The Accommodation Team

The Accommodation Team is based in the Student Information Centre and is open on a 'drop-in' basis on the following days and times:

Monday: 08.45 -18.00
Tuesday: 12.00-18.00
Wednesday: 08.45-18.00
Thursday: 12.00-18.00
Friday: 08.45-12.00 appointments only
(please contact us to arrange an appointment using the details below)
Friday: 12.00-17.00

Telephone: 01695 584 200
Email: accommodation@edgehill.ac.uk
Website: edgehill.ac.uk/studentservices/accommodation/students-off-campus

Facebook: StudentsEHU
Twitter: StudentsEHU

Address: Accommodation Team
Student Services
Edge Hill University
St Helens Road
Ormskirk
Lancashire
L39 4QP
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Foreword

Edge Hill University has over 20,000 students enrolled on our courses and our Halls of Residence provide on-campus accommodation for over 2,000 students. This means that the majority of students either live at home or in private sector accommodation. Students generally prefer to live as close to the University as possible, which means that most of the landlords who register with us own properties in Ormskirk or the surrounding area.

The Accommodation Team, based in the Student Information Centre at Edge Hill University, provides a broad range of services and information to students and landlords.

In order to register with us, landlords must complete an up-to-date registration form and return it to us together with a copy of their landlord gas safety certificate and a copy of their contract. We visit all new properties that are registered on our list and we can also visit a property if a concern is raised to us by a student.

This handbook is intended as a guide to existing and potential landlords. It provides you with advice and guidance as you seek to let your property, details expected standards and contains a range of useful information.

As well as operating a ‘drop-in’ service throughout the week, you can also contact us via telephone and email if you have any questions or require advice (please see contact details at the front of this booklet). We are happy to proactively support you whenever we can but it is important to note that the contract that you have with your tenants is completely independent of Edge Hill University. Therefore, we are limited in what support we can offer. If you need assistance on any aspect of your contract, we recommend that you seek legal advice.

Please also remember to have a look at our website, which contains more useful information for landlords: edgehill.ac.uk/landlords.
Equal Opportunities

Edge Hill University is committed to promoting equality of opportunity to all. The University seeks to identify and eradicate any practice which discriminates on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, age, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion, belief or none, or socioeconomic background.

The University recognises that equality and diversity embraces all aspects of employment and service delivery including curriculum; teaching; learning and assessment; research issues; and extra curricular activities.

The University makes it a condition of service and admission that staff and students adhere to this Statement and our Equality & Diversity Policy. Any breaches of this are dealt with under the Staff or Student Disciplinary Procedures, as appropriate.

The University makes every effort to ensure that traders, contractors, institutions, organisations or individuals who interact with Edge Hill are aware of the policy. Discovery by the University of any inequitable policy or practice by them may result in Edge Hill breaking links and ceasing to do business with them.

Registered Accommodation List

The Accommodation Team manages a database of over 300 off-campus properties and provides up-to-date information on all current or imminent vacancies. Please ensure that you let us know when a vacancy becomes available or is taken so that we can ensure that our list is accurate.

If the gas safety certificate you have provided for your property has expired we are unable to advertise that property on our accommodation list. It is your responsibility to ensure that you provide the Accommodation Team with a copy of a current gas safety certificate for any property you want to be advertised on our list.

We write to every one of our registered landlords in early November, advising on how to register their property for the following September. New registration forms are then uploaded on to our database in readiness for the official release of the registered off-campus list of properties in early December as part of our Accommodation Fair.

We ask that you make clear on your registration form if a letting agent is managing the property on your behalf. This is so that we can ensure the correct contact details are being advertised to students. We also request that, should management of your property change to a letting agent part way through the year, you let us know.

We will confirm in our letter the date that the registered list of Accommodation is to be released. This is so you can plan for this date in anticipation of receiving a number of enquiries from students.
**Expected Standards and Property Visits**

The Accommodation Team expects that all registered properties are safe, habitable and comfortable and we work closely with West Lancashire Borough Council and Lancashire Fire and Rescue.

