



## Newcomers guide to finding accommodation

Where to search for flats in Berlin  
and what to consider: Step 1 - 10

1. What are you looking for?
2. Where do you find a flat in Berlin?
3. What requirements must the flat meet?
4. Checklist - documents for rental companies
5. What do you have to keep in mind when visiting a flat?
6. Checklist – getting the cost approval from Jobcenter/ LAF / social welfare office
7. Tenancy agreement and handing over the flat - what do you need to know?
8. Checklist - flat handover
9. What are the next steps?
10. FAQs
11. Links
12. Addresses of housing associations

Changed: 19.7.2019

# 1 What are you looking for?

- High degree of privacy
- Together with your family
- Decisions on furnishing are entirely up to you

Own  
apartment

WG=  
Shared  
flat

WG = Shared Flat

- Own room but you use common rooms (kitchen, bathroom, etc) with others
- Very common in Berlin, especially among young people (especially students)

If you are looking for a shared room please contact:

**[fluechtlinge-willkommen.de](https://www.fluechtlinge-willkommen.de)**

(a platform that connects WGs with newcomers and also offers workshops on how to find a WG in Berlin)

**Advantages**

- Cheaper than owning your own apartment
- Purchases are shared among roommates
- Contact with roommates, mostly of the same age, and often friendships evolve (through cooking, excursions, etc.)
- Obligations like cleaning are shared
- Often easier to find than a flat

- Private landlords
- Different forms: in the same house / flat as landlord or alone
- Direct communication channels
- Often limited rental period

Sublease

2



## Where can you find an apartment?

### Portals on the Internet

- immobilienscout24.de
- immowelt.de
- immonet.de
- kalaydo.de
- kleinanzeigen.ebay.de/anzeigen
- wohnungssuche-berlin.net
- immonet.morgenpost.de
- tagesspiegel.immowelt.de
- immobililo.de
- www.immobilien.de
- www.immobilienmarkt.de
- www.immopool.de
- www.wohnfinder.de
- www.gimmo.de
- www.nestoria.de
- www.inberlinwohnen.de

### Housing associations / property management companies

- degewo.de
- gesobau.de
- gewobag.de
- howoge.de
- stadtundland.de
- wbm.de
- deutsche-wohnen.de
- immodelfin.com
- evmberlin.de
- berlinovo.de
- eurix.de/wohnen/mieten
- evangelisches-johannesstift.de
- tag-wohnen.de
- rec-hausverwaltung.de
- hachmann-hausverwaltung.de
- vegis-immobilien.de
- mittelpunkt-immobilien.de
- ziggel-immobilien.de
- wohnungsbaugenossenschaften.de/
- hws-berlin.de

Complete overview for Treptow-Köpenick in the appendix

- Berlin Provisionfrei
- Wohnung frei in Berlin
- Wohnung und WG Berlin
- WG Zimmer Wohnung in Berlin, WG-Zimmer und Wohnungen Berlin
- Berliner Wohnungsbörse

- (engl) Rooms/ Housing/ WGs / Accommodation Berlin

### Facebook

Search words are: Wohnung, Flat, apartment, accomodation, Mietwohnungen

### Advertisements in newspapers

- Berliner Morgenpost
- Der Tagesspiegel
- Berliner Zeitung
- Zweite Hand
- zitty
- tip

## What requirements must the apartment meet?

### Size

Recommended, but not compulsory: 1 room per person (depending on the size and floor plan, more people per room can be comfortable (e.g. couples and siblings))  
 → Younger than 6 years? Min. 9 sqm  
 → Older than 6 years? Min. 6 sqm

### Amount of the rent

	= 484,80 €	} Bruttokaltmiete (gross cold rent)= Net cold rent + cold operating costs (garden care, waste disposal, etc)
	= 566,64 €	
	= 725,76 €	
	= 816,48 €	
	= 954,72 €	
	+ 112,32 €	

The shown rent includes the 20% surcharge. According to AV Wohnen, the surcharge applies to homeless people or people threatened with homelessness.

