

NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

FINDING ACCOMMODATION IN NORWICH

This factsheet gives you information on where to start when you are looking for private sector accommodation in Norwich.

Our housing list

Throughout the year landlords in Norwich approach NUA because they want our students to take rooms in their accommodation. When a landlord approaches us we first ensure that the houses are safe by requesting copies of up to date safety certification for the gas and electricity in the property. We also ask landlords to confirm that they provide a minimum level of furnishings that we think our students will need. Properties that meet these specifications are then added to our property list.

It should be noted that private accommodation has not been vetted by the University and any agreement made between the student and the landlord will be a private agreement.

Where to find the list

Students starting their studies this September: It is in the Private Accommodation section of the pre-enrolment portal.

Current NUA Students: You can find the list in the Accommodation section of the student noticeboard on the intranet.

The list is not available to students from other Universities or the general public. Only prospective or current NUA students can see it.

Average costs of private accommodation

The average price for accommodation in the private sector is around £280-£320 per person per month excluding utility bills (gas, electricity and water). These usually amount to around £40 per person per month.

You may find that some landlords charge more than this average but may include some bills in the rent. It is very important that you are sure of, and happy with, what you are signing up for when filling in any paperwork to take a room in the private sector. Once you sign a contract, or tenancy agreement, it will become binding and you may not be able to leave it. Housing contracts do not have to have a cooling off period like some others that you may have signed. Once you sign a housing contract you have agreed to pay the full rent for the duration of the contract.

If you are in any doubt about anything in the contract, do not sign it. Ask the landlord to explain the issue in the first instance. A good landlord will not have a problem answering

questions about their tenancies. If you have been handed a copy of the contract and would like it looked at before you sign it you can ask the Accommodation Officer at NUA for help. NUA does not offer legal advice but the Accommodation Officer should be able to explain any terms you are unsure about before you make a decision.

What if I can't find anything on the list that I like?

While there are generally many properties on our housing list it may be that there is nothing there that you like the look of. If this is the case don't worry, there are other places that list accommodation in Norwich.

A lot of student property changes hand by word of mouth, so a good place to start your search is the NUA Fresher's Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NUAFreshers17/> which has been set up to give new students the chance to talk to each other prior to coming to Norwich. Over the Summer one of the main topics of conversation in the group is accommodation and you could find your new housemates or property there.

There are several letting agencies in Norwich and some estate agents have property management and letting departments; however, they do not all let to students. Letting through an accommodation agency can be expensive. If you have to use an agency, be clear from the outset what charges they are going to make. There is a list of some of the agencies in the city elsewhere on the portal.

You can also try property websites like www.rightmove.co.uk which has a large, easily searchable, student housing section. Most of the properties on websites like this will be listed through letting agents so please bear in mind there may be fees to pay on top of the deposit to secure the property.

More Information

For further information regarding finding accommodation in Norwich or any housing matters please contact the NUA Accommodation Officer on accommodation@nua.ac.uk

NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AND GETTING A GROUP TOGETHER

This factsheet gives you information about how to decide what the best living arrangement is for you and finding people to live with in private sector accommodation in Norwich.

Getting a group together

Some landlords like individual students to approach them about their properties while others prefer it if a whole group comes forward to fill the house. If we're aware of the landlord's preference we will always put this information on our housing list.

I don't know anyone yet, how do I find a group?

One of the most common questions that NUA Accommodation gets over the Summer period from concerned students and parents is how they can meet people if they do not get into University halls of residence. NUA offers two main ways to help you find a group to live with: our Facebook group and our sharers' list on the pre-enrolment portal.

Facebook Group

We encourage all students to join the Facebook group for their year group. New Year 1 and Year 0 students you can find it here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NUAFreshers17/> . It is a great place to meet the students coming to NUA this year and to talk about living and studying at the University. One of the main topics of conversation on the group in the Summer months is accommodation. Students will post on the group if they have found a nice house and need some more people to join them to take it, or if they want to meet people to get together to go house hunting.

The Sharers' List on the Pre-Enrolment Portal

The sharers' list is something that our new entrant students can join in the Summer before starting their studies with us here at NUA.

Students interested in finding housemates to share with can click the button on the pre-enrolment portal to join the list. You will then be able to view the details of everyone else that has done the same thing. From there all you will need to do is contact other new entrants using the details provided and get chatting.

We don't put too many of your personal details on the list, just your name, course and contact information but hopefully this will be enough for you to get a conversation started with other likeminded students.

Some students choose to contact people on the same course as them so they could potentially work together. Other students contact those from other courses to help increase their circle of friends. Think about what might be important to you.

Living Arrangements for Students in Norwich

The private sector in Norwich has properties of all different sizes available and this means, in most cases, living with other people. Below is a run down of the various ways students group together in order to live in Norwich.

Living Alone

For some, this could be the ultimate way of life while for others, living alone could make them feel completely isolated. Not the most popular way of living for students; nevertheless, a few do choose to take a studio or one bedroom flat to live alone.

The main benefit of this is that you are the master of your own domain. If you like working until the small hours with music on then you won't be disturbing anyone.

On the other side of the coin you will be liable for all the bills and rent on the property yourself. This can work out as a very expensive way of living. There are also very few flats of this sort available in the city. Generally landlords who want to rent to students tend to buy larger properties that more people can live in.

With your partner

The prospect of moving in with your partner to a small house or flat can be an attractive one. It can feel like the next big stage in a relationship, you can share the bills and you don't have to worry about housemates wandering in unannounced.

If you are in a secure and stable relationship then this can be a great idea. You get your own private space to set up home and you can split the bills between the two of you.

Unfortunately not all relationships, especially those formed in your late teens or early twenties are built to last. It may not be something that you want to consider but if you were to split up with your partner and you were both living in a one bedroom flat things could get very difficult. Housing contracts can be very difficult to get out of once signed.

It may be worth thinking about living close to your partner but not necessarily in the same flat or house. That way you are close by for when you want to see each other, but not living together so you can have some space if you need it.

With Friends

Living with friends can be one of the best things about university life. A lot of students do this and for most it works out well. Living together can act as a real bonding experience for a group of friends and be a fantastic experience.

Before you do jump in and decide that you want to live together it might be worth thinking about how well you would actually complement each other in a house-share environment. Do you all like late nights (or early mornings)? How tidy are you all? Do you always wash up after cooking? How much do dirty plates in the sink annoy you if you like to wash up straight after eating and your friends don't?

All these kinds of things can put a strain on your relationship with your friends if you disagree about them and could potentially damage the friendship that you have. For instance you may have one friend who is really fun to be out with but likes to take the party home with them after a night out. This may be fun for a few weeks but you need to consider whether this is something that you want happening all year, especially when you have work to do. Is it something that you want to live with or would it be more fun to be their friend and have the option of going home to your own house to bed?

Don't be afraid of deciding that you might want to live in a different household to your friends. If they are your friends then they will understand.

With Housemates

While it may seem strange, a group of like-minded but unfamiliar students can often live together as happily, if not better than, a group of good friends. This is the situation that all students moving into halls of residence face, and moving into a house in the private sector where you do not know your housemates is no different to this.

