



# TIME TO MOVE IN

Our toolkits are an essential  
read before you sign on

*THE DOTTED LINE!*





# Time to move in!

Before you start unpacking make sure you do the following:

## Fill out the inventory

- Include marks on the wall.
- Specify which room and where in the room the problem is.
- Add details of blue-tack marks on the walls, stains on the carpet or furniture etc.
- Be very, very accurate on the inventory as it will be your main proof of the condition of the house when you moved in, and will help you get your deposit back.

## Take photos of the property

- Date stamp the photos.
- Take photos even if the room/ furniture etc. is in good condition and keep them until you have got your deposit back.

## Agree the inventory with the other tenants and landlord/agent before signing it

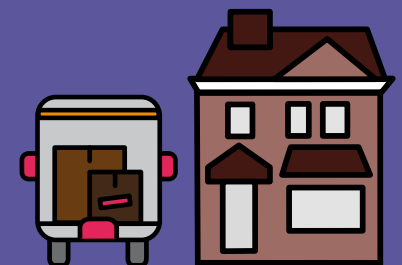
- Make sure you get a copy for your records - **your inventory is the best evidence you will have to get your deposit back.**

## Make a list of any repairs that need to be carried out and put **IN WRITING** to the landlord/letting agent

- Ask the landlord to agree to a timeline of when the repairs will be carried out and add this to the list.
- Ask the landlord/agent to sign the list
- Give the landlord/agent a copy and keep one for your records.

## Find the utility meters and make a note of the readings

- If bills are included keep these for your records.
- If not, contact the utility companies with the readings and set up a new account in **ALL** your names.



# Property inventory

PROPERTY ADDRESS: .....

ELECTRICITY READING: START ..... DATE: / / FINISH ..... DATE: / /

GAS READING: START ..... DATE: / / FINISH ..... DATE: / /

GAS SAFETY CERTIFICATE NUMBER: ..... EXPIRY DATE: .....

## LIVING / DINING ROOM

Item	Description/condition	Item	Description/condition
Door(s)		Windows	
Walls		Curtains	
Ceiling		Sofa /suite	
Carpet		Light fitting/ lampshades	
Heating appliance		Furniture	
Internet connection		TV	

## KITCHEN

Item	Description/condition	Item	Description/condition
Door(s)		Refrigerator	
Walls/ceiling		Cupboards	
Floor		Kettle	
Windows		Washing machine/dryer	
Heating appliance		Lampshades	
Cooker		Bucket/mop	
Sinks/taps		Iron	
Worktops		Hoover	

## BATHROOM / TOILET

Item	Description/condition	Item	Description/condition
Door(s)		Bath	
Ceiling/walls		Shower	
Floor		Toilet	
Heating appliance		Toilet roll holder	
Windows		Sink	
Curtains/blind		Towel rail/hooks	
Mirror		Cupboards	

## HALL / MISCELLANEOUS

Item	Description/condition	Item	Description/condition
Door(s)		Stairs/banister	
Walls/ceiling		Dustpan and brush	
Floor		Ironing board	
Heating appliance		Outside dustbin	
Windows		Garden	
Curtains		Smoke detectors	

## BEDROOM – UPSTAIRS/DOWNSTAIRS – BACK/MIDDLE/FRONT

Item	Description/condition	Item	Description/condition
Door(s)		Bed	
Walls/ceiling		Wardrobe	
Floor/carpet		Drawers	
Heating appliance		Desk	
Windows		Chair	
Curtains		Lampshades/ light fitting	

### Signatures

LANDLORD: ..... DATE: .....

TENANT: ..... DATE: .....

..... DATE: .....

DATE: .....

### Please Note:

This is an example of how an inventory could be set up; it will not cover every situation, as each property is different. However, it can be amended to suit your circumstances.

If your landlord/ agent doesn't give you an inventory, make your own and send a copy to your landlord/ agent within a few days of moving in.

