York Student Community Guide

Living in a shared house

York Loves Students
Welcome

Your years as a student are the best of your life! It’s a time when you learn about living in your own home, being more independent and becoming part of a new community.

This guide is brought to you by the Student Community Partnership, providing key information about living in private accommodation. On the next page is a checklist of important things for consideration, particularly utility meter readings, council tax exemption, and living in a new residential area. Please keep this guide safe, as it provides some handy tips on things to look out for when moving out too.

Information for students with families can be found here: www.higheryork.org/families

Or ask your Students’ Union for our dedicated guide

Checklist:

When you first move in, we suggest doing the following:

✓ Check the inventory – your landlord should provide you with one. If not make your own and send it to your landlord. It may be worthwhile including photos of the house.

✓ Meet your neighbours. You can use the cards on page 5; either deliver them by hand or just pop them through the letterbox.

✓ Arrange contents insurance. Again, shop around for the best deal available using comparison websites.

✓ Call the electricity, gas and water suppliers to set up a new account, and shop around for the best deal available using comparison websites.

✓ Apply for a parking permit if you live on a road that requires you to do so. You can do so at the Council’s Parking Services office in West Offices, Station Rise.

✓ Get familiar with your rubbish and recycling collection schedule. If unsure, ask a neighbour for the dates.

✓ Take the meter readings - fill in the list below:

**Gas:**
On moving in day:

**Electric:**
On moving in day:

**Water:**
On moving in day:
Finance

COUNCIL TAX
If you live in an all-student household, then you are exempt from council tax. To claim this exemption, you or one of your housemates must fill in a council tax exemption form online, available at www.higheryork.org/council. This form covers all students living at the address but does require every resident’s details.

DO NOT PANIC WHEN YOU RECEIVE A BILL DURING SUMMER OR EARLY AUTUMN!
The council sends these out to all households, and when your university publishes its enrolment list, the council will check your exemption form against this, and then send you a bill adjusted to £0. If in doubt, contact the council for clarification www.york.gov.uk

KEEPING DOWN THE COSTS
✔ Use your student card for discounts where available.
✔ Set a timer on your boiler for when you want your central heating to come on automatically.
✔ Shop around for the best deal on contents and cycle insurance.
✔ Switch off all unused lights and appliances (switching them off at the plug will save you even more). Remember to switch off TVs, DVD players and other electronic equipment too – they use up to 90% of the energy in standby mode.
✔ Showers use approximately two-fifths of the amount of hot water needed for a bath.
✔ Close your curtains at dusk to prevent heat from being lost through the windows.
✔ As a rule of thumb, leave your thermostat at around 20 – 22 degrees centigrade. There are always blankets and hot water bottles to help keep you warm too.
✔ Cook together and share shopping trips, it will save fuel and money.
✔ Avoid condensation and mould (and the charges landlords place on such damage) by ventilating your house effectively and ensuring that the property is not too cold for significant periods of time over the winter months. For more guidance see www.higheryork.org/council
✔ Transport – it’s easy to get around York on foot or by bicycle. If you’d prefer to use the bus, plan your journey in advance where possible and get the best deals on tickets. More info: www.itravelyork.info
Hi there!
We’ve just moved in next door.
Our names are:

We’re students in the city. We’ll do our best to be good neighbours, and we’re sure we’ll all get along fine. If there are any problems or you need to talk to us, you can always just pop round, or you can call us on:

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Key contacts

Fill in your key contacts...

Landlord: 
Gas company: 
Electricity: 
Yorkshire Water: 0845 1242 424 
TV company: 
Internet provider: 
Council general enquiries: 01904 551551 
Non-emergency police: 101 

Fill in these cards and post to your new neighbours...
Communities

When you move in, remember... first impressions count.

Be friendly and introduce yourself to your neighbours; they can be a useful source of information you may require later. Whether you introduce yourself personally, or through our postcard, make sure they feel comfortable approaching you should they need to.

