

Charter for Student Self-Catering Accommodation

This Charter outlines a basis for the relationship between landlords and student tenants which is recommended by the Institute of Technology, Carlow.

The Charter addresses the issues that most commonly lead to difficulties for either students or landlords; the Charter is in four parts :

- Recommended documentation
- Standards
- Other Tenants Rights
- Expected Student Behaviour

The Institute does not itself enter into the agreement between the landlord and tenant. The fact that it publishes lists of particular accommodation websites does not imply a recommendation, equally the Institute is unable to recommend particular students as “good students”. It is important that both landlord and prospective tenants make the checks they feel necessary for themselves. The Institute aims to do what it reasonably can to minimise problems between landlords and students and to help any resolve problems that may arise. This Charter has been developed to assist with this aim.

Recommended Documentation (*this section is derived from Housing (Rent Books) Regulations 1993*).

- ◆ There should be a rent book and / or written letting agreement (held by the tenant) which must contain the following specified information about the tenancy :
 - the address of the house / flat
 - the name and address of the landlord and his agent (*if any*)
 - the tenants name
 - the amount of rent, when and how it is to be paid (*eg cash, cheque etc*)
 - details of payments other than rent (*eg TV, phone, gas, electricity etc*)
 - the amount and purpose of any deposit paid and the conditions under which it will be returned to the tenant (*deposits should not be withheld if proper notice is given, keys returned and there are no repairs to be made beyond normal wear and tear – receipts should be available for expenses relating to any deposit withheld*)
 - a statement of information on basic rights and duties of landlords and tenants
- ◆ All rent or other payments made to the landlord must be recorded.
- ◆ An inventory of contents should be made, including clear statements regarding condition of items.
- ◆ Documentation should make clear if one person moves out, will the remaining tenants be liable for that persons rent and will the tenants have any say over who moves in.

Standards (*this section is derived from the Housing (Standards for Rented Housing) Regulations 1993*)

The landlord should :

- ◆ Ensure that the house is in a proper state of structural repair (*ie that it is essentially sound with the roof, floors, ceilings, walls and stairs in good repair and free from damp*)
- ◆ Provide a sink in each dwelling with hot and cold water
- ◆ Provide toilet and bath or shower facilities
- ◆ Provide adequate means for heating, for installing cooking equipment and for storing food
- ◆ Maintain installations for the supply of electricity or gas in good repair and safe working order
- ◆ Provide proper ventilation and lighting to each room

- ◆ Maintain common facilities for cooking, food storage, lighting and heating in good repair and safe working order
- ◆ Maintain common sinks, toilets, baths / showers and other common areas in good repair and in clean condition
- ◆ Provide a secure handrail for any common stairway
- ◆ Provide at least one working smoke alarm for each floor

Local Authorities are responsible for enforcing legal requirements in relation to rent books and standards – see contact details below.

Other Tenant Rights

- ◆ The Landlord should respect the tenants right to quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their home, only entering by prior arrangement or in an emergency (*including to do essential repairs*)
- ◆ Both Landlord and Tenant should give any notice in writing and at least four weeks before it is due to come into effect
- ◆ The Landlord should ensure that the house has adequate study facilities and is not overcrowded

Expected Student Behaviour - Students should:

- ◆ Observe the commitments of the letting agreement, including paying rent on time and in relation to noise, parties and visitors
- ◆ Behave reasonably in respect of neighbours
- ◆ Maintain property and furnishings properly

Landlords will be asked to accept the commitments of this Charter and if they do so their accommodation will be advertised on the Institute's list of accommodation.

When a complaint is made about a landlord or student, the Institute of Technology Accommodation Officer will attempt to help resolve the matter informally, if at all possible.

Where a landlord is in clear breach of the commitments of this Charter and the issue can not be resolved, then the Institute reserves the right to remove that landlord's accommodation from the "Charter list". Any decision to remove accommodation from the "Charter list" will be subject to a right of appeal to the Registrar.

Where a student does not conform to the expected standards of behaviour and the issue can not be resolved, in extreme cases, the Institute reserves the right to deal with the matter as a breach of discipline under its Academic Regulations. (*This would most likely be under Regulation 4.10 which concerns "Activity which adversely affects or is likely to adversely affect the reputation of the Institute, the students or members of staff."*). The Institute will work closely with the Gardai, if this is necessary. Where a student is experiencing financial difficulty, support may be available from the Institute's Student Assistance Fund, depending on the individual circumstances.

Useful contacts:

IT Carlow Accommodation Officer – 059 9175614

Carlow Urban District Council – Housing Section – 059 9131759

Threshold (Housing Advice Agency) www.threshold.ie

The Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) www.prtb.ie