Brunel University London

UNLOCKING YOUR NEW HOME

Your Off Campus Housing Guide **2020/21**

Find out more:
brunel.ac.uk/lettings
bac@brunel.ac.uk

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WELCOME

Accommodation Centre – Brunel Student Lettings

Welcome to your new home and thank you for choosing Brunel Student Lettings! We look forward to working with you and getting to know you over the course of your stay with us. This guide will provide you with everything you need to know about living off campus. Please read through this booklet thoroughly as it provides an induction to living in your off campus home.

Brunel Student Lettings is part of the Accommodation Centre Team at Brunel University London. The Brunel Student Lettings Team works to provide good quality homes in the private rented sector for Brunel students.

Brunel Student Lettings operates a head lease scheme, in simple terms the University rents properties from private property owners and then, with the owners' consent, rents those properties to Brunel students. When you rent from Brunel Student Lettings the University is your landlord.

Our aim is to help you reach your academic potential and to develop personal skills that will allow you to live and work independently.

We know that moving into off campus housing is a big step, and you can be safe in the knowledge that you will always be supported by a full team of professional services from across the University.

All of our owned properties (Groundsmans Bungalow, Ewelme Cottage, 1 and 1a Church Road) are managed in accordance with the UUK code of practice for student accommodation.
You can find out more about what that means at **universitiesuk.ac.uk**

Brunel Student Lettings aim to offer a home away from home for the students who live in our properties. We hope that each of you have an enjoyable stay in your property!

The Accommodation Centre Team

Meet the Team

Brunel Student Lettings Property Officers

As a resident you will have a dedicated Property Officer who takes overall responsibility for the property you live in and who will assist you with any matters that arises during your stay.

Details of the person who manages your property will be provided when you have moved in.

Brunel Student Accommodation Manager

We have a dedicated campus Accommodation Manager who is responsible for overseeing the Brunel Student Lettings team.

They work closely with you and the landlords shaping the service to suit your needs.

Customer Service Team

This is the team you will speak to regarding your rent, maintenance issues and any support you require. If you have any rent queries, questions about making payments, maintenance or domestic issues, you should get in touch with the Customer Service Advisors.

Brunel Student Lettings staff work closely with the finance and student welfare teams to provide additional support to students, if you're unsure who you should contact let a member of the Customer Service Team know and they will be happy to assist you.

Community Liaison Officer

If you are experiencing any disagreements in the household or disputes with local residents, please contact our Community Liaison Officer to assist you so issues can be investigated thoroughly and resolved quickly and amicably.

The Community Liaison Officer is experienced in dealing with these situations. You can call the Community Liaison Officer on 01895 267770 or email **communityliaison@brunel.ac.uk**

YOUR FIRST DAY

Moving In & Key Collection- BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Your keys will be available for you to collect on the day that your contract begins from 12 noon. Due to Covid-19 social distancing guidelines this year we will operate an appointment system for key collection. Key collection slots are limited and therefore we require as many of you as reasonably possible to nominate a housemate to collect your keys, or your group keys!

Before you book an appointment please discuss within your group who do you wish to nominate to pick up your/your group keys (preferably the first person arriving).

We will have various key collection points in year 2020 therefore appointments are essential, so we could inform you where to collect your keys from. The specific location of key collection point (this will be on Brunel Campus) will be provided during the appointment booking process.

Please give us at least a 48 hours notice- for us to prepare your keys and inform you of the key collection point.

Please read more about arrival information (including Housemate Nomination and Appointment Booking Systems) on our Question and Answer Centre:
https://accominfo.brunel.ac.uk/faq/183777

We look forward meeting you!

Parking

Car parking regulations vary throughout the Hillingdon Borough and at each property. If your property has a driveway or off street parking residents are free to use this.

If you are unsure of the specific arrangements for on street parking near your property please contact Hillingdon Council. University parking conditions apply to Brunel owned property parking.

Insurance

Brunel Student Lettings is working in partnership with Endsleigh, the No.1 student insurance provider and the only provider recommended by the NUS, to provide some cover for the contents inside your property.

You don't need to do anything to activate this cover, but it is important for you to check and ensure that you fully understand the protection provided and whether it is sufficient for your needs.

Visit **endsleigh.co.uk/reviewcover** typing "Brunel Student Lettings" as your accommodation provider to:

- Check your level of cover
- Review key exclusions and limitations
- Check your policy excess
- Learn how to make a claim
- Extend and personalise your cover to protect laptops, phones and other valuables

The Inventory

All Brunel Student Lettings properties are professionally cleaned prior to each new contract commencing. The team also check each property to ensure everything is in order and ready for your contract to begin.
If you arrive at your property and you are unhappy for any reason let us know straight away. While the team work very hard to ensure every stay begins positively if we've missed something we'd like to put it right for you.
The completed check in inventory will be emailed to you within 2 weeks of your contract start date.

The inventory records the condition of the property and all of its contents, it contains photographs and notes of any existing damage – for instance burns on carpets, or marks on walls. Once you receive your copy of the inventory report at the start of your stay please make sure you check this thoroughly and report any discrepancies to the Brunel Student Lettings Team within 48 hours. This can be reported through Fixflo our maintenance reporting website. We will then note or action these issues for you.

