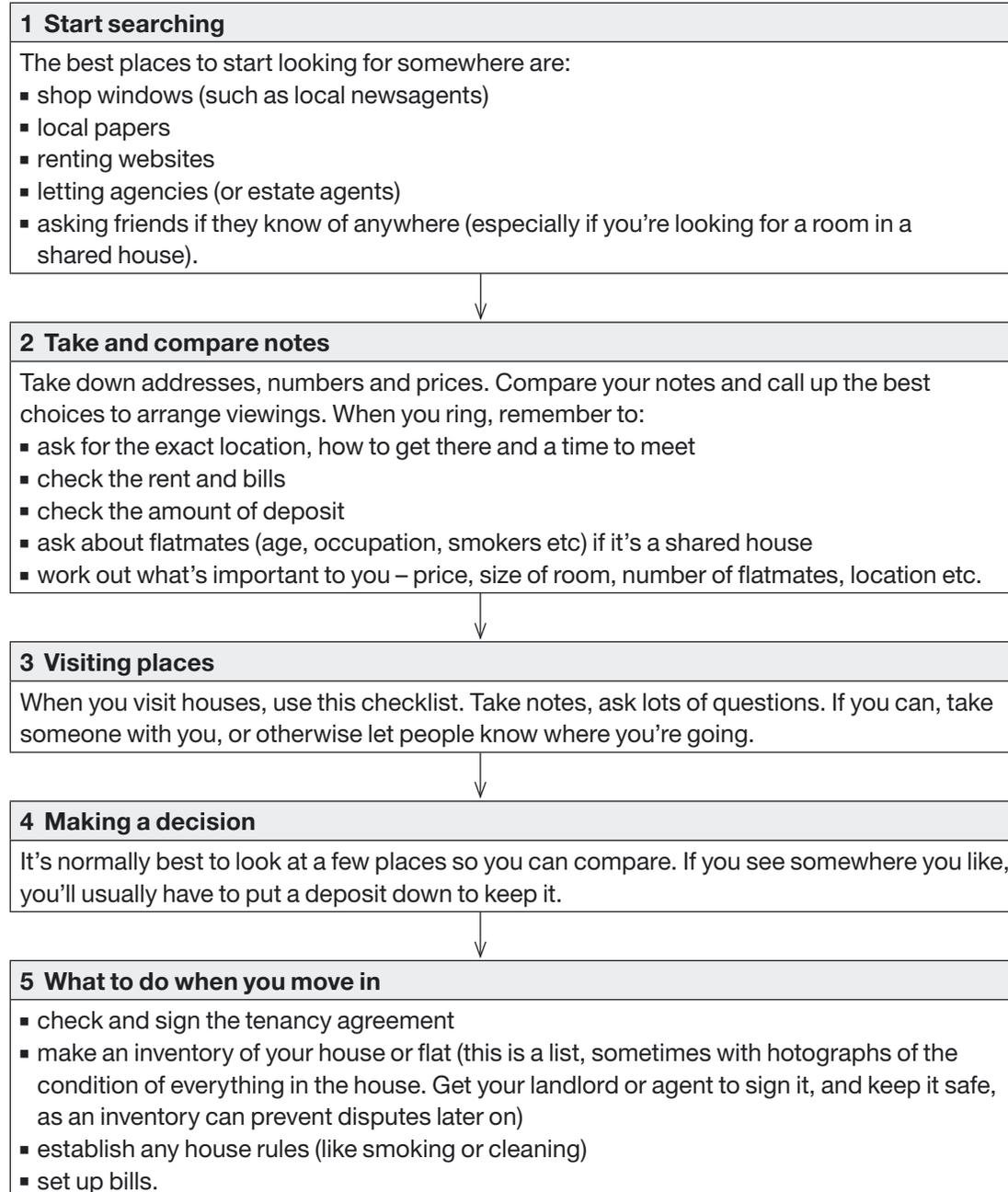


Finding private rented accommodation flowchart



When should I use a letting agency?

Letting agencies (or estate agents) can be used if you're either looking on your own, or with friends (ie you're not looking for a single room in a shared house). You can look in the windows of letting agents in the area you want to move into. If you see anything that interests you, go in – otherwise you can tell the estate agent the kind of thing you're looking for and they will give you a list of anything suitable or get in touch if anything comes up. Remember, if you do get something with a letting agent they will normally charge a fee – check how much it is and what it's for. Some agencies charge for organising tenancy agreements, for providing inventories and for administrative costs such as phone calls and postage.

You shouldn't have to pay any fees until the agency has found a place for you. It is a criminal offence for an agency to charge you just to register or for supplying addresses and details of accommodation. Don't pay any fees until you've been offered a place.

If you find a property you like, the agency may charge a holding deposit while they take up references. This should be deducted from the amount of rent in advance or deposit you pay once your references come through. The agency might ask for references from your employer, bank and/or previous landlord. If you then decide you don't want the property, you probably won't get the holding deposit back.

Check your tenancy type with the landlord and find out if you will always be dealing with the agency after you move in, or directly with the landlord.

Some renting websites:

www.rentamatic.co.uk
www.findaproperty.co.uk
www.loot.com
www.moveflat.com
www.easyroommate.com