



Keele  
University

# Information for Landlords



Thank you for your interest in providing accommodation for Keele Students.

Keele University has over 3000 campus bedrooms. However, we are not able to offer accommodation to all our students. We recommend that students look for properties off campus using our website, [www.keelestudentpad.co.uk](http://www.keelestudentpad.co.uk). This website is where we display properties and rooms that have been registered with us.



This booklet is designed to give you some helpful hints and tips as well as covering some of the legal aspects of renting accommodation. However, more information can be found at [www.studentlandlord.com](http://www.studentlandlord.com), [www.gov.uk/browse/housing](http://www.gov.uk/browse/housing) or from your local council.

## **North & Central Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme**

The aim of the North & Central Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme is to improve both the physical and management standards of the private rented sector within the Keele area. This will be accomplished not only through the provision of encouragement, support and incentives but also by actively working with and publicly recognising those landlords who are willing to attain and adhere to good property standards.

The Scheme is a partnership between Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and the North Staffordshire Landlords Association.

For more information please see [www.landlordaccreditation.co.uk](http://www.landlordaccreditation.co.uk) .



## Types of Accommodation

Generally, there are two categories of accommodation required for student housing which are:

### A Private House or Flat

A furnished house or flat for a group of students to rent as a private household. A lounge, kitchen and bathroom are required in the property and the property would be for the sole use of the tenants. There are also families needing accommodation, usually in a two bedoomed furnished house.



The type of contract to use for a private house is An Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement, copies of which can be purchased from good stationers or from [www.studentlandlord.com/tenancyagreement.asp](http://www.studentlandlord.com/tenancyagreement.asp) or the Residential Landlords Association [www.rla.org.uk](http://www.rla.org.uk). This is a legal contract when completed and is binding on both parties. A contract can also be drawn up by a solicitor.

## **A Room in a House with a Resident Owner**

A furnished room can be offered in a house with a family or single landlord. The tenant would require use of kitchen and bathroom facilities. Some students look for a home environment which includes some meals, however the most prefer a self-catering arrangement.

There isn't a formal tenancy agreement available when renting a room out in your own home, but a rent book should be provided in order to keep a record of payments made. It is useful to draw up some form of written agreement which itemises exactly what the student and landlord can expect, and giving details of what the rent covers. Some landlords offer a room on an inclusive fee, which means that the cost of lighting, heating, hot water and cooking is already included in the figure quoted. The other option is to have a basic room rent, and then calculate a share of the service bills as and when they come in. If meals are offered it is preferable if the total rent, including the cost of meals, is quoted in advance.

More information can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/letting-rooms-in-your-home-a-guide-for-resident-landlords/](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letting-rooms-in-your-home-a-guide-for-resident-landlords/)

## **The Best Time to Rent**

We have students looking for off campus accommodation all year. However, the two peak times are in January and August (both for the following September)

## **Rent Payment**

The rent must be decided in advance and quoted on the registration form. Details of whether or not service costs are included in the rent should be specified. Any deposit or retainer should also be specified.

## **Deposit**

Specify the amount per person. This should be paid to the landlord when an agreement has been reached, and should be refunded at the end of the tenancy if everything in the house/room is in order and all bills are paid. Tenancy Deposit Protection (TDP) means that landlords or letting agents must protect tenants deposits through a Government backed tenancy deposit scheme.

Landlords are advised to familiarise themselves with this legislation and its implications. More information on the different schemes can be found at [www.gov.uk/deposit-protection-schemes-and-landlords](http://www.gov.uk/deposit-protection-schemes-and-landlords)

## **Retainer**

Sometimes retainers are charged by landlords when agreements have been made in advance and the tenants want the house held for them during the summer months. Although this is quite common, we do not encourage students to take properties that carry this proviso.



## **What Should be Provided**

### **Furniture**

There are minimum requirements for furnishings in a student group house and attached is a typical inventory of a student house. Additional items are always welcome, especially where kitchen equipment is concerned. All soft furniture must comply with the relevant Fire and Safety Standards and carry a sewn in label indicating compliance.

### **Heating**

It is necessary to provide adequate heating in every room.

### **Kitchen Facilities**

The essentials in a kitchen are a full size cooker and a fridge/freezer large enough to cope with the requirements of the household depending on the number of students in the group. Other kitchen equipment like a microwave, washing machine, dryer and dishwasher, although not essential, are now often expected and can



make a house more appealing. All domestic appliances provided should be listed on the house inventory.