When compiling an inventory it is vital that you record the condition of every item in the property. We suggest using language such as new, fair, poor, scratched, stained, torn etc. If there are any items in poor condition, we suggest you take date stamped photos, and keep them until you have left the tenancy, just in case there are any disputes over getting your deposit back.

## Household Bills

You should check your tenancy agreement to clarify whether the tenants or the landlord are responsible for paying the bills. Most tenancy agreements have a clause that says the tenants are responsible for gas, electricity, water rates, telephone, internet, TV Licence and Council Tax.

You should notify the suppliers of gas, electricity, water, and telephone. You will have to fill in an application form indicating that you want a supply. On this form you should list all the names of the people who will be living in the property and ask all of them to sign the form. This is to avoid problems with liability (see section on liability for further information).

For loads of tips on managing bills, including how to split bills between housemates, see: [savethestudent.org/accommodation/guide-to-student-energy-bills.html](http://savethestudent.org/accommodation/guide-to-student-energy-bills.html)

**Make sure you take a reading of the gas and electricity meters, and make a note of it, and the day it was taken, and keep it in a safe place. Remember if you don't do this straight away you could find yourself paying for the previous tenants' bills.**

Check your first bill to ensure that it does not include the previous tenants' charges.

### Typical Household Bills

#### Electricity & / Gas

Many companies can now supply your gas or electricity or both. However with choice often comes confusion. The first and easiest option to find out who supplies your electricity and gas if you've just moved to a new property is to simply ask the letting agent, landlord or the previous tenant of your property. In order to find out who your gas supplier is, call the Meter Point Administration Service line on **0870 608 1524**.

#### Electricity

To find out who your electricity supplier is call **0845 330 0889**.



## Water & sewerage

Yorkshire Water supplies water to everyone in this area. Unless you are on a meter you don't have to get a reading for this. Contact Yorkshire Water to set up an account or for any problems to do with your water at [www.yorkshirewater.com](http://www.yorkshirewater.com)

## TV Licence

- **Living in Halls of Residence**  
The law applies to students. You need to be covered to watch or record live TV programmes on any channel, or to download or watch BBC programmes on iPlayer. This applies to any programmes and any provider you use. It's illegal for anyone to do this without being covered by a TV Licence. If you break the law, you risk prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000 plus any legal costs and/or compensation you may be ordered to pay.  
However, you may be covered by your parents' licence. If you think you are, please check that all of the following are true then inform TV licensing straight away:
  - Your out-of-term address (parents' address) is covered by a TV Licence
  - AND you only use TV receiving equipment that is powered solely by its own internal batteries
  - AND you have not connected it to an aerial or plugged it into the mains.For further information about getting a TV licence, see the following link: [www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/for-your-home/students-aud1](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/for-your-home/students-aud1)
- **Sharing a house**  
For students who share a house it will depend on what type of contract you have signed. Joint tenants will need one licence between them to cover all sets in the house but tenants with an individual contract will need a separate licence to cover any TVs owned.

Where a TV set is used only for computers, electronic games or screening pre-recorded videos, a licence is not required. However, the set must be incapable of receiving broadcast services; it is not simply sufficient to remove the tuner.

## Other typical bills

- **Telephone**  
Most students tend to use their mobiles, However, if there is a landline; ensure that each person is named on the bills. You can also request itemised billing to work out who has used what; however, there is usually a charge for this.
- **Internet**  
Most student households will need this, but shop around for the best deals, make sure that it is adequate for your usage, don't just opt for the cheapest option. Internet charges are similar to telephone charges. If more than one person uses your internet supply, you need to come to an agreement about how to pay the bill.  
You may prefer to set up an internet / television / telephone package. It is important to research which provider is the cheapest. Remember that you may need to compromise in order to find a package that suits everyone in the house.
- **Sky/cable TV**  
This can be expensive, ask yourself if it is really necessary! Again shop around as there are cheaper alternatives than Sky. Be careful to check how long you are signing up for as it may be for longer than your tenancy agreement.
- **Council Tax**  
Full time students are exempt from council tax. However, some students will be liable, if in doubt seek advice.

