

## How and where can I find a flat?

### Where can I search for a flat?

You can easily search for flats on **the Internet**. Enter "property offers" or simply "flat" and your desired place of residence in the search.

You can often not only search for flats on internet portals, but also publish your own search queries.

You can also often find offers from **housing associations** and **co-operatives** on their websites.

Notices on **notice boards and in shops** or an advert in a **newspaper** can be useful.

It may also be worth asking around in your **circle of acquaintances**. Perhaps someone knows of flats that are becoming vacant for which "new tenants" are being sought.

Not all vacant flats are publicly offered for rent.

### 1 You can search for flats on the Internet at the following addresses, for example:

- [ImmobilienScout24](#)
- [Real Estate World](#)
- [WG wanted](#)
- [Wohnbau Lemgo - At home in Lippe](#)
- [Home - Wohnbau Detmold](#)
- [Home - Housing co-operative Horn-Bad Meinberg](#)
- [Rental flat | kleinanzeigen.de](#)
- [Property listings in Bielefeld and the surrounding area | immo.nw.de](#)
- [Property in Lippe and Detmold with the Lippische Landes-Zeitung](#)

As soon as you have found a flat that might be suitable, you should arrange a **viewing appointment** as soon as possible. If necessary, you should call in an interpreter. After the appointment, you should quickly let the provider know whether the flat is suitable.

### Viewing the flat - what is important during a viewing?

- German-speaking support/accompaniment,
- Be punctual,
- Have all the necessary documents with you,
- Check the details of the offer (rent, size, number of rooms),
- Check the condition of the flat,
- clarify whether defects will be rectified by the landlord/landlady,
- introduce yourself/show interest.

If the landlord/landlady wants to let you the flat, he/she should give you an **overview of the rental costs and ancillary costs** or a **tenancy agreement**. This must show how big the flat is, how much the rent is and which costs make up the rent.

Before signing a tenancy agreement, please check whether there is an additional clause in the

tenancy agreement stating that you will renovate the flat yourself when you move in and/or that one or two months' rent must be paid for this.

### **IMPORTANT for benefit recipients (benefit provider: job centre, asylum department or social welfare office):**

The costs of the flat for the rent-free period will not be covered, nor will any renovation costs. Under no circumstances should you sign the tenancy agreement **without consulting** your benefit provider! The responsible authority (for example, the job centre) will first check the appropriateness of the expected rental costs on the basis of the so-called "**rent certificate**".


This **rent certificate is NOT a rental agreement**, but a form that you can obtain from your local job centre. Ask the potential landlord or landlady to complete and sign the form. Send the completed rental certificate back to the relevant authority (e.g. the job centre).

If the rent is reasonable, you will receive a written confirmation from the job centre, for example, that the rental costs will be covered. The rent for the flat varies. It depends on the city or town in which the flat is located.

### **Please remember to inform the following institutions of your change of address:**

- Job centre
- Residents' registration office of the new place of residence
- Immigration office of the new place of residence
- Bank
- Health insurance company
- Pension fund
- if you have children: School and kindergarten
- family fund

It is advisable to set up a [Nachsendeantrag](#) at the post office so that your mail is forwarded to your new address.

 To increase your chances of finding a flat, it can be helpful to have a [Wohnungsführerschein](#) made.

## **2. local newspapers**

Flats are advertised here, especially at weekends. It is important to contact the landlord or landlady as quickly as possible: Flats are often let within one or two days. Printed newspapers are often not free of charge, but you can usually find free property pages on newspaper websites.

For example, you can look in the following newspaper:

[Lippische Landeszeitung](#)

[New Westphalian](#)

## 💡 What does that mean?

### **The most important abbreviations from flat adverts:**

- BK -> Operating costs
- HK -> heating costs
- KM -> basic rent
- KT -> Deposit
- MM -> monthly rent
- monthly -> monthly
- NK -> ancillary costs
- Wfl. -> living space
- Whg. -> flat
- WM -> warm rent
- WG -> shared flat

## **3. social housing**

Many cities and municipalities also have social housing. These are subsidised by the state and are only rented to people with [a certificate of eligibility for housing](#).