Providing, as a group, you all generally get on and are civil to each other, if you have done your research beforehand you could find this works really well. None of you will come in with pre-conceived ideas of your "role" in the group or how you might fit in, and you can chat first to make sure that you have the same ideas about things like acceptable cleanliness and noise levels.

You could even make some new friends outside of your normal social group.

Even if you don't become the best of friends, your house could still be a harmonious one providing you all remain polite and respect each others' space.

As with all living arrangements there can be some downsides to living with people you don't know. There is the issue that no matter how well you think you have chosen your new house mates, you may not all get on. For instance, two peoples' opinion on what constitutes a "very tidy" house could be very different. Try to make sure you discuss issues that are important to you before deciding to sign a contract with anyone.

More Information

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NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

VIEWING A PROPERTY

This factsheet gives you information on how to view a property in the private sector to ensure you get the right one for you.

Once you have decided who to live with then the next step is to identify properties that you like the look of, and view them.

Can you afford it?

Make sure that you work out what you can afford for your monthly rent as a group before you start booking viewings. It's okay if your group includes people with different budgets; some houses on our housing list have rooms at different prices. Some also have rooms with different facilities even though the house is priced as a single unit. If this is the case, try to be fair and agree what everyone will pay in proportion to the type of room they have taken. Is it fair that someone with an en suite double room would pay the same as someone with a smaller single room with shared bathroom?

Don't view houses that are out of your price range. The last thing you want to do is see your perfect house and then not be able to take it as you cannot afford it.

The price of the rent on a house does not necessarily correspond with its quality. Rents are set by individual landlords. Some want to charge more than others for their facilities even though the houses are similar to others on the market. The most expensive house is not always the best one. Shop around.

View several properties

The house you choose will be your home for at least the next academic year of your life. It will also be your biggest financial outlay for the year. The first house you see might be very nice but you will have nothing to compare it to. How do you know that it is definitely what you are looking for if you have not seen anything else?

Don't be pressurised into signing up on the day

Some landlords and letting agents will try to pressurise you into signing up for the house as soon as you have seen it. You may hear that "there are a lot of groups interested." Whether this is true or not don't be pressurised into signing up for something that you are not sure about.

Is the house in a good state of repair?

At the viewing you need to be looking out for the condition of the property, as well as how much you like the house. Does it look like it is being looked after? Some landlords will ask the current residents to show you round. Make sure you ask them how they get on with the landlord. Find out how well the landlord responds to questions and maintenance requests.

If the landlord is showing you round ensure that you ask lots of questions. A good, knowledgeable landlord will not mind this.

If rooms have been freshly painted ask why this work was done. It could just be that the landlord wants to refresh the house for the viewings but there may be other reasons such as mould that they want to hide.

Also check to see what the furniture is like. If the landlord says that they are going to replace certain items in the summer get this in writing from them. It should be written into any contract that you sign.

Ask Questions

Try to be assertive as you are going viewing the house. Ask lots of questions to the person showing you round. The way that they answer questions can be as telling as the answers that they give.

If they are open and honest about the house and are happy to answer your questions then you can guess that their communication throughout the tenancy will be the same. If they are evasive or just try to pressurise you into signing up for the place, you might want to consider whether you really want to be giving this person money every month for the next year.

Any good landlord will have no problems addressing any concerns or queries that you may have at your viewing. After all, they want tenants for the house as much as you want somewhere to live.

What's the Internet/Mobile Phone Coverage like?

Most houses in the city will be covered by superfast fibre optic broadband and good mobile reception but there are some areas that this does not fully reach out to. If you are going to use a lot of bandwidth for your course, find out what speeds you can expect to get before you take the house on. Virgin provide the fastest speeds in the city - you may want to contact them to see what they can offer if this is important to you.

What's the water pressure like?

If you like a shower then it is always good to check the water pressure in the showers to see what it is like. The water pressure is something that will be difficult to change once you have moved in so make sure you are happy with it before taking the house.

What is the area like?

Remember, you are going to be living in this house for the next year if you decide to take it so you will need to feel comfortable there. Even if the house is the nicest you have ever seen inside, if it is in area you do not feel comfortable in, do not take it.

Norwich is a safe city with very few crimes, however it still pays to ensure that you take good personal safety precautions. Is the house in a well-lit area? Do you have to go down any alleyways to get to it? How safe would you feel walking home alone to the house after dark? Is it on good bus routes that continue to run into the evening? Is there secure bike storage if you cycle?

If you decide you like a house and you have only viewed it during the day it is a good idea to go back after dark to see how you feel about the area then.

It is also good to see where things like local shops are in relation to your new place. Is there a corner shop or mini supermarket nearby? How far will you have to carry your shopping home if you do not have a car?

Take Photos

Take lots of photos of houses as you look at them; that way, when you all talk about what you have looked at in order to make a decision, you will have things fresh in your mind.

Don't Forget to Have Fun

Looking round houses should be fun and exciting as you plan the next stage of your life. Don't get stressed out. Enjoy the experience.

More Information

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HOUSING CHECKLIST

This checklist is to help you in assessing properties you are thinking of renting. It should also help you to assess the overall expense you are likely to incur and to compare properties, both in respect of facilities and costs. Make a few copies of this checklist and take it with you when you visit the properties you are viewing.

Don't be afraid to ask the landlord (or whoever is showing you round the property) lots of questions during the viewing. Any good landlord will be happy to answer anything that you need to know to make sure that you make the right decision.

It is also a good idea to take photos on the viewing to help you remind yourself what the property looked like.

House Address:

.....

Rent and Outgoings

Put the amounts in the relevant sections to remind yourself what you will be paying for:

Deposit.....

Agency Fee.....

Rent per month.....

Does this rent include:
(tick or cross)

Water

Fuel Costs

Phone

Cleaning

Other

Living Room

(tick or cross)

YES

NO

Is the furniture adequate?

Is a television provided?

If a TV is provided who provides the licence?

.....

Does the room have natural light and ventilation?

Kitchen

(tick or cross)

YES

NO

Is the cooker in good working order?

Is the cooker adequate for the number of occupants?

Is there a fridge?

Is the fridge large enough for the needs of the occupants?

Is there hot and cold running water?

Is the method of heating water adequate?

Is the method of heating water economical?

Is there sufficient dry storage space for food?

Is there sufficient space to prepare food?

Is there sufficient storage space for crockery & utensils
and if provided, are they sufficient for the number of
occupants?

Bathroom and Toilet**YES****NO**

Does the plumbing work properly?

Does the toilet flush?

If there is a shower, does it work?

Is the method of heating water adequate?

Is the method of heating water economical?

Are the light switches safe?

Is there a working heater?

Bedroom**YES****NO**

Is the furniture adequate?

Does the room have natural light and ventilation?

Is there sufficient storage space?

Are bed linen and blankets provided?

Is there a desk if the room is to be used for study?

General**YES****NO**

Do any gas/electric fires work?

Is the heating adequate?

Is the heating system economical?

Is there enough furniture for the occupants?