# Changing suppliers

You might want to look into changing your supplier but you should check your tenancy agreement and discuss with your landlord if this is possible first. Some landlords do not allow tenants to change their supplier. If you want to change and your landlord will not let you please contact us for further advice.

Before signing a contract, it is worth shopping around to compare prices, standing charges, and termination of contract fees, payment options, and the company's policy if you cannot pay your bill. Check to make sure that you are not tied in for a minimum period, which lasts longer than your tenancy agreement. Don't sign up if you are unsure.

To help you find a good deal, go to a comparison website such as [www.uswitch.com](http://www.uswitch.com) or [www.energyhelpline.com](http://www.energyhelpline.com)

If you are not sure who is your fuel supplier, you will need to contact:

### Gas:

Gas Meter helpline on 0870 608 1524

(\*This call will cost 7 per minute plus your phone company's access charge.)

### Electricity:

Northern Power Grid on 0800 375 675

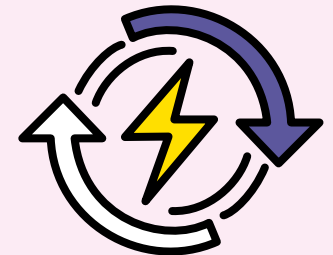
### Water (Sheffield):

Yorkshire Water on 0345 124 2424

### Inclusive Bills

Usually there is a cap on the usage, so if the household goes over the cap you may have to pay the difference.

However, check that you are liable for the usage by asking your landlord to show you meter readings and or the bill from the supplier.



# Liability for paying bills

The person who requested the supply of gas and electricity will be liable to pay for it and their name will appear on the bill.

Everyone named on the bill is liable not only for their agreed share but for the whole of the bill, provided they signed an agreement to have a supply.

This is known as “joint and several liability.” The supplier has the right to pursue one or all the tenants named on the bill for the full amount. Joint and several liability overrides any informal agreement between tenants.

If your name is not on a bill but you are asked to pay it, please contact the Advice Service for further advice.

Problems can occur when only one tenant is named on the bill and the other tenants do not pay their share. The other tenants sometimes escape payment because they are not named on the bill and as a result will not be pursued by the utility company. This is why it is important to ensure that everyone living in the property is named on the bill.

If the bill remains in the name of an ex tenant or is addressed to ‘the occupier’ fuel companies can often hold current tenants liable. This is because, even though they are not named on the bill, they have lived in the property and benefited from the utilities. If you have any disputes over liability, you should contact the advice centre as the rules are complicated.

## What will happen if I don't pay the bills?

### Will I be cut off?

Most services such as gas, electricity, internet and telephone can cut you off. If you don't pay for your service, they can cut you off because you are in breach of contract. However, they will also try to come to an arrangement if you contact them.

### Electricity & Gas

Electricity and gas may fit pre-payment meters to prevent you being disconnected. The meter will collect an amount of money each week towards the arrears before allowing you to pay for and receive a supply of electricity or gas. You should treat debts for electricity and gas as a priority. Companies can pursue the debt through the County Court. Your supply could eventually be disconnected if you do not pay.

### Water & Sewerage

Since 1999, you cannot have your water supply disconnected because of arrears. However, water companies can pursue payment through the County Court. You should contact your supplier and look at ways of making payments to arrears and for future bills. Remember water is an on-going expense. You may be able to apply to the Yorkshire Water or Severn Trent Water Trust for financial help.

### Telephone

Your telephone may be disconnected if you do not keep to agreed payments. Telephone companies can pursue payment through the County Court. Whether or not the telephone is a priority for you depends on your circumstances, but in most cases it is not a priority debt. If you have problems paying the bill you could consider changing to incoming calls only. If you have a mobile you may want to consider changing to a cheaper tariff or to ‘Pay As You Go’.

