

# HOUSING GUIDE

 **WORCESTER**  
STUDENTS' UNION

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# INTRODUCTION

At Worcester Students' union, we understand the importance of students having secure, safe, and decent accommodation whether in University Halls or in the private sector. We know that where you live can have a big impact on your studies and wellbeing.

The following information is for those who are considering renting in the private sector, either directly from a landlord or through a letting agency.

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The Students' Union provides a free, independent, confidential, and impartial advice service to all students at the University of Worcester. This includes students studying at partner colleges.

Advice and support are offered to all students regardless of race, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.

Our service is open to all students at the University, up to 3 months after they graduate and we are dedicated to making sure each student is treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

If you need advice about housing, we encourage you to book an appointment with an academic & welfare advisor:



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## CONFIDENTIALITY

The Help & Advice service is confidential - nothing you tell us will be shared with the University of Worcester or any other organisation or individual without your permission. There are rare occasions where a breach of confidentiality may be deemed necessary. A breach of confidentiality will only occur if staff have evidence to believe that someone is at risk of harm and abuse. Further details can be found in our Confidentiality Policy.

If a decision is made to breach confidentiality, the client will be informed in advance of the breach.

## DISCLAIMER

Every effort has been made to ensure that all information contained on the Help & Advice webpages and guides is both current and accurate. However, information within these pages is subject to change without prior notice. Please seek professional guidance for the latest information. Any advice given is based on the information available at the time of publication. No liability can be accepted for any errors or misleading information. Please note the Help & Advice service is a member of AdviceUK.

# FINDING PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION

## BEFORE YOU START LOOKING...

The key advice is: avoid signing too early. Each year, letting agents and landlord may pressure students to sign early, claiming limited availability. However, there's ample student accommodation in Worcester. Make sure you take your time and consider the following before you commit to looking for a property.

### LOCATION

- Where do you want to live?
- How will you travel to and from lectures and placement?
- Will you need a garden or parking?
- Are there pubs, clubs and train stations nearby and will there be any noise pollution?

### FINANCES

- What's your budget?
- Can you afford the deposit?
- Who will be your guarantor?
- To find out more about budgeting and money, contact the University of Worcester's Money Advice Team.

### HOUSEMATES

- How many people do you want to live with?
- Are they reliable, kind and approachable?
- Do you know them well? Do you have any similar interests?
- Are they clean and tidy?

## WHERE DO I LOOK FOR ACCOMMODATION?

Student Accommodation websites like Right Move, Zoopla, and SpareRoom.

Local Estate Agents: Contact estate agents in Worcester who specialise in student rentals.

Social Media: Join local Facebook groups or use platforms like Instagram and Twitter to find accommodation leads.

Word of Mouth: Ask current students, friends, or acquaintances who have lived in Worcester for recommendations.

Remember to choose your housemates carefully. Things like rent payments and bills affect the whole household.

Find potential housemates and advertise properties or spare rooms here:





# VIEWING A PROPERTY

Once you have found a property you like, you should contact the landlord and book a viewing. Try to view the property face to face (not virtual), during daylight hours, and never let anyone view a property on your behalf. It is important that you find out as much information about the property during your visit.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

### SECURE

- Is the property secure?
  - For example, with functioning windows and doors in a good condition with suitable locks?
- Is there a burglar alarm?
- Are there locks on the bedroom doors?
- Is there CCTV?
- Is there somewhere safe to store bikes or other means of transportation?

### CONDITION

- Is the condition of the property good?
- Is there damp or mould?
- Are the toilets and bathrooms in good condition or are there leaks?
- Are there exposed electrics?
- Are the electrical items PAT tested?
- Are there extractor fans?
- Does the outside of the property look well-maintained?

## WHAT TO ASK:

- Who is responsible for the bills, and can we change providers?
- Who is managing the property and how do we contact them if we have a question of concern? When can I expect a response?
- Will we be charged for any administration or other fees?
- What furnishings are included with the property?
- Which scheme will my deposit be kept in?
- When do you need to sign/pay the deposit and how do I pay the rent?
- Are there any planned works or renovations to the property?

# VIEWING A PROPERTY

## SAFE?

Is the property safe? Are there smoke and carbon monoxide alarms? Is there a fire escape route or meeting point?

You can also use the Fire Safety checklist below to find out if your accommodation is safe.

