



# Living Off-Campus

2024-25



SURREY  
STUDENTS'  
UNION

*Your Surrey Life.*

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# Welcome to your 2024-25 guide to Living Off-Campus!

We have collated advice and tips to support you in your move into private accommodation, so you can successfully navigate moving, maintaining your new home, and when to put out the bins! If you need any support contact the Union's advice team at: [ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk) or visit [surreyunion.org/support](http://surreyunion.org/support)



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# Moving in Checklist

## ***Look at the Inventory***

- o Check through your inventory carefully. This should detail everything that should be there and the condition it should be in. Contact your landlord if there are any discrepancies

## ***Take Photographic Evidence***

- o Take photos of the property so you can prove the condition it was in when you first moved in, to help prevent any future disputes that may impact your deposit when you move out.

## ***Check Your Gas Safety Certificate***

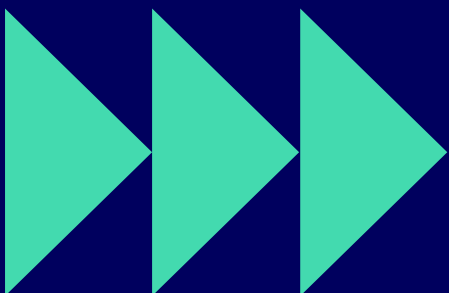
- o If the property you are moving in to uses gas, your landlord is legally required to have a Gas Safety Certificate (CP12) for all the gas appliances. If you haven't already been sent this, you can ask to see it or have it emailed to you.

## ***Test the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms***

- o Check that there's at least one smoke detector on each floor of the building and that they're all working. Your landlord should have checked them before you move in, but it's worth double-checking. If anything is not working, contact your landlord immediately.

## ***Take Meter Readings***

- o Taking a meter reading as soon as possible ensures that your first bill is accurate. It also helps to ensure you are only charged for the energy you use, and not what the previous occupants used. The energy company the house is signed up to will have guides on how to read meters, in case it is confusing!



# Tax Exemption

When you move into private rented accommodation you will need to register for council tax exemption. You can do this by [following this link](#) to the council's website and following the steps in applying for the exemption.

- You will be asked for a **Council Tax student certificate**, which you can generate yourself, [here](#). Alternatively click the 'opt-in' option on your online self-service portal when you register and then the council can issue your exemption automatically.
- Guildford Borough Council have recently **tightened their allowances** for council tax exemption for university students. Moving forward any final year student will be charged council tax **from the end date of their course**, which usually falls around mid-June, for the remainder of their tenancy.
- If you need any **advice and guidance** on Council Tax, you can email the Students' Union at [ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk) or visit our [website](#)

## **Good to know:**

- Full time students should not pay council tax
- You'll get a Council Tax bill if there's someone in your household who's not a full-time student, but your household might still [qualify for a discount](#).
- If you are a final year, you will be liable for council tax from the moment that you receive notice of your final award (and not the date of your graduation ceremony). It means that some final year students due to graduate, or those living with final years may be liable for council tax in July/August.

# Property Maintenance

## ***Get Yourself Covered***

Don't forget to take out home contents insurance to cover your valuables in the event of theft or damage, or check to see if it is included by your bank account or family's household insurance.

## ***Smart Meters***

Smart meters allow you to see how much energy you are using and how much it is costing. The idea is to encourage consumers to use less gas and electricity.

## ***Garden Duties***

Ensure you know who is responsible for maintaining the front and back gardens - your landlord may have left equipment for you to use, or you may be expected to organise this yourselves. Depending on the relationship you have with your neighbours they may be prepared to lend you theirs. Make sure you know where your responsibilities lie so that you fulfil them throughout the year. Check your contract.

## ***Keep Your Deposit Safe***

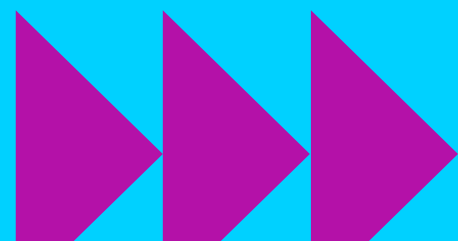
If you have an assured shorthold tenancy and have paid a deposit, your landlord (or agent acting on their behalf) is legally obligated to protect it in a government-approved tenancy deposit scheme that helps ensure you get back what you're entitled to at the end of the tenancy. For more information contact [ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk)

## ***Utility Matters***

Find where things are – Fuse box in case your power goes out. Stop cock, in case you need to turn the water off. Locate Gas, electricity and water meters if your property has them, so you can get the most accurate bills.