Is the furniture in good condition?

Are the stairs and rails safe?

Is there evidence of damp?

Does the roof look sound?

Are the gutters and drains clear?

Is any woodwork rotting or in an unsafe condition?

If you are expected to care for the garden, are tools provided?

Do you have access to the energy performance certificate (EPC)? – you should be able to see one of these.

Is the landlord going to carry out any repairs/renovations to the property before you move in? If so what are they? Remember to get the landlord to add any work that they say they are going to do to your tenancy agreement before you sign it. That way you can be sure it will be carried out.

General Notes on the Property

More Information

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NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

TYPES OF HOUSING CONTRACT

This factsheet will give you information on the types of housing contract that are used for students in private sector accommodation in Norwich.

Once you have found a suitable property, you must come to some form of agreement with the landlord.

Landlords in Norwich may offer the prospective tenants individual contracts i.e. each person has a tenancy agreement with only their own name on it; or a joint contract where all the tenants' names appear on one contract. Both are normal and it is up to the individual landlord to decide which contract they will use for their property.

Where tenants have individual agreements they are only responsible for their own rent and cannot, for example, be made liable for the rent of a fellow tenant who moves out.

Tenants who have a joint contract are "jointly and severally liable". This means that each person is ultimately responsible for the whole rent and therefore if one person leaves, the remaining tenants will be expected to make up the rent. The majority of student lets in Norwich are joint contracts.

Before signing any agreement you should understand the clauses it contains. Be prepared to ask the landlord if you can take an agreement away to read it carefully before you sign it. Any reasonable landlord will be happy for you to do this. You are welcome to bring your contract to Student Support for checking before you sign it. Remember, you are legally entitled to a copy of any contract you sign, so make sure that you are given one.

What is agreed when you sign the contract is very important. You could be evicted for breach of contract if you fail to abide by any of the clauses.

Tenancy Agreements

It is extremely important that you know your housing rights and fully understand the implications of any contract before you sign it.

In the private rented sector in Norwich you are likely to be asked to sign a type of contract called an assured shorthold tenancy but there are other types you may come across.

Assured Shorthold Tenancy

An Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) is a type of fixed term tenancy and is most commonly used by landlords who let to students in Norwich. The minimum period of an AST is six months and there is no maximum period. If the period stipulated for an AST is less than six months, the shorthold is invalid and the tenancy becomes a Periodic Assured Tenancy. For

those in NUA Accommodation, this is the type of contract that we use in our All Saints Green residence.

Before a valid AST can be entered into, the tenant or tenants must be given notice clearly informing them that the proposed tenancy is to be an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. If the appropriate notice is not served then the tenancy is a Periodic Assured Tenancy.

The landlord can gain repossession of the property at the end of the fixed term by giving at least two months' notice to the tenant. This notice can be given two months before the end of the fixed term or at any time thereafter. The tenant cannot be forced to leave without a court order. However, provided that the landlord gave the tenant a valid notice before the agreement was entered into and issued proper notice to quit, the court will evict the tenant.

If the landlord does not give notice or offer another AST at the end of the fixed period, then the tenancy becomes a Periodic Assured Shorthold Tenancy. Under a Periodic Assured Shorthold Tenancy the landlord can give two months' notice to quit and the tenant's rights are the same as for an AST.

Whatever period is agreed on for the contract between you and your landlord, you will be bound by the agreement until the end of that period unless the tenancy has a clause that refers to earlier termination.

A tenant cannot give notice to quit without remaining liable for the rent until the end of the fixed term of the AST unless the contract includes a clause allowing them to do so. If the AST Tenancy has become a Periodic Assured Tenancy then the period of notice required from the landlord is two months and that required from the tenant is equal to the period between rent payments or 28 days, whichever is the greater.

Important - if you sign a joint tenancy agreement with other students you become liable for their rent if they do not pay it. The landlord is renting the house to the whole group of you and all of your housemates are responsible for paying the full rent. You are not just liable for your "share."

No Written Agreement

It is unlikely but possible that a landlord would let you live in their property with no written agreement. This type of arrangement is more common in houses where you are a lodger in a room in the landlord's house, which would make you a licensee rather than a tenant, with different laws applying to things like eviction. Verbal agreements can cause confusion as to exactly what your responsibilities are, for example, who pays the water bills.

NUA would always recommend that you get a written agreement from your landlord before you move into a property. They are there to protect both you and your landlord. If you do not have a written agreement, it is very important to keep proof of any payments made to the landlord. Get a rent book and ask the landlord to sign each time they receive your rent. Pay by cheque and write on the back of the cheque exactly what the money is for and the period it covers.

If you do not have a cheque book then you should pay your landlord by bank transfer, making sure that the description that your bank adds to this explicitly states that it is for rent. Do not pay cash unless you have no alternative. If you do have to pay by cash then ensure your landlord gives you a written receipt for this.

Licences

Licences are used by many universities for their own halls of residence/managed accommodation. NUA uses them in our Beechcroft property. It is an agreement for occupancy and does not create a tenancy. A tenancy is a right in the property and a licence does not create this right.

More Information

For further information regarding finding accommodation in Norwich or any housing matters please contact the NUA Accommodation Officer on accommodation@nua.ac.uk

NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

HOUSING DEPOSIT PAYMENTS AND DEPOSIT PROTECTION SCHEMES

This factsheet will give you information on what a landlord needs to do with any housing deposit payment that you give them.

Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme

If you're a tenant on an AST, the damage deposit you hand over to your landlord when your tenancy starts will be protected. Your landlord must put your deposit into a scheme until the end of your tenancy, or they can pay into an insurance based scheme for it to be refunded should the money go missing.

As well as protecting tenants' deposits, laws have also been introduced so disputes between tenants and landlords can be dealt with more easily. Instead of the landlord and tenant having to go to court if they cannot agree over the return of the deposit, the dispute can be referred to independent arbitrators to resolve. This is a free service and is far quicker and easier than going to court. If you have to use this service NUA Accommodation can help you put your claim together, however we cannot give you legal advice.

When you pay a deposit on a private sector let you should ask your landlord for the details of the scheme that your money is going to be put into. It is a legal requirement that they provide you with this.

When do these rules apply?

The rules apply to all deposits taken for Assured Shorthold Tenancies. As mentioned in the section above regarding contracts, this is the most common type of contract that you will be asked to sign for housing in Norwich. If the landlord takes a deposit from a tenant for any damage to the property, they must let the tenant know the details of which tenancy deposit scheme they are using **within 30 days** of receiving the deposit.

A few tenancies will not come within the scheme, such as lettings with a rent over £25,000, resident landlords, licence agreements or company lets. All student lets with an AST should be covered though.

What happens if the landlord and tenant can't agree?

If the landlord and tenant disagree about any deductions from the deposit at the end of the tenancy, any undisputed element should be paid as agreed. The disputed element must then be paid to the scheme administrators for insurance-based schemes and the dispute will then be referred to arbitration. This is free of charge and the arbitrator will normally make a decision within 28 days of receiving the paperwork. The scheme administrators will pay the deposit out, as appropriate, within 10 days of receiving the arbitrator's decision.