Normally, renting contracts are for an unlimited duration. There are a few exceptions (e.g. for sublease). The recommendation would be:

- Unfurnished: 2 years to unlimited duration
- Furnished / partially furnished: at least 6 months
- More detailed information can be found here:

- [www.berlin.de/sen/soziales/themen/sozial-sicherung/grundsicherung-fuer-arbeitsuchende-hartz-iv/av-wohnen/](http://www.berlin.de/sen/soziales/themen/sozial-sicherung/grundsicherung-fuer-arbeitsuchende-hartz-iv/av-wohnen/)
- <http://interaxion-tk.de/index.php/de/blog/wohnraum/191-wie-viel-darf-meine-wohnung-kosten>
- <http://interaxion-tk.de/index.php/de/blog/wohnraum/349-vermieten-sie-an-menschen-mit-fluchterfahrung>

The gross cold rent must not be higher than the limits granted by social welfare.

### Deposit

- The Jobcenter (JC) pays the deposit (loan agreement) // Normally, this is three times the net cold rent. If you move between districts, the new Jobcenter pays for the deposit.
- The Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten (LAF) also covers the deposit through an agreement.

	Heating oil	Natural gas	Geothermal heat
1 Person	60,50	64,00	79,00
2 Person	72,60	76,80	94,80
3 Person	96,80	102,40	126,40
4 Person	108,90	115,20	142,20

### Heating

- There is a detailed overview on the last page including the financial support which can be granted in cases of hardship or social housing.
- With central water supply + 7 €
- Bruttokaltmiete (gross cold rent) and heating must be appropriate in themselves.

## CHECKLISTE

## What documents does your landlord need?

What document?	What is it for?	Check
Cover letter	Imagine yourself and your family in front of the landlord and what you would want to say about yourself to her / him. Possible content you might like to include (optional): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why you like the flat</li> <li>• What you do for a living</li> <li>• What you have done in your homeland</li> <li>• If you attend a German course</li> <li>• If so, at what level</li> <li>• If your children go to school</li> <li>• Your family's wishes for the future</li> </ul>	
Information sheet	Not all rental companies ask for this prospect tenants questionnaire. It may include questions about the number of tenants, income, pets etc.	
Copy of your ID / title of residence	Proof of your identity	
Certificate of freedom from rent debts (Mietschuldenfreiheit)	Proof by your landlord that you don't have any rental debts from the previous flat. Your camp can give you this certificate too.	
SCHUFA	Statement about your credit worthiness and on whether you were always able to pay your bills	
Leistungsbescheid (Jobcenter // LAF)	Statement on the financial support you receive	
3 Gehaltsnachweise (salary slip)	Salary statements of the previous months	
Erlaubnis zur Anmietung einer Wohnung (LAF)	Permission to rent a flat given by the LAF latest after 6 months in a CAMP	
Immatrikulationsbescheinigung (Immatriculation proof)	If you are student, your university hands you the proof of immatriculation at the beginning of every semester	

5



## What do you have to keep in mind when visiting a flat?

### Questions and documents

•It is best to compile the documents listed in the checklist « Documents for Landlords » as a folder and bring them with you for the viewing (in copy). Ask all the questions that are important for the personal offer for Jobcenter/ LAF and Sozialamt.

- Let the rental agency make you an offer with all the data.
- Check the rental price, number of rooms and size of the flat. Do they match the offer?
- Is the flat renovated? Will there be an arrangement in case it is not?
- Do the doors and windows close?
- Is there any mould?
- Is the electrical wiring ok?
- Are the water taps working?

### Tip

See if you can communicate with the rental company in your language. If you can, try to take a person with you to the viewing who speaks German.