Try to be aware of how your behaviour, particularly any noise you make, will affect them. Do they have children? Do they work shifts? Are they elderly? Always let them know if you’re planning a party – you can even invite them along!

Party responsibly – it may be a good idea to warn your neighbours in advance if you are having a party. Holding a party on a Friday or Saturday night is more considerate, as neighbours are less likely to be at work the next day. Try to keep noise to a minimum, take it inside after 22:00hrs, and keep windows and doors closed. Remember to clean up afterwards.

Remember to put your rubbish out on time (and take your bins and boxes back in after). Don’t let your rubbish accumulate. Details of refuse collection dates can be found on the council website www.york.gov.uk

Ensure your house looks well-kept.

Avoid putting posters up in the windows.

If you have a garden why not have a clear up with your housemates to keep it looking tidy?

Register to vote - you can find more info and register online at www.higheryork.org/council. Make sure to do this before the end of April!

You can find out who your local Councillors are and what they’re up to, on the City Council’s website www.higheryork.org/council

If you have an issue from your local community you would like to raise, or if something is being discussed that interests you, you should consider attending your local ward meeting. Don’t be daunted, people are usually very welcoming, and someone from your Students’ Union may be going too. You can find details at www.higheryork.org/council

Be a volunteer!

There are lots of community and voluntary activities taking place all the time for you to get involved in your local area.

Be a Community Rep!

Ask at your Students’ Union for more information on what you can do in your community.

Check out your Union website’s community pages to find out what’s going on.

Got a great landlord? Tell us! If you are lucky enough to have a fantastic landlord, nominate them in the Good Landlord Awards, a scheme designed to reward those who provide great quality accommodation, great value accommodation, or are just a little bit special! More info: www.studentcommunitypartnership.org

Be respectful of your neighbours and support the SSHH! Campaign

Register to vote - you can find more info and register online at www.higheryork.org/council. Make sure to do this before the end of April!
Safety

If you’re going out, remember our three–step checklist:

1 Plan Safe
- Pack your things. Make sure you remember a charged phone, money, attack alarm etc.
- Eating isn’t cheating
- Store useful numbers – have a back-up plan

2 Drink Safe
- Alternate between alcoholic and soft drinks
- Don’t feel under pressure to drink the same as friends – don’t play catch up
- Never leave your drink at risk of being spiked

3 Home Safe
- Travel together
- Stay together
- Hangover SOS – avoid the hangover by ensuring you eat and drink before you go to sleep!

Staying Healthy
Staying healthy during your time at college or university will help ensure you get the most out of your time here and not miss out on anything from being unwell.

www.yorkstudenthealth.org.uk contains information on common student health concerns, including advice on where to go for treatment and support. You can find out how to register with a doctor and what happens at your appointment. There is also guidance on staying healthy and a dedicated section for international students focussed on understanding the UK healthcare system.

Safe & Secure
Students are a prime target for burglars, so household security is very important. To reduce your chance of being burgled, there are a number of steps you can take:

Always lock your doors and windows, even if someone’s in downstairs. Your contents insurance will likely be void if you don’t do this.

Discounted cycle locks may be available from your Students’ Union, just ask.

Never leave cash or valuables such as laptops, tablets, mobiles, MP3 players in sight.

Always lock up your bike, even if it’s in your back garden. Ensure that your bike is secured to an immovable object if possible.

Use a timer for lights and radios when you’re out – this gives the impression that you are in.

Register your bike and other property: www.immobilise.com

Be part of your community by joining a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, keeping you and your property safe. Find out more: www.ourwatch.org.uk

In an emergency, please call 999. If it is not an emergency, you can contact the local North Yorkshire Police on 101

HANDY HINT:
The average burglary will cost you over £1,000. Insurance is far cheaper, starting from £18 per year. ENDSLEIGH.
**Waste**

*You are responsible for putting your rubbish out for the council to collect each week.*

Your landlord should tell you the day and where you should leave it for collection. If they don’t, you could always ask your neighbour.