The Accommodation Officer in Student Support can help you if you need to raise a dispute in this way at the end of your tenancy.

Are there penalties for not using a scheme?

There are penalties if landlords fail to comply with the statutory requirements regarding deposits. If a landlord doesn't protect your deposit, you can go to court and ask for the return of the deposit or get a court order that the deposit be protected under a deposit scheme. You can also be awarded a sum of up to three times the deposit amount paid to you by the landlord.

The landlord will not be able to ask you to leave the property (this means they cannot issue a section 21 eviction notice) while the deposit is unprotected, unless they have paid it back to you first.

For further information on deposit schemes go to <https://www.gov.uk/private-renting>

Guarantor Agreement

Landlords are entitled to ask for a guarantor to cover any arrears with your rent. This is usually a parent or guardian and your guarantor will need to sign an agreement also signed and witnessed by an independent person stating that they are happy to take on this role for you.

If you have trouble finding a guarantor, sometimes the landlord will accept a certain number of months' rent up front in place of this. You will need to discuss this issue with your landlord if you are in this situation. There are also companies that can act as your guarantor (e.g. <https://www.housinghand.co.uk>) for a fee. The University does not recommend any particular one though. We ask that you research any company of this type carefully so that you know what you are getting for your money before signing up with them.

More Information

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NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

WHAT TO PACK AND YOUR MOVING IN DAY

This factsheet will give you information on what to pack to come to NUA and what to expect on your moving day

What to pack

What you bring to University with you is really up to you but it is good to make sure that you cover the essentials.

For your bedroom

Personal Documents – Make sure you have everything you need to enroll on your course when you get there. It is also good to have your bank cards, passport, driving license (if you have them) and all your student finance documents.

Enough money for few weeks – You don't need this as cash but make sure your bank account has enough money in it to cover your first few weeks. Your Student Finance will normally be paid soon after you have enrolled but in case of any delays it is good to make sure you have some money available. If you have problems getting your finance through then make an appointment with Student Support at NUA and they will be able to help you.

Phone/Laptop/Tablet – If you have them, and don't forget the chargers!

Bedding – Find out if your room will have a single, double or $\frac{3}{4}$ sized bed before you arrive and bring the right sized bedding with you.

Coat Hangers – Sometimes the previous tenant will leave coat hangers behind when they leave a property but other times they will remove them. Bring a few with you to make sure you can hang up your clothes.

A lamp – Makes reading in bed and working at night easier.

Some decoration for your room – Check with your landlord or look in your contract as to what decoration you are permitted to put up (and with what!).

Clothes – but not too many, storage space is often limited in student bedrooms.

For the kitchen

Your household will probably need to provide their own kitchen equipment other than the white goods. It might be a good idea to discuss the list of items that you will need for the kitchen between you so that you do not end up with six full sets of crockery! You could split the more expensive items between you and perhaps all bring one or two of them each. Not only will this mean there are fewer duplicates in the kitchen but you will have more storage space for other things. Here is a suggested list:

Set of Saucepans

Frying Pan/Wok
Baking Tray
Oven Dish
Colander/Sieve
Cheese Grater
Tin Opener
Bottle Opener/Corkscrew
Kitchen Knives
Cutlery
Mugs
Measuring Jug
Big Serving Bowl
Crockery Set
Kettle – although a lot of landlords will provide these in the kitchen already.

Things to check if they are provided.

These items are not essential to bring however many people find them very useful. As with kettles on the list above it is possible that your landlord will provide these items so make sure you check

Microwave

Iron

Ironing Board

TV – If you are going to watch TV (even on your laptop/other device) you will need a TV licence.

Supermarket Shopping – When you get here or before you arrive

Norwich has many supermarkets around the city and no part of the city is far from a large one. All of the major chains have outlets and if you need information on the location of a particular one please contact Student Support who will be able to help you.

Things that you will need to bring with you or buy on your arrival from the supermarket are:

Food for a few days

Cleaning Products – It will be your responsibility to keep the house clean once you move in. This means buying the products that you will need to do this.

Toiletries

This is just a list of essential items to bring but you can find more information about packing for University online. This blog at Unibaggage.com has some really good practical information. They also have a downloadable packing list that may be useful:

<https://www.unibaggage.com/blog/what-to-take-to-university-the-ultimate-packing-list/>

Your moving in day, things to remember in general.

You are legally entitled to a copy of any document that you have signed. Have you been given a copy of your contract? You are legally entitled to know the name and address of your landlord. Make sure that you are given this information. If you do not have it then ask your landlord to provide it when you pick up your keys from them.

If you have paid a deposit, you should have also been given a receipt stating the amount, and information on the deposit scheme your money is held in. See also the section on Deposits.

It is very important to make a detailed check of the property as soon as you move in. Take your time doing this; it can save a lot of issues later. Are there any repairs that need doing? Check the property both inside and out and take photos of anything that needs attention. If there are areas that need looking at, write to the landlord advising him/her of the repairs that are needed and keep a copy of this. It is best to do this by email as you can attach your photos and clearly see the date and time that it was sent in the case of any disputes.

It is always best to correspond with your landlord in writing. That way you have evidence you have done so in case you need it at a later date. Email is best as it gives you an electronic date stamp on every one.

Above all enjoy yourself. Moving to a new house is exciting and the day should be fun.

Inventory

The inventory is the single most important document that is used to get your deposit back at the end of the tenancy. Without one it is very difficult to prove the condition of your property when you moved in. If you need to dispute your deposit return with your deposit scheme then they will ask for this document.

- **Complete your inventory before doing anything else when you move in.**

Some landlords will provide you with an inventory (list of furniture etc). If you have been given an inventory, go through it and note any items that are missing or damaged. If no inventory is provided, make one yourself, again noting any damage. Make sure that you also take photos of anything that needs attention or shows wear. When your inventory is complete, sign and date it and send a copy to your landlord (along with the photos) and keep a copy yourself. It is best to do this by email as you can attach your photos and clearly see the date and time that it was sent in case of any disputes.

Cleaning

Is the house clean? If not, write to the landlord, attaching photos of the areas that are not clean, advising them of the condition and keep a copy of your email. It may be worth inviting the landlord to inspect the property.

More Information

For further information regarding finding accommodation in Norwich or any housing matters please contact the NUA Accommodation Officer on accommodation@nua.ac.uk

NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

DAY TO DAY LIVING IN YOUR NEW HOME

This factsheet will give you information on some of the day to day issues that you need to be aware of when renting a home in the private sector in Norwich.

Condensation

The problem of condensation is difficult to cure. Prevention is the best course of action. It is estimated that a typical family can generate between 7 and 14 litres of water each day just from breathing, cooking, washing and drying clothes. Some of the factors which encourage condensation, leading to mould growth and dampness in the corners of rooms, are intermittent heating, lack of ventilation, drying and airing clothes indoors. This is usually worse in the Autumn and Winter and can look unsightly, although it is not always a health risk. Further information on controlling condensation can be obtained from Student Support.