**Do not pay any money before signing the rental contract!**

## CHECKLISTE

### What documents do you need to get the cost approval?

What do you need?	Description	Details	Check
<b>Personal offer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All relevant information</li> <li>- The landlord must sign the offer (the company must stamp it)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Address of the apartment</li> <li>- Rental start</li> <li>- Size of the apartment</li> <li>- Number of rooms</li> <li>- If a WBS required</li> <li>- Net cold rent</li> <li>- Operating costs</li> <li>- Heating expenses</li> <li>- Security</li> <li>- Type of heating and hot water supply</li> <li>- Size of the building</li> <li>- If the flat is in renting condition</li> <li>- If there is a stove and sink</li> <li>- If the apartment is (partly) furnished?</li> </ul>	
<b>Private Landlords</b>	Proof of ownership of the flat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land register excerpt or</li> <li>- declaration of ownership (submission from LAF)</li> </ul>	
<b>Sub-contract</b>	Permission to sublet from the landlord of your landlord	Main rental contract for comparison to check the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is your proportionate rent not too high?</li> <li>- How is the rental period fixed?</li> <li>- Who rents the flat?</li> </ul>	

### Application of cost approval from the LAF

- 1 Submission of application:  
Darwinstraße 14-18, 10589 Berlin
- 2 With the cost approval you can sign the contract
- 3 Date to transfer the rent and deposit to the landlord / flat-rate for the first equipment  
Requirements for the appointment:  
invitation for last appointment + rental contract

### Application of cost approval from the Jobcenter (JC)

- 1 Obtain permission from the JC to rent the flat
- 2 Only then, sign the rental contract and bring it to the JC and apply for KdU (accommodation costs). You have to do this twice in case of changing your district and JC! Then, the first rent is paid by your current JC, and the second rent and the deposit is paid by the new JC., where you also have to register again (in full). The KdU application is always necessary to make the Jobcenter pay the rent and deposit.



## Tenancy agreement & apartment handover – what you need to know

### Content of the rental contract

All contract signers with their full name and address

- Rent amount and deposit
- All rented rooms (e.g. kitchen, bathroom, 2 rooms, hallway, etc)
- Start of tenancy and, if necessary, any time limit
- Residential protocol with a record of any damages (make sure you record what must be remedied by the landlord).

Pay special attention to:

- Exclusion time for the termination of the contract
- Scaled rent / rent increase
- Clear modernisation measures needed beforehand (Consider if a modernisation of windows
- and heating entitles the landlord to rent increase?)

### IMPORTANT:

- Don't pay any money without receipt and the signed rental contract - especially not if you are
- suspicious! Never sign a contract you don't understand! Beware of fraud! Usually, tenants don't pay agencies, but the landlord does!

- Inspection of the flat by you and the landlord
- Current condition of the flat is recorded in a protocol
- Both parties sign the protocol
- When you leave the flat the protocol is very important. Check what is recorded in detail? On the basis of the protocol, it is decided whether you get back the deposit for the flat or if you have to pay for new damages
- Take a person with you who can agree with the rental protocol (ask at the integration guides: [integration@offensiv91.de](mailto:integration@offensiv91.de))
- Tenant associations will help you if there are uncertainties and support you with questions

### Handing over of the flat



8

## CHECKLISTE

### Handover of the flat

What should you watch out for? What questions should you ask?	Check
Are there any signs of wear in the flat that go beyond normal? Is the flat in need of renovation? Insist on a written agreement	
The walls should be in neutral colour	
Are cosmetic repairs still outstanding? What agreements have been made in this regard? Do all heaters and electrical appliances (e.g. stove) work?	
Possible damages or defects can be: Stains on the carpet, broken tiles and damaged PVC or wooden floors. Windows: Do they all close? Are they worn out? What about the glass? Ceramics: Take a close look at the sink, toilet, shower and bathtub. Are there cracks?	
Are the taps dripping? Are all the pipes sealed? Do you see any signs of mould or water damage?	
Is the cellar empty? Is the flat clean?	
What must be written in the protocol?	Check
Date, name and address of the tenants and of the landlord, and address of the apartment	
Read well before signing: check all points again carefully.	
Record all damages and defects as well as the corresponding agreements.	
Note the metre numbers and readings (water metres, radiators and electricity).	
Note the number of keys handed over (house and apartment door, letterbox, cellar, etc.) Write down any promises of future projects by the landlord to be taken care of in the flat before or after your moving	
Did the landlord sign the protocol? (The caretaker is not enough)	
At the end of the handover, please ask for a copy of the records.	