	Yes	No
Is there a fire risk assessment for the property? Date of FRA?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, have all the action points been attended to?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the fire risk assessment been reviewed in the last 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a fire safety log book/tenant log book for the property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a copy of the HMO licence on display/in the tenant log book?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a fire alarm servicing certificate dated within 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the fire alarm tested and recorded in the log book weekly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there an emergency lighting servicing certificate dated within 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the emergency lights tested and recorded in the log book weekly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is If the property is 3 or more storeys, is emergency lighting provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a fire extinguisher testing and servicing certificate dated within 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a Gas Safe certificate dated within 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a satisfactory Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) dated in the last 5 years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) certificate dated within the last 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) dated in the last 10 years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all doors on escape routes easily openable from the inside without the use of a key?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# TENANCY DEPOSIT SCHEMES

## TYPES OF DEPOSITS

In the UK, students renting private accommodation may encounter several types of deposits:

### TENANCY DEPOSIT:

Paid by the tenant to the landlord at the start of the tenancy, typically five weeks' rent. It covers potential property damage or unpaid rent and must be protected in a government-approved scheme. Also known as a Security or Damage Deposit.

### HOLDING DEPOSIT:

Paid to reserve a property before signing the tenancy agreement, usually one week's rent. It secures the property while checks are conducted and is often deducted from the first month's rent or the security deposit if the tenancy proceeds.

### UTILITY DEPOSIT:

In some cases, especially in shared housing or where utilities are included in the rent, a landlord might request a deposit to cover potential unpaid utility bills.

### PET DEPOSIT:

If a student tenant has a pet, a landlord might request an additional pet deposit to cover any potential damage caused by the animal.

Understanding these deposits and their purposes can help students prepare financially for renting private accommodation and ensure compliance with legal requirements.

Landlords and agents cannot charge fees for contracts, administration, referencing, or renewals. However, they may charge fees for specific services like late rent payments, key replacement, tenant replacements, or property remarketing, reflecting actual costs incurred. The recommended charge for a service is £50. While marketing a room can sometimes cost £250. The landlord can still charge you more if they can provide a breakdown of the costs.

# TENANCY DEPOSIT SCHEMES

All deposits for Assured Shorthold Tenancies in England and Wales must be protected by a deposit protection scheme. These schemes ensure tenants can reclaim their deposit when due and promote clear agreements on property conditions from the outset.

There are currently three tenancy deposit protection schemes available for landlords and letting agents:

- My Deposits
- Tenancy Deposit Service (TDS)
- Deposit Protection Service (DPS)

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Within 30 days of receiving a deposit the landlord or agent must give the tenant the details about how their deposit is protected includes:
- The contact details of the tenancy deposit scheme selected.
- The landlord or agents contact details.
- How to apply for the release of the deposit.
- Information explaining the purpose of the deposit.
- What to do if there is a problem about the deposit.



If you enter into a dispute with your landlord about your deposit or tenancy, book an appointment with an academic and welfare advisor.

# GUARANTORS

A guarantor for private student accommodation, often a parent or guardian, commits to covering the student's rent if they cannot pay. Landlords require this to ensure payment security, given students' limited income and credit history. The guarantor, demonstrating financial stability and good credit, safeguards the landlord against missed payments or damages, facilitating easier housing approval for students.

Guarantors are not a legal requirement – it is to the discretion of the landlord or letting agent if they wish to make guarantor necessary for students.

If you cannot obtain a guarantor, you do have other options:

You could offer your landlord an extra month's rent in advance to mitigate their risk (as long as this is affordable).

You can also use rent guarantor services, where you pay a monthly fee for the company to act as a guarantor. Note: Not all guarantor services are equal – if you chose this option, make sure you do your research before entering into a contract.





# SIGNING A CONTRACT

Tenancy contracts are legal agreements that outline the terms and conditions of renting a property.

## RIGHT TO RENT

Before signing, landlords verify your right to reside and rent in England. UK citizens use passports, non-UK students use 'share codes' with biometric cards, and EU students with settled status comply. Checks vary from online to in-person with originals, and landlords may retain copies until you depart. Avoid mailing originals and safeguard document recipients.

## GET THE RIGHT CONTRACT

Most student renters have an 'Assured Shorthold Tenancy', which can be either individual or joint depending on the rental agreement. An individual tenancy involves each tenant having a separate agreement with the landlord, while joint tenancy involves all tenants sharing one agreement and collectively assuming responsibility for rent and damages.

