



Support



# A-Z guide

to living in the private sector



ROYAL  
HOLLOWAY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

## A Accommodation Standards

When you rent a room or a house in the private sector your landlord is legally responsible for maintaining your health and safety whilst you are a tenant. A useful checklist for checking accommodation standards can be found in the SU Private Rented Accommodation guide which can be picked up from the SU Advice team.

Ask your landlord to provide a copy of the latest Gas Safety Certificate as they are obliged to keep records of safety checks. Consider buying a carbon monoxide detector if the house doesn't have one. Alternatively, ask your landlord to buy one or contribute towards the cost.

Make sure smoke alarms or fire detectors are working. There are specific fire regulations for a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) so ensure these are met if your house qualifies as an HMO.

If repairs are needed in the house, report them to your landlord or agent as soon as you notice. It is recommended you do this in writing so you have a record of your request and follow up if s/he does not respond appropriately – although for minor or non-urgent repairs don't expect an immediate response. Do not try to withhold rental payments as a method to try to speed things up as you could then find yourself heading towards eviction proceedings.

## B Be a Good Neighbour

This phrase sums up our community liaison policy. It is simple to achieve – introduce yourself to your neighbours when you move in so that you can establish a good relationship with them, and treat them with respect and consideration. If problems arise during the year, talk things through with them and try to sort them out amicably. Read our Be a Good Neighbour guide here: [royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/documents/pdf/communitymatters/beagoodneighbour.pdf](http://royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/documents/pdf/communitymatters/beagoodneighbour.pdf)

## C Community Wellbeing Advisers

Our team of Community Wellbeing Advisers support students living in the local community. They make welcome visits to a number of houses at the start of each academic year and on request throughout the year to give help and advice on welfare and community issues. They are all local members of College staff so they understand and have experience in dealing with the issues that affect students living off-campus. Their contact details and further information about how they can help you can be found at: [royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/welfare/non-residentialsupport/home.aspx](https://royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/welfare/non-residentialsupport/home.aspx)

## D Driving in the local community

Like most organisations, Royal Holloway has signed up to a sustainable transport plan to reduce car use. The College actively encourages cycling by providing ample bike storage and marked cycle routes in the area around the University. It also has strict rules on car use on the main campus and in the local area:

- Students living on the main campus must not bring cars into the local area at all
- Students living in Kingswood may bring a car if they have a permit to park at Kingswood, but they cannot bring their car onto the main campus
- Students living off campus in the local area (not in halls) may bring a car if there is adequate space for them to park at their place of residence and their landlord agrees to it. They are not entitled to park their car on campus or in other local streets
- Students are only eligible to apply for an annual student parking permit that allows them to park on the main campus if they live more than 1.5 miles from the College. Once issued, the permit must be clearly displayed in the vehicle. The College will issue a penalty charge to any car that is parked on campus without displaying a valid student parking permit. For detailed information, see: [royalholloway.ac.uk/iquad/documents/pdf/campuslife/trafficandcarparkingpolicyfinal.pdf](https://royalholloway.ac.uk/iquad/documents/pdf/campuslife/trafficandcarparkingpolicyfinal.pdf)

## E Elections

Taking part in local and national elections is an important way to allow your voice to be heard on issues that will impact you directly both as a student and in later life. Students from the UK, Republic of Ireland and the Commonwealth Countries are able to vote in local and general elections. If you live close to College, you can apply to be registered in this area so that you can vote in elections for local Borough Councillors, County Councillors and the Member of Parliament for Runnymede constituency. The College works closely with the Councillors in this area and we want to ensure your views are well represented at Council level. Further information can be found online at: [runnymede.gov.uk/portal/site/elections/](https://runnymede.gov.uk/portal/site/elections/)

## F Fireworks

It is tempting to let off fireworks at celebrations and parties, but be aware that there are strict regulations controlling their use. Under the Fireworks Regulations 2004, it is an offence to let off fireworks between 11pm and 7am (except until midnight on 5 November and 1am on New Year's Eve, Chinese New Year and Diwali), and if you break the fireworks law you could face a fine of up to £5,000 and six months in prison.

## G GP – make sure you are registered with a Doctor

Don't wait until you need a doctor or medical advice before you register with a surgery. The College's Health Centre is based on campus in Founder's East and you can register as a patient with them between 9.30am and 11.30am on any weekday from Pre-Registration / Welcome Week provided you live in any of the Halls of Residence, Englefield Green, Egham Town, Christchurch Road, Virginia Water, Old Windsor or Windsor. If you live elsewhere, they can advise you of your nearest surgery.

