there space for parking or secure cycle storage?
23. Will you need a car parking permit?



Agreements

24. Do you know when the tenancy starts and ends?
25. Who manages the property? Name, address and phone



Owner

26. Is the landlord a member of the Unipol Code?
27. Do you know what you are responsible for maintaining? E.g. replacing lights and taking bins out
28. Has the landlord/ agent provided you with any extra services (e.g window cleaning, gardening, lighting of common parts, dustbin and refuse disposal)?
29. Has the landlord/ agent agreed any changes to the property (get them in writing).



Other

30. Are there shops nearby?
31. Is public transport nearby should you need it?



HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO CHECK BEFORE YOU SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE.

CONTRACT



Tenant Fees Act 2019:

Landlords shouldn't ask you to pay any additional fees when you sign a contract. More information about what landlords can charge can be found on the government website: www.gov.uk/government/collections/tenant-fees-act

Deposits:

You'll usually have to pay a deposit when you sign for a property. By law landlords are obliged to protect your deposit under one of the three government schemes. At the end of your tenancy the deposit should be returned to you as soon as possible and normally within 10 days unless deductions are made. Reasons for deductions should be clearly stated to you in writing within this timeframe. You can find out more here:

www.unipol.org.uk/deposits



Fair usage Clauses:

Most all-inclusive tenancy agreements will have an energy usage cap or a fair usage policy. Put simply, this means that your agreement is only 'all inclusive' up to the point where you exceed the fair usage policy. If you do exceed the fair usage policy, the landlord/agent may retain a proportion of your deposit if you have paid one, or if you have not paid a deposit, they might ask you to pay from the point at which you have gone over the cap or at the end of your tenancy.

Guarantors:

A guarantor is someone who is asked to guarantee that the rent is paid and will take financial responsibility if it is not. Most students are asked to provide a guarantor when asked to sign a contract. If you don't have one, please contact us and we can provide you with advice.

Make sure your guarantor knows exactly what they are signing for and that they are only responsible for your rent.



CAN YOU AFFORD IT?

Council Tax:

If you are 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.

Before you sign any contract:

make sure you figure out what your incomings and outgoings are. It might be useful to make a spreadsheet so you can budget everything in.

There are lots of useful tools online that can help you with this.

Inflation:

With inflation still causing the cost of just about everything to increase, make sure that you factor in a 3% safety net as things that you may be able to afford now could be unaffordable in a years' time.

Check out the EPC rating:

You'll be giving an EPC rating with your housing pack. This gives you an indication of how energy efficient your property is. The green end of the scale indicates that the running costs will be cheaper.

Summer rent discount:

Some landlords will offer a discount over the summer months. Speak to your landlord to see if it is something that they offer as it can save you money.

TV licence:

Check whether your landlord pays for your TV licence. If not, tenants should do this. You can pay online here: www.tvlicensing.co.uk/pay-for-your-tv-licence/ways-to-pay/payment-card

Bundle your bills.

If your rent is not inclusive of bills, you will need to work this out separately. There are companies that offer to manage your bills for you but there is normally an admin charge you will need to pay. Take advice as energy costs are on the rise. Allow between £25 - £40 per person per week to cover costs.



SIGNING THE CONTRACT

Contract checking - are you good to go?

So you've found your perfect property and you are ready to sign on the dotted line but before you do you should consider getting your contract checked. The golden rule is never to sign anything you don't understand. Unipol and the Students' Unions offer a contract checking service which in most cases is available without an appointment.

Right to Rent

All landlords are legally obliged to verify the immigration status of all prospective tenants or lodgers before they can rent their property to you. You will be asked to produce a valid passport or a combination of two other documents.

To see the full list of documents visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent

How to Rent Checklist

Landlords are obliged by law to provide a copy of the 'How to Rent Checklist' at the time you sign your contract.



The Unipol Code

Before you rent from a Unipol Code landlord you can request a copy of the contract, which should include details of any fees payable in addition to rent and any arrangements involving guarantors. Have this checked by Unipol or a students' union. Under the terms of the Unipol Code the landlord or agent needs to give you 24 hours to do that before remarketing the property. (Source: The Unipol Code, clause 2.03).

FAQs



How clean does the house need to be to get the deposit back?

The landlord will expect you to return the property in the condition you originally rented it in. Tenants can incur certain charges for neglecting cleaning jobs such as the oven and bathrooms. To find out more information about what is expected, visit www.unipol.org.uk/movingguide

What happens if someone in the house doesn't pay their rent? Will I be charged?



This is dependant on what contract you have signed. If you have signed an individual contract you will not be liable. Unfortunately, if you have signed a joint contract you are severally liable with the rest of your house mates for rent as a whole. To find out more about contracts, visit: www.unipol.org.uk/contracts

☎ 0113 243 0169

✉ info@unipol.org.uk

📍 Unipol Student Homes
155-157 Woodhouse Lane
Leeds LS2 3ED

🕒 **OPEN** Mon-Fri 9am - 4.45pm

Daily Recorded Information Line: 0113 205 3434

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🐦 Follow us @unipol_students

📷 Instagram [unipolhousing](https://www.instagram.com/unipolhousing)

www.unipol.org.uk/LeedsHH

About Unipol: We are a not-for-profit housing charity established in 1975 and provide help and assistance to students renting in the private sector. Our values are to; be trusted, be impartial experts, provide value for money, promote safety and wellbeing, promote community, be ethical, and be transparent and accountable.

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