Mould and Damp

Peeling wallpaper, flaking paint and stains (particularly in the corners of ceilings) are all signs of damp. Sometimes landlords will attribute damp to condensation or paint over damp patches without remedying the cause. Remember, if you view a house in the Spring or Summer, it may appear to be in a much better condition than it would be in the Winter. Damp is caused by excess moisture in the house which can be caused by leaking pipes, rising damp from basement or rain seeping in due to damage to the roof or around window frames.

It is worth pointing out however that one of the main cause of damp and excess moisture in properties is actually from the tenants themselves. Drying clothes indoors, and showering then not ventilating rooms can all add to this problem. It is always best to make sure that you ventilate the rooms of your house every day by opening the windows and ensuring that you wipe off any excess water on them in the mornings. This will help to stop mould growth in your house.

Insurance

You should always have insurance to cover your own possessions. Make sure that any personal effects policy covers you against Third Party claims. You could be liable, for instance, if you accidentally started a fire, giving rise to serious damage or destruction of the property. The law about taking reasonable care of a property is very complicated and you could be liable for burst pipes if caused by frost. Proper insurance can cover you. There are many companies that you can choose from, with many offering specialist Student Insurance. If in doubt get advice from Student Support or the Students' Union at the University

Broadband and wi-fi

There are many different companies that provide broadband, wi-fi and other entertainment services. Sometimes, the broadband connection is included in your rent and you may not be able to change the provider without permission from your landlord.

If the speed of your internet is important to you then you may want to consider a fibre optic connection as this offers the fastest speeds. In Norwich the fibre-optic service is run by Virgin.

If the connection is not provided in your rent you will need to get this connected yourself. Make sure you research what the various providers can offer you for your money. The cheapest deal is not always the best. Some companies like Sky and Virgin will also be able to offer TV services as well as the internet if this is something you are interested in. Remember though, if you watch TV broadcasts on a TV set or other device then you will need to get a TV licence.

Utilities such as Gas, Electricity and Water

Unless your landlord covers any utility payments in your rent then it will be your household's responsibility to contact the gas, electricity and water companies and get the bills put in your name. How you choose to do this is entirely up to you.

Some households have one named person who looks after the bills and the others give them money each month to cover their share. Others will perhaps put one utility in each of the tenants' name and give each other money towards "their" bill when they are due. Other student houses have meters for which you need to buy pre-pay top up cards to keep the supply of the utility running to the property, however this is an expensive way to pay for gas and electricity.

When you move in check with your landlord to find out who the current utility suppliers are (and where the meters to show their usage are in the property). With gas and electricity you will have a choice of many different suppliers who all charge different amounts for their products. As long as you keep your landlord informed of what is going on they will probably not mind you switching companies to get a better deal. If you get both gas and electricity from the same company then you can often make bigger savings.

Water is only provided by Anglian Water so you cannot shop around for a better deal.

There is a company called Glide <https://glide.co.uk> who will split utility bills between multiple tenants. They are quite popular with students because of this convenience, however you might not get the cheapest product rates with them.

For more information on switching utility companies try the uswitch website:
<https://www.uswitch.com>

Television Licence

Anyone who watches TV broadcasts on a TV set or other device must have their own TV Licence and should be aware that if found without a licence, could be heavily fined by the TV Licensing company. TV Licences currently cost £145.50 per year and can be purchased online. The website address is www.tvlicensing.co.uk. Please ensure that you check this website to make sure you are complying with the latest legislation to avoid a fine.

If you have a TV in the house that is not being used for watching broadcast programmes (one connected to a games console or DVD player only, for instance) then you should declare this to TV Licensing. You do not need a licence in this instance although you may still be called on by licencing officials for them to check your set up.

Council Tax Exemption Certificate

Full time students are usually exempt from paying Council Tax. If the house only has full-time students residing at the property, council tax is not charged to the tenants, but if one resident is not a full-time student there will be a proportion of Council Tax to pay. For more information please contact Student Enquires on 01603 610561 extension 6393.

Please note that new students will only be exempt from Council Tax from the date of enrolment at the University. If your housing contract starts before you enroll there is likely to be a small amount of council tax to pay for the period that you are not a fully enrolled student.

More Information

For further information regarding finding accommodation in Norwich or any housing matters please contact the NUA Accommodation Officer on accommodation@nua.ac.uk

NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

LOOKING AFTER THE PROPERTY – MAINTENANCE AND GAS LEAKS

This factsheet will give you information on what to do if you need anything in your new home fixed. It has will also tell you who to call if you can smell gas and think you may have a gas leak.

Maintenance

The landlord is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the structure and exterior of the property, including drains, gutters and external pipes, the installations for the supply of gas, electricity, water and sanitation together with the fixtures and appliances for space and water heating. These are legal requirements upon the landlord and ANY clause in an agreement which seeks to place these responsibilities upon the tenant is meaningless.

Agreements may include additional responsibilities for the owner e.g. the responsibility for internal decorating. When negotiating a contract, clarify your responsibilities regarding maintenance and repairs, especially in relation to cookers and mobile electrical appliances such as heaters, vacuum cleaners etc. Where possible get these details in writing, which may prevent problems occurring later, especially when it comes to getting your damage deposit returned.

The responsibility for notifying the landlord of disrepair lies with the tenant; you should write to the landlord informing them of any repairs that need doing and keep a copy. It is best to do this by email as you can clearly see the date and time that it was sent in the case of any disputes.

Gas Safety Regulations

The Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1994 places a legal obligation on all landlords.

What to do if you have a problem

As with any other maintenance issue in your house, if you think there is a problem with one of the gas appliances in the property then you should contact your landlord or letting agent in the first instance. They should be able to resolve any problems that you are having.

If you do not get the repair that you have requested then you can remind your landlord of his/her legal duties, under Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1994. If the landlord refuses to comply with these legal obligations, you should contact Norwich City Council on 0344 980 3333 or contact Student Support.

However, in an emergency:

If you suspect that there is a gas leak or that your appliance is emitting carbon monoxide – contact National Grid Gas Emergency Service immediately on 0800 111 999 (24 hour service).

This could save your life so use this number if you need it,

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon Monoxide is deadly yet it cannot be detected. It is invisible, odourless and silent can kill in a very short time.

What Is It?

- Carbon Monoxide is a highly poisonous gas
- Appliances that burn gas, coal or oil (such as gas heaters and immersion boilers) can emit carbon monoxide if they have not been installed correctly or serviced regularly
- Prolonged exposure to carbon monoxide can cause brain damage or death

What are the Danger Signs?

- Check for visible staining, discolouration or sooting on your appliances
- Check that the flame on your gas fire or water heater is not yellow or orange
- A strange smell emitted from the appliance when it is on
- Special attention needs to be paid to old fashioned, open-flumed water heaters. If you have a heater of this type, check when it was last serviced. If this was not carried out within the last six months, you must have it professionally checked immediately, whatever its appearance
- Never cover the air supply to the appliance, i.e. air brick or vent and always remove any obstruction to proper ventilation

Beware – gas appliances can emit carbon monoxide without showing visible signs, so be aware of the following danger signs

- Unexplained headaches, chest pains, weakness, flushed cheeks or paleness
- Sickness, diarrhoea or stomach pains
- Sudden dizziness when standing up
- General lethargy

Your landlord should have fitted carbon monoxide alarms in your property. Remember to ask them about this if you are unsure.