## ***TV Licensing***

If you plan to watch live TV (via any service) or BBC iPlayer, make sure you have paid your TV licence. Rebates are available from the TV licensing authorities if you do not use the TV all year round [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk)



## ***Preventing Mould***

- Wipe the water from your windows and sills with a cloth - but make sure you wring it out in a sink so it doesn't evaporate back into the air.
- Leave washing to dry outside, or in a well ventilated room.
- Put lids on your saucepans when cooking and open a window.
- Use the trickle ventilators or night vents in your windows - you need a good air flow to help get rid of moisture which is produced when you sweat at night.
- Open a window after showering/bathing for at least 20 minutes and keep the door shut. When not in use, keep the doors open to let the heat circulate.
- Allow air to circulate where possible and avoid putting furniture against the outside walls of your home. Leave a gap between the wall and the furniture so air can circulate.
- Keep your house warm.
- Cover any fish tanks and remember that house pets and plants produce moisture too.

## ***Lights Out?***

1. Check to see if other houses on your street have any lights on. If not, it may be a power cut, if so call 115.
2. Check your fuseboard to see if any of the switches have tripped to the 'OFF' position and switch it back on. You may have a faulty appliance (which needs unplugging) or have blown a bulb.
3. Check that the electricity bill has been paid!

## ***Dealing with Damp***

Damp is a common problem in many properties in Guildford, especially over the winter. Damp can cause mould to form on walls, furniture and clothes, and may make medical conditions such as asthma, worse. If you notice damp in your house, notify your landlord.

## ***Electrical Safety***

Faulty appliances or damaged plugs, sockets and flexible cables can cause electric shocks, burns and fires. If you are concerned about any part of the electrical installation or appliances in your home, speak to your landlord or lettings agency, immediately.

## **Electricity - Staying Safe**

- Don't bring mains powered, portable appliances into the bathroom.
- Never overload adaptors, particularly with high current appliances such as kettles, irons and heaters.
- Don't Use adaptors plugged into other adaptors.
- Cables from electrical appliances (including extension cables) should not trail underneath carpets or rugs.
- Never touch any electrical equipment or switches with wet hands.
- Flexible cables should not be wrapped around any equipment, when it is still warm.
- Do not clean appliances such as a kettle, whilst it is plugged in.
- Never retrieve toast stuck in a toaster whilst it is plugged in, and especially not with a metal knife - there are live parts inside!
- Do not fill a kettle or steam iron when it is plugged in.
- Never exceed the recommended bulb wattage for light fittings.

If in doubt remember you can always speak to the Union's Advice Team. You can contact them by email: [ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk) or [website](#)





# Be a Good Neighbour

1. Introduce yourself early on – if you're feeling shy, at the very least pop a note through the letter box to say 'hi'. This lets your neighbours know that you are approachable, should they have any issues.
2. Keep noise to a reasonable level – not just music, but banging doors, loud conversations or walking home late at night. You are legally obliged to be quiet after 11pm but be considerate at all times during the day.
3. It is worth remembering that while you must keep noise to a minimum past 23:00, all noise complaints before this time can be investigated by both the council and University. So, it is best not to use 23:00 as a "cut off" for noise and consider your neighbours during any events, pre-drinks or parties, and warn them in advance.
4. Manage your bins – unsightly and overflowing bins attract vermin and are a health hazard. It is also important you put them away once they have been emptied and don't block pavements.
5. We advise you NOT to bring a car, but if you do, please park with consideration and not on pavements or green spaces, obstructing buggies, wheelchairs or damaging the natural environment.
6. Remember that residents can complain directly to the University, to Surrey Police and Guildford Borough Council which can lead to sanctions and even prosecution.
7. The University takes all complaints seriously, and can impose disciplinary action (including fines or suspension) against you and your housemates - including expulsion in serious cases.  
Email [ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk) for more information

**Problems with your neighbours?** Visit [help.surrey.ac.uk](http://help.surrey.ac.uk), email the Union's Advice team at [ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk) or if you feel threatened or in immediate danger contact Surrey Police on 101(non emergencies) or **999 for emergencies**.



# Know Your Bins

Find your bin day

## Frequency of waste collections:

- **Refuse bins** - Every two weeks (*alternates with recycling*)
- **Recycling bins** - Every two weeks (*alternates with refuse*)
- **Food waste caddy** - Every week

If you put waste in the wrong bin, the council will not be able to collect it. The bin will be 'contaminated', and you'll have to take any incorrect waste out. You'll also have to wait up to two weeks for them to empty your bin.

### Green recycling bin

**Yes please:**

- ✓ Paper, card, newspapers and magazines
- ✓ Glass bottles and jars
- ✓ Empty tins, cans and cartons
- ✓ Empty aerosol cans
- ✓ Clean foil and foil trays
- ✓ Plastic bottles, tubs, pots and trays
- ✓ Plastic carrier bags
- ✓ Plastic and metal lids, caps and bottle tops



Remember!  
Bins are not meant to be left on the road. Bins bags left on the ground won't be cleared. Please bring in the bin once it's been collected!

### Small green food waste bin

**Yes please:**

- ✓ Meat and fish, including the bones
- ✓ Shells of fish, nuts and eggs
- ✓ Dairy food
- ✓ Fruit and vegetables
- ✓ Bread, cakes and pastries
- ✓ Rice, pasta and beans
- ✓ Leftover, mouldy or expired food
- ✓ Tea bags and tea and coffee grounds



### Black refuse bin

**Yes please:**

- ✓ General waste that cannot go in your green bin



If you have too much recycling for your green bin, put anything else neatly at the side of your bin in a see through plastic bag.

# Bins: *What you need to know*

- Don't leave bins out on the street where they can block pavements and cause disruption. People with disabilities or parents with pushchairs should be able to use the pavement without any obstacles. Remember they can also be a hazard if they are blown over and enter the road.
- If you over-fill your bin the lid will not close properly and the council may not empty it. If you have too much rubbish, store any excess in a sturdy bin bag, ready for the next refuse collection date.
- Try to get your bin out and ready the night before, usually after 19:00 to avoid impacting people arriving home from work. Bins should be ready for collection from 6:30/7:00 on collection day, to avoid being missed.



# Communal Living

1

Sit down, set up a Whatsapp group and agree how you are going to live together. Maybe you could plan to cook evening meals together as this can work out cheaper. Have fun, and most importantly – enjoy yourselves!

2

Make a rota for chores such as taking out the dustbin or hoovering the sitting room. Try to complete small tasks then and there, such as washing up straight after dinner, rather than leaving dirty dishes in the sink.

3

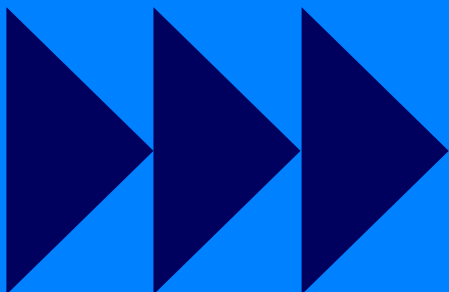
Consider having a 'house fund' for items such as milk and toilet roll, that all housemates use every day. Make a rota so a different person buys these items each week.

4

Agree between yourselves how bills will be paid. If you choose to pay by direct debit from one person's account, other housemates should also set up a direct debit into that account to ensure that payments are always made on time.

5

Be open and honest if a housemate's habits are becoming difficult for others in the property – having calm conversations immediately after something happens is better than bottling up issues until they get out of control.



Falling out with housemates is one of the most common problems students sharing a house have. People that seemed fun and easy-going at the start of the year may have habits you find irritating, drunken nights out end in arguments and you receive unexpectedly large utility bills.

If disagreements do occur, don't be alarmed - they are part of living with other people. Talk through issues rather than letting them build up and be prepared to negotiate with housemates.

