



**A-Z guide  
to living in the private sector**

Royal Holloway  
University of London



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## Accommodation standards

When you rent a room or a house in the private sector your landlord is legally responsible for maintaining your health and safety whilst you are a tenant. A useful checklist for checking accommodation standards can be found online at: **[www.accommodationforstudents.com/info/housing\\_standards.asp](http://www.accommodationforstudents.com/info/housing_standards.asp)**

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

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

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

## Be a good neighbour

This phrase sums up our community liaison policy. It is simple to achieve: introduce yourself to your neighbours when you move in and establish a good relationship. If problems arise try to talk things through with them and sort it out amicably. For useful information, visit:

**[www.rhul.ac.uk/for-students/goodneighbour.html](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/for-students/goodneighbour.html)**

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## Cars

Like most organisations Royal Holloway has signed up to a sustainable transport plan to reduce car use. The College actively encourages cycling and has strict rules concerning car use on the main campus and in the local area:

- students who live on the main campus must not bring cars into the local area at all
- students living at a hall off the main campus (with parking) may bring a car if they have a permit to park at the hall, but cannot bring their car onto the main campus
- students living out of halls, but in the local area, may bring a car if there is adequate space for them to park at their place of residence and if their landlord is in agreement; they are not entitled to park their car on campus or in other local streets

For detailed information, visit:

**[www.rhul.ac.uk/advice/cars/](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/advice/cars/)**

## Deputy Community Liaison Officers

In September 2007 four Deputy Community Liaison Officers were appointed by the College to visit new student households and help sort out any settling in problems. They are all local members of College staff and will be pleased to help you throughout your time living in the local community as a student. Their contact details, and further information on how they can help and advise you, can be found online at:

**[www.rhul.ac.uk/for-students/localsupport/](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/for-students/localsupport/)**

## Elections

Taking part in local and national elections is an important way to allow your voice to be heard on the important decisions that will have a direct impact on you both as a student and in later life. You can apply to be registered in this area so you can vote in elections for local Borough Councillors, County Councillors and the Member of Parliament for Runnymede constituency. The College works

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closely with the councillors in this area. Further information can be found online at:

**[www.runnymede.gov.uk/portal/site/elections/](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk/portal/site/elections/)**

## Fireworks

Many people are tempted to let off fireworks to celebrate, or at parties, but remember if you break the fireworks law you could face a fine of up to £5,000 and six months in prison. Under the Fireworks Regulations 2004, it is an offence to let off fireworks between 11pm and 7am (except until midnight on 5 November and 1am on New Year's Eve, Chinese New Year, and Diwali).

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

Don't wait until you need a doctor or medical advice before you think about registering with a surgery. Check with the College's Health Centre (based on campus in Founder's East) to see if you are in their catchment area (all Halls of Residence, Englefield Green, Old Windsor, Windsor and parts of Egham are covered). They will be able to advise you of your nearest surgery, if you can not attend here.

The College's Health Centre can be contacted during working hours on 01784 443131; the emergency out of hours number is 0118 936 5390. For general health advice call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or visit their website:

**[www.nhsdirect.com](http://www.nhsdirect.com)**

## Happy household!

Choose your housemates wisely – be honest about how you like to live and try to find people who will fit in with this. If you like to study in peace and quiet it is not a good idea to live with someone who can't study without their music at top volume!

Once you have all moved in make sure you respect your housemates' privacy and don't treat their room as an extension of your own. Similarly, when you have guests to stay, let your housemates know in advance and make sure

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your friends know any house rules. Don't allow anyone to stay in the house for a long period of time, especially if they make no financial contribution to the household.

It is advisable to decide whether you are going to buy food, etc as a house or whether you are each responsible for your own. Also, make sure you all do your fair share of the cleaning and washing up so that it is not always left to the same person.

If you do have disagreements you can either accept it or discuss the problem. If you decide to talk about things try to discuss them face to face as a group to resolve things amicably. There is little worse than living in a household where tenants have resorted to communication only by writing notes and emails to each other so do try to rise above this.

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

## **I**nsurance and home security

Surrey has one of the lowest crime rates in England but it is still advisable to insure your possessions against damage or theft. Many companies offer a low cost policy specifically geared towards students; the Students' Union (SU) will be able to advise you and give you an application leaflet. You can also get a quote online from Endsleigh at:

**[www.endsleigh.co.uk/student-possessions.html](http://www.endsleigh.co.uk/student-possessions.html)**

Common sense goes a long way in safeguarding yourself from crimes such as burglary. Make sure you never leave the house unattended whilst you are moving your belongings in; don't leave windows open if you are going out; and don't leave valuable possessions, such as a laptop, on view. Make sure you don't let strangers into the house and ask for ID for anyone who may need to call e.g. utility tradespeople / meter readers.

Any concerns you have about the security and safety of your room or house should be addressed to your landlord.