## IS IT A HOUSE OF MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY (HMO)?

An HMO is a building housing three or more unrelated individuals. Landlords must meet safety standards, including fire precautions and room dimensions. Currently, all HMOs in Worcester require a licence. Landlords face fines for failing to obtain licences, and tenants may claim a 'rent repayment order' for up to 12 months' rent.

## GET AN ADDRESS FOR THE LANDLORD

This is crucial in case of issues. Landlords must legally provide tenants with their UK contact address. If an agent's address is given, you have the right to request the landlord's address, even if it's overseas.

## WHO OWNS THE PROPERTY?

Before paying any money, you should check who owns the property and make sure they have the right to rent the property. You can conduct a land registry search at [landregistry.gov.uk](https://www.landregistry.gov.uk) to confirm the legal owner's name. This usually costs no more than £5.

# SIGNING A CONTRACT

## IT'S ALL IN THE DETAIL

The first page of the contract typically outlines the basic terms, which should include the start date, the duration of the agreement, rent amount, deposit amount, and the property's address. You must ensure that this all of this reflects what you have agreed to. Check the contract to see when the rent due date, payment method, responsibilities regarding utility bills, smoking and pet policies, and whether the property is furnished or unfurnished. Additionally, you should also check if there are any rent increases in the contract.

## REPAIRS

You're responsible for minor maintenance tasks outlined in your contract: mold removal, replacing fuses, lightbulbs, gardening, and preventing property issues like infestations and drain blockages. Legally, landlords must handle major repairs such as heating, electrical issues, and leaks, but not appliances like fridge freezers or washing machines unless specified. Always document repair requests and seek advice if asked to pay for damages not your responsibility. Always get agreements for repairs, cleaning, or additional furniture in writing from your landlord or letting agent.

## BE SAFE

Landlords must meet safety standards for tenants, including annual gas safety certificates, electrical safety certificates every five years, smoke or heat detectors (plus carbon monoxide detectors for coal or wood fires), and fire-resistant furniture. Tenants should obtain a carbon monoxide alarm if not provided by the landlord and receive copies of the latest gas and electrical safety certificates before moving in.

## YOUR PRIVACY

Landlords must give reasonable advance notice and schedule visits at mutually convenient times. Review your contract for notice procedures—typically 24 hours—unless living with a resident landlord. Landlords may enter communal areas without notice. It's crucial to grant access for necessary repairs promptly to prevent worsening issues. It is important to confirm the identity of anyone accessing the property on behalf of the landlord by asking to see photo ID when they arrive.

If you have concerns about the condition of your property despite talking to your landlord, you can contact the housing department at Worcester city council for advice.

Tel: 01905 722288 Email: [privatehousing@worcester.gov.uk](mailto:privatehousing@worcester.gov.uk)

# HOUSING CONTRACT CHECKLIST

The basic information you should expect your contract to include.

- Name and Address of the landlord (If the landlord uses a managing agent, the address can be the agent's address).
- The name of the tenant or tenants.
- The address of the property (If the contract is for a room in a shared house, the address section should make this clear).
- The length of the contract (term).
- Key information about the deposit e.g. which scheme it is in, the amount, circumstances in which the landlord can keep the money, when it will be refunded.
- Key information about the rent e.g. amount, frequency of payment, date of first payment, if you have to provide a guarantor.
- Key information on bills and Council Tax (Are bills included? If so, are there any fair usage agreements, internet, TV licence?)
- Information on additional charges (e.g. for late payments, lost keys and changes to the contract).
- Information on looking after the house (Expectations on you for keeping the house clean and tidy).
- Information on letting the landlord in (How much notice the landlord is required to give before entering the property, arrangements for viewings etc).
- Information around visitors (how long a visitor can stay, who is responsible if the visitor damages something etc)
- Nuisance and annoyance information (these clauses are usually about noise and disturbing neighbours).

# HOUSING CONTRACT CHECKLIST

- Information on insurance (Most contracts say you must not do anything which invalidates the landlord's insurance, it will probably also recommend getting personal contents insurance)
- Information on the landlord's responsibilities, what they agree to do and what they legally have to do.
- Quiet enjoyment information (nothing to do with noise! It means that your landlord must allow you to live in the house without unnecessary interference.
- Right to rent check (Since February 2016, landlords are required to check all tenant's immigration status. If there is no limit on how long you can stay in the UK (e.g. you are a British citizen), the landlord can carry out this check at any point in the run up to the start of the tenancy. If there is a limit on how long you can stay in the UK, the landlord must check your status no more than 28 days before the tenancy start date).