Utilities

Council Tax

You are liable for Council Tax during the whole duration of your Tenancy Agreement which you are not exempt from paying. At the start of a contract fully enrolled, full time students at Brunel are required to provide Hillingdon Council, located in Civic Centre, Uxbridge with a Council Tax Exemption Certificate. Please log on to your **eVision** to print the certificate out or contact the Student Centre if you require further assistance.
For more information about Council Tax please go Hillingdon Council website **hillingdon.gov.uk/counciltax**
Please note that if you are a part time student or end your studies earlier than your contract end date you may be liable for council tax.

TV Licensing

If you are intending to watch TV please make sure you set up your TV licence in order to avoid a fine.
If you rent a whole property as a group then usually one TV license should cover the whole property.
Please visit the TV license website for further information at **tvlicensing.co.uk**

Internet

Internet is not provided by the University and you will have to arrange this yourselves. We advise all students to avoid setting up accounts for any longer than the period of the contract.

Set Up Electricity, Gas and Water accounts

Your bills are usually not included within the rent. Unless otherwise specifically stated in your agreement, you will be liable for organising set-up/payment of utility bills (including standing charges for supplies to the property during the entire agreement period).
To pay gas, electricity and water you will need to do the following:

- Take your meter readings on the day you move in: the meter locations are detailed in your inventory.
- For gas and electricity only you can switch supplier – you can find further details of how to do this online.
- Set up accounts in all your names so that you are all equally liable for the bill.

Top Tip

To find a current supplier of your property:

- Use gas supplier online search tool: **findmysupplier.energy/** or call 0870 6081524
- Use electricity supplier online search tool: **energynetworks.org/info/faqs/who-is-my-network-operator.html/** or call 0800 029 4285
- Your water/sewerage service is billed by Affinity Water. You can set up your account online: **affinitywater.co.uk/moving-home**

YOUR FIRST WEEK

Access Issues

What to do if you are locked out

If you lock yourself out of the property and want to regain access outside normal office hours you may seek assistance from the Security Office at Brunel University London; during normal office hours may seek assistance from Accommodation Centre.
Identification must be produced and such requests for assistance will not take priority over other duties of the University Staff.
There will be a charge for this service which will be added to the Resident's University account.

Cleaning

You should clean your home regularly to ensure it's a pleasant place for you to live and because it's a requirement of your contract for you to look after the property. Problems can also arise due to poor care and unhygienic conditions, if you don't want to be sharing your home with pests and vermin keeping it clean is a great start.
Many of our students living together set up a cleaning rota, this way everyone knows what's expected of them and when – this can avoid a lot of arguments down the line!

Cleaning Tips

Vacuuming – A vacuum has been provided so you can keep carpets and flooring clean. Take care of your vacuum by emptying it regularly and not hoovering up large items that could damage it (coins, hairs grips, bottle tops).

What to do if you have lost your keys

If you lose your property keys, please get in touch with a member of the Brunel Student Lettings Team to let us know more details regarding what has happened with your lost keys.

A charge (this will vary depending on key type and whether locks have to be replaced) will be made for the replacement of each door key, to include the labour and parts associated with changing the lock where appropriate.

Please report lost keys via our online Fixflo system at **brunel-student.fixflo.com**.

Top Tip

No one likes a mouldy bathroom. Keep yours mould free by using any provided extractor fans and by ventilating and heating.

Open the window after you've showered, make sure you've got the heating on in winter. If mould does form clean it down using a mould spray or warm soapy water. Contact your Property Officer if it's becoming a problem.

If the vacuum isn't sucking dirt up properly, or doesn't seem to be working as it should do, please check it doesn't need emptying and check the pipework for blockages before contacting the Brunel Student Lettings Team.

Top Tip

Stained carpets are one of the most common things to receive a deposit deduction for. Avoid facing a deposit deduction by cleaning up after any spillages as soon as they occur.

Worktops and tables – Spray and wipe down as you go, or agree and create a cleaning rota.

Cooker – wipe it down after use, old grease and dirt that builds up is harder to remove and can cause damage to the surface of the appliance. A heavy build-up of grease or dirt can also increase the risk of a fire.

Fridges and freezers – It's good practice to go through the fridge every now and again to throw away any forgotten expired items and to clean up after any leaks or spillages.

There is a small drain at the back of the fridge that may become blocked by food and cause water to pool at the bottom of the fridge, make sure you keep this clear. If the freezer is getting very icy, and it's hard to pull the drawers out it's time to defrost it.

Extractor hoods – It's there to keep you 'cool when you cook' it also collects a lot of grease over time. This does pose a fire risk, get into the habit of giving the underside of the extractor hood a clean down regularly.

Bathrooms and toilets – Get into the habit of using a suitable toilet cleaner every week. Heavily stained toilet bowls are a common deposit deduction that the team have to make which are easily avoidable.

Every month clean down any tiled areas and the shower cubicle or bath.

Preventing Condensation Information

'Condensation dampness' is a condition that affects many homes and has probably become the major cause of 'environmental' dampness within a property. Condensation is particularly common in homes which are poorly heated and poorly insulated and usually gets worse in the colder winter months i.e. 'the condensation season'.
Please read for more in PCA Condensation Leaflet **property-care.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/PCA_Condensation_leaflet_2013.pdf.**

Repairs

How to report a repair

Reporting a problem in your home is easy, you don't even have to leave your bedroom as we have an online reporting system for repairs and maintenance – **Fixflo.** We have a commitment to resolve issues quickly and reliably and this online system helps to make the reporting of maintenance quicker and easier for you.

