

Guideline

TIPS AND ADVICE TO FIND APARTMENTS IN LOWER SAXONY

Content

1. Do you need an apartment or would you rather like a shared flat?
2. Where can you find an apartment?
3. How big does the apartment have to be? How much should the rent cost?
4. How much can the deposit cost?
5. How long is a rental agreement?
6. Checklist: Application documents
7. What do you have to consider when making the apartment inspection?
8. What to do in case of discrimination?
9. Application for costs coverage
10. Checklist for costs coverage
11. Rental agreement and handover of the apartment
12. Apartment handover checklist
13. What are the next steps?
14. Glossary (explanations of words)

1. Apartment or a shared flat?

In your own apartment, you will have

- a main lease
- lots of privacy and freedom to design your home

In the flat share (WG), you will have

- often a sublease, sometimes for a limited period
- your own room
- companionship through your roommates - note that most likely young people live in shared flats
- a cheaper rent - also in the city center
- shared cost for commonly used services (e.g. cleaning) and acquisitions (e.g. equipment)
- joint activities

The "Living together" project will help you search for a flat share



2. Where can you find an apartment or shared flat? I

You can find many apartments and shared flats online, on platforms:

- www.immobilienscout24.de
- www.ebay-kleinanzeigen.de
- www.immowelt.de
- www.immonet.de
- www.wg-gesucht.de

You can find many apartments and shared flats online, on platforms:

- www.vonovia.de
- www.deutsche-wohnen.com
- heimkehr-hannover.de (e.g. for Hanover)

and many more!

The following terms can be entered for the online search:

"Wohnungsbaugesellschaft",
"Immobilien-gesellschaft", "Hausverwaltung",
"Immobilienverwaltung" ("Housing company", "Real estate company", "House management", "Real estate management")+ the desired place of residence



2. Where can you find an apartment or a shared flat? II

There are also housing associations. These are particularly social rentals. Search online, using the term "Wohnungsgenossenschaft" ("Housing Cooperative") + the desired place of residence to find an overview of such associations.

- www.wbs-wohnung.de
- www.wohnungsbaugenossenschaften.de

You can find alternative forms of housing based on solidarity in housing projects:

- www.neues-wohnen-nds.de
- www.syndikat.org/projekte

You can find private rentals primarily on ebay-kleinanzeigen.de. Note that flat sharers often share their offers in local Facebook/Telegram/Signal groups.



3. How big does the apartment have to be? How much should the rent cost? I

How big should the apartment be?

You should calculate with one room and 12 square meters per person, for children under 6 years with 10 square meters. Couples and siblings can, of course, share a room (the legal limits are lower).

How much should the rent cost?

- If you have your own income, the guideline is that the rent should not be more than 1/3 of the net income.
- When receiving benefits from the job center or social welfare office, the values for the appropriateness of the size and the costs of the apartment are determined by law, with the costs being updated annually. These values are often also referred to as the upper rent limit. Depending on the location, they can vary greatly. Rents are higher in the big cities, so the upper rent limit is also higher. You can ask the job centre or social welfare office for the costs / upper rent limit for the desired place of residence.



3. How big does the apartment have to be? How much should the rent cost? II

Rent caps based on the example:

Hanover: 06/2022

Rent caps based on the example: 1 and 2

1. Gross rent, without heating (so-called cold rent) = net rent without heating (basic rent) + commonly used operating costs (this includes, for example, garden maintenance, waste disposal, etc.)

	= 458 €	50 m ²
	= 539 €	60 m ²
	= 640 €	75 m ²
	= 766 €	90 m ²
	= 869 €	105 m ²
 + 	+ 92 €	+10 m ²

2. Heating costs

Both together result in the total gross rent (so-called warm rent).

Important note: Gross cold rent and heating costs must be individually reasonable and are checked in each case (not the warm rent).

At the end of the guide, you will find a table showing the values for the Hanover region for illustration purposes.



3. How big does the apartment have to be? How much should the rent cost? III

In difficult life situations, higher rental costs are granted.

With the help of a bonus (from 10% to 40%), the upper rent limit is calculated in your favour by the job centre and social welfare office. The upper rent limit will be adjusted to your individual situation in the following cases:

- If you are homeless or will soon be homeless, the gross cold rent of the new apartment can cost up to 20% more
- In a case of hardship: for example, for single parents, older people, people with disabilities or chronic illnesses and some more, it is another 10%
- for apartments with a residence entitlement certificate, another 10%

If multiple reasons apply, you can add up the values: 20%+10%+10%=40% That means your rent can cost up to 40% more.

Example: for 1 person in Hanover with the above reasons: 458+(458x40 %) = 641.20 EUR instead of 458 EUR !



4. How much can the deposit cost? Where can I get help with payment?

- If you cannot cover your living expenses sufficiently from your means, the social welfare office and job centre can take over the deposit in the form of a loan
- If you change your place of residence, the deposit will be paid by the receiving job centre
- The amount of the deposit may not exceed three times the net cold rent.



