

Rental Scams in Ireland

A Guide for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Ireland

Rental scams are becoming increasingly common in Ireland, particularly in areas where demand for housing is high. These scams involve fraudulent schemes designed to obtain money or personal information from people searching for accommodation.



This guide from Irish Red Cross provides clear information on how rental scams work, how to recognise the warning signs, and what steps to take to avoid becoming a victim and how to respond effectively if targeted.

Understanding Rental Scams

A rental scam is any illegal or dishonest scheme where a person pretends to offer accommodation with the purpose of taking money or personal information without providing a genuine rental property.

Some forms of rental scams in Ireland include:

- **“Absent Landlord”**

The scammer shows a property to several people at the same time, collects deposits from each, and then disappears without providing access to the property.

- **Deposit Scam**

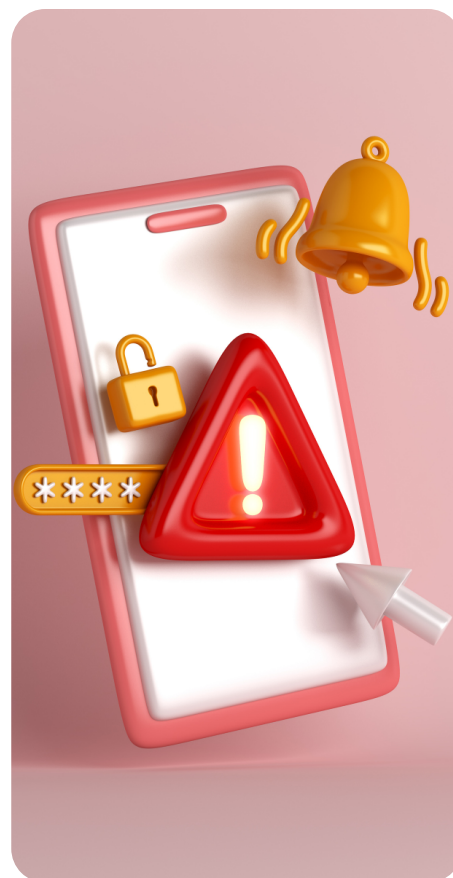
The scammer shows a property to several people at the same time, collects deposits from each, and then disappears without providing access to the property.

- **False Keys or Documentation**

The transaction appears legitimate until the renter attempts to move in, only to discover that the keys do not work and the landlord cannot be contacted.

- **Fictitious Online Listings**

Entirely fictitious properties may be listed online, often advertised at prices below the market rate. The scammer pushes for upfront payments before any viewing takes place.





Be alert to the following potential warning signs:

- Requests for deposits before viewing the property.
- Landlords or agents unwilling to meet in person.
- Payment requests via cash, wire transfer, cryptocurrency, or gift cards.
- Rental offers significantly below market rates or listings that are ‘too good to be true’.
- Pressure to make quick payments or decisions.
- Pressure to act immediately to avoid “losing” the property.
- Requests for unusual or insecure payment methods.
- Requests to keep the transaction confidential.
- Spelling mistakes, vague details, or inconsistent information in listings.
- Limited or vague contact information for the property owner/manager.



The following measures can be taken to help avoid rental scams.

Inspect the Property in Person

- Always visit the property before making payments. Do not rely solely on online photos or virtual tours.

Use Secure Payments and Written Agreements

- Only use secure, traceable payment methods (bank transfer, debit/credit card).
- Avoid cash payments or transfers to foreign accounts.
- Ensure a written tenancy agreement is signed, clearly stating rent, deposit, and terms.



Verifying an agent

- If you have concerns regarding a letting agent, you can ask to see their PSRA licence
- The Property Services Regulatory Authority (PSRA) have a register of licensed property service providers available to view on their website. It will show you their license number, when it expires, the company they registered with and address.

Listen to Your Instincts and Seek Advice

If an offer seems too good to be true, take the time to investigate it further. Seek advice from trusted organisations such as Threshold, Citizens Information, or the Residential Tenancies Board.

If you suspect you have been the victim of a rental scam.

Immediate Actions

- If you come across an ad that you are suspicious of, you can contact Threshold, and they can investigate your claim.
- Stop all communication with the suspected scammer.
- Do not send further payments.

Reporting

- Rental scams are easy to fall victim to. If you report a scam, it can help protect other people.
- If you suspect that you have fallen victim to a rental scam, you should report the incident to your local Garda station.
- Keep all records of the suspected fraudulent engagement - emails, messages, receipts, bank transactions.
- If you have concerns around confidential information that you have shared related to documentation and personal information requested by the landlord, this concerns can be raised with the Data Protection Commission.





Finding Rental Accommodation can be challenging at the best of times. In the current rental climate, it is increasingly easy to fall victim to a scam due to the pressure that individuals and families are under to find a home. By understanding how scams operate, recognising the warning signs, and following safe practices, individuals can significantly reduce the risk of falling victim to a scam.