To this end, when a new property is registered, we will make arrangements with you to view it. There may be occasions when we conduct these property visits in conjunction with West Lancashire Borough Council and/or Lancashire Fire and Rescue.

We will also arrange to visit a property if any concern is reported to us by a student. Following the visit, we may remove the property from our list. In these circumstances we will also seek advice from West Lancashire Borough Council.
Student Code of Behaviour
Edge Hill University has a Student Code of Behaviour which all students are expected to abide by whether they are resident on or off the campus. This means that there are prescribed expectations of behaviour for students living in your property, and a documented disciplinary system for students who fail to meet those standards. Our Student Code of Behaviour covers issues such as excessive noise pollution, disruptive or offensive behaviour, threatening and/or aggressive behaviour, and any form of sexual or racial harassment, including issues that contravene the University’s Equal Opportunities Policy.

Excessive Noise
Students are expected to be respectful and considerate when living in the local community, particularly with regard to noise levels. Every student living in Ormskirk is sent a letter and email making clear the University’s expectations of them. A separate communication is also sent, requesting that they read our Streetwise guide. This has a whole host of information aimed at helping students to integrate effectively into life off campus.

If a local resident contacts us to report an issue connected with noise or antisocial behaviour at a student property, our standard procedure is to invite all students at that property in for a meeting, whereby we make clear what our expectations are of them and enforce the Student Code of Behaviour.

In these instances, we also contact the landlord and expect that the landlord also speaks to the students separately to further reinforce the message.

Data Protection
Please note that in all dealings with you and with the students, Edge Hill University adheres strictly to the requirements of the Data Protection Act. This means that we cannot disclose information about any individual to any third party without their permission.
Different Types of Student Accommodation

Student accommodation falls into two broad types: self-catering and lodgings.

Self Catering Accommodation
This is subdivided into three distinct types, all of which mean that the student has access to a kitchen area or cooking facilities. Average rents range from £80.00 to £100.00 per week, depending on the standard of the accommodation and the facilities provided.

**Shared house accommodation** tends to be the most common type of accommodation used by students. This is where students share all amenities of the house with other students but have sole occupancy of a bedroom/study room.

**Bedsit accommodation** is also popular with students. A Bedsit is a unit that contains a self contained cooking area, although occupants of bed-sits tend to share the bathroom facilities with other students.

**Flat accommodation** tends to be attractive to mature students or those students with children. A flat usually contains a bedroom(s), kitchen, bathroom, living room and toilet. All the amenities listed are used solely by the registered tenant.

Lodgings Accommodation
Lodgings are rooms in private households, usually in the landlord’s own home. This kind of accommodation is generally offered on a five or seven day basis. The average rents range from £80.00 to £110.00 per week, depending on how many days the student stays and whether meals and/or cleaning are provided. In recent years, this type of accommodation appears to be less popular with students, although landlords who are prepared to offer flexible contracts - for example termly or even weekly lets - are more likely to be successful in attracting interest.
Acceptable Standards
The accommodation you offer must be of a standard that is suitable for students. Listed here are the minimum expectations of furniture and furnishings which you will need to provide, together with guidance on what fire safety provision you must have in place.

Throughout the property
Adequate heating supply to all living areas
Adequate lighting to all areas, including direct sunlight
Ventilation: windows which open, extractor fans etc
Dry plasterwork and flooring:
lack of damp and/or mould
Carpets, rugs or equivalent floor coverings
Curtains or blinds
Annual gas safety check (see page 10)
Secure doors and windows
Rooms appropriately sized (see page 9)
Sufficient power points
5 yearly electrical safety certificate
Energy performance certificate
Smoke alarms, wired into the mains or wireless
Fire extinguisher(s)
Clear escape route and Fire Doors or escape windows

