



Housing Guides

Living in Harmony during Lockdown

All aspects of our lives have been changed during the current health crisis.

One of the aspects most that has most impacted on students has been sharing a house in the private rented sector.

As there is some uncertainty currently it is particularly important that the choices you make are informed ones.

This guide covers: signing a contract as well as the key issues to consider before going into shared accommodation and what to do if things begin to go awry.

Signing an Assured Shorthold Tenancy

It is important that all in the house understand their rights and responsibilities as tenants from the start.

The Advice Centre can help with this. We have prepared relevant resources, which you can access on our website [here](#). We also strongly advise you to have your contract 'checked' by us before you sign it (email us to request that at advice@susu.org).

As one of the key housing challenges for students during lockdown is early release you may find this resource helpful: [early release guide](#).

While there are benefits to sharing a house, it is important that you all know the terms of the contract you are signing and have honest conversations about what some of the challenges might be.

Managing house share tensions in the current lockdown – dos and don'ts

Whilst there are some limitations with what you can do during the lockdown (November 2020), there are also some ways of reducing tensions that sometimes arise when you are together 24/7. The 'dos' examples below may help with having a 'breathing space' from each other and will also help you with your mental and physical wellbeing.



Dos	Don't's
<ul style="list-style-type: none">You can go out and take unlimited exercise – helpful not only for taking a break from each other, but both for your mental and physical health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Don't vent your frustration on social media. Once it's 'out', it is 'out' and with any written communication, it may be misinterpreted and misconstrued, which can lead to some unintended consequences.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">You can catch up with a friend in an outdoor public place, like a park or beach, as long as you socially distance and neither of you is self-isolating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Don't ignore the building up tension, the earlier you address it and attempt solving a way forward, the better.

Tip: For more information on what is allowed and not allowed check [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) website, or this useful summary from BBC: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-52530518>.

Honest conversations & dealing with conflict

'Student Space' resource website led by Student Minds, the UK's student mental health charity, has some very helpful tips and guidance on how to cope with living in the bubble and manage potential conflicts successfully.

These range from understanding why conflicts in house share arise in the first place, how to prepare to have 'the conversation' to address the issues and the best tips on how to behave and what to say.

More details and a step by step guidance can be found here:

- Why conflicts arise?**
<https://studentspace.org.uk/wellbeing/why-conflict-may-occur-in-social-bubbles>,
- How to prepare to have 'the conversation'?**
<https://studentspace.org.uk/wellbeing/preparing-to-address-conflict>,
- Addressing conflict successfully**
<https://studentspace.org.uk/wellbeing/addressing-conflict-successfully>

Getting professional help for most difficult circumstances

If you followed the tips from Student Space and you are still stuck it may be time to seek appropriate professional support.



Support Advice Centre

University Mediation Team can help with that. It is a free and confidential service offered at the University (not linked with any faculty or course). You can find more details about what they do and how to self-refer [here](#).

Further guidance

For further help on housing, contact The Advice Centre:

Tel: 02380 592 085

E: advice@susu.org.

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