

The safety and wellbeing of all Glasgow School of Art students is paramount. This information is intended to help students find a suitable place to live in Glasgow whilst taking into consideration restrictions as a result of the current global pandemic. Please be mindful that when looking for somewhere to live that coronavirus restrictions in Scotland may be different to the other parts of the UK and other countries.

Home moves have been permitted by the Scottish government since 29th June, 2020 provided they can be carried out safely. This means that students can undertake activities in connection with the rental of a residential property including:

- visiting estate or letting agents,
- viewing a residential property,
- preparing a residential property to move in to, or
- moving home.

We must still all continue to follow the advice designed to help people stay safe, protect others and save lives. To prevent transmission of Covid-19:

- keep a physical distance of at least 2 metres from other people wherever possible
- wash your hands regularly, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and warm water
- if you can't wash your hands, use hand sanitiser
- avoid touching your face
- ensure that any surfaces you come into contact with are cleaned and disinfected regularly
- when leaving home, carry hand sanitiser/disinfectant wipes with you and wear a mask or face covering. **If you have suspected symptoms or Covid-19 has been confirmed, you need to self-isolate for the period of quarantine and you must stay at home. You should not move into any property where people have Covid-19 or are self-isolating.**

Please see the NHS Scotland Inform guide at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-general-advice>

People who have been in close contact with someone who has the virus (as confirmed by testing) should self-isolate, even if they don't have symptoms. This is part of Test and Protect – Scotland's approach to implementing the Test, Trace, Isolate, Support strategy.

The situation may also change at short notice and guidance is reviewed regularly. Check for updates at <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus>

The process of finding and moving into a new home is different prior to COVID-19. Those involved in the process have had to adapt practices and procedures to ensure that the risk of spreading COVID-19 is reduced as far as possible and this has resulted in more online/virtual viewings being offered.

If you are viewing a property in-person, try not to touch surfaces. Remember that the virus lives on surfaces, including workshops and door handles. You should follow the Scottish government's advice on physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene, (masks/face coverings).

If you are seeking a room or property, it is recommended that you ask the person advertising to provide you with a virtual tour of the property. Go through the Student Welfare checklist to ensure that the virtual tour covers all the points on the list. If it doesn't, ask the landlord, or person advertising the room to provide you with the additional information.

For more information on this from the Scottish Government:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis/>

Our Top Tips

- 1. ALWAYS SEARCH ONLINE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE LANDLORD/LETTING AGENT** - Google the landlord/letting agent's 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. ALWAYS CHECK THE PROPERTY ONLINE** - check that the property actually exists and is in fact private rented accommodation and is not a shop or a warehouse! You can do this by putting the property address into Google Maps and looking at it on Google Street View. (If you are viewing the property in person, you should never go alone).
- 3. ALWAYS CHECK DOCUMENTATION THAT 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 If you are unsure if the landlord is registered, email welfare@gsa.ac.uk
- 4. CHECK TO SEE IF THE LANDLORD IS HMO REGISTERED** - if you are renting a property which requires a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licence** you can check if the landlord has this licence by contacting Glasgow City Council's HMO unit: **0300 343 0414**. If you are unsure if the landlord has an HMO licence, email welfare@gsa.ac.uk
- 5. ALWAYS CHECK THE TENANCY AGREEMENT** - check the tenancy agreement before sending any money to the landlord/letting agent. Our Student Welfare Advisers can review the tenancy agreement for you if you email a copy of the contract to welfare@gsa.ac.uk before you sign.

6. BE AWARE OF ADVANCE PAYMENTS, never pay anything other than rent or a deposit in advance (a deposit is usually the equivalent of one month's rent but must not be more than two month's rent) and you should always get a receipt when you pay your deposit. If the landlord/letting agent is trying to charge you for anything else it may be a scam, although there may be some exceptions. 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. If you are unsure, seek advice from welfare@gsa.ac.uk before you pay anything

7. ALWAYS KNOW WHAT YOU ARE PAYING FOR - think carefully before handing over money to a landlord/letting agent for anything other than rent/deposit or utility bills (see above). Be wary of landlords who insist on payment in cash or via Western Union or similar money transfer companies as the money transaction is untraceable and they may be trying to deceive you. Pay by bank transfer, standing order or cheque as it is easier to prove what has been paid. If you do pay in cash always make sure you get a proper receipt, dated and signed by the landlord. If you aren't sure if you should be paying a bill or fee to the landlord/letting agent email welfare@gsa.ac.uk

8. APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEPTIVE - 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.

9. BE WARY OF HANDING OVER PASSPORT DETAILS - never let a landlord/letting agent keep your ID or passport. If they insist on making a copy, ask them to confirm that your details will be stored securely, and destroyed when no longer needed, so as to avoid potential identity theft.

10. IF YOU NEED A UK GUARANTOR – there are private companies which provide this service to EU/international students for a fee. Our Student Welfare Advisers can signpost you to these companies, however GSA cannot act as your guarantor and does not endorse these companies or pay for this service.

11. WHEN YOU FIND YOUR PROPERTY AND MOVE IN - make sure you do an initial clean as soon as possible.

ALWAYS REMEMBER – if it looks too good to be true, it probably is - please be vigilant when viewing properties online and stay safe! Check out our Accommodation Guide for a wealth of useful and more in-depth information.

http://www.gsa.ac.uk/media/1806663/accommodation-student-welfare-leaflet_july2020-1-.pdf

*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 email welfare@gsa.ac.uk .

**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.