Bedrooms
Adequate heating and lighting
Minimum of 70 sq ft if single room and 110 sq ft if shared room
Single or twin bed(s) (mattresses should display fire labels)
Wardrobe
Chest of drawers
Mirror
Desk
Chair
Bookshelves
Wastepaper bin
Smoke alarms, wired into the mains, wireless or batteries
**Bathroom**
- Bath and/or shower
- Toilet
- Washbasin
- Bathroom cabinet or shelf space
- Mirror
- Bin
- Adequate ventilation

**Lounge/ Dining Room (if applicable)**
- Chair or sofa space per tenant
  (soft furnishings must display fire safety labels)
- Coffee / dining table
- Cabinet

**Kitchen**
- Cooker
- Fridge and freezer
- Adequate storage space
- Vacuum cleaner
- Adequate ventilation
- Cleaning equipment
- Fire extinguisher
- Fire blanket
Room Sizes

The accommodation must also be of an adequate size for the number of students.

**Bedsit Rooms and Flats:**
One room unit of accommodation with cooking, living and sleeping facilities

- Bedsit for one person: 10.2m² (bedsit only)
- Bedsit for one person: 12.2m² (inc. toilet with WC)
- Bedsit for one person: 13.2m² (inc. shower room with toilet)
- Bedsit for one person: 15.2m² (inc. kitchen)

**Two or more room units** with cooking, living and sleeping facilities.

- Single Bedroom: 6.5m²
- Double Bedroom: 10.2m²
- Each living room for single person units: 9.0m²
- Each living room for two person units: 10.0m²
- Each living room/dining/kitchen for single person unit: 11.0m²
- Each living room/dining/kitchen for two person unit: 13.9m²

**Shared House:**
Each bedroom/study shall be for occupation by one person. The bedroom shall be at least 10m² except where a separate living room is provided which is not a kitchen or kitchen dining room. If a living room is provided the bedroom shall be at least 6.5m².

- The Living room (for up to 5 occupants): 9.3m² minimum plus 1.9m² for each additional person
- Living/dining: 11.5m² minimum 2.3m² per person

*We expect all registered properties to comply with current housing legislation and Local Authority regulations concerning planning permission, building, environmental health and fire regulations.*

**Furniture and Furnishings**
There is legislation in place relating to fire resistance and furniture and fittings. For guidance on this please see: [firesafe.org.uk/furniture-and-furnishings](http://firesafe.org.uk/furniture-and-furnishings)-fire-safety-regulations-19881989-and-1993
Gas Safety Regulations
Landlords or their agents are required by law to have all gas equipment in their rented properties checked annually by a GAS SAFE registered installer under the GAS SAFETY (INSTALLATION AND USE) REGULATIONS 1998. In accordance with this law, when a person lets a property, or part of a property (i.e. a room in their home), a gas safety check must be carried out at least once every 12 months to ensure that all gas appliances in that property have been checked for safe use. The GAS SAFE registered installer will then issue a certificate to confirm the check has been completed. Always check your installer is registered by asking to see a current GAS SAFE registration certificate or by ringing GAS SAFE on 0800 408 5500.

If you have any gas appliances in your rented property, please note that the Accommodation Team requires a copy of a valid gas safety certificate(s) in order to keep your registration up-to-date. You MUST also provide a copy to your tenants within 28 days of the safety check being carried out.

The Gas Safety Certificate must:
- be issued by a GAS SAFE registered professional.
- be dated and current: certificates are valid only for 12 months.
- show the address of the property inspected.
- explicitly state that the property has been checked for gas safety and that all appliances are safe for use. This includes such items as gas cookers, heaters, fires and boilers. By law, gas heaters in bedrooms must be fitted with an automatic safety cut off device.

If an agent manages your rented property then your agent has a duty to inform you of these requirements. Your management contract must also specify who is responsible for the maintenance of any gas appliance and for keeping a record of safety checks carried out.