Gas and Electrical Supply

It is essential, if you don't want to end up paying for the previous tenant's gas and electricity, that you arrange to have meters read and supplies put into your name immediately.

- Have you arranged to have the gas and electricity meters read and transferred to your responsibility on moving in?

- Have all gas appliances been serviced by an accredited (Gas Safe) servicer within the last 12 months?
- Is the cooker in good working order?
- If you leave an electric fire on for 10 minutes, does the plug get hot? If it does, it could be an indication of faulty wiring.
- Are the light switches for the bathroom or shower either pull cord or sited outside the room?
- In the event of a fire are your exit routes from the property free from obstructions?

Gas Leaks

If you suspect a gas leak, extinguish all naked flames immediately, turn off all gas appliances and contact National Grid Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.

Never attempt to mend gas leaks yourself.

More Information

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NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

This factsheet will give you information on how to be green and save energy (and money!) around the home.

How can you save energy and resources in and around the home?

Simple steps can lead to significant savings on bills and a more comfortable place to live. The average an NUA student pays for bills on top of their rent is around £45 per month and it is worth budgeting for this when you are working out how much your monthly outgoings are likely to be. A few small changes around the home can make all the difference, leaving both your wallet and the environment better off!

Heating

Turning your heating thermostat down by 1°C can cut your heating bill by 10% and it is unlikely that you will notice the difference in comfort. Efficient use of the timer on your heating system will help to save money, only heating your home when you need to. Your home will stay warm for at least half an hour after the system switches off, even longer if it is well insulated. However, you should try to maintain a reasonable level of background heat, as heating a house from cold then allowing it to cool again encourages condensation, mould and damp.

Putting aluminum foil behind radiators fitted to outside walls will reflect the heat back into the room. Ordinary kitchen foil will work but specially designed foil can be bought from DIY stores like Thornes on Exchange Street near to the University campus. This can save about £5 - £10 over the winter. If the landlord allows you to do so, fit shelves above radiators to help deflect warm air towards the middle of the room and prevent the heat from rising to the ceiling. Check that your furniture is not placed too near radiators; this can stop the heat from circulating and can also dry the furniture and cause warping and cracking.

If you have electric fires, try to keep their use to a minimum. Electric fires are very expensive to run. Using just a 1 bar (1 kilowatt) fire for one hour is the equivalent in energy terms of watching TV for 7-9 hours!

Hot Water

You might be spending more on heating your water than you think. On average at least 20 pence in every pound spent on energy goes on water heating. Do not heat your water to a scalding temperature. For the majority of people, setting the hot water thermostat to 60°C or less should be OK.

In only one day, a dripping tap can fill a bath! Have dripping taps fixed quickly and always turn taps off properly. If possible, take a shower instead of a bath - it will use one fifth of the water needed for a bath.

Insulation

Due to their age, some houses may not have the most modern insulation. Under current building regulations, new homes and extensions to existing houses must be properly insulated, but older buildings may not have been built to the same standards.

Check that your hot water tank is properly insulated. If it is not, ask your landlord if s/he will pay for a cylinder jacket to be fitted. A British Standards approved jacket, 80mm (3") thick, will cost approx. £6-£8 and should save you between £15 and £30 a year.

Doors and windows can be made draught-proof with plastic foam strips or metal draught excluders. The bottoms of doors can be fitted with rubber or brush seals. They are cheap to buy and easy to fit. Letterboxes can be a significant source of heat loss. Fitting a cover or brush type seal can reduce this.

Be sure to get the permission of your landlord before you make any alterations which would affect the fixtures or fittings of the building.

A student-friendly alternative to double glazing, which costs only a few pounds, is polythene or cling-film sheets stretched across the window frames. This is almost as effective as glass and can save you £10 - £20 in fuel bills.

A free way of saving energy is to make sure that you close your curtains at dusk to keep heat from being lost through the windows. However, do not let curtains drape over the radiators or hang in front of them. This is a fire risk as well as driving the heat straight out through the windows. Remember, whilst comprehensive insulation is worth installing, it is vital to have enough ventilation, particularly if you have gas appliances, boilers or coal fires.

Light Bulbs

Energy efficient light bulbs can pay for themselves in lower bills – often within two years. Although they cost much more than filament bulbs (between £5 - £15 each), they use only a quarter of the electricity and last eight times longer. They are as bright as ordinary light bulbs and are ideal for lighting main areas and other lights which are used for long periods of time. They fit into conventional light bulb holders.

Water

Always put the plug in the basin or sink when washing your hands or washing dishes. Leaving a tap running is wasteful and expensive. Washing up all in one go will also reduce the amount of water you use.

Rubbish collections and Recycling

In Norwich, wheelie bins are usually used to collect general and recyclable waste. Each type of waste is collected fortnightly: general waste one week and recycling the next. To find out which day your waste is to be collected please go to

https://www.norwich.gov.uk/info/20001/bins_and_recycling

Saving resources does not end at your front door. The University provides recycling facilities and the City Council also provides recycling facilities at various points around the city. Please use them. If you are unsure where your nearest facilities are located please contact the Students' Union or the City Council on 0344 980 3333.

Domestic Appliances

If you or your landlord is thinking about buying new appliances, it is well worth looking for those which are energy efficient, even if the initial costs are higher. All new appliances are labeled with their energy rating and annual consumption.

Cookers

When making toast, use a toaster instead of a grill pan. When using the oven, take out any shelves that are not being used. The use of a microwave for defrosting, cooking and heating pre-cooked foods will save money, as they use less electricity than a conventional oven. Beware though; some foods cannot be cooked in a microwave. Always check the packaging if you are unsure.

When using a kettle, don't overfill it, only use the amount of water that you really need but make sure there is enough to cover the element. A kettle uses less energy than boiling water in a pan.

Fridges and Freezers

When loading and unloading a fridge or freezer, do not waste time. The cold air escapes and it costs more to maintain the low temperature. For the same reason, never put hot or warm food into the fridge or freezer, as this can also lead to a frost build up which will make the equipment less efficient. Regular defrosting helps to reduce running costs. Try not to have the fridge or freezer next to the cooker, boiler or other heat sources. If this is impossible, leave a gap between the appliances. Test the seal around the doors of fridges and freezers by closing the door on a piece of paper: it should be gripped tightly and not slide easily. If it does, contact your landlord and ask for it to be repaired or replaced. Attempt to keep your freezer at least $\frac{3}{4}$ full.

If you have never defrosted a freezer before and need advice on how to do this please contact your landlord or the Accommodation Officer in Student Support.

Washing Machines

Washing your clothes in a **30°C** wash cycle can use approximately 40% less electricity than washing them at a hotter temperature. If you can, wait until you have enough dirty clothes for a full wash load. If this is not possible and your machine has them, use the half load or economy programme.