## ENERGY AND BILLS

### FAIR USAGE POLICIES

Many landlords now include fair usage policies in contracts due to rising energy costs. These policies specify monthly/quarterly limits on gas and electric usage, usually based on energy provider estimates relative to property size. Tenants are responsible for any usage exceeding these limits and should monitor consumption with regular meter readings, ideally taken on rent payment days for easy tracking and evidence in case of disputes over energy charges at the end of the contract. If you notice a steep rise in costs, there may be an issue with the boiler or other energy system. In this case, you must notify your landlord as soon as possible.

### COUNCIL TAX

Full-time students are typically exempt from council tax and you can obtain evidence of your student status from the University's online portal. You should apply for council tax exemption to the council as soon as possible.

### TV, WIFI, AND STREAMING SERVICES

Remember, a TV licence is necessary for watching live broadcasts or BBC iPlayer; platforms like Netflix do not require one. If your tenancy includes Wi-Fi, get written confirmation of minimum guaranteed internet speed to ensure compliance.

# MOVING IN

There are important things you must do when moving into a new property!

Take photos of the condition of the property and compare them with the inventory; report discrepancies to the landlord within 14 days.

Record meter readings and register with the utility providers if bills are not included; share readings with the landlord or energy company.

Ensure safety measures are in place: check locks, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, and gas safety certificates.

Review tenancy obligations like prohibited behaviours and maintenance responsibilities.

Know your recycling and waste collection schedule by asking the landlord or contacting Worcester Council.

Establish ground rules with housemates for shared responsibilities and communal living expectations.

Register for council tax exemption.

Ensure your deposit is protected in a government-approved scheme. Your landlord has 30 days to send across the details. You should log in and set up

Consider getting contents insurance for your belongings.

Familiarise yourself with property features and operational basics like the fuse box, stopcock, and boiler.

Set up rent payments through an agreed method to avoid penalties.

Maintain a list of emergency contacts, including the landlord, maintenance services, and local emergency numbers.

# MOVING OUT

When moving out of rented student private accommodation, it's important to follow certain steps to ensure a smooth transition and to secure the return of your security deposit.

- Review your tenancy agreement for the notice period and moving-out procedures; you must comply with all terms.
- Give written notice to your landlord within the specified timeframe and keep a copy for your records.
- Clean thoroughly, including general cleaning, kitchen appliances, bathroom fixtures, and removing personal items.
- Repair any damages caused during your tenancy, such as wall holes or broken items.
- Schedule a check-out inspection with your landlord, comparing the property's condition with the initial inventory; document any discrepancies.
- Take final meter readings for gas, electricity, and water; inform utility providers of your move-out date.
- Cancel or transfer utilities and services to your new address; settle outstanding bills.
- Return all keys as per your tenancy agreement and obtain a receipt.
- Provide your new address to your landlord for deposit return and update other institutions.
- Properly dispose of unwanted items to avoid deductions from your deposit.
- Request the return of your security deposit within 10 days after agreeing on deductions.
- Conduct a final walkthrough to ensure everything is secure and in order.
- Keep records of all communications, receipts, and photos related to your move-out for reference.

## LEAVING EARLY

If you leave before the fixed term ends, you're responsible for the remaining rent unless your tenancy contract states otherwise. There are no exceptions to this rule and withdrawing from university does not allow a student to leave their tenancy contract. The landlord may pursue you through small claims court, impacting your credit. You can find a replacement tenant by posting on our Housemate Finder page, but you would need your landlord's permission. You could ask the landlord to re-advertise your room, which may incur a cost once a tenant has been found. It is important students obtain a 'Deed of Assignment' from the landlord to release you from future tenancy liabilities and notifying the deposit scheme for joint tenancies.

# COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LANDLORD

Before moving in, you should ask your landlord how they would like you to communicate with them and the timeframe for getting a response. Here are some tips for communicating effectively:

## **BE CLEAR AND CONCISE:**

When communicating with your landlord, be direct and to the point. Clearly explain your issue or request, providing all necessary details to avoid misunderstandings.

## **KEEP RECORDS:**

Always document your communications, whether via email, text, or written letters. This can serve as evidence if any disputes arise in the future.

## **BE POLITE & PROFESSIONAL:**

Maintain a respectful and professional tone in all interactions. Politeness goes a long way in building a good relationship and can make it easier to resolve any issues.