Please note: As of 1st April 2009 Gas safety is overseen by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). From this date gas safety inspections must be carried out by a GAS SAFE registered engineer.
Harassment
It is illegal for a landlord to harass a tenant. Harassment entails:
- acts likely to interfere with a tenant’s quiet enjoyment of the property
- persistent withdrawal or withholding of services which the tenant needs to live reasonably within the premises

The definition of harassment varies but may include these examples:
- the landlord entering the premises without the tenant’s consent
- the landlord going through the tenant’s possessions
- the landlord threatening the tenant with, or actually carrying out violence
- the landlord withholding a key which may cause difficulties
- anti-social behaviour by the landlord or his/her agent
- a failure to carry out repairs which the landlord is legally obliged to do

Rent, Deposits and Bills

Rent
Calculating how much rent to charge and what the rent covers can be one of the most important decisions you have to make when offering accommodation. Edge Hill University does not advise landlords on specific rent levels. However, as a guideline, weekly rents per student per week are generally in the order of:

Self catering house shares and flats - £80.00 - £100.00
Lodgings - £80.00 - £110.00

Charges vary according to the facilities and amenities provided and the location of the property.

Collecting the Rent
This is a matter of agreement between the landlord and the tenant, and should be clearly reflected in any appropriate documentation such as licence agreements or tenancy agreements.

Rent is usually paid in the following instalments:

weekly: this arrangement is usually more suitable when the landlord resides in the property (ie. lodgings).

monthly: inform your tenants whether the monthly payment is for either a calendar month or a four week period.

termly: most landlords request termly rent payments, to coincide with students receiving their student loan instalments.
You can collect rent in person, by cash or cheque or by bank standing order directly into your bank account. It is recommended practice to always provide the tenant with a receipt for any payments you receive or to document the information in a supplied rent book, which should show your name and address as the landlord.

**Rent Arrears**
Please note that any contract signed between you and a tenant is independent of Edge Hill University and we are therefore unable to legally recover any money owed to you from students. We advise landlords to maintain a dialogue with students about their rent, and not to allow more than two months of rent arrears before taking action to recover the money. If students fail to respond to warning letters then you should seek the advice of the Citizens Advice Bureau or a solicitor.

**Retainer**
The retainer is an amount paid to retain the property or the room during the holidays. Whether or not you decide to make this charge is entirely up to you. Some landlords charge half rent, reduced rent, or nothing at all during the Christmas and Easter holidays. For summer holidays you may consider charging:

- a non refundable sum (usually between £100.00 - £300.00),
- a refundable lump sum, or a lump sum which is then discounted against the first term’s rent.
- a lump sum which is then used as a damage deposit
- a reduced rate per week
- nothing at all

Most students are not entitled to housing benefit so many cannot afford to pay the retainer over the summer months. Consequently, some students will not rent a property until September in the hope of avoiding a retainer charge. However, if a student has additional needs, they may be entitled to housing benefit. They should contact the local authority housing benefits section for more information.

**Deposit**
A deposit is the amount paid to either secure a property for a future date, or to cover any loss or damage to a property. The amount charged for deposits varies considerably but students are usually unable to afford a deposit in excess of £100.00. Legally, the deposit should not be more than two times the monthly rent.
Tenancy Deposit Protection Schemes
Any landlord entering into a new Assured Shorthold Tenancy after 6th April 2007 must place any deposit they take into a government recognised scheme. The Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme has been introduced to help prevent disputes between landlords and tenants if the deposit is not to be returned at the end of the tenancy.

Landlords are required to tell the tenants within thirty days which of the schemes they will be using along with the contact details. Each of the schemes will have the use of a dispute resolution service but both parties will still have the right to take their dispute to the small claims court if they are unwilling to use the resolution service. If the service is used, the decision of the arbitrator is binding on both parties.

Landlords can help avoid disputes by taking a full inventory at the start of the tenancy. This should include a full list of all appliances, furniture, fixtures and fittings along with the condition of each room. Photographs are also a useful record of the condition of each room. The inventory should be repeated at the end of the tenancy. The landlord and the tenant should sign the inventory to show that it is accurate and the tenant should be given a copy. The two inventories can then be presented as evidence should a dispute arise at the end of the tenancy.

Student Lets
If you let to students, the Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme will apply if you let the property on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement and charge a deposit. It is important to note that you must tell the tenants if they will all be jointly liable for any damage.
The government have approved three service providers to run Tenancy Deposit Protection Schemes.