5. How long is a rental agreement?

- As a rule, leases are concluded for an indefinite period
- A minimum rental agreement term is not uncommon nowadays, for example, for 1 or 2 years. However, in this case, you cannot give notice of the apartment during the rental time
- Sublease leases can be limited in time
- Interim leases are often limited in time

We recommend that you pay attention to the duration of the sublease or interim rental agreement and, if necessary, negotiate with the landlord/landlady a rental period that is more suitable for you.



6. CHECKLIST: APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

A COPY OF ALL DOCUMENTS IN PRINT OR AS A PDF IF DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY



- Cover letter:** Opportunity to introduce yourself (and your family) and your own situation to the rental
- Expression of interest form:** Form from the rental - personal data is requested here (sent usually during the inspection or afterwards via a link (e.g. by e-mail))
- ID card** or passport of all household members & **residence permit** (both sides)
- Rent debt exemption certificate:** A certificate which shows that you have no rent debts. You can get them from your current landlord* in your accommodation
- SCHUFA:** Statement on your "creditworthiness" (whether you are able to pay your bills and whether you can credibly do so in the future). You can get them from the Postbank, Volksbank or on the Internet.
- Salary slips from the last three months** or the current **performance notice** from the job centre or social welfare office
- If you are studying or doing an apprenticeship: **Certificate of enrollment** or **training contract**
- Housing entitlement certificate (WBS):** For social housing at a low rent, possibly "with special housing needs"

7. What to do in case of discrimination?

Unfortunately, discrimination is widespread in the housing market.

You can find information about this in this explanatory film.



If you have experienced, felt or observed discrimination when looking for an apartment, you can contact an anti-discrimination agency. The consultants can work with you to develop options for action and support you in implementation. The advice is confidential, anonymous and free of charge.

Anti-discrimination office in Hanover
Blumenauer Straße 5-7, 30449 Hannover
Phone: 0511 - 168 31045
E-Mail: ADS@hannover-stadt.de

Oldenburg Anti-Discrimination Agency
Klävemannstr. 16, 26122 Oldenburg
Phone: 0441 920582 28
E-Mail ads@ibis-ev.de



Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency

11018 Berlin

Phone: 0800 546 546 5

Consultation hours:

Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m

E-Mail: beratung@ads.bund.de

www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de

Contact point for those affected by right-wing, racist and anti-Semitic violence in Lower Saxony:

www.betroffenenberatung.de



8. What do you have to consider when viewing the apartment?

It is best to compile the documents from the "Checklist: Application documents" in a folder and bring them with you (as copies).

Let the rental company make you an offer.

You often have to fill out a form where you express your interest to rent.

Ask how to get the form (in person or by email).

Check whether the rental price, number of rooms and size of the apartment are similar to the specifications in the offer.

Are the doors and windows closing?

Do you see mould (damp patches) anywhere? Are the electric cables okay?

Are the faucets working?

Take someone with you, who speaks German.



9. Application for costs coverage

At the social welfare office:

- Submit an application with a personal offer: to the responsible social welfare office
- Then sign the rental agreement
- **Take your confirmation and invitation to the appointment + Send the rental agreement to the service team for the assignment of the rent and security deposit**

At the job centre:

- Obtain costs coverage with a personal offer
- **Sign the rental agreement when you accept the costs coverage**
- Apply for accommodation costs with the rental agreement (KdU enclosure) and submit an application for the deposit to be paid.

For the initial equipment for furniture, refrigerator and washing machine, you have to submit a different application.



10. COSTS COVERAGE CHECKLIST

WHAT DOCUMENTS DO YOU NEED TO SUBMIT AT THE OFFICE TO OBTAIN A COST COVERAGE?



- Personal offer:** All relevant information about the apartment shall be included
 - address of the apartment
 - rental start date
 - size of the apartment (of the room)
 - number of rooms
 - is a WBS (residential entitlement certificate) required?
 - net cold rent
 - operating costs (additional costs)
 - heating costs
 - deposit
 - type of heating and size of the building
 - is the apartment in usable condition?
 - is the apartment in usable condition?
 - is the apartment (partly) furnished?

- For private rentals:** Proof of ownership (declaration or extract from the land register)

- If sub-letting:** Permission to sub-let from the main renter & main rental agreement for comparison
 - Is your rent "reasonable" in terms of shares?
 - How is the rental period determined?
 - Who is the main tenant?
 - Did everyone sign?

11. Rental agreement & handover of apartment - what do you need to know? I

What does the rental agreement say?

- It contract signatories by name
- rent and security deposit
- all rented rooms (kitchen, bathroom, ...)
- beginning of the tenancy and, if applicable, a time limit
- protocol with defects, meter readings, ...
- house rule
- personal agreements between renter and tenants

Pay attention to:

- Is there any limitation in the rental agreement?
- Is the rent gradually increased or are rent increases amounts included?
- Clarify modernization measures in advance

Don't pay money without a receipt and without receiving the service or product for which you pay! Keep everything in writing! Don't sign any contracts you don't understand.