## **REPORT ISSUES PROMPTLY:**

Inform your landlord immediately about any maintenance issues or damages in writing. Early reporting can prevent minor problems from becoming major repairs.

## **REQUEST WRITTEN AGREEMENTS:**

For any changes to the tenancy agreement or verbal promises, ask for written confirmation. This ensures clarity and prevents future disputes.

## **ARRANGE REGULAR CHECK-INS:**

Establish regular communication with your landlord to discuss the property's condition and any concerns. This can foster a positive relationship and show that you are a responsible tenant.

## **PLAN AHEAD:**

If you need to discuss important issues such as rent adjustments or extending your lease, initiate the conversation well in advance. This gives both parties ample time to consider and negotiate terms.

# COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LANDLORD

## USE APPROPRIATE CHANNELS:

Use the preferred communication method specified by your landlord, whether it's email, phone, or an online portal. This ensures your messages are received and addressed promptly.

## STAY CALM IN DISPUTE:

If a disagreement arises, remain calm and composed. Listen to the landlord's perspective and work towards a mutually beneficial resolution. If necessary, seek mediation or advice from student support services.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES:

Familiarise yourself with your tenancy agreement and relevant rental laws. Understanding your rights and responsibilities can help you communicate more effectively and assertively.

Following these tips can help maintain a positive and effective relationship with your landlord, making your rental experience more pleasant and stress-free.

Many students arrive at advice appointments stating they have not received a response from the landlord. Yet, most never clearly request a response. You should make sure to tell your landlord that you would like them to respond within 10 working days by email. If you have not heard from your landlord within 10 working days, contact them again in writing. If a further 10 working days pass and you have not heard anything, make an appointment with a Students' Union advisor to discuss your next steps.





# CONFLICT WITH HOUSEMATES

Dealing with disagreements with housemates in student accommodation can be challenging but manageable with the right approach. Here are some strategies to help navigate and resolve conflicts effectively:

## 1. COMMUNICATE OPENLY AND RESPECTFULLY

- **Set a time for discussion:** Arrange a convenient time for everyone to talk without distractions.
- **Use "I" Statements:** Express your feelings and concerns using "I" statements to avoid sounding accusatory. For example, "I feel frustrated when..."
- **Listen Actively:** Give everyone a chance to speak and listen without interrupting.

## 2. ESTABLISH HOUSE RULES

- **Create a House Agreement:** Draft a set of house rules regarding common issues such as cleanliness, noise levels, and guest policies. Ensure everyone agrees to these rules.
- **Regular Meetings:** Hold regular house meetings to discuss any ongoing issues and review the house rules.

## 3. RESPECT EACH OTHER'S SPACE AND PRIVACY

- **Personal Boundaries:** Respect each other's personal space and belongings.
- **Common Areas:** Keep shared spaces clean and tidy. Establish a cleaning rota if necessary.

## 4. ADDRESS ISSUES EARLY

- **Don't Let Issues Fester:** Address small issues before they become big problems. It's easier to manage disagreements when they are still minor.

# CONFLICT WITH HOUSEMATES

## 5. COMPROMISE AND BE FLEXIBLE

- **Find Middle Ground:** Be willing to compromise and find solutions that work for everyone.
- **Be Understanding:** Recognise that everyone has different habits and preferences.

## 6. SEEK SUPPORT IF NEEDED

- **Counselling Services:** If a situation at home is causing you to feel upset or frustrated, you could book an appointment with the University's Counselling and Mental Health service to help you understand your feelings and plan to resolve the situation effectively.

## 7. DOCUMENT AGREEMENTS AND ISSUES

- **Keep Records:** Document any agreements made and issues discussed. This can help in clarifying misunderstandings and tracking recurring problems.

## 8. CONSIDER A ROOM SWAP

- **Last Resort:** If the conflicts are irreconcilable, speak to your landlord or letting agent about the possibility of a room or housemate change.

To find out more about the University's Counselling and Mental Health Service, and to book a STAR appointment, scan here:



# CONFLICT WITH HOUSEMATES

## EXAMPLE SCENERIO AND RESOLUTION

Scenario: One housemate often leaves dirty dishes in the sink for days, which frustrates others.

**Step 1:** Arrange a house meeting to discuss the issue.

**Step 2:** Use "I" statements: "I feel frustrated when the dishes are left in the sink because it makes the kitchen unusable for others."