The College's Health Centre can be contacted during working hours on **01784 443131**; the emergency out of hours number is **01753 865773**.

For general health advice, call NHS 111 or visit their website: [www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/Emergencyandurgentcareservices](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/Emergencyandurgentcareservices)

## **H** Happy Household

Before you choose your housemates, think carefully about how you like to live and try to find people who will fit in with this. If you need to study in peace and quiet, it is not a good idea to live with someone who can only study to loud music!

After you move in together, show consideration to your housemates. For example, respect their privacy and don't treat their rooms as an extension of your own. Similarly, let your housemates know in advance that you intend to have guests to stay and make sure the visitors know any house rules. Don't allow anyone to stay in the house for a long period of time, especially if they are not making any financial contribution to the household.

It is also advisable to take time to plan how you want to organise your house. For example, decide if you are going to buy food etc. as a house or be responsible for your own. Also, make sure you all do your fair share of cleaning, washing up and putting out the refuse and recycling each week so that it is not always left to the same person. This can lead to resentment if someone isn't doing their share.

If you have disagreements, you can either accept them or discuss the problems. If you decide to talk things through, try to discuss issues face to face as a group to find an amicable solution. You may be living with your housemates for a long time, and there is little worse than living in a household where you only communicate by notes or emails. Avoid getting into angry discussions on social media / messenger services. Our Community Wellbeing team can help mediate if you feel it would be useful to have independent involvement.

Sharing a house with friends can be one of the best times of your life, so make sure you make the most of it.

## I Insurance and home security

Surrey has one of the lowest crime rates in England and Royal Holloway is among the Top 20 safest Universities in the country (from the Complete University Guide), and has been named the safest place for students to live by StuRents.com. It is, however, still advisable to insure your possessions against damage or theft. It may seem like an unnecessary expense, but if you add up the value of your possessions and consider the cost of replacing them, you should quickly realise that the insurance premium is only a fraction of any claim you could make.

Many companies offer a low cost policy specifically geared towards students; the Students' Union (SU) can advise you and give you an application leaflet. You can also get a quote online from Endsleigh at: **[endsleigh-alpha.azurewebsites.net/personal/student-insurance/](https://endsleigh-alpha.azurewebsites.net/personal/student-insurance/)**

Common sense goes a long way towards safeguarding your property from crimes such as burglary. Make sure you never leave the house unattended while you are moving your possessions in; don't leave windows open if you are going out; don't leave valuable possessions, such as a laptop, on view. Make sure you don't let strangers into the house and ask for ID for anyone who may call e.g. delivery people or meter readers.

If you have any concerns about the security or safety of your room or house, contact your landlord.

You can find additional information about home security at: **[surrey.police.uk/advice/protect-your-home-and-belongings/](https://surrey.police.uk/advice/protect-your-home-and-belongings/)**

## J Jobs

Whether you are looking for a part-time job while at University or thinking about your longer term career progression, the College's Careers Service – located in the Horton Building – offers a wealth of resources.

Employment opportunities are posted on the JobOnline area of the College's Career Service website. The Careers Service team also run job fairs as well as an extensive programme of careers seminars and employer presentations. For more information, visit:

**[royalholloway.ac.uk/careers](http://royalholloway.ac.uk/careers)**

Students should limit the number of hours they work during term-time to avoid any negative impact on their academic studies. Our Regulations say that full-time students should work no more than 20 hours a week in term-time. There are many possibilities for work during the holidays in the local area. Your holidays are a good time to earn money and gain work experience, but you should also consider that you will need to complete work for your course during this time, and you will probably need a break. So it is not advisable to work for the whole of the vacation period.

## **K** Keeping in touch

You'd be amazed how many calls the College gets from anxious family and friends worried because their loved one has not been in contact with them for days, weeks or even months! We can't give them any information, but will ask you to call them to put their minds at rest. Please keep in touch with home - where appropriate - regularly so they don't worry.

It is also advisable to keep in touch with your neighbours whilst you are living off-campus. It will make life easier for you if you can establish a good relationship - they may keep an eye on your house whilst you are away from the area during the holidays, hold a spare key for you or help out in an emergency. You can also determine each other's priorities and sensitivities - so perhaps they will not start up DIY when you are trying to revise and they may be happy for you to have a party to celebrate an occasion.

## L Landlords and accreditation

The Runnymede Accreditation Scheme is run by Runnymede Borough Council and supported by Royal Holloway and the Students' Union, Safer Runnymede, Surrey Police and Surrey Fire and Rescue Services.