#### Tip

Ask a person you trust to accompany you, ideally someone who speaks German well. This person can serve as a witness in case of a conflict. Integration guides can help out! [integration@offensiv91.de](mailto:integration@offensiv91.de)

Watch the light conditions: Daylight is ideal, alternatively you may need powerful lights  
Document damage with photos or videos and record it in writing  
Check the condition of the apartment carefully - take all the time you need to do this

## What are the next steps?

Money can be made available to you for furnishing your flat for the first time. You can apply for it at the **Jobcenter** by filling in an application form – processing normally takes a few days / At the **LAF** you have to voice your need during the date to transfer the rent and deposit

Furnishing  
your flat

Cheap  
furniture

- [ebay-kleinanzeigen.de/](http://ebay-kleinanzeigen.de/)
- Facebook-Group « Berlin » and « Free your stuff Berlin »
- Social department stores
- Collection of addresses around Berlin: [interaxion-tk.de/index.php/de/blog/wohnraum/219-guenstige-moebel-in-berlin-finden-2](http://interaxion-tk.de/index.php/de/blog/wohnraum/219-guenstige-moebel-in-berlin-finden-2)

- Electricity, internet, gas supplier
- Liability and household insurance

Contract

Registra-  
tion

Everyone has to register!

### When you are with the LAF:

- Flüchtlingsbürgeramt in Mitte (City Hall Tiergarten, Mathilde-Jacob-Platz 1, 10551 Berlin; responsible for: Mitte, Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Neukölln, Tempelhof-Schöneberg, Steglitz-Zehlendorf, Pankow, Marzahn-Hellersdorf, Lichtenberg, Reinickendorf, Treptow-Köpenick)
- Flüchtlingsbürgeramt in Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf (Hohenzollerndamm 177, 10713 Berlin; responsible for: Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf, Spandau)

### For everyone with the Jobcenter:

- Reregistration at any citizen's office is possible
- Appointments online: [service.berlin.de/dienstleistung/120686](http://service.berlin.de/dienstleistung/120686)
- Take the necessary documents with you to the appointment: Passport / Identification card replacement and residence permit, Completed registration forms, Rental contract and certificate of the new landlord (confirmation of the landlord)

Who else needs your address?  
BAMF, LABO, health insurance, Kita, school, workplace, ...



## FAQ

**Befristeter Mietvertrag:** There can be a time limit to the contract under certain circumstances. The tenants must be informed of the reason for the time limit when the contract is concluded. Reasons that can be deemed valid: e.g. own requirements, extensive renovation work and rental of services.

**Kautions:** If you pay a security deposit to the letting for damage cases and rent payment arrears, the acceptable maximum is three times the net cold rent.

**Nettokaltmiete:** Rent without operating costs, calculated per square metre of rental space and also without eating and hot water supply.

**Maklerprovision:** People mediating between landlords and tenants, usually paid by the landlord. Beware of fraud!

**Abstandszahlungen:** If you want to take over furniture or furnishings from the previous tenant you usually pay something called "Abstandszahlung", a fixed price you both agree upon. Only pay after conclusion of the lease and pay attention to adequacy of the price asked for the furniture.

**Wohnungsberechtigungschein (WBS):** Special entitlement to cheaper housing ("social housing" subsidised by the city). For people with low income and/or special housing needs (e.g. homelessness). All people with a residence permit who live in community accommodation can get a WBS. Conditions: The title of residence must still cover at least 11 months when applying:  
<http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/service/formulare/de/wohnen.shtml>

**Wohnungsübergabe:** •Tenant and landlord are both present at the handover of the apartment, a handover protocol contains all important details such as the metre readings and damages.



Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf

Willkommen im Westend:  
kontakt@willkommen-im-westend.de

Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg

Wohnscouting: [www.wohnscouting.de](http://www.wohnscouting.de)

Marzahn-Hellersdorf

Caritas Migration Centre  
030 28 70 37 10

Mitte

SOKO Wohnbegleitung für Geflüchtete:  
0162 9578540 warning-wohnbegleitung@mail.de

Neukölln

AG Wohnungssuche Bündnis Neukölln:  
[www.buendnis-neukoelln.de/  
fluchtasyl/wohnungssuche/](http://www.buendnis-neukoelln.de/fluchtasyl/wohnungssuche/)

Pankow

AG Wohnen Pankow Hilft: [wohnen@pankow-hilft.de](mailto:wohnen@pankow-hilft.de)

Reinickendorf

AG Wohnen Reinickendorf:  
[www.kirchenkreis-reinickendorf.de/page/  
1474/wohnraum-fuer-gefluechtete](http://www.kirchenkreis-reinickendorf.de/page/1474/wohnraum-fuer-gefluechtete)

Steglitz-Zehlendorf

Xenion: [wohnen@xenion.org](mailto:wohnen@xenion.org)  
Mittelhof e.V.: [kugel@mittelhof.org](mailto:kugel@mittelhof.org)  
030 688 38 308

Treptow-Köpenick

InteraXion (Welcome Office for  
Newcomers): [www.interaxion-tk.de](http://www.interaxion-tk.de)

For women affected by domestic violence: <https://www.hestia-ev.de/>



## Addresses of Housing Companies

DEGEWO:	• <a href="http://www.degewo.de">www.degewo.de</a>
GESOBAU	• <a href="http://www.gesobau.de">www.gesobau.de</a>
GEWOBAG	• <a href="http://www.gewobag.de">www.gewobag.de</a>
HOWOGE	• <a href="http://www.howoge.de/mieten/wohnungssuche.html">www.howoge.de/mieten/wohnungssuche.html</a>
STADT UND LAND	• <a href="http://www.stadtundland.de/">www.stadtundland.de/</a>
WBM Berlin-Mitte	• <a href="http://www.wbm.de/de/">www.wbm.de/de/</a>
Deutsche Wohnen	• <a href="http://www.deutsche-wohnen.com">www.deutsche-wohnen.com</a>
Immodellfin	• <a href="http://www.immodellfin.com">www.immodellfin.com</a>
Berlinovo	• <a href="http://www.berlinovo.de">www.berlinovo.de</a>
Berolina	• <a href="http://berolina.info/">berolina.info/</a>
Neues Berlin	• <a href="http://www.neues-berlin.de/">www.neues-berlin.de/</a>
WBG Friedrichshain	• <a href="http://www.wbg-friedrichshain-eg.de">www.wbg-friedrichshain-eg.de</a>
WBG Zentrum	• <a href="http://www.wbg-zentrum.de">www.wbg-zentrum.de</a>
FriedrichsHeim e.G.	• <a href="http://www.friedrichsheim-eg.de/">www.friedrichsheim-eg.de/</a>
SOG	• <a href="http://www.sog.berlin">www.sog.berlin</a>
BGP	• <a href="http://www.bgp-am.com/de/home.html">www.bgp-am.com/de/home.html</a>
Vonovia	• <a href="http://www.vonovia.de/">www.vonovia.de/</a>
Alexandra Stiftung	• <a href="http://www.hws-berlin.de/startseite0/">www.hws-berlin.de/startseite0/</a>
BEWOGE	• <a href="http://www.wbm.de/">www.wbm.de/</a>
KÖWOGE	• <a href="http://www.degewo.de/content/de/Service/_3-0-Kundenzentren/Koepenick.html">www.degewo.de/content/de/Service/_3-0-Kundenzentren/Koepenick.html</a>
WohnBau Pankow	• <a href="http://www.ewg-pankow.de/">www.ewg-pankow.de/</a>
GW Neukölln	• <a href="http://www.gwneukoelln.de/">www.gwneukoelln.de/</a>
GWG Berliner Bär	• <a href="http://www.berliner-baer-koepenick.de/home/">www.berliner-baer-koepenick.de/home/</a>
Treptow Süd	• <a href="http://www.wg-treptow-sued.de/">www.wg-treptow-sued.de/</a>
Altglienicke	• <a href="http://www.wg-altglienicke.de/">www.wg-altglienicke.de/</a>
Wendenschloss	• <a href="http://www.wbg-wendenschloss.de/">www.wbg-wendenschloss.de/</a>
Amtsfeld	• <a href="http://www.wbg-amtsfeld.de/">www.wbg-amtsfeld.de/</a>
Treptow-Nord	• <a href="http://www.wbg-treptow-nord.de/">www.wbg-treptow-nord.de/</a>
Mittendrin im Wuhletal	• <a href="http://www.mittendrin-im-wuhletal.de">www.mittendrin-im-wuhletal.de</a>
WGJO	• <a href="http://www.wgjo.de/">www.wgjo.de/</a>
WBG Köpenick Nord	• <a href="http://www.koepenick-nord.de">www.koepenick-nord.de</a>