It allows you to upload photos of your repair or maintenance request and we recommend that you do, so when our contractors visit they can bring the right tools and equipment to fix your problem as quickly as possible. You can find the online reporting site at **brunel-student.fixflo.com**

All repairs and issues will need to be reported online before we are able to process them. Unfortunately we are not able to log maintenance issues by phone, email or over the counter unless they are of an emergency nature.

If your repair is an EMERGENCY, you should contact Brunel via phone or in person immediately (or as soon as practically possible):

Office Hours Emergency Support

(Monday – Friday 9am – 4.45pm)

Brunel Student Lettings Team on: 01895 267 900. Do not email through emergency issues.

Out of Hours Emergency Support

Out of Hours Security Office Team on: 01895 255786.

As soon as practically possible and after you have informed Emergency Support Team: you must report all emergency incidents on Fixflo.

Prioritising Repairs

Brunel Student Lettings have a priority system for repairs which is intended as a guide so that all parties have the same understanding of how repairs should be approached.
Inevitably, some repairs are more complex than others so while the initial visit by a contractor will be arranged as soon as practicable, if return visits are required following new parts having been sourced, or for another engineer to carry out work, this is acceptable. We will keep you informed as to who you can expect to visit and when.
Before you let us know about an issue in your property please check the information below to make sure it isn't something that you are responsible for and can easily solve yourself.

As a resident you are responsible for:

- Replacing any light bulbs (for higher light fittings use a stable chair/ladder and ask a housemate to hold it while you carefully replace the bulb)
- Unblocking sinks and drains by using a de-blocking product that you can buy cheaply at the supermarket. If a plunger is provided you should also use this.
- Resetting trip switches if an appliance causes the electrics to trip.
- For the cost of any remedial work that may be required as a result of damage (accidental or purposeful) to the property you live in or furnishings; and for the costs of any contractors visits where it's found that there isn't a fault, or that you could easily have remedied the problem yourself e.g. reset the fuse board if the electrics trip.
- Paying for replacement keys or fobs. If you lose your keys you should visit the Accommodation Centre office where you can request a replacement set of keys. Please note depending on which keys you have lost it may be necessary to change the locks to the property. These charges would be added to your student account.

Examples of emergency repairs:

- A gas or carbon monoxide leak
- A fire
- Electrical fittings in contact with water
- Live or bare electric wiring
- A flood affecting the inside of the property (a burst pipe for instance)
- Burst storage tanks, cylinders or pipes
- Sewage overflowing into the home
- A total boiler breakdown (during winter)
- Failure of heating systems in severe weather and where no alternative is available
- Failure of all lights or all power
- Failure of all communal lighting
- A property in need of securing following a burglary or broken window

If you smell gas or suspect carbon monoxide leak, please contact the National Grid Gas Emergency helpline immediately on 0800 111 999.

Emergency issues should be called through to the Brunel Student Lettings Team on: 01895 267 900; Out of Hours call Security Team on: 01895 255786.

You will need to state that you are a Brunel Student Lettings resident, provide your full address, contact number and details of the problem that you are experiencing.

For example the issue requires immediate attention the member of staff you speak to will arrange for a contractor to visit you.

We have arranged for this Out of Hours service to be in place for emergency use only, Brunel Student Lettings reserve the right to pass costs that are incurred onto residents if the service is misused.

Priority One Repairs (Emergency repairs)

A repair that requires urgent attention, in order to avoid danger to health, risk to the safety of residents, or which has the potential to cause significant damage to the property or residents belongings if not promptly addressed. E.g. boiler's breaking down (particularly in Winter), the gas supply being cut off, a serious leak through a roof or ceiling, a property requiring securing following a break in/attempted break in.
We will aim to have a contractor with you within 24 hours of learning of the problem.

Priority Two Repairs (Urgent repairs)

A repair which is inconvenient and will affect the comfort or convenience of residents, which while not immediately pressing should be dealt with promptly. E.g. a shower requiring work (where there are more than one in the property, or where a bath is available instead), a pest issue, or a small leak through the roof or a crack in a window.
We will aim to have a contractor with you within 5 working days of learning of the problem.

Priority Three Repairs (Non urgent day to day repairs)

Non urgent day to day repairs. E.g. replacing gutters, replacing windows, improvements in the property – fitting a suited lock system, replacing door handles. Remedial works that residents may not request, but that are necessary to ensure the property is well maintained i.e. resealing behind a sink, and so forth.
We will aim to have these issues addressed within 28 days of learning of, or finding, the problem.

Rubbish and Recycling

Check the council website at **hillingdon.gov.uk** to find out when your collection day will be and place the rubbish and recycling out the night before.

Please don't leave black bags out during the rest of the week unless secured in a dustbin as they are likely to be ripped open by foxes – if this happens you will probably have upset neighbours or a visit from the Council Street Enforcement Officer, who could fine you for the offence.
Find out when yours is collected, what you can recycle, and to order replacement recycling and food waste bags at **hillingdon.gov.uk/rubbishandrecycling**

Litter picking within a property compound is resident's responsibility.

Groundsmans House refuse is currently collected by Grundon Waste Disposal from the Sports Pavillion bin. Please don't leave black rubbish bags out unless secured in the Sports Pavillion bin as they are likely to be ripped open by foxes. Recycling should be disposed by leaving the clear recycling bags next to the Sports Pavillion bin.

Post

All post is delivered directly to your property address.

