



**University of Brighton**

**US**

**University of Sussex**

# **resident landlord guide**

for landlord occupiers 2012-13





# welcome

Welcome to the joint University of Brighton and University of Sussex guide for resident landlords. We are working together to provide students and landlords with an improved service so that students benefit from greater choice whilst landlords enjoy coverage to over 30,000 students.

The University of Brighton has three accommodation offices which are located on the Moulsecoomb campus in Brighton and Trevin Towers in Eastbourne. A local service is also offered to Hastings landlords from our Hastings campus. The University of Sussex Housing Office is located at Bramber House on their campus at Falmer.

Each office provides help and support to students looking to find accommodation with the aim of providing all our students with good quality private sector properties.

The universities offer landlords the opportunity to advertise their property via an online database, see page 2.

Contact details for all offices can be found on page 9.

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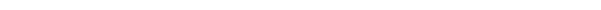
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# about us

## Questions?

Our contact details are on page 9 and we are happy to discuss any questions you may have.

## Why choose us?

The University of Brighton and the University of Sussex have over 30,000 students in Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings - most of whom live in the private sector. The accommodation and housing offices provide help and advice to students who are looking for somewhere to live and to landlords who wish to let to students.

Student expectations of their housing are increasingly high, and these days students demand and expect the highest quality of accommodation and furnishings. Properties also need to offer value for money and deliver high safety standards and security.

This booklet gives guidance on how to register your property with the universities and contains information on letting rooms in your own home.

## Equal opportunities

The University of Brighton and the University of Sussex are committed to providing a fair environment that embodies and promotes equality of opportunity and values the diversity of all members of our community. To reflect this owners must ensure that there is no discrimination in the provision and letting of accommodation and that all tenants are treated respectfully and fairly.

Discrimination on grounds of disability, gender, sexual identity, marital status, family or caring responsibilities, race, colour, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, national origin, nationality, trade union membership and activity, political or religious beliefs, work or study pattern or contractual status may be unlawful as well as representing a breach of university policy.

Failure to respect the universities commitment to equal opportunities may result in owners being removed from the accommodation register.

## Data Protection

Personal data, i.e. any information from which a living person can be identified, is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998 whether it is stored manually or on computer. All personal information provided will be treated strictly in terms of the Act. This means that confidentiality will be respected, and that all appropriate security measures will be taken to prevent unauthorised disclosure. The data which we require is necessary for the proper administration of our relationship.

We will not share information with other parties unless required to by law or unless authorised by the individual themselves.



# studentpad



## The main advantages

Your property can be seen by over 30,000 students

The service is free to owners - there is no charge to register or advertise.

We actively market and encourage students to use the website.

Over the summer, the site receives up to 50,000 hits a month.

We manage and upload the data and photographs for your property.

## What is studentpad?

[www.yourstudentpad.co.uk](http://www.yourstudentpad.co.uk) is an online database of properties available to students at both universities. Students looking for a place to live in the private sector can search for and locate properties on the database.

To list your property on studentpad you will need to register with us. This will enable university students or prospective students to see your property details from wherever they are based. The site is password protected so only those authorised by each university are able to see property details.

## Registering

Registering requires the following:

- 1 If you have registered with us before we will send you a new form each year. If not, download a property registration form from [www.yourstudentpad.co.uk](http://www.yourstudentpad.co.uk) or contact the appropriate accommodation or housing office for the form to be sent to you.

**Please note:** landlords with properties in Brighton & Hove can contact either the University of Brighton Accommodation Office or the University of Sussex Housing Office. Properties listed with either university will be able to be viewed by students at both.

- 2 Return the completed form together with the following:

- a **current landlord/home owner Gas Safety Record**
- b **up to six photographs in digital form**

**Ensure that you sign the Code of Standards declaration on the application form**

When we have received your completed registration form and all the required documentation and are satisfied that your property complies with the Code of Standards (see page 6–8) we will advertise your property on the site.

