

## WHAT IS A SCAM?

A scam is a scheme or situation deliberately set up by someone to deceive you and often to take money from you dishonestly.

Unfortunately, some landlords/letting agents advertise properties that don't actually exist or ask students for large amounts of money before disappearing and never contacting them again.

In order to help protect you against falling for one of these scams we've created a check list of things you should do before you sign a contract for a flat or hand over any money:

## SRC ADVICE CENTRE

If you have a problem or enquiry about any aspect of student life, you can drop in to the SRC Advice Centre for a confidential chat with one of the professional advice workers.

**No appointment is necessary  
and the service is free.**

The Advice Centre is run by the SRC which is independent from the University and there to fight your corner in academic matters like academic appeals, complaints, student conduct procedures and other issues.

SRC Advice Centre staff also deal with welfare issues including: benefits/tax credits, council tax, debt, national insurance, tax, housing, student financial support and employment rights.

**SRC ADVICE CENTRE**  
JOHN MCINTYRE BUILDING  
UNIVERSITY AVENUE  
GLASGOW  
G12 8QQ

Normal opening hours below.  
May vary dependent upon staff commitments.  
Please call or check our website if planning a long  
journey to see an advisor.

MON - FRI 11.30AM-4.00PM

0141 330 5360  
advice@src.gla.ac.uk

# THE SRC ADVICE CENTRE'S TOP 10 TIPS FOR AVOIDING HOUSING SCAMS

2014 EDITION



# GUSRC'S TOP 10 TIPS FOR AVOIDING HOUSING SCAMS

## 1 SEARCH ONLINE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE LANDLORD/LETTING AGENT

**ALWAYS** google the landlord/letting agents name and the words "scam" and/or "fraud", it's possible that if there's a problem with the landlord/letting agent someone will have posted about it on the internet previously.

## 2 CHECK THE PROPERTY ONLINE

**ALWAYS** check the property exists and is in fact private rented accommodation (and not a shop or a warehouse or something!) by putting the property address into Google Maps and looking at it on Google Street View.

## 3 CHECK THE LANDLORD IS REGISTERED WITH GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL

**ALWAYS** check the landlord is registered with Glasgow City Council's landlord registration section, you can do this by searching the property address and landlord's details here:  
[www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk)\*

Similarly if you are renting a property which requires an House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licence\*\* you can check if the landlord has this by contacting Glasgow City Council's HMO unit on 0141 287 4535.

## 4 CHECK THE TENANCY AGREEMENT

**ALWAYS** check the tenancy agreement before sending any money to the landlord/letting agent, the SRC Advice Centre can review this for you and you can email us a copy of the contract to check before you sign if you aren't able to come in and see us.

## 5 CHECK THE DOCUMENTATION

**ALWAYS** check that any documents which supposedly prove ownership of the property are genuine and legal in the UK. Please note it is not necessary to see proof of ownership before you rent a property – it should be enough to check the landlord registration (see above). If you are in any way unsure, get in touch with the SRC Advice Centre.

## 6 KNOW WHAT YOU ARE PAYING FOR

**ALWAYS** think carefully before handing over money to a landlord/letting agent for anything other than rent/deposit or utility bills, if you aren't sure if you should be paying a bill or fee to the landlord/letting

agent get in contact with the SRC Advice Centre. Be wary of landlords who insist on payment in cash. If you can, try and pay by bank transfer, standing order or cheque as it is easier to prove what has been paid. If you have to pay in cash always make sure you get a proper receipt, dated and signed by the landlord.

## 7 APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEPTIVE

**ALWAYS** remember that just because an advert is hosted on a supposedly reputable or well-known website, it doesn't guarantee the person posting the advert is to be trusted.

## 8 DON'T HAND OVER YOUR PASSPORT DETAILS

**NEVER** under any circumstances provide your landlord/letting agent with a copy of your passport or visa documents, there is no legal reason for them to hold this information and it is not a legal requirement for agreeing a tenancy under Scottish law.

## 9 KEEP TRACK OF YOUR MONEY

**NEVER** send money to a landlord/letting agent via Western Union as this is untraceable, if you are transferring money to a landlord/letting agent do so via bank transfer. If they insist on cash or Western Union they may be trying to deceive you.

## 10 BE AWARE OF ADVANCE PAYMENTS

**NEVER** pay anything other than rent or a deposit in advance, if the landlord/letting agent is trying to charge you for anything else it may be a scam. Also only pay the rent or deposit in advance once you've carried out the steps above and are happy with the contract the landlord/letting agent has offered.

It is strongly advised that you view the accommodation yourself before you pay any money or sign any contract. We realise this may be difficult for students coming from abroad, but it may be worth staying in short-term accommodation (e.g. a hotel or hostel) for a few days whilst you view different properties. Alternatively if you have friends or family in Glasgow already you could ask if they will view a few flats for you before you arrive, to ensure the offer of accommodation is genuine.

\*The fact that a landlord is registered with Glasgow City Council is not a guarantee that they are honest and reliable. If you're having doubts about a potential tenancy/landlord come in and speak to us.

\*\*Your landlord should have a HMO licence if you live in a property where: at least three people live there, and; the people who live there belong to three or more families, and; the people who live there share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet. Just because there is no HMO when there should be, doesn't necessarily make it a scam, but it may raise doubts about whether the landlord is trustworthy. Again, if in doubt seek further advice.



## MORE INFORMATION

### SRC ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

[www.glasgowstudent.net/accommodation](http://www.glasgowstudent.net/accommodation)

### LANDLORD REGISTRATION SCOTLAND

[www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk)

### GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL

[www.glasgow.gov.uk](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk)

### SHELTER SCOTLAND

[www.scotland.shelter.org.uk](http://www.scotland.shelter.org.uk)

### SRC FLATHUNTING LEAFLET

DEATH TRAP OR DEAD GOOD?: A GUIDE TO FLAT HUNTING IN GLASGOW

[www.glasgowstudent.net/documents](http://www.glasgowstudent.net/documents)

### CONTACT GUSRC

If you have any doubts about a potential property or landlord/letting agent or just want some general advice on finding private rented accommodation contact :

SRC Advice Centre  
John McIntyre Building  
University Avenue  
Glasgow  
G12 8QQ

0141 330 5360  
[advice@src.gla.ac.uk](mailto:advice@src.gla.ac.uk)