At the end of your agreement you should arrange for mail to be redirected to your new address. This can be done online at **royalmail.com/start-your-redirection**. If you don't redirect your mail you leave yourself vulnerable to identity theft. We will not be able to access the property to collect any mail delivered in error- this includes Amazon deliveries.

Pets

You are not allowed to keep any animal at the property unless it is to assist with a registered disability.
If a disability assistance animal is required you will need to notify the Brunel Student Lettings before signing your agreement, so that we can agree its presence at the property, and check the suitability of the property with the property owner.

Community Living

Neighbours

It's likely, particularly in Hillingdon, that you'll be living in close proximity to a number of other residents. Treat them as you'd like to be treated and everything should go smoothly, you may even make yourself a neighbourly friend or two.

When you move in introduce yourself to your neighbours, or simply say hello when you see them. If your neighbours know you they are more likely to be there for you, if you have any problems they may be able to help.

Neighbours can also be great when it comes to security, there's no-one better placed to keep an eye on you home than someone who lives next door.

Parties – if you've planned a gathering or celebration at your home let your neighbours know. Tell them when the party will be and discuss a time that the noise will stop – the law states that this should no later than 11pm. If you're friendly with your neighbours ask them if they'd like to come?

Consider when you hold parties too. Your schedule may mean a midweek party is a possibility, if you're living next to young families or professionals they're unlikely to appreciate much noise midweek, noise causes more complaints than any issue.

Clean up after yourself – don't leave rubbish outside your front door, if you have a garden keep it clean and free of litter. Do your bit to keep the street clean too.

Though the points above are very simple, they really do make a world of difference. We hope you get on with your neighbours and enjoy being part of the community you have moved into.

Community Liaison Officer

If you are experiencing any disagreements in the household or disputes with local residents, please contact our Community Liaison Officer to assist you so issues can be investigated thoroughly and resolved quickly and amicably.

The Community Liaison Officer is experienced in dealing with these situations. You can call the Community Liaison Officer on 01895 267770 or email **communityliaison@brunel.ac.uk**

Heating & Energy Conservation

Keep your home and yourself healthy by heating your property: the heating system is there for you to use so make sure you do.

Most properties have a boiler which can be set to turn the heating on and off at certain times or which you can instruct, through a thermostat, to keep the property at a constant temperature i.e. 20°C to ensure to remain warm and the property remains in good condition.

In some properties you will see TRV'S (thermostatic radiator valves) on the side of the radiators. This means you can adjust the temperature of each radiator. Please note: these are not present in all properties. Some Brunel Student Lettings properties don't have any gas supply meaning you're more likely to have electric wall heaters. You can generally set these individually by using the controls on the side of the heater. Whatever type of heating system you have in your property as winter approaches and the temperature drops, familiarise yourself with your heating system and start using it.

Energy Conservation

Unless you've got an unlimited budget it's unwise to leave your heating on constantly. Save money and heat your home more greenly:

- Set your thermostat between 18°C–21°C. Turning down your thermostat by 1°C could save you as much as 5–10% off your gas bill. If 21°c feels comfortable, see what 20°C feels like.
- If you're using the timer to heat your home set it so it comes on 15–30 minutes before you get up in the morning so your home is warm when you wake up. Turn the heating off 30 minutes before you leave the house or go to bed, the house will stay warm until you leave or until you go to sleep due to the heat that has already built up.
- Dress for the season. It may sound obvious, but wrap up when it's cold. Turn the thermostat down a degree or two and on your jumper and slippers instead.
- Keep doors closed if you want to keep rooms warmer, it stops the heat escaping so easily.
- Drafts: If you can feel a draught try and stop it – close the letter box protector, make sure the windows are fully shut, close your curtains when it gets dark. If you discover a draught that you can't block let your Property Officer know.
- On a more general note if you're not using it turn it off. Lights, the radio, the TV, laptops, chargers – you name it, if it's plugged in and not in use turn it off.
- Hillingdon Council offer an excellent recycling service please visit the council website at **hillingdon.gov.uk** to find out more.

Inspections

The Brunel Student Lettings Team will inspect your property two to three times a year, if there are problems there may be cause for further visits to be made.

We will always advise you when we've scheduled an inspection at your property, you are welcome to stay in for the inspection however, staff will have keys so the inspection can go ahead if you're out at the time of the visit.

The inspection covers a range of checks to ensure everything in your property is in good working order and that you are taking care of the property as we would expect. In the event that a property is found to be in an unacceptable condition when a member of staff visits a re-inspection will be necessary.

If no improvement has been made when staff return to the property you could face costs for this being put right e.g. the cost of a professional clean if you are not keeping the property clean yourselves.

Your Property Officer will keep the information of your inspection outcome and will provide any other details you may require.

Money Matters

Rent Payments

First rent instalment is due on or by 31 July 2020. Do not wait for an invoice from Brunel Student Finance to make your payment as your Tenancy Agreement is your demand for payment. The total group instalment is on the agreement. If you have not received an invoice by the middle of July and are not sure of your individual instalment amount, please contact us and we will check for you. Future rent instalment dates are 18 October 2020, 7 January 2021 and 28 April 2021 (and 31 July 2021 for those with longer contracts).