## **Room Size**

There is no maximum room size, but a minimum room size, as laid down by Newcastle Borough Council, is  $10m^2$ , or  $6.5m^2$  if there is a shared sitting room in the house. The room should be large enough to hold the normal bedroom furniture as well as a desk suitable for study, and a chair.

## **Toilet Facilities**

If the WC is within the bathroom of the house, then a second WC and washbasin is required in a house accommodating four or more students.

## **Waste Collection**

Items like a Wheelie Bin and Recycling Box should be provided and respective collection dates given to tenants. Please encourage your tenants to re-cycle waste products wherever possible.



## **Repairs**

When students inform you of any repairs you should let them know when you can complete the repairs and who will be doing the work. If these repairs cannot be made immediately then the students should be informed, preferably in writing. To avoid any misunderstandings it is best to communicate with the students directly. Do not relay messages through a third party, such as the person carrying out the repairs.

If you refuse to carry out essential repairs then your tenants have the right to seek help from the local council. The council can serve a repair notice ensuring that repairs are carried out by a specified date. Failure to comply with notices can lead to works being done in your default with the cost of the works being transferred to the landlord. You will also be liable to prosecution for non-compliance of a notice. If you feel aggrieved by a notice you can generally appeal against it.

- (a) Loan Application & Fee Deadline
- (b) Seller Disclosure Deadline
- (c) Evaluations & Inspections Deadline
- (d) Loan Denial Deadline
- (e) Appraisal Deadline
- (f) Settlement Deadline

**25. OFFER AND TIME FOR ACCEPTANCE**

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## Legal Implications and Safety A-Z

Landlords should make themselves aware of all current legislation with regard to renting property. Further information can be obtained by contacting Newcastle Borough Council or Stoke-on-Trent City Council, the Trading Standards Department of Staffordshire County Council or the local office of the Health and Safety Executive. This is a brief summary of requirements:



## Council Tax

A property where all tenants are full time, registered, students will be exempt from Council Tax.

A list of all full time Keele Students is sent to the Local Council Offices on an annual basis by Keele University to determine properties that are discounted or exempt from Council Tax. If students change their full time status for any reason during the academic year they should contact the Local Council Office as this will probably affect

whether or not council tax is payable. If you receive any correspondence regarding Council Tax that you feel is incorrect you should contact your Local Council Office straight away and refer them to the “Keele list”. If you are asked for a Council Tax Exemption Certificate this can be obtained by the student(s) occupying your property from The Student Reception on Keele University campus.

## **Electrical Certificate**

Keele University requires Periodic Electrical Inspection and Testing Certificates, IEE Wiring Regulation 4 (BS 7671) to be provided for all registered properties.

(If you are a Gas-Elec customer please ensure that you ask for their “Periodic Electrical Installation Report” as their “Basic Electrical Inspection” is not accepted.)

## **Energy Performance Certificate**

Landlords are required to provide an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) when renting out a property. An EPC gives information on the energy efficiency of a building and is valid for 10 years.

Not all property types require an EPC by law. However, to avoid confusion, property details will not be displayed without a valid EPC.



## **Eviction**

If tenants do not leave your property voluntarily after any notice has expired, you must obtain a possession order from the court to recover possession. Evicting a tenant (or any other permitted occupier) other than through court proceedings is a criminal offence.

## **Fire Safety**

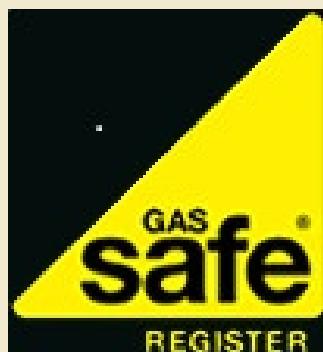
There is a legal requirement that all soft furnishings in a house that is offered for rental should carry a sewn in flame retardant label to conform to the current safety standards. Further details can be obtained from the Trading Standards Department of Staffordshire County Council if in doubt. It is illegal to supply any furniture in a rented property that does not carry the necessary flame retardant label. For further information



on second hand furniture contact the Trading Standards Office on 01782 277839 or see [www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/advice/advice-business-sfsum20.cfm](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/advice/advice-business-sfsum20.cfm)

Fire safety equipment should be provided in each property. Water fire extinguishers should be placed in the hall and landing (not in a kitchen), fire blankets in the kitchen, and fire alarms fitted, (hardwired preferably). Water fire extinguishers should not be placed in a kitchen. Tenants should be made aware of the appropriate equipment to use in the event of a fire, especially in the case of cooker fires. Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are essential for the safety of your tenants. Please ensure that batteries on smoke detectors or battery operated fire alarms are tested regularly and replaced if necessary. Gas and electricity meters should be encased in fire resistant boxes. Owners of larger properties should ensure they comply with fire regulations and have escape/emergency lighting in place.