## If your housemates won't pay their share

You may be able to get your money back via the county courts but you will need a forwarding address to do so. Please contact Sheffield Hallam Student's Union Advice Service for help with this issue.

## Problems with bills

You can prevent problems with chasing other tenants for their share of the bill if you:

- Have a forwarding address and their parents' or home address. Should you need to send them a letter about their share of the bill, this can make it easier.

- Set up a bank account together and save money each week/ month towards the bills.
- Ask for an itemised telephone bill, which shows the number dialled, the date and cost of the call. This can help identify what proportion of the bill each tenant should pay.
- Keep on top of the bills; try to pay them on time. Unpaid bills can affect your credit rating!
- If people move in and out of the property during the tenancy, ask the utility company to change the names on the bills. Ensure that the outgoing tenant leaves a forwarding address and money for their share of the bills. The incoming tenant should be added to the names on the bill.
- Try to avoid estimated bills by providing regular meter readings.

## If you receive high bills:

- Ensure that bills are based on actual and not estimated meter readings. Often estimated bills come with an ‘E’ next to the reading.
- If there is any dispute about the bills ask the company for a breakdown of the actual costs and payments may so far.
- If you think that the meter is registering fuel use at too high a rate, ask the supplier to check the meter.
- Most suppliers offer schemes to allow you to spread payments across the year or pay at different intervals.

# Time to settle in

...but remember you will still need to do the following:

## Show your certificate of Council Tax exemption letter to the relevant council

- For Sheffield City Council, take your certificate to their offices:  
First Point  
Howden House  
Union Street  
Sheffield  
S1 2SH

## Create a House Documents File

- Keep all bills and a copy of the inventory and contract
- Make this available to all tenants
- Agree how bills will be paid - seek advice from the SHSU Student Advice Centre

## Get confirmation that your deposit is protected

- If you've not had it already (your landlord has 30 days to protect your deposit once it has been received)
- Even if your contract states who it is protected with, check with the scheme to ensure that this has been done. See the Student Advice Centre or Shelter websites for more information about tenancy deposits.

## During the tenancy, remember to do the following:

- Get to know your neighbours and don't annoy them with noise and other nuisances.
- Put out the bins and recycling on the correct days - do not allow rubbish to build up. Check Sheffield City Council's website for information on bin collection.
- Report all disrepair in writing as soon as possible and send it to your agent/landlord via email or recorded delivery and keep a copy for yourself.
- Take photos of the disrepair to use as evidence should you need to.
- Make sure windows and doors are locked at all times when the property is empty.
- Let the neighbours know if you are going away for the weekend.
- Let your landlord know if you will be away for more than 2 weeks.
- **Living in a private house carries many responsibilities with it; if you do not act responsibly you may find yourself in trouble with the council, the police or even the university!**

# Useful contacts

## Shu Accommodation Services

38/40 Howard Street  
Sheffield  
S1 1WB  
Tel: 0114 225 5555

## Sheffield City Council

**Private Housing Standards Advice Line:**  
(0114) 273 4680

**By email:** [phs@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:phs@sheffield.gov.uk)  
for advice and help regarding repairs, improvements, HMOs and HMO Licensing and empty properties.

[tro@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:tro@sheffield.gov.uk)  
for enquiries about tenancy issues

## Postal address

Private Housing Standards  
1st Floor, Howden House  
1 Union Street  
Sheffield, S1 2SH  
Visit us at First Point at Howden House.