Making Rent Payments

The rent that you need to pay during your stay is set out on your contract, the payments are payable termly. If you'd like another copy of your contract please contact the Brunel Student Lettings Team so they can assist you. Payment of rent can be made in the following ways:

- Online at: **brunel.ac.uk/study/online-payment-facilities-for-students**
- Through your **eVision** account once you have been invoiced for your accommodation fees
- By phone: 01895 265264
- Or by bank transfer
- Direct Debit

Missed or Late Payments

Brunel Student Lettings expect residents to make rent payments on time. Your rent schedule outlines the dates rent is due and the amount due at the time. You should make arrangements to ensure you pay your rent when it is due and in order that you don't miss any payments.

Failure to pay your rent on time may result in a late payment charge applied to your account.

Financial Hardship

We understand that sometimes students may suffer financial hardship. It is crucial that you contact
the Student Centre as soon as possible if you find yourself in this position. They can point you in the direction of sources of support who can discuss payment options with you.

We are also aware that students may be dependent on funding from external sources in order to pay accommodation fees and that there can sometimes be delays in when these funds are received.

If this affects your ability to make payments for your accommodation, please email the Student Centre for further advice at **student.centre@brunel.ac.uk**

Property Viewings

During November through to February students will be looking to book their property with Brunel Student lettings – much in the same as you did with us.

Your Property Officer will be in contact with you to agree dates and times or open houses. We would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Student Support & Welfare

The Student Centre is your first point of contact for a wide range of administrative enquiries and support services, here to help you through your student journey from registration to graduation.

The Student Centre has three teams here to help you: Student Centre Advisers, Immigration Team, Student Support and Welfare Team. Student Centre can be contacted by email to **student.centre@brunel.ac.uk** and telephone on 01895 268268.

The Student Support and Welfare Team are available to offer support and guidance on a range of personal, welfare and financial issues.

They are here to help you access support that is right for you; you can make appointments through this team to access the Counselling and Mental Wellbeing Service and Disability and Dyslexia service.

This team also runs Well@Brunel, the University's wellbeing service - so look out for competitions, initiatives and events throughout the year!

The Student Support and Welfare Team can be contacted on 01895 267045 or you can email **studentsupport@brunel.ac.uk**

The End of Your Tenancy

Your options for next year

Staying On

If you'll be continuing your studies for the next academic year and are happy in the property that you're in let us know that you'd like to stay on.

Please note: we'll happily renew your group contract provided you are up to date with your rent and have been looking after the property.
If you need to find a replacement for your group please join our closed facebook group 'Brunel Student Lettings- Find a Housemate'.

Brunel Student Lettings Property Lounge

If you've enjoyed your time with Brunel Student Lettings but fancy a different property for next year, you can visit the Brunel Student Lettings Property Lounge from November.
This will allow you to arrange viewings of potential property's for the following year and speak with the team for any advice. The Property Lounge will be located in the Atrium in the Hamilton Centre making it easy for you to find us! We will let you know as soon as it is launched and look forward to helping you secure your property with us.

What do I need to do before I leave?

When you leave your property, all we ask is that you leave your house in the condition in which you found it. Please note that any additional cleaning we may have to carry out could incur a charge so make sure to clean up before you leave! You can't leave any belongings behind after the point of departure. Any items found in the property (including external areas) will be disposed of by the cleaning teams. We can't keep your belongings for you to collect later as we simply don't have the space to do so.
You'll need to take time to empty out your kitchen cupboards, fridge and freezer and clean up any residual mess in your kitchen and on the appliances. You must vacate your property and return keys by no later than 10am on the end date of your contract.

Check out report

Once you have handed back your keys to the Brunel Student Lettings Team, we will arrange an inspection of the property and its contents and check them against the inventory.

We will check and note the condition the property has been left in and look out for anything that has changed since the inventory for your property was produced. This report will be passed to the Property Officer who instructs the Finance Team to return your deposit, or will confirm what charges have
been made.

Deposit Deductions

We'd prefer that you leave your property well and that no deposit deductions have to be made as it puts a bit of a dampener on what we hope will have been an enjoyable stay for you. The most common deposit deductions we have to make – and therefore the things you should make sure you pay attention to are as follows:

- A poor cleaning effort generally
- The oven having not been cleaned – this includes the oven door
- Freezers not having been defrosted
- Belongings being left behind (food, furniture, clothes, rubbish, toiletries – if it wasn't there at the beginning it shouldn't be there at the end)
- Stained mattress
- Stained toilet
- Rubbish in and around the property
- Replace light bulbs that aren't working (this is your responsibility)
- Carpet burns or stains
- Keys not being returned. If you don't return your keys there are security implications we have to consider. In order to ensure the property is secure for future residents, if you fail to return your keys we will need to have the locks replaced and new keys cut for all the residents and staff sets. You will be charged for the total cost of this.

If damage has been found in your bedroom you will be individually responsible for the cost of that damage being put right. It will not affect the deposit return of your housemates, but will likely delay your own.

If damage has been found in a communal area of a property, where possible we will always work to pass the cost of putting the damage right onto the student who was responsible for it.

We may need your help in working out who caused the damage. In the event that this cannot be determined the cost of the work that is required will be split equally between all residents.

Where deposit deductions have to be made in order that damage to a property can be addressed deposit returns are likely to be delayed.

This is while we arrange for the necessary work to be undertaken, and then while we wait to receive an invoice for that work. If your deposit return is going to be delayed for this reason a member of the Brunel Student Lettings Team will write to you and will keep you updated.

Deposit Returns

Deposits will usually be returned within 28 days of your contract ending. Your refund will be returned to you by cheque if you made your payments by cash or by cheque. If you paid by credit/debit card the refund will be returned to the card the payments were made from. If payment was made by bank transfer then the refund will be made to the same account.

If a relative or friend has paid the money to the Cash Office then the refund will be returned to the payee. Delays may be experienced should damages have to be addressed at your property. If this is the case the Brunel Student Lettings Team will be in touch to provide more details and to let you know why there will be a delay.

If you owe rent come the end of your contract the University will use your deposit to offset any outstanding balance on your account.

If your deposit is insufficient to meet the costs reasonably incurred by Brunel Student Lettings in connection to any breach of your contract you will pay the University promptly, on demand, such further sums as shall be reasonably required.

Complaints Procedure

While we'll try to make sure that everything runs smoothly for you, there might be points throughout the year where you need to let us know about something you're unhappy with.

The first step is to let us know of the problem. We'll try to resolve the issue quickly and with minimal disruption to you. Our Customer Service Team or Property Officer is often the best place to start; speak to the staff and they can point you in the right direction.

If you've spoken to us and feel that we've let you down by not resolving your issue, you can raise a formal complaint.

For our complaints procedure, please visit **brunel.ac.uk/life/accommodation/contact-us/home**

SAFETY & SECURITY

Electrical Safety

All the electrical wiring in University managed properties has been checked and passed by a qualified electrician. However, here are some simple rules to ensure the safe use of your electrical appliances:

- Remove plugs carefully – not by pulling the flex
- Use only good quality plugs that conform to British Standards.
- Do not plug a two-pin plug into a socket without a three-pin adapter which confirms to British Standards
- Never run an electrical appliance from a light fitting
- If you need to use an extension cable, do not use a longer one than you need.
- Do not keep extension cables coiled, as they may overheat
- Do not run cables (including extension cables) under carpets or rugs as the protective covering on the cable can be damaged
- Do not overload wall sockets. If you need more plug sockets use 4-gang socket adaptors with a single plug and not the 2 or 3 plug-in, box-type adaptors
- Do not exceed the recommended bulb wattage for light fittings
- Do not put too high a fuse in plugs
- Never use mains powered equipment in bathrooms or near water
- Do not leave electrical appliances switched on or on standby when you are not using them – electric blankets are a common cause of fires.
- Do not touch or use any electrical items that you think are unsafe. Report them to your Property Officer via the online maintenance reporting system Fixflo.

Other useful information is available from the Electrical Safety Council at **electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/product-safety/**

Chargers, batteries and fire safety information at **london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/electrical-items/batteries-and-chargers/**

Top Tip

The main switch for your electricity supply is situated near the meter and fuse box, or in the case of a modern consumer unit it is on the unit itself and should be clearly marked.

Make sure you can access your fuse box and meter easily. Keep a torch nearby, so you can see what you are doing if the lights go out!

Fire Safety

Fires are rare but can quickly have a devastating impact. Fire safety is everyone's responsibility, and you need to make sure you read the information in your welcome pack and contract to make yourself aware of what your responsibilities are in relation to this.

To try and make this straightforward we have highlighted some of the day-to-day things you need to remember:

- Fire doors must be kept shut – this includes any door with a Fire Door sign, and your bedroom door. Rather than propping your bedroom door open and shouting at someone across the corridor it's much more social to all meet in the kitchen or common room together (just remember to close the door behind you).
- Practice evacuations are a necessity in our University owned properties (Groundsmans Bungalow, Ewelme Cottage and 1 and 1a Church Road) – These take place in the first semester and are a requirement of living in these properties. We know that these can feel like an inconvenience but please cooperate during practice evacuations; this will honestly make them quicker and easier for everyone.
- Fire safety equipment is there for emergency use only - it is there to protect you so please don't break or misuse it. Intentionally misusing or tampering with any fire safety equipment e.g. covering smoke detectors or unnecessarily using fire blankets is actually a criminal offence as you are putting yourself and others at serious risk by doing so.

Fire Safety Equipment

Within your home you'll find a fire blanket wall-mounted in the kitchen, there will be a fire door that operates on a self-closing device on the kitchen (in larger properties on bedrooms and other doors too), as well as a mains hard wired or zoned fire alarm system. These measures are in place to protect you in the event that a fire breaks out in your home.

Help us to ensure that you remain safe from the risk of a fire by observing the following:

- Do not prop open fire doors. This can damage doors by preventing them from closing properly, when they aren't propped open, it also defeats the point of the doors being in place. Fire doors provide 30 minutes of protection to a room or escape route if a fire breaks out. If it's propped open it provides none.
- Test your alarms. Unless you have a zoned fire alarm panel in your property, get into the habit of testing the alarms (both fire/smoke and carbon monoxide) on a monthly basis and reporting any problems to the Brunel Student Lettings Team. Simply press the test/reset button on one of the alarms. Use a chair (without wheels), or a stepladder to do this safely.
- Keep the escape route clear. If a fire were to break out in your home you need to be able to get out quickly and safely. Don't store bikes in the hallway by the front door, don't keep belongings piled up in the hallway: keep it clear so you can get out easily should you need to.
- Familiarise yourself with the In The Event of a Fire notice which is included in your welcome pack. This notice tells you what to do if you discover a fire, if you hear the alarms go off but there is no fire, and how to deal with false alarms if there is no fire but the alarms are sounding.
- Smoking. Please note that all of our properties are strictly non - smoking. If you are found to be smoking indoors anywhere in house you will face disciplinary action and a potential fine. You may additionally be required to attend a fire awareness course. So smokers, it is outside only please for smoking.
- Don't leave anything burning – incense, candles, your dinner. If it's on a hob or has been lit issuing a flame don't leave the room if it's still on.
- Cooking and kitchen equipment – nearly all student fires start in the kitchen from cooking, or heated appliances. Don't leave your cooking unattended, don't obstruct the hob, and do not use kitchen appliances in your bedroom.
- Don't overload plug sockets, stick to one plug per socket. If you don't think your room has enough plug sockets let us know. Be careful with trailing wires and don't leave electrical items charging on soft furnishing i.e. your laptop on your bed.
- The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended in 1989, 1993 and 2010) set levels of fire resistance for domestic upholstered furniture, furnishings and other products containing upholstery, Essentially, the furniture provided in your property doesn't pose a risk to you in the event of a fire as it meets the required levels of fire resistance that the above act sets out. Please don't introduce furniture into the property if it might not be of the required resistance. If you feel something is missing in your room that should be added contact the Brunel Student Lettings Team who can look into this for you.

Gas Leak

If you have a gas leak or you can smell gas you must immediately :
- **Turn off** the gas at the Emergency Control Valve by the gas meter
- **Extinguish** all sources of ignition
- **Do not** smoke or operate mobile telephones
- Ensure no one **operates** electrical lights or power switched (on or off)
- **Ventilate** the building(s) by opening doors and windows
- **Evacuate** the premises and ensure access can be made
- **Report** the gas escape to the National Gas Emergency Service Call Centre on 0800 111 999
- **Do not re-enter** the premises until it has been made safe by them
- **Immediately** move to a location in fresh air
- Do a **head count** to be sure all persons are accounted for

Carbon Monoxide Leak

If you have a carbon monoxide detector and it goes into alarm or if anyone is experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning: headaches, dizziness, vomiting etc. you must immediately;

- Follow the above advice for a Gas Leak
- If you have experienced the symptoms then seek immediate medical attention/advice

As soon as practically possible after the gas or carbon monoxide incidents you must report this issue on Fixflo and by telephone to Brunel University London Security Office - 01895 255 786.

Health Emergencies

For a latest Coronavirus information for the Brunel community please check online at **brunel.ac.uk/about/coronavirus-information-for-the-brunel-community.**

For a serious life threatening emergencies such as chest pains, abdominal pains etc. please call 999 or go straight to Hillingdon Hospital.

If you need a doctor and the Medical Centre is closed and you require help please call 111. They will help and advise you on what you need to do.

There is a Medical Centre based at Brunel Campus, adjacent to Saltash Hall. To register online please visit at **campusdoctor.co.uk/brunel**. To book a non-urgent appointment with your GP at Brunel Medical Centre call 01895 266904.

Fire

In an event of fire please follow the Fire Evacuation Procedure displayed in this property and any signs available to evacuate the building. You must immediately evacuate the property and then contact the emergency services to report the fire, by calling 999. Following this you must contact to inform Brunel University Security Office.

Top Tip

If you hear an alarm beeping intermittently it's likely that the back-up battery needs replacing. Hard wired alarms contain a back-up battery so the system remains up and running if there is a power failure in your home.

You should be able to easily replace the battery yourself. Check what the battery type is, buy a new one, remove the old battery and fit the replacement. If you have problems during this contact your Property Officer.

Legionnaires Disease

Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia caused by the inhalation of small droplets of contaminated water containing Legionella. All man-made hot and cold water systems are likely to provide an environment where Legionella can grow.

Prevention

- Hot water systems should be in working order and hot water should remain 'hot'
- Cold water should remain 'cold'
- Water in the household system(s) should be kept circulated

As a resident you should:

- Not interfere with the settings on your boiler or water heating system. The hot water should be set so that water is heated to 60°C.
- Make sure cold water coming out of cold outlets is cold
- Flush through any showers in the property at least two minutes every week (especially in guest rooms where they may not be used frequently). Keep clear of the water flow whilst doing this.
- Clean the shower heads periodically, descale and disinfect it. This should be done at least every six months

Please make sure you contact the Brunel Student Lettings Team as soon as possible if:

- The cold water is still running warm after you have initially run off any water which may have accumulated in the pipes. It should not be above 20°C.
- There are problems with water flow, debris or discolouration in the water.
- The boiler or hot water tank is not working properly, particularly if the water is not coming out of the taps at a sufficiently high temperature. It should come out at a temperature of 50°C after it has run for a minute at the latest

If you plan to leave the property empty for any extended period, please make sure that when you return you flush the water system(s) through by running all taps, showerheads etc. for 2 minutes.

The property owner has a legal responsibility to take precautions to prevent the Legionella bacteria being present in hot or cold water systems and as required we request that they undertake a risk assessment to ensure that they meet this responsibility. However, as a resident you also have an important part to play by taking the simple steps above.

Personal Safety & Security

If you are immediately concerned about your safety and/or you suspect there is an intruder in the property please call 999.

Please notify Brunel University London Security Office immediately of any Safety and Security incidents. It is in your interests and is your responsibility to take simple steps to ensure your home is secure while you are a resident of it.

- On leaving the property always make sure all windows and doors are securely locked.
- If you have a burglar alarm use it.
- If you're out a lot and the property may appear obviously empty, invest in some timers so you can have lamps turn on automatically at night, or a radio come on. A property that appears occupied is a less likely target for opportunistic burglars.