More Informatio

For further information regarding finding accommodation in Norwich or any housing matters please contact the NUA Accommodation Officer on accommodation@nua.ac.uk

NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

FIRE SAFETY

This fact sheet will give you some important information about fire safety in the home.

It only takes a second for a fire to start but within minutes your home could be filled with highly dangerous smoke. Discuss and plan your escape route, **don't wait until a fire starts!**

Never store bikes or equipment in hallways, corridors or exit routes. Do not store paper or other flammable materials under stairs. During a fire they may well prevent you from escaping.

Do not wedge open fire resisting doors or disable closing devices on doors, they are there to protect you.

If Fire Breaks Out:

1. Don't panic – operate the fire alarm (if fitted).
2. If you can do so safely, close the door of the room where the fire has started and close all doors behind you. This will help delay the spread of the fire and the smoke.
3. Get everybody out as quickly as possible. Do not attempt to take possessions with you!
4. Telephone the fire service on 999. Remember to state clearly the address where the fire is.
5. Before opening a closed door, use the back of your hand to touch the door. If it is at all warm do not attempt to open it – the fire could be on the other side.
6. Once out – stay out! Only re-enter your home if a Fire Officer has explicitly told you that it is safe to do so.

If you find yourself cut off from all exits by fire:

1. Try to remain calm – saving your energy will help you to survive.
2. If you are unable to get out because of flames or smoke, if possible, close any doors between you and the fire and use bedding or towels to block any gaps - this will help stop smoke spreading into the area where you are. Remember smoke is more deadly than fire.
3. If possible open the window and try to attract attention. If it is safe to do so get out through the window, if not you should wait for the fire service.

4. If the room becomes smoky, get as near to the window as possible and get down to floor level where it should be easier to breathe because smoke rises upwards.
5. Do not attempt to jump unless your life is in immediate danger. Try to throw bedding to the ground to break your fall. Remember, if at all possible wait for the fire service.
6. If you need to drop to the ground, get out feet first and lower yourself to the full length of your arms before dropping. Beware of railings and other items below.
7. Once out, stay out. Do not attempt to re-enter unless the fire officer explicitly says it is safe to do so!

If someone's clothes catch fire:

1. Lay them on the floor.
2. Roll them in a blanket, rug or thick coat until the flames are extinguished. Cool them to reduce burning.
3. Remove any bits of burnt material that are not touching their skin as soon as possible.
4. Seek medical help immediately.

If you are unsure how adequate your means of escape is in the event of a fire or you believe that there could be a potential fire hazard in your home, contact your landlord to discuss the problem.

General fire safety advice is available from Norfolk Fire Service by contacting 01603 810351.

More Information

For further information regarding finding accommodation in Norwich or any housing matters please contact the NUA Accommodation Officer on accommodation@nua.ac.uk

NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

This factsheet will give you information on living as part of the community in Norwich and anti-social behavior in your property.

Whether you are moving into private accommodation for the first time or you are already renting a property, it is important to be aware of your responsibilities. The University is committed to providing you with guidance and support in becoming part of the community. Living in the community means you will be living amongst residents with diverse lifestyles and levels of tolerance. There will be elderly people who may be ill or unable to get out of their houses; there will be working people who although they like to socialise at weekends, have to be at work on time or maybe they work night shifts. Many will not be able to sleep in after a late night partying during the week! There will be parents of young children who already may have disturbed nights and will not appreciate any further disturbance.

As NUA students are responsible adults it is important that you show the local community that you respect others and want to play your part in appreciating the community.

- Try and get to know your neighbours – it will help to avoid any unpleasantness
- An occasional party is usually acceptable if the neighbours are warned in advance and the music is not audible after 11.00pm
- You are responsible for the behaviour of any guests and it is important to ask them to be quiet when they leave the property. The noise from doors banging, talking and laughter in the street can carry further than you would think. Taxis dropping off and picking up late at night can cause disruption and it is worth considering this.
- Any behaviour that may cause offence such as shouting, drinking or playing football in the street late at night will be classed as anti-social.
- It is also important to think about the area around your house and keep it tidy and free of rubbish. Make sure you put all rubbish in the bags provided to avoid rats and other vermin being attracted to the area.

Student Regulations and the NUA Disciplinary Procedure

Students can be disciplined under the NUA Student Regulations and Procedures and it is important that you remember that your behaviour off campus is also covered by the Regulations. If we receive a complaint about your household we will ask you to attend an initial investigation meeting to discuss this further with you. We take any complaints about our students' behaviour very seriously.

You can find more information about the NUA disciplinary procedures in the Student Regulations and Procedures:

Current Students can find it on the intranet here:

https://net.nua.ac.uk/wiki/student_resources:academic_registry:student_regulations_and_procedures

Students starting their studies in September can find the regulations on the pre-enrolment portal.

Who to Contact if you are a Victim of Anti-Social Behaviour

The University works closely with the Anti-Social Behaviour and Environmental Health Officers and also the police to improve the relationships between local residents and students living together in the community.

It might be you who is a victim of anti-social behaviour and the University will support you in finding a resolution. If you have any issues surrounding this please contact the Accommodation Officer in Student Support.

Noise and Nuisance

Sound is a normal part of our daily lives but noise is not. Noise is unwanted and unnecessary sound. It can be an annoyance for many people and a source of serious problems for some. A noise nuisance is noise that an average person would find unreasonable. This is affected by the volume, time, frequency and duration. What may be acceptable in the middle of the day may be unacceptable at midnight. Rowdy behaviour and loud music in the streets or coming from the accommodation is considered a nuisance to both fellow students and other residents in the area.

If you are being kept awake by loud music coming from another student house it is a good idea to come to Student Support in the first instance. We can advise on the options open to you and can help to mediate in some cases.

It may be that you are not aware that you are causing the noise disturbance and it is worth following these simple measures from the start of your tenancy:

- Keep the volume of all radios, TVs and any other hi-fi equipment as low as reasonably possible, especially at night. The programme or music is for your enjoyment not your neighbours'!
- Low frequency noise from speakers can carry and it is advisable to position speakers off the floor and away from the neighbours' walls. It is often the bass sound that carries the furthest.
- If you like your music loud – use headphones!
- Sound travels further at night when it is quiet. If you are coming home from a night out don't hang about in the street on your return. Go straight into your house and carry on your conversation there instead of outside. If you have been in a bar or club with music playing it is unlikely you will realise how loud you are speaking.

Complaints from the Community

If a complaint is received by the University regarding noise in a student house it is taken very seriously. Any anti-social behaviour by students that brings the University's reputation into

question is dealt with under the disciplinary procedure as laid out in the Student Regulations and Procedures.

If you are asked by Student Support to attend a meeting about your behavior, it is also an opportunity to give your side of any complaint.

More Information

For further information regarding finding accommodation in Norwich or any housing matters please contact the NUA Accommodation Officer on accommodation@nua.ac.uk

NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

RESOLVING ISSUES WHILE LIVING AS A GROUP

This factsheet will give you information on what you could try if you are having disputes living together as a group.

