

# Your Guide to...

## LIVING IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY



# LOOKING FOR YOUR NEXT STUDENT HOME? Home Stamp can help



This is your handy guide, produced by Home Stamp and your students' union, to help you understand everything you need to know about living in the local community.

We're located up on the University of Kent campus, in Mandela building. Pop in to see us between 9-5 Monday to Friday, or you can call us on 01227 823214, or email [homestamp@kent.ac.uk](mailto:homestamp@kent.ac.uk).

### What is Home Stamp?

Home Stamp is the official place to go for support in finding private, off-campus accommodation in Canterbury and Broadstairs, with over 1000 registered landlords and letting agents, who must adhere to our Code of Standards.

**Home Stamp is the only accreditation scheme backed by your students' union, university and Canterbury City Council – so you know the service you'll receive is the best out there.**



### GET IN TOUCH WITH OTHERS

Got a spare room in an accredited property? Looking for housemates? Why not try posting on the Home Stamp message board?

**REGISTER FREE ON OUR WEBSITE  
TO RECEIVE PROPERTY ALERTS**

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

### OUR HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR STREET

Living off campus and finding a home can be a daunting experience, whether you've done it before or not. Wherever you are living, you'll become part of a local community, which include people from many backgrounds. To make the transition simpler, you'll find plenty of information on what you can do to have a positive experience in your new home.

# YOUR HOUSING JOURNEY



## SEPTEMBER

Start of term and welcome events.

## OCTOBER

Settling in and making friends.

## NOVEMBER

Don't rush to look for accommodation for next year, house-hunting continues all year! Keep an eye on the Home Stamp website for housing advice and upcoming events.

## FEBRUARY

House-hunting continues! List potential properties and contact landlords/agents to arrange viewings.

## JANUARY

Attend the Housing Fair and Find a Housemate events. Start your search at [homestampkent.co.uk](http://homestampkent.co.uk). Create a student account to receive property alerts & more!

## DECEMBER

If you haven't done so already, you may want to think about who you are going to live with, where and what type of accommodation.

## MARCH

There will still be plenty of properties available. If you have found yours make sure you have read your tenancy contract carefully before signing and sort out who your guarantor will be.

## APRIL

Staying in Canterbury over summer? Home Stamp lists properties available over the summer period.

## MAY

Recycle and discard of any rubbish safely and correctly. Check the website for tips on getting your deposit back.

## JUNE

Move into your summer let.

## AUGUST

Prepare to move into your new place in September.

## JULY

Enjoy the summer!

# REMEMBER!

If you have any concerns about your off-campus accommodation or would like to be referred for free, confidential housing advice please get in touch: [homestamp@kent.ac.uk](mailto:homestamp@kent.ac.uk)

# CHOOSING YOUR HOUSEMATES

When you're picking your housemates, it's easy to live in the moment. You might be tempted to arrange viewings with your friends in halls, on your course, or through the society you're involved with, out of ease, or because everyone else is. But before you jump in to anything, make sure these are the people you really can see yourself living with. The best friends in the world don't necessarily make the best housemates.

**Think about it...** Will they contribute to the washing up? Will they pay their share of the bills on time? Will they be respectful when you're stressed out during exam period? If you're not 100% certain that you want to live with these people, don't do it!

Perhaps you need to find someone who is compatible with **your lifestyle?** Home Stamp hosts annual Find a Housemate events in conjunction with your students' union, where you can meet new people who have shared interests with you. Alternatively, why not send a message to the Home Stamp message board on the website, and you'll be able to start meeting potential housemates right away!

It's important to work out whether you would be **well matched**, so meet up, grab a coffee and get to know them before you make any decisions. The truth is, you probably won't really know a person until you're living together, but it helps to do as much preparation work as you can!

# PROPERTY VIEWING CHECKLIST

To give yourself the best start in your property journey, we've put together a tick list of things to look for on a viewing.

## About the Property

- o Is the property accredited by Home Stamp?
- o Are you fully satisfied with the tenancy agreement?
- o Do you know how long it will take you to commute to and from your University?
- o Can you get to and from a supermarket?

## Outside the Property

- o Is there good street lighting?
- o Are there good transport links?
- o What is the local area like?
- o Quiet or noisy?
- o Is the outside of the property in good repair?
- o Are the doors and windows secure?
- o Are the drains and gutters clear?

## Plumbing

- o Does the shower work properly?
- o Try the taps, do they all work?
- o Do all the sinks drain?
- o Does the toilet flush or leak?

## Utilities

- o If possible, ask the current tenants how much the bills are and if the property is easy to heat.
- o Are bills included in the rent?
- o If so, is there a cap on utility charges and is the cap likely to be exceeded or will the amount cover the full year?
- o Do the electric or gas fires work?
- o Does the property have gas and electricity or just electricity?
- o Is the boiler in good working order?
- o Are there enough plug sockets in each room?
- o Is there internet access and is this included in the rent or paid separately?

## Security

- o Is there a working burglar alarm?
- o Is the house easy to secure?
- o Are the external doors solid?
- o Is there double glazing?
- o Do the external doors have five-lever mortice locks?
- o Do the downstairs windows have locks?

## Furniture

- o Has the property got enough furniture for the number of tenants?
- o Does any of the furniture belong to existing tenants?
- o Do all soft furnishings supply, e.g. sofas and beds, have a fire safety label intact?
- o Is all the furniture in good condition?
- o Do the bedrooms have a bed, desk and appropriate storage space?
- o Does the property have blinds or curtains throughout?
- o Are the carpets in good condition?

## Kitchen

- o Is the kitchen appropriate for the number of tenants?
- o Is there enough fridge/freezer space for the number of tenants?
- o Is the kitchen clean and hygienic?
- o Do the appliances work properly?



## 8 Tips to Being a Top Neighbour

- 1 Introduce yourself to your neighbours
- 2 If you're heading home late at night, be quiet and considerate
- 3 After 11pm, be considerate of the noise you are making and turn down music or TV sets
- 4 Close windows and doors at night so noise doesn't carry
- 5 Position speakers away from adjoining walls
- 6 Go along to community meetings
- 7 Park vehicles safely and within parking restrictions
- 8 Let your neighbours know if you're planning on having a party – speak to them politely and you might be surprised how understanding they are!

## Having a Party?

- \* Make sure you have enough room for everyone
- \* Agree what time it will finish and let your neighbours know
- \* Do your neighbours seem like they'd like to come? Why not invite them?
- \* Keep the party to yourselves! Keep windows closed and don't take it into the street
- \* Clean up afterwards and ask your guests to leave quietly
- \* Don't allow any damage to your property
- \* Only invite people you know and trust!

If you're persistently noisy and disrespectful, your neighbours could report you to your landlord, the University, or the Council, and you could be landed with a hefty £5000 fine. So it really does pay to be considerate!



# MOVING IN CHECKLIST

You've found that perfect property and you and your house-mates are buzzing to move in. There's still plenty to make sure of, so don't take your eye off the ball!

## Deposits

- Your landlord must put your deposit in a tenancy deposit scheme within 30 days.

## Take Meter Readings

- Contact your landlord or letting agent and energy supplier as soon as possible to ensure you're not being charged for the previous occupants' energy usage!

## Gas & Electric

- Contact your landlord or letting agent and energy supplier as soon as possible to ensure you're not being charged for the previous occupants' energy usage!

## Check the Inventory

- It can be time consuming to complete a property inventory, but it's probably one of the most important items on the agenda. You should do it regardless of whether you're asked to, and take pictures of any damage you find. Even if it's minor, if it's not your fault, you shouldn't have to pay for it!

## Appliances

- Make sure you know how to use any included appliances, including the boiler!

## TV License

- Whether you're renting an entire property, or just a room in a shared property, you need to be covered by a valid TV License to watch or record your favourite live shows. Even if you are watching on BBC iPlayer on your tablet or phone, you need to be covered. Visit [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk) for more information.

## Fire Safety

- Keep all exits clear and know your escape routes. Keep keys where everyone can find them (but make sure it's not a place that will attract burglars!) Check your smoke alarms regularly throughout your tenancy to ensure that your home is the safest it can be – if you haven't got any, get in touch with your landlord or letting agent as soon as possible.

## Booking Taxis

When you're ordering taxis to your home address, it can be a signifier that your home is empty, especially if lots of you are heading out at the same time.

It's sometimes worth leaving a light on, or making sure your curtains are drawn, to make sure your house still looks occupied.



# MENINGITIS AND SEPTICAEMIA ARE



## life-threatening



### DO NOT WAIT FOR A RASH

Symptoms can appear in any order or may not appear at all

Someone with meningitis or septicaemia can get a lot worse very quickly. Keep checking them.

**Trust your instincts, get medical help immediately**

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

- FEVER, COLD HANDS AND FEET
- VOMITING
- DROWSY, DIFFICULT TO WAKE
- CONFUSION AND IRRITABILITY
- SEVERE MUSCLE PAIN
- PALE, BLOTCHY SKIN. SPOTS/RASH
- SEVERE HEADACHE
- STIFF NECK
- DISLIKE BRIGHT LIGHTS
- CONVULSIONS/SEIZURES

# Staying Safe

Canterbury and Broadstairs are two of the safest places in the country. Sadly though, everyone runs the risk of becoming a victim of crime, and that can ruin your experience of the city! Take care to look after your property and housemates by taking a few simple steps:



Don't leave valuables on display.



Lock all doors and windows when you go out.



When out, pay attention to your surroundings, travel together in the evening and use well lit paths.



Register your electronic devices free of charge to help the police identify lost and stolen property.



Where possible keep your wheelie bins away from doors and windows

# 999

If you need them, get in touch with your local police; in an emergency, dial 999, or for non-emergencies, call 101



# RUBBISH!

Bins need to be put out at the right time and place, and store them away between collection days to ensure they don't get lost or stolen. Expect to pay £25 - £50 to replace a wheelie bin.