You can find further information about home security at:

**[www.surrey.police.uk/property.asp](http://www.surrey.police.uk/property.asp)**

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## Jobs

Whether you are looking for a part-time job, or are thinking about your longer term career progression, the College's Careers Centre – located in the Horton Building – offers a wealth of resources. Employment opportunities are posted on the Job Shop area of the College's Careers Service website. The Careers Service team also run job fairs as well as an extensive programme of careers seminars and employer presentations. For more information, visit:

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

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

## Keeping in touch with home

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

It is also advisable to keep in touch with your neighbours whilst you are living in Egham or Englefield Green. It will make life easier for you if you can establish a good relationship – they may keep an eye on your house whilst you are away from the area at Christmas or Easter, hold a spare key for you, or help out in an emergency. Similarly you will both be able to determine each others priorities and sensitivities – so perhaps they will not start up any noisy DIY when you're trying to revise and they may be happy for you to have a party to celebrate your birthday!

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## Landlords and accreditation

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

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

Those involved with this scheme agree it is a good example of best practice for both landlords and tenants. For more information, visit: [www.ras.rhul.ac.uk](http://www.ras.rhul.ac.uk)

## Money and personal finances

Studying at university can be a stretch on your finances but the College has an excellent financial advice team who are there to help you with any financial issues or concerns; they can be contacted at [FinancialAdvice@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:FinancialAdvice@rhul.ac.uk).

You may be eligible to apply for help from the Access to Learning Fund or for an interest-free loan from the Principal's Loan Fund. The Students' Union are also able to give a short-term interest-free emergency welfare loan of up to £50 to Royal Holloway registered students with cases of genuine hardship as a temporary solution to any financial difficulties.

## Non-residential bus

The Students' Union run a non-residential bus service each night during term-time running from the College to your home, if it is within a three mile radius. Tickets are maintained at a low cost for Royal Holloway students (slightly higher for non-Royal Holloway students) and you can get a termly or even annual pass from the SU reception at a further discounted price. The College is in complete support of this service and tries to help with financial contributions towards the running costs of the bus. For more information, visit:

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

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## Opening hours of the College back gate

If you are living in Egham make sure you know the opening times of the back gate which exits onto the Ripley Springs estate: Mondays – Fridays the gate opens at 6.45am and at weekends it is opened at 8am. The gate closes at 11.15pm on Sundays through to Thursdays and at 12.45am on Friday and Saturday nights.

When you leave the campus via this gate, remember you are entering a residential area and people do not wish to be disturbed.

Please do not attempt to exit the campus from this area at times when the gate is locked – alternatively, use the non-residential bus or walk into Egham using the main A30 footpath.

## Parties and noise

The most common complaint from neighbours in the area surrounding the College is noise nuisance caused by student parties. While we don't want for you not to enjoy your time at university, poor relations with your neighbours can cause unnecessary unpleasantness.

We ask that there should be no noise after 11pm on a night preceding a weekday. Weekends are more flexible as the majority of people do not have to get up early for work or to do the school run. However, there should not be an assumption that you can have late night parties every week.

If you are planning a party please make sure you give your neighbours at least a week's notice – not just the houses either side – and try to agree a reasonable end time to the party; also consider inviting them to join you. For more useful tips, please see our Community Liaison Office checklist, available online at:

**[www.rhul.ac.uk/for-students/goodneighbour.html](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/for-students/goodneighbour.html)**

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## Questions and Support: Support & Advisory Services & Students' Union

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

The College Support & Advisory Services team comprise of the Careers service, Chaplaincy and Faith Support, Community Liaison and Student Discipline, Educational Support, Funding and Financial Advice, Hall Wardens, Health Centre, International Student Support, and Student Counselling.

The main office is based in Founder's West and our staff can point you in the right direction if you're unsure where to go. You may also choose to go to the Students' Union for support; the Student Advice centre also operates an open door policy for students.

## Rubbish and recycling

Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) have a policy not to collect any refuse that is left outside of your supplied wheellie bin in an attempt to encourage residents to minimise the volume of waste produced.

Collection days vary within Egham and Englefield Green so you will need to check the RBC webpage ([www.runnymede.gov.uk](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk)) to find out what day your bin needs to be made available.

RBC also operate a kerbside collection recycling service; you can get all the information you need by ringing the Recycling hotline on 0800 052 0067.

Make sure you know who has responsibility for keeping the outside of your property and garden clear and tidy – you as tenants or your landlord. If your contract requires your landlord to keep the external appearance of your house at a good standard, hold them to it and explain to the neighbours the issue is not your fault.

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## Saying sorry!

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

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

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

We would also urge non-student residents to do the same if they have caused any inconvenience to students.

## TV licensing

Remember that any TV you buy, or bring from home, is not covered by your parents' TV license or by the College.