## *Some things that can cause arguments:*

- Partners staying over and not helping with the bills.
- Borrowing items without asking.
- Housemembers not cleaning up after themselves.
- How much the heating needs to be on and at what temperature.
- Late night partying and spending too long in the bathroom in the mornings.
- Whose turn it is to replenish communal items such as bread, milk and toilet roll.
- Shaming people on group chats - a definite no!
- Forgetting to put the bins out!





# Community Hub

Your **Community Hub** is here to support you with the cost of living. Stocking items from homeware to clothing, food to electronics, if you are in need of anything it is worth coming down and looking around.

**Free food** can be picked up most Thursdays and Fridays from 17:30 during term time, as well as a large selection of pick & mix sweets!

**Almost everything is just £1.00** (or whatever you feel you can pay). So the Hub should be your first stop when you're in need of something. We've had donations of everything from bikes to printers, so who knows what you may find! All of stock is made up of donations from across campus to our collection points or from your campus services outlets.

**If you would like to donate** to the Hub please look out for the trollies dotted across campus or just come by the Hub and speak to one our supervisors!

All surplus money from the Hub is **donated to the Union's RAG fund**



# Your Security

## ***Keeping Your Home Secure***

The majority of burglaries are opportunist – a few simple steps can be enough to make thieves think twice and move on!

1. When you go out make sure all windows and doors are locked. It might seem obvious but double check!
2. Check windows for vulnerabilities, make sure they're strong, secure and fitted with locks. If they're not you should speak to your landlord or letting agent.
3. Don't advertise your valuables to thieves. Ensure that your laptop, jewellery, cameras, bicycles, and any other expensive items cannot be seen from windows.
4. Simulate occupancy with light timers when the house will be empty especially over extended periods (Christmas, Easter).
5. Register possessions on 'Immobilise'. Having a record of the make, model and serial numbers will help the police identify and return items if stolen, and can make insurance claims much simpler.
6. Keep your gate shut and bolted at all times. Make sure bins don't make it easy for burglars to climb over walls or fences.
7. Get insurance. It is tempting to save money but make sure you have insurance and it covers all your kit.

## ***Secure Bikes***

- o If you own a bike make sure it's locked to an immovable object with a decent lock, preferably out of sight, inside your house!
- o The best lock for your bike is a "D" Lock as these are less easily removed with bolt cutters.
- o You can purchase a security marking kit for your bike which helps deter thieves and aids the recovery of stolen bikes. For more information visit [bikeregister.com](http://bikeregister.com)



# Getting Home Safely

## Walking Alone at Night

- If you have to walk, **avoid short cuts in lonely areas**. Keep to well-lit, busy streets. Always walk facing oncoming traffic so a car cannot pull up behind you.
- If you regularly go walking or jogging, **vary your route**.
- **Avoid using headphones or a mobile phone** while walking or jogging. They can distract you from your surroundings.
- If you think you're being followed, **walk to the busiest place you can find** or knock on a door. Then call the police.
- **If you are attacked, shout 'FIRE'** as loudly as you can; studies have proven that passers-by are more likely to respond to 'fire' than 'help'. Try to get to a safe place and call the police.
- When approaching your car or home, **have your keys ready** so you can enter without delay.
- Consider **carrying a personal attack alarm**. Surrey Union provides free safety alarms, come to the union building to grab one
- Remember to look out for **Street Marshals in yellow jackets** -They're here to keep you safe.
- **Use lit-up areas** such as Yorkies railway bridge/pathways between the University and Southway
- Check to see if your club/society is signed up to the Union's **Get Home Safe** scheme



## I.C.E. Number

*(In Case of Emergency)*

Make sure you have your main contact in your phone labelled as ICE. Some smart phones give you the option to add medical information under your Emergency Contact Profile.



# Useful Contacts

**POLICE:                      Emergency: 999                      Non-Emergency: 101**

- Campus Safety (non emergency) 01483 682002
- University Wellbeing and Support
- University Student Support
- University Accommodation Office
- Surrey Students' Union
- Report a Noise Complaint (Council)
- Free Mouse and Rat Treatment (Council)
- Guildford Borough Council
- Council Community Warden Office