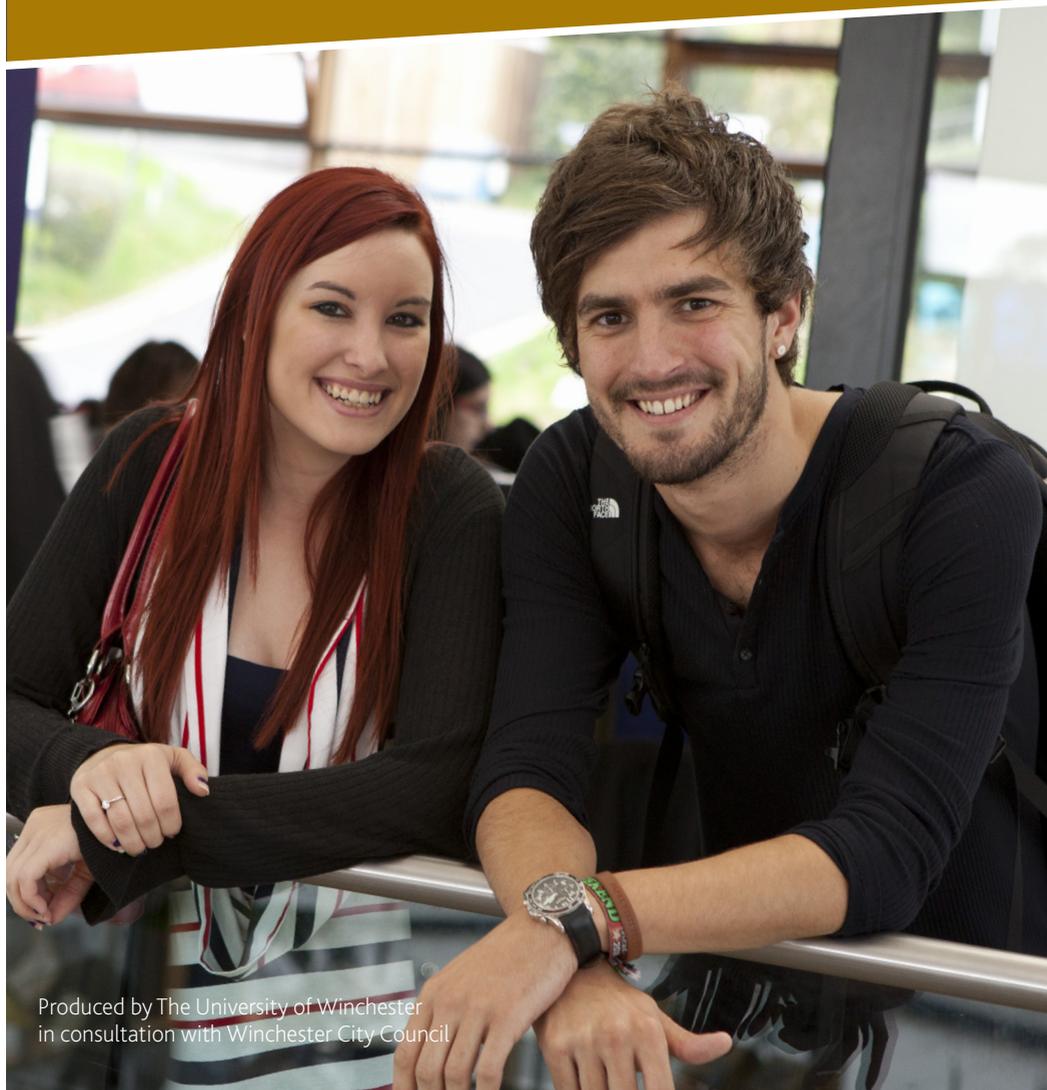


Lodgings: A Guide for Landlords

Produced by The University of Winchester in consultation with Winchester City Council



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This guide is aimed at resident landlords offering lodgings and at students wishing to rent a room in a resident landlord's home. If you are a landlord with self contained properties to rent please refer to the "Guide for student Landlords" produced by The University of Winchester.

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When the term 'landlord' is used in this booklet it is deemed to mean both landlord and landlady.

Every attempt is made to guarantee the accuracy of the information in this booklet but the University can accept no responsibility for any errors, omissions or subsequent changes in legal requirements.

1. Student Housing Services – The University of Winchester

The Student Housing Services office is located on the King Alfred campus of the University of Winchester in Sparkford Road, Winchester. It is open Monday to Friday from 10am to 3pm for counter enquiries and 9am to 5pm for telephone enquiries on (01962) 827533.