**Custodial Protection Scheme**

The Deposit Protection Service (The DPS)
Web: **depositprotection.com**
Tel: **0330 303 0030**

**Insurance Based Protection Schemes**

My Deposits (Run by Tenancy Deposit Solutions Ltd)
Web: **mydeposits.co.uk**
Tel: **0333 321 9401**

The Tenancy Deposit Scheme (Run by The Dispute Service)
Web: **tenancydepositscheme.com**
Tel: **0300 037 1000**

All three service providers are accessible to all letting agents and landlords. The schemes all offer an Alternative Dispute Resolution Service in case of any disputes in relation to refunding deposits.

**What Happens if I do not Protect the Deposit?**

You will face penalties if you do not protect your tenant’s deposit as required by tenancy deposit protection rules.

You will have to pay compensation of between 1 and 3 times the amount of your deposit.

Tenancy deposit breaches can also make a section 21 notice invalid.

You may:
- be unable to get a court order to evict your tenant using the section 21 notice procedure
- have to refund ya tenants deposit in full before a section 21 notice can be used.
Bills

Gas
All students who live in a property that has gas appliances installed need to register with the gas supplier. It should be the students living in the premises who are liable for the gas bill and not the landlord. The students should contact the gas supplier and nominate one resident student to become the named liable person for the gas bill.

On arriving at the property all tenants should insist on a meter reading so that they know from which point their contribution should start. When students are vacating the property, another reading should be taken by the gas supplier. The gas supplier should be informed of the exact dates the students move out. Students will need to give at least three days notice to ensure that they get a meter reading.

Electricity
Students should contact the electricity supplier to arrange for a new account number and to sign the necessary documentation, including the Application for Supply Form, which transfers the responsibility of the bill to the new tenants.

To register with an electricity supplier the tenants usually need to provide proof of tenancy, either through a letter from the landlord or from the tenancy agreement. The electricity supplier also requires some form of security against non-payment of future bills. Acceptable forms of security are a £100.00 cash deposit; bills paid by direct debit or the installation of a card meter. Electricity cards can be obtained from a number of retail outlets using an account card supplied by the electricity company.

The card works on the principle that payments are credited to the card account: the tenants effectively pay for their electricity before they use it.

Whenever students vacate a property they should inform the electricity supplier to arrange a final reading. This measure ensures that students do not pay for electricity that they did not use.
Council Tax
Properties are exempt from Council Tax if ALL the adult residents are registered as full time students. If there is only one adult student who is not in full time education then 75% of the Council Tax will be payable. If there are two or more adult residents who are not full time students, then full Council Tax will be payable.

Student tenants should be made aware of the status of all other residents in the property so that there are no misunderstandings about liability for council tax.

To be exempt from Council Tax, your tenants need to prove that they are students in full time education. Students are issued with Council Tax Exemption Certificates at the start of the academic year.

When you have received the Council Tax Exemption Certificate from the student it is your responsibility to send it to the appropriate Council Tax Department immediately. Failure to do so may result in you being charged the full amount of Council Tax for the property.

For further information on Council Tax billing contact your local Council directly. West Lancashire Borough Council, Council Tax office on 0300 790 0381 or at council.tax@westlancs.gov.uk

Refuse Collection
For information on refuse and recycling please see: www.westlancs.gov.uk/refuse-recycling.aspx.
Houses of Multiple Occupation
The council keeps a register of all licensed HMOs in the borough. It is a criminal offence to manage or control a HMO that should be licensed but is not. The council will provide you with an opportunity to apply for a licence before considering prosecution. If a landlord is convicted of not licensing the property the fine can be up to £20,000. In addition, the landlord may have to pay back all the rent received during the time the property was not licensed (up to a maximum of 12 months).

All HMOs have to be managed in accordance with The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006, irrespective of whether they need to be licensed. Failure to comply with these regulations could see the landlord fined up to £5,000.