Collection and waste info:

[www.canterbury.gov.uk/bins-recycling/](http://www.canterbury.gov.uk/bins-recycling/)

[www.thanet.gov.uk/your-services/recycling/wheeled-bins/wheeled-bin-collections/](http://www.thanet.gov.uk/your-services/recycling/wheeled-bins/wheeled-bin-collections/)

# Register to vote

Register to vote in the local elections and have your say about key decisions that could affect you. You must register each time you move into a new property. The process to register is simple, and only takes two minutes online

**DID YOU KNOW STUDENTS CAN REGISTER AT BOTH HOME AND TERM TIME ADDRESSES?**

[www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)



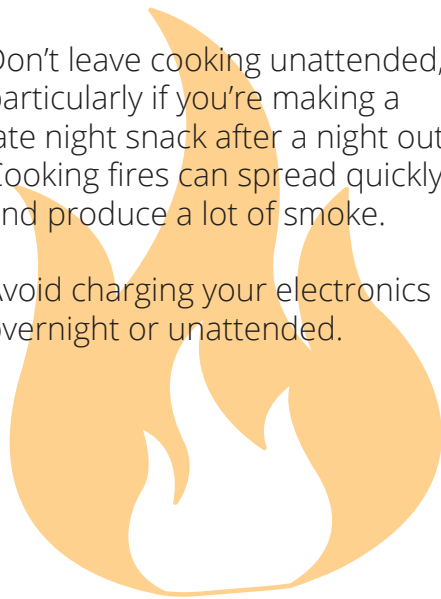
# Be Aware FIRE KILLS

Fire and smoke can cause serious harm to you and your health. You can become disorientated and time is key, so ensure you have working smoke and heat alarms – check them at least once a year, preferably more.

Keep aware of what you are doing – if you use hair straighteners, or a hair dryer, don't put anything on top of them, and leave them to cool in a safe place... don't leave them on your bed! Make sure you know how to use your appliances, such as tumble dryers, and keep up the maintenance of them.

Don't leave cooking unattended, particularly if you're making a late night snack after a night out! Cooking fires can spread quickly and produce a lot of smoke.

Avoid charging your electronics overnight or unattended.



## Doctors and Dentists

Make sure you find a local GP and dentist shortly after you move in and register with them. It's quick and easy to do online – just enter your postcode!

[www.nhs.uk/service-search](http://www.nhs.uk/service-search)

Even if you're already registered, you may have to reregister when you move house, so it's always best to check.

# MOVING OUT CHECKLIST

## Tenancy Agreement

- Check to see if your landlord or letting agent has included an end of tenancy procedure and follow it! Arrange key return as instructed to do so.

## Cleaning

- Most contracts will state that the property must be left in the same condition as it was let, taking into account fair wear and tear. Make sure you give your house a good, thorough clean before you leave. It might also be worth checking any damage and bringing it to your landlord or letting agents attention. Expect to pay for any damage caused; honesty is the best policy!

## Deposit return

- Your deposits should be protected and kept in a tenancy deposit scheme. Find out more about getting your deposit back!

## Unwanted Items

- You can donate any unwanted household items!  
Necessary Furniture  
British Heart Foundation  
Canterbury Foodbank  
Broadstairs Families in Need

## Bills & Contracts

- If you pay for your bills separately, contact the utility companies to make sure these are all paid in full. Let the companies know when you are moving out, so that your name will be removed from the bills for the property. To ensure you only pay for what you have used, take final meter readings.

## TV Licence

- If you have purchased a TV licence you can get a refund for the summer months. For further information and to arrange a refund, visit [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk) or call 0300 790611

## Mail

- If you have mail that comes through to your property, you can contact Royal Mail to have this redirected to your new property or another address. This is particularly important for confidential items such as bank statements.

## CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?



HEADACHES



NAUSEA



DIZZINESS



BREATHLESSNESS



COLLAPSE



LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

# The Legal Stuff

## Deposit Protection Schemes

A tenancy deposit is a returnable payment taken by the landlord or agent, which must be placed in a Government authorised deposit protection scheme. The schemes protect the deposit and offer a means to resolve disputes between landlords/agents and tenants.

### Government authorised schemes

[www.depositprotection.com](http://www.depositprotection.com)  
[www.tds.gb.com](http://www.tds.gb.com)  
[www.mydeposits.co.uk](http://www.mydeposits.co.uk)

### Right to Rent

This is a pre-tenancy check that all landlords/agents (except those that own or manage purpose built or halls type accommodation) should do before a tenancy agreement is offered to you. You will need to supply forms of ID. If this is a problem, your university may issue you with a 'Nomination Agreement Letter'. For more details on what forms of ID can be used please visit [www.gov.uk/check-tenant-right-to-rent-documents/who-to-check](http://www.gov.uk/check-tenant-right-to-rent-documents/who-to-check)



## Did you know...

It is a legal requirement for all letting agents and property managers in England to join one of the 3 Government approved redress schemes; Property Redress Scheme; The Property Ombudsman OR Ombudsman Services Property.

**All letting agents must also clearly publish full details of their fees and charges online and in their offices.**