**Step 3:** Listen to the housemate's perspective. Maybe they are unaware of the impact or have a busy schedule.

**Step 4:** Agree on a solution. Perhaps establish a rule that dishes should be washed within 24 hours or create a rotating dishwashing schedule.

**Step 5:** Follow up after a week to see if the new system is working and adjust if necessary.

Living with others requires patience, respect, and effective communication. By addressing issues promptly and collaboratively, you can maintain a harmonious living environment. Many students contact the Students' Union because they have reported poor behaviour of housemates to the landlord and feel the landlord isn't taking it seriously or acting appropriately despite behaviour breaching the tenancy agreement. While there are expectations of behaviour in tenancy agreements, landlords do not get involved in housemate disputes. Students are expected to resolve issues themselves. Evictions are extremely rare and would involve often expensive court action for the landlord. However, if you feel you are being bullied, harassed or targeted because of an actual or perceived protected characteristic, you should seek advice from the University and Students' Union in the first instance, or contact the police if you feel you are in immediate danger or that a hate crime or incident has taken place.

Scan here to book an appointment with an advisor:



# DEALING WITH HOMESICKNESS

Leaving home and starting university can be a daunting experience, often leading to feelings of homesickness. It's normal to miss family and friends in a new environment, and many students experience this.

You might be surprised by your homesickness, especially if you've looked forward to university for a long time. Mixed emotions are common, but don't worry—these feelings don't mean you can't cope or have made the wrong choice. Allow yourself time to adjust during this transitional phase.

It's easy to feel isolated when homesickness strikes but remember that many students find settling in challenging as well. Homesickness can hit unexpectedly—not just at the beginning of the academic year, but also after the initial excitement fades or when returning from breaks.

## TIPS FOR EASING HOMESICKNESS

To help you feel more settled in your new home, consider these strategies:

- **Personalise Your Space:** Bring items that make your room feel homier.
- **Meet Your Flatmates:** Prop your door open to encourage socialising; they may be feeling lonely too.
- **Cook a Family Meal:** Prepare a favourite dish from home to enjoy.
- **Host a Movie Night:** Create a list of movies with your flatmates and plan an evening together.

## SEEKING SUPPORT

Homesickness is very real and can make you feel isolated and anxious. It is much more common than you might think though, and help and support is available:

- The Student Support and Wellbeing Service run “Fancy a Cuppa” twice a week in firstpoint. It is a great opportunity to meet fellow students from all years and academic courses and expand your social circle beyond your studies and your flat. Friendly support staff are there to listen and answer questions in an informal setting – it's an opportunity to connect with them on a more personal level. See the Fancy a Cuppa webpage for more details...

Scan here for more  
details on:  
Fancy a Cuppa



If homesickness is having a serious impact on your health and your studies, the University's Counselling Service is available for you to access via a STAR appointment. You can book through firstpoint or by using the online STAR calendar.



# DEALING WITH HOUSEHOLD REPAIRS

If something in your property is damaged, there are important steps you must take to get the problem resolved.

## 1. UNDERSTAND YOUR TENANCY AGREEMENT

Thoroughly read your tenancy agreement to understand your rights and responsibilities, as well as the landlord's obligations and note any specific clauses related to repairs and maintenance.

## 2. KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Familiarise yourself with the UK laws protecting tenants, such as the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, which requires landlords to keep the property in good repair. Understand the standards your accommodation must meet, including gas safety, electrical safety, and the general habitability of the property.

## 3. REPORTING REPAIRS

Report any issues as soon as they arise to prevent further damage and to ensure timely repairs. Always report repairs in writing (email or letter) to create a paper trail. Include details of the issue, the date you first noticed it, and any photos if applicable. Maintain copies of all communications and responses from your landlord or property manager. Allow a reasonable amount of time for the landlord to respond and arrange for repairs. The time frame may vary depending on the severity of the issue. If you receive no response, follow up with additional written reminders. You can find more information about how to do this on pages 14 and 15 'Communicating with your landlord'.

## 4. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

For serious issues (e.g., no heating in winter, major leaks), stress the urgency in your communications and request immediate action. If the landlord fails to respond, contact your local councils Private Sector Housing Team, which can enforce repairs.

# DEALING WITH HOUSEHOLD REPAIRS



## 5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Avoid withholding rent as leverage for repairs; this can put you at risk of eviction. If the repairs are not addressed and your living conditions are significantly affected, you might be entitled to a rent reduction. Seek advice from our Academic and Welfare Advisors before taking action.