If your property is not on the register and you think it should be licensed, contact the Private Sector Housing Team for advice:
privatesectorhousing@westlancs.gov.uk

If you know the property needs a licence or your current licence is due for renewal, you can download a HMO Licence Application and submit it along with the required fee of £350 by accessing this link:
www.westlancs.gov.uk/media/135598/1a-hmo-licence-application-aug-14-check-list-crb.pdf
Energy Performance Certificates
Where a dwelling is being let an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) will be required. An EPC is required as follows:-

- Individual house/dwelling (i.e. a self contained property with its own kitchen/bathroom facilities) - one EPC for the dwelling.
- Self contained flats (i.e. each behind its own front door with its own kitchen/bathroom facilities) - one EPC per flat.
- Bedsits or room lets where there is a shared kitchen, toilet and/or bathroom (e.g. a property where each room has its own tenancy agreement) - No EPC is required.
- Shared flats/houses (e.g. a letting of a whole flat or house to students/young professionals etc on a single tenancy agreement) - one EPC for the whole house.
- Mixed self contained and non self contained accommodation - one EPC for each self contained flat/unit but no EPC for the remainder of the property.
- A room in a hall of residence or hostel - no EPC is required.

There are fixed penalties for failing to provide an EPC/make one available when required. The fixed penalty for dwellings is £200 per dwelling. There is a six month time limit for any enforcement action to be taken.

What changes have been made?
Changes took effect as from the 9th January 2013 as follows:-

- Property advertisements must contain the asset rating ie. the EPC rating for the property and the SAP rating where an EPC is available.
- The requirement for Property Particulars to be accompanied by a copy of the first page of the EPC has been scrapped. However, these must show the EPC rating and the SAP rating for the property if an EPC is available.
- It is intended that listed buildings and ancient monuments should be excluded from the need for an EPC but it is doubtful that the wording of the relevant exemption achieves this.

In addition, further changes took effect as from 1st October 2015 for new tenancies starting on or after that date. Landlords will now have to provide the EPC to tenants before they can rely on a section 21 notice. Further information on this is available in our Section 21 FAQ.

Fire Safety
As part of a Fire Service initiative ‘To Make Lancashire a Safer Community’ Lancashire Fire Rescue Service plays an active role in working with landlords who are registered with Edge Hill University. Landlords are requested to allow Lancashire Fire Rescue Service personnel to give an educational fire safety talk to the occupants of the property, (please note: this is not a safety inspection of www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/sites/lancs/Pages/hfsc-booking.aspx
Contracts

You are advised that, when you have found a suitable tenant, you both sign a formal tenancy agreement. Before signing the agreement please ensure that it is clearly written and contains the following essential information.

The name of the landlord and tenant(s)
The address of the property (and room number if applicable)
The period of the agreement
The amount of the rent and other charges
Details of when the rent is to be paid
Notice period & deposit details

Even if there is no written agreement, a verbal agreement is a legally binding contract. However this is harder to negotiate if there are any problems. Regardless of what contract is used it is essential that you and your tenants read it thoroughly and understand what they are signing.

Please note, we do not endorse the use of any particular contract and strongly advise you to investigate the various alternatives that are available. This link contains useful guidance about your rights and responsibilities as a landlord, as well as government model contracts, which you may wish to adapt: citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/renting-a-home/information-for-landlords. It is your responsibility to use a contract that is appropriate for your needs.

Any contractual agreement you enter into is strictly between you and your tenants and does not involve Edge Hill University.
Repairs and Maintenance

We recommend to all landlords that you ensure the house is in good repair before the tenants move into the property, since outstanding repairs and inadequate facilities can prove to be the main source of disagreement between students and landlords. From the outset it is important that both parties are aware of their responsibilities in relation to repair and maintenance to the property. It is crucial that all landlords are aware that they do have legal obligations to repair and they do have to meet specific legal requirements.

Rights to Repairs

Under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, landlords are legally bound to keep the structure and exterior of the house in repair and in proper working order.

