

security in your home

Staying safe at home, and when house hunting.

Most students live in shared accommodation. When arranging to share a property it is important to be clear about your own 'wants' and 'needs'. If these are not made clear in the house hunting phase then difficulties can emerge during the tenancy, when it can be difficult to leave the property. This is because most tenancies are for a fixed term.

Choosing housemates

There are no golden rules that make for a good house share. Some say that mixed households tend to work better than single sex house-holds, and that one woman sharing a house with several men tends not to be a good arrangement. Think about the kind of house share you would prefer and remember that you will be living with those people for a year.

It is worth considering the pros and cons of living with people you know and people you do not know. Sharing with strangers can mean a more formal arrangement, which can protect you from the squabbles that living with friends can bring. The disadvantage is that you will not know what the people are like until you move in with them.

On the flip-side, living with friends can mean the end of a beautiful friendship once you realise that they never wash up or do the cleaning.

Finally, you may feel perfectly at ease with the group you are to share with, but there may be times when you are alone at night with just one member of the group. Will you still feel secure?

Things to think about choosing a house

When viewing a property prior to renting it is important that you are accompanied. **NEVER** arrange to meet a stranger at a property by yourself. If you are considering taking a property then try and visit it after dark before you sign any agreement,

to check the safety of the house and the area it is in. Points to look at include:

- Is the property set back from the road?
- How much street lighting is there nearby?
- Is there a dark alley leading to the

house / on the journey to the house from campus?

- How far is the nearest bus stop/shop and what is the route like to each place?
- Ask the students currently living in the house ask them what the area is like and whether they have felt safe living there.

Household security

Consider the level of security of the building before signing an agreement. Check the front and rear door. The house should have solid wood external doors. Ideally, external doors should also be fitted with five lever mortice locks.

Ground floor windows should either be locked or, if sash/sliding windows, have blocks fitted to prevent the window from opening more than about 10cm. Windows on upper floors overlooking an offshoot or outbuilding roof should also have locks.

If you would feel happier with a spy-hole in the front door ask for one to be fitted. Chains on doors are important and should be used.

Living in Rented Accommodation

You are paying rent to live in the property as your home and have the right to 'quiet enjoyment'. The owner of the property or their agent has a right to inspect the property, or come round, only at reasonable times of the day and with 24 hours' notice in writing of any visit. If your landlord is coming round without notice this is harassment and they are breaching their agreement with you.
Any kind of interference with your

personal belongings, threats, verbal abuse, intimidating behaviour, sexist and/or racist remarks are also harassment, which is a criminal offence. Contact the Union Advice Service if you experience harassment of any kind, or in an emergency contact the police. If the police do become involved, even if you do not press charges, a report will be made of your complaint and this could be useful in any legal action for compensation that you may wish to pursue.

Some tenancy agreements indicate that the tenants are responsible and legally liable for the behaviour of other people that they invite into the property. Again, talk through the situation with an Advice Worker at the Union Advice Service and explore what options are open to you if you are being harassed in any way by a guest.

Safe Space (on campus)

Anybody who does not feel safe in their own home or who needs a safe space of refuge or respite can request to stay in a safe space on campus for a night (in the first instance). During working hours the Dean of Students' Office will be able to arrange this. Outside of these times, the Security Lodge will be able to help.

Useful Numbers

Police (emergency)

999

Police (non-emergency)

101

Sue Lambert Trust

01603 622406

Samaritans

08457 909090

UEA Nightline

01603 503504

07794 924366 (texts)

UEA Security Lodge

01603 592352

**find us in the gateway in
union house
open 10-4
every weekday**

**01603 593463
advicecentre@uea.ac.uk
ueastudent.com/advice**

we've got your back

advice  **SU**