## 6. SEEKING HELP

If you have failed to receive a response from your landlord about non-urgent repairs, you can book an appointment with an Academic & Welfare Advisor at the Students Union. However, the Students' Union are not a specialist housing or legal advice service. For unresolved disputes, consider seeking free legal advice from housing charities such as Shelter or Citizen's Advice.

## 7. END OF TENANCY

Upon moving out, ensure all repairs you reported are noted in the final inspection to avoid unfair deductions from your deposit. By staying informed and proactive, you can effectively manage repair issues and ensure a safe and comfortable living environment while renting in private student accommodation.



# HOW TO BE A GOOD HOUSEMATE

We understand that university life can be a unique experience and living with others—whether friends or new acquaintances—can sometimes lead to conflict due to differing expectations. Each student brings their own way of living, shaped by their culture and personality. It's important to be self-aware and set clear expectations before moving in together. Disagreements are normal, but how you handle them is key. This is a valuable opportunity to learn, compromise, and practice tolerance. Remember, the university expects all students to behave respectfully both on campus and in the wider community.

## TOP TIPS

### COMMUNICATE OPENLY

Share your preferences early on (cleaning, quiet hours, guests) and listen to others.

### RESPECT SHARED SPACES

Clean up after yourself in communal areas like the kitchen and living room. Don't leave personal items scattered in shared spaces.

### MANAGE NOISE CONSIDERATELY

Keep noise to a minimum, especially late at night or early in the morning. Use headphones for music, movies, or games if others are studying or sleeping.

### SHARE HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES

Create a rota for cleaning or taking out the trash so everyone does their part. Be proactive in helping when needed, even outside of your assigned tasks.

### BE MINDFUL OF GUESTS

Give your housemates a heads-up if you're planning to have friends over. Avoid bringing large groups home unexpectedly, especially late at night.

### RESPECT PRIVACY

Knock before entering a housemate's room. Understand that everyone needs personal space and alone time.



## **PAY BILLS AND RENT ON TIME**

Ensure that your share of rent and bills is paid promptly to avoid conflict.

## **AVOID ARGUMENTS**

Handle issues calmly and maturely by discussing concerns rather than letting them build up. Be open to compromise and finding solutions that work for everyone.

## **TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MISTAKES**

If something goes wrong (like breaking something), own up to it and offer to fix or replace it.

## **BE CONSIDERATE DURING EXAMS OR STRESSFUL TIMES**

Understand when housemates need peace and quiet, especially during exams or busy study periods.

# SIGNPOSTING

We encourage all students who need housing advice to book an appointment with a Students' Union academic and welfare advisor. You can do so by completing our online enquiry form. Once you receive a link to book in, it is essential you send your tenancy across to [suadvice@worc.ac.uk](mailto:suadvice@worc.ac.uk) at least 24 hours before your meeting. This allows advisors to review your tenancy and provide you with the best advice.

## UNIVERSITY SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS RENTING PRIVATELY...

### MONEY ADVICE

If you require support with budgeting and affordability, we advise you to contact Firstpoint in the Pierson building and book an appointment with a specialist money advisor. Appointments are offered face to face or virtually.

If you have been evicted from your private rented accommodation, you should contact the University accommodation team in the first instance.

### EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Several organisations in the UK can assist students with private sector housing, providing advice, support, and resources.

**Citizens Advice:** Citizens Advice offers free, confidential, and impartial advice on a range of issues, including housing. They can help with understanding tenancy agreements, resolving disputes with landlords, and knowing your rights as a tenant.

**Shelter:** Shelter is a housing and homelessness charity that provides expert advice on housing issues. They offer online resources, a helpline, and face-to-face advice services for tenants facing problems with private rented housing.

**National Union of Students (NUS):** The NUS provides support and resources for students on various issues, including housing. They offer advice on finding accommodation, understanding tenancy agreements, and dealing with landlord disputes.

**Local Housing Departments:** Local councils often have housing advice services that can assist students with private renting issues, including landlord disputes, housing standards, and legal rights.

**The Property Ombudsman:** If you have issues with letting agents, the Property Ombudsman can provide dispute resolution services. They ensure that agents follow the code of practice and handle complaints impartially.

**Generation Rent:** Generation Rent is a campaign group that supports private renters. They offer advice and campaign for better rights and protections for tenants.