This includes:
- Installation of water, gas and electricity supplies.
- Repairs to the roof, floors, walls and windows.
- Upkeep of gutters, pipes and drains.
- Repair of plumbing and sanitary convenience, i.e. baths, showers, toilets, sinks.
- Repair of electrical wiring, gas plumbing, fixed heaters, central heating and water heaters.
- Repair of window frames, internal doors and glass frames.
- Repairs to the bath, basins, boilers and pipework.

Regardless of what the contract states, landlords must carry out the duties defined by law.
Council Intervention
West Lancashire Borough Council carries out an evidence based risk assessment of dwellings using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (H.H.S.R.S). Under this system the properties are assessed against 29 different hazards. The main ones which are commonly encountered are damp and mould, excess cold, fire safety, crowding and space, lighting, food safety, falls on stairs and level surfaces and electrical safety. Where a hazard is judged likely to cause significant harm to health, the Council is under a legal duty to take appropriate legal action.

Tenants are expected to notify their landlord first but if you ignore their complaints or they are unable to contact you they often contact the University or Local Authority. If you fail to carry out essential repairs or maintenance checks such as fire, electrical and gas safety checks you can be served with an Improvement Notice, or, particularly in the case of overcrowding, a prohibition order.

Failure to carry out the works may result in prosecution and/or the Council carrying out the works and recharging the landlord. From 2017 the new Housing and Planning Act 2016 will be rolled out and Local Authorities will also have the option of introducing Financial Penalties as an alternative to prosecution for certain offences under the Housing Act 2014.

This is likely to apply to failure to comply with Improvement notices, and offences in houses in multiple occupation.
**Student Responsibilities**

Students, on the other hand, are often held responsible for ensuring that batteries are renewed in doorbells and/or smoke alarms, and that light bulbs are changed - maintenance of a minor nature which can properly be expected of any occupier. It is essential that students are aware of the importance of reporting ALL repairs to the landlord. A delay in notifying you of what may appear to be a minor repair could have detrimental consequences to the structure and value of the property. For example, a leaking downspout may not affect the comfort of the students but it could damage the brickwork and cause damp.

**Reporting Repairs**

You will need to consider what system you want your tenants to use for reporting repairs. Students should be given a contact number to report urgent repairs, although you may prefer that less urgent repairs are reported in writing. Landlords should stress to students the need to report all defective items in a clear and concise manner, no matter how small the repair.

**Responding to Repairs**

Once a repair has been reported, you should respond within a reasonable time span. If the repair causes potential health and safety risks or inconvenience to the tenants then the response should be within twenty-four hours. For example, a gas leak should be acted upon immediately, whereas repairs that do not interfere with the comfort of the residents should be completed within a reasonably agreed timeframe.
Inspecting Your Property

The Accommodation Team recommends that landlords should inspect their premises regularly to ensure that minor repairs, which are the responsibility of the students, are not being overlooked, in addition to more major repairs which you may need to be notified of. You should give at least twenty-four hours notice before inspecting the property.

We suggest the following procedures when inspecting the property:

- Try to give tenants one week written notice of the inspection date. The presence of the student during the proposed visit is not necessary but preferable.

- Examine the property and point out anything that is not satisfactory.

- If you identify problem areas you should notify the student that the faults need to be rectified within twenty-one days. After twenty-one days, inform the students that you will be re-inspecting the premises to check on progress and examine the defects.

- Tell the students about any defects that might affect the refund of the deposit. This may encourage students to take greater care of the household facilities and take responsibility for maintaining the property in reasonable order.
Property Management Checklist

Whenever a student enquires about accommodation or visits your property, you should discuss the following points:

**Rent**
How much you intend to charge; how many weeks you charge for; what the rent covers; when it is due; should the student pay the rent individually or in a group?

**Contract**
What type of Tenancy Agreement are you using?
ALWAYS provide the tenants with a copy of your contract.

**Retainer**
How much, if anything, will the students be paying during the summer holiday period?

**Deposit**
How much is the deposit? What does it cover? Which of the tenancy deposit schemes will you be using and what are the contact details?