Please note that it is your responsibility to make sure that applications submitted for listing are complete. We are unable to register properties if documents are missing.

We inspect studentpad properties on a random basis to ensure compliance with the Code of Standards. However if we receive a complaint about a particular property we will need to investigate the issues raised and may wish to inspect the property.

We do not advertise the street number of your property so students will only be able to view properties by making an appointment directly with you or, if you prefer, with the current tenants after seeking their permission.

Your property details will be displayed until we are advised that the property is let or until the gas safe record expires.

## Rent levels

The University of Brighton and the University of Sussex have removed any specific rent guidelines to provide greater choice and flexibility to owners and students. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that the rent reflects the quality, location, amenities and decoration of the property.

# letting a room

## What type of property

Location is very important. Although some students have cars, it is best if the property is near to public transport, either on main bus routes or near railway stations if applicable. Ideally the property needs to be close to good transport providing easy access to campus sites. Accommodation which shares communal facilities with the landlord is useful for first year students and international students who appreciate the home comforts that a family can provide. Only single occupancy rooms will be considered.

As we also have a number of students on exchange programmes we are always interested in hearing from landlords who are willing to let to students on a short-stay basis.

## What should be provided?

Before the room can be advertised on studentpad you will need to sign up to our Code of Standards for residential landlords and provide a current gas safety record for your property, if applicable.

Compliance with the code will ensure that:

- both owner and student enjoy the benefit of good standards of housing management and practice
- misunderstandings and disputes are reduced and promptly resolved when they do occur.

Students are looking for comfortable rooms which are well lit and adequately heated. Most students have their own personal computers which they expect to link into a telephone line, or wireless router for internet use. You will need to decide how you will arrange this and discuss the financial implications with the student.

Whether or not you are providing meals for your students, you should allow them access to your kitchen to prepare refreshments and meals. It is wise to discuss times when students can use your bathroom to avoid inconvenience for both sides during the busy morning period.

You will need to decide whether or not students will have access to other communal areas of your house, such as the lounge and/ or dining room. Adequate cooking facilities and food storage (including a refrigerator) should be provided in the kitchen and washing machines are desirable. We suggest one shelf in a fridge or freezer or one cupboard per student. You should decide on what your arrangements will be for

washing, drying and ironing. Toilet and bathroom facilities should be adequate for the number of students.

A key to your property should be provided, on the understanding that students are also responsible for ensuring that the property is secure. Students are asked to inform the householder if they expect to return late at night or stay out overnight.

### We recommend for each study bedroom

Bed with clean, stain free and firm mattress (replacement mattresses must be new)

Wardrobe (not canvas or plastic)

Mirror - securely fixed to wall

Chest of drawers with adequate storage

Desk or table (minimum size 2.5ft x 3ft) with desk lamp

Upholstered desk chair which is suitable for study use

Book case or wall shelving of an appropriate size

Rubbish bin

Lined curtains are required for all bedrooms (with nets in ground floor rooms). In some instances blinds are suitable. Other suitable coverings are required for all other windows.

At least four electrical plug sockets

## Agreements and payment

### License agreements

The type of agreement applicable to this arrangement is known as an excluded tenancy or licence to occupy. As a landlord, you are agreeing to let someone live in your own home and so you should choose carefully and make sure that both of you have a clear understanding of the rules and courtesies that each expects. We require that all agreements are in writing as this avoids confusion between both parties. We strongly recommend that, even though such agreements are relatively informal, you write down the main points to avoid confusion at a later date.

The agreement should state:

- the full names of both landlord and the occupier
- how much rent is to be paid, when and how often
- if bills are to be included with the rent
- how much notice each side will give to the other if either wants to end the agreement
- what meals and services will be provided, if any
- whether a retainer will be charged for vacation periods
- how much deposit is to be paid and what it could be retained for
- any other house rules which must be clear, unambiguous and non discriminatory.