Not all complaints or issues arising from communal living come from people outside the household. Living together as a group of students can be a fun and rewarding experience, however, disagreements and arguments are unfortunately inevitable from time to time.

Sometimes a student feels that they need to move out of their house because of something that has happened between them and the others they live with. This is not a situation that anyone wants to be in and things usually don't need get to this level.

There are several things you can do to help make your home a happy and harmonious one. Below are some top tips for communal living.

You can choose your friends but...

The number one way to stop arguments in the house is to pick your housemates well.

Think carefully before deciding, or agreeing, to be someone else's housemate. Sometimes living with friends is best but often a group of like-minded individuals can get on just as well.

For instance, you may enjoy going out with some of your friends but how different is their lifestyle outside of this to yours? If you like to study most nights and then go out at the end of the week how will you get on with a group that have friends over every night while you are trying to work?

You don't have to be best friends with your housemates

While it is very important that you are civil and polite to each other it is good to remember that you don't have to be best friends with your housemates. Living together in the same house does create a bond between you all but you don't have to be friends or socialise outside of the home.

As mentioned above, a group of students who didn't know each other before moving in together, with similar lifestyles, can often get on better than a pre-existing group of friends in a house.

It can actually be helpful to have friends outside of your house so if things do get on top of you there is somewhere else you can go to vent about your problems.

Don't hide from your problems

No matter how well you get on with your housemates, problems between you will inevitably crop up over the course of your contract. Just think how many little arguments the average family has over the course of a year. Living together as a group can be just like that.

Most things that happen will be pretty minor, ranging from someone not pulling their weight in the cleaning or washing up or making noise at night when everyone else is trying to sleep. The real problems start if these are not dealt with properly to begin with.

The best way to deal with any problems you are having is to talk things through, calmly and face to face.

Please don't let small things that are upsetting you fester away without dealing with them. This is what makes small problems become big ones and can lead to feelings of wanting to move out.

Unsocial Media

It is easy to understand the appeal of group chats when it comes to arranging nights out or for groups of friends who don't live together, but does your house of 3 or 4 students really need its own group chat?

They are great, for instance, when you need to contact the rest of the household about a bill that needs paying, but can get misused if tensions arise between housemates.

Leaving notes in a group chat for each other about noise or problems may be "easy" and may help you vent your angry feelings without fear of seeing the person you are angry with, but in most cases all it does is exacerbate any issues and doesn't solve anything!

Many students have worries about conflict and falling out with their friends. Others find talking directly with people about things that are upsetting them to be difficult but this is still the best way to deal with anything.

If you come and see Accommodation Officer in Student Support they can give you some tips on how to have difficult conversations.

To give an example of this in action just think how many different ways you could read the following message:

"Thanks for not making any noise when you came in last night."

What is the intended recipient supposed to think when they read this? What was your immediate reaction to it? Do you think it is the same as what the writer was thinking when they wrote it? Would you be angry if it was directed at you?

Now think about how much easier it is to make yourself understood to someone when they are standing in front of you.

Most people will appreciate a calm conversation about something that is upsetting you more than a message on a public group chat that is designed to upset them.

Enforced Cleaning Rotas

Students come to Student Support saying that a housemate is really messy and they want them to clean up. They say that they have made a rota, told the other student about it (often on a group chat) and they are upset because they have not stuck to it.

Cleaning rotas are fantastic if the whole household gets behind the concept but if even just one of the group is not going to follow it then it will fail. Either the rest of the household will

resent doing the “work” that the messy student is “supposed” to be doing or the messy student will not like being told what to do by their housemates and fall out with them.

Again, it is best to work out what is best for your group by discussing things calmly, working out where issues lie and coming to a compromise where everyone is happy.

Having “that” discussion

An issue has been identified in your house that needs to be addressed. How do you go about making your point in a way that will help the household and not upset anyone?

Try not to have conversations about issues while you are angry. If something has upset you, wait until you have calmed down before trying to talk about it. Similarly if the person that you want to speak to is angry (or gets angry when you first approach them) then this is also not the right time to have the discussion.

Keeping the conversation calm

If the issue that needs to be discussed is about something very specific to the house then it may be a good idea to have the discussion away from there. Perhaps suggest a meeting in a neutral venue like a coffee shop where no one has “home advantage.”

Remember, that you are having a discussion and you need to listen as well as speak. You are not there to tell someone what to do but to come up with a way that you can live together. This may require some compromise on both sides. Compromise is not “losing” the discussion, it is what mature people do.

Instead of aggressively saying “because of you, I’m upset” try phrasing things more constructively and assertively perhaps using “when you do x, it make me feel y”. That way you can both fully have an understanding of the issues.

Above all be respectful. Put yourself in the place of the person that you are speaking to. How would like to be spoken to if the situation was reversed?

Student Support can help

Remember Student Support is here to help you if you want assistance in resolving household problems. They can help you with advice on all aspects of living together in Norwich so make an appointment at Francis House Reception if you need to.

More Information

For further information regarding finding accommodation in Norwich or any housing matters please contact the NUA Accommodation Officer on accommodation@nua.ac.uk

NUA ACCOMMODATION PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION ADVICE

USEFUL ADDRESSES/CONTACT DETAILS

Utility Companies/helplines:

- Electricity Supplier Helpline (to find out who supplies electricity to your property): UK Power Networks - 0845 601 5467 or <http://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/>
- Gas Supplier Helpline (to find out who supplies gas to your property): 0870 608 1524
- Uswitch (can help you to find good deals for energy provision): 0800 051 5493 / <http://www.uswitch.com/>
- Anglian Water (general enquiries): 03457 91 91 55 or <http://www.anglianwater.co.uk/>
Anglian Water helpline (for notification of leaks): 0800 771 881 or an online form at <http://www.anglianwater.co.uk/>

Advice/information

- NUA Student Support Accommodation Officer – 01603 751481 / accommodation@nua.ac.uk
- Norwich City Council – Main Tel no: 0344 980 3333
Norwich City Council antisocial behaviour hotline: 01603 212100 / <http://www.norwich.gov.uk/Communities/ReportingIssues/Anti-SocialBehaviour/Pages/AntisocialBehaviour-HowToReportIt.aspx>
- Police - Non-emergency: 101 / <http://www.norfolk.police.uk/>
- Norfolk Fire Service, Tel: 01603 810351 / <http://www.norfolkfireservice.gov.uk/>
- Norwich Citizens Advice Bureau: 01603 765783 / <http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
- Mancroft Advice Project (MAP-provides advice on accommodation and welfare for people 11-25 yrs): 01603 766994 / <http://www.map.uk.net/pages/>
- www.tvlicensing.co.uk
- www.rightmove.co.uk

Environment and Energy Efficiency

- Energy saving tips with Norwich City Council: https://www.norwich.gov.uk/info/20012/energy_savings
- Good Energy, Monkton Reach, Monkton Hill, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 1EE
Tel: 0845 601 1410 / <http://www.goodenergy.co.uk/>
- Energy Saving Trust, 21 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BP. Tel 0845 512 012 / <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Eastbury House, 30-34 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TL, Tel: 08459 335577 / <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs>