Guidance for students living in shared houses in Runnymede
Student responsibilities

The Private Sector Housing Team at Runnymede Borough Council has put this guidance together to help you live happily in your shared house. It contains information about your responsibilities towards your home, landlord and neighbours and your landlords responsibilities towards you. We are, with the support of the university, seeking to ensure that local residents are not adversely affected by the presence of student households.

Local residents occupy their houses on a long term basis, and you can affect their lives by the way that you and your friends occupy your accommodation. Most residents permanently live in the area and have invested much into their homes. They can be subject to a great deal of stress should they be disturbed on a regular basis i.e. by excessive noise, inconsiderate parking or poorly maintained housing.

Please be aware of your responsibilities under your tenancy agreement and take care to carry them out, in order that your tenancy may contribute positively to the local community, to your landlord and to the students that follow you.

You are specifically asked to:

1. Work to build an amicable relationship with your neighbours by introducing yourselves on arrival and being conscious of your neighbours’ circumstances;

2. Ensure that any problems with the property are reported immediately to the person responsible for the management of the property;

3. Store all refuse in the bins provided and keep the refuse storage area clean and tidy;

4. Fulfil all arrangements that you have agreed with your landlord or managing agent to ensure that all gardens, yards and paths are maintained in a clean and tidy state;

5. Comply with all duties of occupants under The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006, contained at the end of this document (this is legal requirement which can be enforced by Runnymede Borough Council);

6. Ensure that all Fire Doors provided by your landlord are kept shut at all times.
You are also asked NOT to

7. Damage or tamper with any fire safety measures within the property, and report any defects to the responsible person immediately;

8. Cause noise nuisance to your neighbours. Do not act in a manner that will affect their enjoyment of their properties or be detrimental to neighbourhood;

9. Keep more cars than recommended at the property and ensure that you and any guests park and drive considerately.

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**Noise**

Do not cause excessive noise that could be a nuisance to neighbours. We ask you not to cause excessive domestic noise such as loud music late at night or cause noise in the street. If you are planning to have a party, let your neighbours know about it well in advance and consider any objections they may have. It is important if you are returning home late at night, that disturbance is minimised. Remember that your neighbours will consist of working people, children, the elderly and infirm. These groups can be adversely affected by noise, and excessive noise at unreasonable times can affect their health and well-being.

The Council and the police have a wide range of enforcement options available to deal with anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance from seizure of equipment to the power of arrest. The University works closely with these agencies. If you are deemed by them to be causing a nuisance, you will have broken College regulations too, and will be treated accordingly.

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**Parking**

You must ensure that you and any guests must park your vehicles considerately and appropriately. Student houses can often have more cars at a property than a single household, which can cause problems to neighbourhoods. You landlord or agent should have indicated the maximum number of cars recommended for the accommodation. You should not exceed this limit. Be sure to drive carefully and considerately around residential areas; under new legislation, irresponsible use of a car can lead to it being seized from you by the Police. Where possible keep the numbers of cars to a minimum.

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**Waste and recycling**

It is your responsibility to ensure that any refuse that you may have is stored in the bin(s) provided, and put out for collection on a weekly basis. The refuse area must be maintained in a clean and tidy state. Please minimise the amount of refuse for collection by participating in the local recycling service. Further information is available on our website [www.runnymede.gov.uk](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk)
Gardens

Your landlord or managing agents should have made adequate arrangements with you to ensure that any gardens, yards or paths are maintained in a tidy state. You should ensure that such arrangements are made clear at the start of your tenancy, and you participate in the arrangement throughout the course of your tenancy. Landlords have a duty under the scheme to keep these areas tidy; if you fail to carry out your agreed obligations in this area, landlords will be obliged to remedy the situation and may charge you accordingly.

Repairs

Minor faults can often be repaired with minimal effort and cost, however if left for long periods of time can lead to serious and costly disrepair. It is imperative that you report any faults that the property may have immediately. You may be responsible for some minor maintenance of the house such as changing light bulbs. Please check your contract and ensure you carry out these tasks.

Fire Safety

Your accommodation will have been provided with some fire safety measures, which may include: smoke alarms, fire doors, emergency lighting and firefighting equipment. It is vital that these are not interfered with as, to do so, would seriously compromise your safety in the event of fire. The Fire Service is making every effort to reduce the number of calls it receives to fires, and to unnecessary fire alarm actuations. You can help by ensuring that your activities do not result in an emergency response.

The Fire Service provides a wide variety of information and advice, in the form of leaflets or home visits by fire-fighters – all of which are free of charge. Fire alarms are very sensitive to some everyday activities such as cooking fumes, steam from showers and aerosols and every time an alarm system reacts to one of these, the Fire Service responds. This puts a great strain on their resources and stops them being available for a real emergency. It also puts other road users at risk from fast moving fire engines. Your cooperation, by trying to avoid causing these unwanted alarms, will lead to greater safety for all.
Read your contract!

You should familiarise yourself with your responsibilities under your contract. You should take reasonable care of the property, and make every effort to ensure a pleasant stay throughout the course of their tenancy.

Joint Liability; if you have signed the same contract as your housemates and you all agree to take the property at the same time; you will be joint and severally liable with each of your housemates for any rent arrears and/or damage to the property. So, if one tenant moves out, the landlord/agent can pursue the remaining tenants (as well as the tenant who has left) for any money due.

Individual Liability; if you have a separate agreement between you and the landlord/agent, and another tenant leaves the landlord/agent cannot ask that you cover their rent. You would be liable for any damage to your room. The landlord/agent can make a charge for any damage to communal areas but they have to first try and find out who was responsible.

Your landlord must put your deposit in a government-backed tenancy deposit scheme (TDP) if you rent your home on an assured shorthold tenancy that started after 6 April 2007. Further information is available at: www.gov.uk/tenancy-deposit-protection

Reporting a complaint about property conditions

You should first raise any problems over the condition of their property or the management practices with the Landlord/Agent. Your landlord should deal with all complaints quickly and fairly so you can move into a more constructive relationship for the remainder of the tenancy. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally the following action should be taken.

If there are hazards within the property and you have reported the problem to your landlord already and they have not responded adequately, then you can make a complaint to us. You can contact us on 01932 425886 or email privatesectorhousing@runnymede.gov.uk

If there is an issue being disputed between you and your landlord that could benefit from mediation or arbitration then the Student’s Union may be able to assist. Requests for assistance should be made to the Students Union advice and support centre on 01784 276700
Your responsibilities under the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006

You must:

- conduct yourself in a way that will not hinder or frustrate the manager in the performance of his duties;
- take reasonable care to avoid damage and disrepair;
- cooperate in a reasonable way with the manager, and provide information to allow him/her to carry out their duties;
- allow the manager to access your living accommodation, at all reasonable times, for any purpose connected with the carrying out of duties imposed on him by these Regulations;
- provide the manager, at his request, with any such information as he may reasonably require for the purpose of carrying out any such duty;
- comply with any reasonable arrangements or instructions made by the manager regarding means of escape from fire and the storage or disposal of refuse.

A person who fails to comply with these Regulations commits an offence under section 234(3) of the Housing Act 2004, punishable on summary conviction with a fine not exceeding £5000

The advice and guidance given in this booklet is based on legislation and guidance in force as at August 2018 which will be subject to revision. The advice given is not intended to be a definitive guide. Independent legal advice should be sought where appropriate. Only the Courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.