Both parties should sign and keep a copy. You may also find it useful to take a note of the student's home address for future reference. If your student pays rent weekly you are required by law to provide them with a rent book. These can be obtained from most large stationers.

It is normal to give at least two weeks' notice or a month's notice if your tenant pays rent monthly. If the relationship with your tenant is good, you will want to give him or her as much time as possible to find another home. Even if it is not, you must not use force to evict your tenant.

To let a room in your own home you will need to provide:

- current landlord/home owner Gas Safety Record
- and sign the Code of Standards declaration on the application form.

### Unfair tenancy terms

The Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999 requires landlords to ensure that their agreements are in clear language and not containing any 'unfair terms' ie clauses that impose unfair restrictions, penalties or obligations on the tenant.

We suggest that all landlords take a deposit as a safeguard against damage. It is usual to charge the equivalent of one month's rent where rent is paid monthly or the equivalent of one week's rent where rent is paid weekly. You should never deduct from the deposit to cover 'fair wear and tear'. The tenancy agreement should also outline what the deposit may be used for.

We will investigate any complaints made by students stating that their deposit has been unfairly withheld. If a registered landlord is found to be unfairly withholding deposits, they will be removed from the register. Information showing that an owner is not complying with the Code of Standards is in the public domain and will remain so for three years even if an owner leaves, or is removed from the code.

## Tax and insurance

### Council tax

Students studying full time (21 hours per week or more) for a full academic or full calendar year are not required to pay council tax.

Students must obtain an exemption letter from their school office at the university and send it to the local authority.

### Income tax

Landlords letting rooms in their own homes are allowed to earn a certain amount of rent without paying tax.

Contact your local tax office for more details or visit: [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk).

### Insurance

Landlords are advised to contact their insurance companies before letting to students to ensure that they are covered for student occupants. Not doing so may render policies null and void. Students are advised to provide their own insurance for their personal belongings.

### Furniture and Furnishing (fire safety) Regulations 1988

Owners are responsible for ensuring that all upholstered furniture complies with this legislation. Items covered include beds, headboards, mattresses and bases, sofa beds, futons, settees, armchairs, padded upright chairs, scatter cushions, seat pads and pillows, loose and stretch sofa covers.

## Gas safety

By law, landlords are responsible for ensuring that gas appliances are maintained in good order and checked for safety at least every 12 months. We will need to see a legible copy of the Gas Safety Record which will be copied for our records.

Please note we will not list any property until we have seen a complete copy of the current landlord/home owner gas safety record plus any evidence that any required remedial works have been completed.

HSE Gas Safety Advice Line  
0800 300363 or 0845 345 0055

## Student responsibilities

Your student has a number of responsibilities as part of a tenancy agreement, these include:

- paying the rent on time
- not causing a nuisance to neighbours or other occupants
- using the property in a proper manner and avoiding damaging it
- taking steps to prevent major damage, for example turning off water if pipes they have burst
- securing the property when it is empty
- informing the landlord if any repairs are needed.



# code of standards



Both universities have adopted a Code of Standards for private sector accommodation.

**The purpose of the code is to enable landlords and tenants to agree a set of undertakings about how they wish to do business with one another.**

The criteria in the code have been chosen to reflect a balance of common sense obligations and responsibilities between landlords and tenants and set standards that are achievable without significant expenditure of time and money and without prejudice to their respective legal rights.

Compliance with the code will ensure that:

- both partners enjoy the benefit of good standards of housing management and practice
- misunderstandings and disputes are reduced
- where problems occur they are promptly resolved.

Compliance with the Code of Standards is mandatory for all dwellings advertised on studentpad. The code is actively promoted amongst students searching for housing.

## The Code of Standards

### 1.0 Equal opportunities

The University of Brighton is committed to providing a fair environment that embodies and promotes equality of opportunity and values the diversity of all members of our community. To reflect this, the host must ensure that there is no discrimination in the provision and letting of accommodation and that all students are treated respectfully and fairly. Discrimination on grounds of disability, gender, sexual identity, marital status, family or caring responsibilities, race, colour, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, national origin, nationality, trade union membership and activity, political or religious beliefs, work or study pattern or contractual status may be unlawful as well as representing a breach of university policy.