The Student Housing Services Department has a dedicated Housing Team for the private sector, who are responsible for running a registration scheme for private sector landlords – The Winchester Student/Landlord Forum; and also for administering the University Managed House scheme.

2. The Winchester Student/Landlord Forum

The Student/Landlord Forum was set up in 2000 after a series of 'Digs meetings' in which the University of Winchester (then King Alfred's College), students and local landlords participated. The aim is to provide recognised and agreed guidelines towards mutual responsibilities of landlords and student tenants in private sector accommodation advertised by the University.

The Student/Landlord Forum is a good opportunity for local landlords to get together to discuss issues that surround renting to students. Meetings are held twice a year and at these meetings you will have the opportunity to meet with other local landlords and representatives from the University and discuss any issues that you may wish to raise. There is also an opportunity for representatives from external agencies to attend, such as the City Council Private Sector and Accreditation Scheme Officers. Representatives from the Student Union are also members of the forum. The scheme has grown into a very successful and beneficial project and there are now over 180 landlords registered with the forum.

The lodgings of landlords who register with the forum are advertised throughout the year to students. The spring term is generally the busiest time, when first year students who will be leaving halls of residence begin to look for accommodation for their second year.

We hold a Housing Advice Day in December which landlords are invited to. We then advertise properties on www.winchesterstudentpad.co.uk from January onwards. The University of Winchester site is managed by our Off Campus Housing Team.

Landlords usually register properties with the Forum between November and January in order for them to be advertised to students after the Christmas Vacation, but properties can be advertised at any time throughout the year. There is a registration fee per property and this covers the pre-tenancy advertising period up until the following January.

Landlords wishing to take lodgers must have a gas safety certificate, undertaken by a Gas Safe Registered engineer (renewed yearly) in order to register with the forum. This is a legal requirement.

To register lodgings with the forum you should complete and return the enclosed registration form together with the registration fee and all relevant certification.

Homestay accommodation is needed for students both short term (a few weeks) and long term (a semester or a year) and for summer schools during the vacation.

If you are interested in providing homestay accommodation please contact:

English Language Teaching Unit
The University of Winchester
Winchester
SO22 4NR
Tel: 01962 827546

3. Winchester City Council Shared Housing Accreditation Scheme

In September 2003, Winchester City Council supported by the University of Winchester, Hampshire Fire Department and Winchester Housing Group launched the Winchester Student Housing Accreditation Scheme. The scheme was originally just aimed at student properties but has since been widened to include other HMO properties let to non-students on a shared basis. It is now known as the Winchester Shared Housing Accreditation Scheme.

This scheme is aimed at landlords who wish to provide shared housing whether it is to students or non-students such as young professionals which is safe, of a good quality and well managed.

For further information about the scheme please contact: 01962 848483

4. Expected Accommodation Standards for Lodgings

Internal Decoration

The internal decoration should be maintained in good order. Floor coverings should be of good condition and fixed securely.

Bedroom space

All bed/study rooms must have at least 70sq feet of floor area. Or 110sq feet if there is no communal area in the property.

Lighting

All bed/study rooms should have windows opening directly to the external walls for light and air.

Ventilation

All bed/study rooms must have adequate ventilation and should be free from dampness including condensation.

Bathroom/Toilet Facilities

Lodgers should have access to adequate bathroom and toilet facilities with hot and cold running water. If the room does not have ensuite facilities, it should be agreed between the landlord and the lodger when the bathroom is available for use.

Kitchen Facilities

If the room is rented on a self catering basis adequate kitchen facilities must be provided including:

- Cupboard and fridge/freezer space for food storage
- Pots and pans and utensils for meal preparation
- Use of cooker and microwave

It should be agreed between the landlord and the lodger when the kitchen is available for use.

If the room is rented on a bed and board basis the timings of meals should be discussed and reasonable notice given by the lodger if they do not require a meal.

The frequency of use of the laundry facilities should also be agreed upon.

Heating

The bed/study room needs to have either a radiator or a portable heater. A gas appliance with an open flu should not be installed in any room used for sleeping.

Security and access

The lodger should be provided with a door key on the understanding that they are responsible for the security of the property. It is considerate for the lodger to inform the landlord if they intend to be out late at night. Window locks should be fitted to all bed/study rooms on the ground floor and to those with vulnerable first floor windows.

It is expected that the landlord should respect the privacy of the lodger and not enter their bed/study room without permission.