Keep valuables out of sight when you're out. If you're going home or elsewhere for a period take your valuables with you, or put them away and ensure they aren't visible.

USEFUL INFORMATION

FAQ - Your Contract

If you haven't already, it's really important that you read through the contract. These are the set of rules and the code of conduct we expect you to follow whilst living here, to enable everyone to enjoy their time in our properties.

Most of the rules are common sense but understanding what is and what isn't allowed can help you avoid getting on the wrong side of these during your stay. Below are four of the top contract questions we are asked:

Can I sub-let my room?

The contract that you have made with us is legally binding, relates to you and is non-transferable.

If you are found to have sub-let your room to someone else, the person sub-letting the room may be asked to leave and you may remain liable for the rental payments and further disciplinary action could be taken.

Can I have guests?

You are very welcome to have guests stay with you in property, it's a lot of fun to show a friend around your new home and area!

Please note that they can only stay a maximum of three nights and you will need to make sure that your guests do not break any of the conditions of your contract e.g. smoking as they will need to follow them as well.

The only thing to remember is that your property is not designed to house additional people for long, 3 days is the maximum that we will allow. Please be respectful of your house mates, your guest is your responsibility!

Can I loan my key to a friend?

The simple answer is no! The security of you and your housemates is very important and the keys to your property should not be shared with anybody.

Can I end my contract early?

Although you've signed a fixed term agreement with us we appreciate your circumstances may change sometimes and are here to help if you're unhappy or if you want to explore the possibility of moving out early. While it's important that you're aware that in the majority of cases we can't just end your contract early for you, we will try and help out in a number of ways.

We offer our residents the chance to:

Swap Rooms: if you're unhappy in your property because you're not getting on with your housemates, or because you're finding the environment a distraction from your studies we'll offer you the chance to view other properties and rooms that you're eligible for.

If you'd like to know what rooms you might consider swapping into get in touch with your Property Officer so they can help.

Please note: this is subject to availability.

Reassign a contract: If you want to leave your property early we'll help you to try and find a suitable student to take over the rest of your contract. If you manage to find a suitable student you can then be released from your obligations to us and from your responsibility for your room.

In our experience the residents who find a suitable student to take over their contract through a reassignment are the students who are being most proactive in terms of marketing their room.

We'll give you advice as to how you can maximise the exposure of your room to give yourself the best chance of finding a replacement by using our Facebook page – Brunel Student Lettings Find a Housemate.

Please note: While we are happy to try and help you we cannot guarantee that a suitable student will come along to take over your contract. While we will advise you and assist you, it is ultimately your responsibility to find a replacement student. If you don't manage to do so you will remain liable for your room and rent until the contract officially ends.

You can find more of our questions and answers at **accominfo.brunel.ac.uk**

Trouble shooting

Instruction Manuals

Not sure how the washing settings operate? How to use the boiler and heating controls?

Brunel Student Lettings can provide manuals for the appliances in your home upon request please get in contact with the Brunel Student Lettings Team if you require more information.

Troubleshooting Guides

There are also troubleshooting guides available on the Brunel Student Lettings website. Often when you encounter problems in your home, you can make some basic checks and easily resolve the problem yourself i.e. if the power suddenly goes off a switch may have tripped on your fuse board – you can easily reset this to restore the power to the property.

Online at **brunel-student.fixflo.com** you can find guides to help with the following – or you can contact your Property Officer for more details:

- No Heating or hot water
- Loss of electricity
- Condensation and mould
- Vacuum cleaner problems
- Blocked drains
- Defrosting your freezer

USEFUL CONTACTS & SERVICES

Brunel University London

Brunel Student Lettings – The Accommodation Centre	T: 01895 267 900 E: bac@brunel.ac.uk W: brunel.ac.uk/lettings Opening Hours: 9am until 4:45pm Monday to Friday
Out of office hours	Brunel University Security Team T: 01895 255786
Student Centre	T: 01895 268268 E: student.centre@brunel.ac.uk W: brunel.ac.uk/life/supporting-you
Union of Brunel Students	T: 01895 269 269 E: union.reception@brunel.ac.uk W: brunelstudents.com

To Report a Crime, Medical Emergency or Fire

Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade (Emergency)	999 (24 hours)
Police (Non-Emergency)	101 (24 hours)
Suspected Gas or Carbon Monoxide Leaks – National Grid	T: 0800 111 999 (24 hours)

Welfare Services

Samaritans	T: 116 123 (Free Number – 24 hours) W: samartians.org
Nightline	T: 020 7631 0101 (6pm – 8am during term time, students there for students) W: nightline.org.uk Text: 07717 989 900

Other Services

Gas Meter Helpline	T: 0870 608 1524
Electricity Meter Helpline	T: 0845 604 5467 W: ukpowernetworks.co.uk/internet/en/help-and-advice/who-is-my-supplier/
Affinity Water	T: 0345 357 2402 W: affinitywater.co.uk/moving-home
You.Gov (Government Website)	gov.uk
Find a Local Doctors Surgery:	nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4
Find a Local Dentists Surgery:	nhs.uk/Service-Search/Dentists/LocationSearch/3
Find A&E (Accident and Emergency) Services:	nhs.uk/Service-Search/Accident%20and%20emergency%20services/LocationSearch/428
Endsleigh – Contents Insurance	T: 0333 234 1688 (Claims Team) T: 0333 234 1555 (For questions) W: endsleigh.co.uk/reviewcover/

Accommodation Centre

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Brunel University London

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