### 2.0 Data protection

Personal data, i.e. any information from which a living person can be identified, is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998 whether it is stored manually or on computer. All personal information provided will be treated strictly in terms of the Act. This means that confidentiality will be respected, and that all appropriate security measures will be taken to prevent unauthorised disclosure. The data which we require is necessary for the proper administration of our relationship. We will not share information with other parties unless required to by law or unless authorised by the individual themselves.

### **3.0 Prior to letting, the resident landlord will ensure that:**

3.1 Study bedrooms have the following:

- one bed with clean, stain free and firm mattress
- wardrobe
- mirror – securely fixed to wall
- chest of drawers with adequate storage
- desk or table (minimum size 2.5ft x 3ft) with a lamp
- upholstered desk chair which is suitable for study use
- book case or wall shelving;
- rubbish bin
- lined curtains or blinds are required for the bedrooms (with nets in ground floor rooms), and
- at least four electrical plug sockets

3.2 A copy of the current Landlord/Home Owner Gas Safe Record must be available to the student

3.3 All furnishings and furniture are clean, in reasonable condition and comply with the Furniture and Furnishing (fire safety) Regulations 1988.

3.4 Smoke alarms are in place, functioning and if battery operated, the battery is checked regularly and replaced at least annually.

3.5 All exit routes within the property (such as hallways and stairs) are as far as reasonably practical well maintained and free of obstruction.

### **4.0 During the period of the agreement resident landlords will ensure that:**

4.1 Business is pursued in a professional, courteous and diligent manner at all times.

4.2 The student's right to privacy is respected. The resident landlord will not enter the student's bedroom without permission except in a genuine emergency.

4.3 Repairs are carried out punctually and effectively with consideration for the student's privacy.

4.4 The student has a clear understanding of the permitted use of kitchen facilities (washing machine and fridge /freezer for example).

4.5 The student receives instruction on the first day of occupancy on how to operate any domestic appliance they have access to.

4.6 The student receives instruction on how to operate any heating appliance or central heating system on their first day of occupancy. The extent of control that the student has over adjusting heating that affects other parts of the house, must be made clear at the outset.

4.7 All gas appliances are serviced and repaired by Gas Safe Register approved engineers.

4.8 All facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food are well maintained and easy to clean.

4.9 The student has use of an efficient vacuum cleaner.

4.10 The property is maintained free of avoidable and unnecessary hazards (as far as reasonably practicable).

4.11 The student is provided with working keys to the accommodation, which will include a key to the student's room (if it has a lock) and a key to your house or flat. If a key to a bedroom is provided the lock on the door concerned must be thumb release type.

### **5.0 Catering facilities**

5.1 The resident landlord must provide the student with adequate facilities for cooking, dry food storage, refrigeration and washing up. The agreement with the student should specify any restrictions on times when the kitchen will be available and should make it clear exactly what kitchen facilities and equipment the student is entitled to use.

5.2 If accommodation is offered on a catered basis, the resident landlord must provide the student with good quality and nutritious meals. The resident landlord should allow the student access to the kitchen to make drinks and snacks. The agreement with the student should specify any restrictions on times when the kitchen will be unavailable and should make it clear exactly what kitchen facilities and equipment the student is entitled to use.



## 6.0 Damage and deposits

- 6.1 The resident landlord may charge the student a deposit and use it to pay for damage, taking into account fair wear and tear. The deposit charged should not exceed the equivalent of one month's rent.
- 6.2 The resident landlord must provide the student with a receipt to support all deposit deductions.
- 6.3 It is also recommended that the resident landlord ensures that their existing insurance policy covers them for loss and damage and that the insurer concerned is aware that students are in residence. Written receipts must also be issued where requested by the student for any monies demanded. Where transactions are undertaken in cash a written receipt will always be provided.