**Inventory**
At what point will the inventory be agreed? ALWAYS provide students with a copy of the inventory: we suggest that you attach it to the Tenancy Agreement.

**Repairs**
Discuss reporting of repairs and give an indication of your response time. How much notice will be given to students if repairs are to be carried out in the property?

**Bills**
Who is the person liable for the gas and/or the electricity bill?
How will the bills be paid? If the bills are included in the rent then you should provide the student with a copy of the quarterly bill(s). Make sure all the meters are read the day the students arrive and leave the property.

**Telephone**
Establish who pays the telephone rental charge. You also need to inform students about the method of payment for calls.

**Notice**
How many weeks notice would the students need to give legally should they want to vacate the premises?

**Parking**
Are there parking facilities available?

**Visitors**
Can friends and family stay if they visit?
| **Cleaning** | Explain your expectations and outline any specific issues |
| **Security** | Explain your security procedures and talk about keys. What happens if a student loses a key? |
| **Storage** | Can the students store their belongings during the summer holiday? |
| **Gas** | If your property has any gas appliances, tell the students about your gas safety certificate: this should help to reassure your potential tenants (and their parents) about the safety of your property |
| **Insurance** | All students must take full responsibility for ensuring that their own personal belongings are insured. The contents of the property, as listed on the Inventory, should be insured by you, NOT the students. Clarify what is covered by your insurance and reinforce that students’ own possessions are not covered by your policy. |
| **Lodgings** | If you are providing lodgings accommodation you should discuss the provision of meals. Which meals (if any) are provided? At what time will meals be served? Can the student(s) use the kitchen at other times of the day? What facilities in the kitchen can they use? Are all the rooms in the property available to the student(s), or do you have a private sitting room etc? |
Checklist - When Students Move In

- Ensure that the property is clean and in good repair for students arriving.

- Discuss in full the Tenancy Agreement, including the notice period the student must give if they wish to vacate the property. Make sure that the students fully understand the contract and all have a copy of the contract.

- Confirm the rent arrangements, e.g. how much the students need to pay and when and provide each student with a receipt for any money paid.

- Provide each student with a written statement detailing exactly what the deposit covers.

- Discuss the Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme procedures, including information about which scheme you are using and the contact details.

- Discuss arrangements for having the meters read.

- Explain how the bills are paid. Are they included in the rent, are there coin or card meters or are they due quarterly.

- Do a full inventory at the start of the tenancy. This should include all appliances, furniture, fixtures and fittings along with the condition of each room. Repeat this process at the end of the tenancy. Both parties should sign the inventory to show this is accurate.

- Demonstrate to the students where the electricity switch/ gas/water supply taps are located in the premises.

- Ensure that all doors and windows open and close and are not obstructed.

- Make sure that all emergency escape routes are accessible and clearly signed.

- Make sure that all students have a contact number should there be an emergency.

- Discuss the terms and conditions of your insurance policy, highlighting exclusions.

- Discuss any parking arrangements. Parking is usually at the car owner’s risk.

- Ask about any absences during term time, eg teaching practice or field work.

- Ensure that you have each student’s full name and home address

Discuss all arrangements and terms with each student. Do not rely on students to pass information on to others in the group.
Checklist - When Students Move Out

- At the end of the term of the tenancy you should check the inventory which you agreed when the student(s) moved into the premises. If everything is in order and there is no damage, instruct the tenancy deposit protection scheme operator to return the deposit.

- Inspect the premises even if just one of the students moves out. It would be unfair to retain that student’s deposit if subsequent damage was caused by the other students who remained in the property.

- If you wish to retain any part of the deposit and you and your tenant cannot agree the case can be referred to the dispute resolution service of the scheme you are using.

- It is a good idea to incorporate the cost of professional cleaning into the rent so that the property can be cleaned professionally when the students move out, thus saving time and energy for you and money for the students.

- Complete any repairs and maintenance that is required to bring the house back into good repair, preferably during the summer months. Your property will then be ready to start the cycle all over again.