## Yorkshire Water

Tel: 0845 124 2424

## Yorkshire Water Community Trust (for financial help)

Tel: 0845 124 24 26  
[www.yorkshirewater.com/watersure](http://www.yorkshirewater.com/watersure)

## Gas Emergencies

National Grid Gas Emergency number:  
0800 111 999

[www.nationalgridgas.com/safety-and-emergencies](http://www.nationalgridgas.com/safety-and-emergencies)

## Complaints about gas & electricity suppliers:

Citizens Advice Consumer Service

Tel: 03454 04 05 06

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/complain-about-an-energy-company/complain-to-your-energy-supplier/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/complain-about-an-energy-company/complain-to-your-energy-supplier/)

## Telephone and Internet

There are two Alternative Dispute Resolution Services set up for complaints about phone Service providers:-

Ombudsman Services:

[www.ombudsman-services.org/contact-us-communications.html](http://www.ombudsman-services.org/contact-us-communications.html)

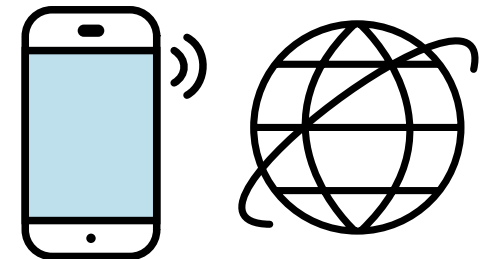
Tel: 0330 440 1614

CISAS (independent ADR service approved by Ofcom) [www.cedr.com/cisas/](http://www.cedr.com/cisas/)

Tel: 020 7520 3814 Email: [cisas@cedr.com](mailto:cisas@cedr.com)

## TV Licence

[www.tvlicensing.co.uk/?WT.mc\\_id=phd\\_Search\\_Brand&WT.srch=1](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/?WT.mc_id=phd_Search_Brand&WT.srch=1)

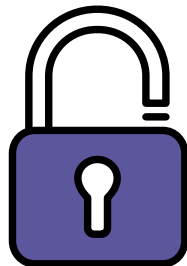


# Staying safe in your accommodation

There are likely to be many gadgets lying around a student property, such as laptops and tablets, mobile phones, TVs etc. This can mean that student properties are attractive to burglars.

## Here are our tips on how to protect your belongings:

- Close windows when you aren't in the room (particularly on the ground floor).
- Lock your front and back doors, even when you are in the property.
- If you have a burglar alarm – use it!
- Leave your light on when you're going out at night, and consider a lamp on a timer (particularly during holiday time).
- Record the IMEI number of your mobile phone somewhere safe. You can find this number by typing \*#06# in your phone. In the event of the phone being stolen the police have a chance of arresting a person who may subsequently use the handset. IMEI numbers will now be recorded by the Police and checked against suspected stolen mobile phones.
- Don't let any contractor into the property unless your landlord has informed you about their visit beforehand.
- Register your items on Immobilise [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com) so they can be returned to you if they are lost or stolen.
- Use a UV property marking kit to mark your property.



# Contents Insurance

Your landlord is responsible for insuring the premises and their belongings, but you are responsible for insuring your personal possessions. Generally Home Contents

Insurance must be taken out for a year.

Some students may be covered by their parents' (Home Contents) insurance policy, which may provide cover for students studying away from home. It is worth checking if this applies to you, and what type of loss you can claim for.

## Insurance terms explained:

### Home Contents Insurance

This normally covers most items in the home. For example, TV, stereo, clothing, jewellery etc. It is important to check each policy to make sure that all your belongings are covered.

### Personal Belongings Insurance

This is cover for items which you take out of your home, this may include maximum payouts for items such as money, so make sure it covers you for your needs.

### New for old policies

Many insurance companies offer a new for old policy. This means that if your old TV worth about £20 is stolen, then they would pay the full amount needed to buy a new one of a similar make.

### Wear and Tear

Some policies will include a wear and tear clause for items such as clothing. In other words, they will not pay the full cost you paid for an item, and will deduct an amount for wear and tear.

### Discounts

Many insurance companies will offer discounts if you have a burglar alarm, or if you live in a Home Watch Area.