If you do not have the correct waste bins or recycling bins, please contact the council via [www.york.gov.uk](http://www.york.gov.uk)

Use the Postcode Checker to find out what bins you should put out when via [www.york.gov.uk](http://www.york.gov.uk)

Your rubbish should be presented no later than 7am on the day of collection and no earlier than 7pm the day before.

Try and keep recycling boxes and bins out of sight when they’re not in use.

There are special arrangements for end of year collections - please see [www.york.gov.uk](http://www.york.gov.uk) and look up ‘students’.

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**Support**

*Support is always available despite not living on campus. If you need any further information on any of the topics covered in this guide, or need support if something goes wrong, please don’t hesitate to get in touch.*

**York University Students’ Union**

[www.yusu.org](http://www.yusu.org)

enquiries@yusu.org

01904 323 724

facebook.com/yorkunisu

@yorkunisu

**York St John Students’ Union**

[www.ysjsu.com](http://www.ysjsu.com)

su@yorksj.ac.uk

01904 629 816

facebook.com/ysjsu

@ysjsu

**Askham Bryan College Students’ Union**

01904 772277

[www.askham-bryan.ac.uk/students/student-life](http://www.askham-bryan.ac.uk/students/student-life)

**York College Student Services**

01904 770441

studentservices@yorkcollege.ac.uk

[www.yorkcollege.ac.uk](http://www.yorkcollege.ac.uk)

**Graduate Students’ Association (University of York)**

[www.yorkgsa.org](http://www.yorkgsa.org)

info@yorkgsa.org

01904 322718

Facebook.com/YorkGSA

@GSAYork
### Bills and Utilities
You are responsible for paying utility bills for up to and including the last day of your tenancy. It’s your responsibility to take final meter readings and to inform your service provider that you are moving out and need your final bill.

Remember to cancel any subscriptions you may have such as broadband, cable television or newspaper deliveries. You may be eligible for a refund on your TV licence for the remainder of the year.

### Handing over the keys
Make sure you take an inventory and photos of the house before you leave, in case there are any conflicts regarding the state that the property was left in.

Contact your landlord before you move out to agree when to hand over the keys of the house.

Remember to leave a forwarding address with your landlord. Or alternatively, you can do this directly with royal mail online at [www.royalmail.com](http://www.royalmail.com)

### Waste and recycling
If you have lots of rubbish to dispose of, the council will collect it for a fee or you can take it to a local household waste recycling centre. For details of locations and opening hours, please visit [www.york.gov.uk](http://www.york.gov.uk)

You can offer your unwanted things through Freecycle at York St John University or Big Green Clean at York University.

### Rights of your deposit
Landlords can take money from your deposit to pay for the cost of removing rubbish or for cleaning at the end of your tenancy. However, under Tenancy Deposit Protection Schemes, your landlord has to provide you with details of the insurance scheme your deposit has been placed in, within two weeks of receiving it, in case of disputes. This is a legal requirement. You must claim at the end of your tenancy to get your deposit returned. If you have any issues, please contact your Students’ Union (see the contacts on page 13).

### Your next house
If you’re studying at uni/college and are thinking about moving to a different house next year, the key thing to remember is not to make any snap decisions! Consider who you’ll live with, what you need from a property and what’s available within your price range. Your college/university supports YorProperty - a voluntary accreditation scheme for landlords and agents operating in York. It provides tenants with the confidence that the properties within the scheme meet a consistent standard. More info: [www.yorproperty.co.uk](http://www.yorproperty.co.uk)

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#### Checklist

**Gas:**
On moving out day: [ ]

**Electric:**
On moving out day: [ ]

**Water:**
On moving out day: [ ]

It’s important to check your utility meters before you leave to ensure you’re not incorrectly charged. If you’re not using your internet for a long duration, ask for it to be frozen, or alternatively disconnect until you move elsewhere.
Just moved in?

#MeetYorNeighbour

Want to win dinner at Betty’s?

Tweet #MeetYorNeighbour with a picture of you and your neighbour for a chance to win!