If you have a prospect of social housing, you must therefore apply for a certificate of eligibility from your local authority or municipal/district administration.

For further information, please contact Mr Rosien.

**Mr Rosien**

☎ [05231625040](tel:05231625040)

✉ [@M.Rosien@kreis-lippe.de](mailto:M.Rosien@kreis-lippe.de)

## 💡 **For benefit recipients: You are not yet allowed to sign the tenancy agreement!**

You must submit this to the benefit provider (job centre, asylum department, social welfare office). The flat will then be checked. The benefit provider will decide whether the flat is suitable. You may have to send further documents to the job centre or the landlord. You should do this as soon as possible.

If the job centre deems the flat suitable, you can sign the tenancy agreement and move. Before you move, you should organise transport for your belongings. If you need additional furniture, you should submit an application for initial furnishings to the Job Centre in good time.

## **4. housing associations or housing co-operatives**

You can apply directly to housing companies or co-operatives for a flat. To do this, you usually have to present yourself there in person. You may be placed on a waiting list. You can find the

addresses of local housing companies and customer centres on the [Internet](#).

An estate agent can also help you find a flat. If flats are offered there, the landlord or landlady must pay the fee ("commission").

## What do I need to apply for a flat?

As a rule, you will need a number of documents when applying for a flat. It is a good idea to summarise and copy these.

**Never** hand in original documents, but always a copy! Sometimes you will be asked to send scanned copies of the documents by e-mail. The person who submits all the documents first often gets the flat.

## Landlords and landladies ask for these documents

- **Identity papers** and **residence status documents**, such as a residence permit
- For social housing, you will need a [Wohnberechtigungsschein \(WBS\)](#) if necessary with a note of urgency
- **Proof of income**: for example, salary statements for the last three months (for employed persons) or the last tax assessment notice. If you receive benefits from Sozialamt or Jobcenter, you should submit the relevant notification.
- Information about your creditworthiness: [SCHUFA](#) collects all registered debts in Germany and provides information about them. Such information is requested by almost all landlords. It should not be older than three months. Application forms are available on the Internet.
- A **"tenant self-disclosure"** with personal details is often requested before a tenancy agreement is concluded. You can also find forms for this on the Internet. It can be helpful to prepare a completed self-disclosure form.
- Sometimes landlords ask for a **"confirmation of no rent debts"**: This confirms that you have always paid your rent reliably and that there are no outstanding rent debts from the previous tenancy.
- If a **"previous landlord certificate"** is requested, this means that your previous landlord or landlady should provide information on how the tenancy with you went.

If you do not wish to provide a Schufa report or a previous landlord's certificate, you do not have to do so. You are not obliged to do so. However, it is possible that someone else will get the flat if you do not.

In the end, you decide what you want to do to get a flat. If you are unsure about the consequences, you should definitely seek advice before you sign a tenancy agreement.

## Contacting landlords or landladies

Once you have found a suitable flat offer, contact the landlord or landlady by phone or e-mail.

Ask for an appointment to view the flat. It is best to make a note of any questions that are not answered in the advert beforehand.

If you do not feel confident speaking German, seek support. German-speaking acquaintances or relatives or integration assistants could help you with telephone calls and job interviews.

## **You can obtain information and advice here:**

-  [Deutscher Mieterbund e. V.](#)
-  [Tenants' Protection Association e. V](#)
-  [Consumer centres](#)

### **Further useful links:**

[What is a building cooperative? Building co-operatives explained simply!](#)

[Building cooperatives in NRW - Find a cheap flat in North Rhine-Westphalia](#)

[Spar- und Bauverein Paderborn eG - Baugenossenschaft.info](#)

[Wohnbau Lemgo - At home in Lippe](#)

[Home - Wohnbau Detmold](#)

[Home - Housing co-operative Horn-Bad Meinberg](#)

[We give people a home - Vonovia - for people from Ukraine](#)

[Best flat search on the Internet: Where to search for flats? - Buildingcooperative.info](#)

[The successful application for a flat: tips & tricks!](#)

[BMWSB - Homepage - Looking for accommodation in Germany](#)