## 7.0 End of agreement

At the end of the agreement the student will be issued with clear guidelines regarding the standard of cleaning and other arrangements for bringing the agreement to an end so as to avoid misunderstandings at the end of the occupancy.

## 8.0 Management of disputes

Where disputes occur between the resident landlord and the student, reasonableness and promptness in dealing with the issues by both parties is the key to the amicable and effective resolution of problems. The resident landlord undertakes to maintain courteous professional relations with the student during any dispute.

## 9.0 Complaints

- 9.1 Where a complaint is made against the resident landlord or the student, this will be investigated by accommodation staff and wherever possible resolved to the satisfaction of both parties.
- 9.2 In the event that the resident landlord is deemed to be in breach of the code they will be removed from [www.yourstudentpad.co.uk](http://www.yourstudentpad.co.uk) either permanently or for a designated period of time.

# contact us

## University of Brighton

### Brighton Accommodation Office

Residential and Catering Services  
University of Brighton  
The Manor House  
Moulsecoomb Place  
Lewes Road  
Brighton  
BN2 4GA

01273 644124

[accommodation@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@brighton.ac.uk)  
[www.brighton.ac.uk/accommodation](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/accommodation)

### Eastbourne Accommodation Office

Residential and Catering Services  
University of Brighton  
Room G3  
Trevin Towers  
Gaudick Road  
Eastbourne  
BN20 7SP

01273 643848 or 643810

[a.eastbourne@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:a.eastbourne@brighton.ac.uk)  
[www.brighton.ac.uk/accommodation](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/accommodation)

### Hastings Accommodation Office

University of Brighton in Hastings  
Havelock Road  
Hastings  
TN34 1BE  
01273 644631

[hastingsaccommodation@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:hastingsaccommodation@brighton.ac.uk)  
[www.brighton.ac.uk/accommodation](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/accommodation)

## University of Sussex

### Housing Office

Bramber House  
Falmer  
Brighton  
BN1 9QU

01273 678220

[housing@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:housing@sussex.ac.uk)  
[www.sussex.ac.uk/residentialservices](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/residentialservices)

Open 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm  
on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays  
and Fridays. 10am to 4pm on  
Wednesdays.

## Non-university

### Brighton & Hove City Council

Private Sector Housing  
Town Hall  
Norton Road  
Hove  
BN3 3BQ

01273 293156

[psh@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:psh@brighton-hove.gov.uk)  
[www.brighton-hove.gov.uk](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk)

### Eastbourne Borough Council

Town Hall  
Grove Road  
Eastbourne  
BN21 4UG

01323 415362

[environmentalhealth@eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@eastbourne.gov.uk)  
[www.eastbourne.gov.uk](http://www.eastbourne.gov.uk)

## Hastings Borough Council

Town Hall  
Queens Road  
Hastings  
TN34 1QR

0845 2741066

[hbc@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:hbc@hastings.gov.uk)  
[www.hastings.gov.uk](http://www.hastings.gov.uk)

## Lewes District Council

32 High St  
Lewes  
BN7 2LX

01273 471600

[ewesdc@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:ewesdc@lewes.gov.uk)

## National Landlords Association

22-26 Albert Embankment  
London  
SE1 7TJ

020 7840 8900

[info@landlords.org.uk](mailto:info@landlords.org.uk)

## Health and Safety Executive

0845 345 0055

**December 2011:** The University of Brighton and the University of Sussex make every effort to ensure the accuracy of this handbook and will take all reasonable steps to provide the services described within it and in supplementary documentation. It cannot, however, guarantee their provision in the event of circumstances beyond its control (such as lack of demand, changes in government policy or industrial action) but in such an event, will make reasonable effort to provide a suitable alternative. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that they are aware of and comply with any changes in current legislation.

Bottom image page 8: Stuart Robinson, University of Sussex photographer  
All other images: Andy Weekes/University of Brighton

This publication is available in  
alternative formats on request

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