It is designed to recognise and promote good quality and well managed private sector accommodation within Runnymede. The scheme requires landlords to maintain a high standard of accommodation for tenants and encourages tenants to behave in a responsible and mature way.

Those involved with this scheme agree it is a good example of best practice for both landlords and tenants.

## M Money and personal finances

Studying at University can put pressure on your finances, but the College has an excellent Financial Welfare and Funding Support team who are there to help and advise you with any financial issues or concerns. They can be contacted on **[financialadvice@royalholloway.ac.uk](mailto:financialadvice@royalholloway.ac.uk)**

You may be eligible to apply for help from our Hardship Funds or for an interest-free loan from the Principal's Loan Fund.

## N Night time travel – SSHH! bus

The Students' Union run a non-residential bus service (the SSHH! Bus) on each of their function nights during term-time from the College to your home, if it is within a three mile radius, and to Egham station. Tickets are maintained at a low cost for Royal Holloway students (slightly higher for non-Royal Holloway students) and you can get an annual pass from the SU reception. The College supports this service and contributes towards the running costs of the bus. For more information, visit: **[www.su.rhul.ac.uk/](http://www.su.rhul.ac.uk/)**. Remember that SSHH! means Silent Students, Happy Homes.



## O Opening Hours of the College back gate

If you live in Egham, make sure you know the opening times of the gate that exits onto the Ripley Springs estate: Monday – Friday the gate opens at 6.45am and at weekends it opens at 8.00am. The gate closes at 11.15 Sunday – Thursday and at 12.45am on Friday and Saturday nights.

Remember that when you leave campus via the back gate, you are entering a residential area and people do not wish to be disturbed. Therefore please make sure you walk through the area quietly and without causing disruption to people who may be sleeping.

Please do not attempt to exit the campus from this area when the gate is locked. You should use the SSHH! bus if it is an SU function night or walk into Egham using the main A30 footpath.

## P Parties and noise

The most common complaint from neighbours in the area surrounding the College is noise nuisance caused by student parties. While we want you to enjoy your time at university, poor relations with your neighbours can cause unnecessary unpleasantness.

We ask that you respect the laws and expectations on noise by making sure there is no excessive noise at any time and no audible noise at night time. If you are planning to have a party, it is better to hold it at the weekend as the majority of people do not have to get up early the next day for work or to do the school run. However, you should not assume that you can have parties every week. Also make sure that you give your neighbours – not just the houses either side – at least a week's notice of a party and try to agree a mutually acceptable end time. For more tips on how to be a good neighbour please visit: [royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/welfare/non-residentialsupport/beagoodneighbour.aspx](http://royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/welfare/non-residentialsupport/beagoodneighbour.aspx)

We work closely with Runnymede Borough Council Environmental Health to resolve issues of noise nuisance either affecting students or being caused by students.

## Q Queries and Support: Support & Advisory Services & Students Union

Royal Holloway has a reputation as a friendly and caring community with dedicated support and advisory services to help you get the most out of your time here.

The College Support & Advisory Services team comprise of Chaplaincy & Faith Support, Community, Wellbeing and Student Outreach, Disability & Dyslexia Services, Financial Welfare and Funding Support, Health Centre, International Student Support and Student Counselling.

The Health Centre is in Founder's East and International Student Support is based in the International Building. The offices of the other sections are based in Founder's West 1st floor and staff can point you in the right direction if you're unsure where to go.

You may also choose to go to the Students' Union for support. The Advice Centre is located in the SU building and also operates an open door policy for students.

## R Rubbish and Recycling

Collection days vary within Egham and Englefield Green, so you will need to check the Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) website to find out which day your bin needs to be put out at the boundary of your property and the collection timetable, see: [runnymede.gov.uk](http://runnymede.gov.uk).

RBC operate a refuse collection and kerbside collection recycling service on alternate weeks. You can get all the information you need about what to recycle on the Recycling hotline on **0800 052 0067**. However, be aware that they have a policy not to collect any refuse that is left outside the supplied wheelie bins or to empty bins that are too full to close in an attempt to encourage residents to minimise the volume of waste produced.

## S Saying sorry!

We realise that the vast majority of students living out in the community do so without any difficulty or tension! However if relationships between students and their neighbours do break down, it can be unpleasant for everyone involved.

We would urge everyone to do their best to maintain good relationships with each other. Noise is the most common cause of nuisance so be prepared to say sorry to those you caused a disturbance to if appropriate.

Our Community Wellbeing Advisers frequently visit houses in the aftermath of a complaint about noise nuisance or a party and often the students admit they can see why a complaint has been lodged and immediately offer to apologise. Simply saying sorry usually resolves any issue so you can all move forward.