Gas Safety

It is a legal requirement for all homeowners renting rooms to have a valid gas certificate.

Gas boilers or gas fires are not acceptable in bed/study rooms.

Electrical Safety

By law the landlord must ensure that the electrical system and any electrical appliances supplied to the lodger are safe to use.

At least two double sockets should be provided in each bed/study room. The lodger is responsible for ensuring these sockets are not overloaded.

5. Furniture and Fittings

Bedrooms	Essential	Desirable	Optional
Single bed	✓		
Mattress in clean condition	✓		
Mattress protector		✓	
Desk (or table) and chair	✓		
Carpet/suitable floor covering	✓		
Curtains/blinds	✓		
Wardrobe	✓		
Chest of Drawers	✓		
Bookcase or shelving		✓	
Easy chair		✓	
Fixed radiator/heater	✓		
Bedside table		✓	
Table lamp		✓	
Towels			✓

Above are recommendations for furniture and fixtures to be provided in bed/study rooms.

All furniture and appliances are required to be in clean condition and in good order. All furniture should be of a good standard and must comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988.

6. Rent and Contracts

A weekly*/monthly rent should be agreed and a written contract signed by both parties. The contract should include the following terms:

- How long the letting will last (e.g. whether it is for a certain number of months or on a week by week basis)
- How much rent is payable and how often
- How much notice each party must give to end the letting
- What is included in the rent (e.g. Meals, laundry, Gas and electricity, use of telephone/ internet)
- Whether a retainer is to be paid during vacation periods

*If the rent is to be paid weekly it is a legal requirement to provide a rent book.

7. Deposits

Deposits are usually taken when contracts are exchanged. A receipt should be given to the tenant clearly stating that funds accepted are held as a deposit. The deposit is generally equivalent to a months rent. It is illegal to charge more than two months rent as a deposit. The landlord must stipulate when the deposit will be returned and list the reasons why it may be withheld.

8. Inventories and other issues

It is advisable to do a full inventory check of the facilities, with both parties present, at the beginning of the let and to take photographs.

It is also a good idea to discuss other issues such as whether overnight guests are allowed and when music can be played, to avoid future friction or misunderstandings.

9. Repairs

Although the Landlord and Tenant act 1985 applies only to self contained tenancies resident landlords are still responsible for ensuring that their home must be fit for habitation and any maintenance issues that affect the let should be dealt with straight away.

A lodger is under a duty to use the property in a "tenant like manner" and will be responsible for repairing any damage caused by their failure to do so.

10. Council Tax

If a lodger only rents a room in a house the landlord will normally be responsible for paying the council tax. If the landlord is receiving a single person discount they must declare that another adult is occupying the property. All full time students are exempt from council tax – but a certificate from their institution of study must be provided to the council to prove this.

11. Insurance

A home owner taking in a lodger needs to check with their insurance company whether this affects their buildings and contents insurance – as sometimes cover will need to be extended.

Tenants are advised to take out insurance for their personal belongings.

12. Landlord/Tenant Relations

(The Honest Broker Scheme)

Any resident landlords who join the Winchester Student/Landlord Forum are expected to let their lodgings in a responsible manner. A student who chooses to live with their landlord should take care to treat their home in a considerate manner.

Where disputes arise between landlords and tenants, the aim should be to reach a swift amicable decision.

As members of the Winchester Student/Landlord Forum, both landlords and tenants are able to make full use of the Honest Broker Scheme operated by the University of Winchester.

Student Housing Services will act as a mediator in any disputes that landlords and tenants are unable to settle. This may mean organising a meeting between both parties, or offering suggestions for a reasonable solution to both parties.

3. Useful websites

The Department of Trade and Industry

www.dti.gov.uk

020 7215 5000

For information on the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988

Gov.UK

www.gov.uk

Website with government services and information

Health and Safety Executive

www.hse.gov.uk

08701 545500

For information on gas safety and electrical safety

Office of Fair Trading

www.of.t.gov.uk

08457 22 44 99

For information on Unfair terms in consumer contracts

Landlord Zone

www.landlordzone.co.uk

0870 765 4420

Useful information and links to services for landlords

Landlord Law

Legal advice for landlords and tenants

www.landlordlaw.co.uk

The University of Winchester

www.winchester.ac.uk

01962 827533 (Student Housing Services)

housing@winchester.ac.uk

For information on the Student Housing at the University of Winchester and to view the online search.

Winchester City Council

www.winchester.gov.uk

01962 840222

Information on the City Council Student Accreditation Scheme and other local housing issues.



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