## Things to look out for

- Is your property insured only if it is stolen from your home? Are you covered outside the home for property such as portable computers, stereos and bicycles?
- If items such as bicycles are stolen from a communal hallway would you be covered?
- Some insurance companies will pay a maximum amount for certain items. For example, they may only pay a maximum of £200 for stereo equipment even if it would cost you £500 to replace.
- Are you covered for accidental damage? Again check the small print.
- Are you covered if you are on holiday and the property is vacant?
- Are you covered out of term time?

Remember to check the small print so that you are aware of what you are buying!



# “You don’t really know someone until you live with them”

Living with friends can be fun and one of the best things about University life; however, we know that sometimes things don’t go to plan so here are our top tips on how to get on with your house mates:

## Luke’s story

Two of my housemates trashed the kitchen after coming home drunk, the cooker got broken and food was thrown everywhere even on the ceiling. I share the house with 5 others and I believe that we shouldn’t have to pay for it. One of my friends recommended the Advice Service in the Students’ Union. I went for the drop-in session and was advised what my rights were. I wasn’t happy that I might be liable for the damage as I had signed a joint contract. However, the adviser explained what my options were and I am trying to sort it out but unfortunately I have to still live with the people that caused the damage and I’m not sure if I will live with them again after this.

## Share the bills

If bills are not included in the rent then please make sure costs are shared between you. Tenants of a property are usually jointly responsible for the utility bills. The names of all tenants in the property should be given to the utility companies as soon as you move in. Agree on how the bills will be paid i.e. everyone set up a standing order & try to avoid one person paying out of their own account.

## Hold the line please

If you have use of a house telephone then make sure everyone’s name is given to the phone provider, so one person is not left responsible for sorting out the cost of the phone calls. Try and account for your calls as best you can and make sure you get an itemised bill showing all phone calls made. If there are a few stray numbers left over that no-one admits to calling then agree to split the cost between everyone in the house.

## Share the housework!

Share the housework! Agree a cleaning rota so everyone does their fair share of cleaning & buying cleaning materials. Suggest having a kitty for cleaning materials and maybe even loo rolls. You are all responsible for the cleaning of the communal areas in your house. All tenants can have their deposits deducted if properties are left unclean at the end of the tenancy.

## Nip it in the bud

Talk to your housemate(s) if there is a problem before you both get angry and upset and the issues get out of hand.

## Remain calm and friendly

Do not threaten to retaliate or wait until you are end of your tether. Do not be embarrassed to say how much the problem has upset you or be afraid to make your views clear.

## Call a meeting

Think about having a house meeting. Having everyone together at one time is a good idea to help restore communication and sort out any problems. Sit down all together & discuss the matter collectively. Make sure that everyone gets their chance to speak & that everyone listens to each other.

## Give it time

Give yourselves time to get to know each other and consider others feelings. Living together for the first time can be strange for everyone. Not everyone likes to live in the same way, some people are party animals and others may be very introverted; some are untidy and some like a clean and tidy house. Why not have a meeting at the start of the tenancy to discuss how you can all live together better.

## Get advice if you need it

If you can’t sort it out, seek advice before it goes too far. Contact the Students’ Union Student Advice Centre: [hallamstudentsunion.com/adviceandhelp](http://hallamstudentsunion.com/adviceandhelp)

If the difficulties you are experiencing are causing you emotional distress, you can contact the University’s Student Wellbeing Service. See: [shu.ac.uk/wellbeing](http://shu.ac.uk/wellbeing) for full details of their services.

## Help and support for bullying, harassment, hate crime and sexual violence.

Being at university isn’t just about getting a degree; it’s also about becoming independent and being part of a diverse adult community. Sheffield Hallam is a safe and tolerant community.

We don’t stand for harassment or abuse. If you have experienced sexual violence, harassment, abuse or hate crime report it either anonymously or get support from an advisor.

You can also find information about support available and how to disclose or report the incident on the University’s web page:

[reportandsupport.shu.ac.uk/](http://reportandsupport.shu.ac.uk/)