11. Rental agreement & handover of the apartment - what do you need to know? II

Handover of the apartment

- Inspection of the apartment with the tenant and you being present (possibly accompanied)
- The current condition of the apartment is recorded in a log
- Both parties sign the protocol.
- When you move out, a decision will be made based on the protocol as to whether you will get the deposit back for the apartment or whether new damage has occurred for which you must pay.
- The log records which damage or defects from the rental still have to be repaired
- Take someone with you who can communicate with the rental company
- Tenant associations will help you if there are uncertainties, and support you.



12.CHECKLIST: APARTMENT HANDOVER



WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD YOU ASK?

- Wear and tear:** Does the apartment need renovation?
Are there any cosmetic repairs left?
Are the heating and electrical appliances working?
Damage or defects visible or present: e.g. stains on carpets, broken tiles, damaged PVC or wooden floors.
Do all windows close?
In what condition are the sinks, toilets, shower, bathtub, ...?
Are there signs of mould or water damage?
Is the basement empty, and the apartment swept clean / painted neutral?

- What's in the log?**
 - Date, name and address of the renter(s) and tenant(s)
 - Address of the apartment
 - All damages, defects and associated agreements
 - Note of meter numbers and readings (water meters, radiators and electricity)
 - Note on keys handed over (front door, apartment, mailbox)
 - Promises of future projects
 - Signature of both parties

- Tips:**

Check everything and insist on having a copy. Pay attention to the lighting conditions when inspecting the apartment. Check everything carefully and take the time you need. Take one person with you as a witness.

13. What are the next steps?

What are the next steps?

- Money for the first furnishing of the apartment from the social welfare office and job centre
- You have to make an extra application
- List what furniture you need.

Buying affordable furniture

- www.ebay-kleinanzeigen.de
- Social shops and flea markets
- Facebook groups
- Neighborhood groups such as www.nebenan.de

Concluding contracts

- Electricity, internet, gas for cooking
- Insurance, such as household contents or liability insurance
- You pay for these contracts yourself

Register at the Citizens' Registration Office and give your address to agencies such as BAMF, banks, health insurance, ...

School re-registration



14. GLOSSARY (EXPLANATION OF WORDS)

- **Limitation: Must be justified in the rental agreement. More information.**
- Deposit: Security for the rental for damage claims and rent arrears. A maximum of three times the net cold rent.
- Net cold rent: Rent without operating costs, per square meter of rental space warm rent (gross rent including heating): Total rent including cold operating costs and heating costs. Additional costs: cold = operating costs // warm = heating costs
- Broker fee: Wenn another person brokers the apartment for the rental. The "ordering party principle" applies. Usually has to be paid by the rental company. Beware of fraud!!!
- Compensation payments: For furniture or furnishings in the apartment that are taken over by the previous tenants.
- Housing entitlement certificate (WBS): Social housing at a low rent, which is reserved for people who have little income or receive transfer payments (job center, social welfare office) and have a residence permit - limited to at least one year. "With special housing needs" (WBS) applies, for example, in the case of homelessness or other hardship cases. The responsible housing office checks the requirements for the award of the WBS.

CURRENT ADEQUACY LIMITS FOR JOB CENTRE AND SOCIAL OFFICE EXAMPLE APPLICABLE IN HANNOVER REGION (AS OF JUNE 2022)

Anlage 1 zur BDs 0668 (V)

Angemessenheitswerte für Bedarfe für die Unterkunft ab 01.06.2022 in Euro

Kommune	1 Person	2 Personen	3 Personen	4 Personen	5 Personen	jede weitere Person
Barsinghausen	418,00	516,00	613,00	648,00	713,00	75,00
Burgdorf	444,00	491,00	615,00	662,00	757,00	80,00
Burgwedel	436,00	501,00	585,00	708,00	791,00	84,00
Garbsen	470,00	510,00	606,00	727,00	760,00	80,00
Gehrden	394,00	459,00	581,00	702,00	762,00	81,00
Hannover	458,00	539,00	640,00	766,00	869,00	92,00
Hemmingen	404,00	543,00	630,00	681,00	818,00	87,00
Isernhagen	450,00	570,00	669,00	748,00	841,00	89,00
Laatzen	438,00	497,00	613,00	757,00	855,00	90,00
Langenhagen	413,00	528,00	637,00	760,00	853,00	90,00
Lehrte	420,00	485,00	557,00	664,00	740,00	78,00
Neustadt	400,00	445,00	539,00	618,00	667,00	71,00
Pattensen	388,00	454,00	541,00	674,00	732,00	77,00
Ronnenberg	364,00	459,00	615,00	697,00	741,00	78,00
Seelze	382,00	461,00	566,00	675,00	796,00	84,00
Sehnde	367,00	442,00	553,00	681,00	813,00	86,00
Springe	372,00	438,00	526,00	598,00	695,00	74,00
Uetze	381,00	429,00	551,00	580,00	645,00	68,00
Wedemark	433,00	503,00	593,00	690,00	829,00	88,00
Wennigsen	373,00	461,00	539,00	636,00	689,00	73,00
Wunstorf	382,00	444,00	576,00	689,00	754,00	80,00

Source: <https://www.asg-hannover.de/wp-content/uploads/Mietobergrenzen-Region-Hannover.pdf> (accessed on November 15, 2022)

IMPRESSUM

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