## Gas Safety



It is a legal requirement that all gas appliances must have an annual safety check by a registered engineer. It is a legal obligation to obtain a certificate every year and provide a copy to the students. Students will be told to ask for the certificate when taking a property and to inform The Student Accommodation Office if the certificate is not available. It

is a legal requirement that gas fitters must be 'Gas Safe Register' engineers [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk). Keele University will not advertise properties without prior sight of an original current gas certificate (this will be returned to you).

## **Harassment**

It is a criminal offence for a landlord to harass an occupier of residential premises.

The definition of harassment varies from situation to situation but may include:

- entering premises without the occupiers consent, going through the occupiers belongings
- withdrawing such services as gas and electricity
- threatening the occupier with, or actually carrying out, violence against them
- withholding a key, which causes intolerable difficulties
- Anti-social behavior towards the occupier
- demanding to carry out excessive repairs
- failing to carry out repairs that the landlord is legally obliged to do

## Housing Health and Safety Rating System

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-guidance-for-landlords-and-property-related-professionals](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-guidance-for-landlords-and-property-related-professionals)

Landlords should be aware that they are required to comply with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. This obliges all landlords to conduct risk assessments across a number of areas to ensure your premises satisfy minimum standards for:

- water, gas and electricity
- personal hygiene
- sanitation and drainage
- food safety
- Ventilation
- space and water heating
- identifying deficiencies and generally addressing hazards



## Houses in Multiple Occupation

This is a house which is occupied by persons who do not form a single household. If you have an Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreement drawn up, agreed and signed by a group of students, then this can be considered a group tenancy (single household). However, individuals booking just one room and the group forming by itself can be considered to be a house in multiple occupation and the rules that apply to this type of house are extensive. Under the Housing Act 1984 Part 2, Local Authorities are required to licence Houses in Multiple Occupation of three or more storeys and five or more occupants. Please contact your local council for more information and advice or see [www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/housing/private-sector-housing/houses-in-multiple-occupation/](http://www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/housing/private-sector-housing/houses-in-multiple-occupation/).



## House Mortgage

If the property you are intending to rent has a mortgage, it may be necessary to check with your mortgage provider before advertising the accommodation, as some providers do not allow properties to be let without their permission.

## **Insurance**

It is necessary to have insurance cover on your property, and advisable to have insurance cover on the contents, fixtures and fittings. Any insurance cover taken out by tenants is only likely to cover their personal belongings.

## **Privacy**

Your tenants are entitled to privacy in their accommodation. This means that you should not go into the house/room without giving advance notice and obtaining their agreement on a mutually convenient time to visit.

## **Security**

It is advisable that you make the property as secure as possible. For more information on how to do this please see [www.staffordshire.police.uk/media/doc\\_rep/leaflets\\_brochures/pdf/guide\\_homesecurity](http://www.staffordshire.police.uk/media/doc_rep/leaflets_brochures/pdf/guide_homesecurity)

## **Tenancy Deposit Protection**

Tenancy Deposit Protection (TDP) provides protection for tenants by preventing landlords and letting agents from unfairly withholding a deposit. The scheme protects all Assured Shorthold Tenancies in England and Wales. Landlords are advised to familiarise themselves with this legislation and its implications.

## Recommended Websites

[www.keele.ac.uk/livingoffcampus/informationforlandlords/](http://www.keele.ac.uk/livingoffcampus/informationforlandlords/)

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

[www.rla.org.uk](http://www.rla.org.uk)

[www.gov.uk/browse/housing/landlords](http://www.gov.uk/browse/housing/landlords)

[www.landlordaccreditation.co.uk](http://www.landlordaccreditation.co.uk)

[www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/advice/advice-business-sfsum20.cfm](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/advice/advice-business-sfsum20.cfm)

[www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/housing/private-sector-housing](http://www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/housing/private-sector-housing)

[www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)

[www.staffordshire.police.uk](http://www.staffordshire.police.uk)

Student Accommodation Office

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