We would also urge non-student residents to do the same if they have caused any inconvenience to students. We can also advise you how to make a complaint if you are disturbed by others.

## T TV Licensing

Remember any TV you buy or bring from home is not covered by your parents' or the College's TV licence.

If you live in a private property with other students on a joint tenancy contract you only need one licence for the house; if you are not joint tenants, you each need to apply for your own licence.

If you are found watching TV without a licence, you can face a fine of up to £1,000. For further information visit: [tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/for-your-home/students-aud1/](https://tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/for-your-home/students-aud1/)

## U Utility Bills

You and your housemates should agree when you move in how household bills will be paid/split between you all, as this can be a major source of arguments between students.

Ensure the meters are read when you move into the property, keep records of the readings and notify the utility companies. Where possible, all tenants names should appear on the bills, otherwise one person can end up solely liable for any money owed.

When you vacate the property, once again make sure the meters are read and keep a note of the figures. Tell the relevant companies that you are moving out and ask for a final bill.

## V Volunteering

Community Action Volunteering at Royal Holloway offers you some fantastic opportunities to get involved with volunteering in the local community. Recent projects have included International Kitchen in local schools and youth centres, weekly Sing-Along projects with the elderly, litter tidy and clearance and helping young people to make flags to celebrate the Magna Carta's 800th anniversary.

Volunteering is hugely rewarding and it enhances your transferable skills and experience for employability.

To find out more and to get involved, visit:

**[royalholloway.ac.uk/volunteering](http://royalholloway.ac.uk/volunteering)** . Get Involved!

## **W** Walking home

Even in a very safe county like Surrey, all members of the community should make every effort to minimise the risk to themselves and to others when walking home.

You should try to avoid walking home alone during hours of darkness and use the SSHH! bus service or local taxis instead. Alternatively, walk in a group and stick to well-lit main roads, rather than taking shortcuts – you can collect safer walking maps for the local area from Support & Advisory Services in Founder's West 1st Floor. Don't walk along listening to music or talking on the phone as you need to stay alert. If you share a house, let someone else know when you plan to be home so they can raise an alarm if they become concerned. Consider carrying a personal alarm – you can get one free from Support & Advisory Services or Founder's Security.

Keep both the College Security number (**01784 443063**: available 24 hours) and the Surrey Police number (101) stored in your mobile and let them know of anything suspicious that you see or hear about. If there is an emergency, dial **999**.

Further advice can be found on the College's website at: **[royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/campuslife/personalsafety.aspx](http://royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/campuslife/personalsafety.aspx)**

## W Winter vacation

When leaving your rented property to go home over the Winter break, help avoid break-ins by making sure that the house is secure and valuables aren't left on display. You might also want to consider leaving lights on a timer switch or ask a neighbour to call in and check the house a few times.

We often get a cold snap over this holiday so to stop pipes freezing up think about leaving your heating on for a time each day. It is also worthwhile leaving a contact number – either yours or the landlords – with neighbours so they can contact you in the case of an emergency.

## Y Your rights as a tenant

All new tenancy deposits have to be protected in a government authorised scheme. This ruling applies if a tenancy is an assured shorthold tenancy.

There are currently three authorised schemes in operation:

- The Deposit Protection Service ([www.depositprotection.com](http://www.depositprotection.com))
- My Deposits ([www.mydeposits.co.uk](http://www.mydeposits.co.uk))
- The Tenancy Deposit Scheme ([www.tds.gb.com](http://www.tds.gb.com)).

If a landlord fails to protect a deposit, you can apply as a tenant to the local County Court where the Court can then order the landlord to repay the deposit or protect it in one of the authorised schemes. If the landlord or their agent has not protected the deposit, they can be ordered to repay the tenant up to three times the amount of the deposit.

## Z Zzzz – getting some sleep!

For students this is often the first time living in a house where you are responsible for yourself. However tempting it is to burn the candle at both ends, remember that you do need to get some sleep so you can study effectively and to the best of your ability.

Students often keep different hours to people who have 9-5 jobs, but remember they are entitled to a good night's sleep in advance of their working day.

Often students have a greater tolerance of noise – particularly if you've lived in halls of residence during your first year – and this means that you can be unaware of other people's sensitivities about noise. We often ask students who we hear have made noise through the night and who then sleep through the day what their parents or grandparents would think if they lived next door – it's often a sobering thought!

The most important thing to remember is to make the most of and enjoy your time living with friends whilst at university. For most students, the people you chose to share a house with will become the friends you invite to social events and reunions for years to come, so it is advisable to get things right.

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