## Mietobergrenzen nach AV Wohnen, 1. Januar 2019

Größe Bedarfs-Gemeinschaft	Richtwert Bruttokalt in Euro	Bruttokalt + 10% in Euro	Bruttokalt + 20% in Euro	Bruttokalt + 30% in Euro	Bruttokalt + 40% in Euro	Gebäude-Fläche in m <sup>2</sup>	Grenzwert Heizkosten Erdöl in Euro	Grenzwert Heizkosten Erdgas in Euro	Grenzwert Heizkosten Fernwärme in Euro	Abschlag bei dezentraler Warmwasserversorgung
1 Person	404,00	444,40	484,80	525,20	565,60	100-250	67,50	74,50	91,50	-6,00
						251-500	64,50	70,00	86,50	
						501-1000	62,00	66,50	82,00	
						>1000	60,50	64,00	79,00	
2 Personen	472,20	519,42	566,64	613,86	661,08	100-250	81,00	89,40	109,80	-8,00
						251-500	77,40	84,00	103,80	
						501-1000	74,40	79,80	98,40	
						>1000	72,60	76,80	94,80	
2 Personen (Alleinerziehend mit einem Kind)	491,40	540,54	589,68	638,82	687,96	100-250	87,75	96,85	118,95	-8,00
						251-500	83,85	91,00	112,45	
						501-1000	80,60	86,45	106,60	
						>1000	78,65	83,20	102,70	
3 Personen	604,80	665,28	725,76	786,24	846,72	100-250	108,00	119,20	146,40	-10,00
						251-500	103,20	112,00	138,40	
						501-1000	99,20	106,40	131,20	
						>1000	96,80	102,40	126,40	
4 Personen	680,40	748,44	816,48	884,52	952,56	100-250	121,50	134,10	164,70	-11,00
						251-500	116,10	126,00	155,70	
						501-1000	111,60	119,70	147,60	
						>1000	108,90	115,20	142,20	
5 Personen	795,60	875,16	954,72	1034,28	1113,84	100-250	137,70	151,98	186,66	-13,00
						251-500	131,58	142,80	176,46	
						501-1000	126,48	135,66	167,28	
						>1000	123,42	130,56	161,16	
jede weitere Person	93,60	102,96	112,32	121,68	131,04	100-250	16,20	17,88	21,96	-2,00
						251-500	15,48	16,80	20,76	
						501-1000	14,88	15,96	19,68	
						>1000	14,52	15,36	18,96	

Zuschlag +10% für Sozialwohnungen (WBS)

Zuschlag +20% für Wohnungslose oder von Wohnungslosigkeit bedrohte Menschen

Zuschlag +10% für Härtefälle (Alleinerziehende, Schwangere, Kranke, Behinderte, Ende der Jugendhilfe,...)

Diese Zuschläge zum Richtwert der Bruttokaltmiete können je nach persönlicher Situation addiert werden.

Quelle: SenIAS zusammengestellt von Xenion AG Wohnen