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

You can face a fine of up to £1,000 if you are found watching TV without a license. For further information visit:

**[www.tvlicensing.co.uk/students/](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/students/)**

## Utility bills

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

All the tenants names should appear on the bills, otherwise one person can end up solely liable for any money owed.

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Ensure the meters are read at the time you move into the property, keep records of the readings, and also notify the utility companies. When you vacate the property, once again get the meters read and keep note of the figures. You should also notify the relevant companies you are moving out and ask for a final bill.

## Volunteering

Royal Holloway offers you some fantastic opportunities to get involved with volunteering in the local community. Recent projects have included creating an outdoor children's sensory garden, repainting the front of a local youth centre, befriending elders, litter tidy and clearance, and a school outdoor music and drama development.

Volunteering is hugely rewarding and enhances your transferable skills for employability. To find about more, and to get involved, visit: **[www.rhul.ac.uk/volunteering/](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/volunteering/)** or the Volunteering Office in the Students' Union.

## Walking home

In an ideal world we should, within reason, all be free to go where we want when we want. Unfortunately in the 21st century this is not always the case and all members of the community – even in a very safe county like Surrey – have to make every effort to minimise the risk to themselves and others.

You should try to avoid walking home alone during hours of darkness – make full use of the non-residential bus service or use local taxis. Alternatively, walk in a group and stick to well lit main roads, rather than taking shortcuts. Don't walk along listening to your i-Pod as you need to stay alert. If you share a house let someone else know when you plan to be home so they can raise an alarm if they become concerned. Consider carrying a personal attack alarm – you can get one from the Students' Union.

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Keep both the College Security number (01784 443063; available 24 hours) and the Surrey Police number (0845 125 22 22) stored in your mobile and let them know of anything suspicious you see out of College. If there is an emergency, use 999.

Further advice can be found on the College's website at:  
**[www.rhul.ac.uk/for-students/safety.html](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/for-students/safety.html)**

## Xmas

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

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

## Your rights as a tenant

From April 2007 all new tenancy deposits have to be protected in a government authorised scheme; this ruling applies if a tenancy is an assured shorthold tenancy.

There are currently three authorised schemes in operation:  
The Deposit Protection Service  
(**[www.depositprotection.com](http://www.depositprotection.com)**),  
Tenancy Deposits Solutions Ltd  
(**[www.mydeposits.com](http://www.mydeposits.com)**) and the Tenancy Deposit Scheme (**[www.tds.gb.com](http://www.tds.gb.com)**).

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If a landlord fails to protect a deposit, you can apply as a tenant to the local County Court where the Court can then order the landlord to repay the deposit or protect it in one of the authorised schemes. If the landlord or their agent has not protected the deposit, and fail to do so within 14 days, they can be ordered to repay the tenant three times the amount of the deposit.

## Zzzzz – getting some sleep!

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

Students often keep different hours to people who have 9-5 jobs so you need to remember they are entitled to a good nights sleep in advance of their working day.

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

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

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## Royal Holloway contacts

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| <b>Community Liaison</b>       | 01784 443394<br>community@rhul.ac.uk                          |
| <b>DCLO team</b>               | 01784 443394<br>dclo@rhul.ac.uk                               |
| <b>Students' Union</b>         | 01784 486300<br>vpedwelfare@su.rhul.ac.uk                     |
| <b>Student Housing Bureau</b>  | 01784 443338<br>studenthousing@rhul.ac.uk                     |
| <b>Careers Service</b>         | 01784 443073<br>careers@rhul.ac.uk                            |
| <b>Faith Support</b>           | 01784 443950<br>chaplaincy@rhul.ac.uk                         |
| <b>Student Counselling</b>     | 01784 443128<br>counselling@rhul.ac.uk                        |
| <b>Educational Support</b>     | 01784 443966<br>educational-support@rhul.ac.uk                |
| <b>Financial &amp; Funding</b> | 01784 276109 / 01784 414633<br>financialadvice@rhul.ac.uk     |
| <b>International Support</b>   | 01784 276168 / 01784 443663<br>internationaladvice@rhul.ac.uk |
| <b>Volunteering Office</b>     | 01784 414078<br>volunteering@rhul.ac.uk                       |
| <b>Health Centre</b>           | 01784 443131  |

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## External contacts

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Surrey Police</b>                | 0845 125 22 22                                 |
| <b>Surrey County Council</b>        | 08456 009 009                                  |
| <b>Runnymede Borough Council</b>    | 01932 838383                                   |
| <b>RBC Private Sector Housing</b>   | 01932 425888                                   |
| <b>Accreditation scheme</b>         | 01932 425886                                   |
| <b>Recycling (RBC)</b>              | 0800 052 0067                                  |
| <b>Citizens Advice Bureau</b>       | (Egham) 01932 827187<br>(Staines) 01784 444220 |
| <b>University of London Housing</b> | 020 7 862 8880                                 |
| <b>Community Legal Services</b>     | 0845 3454 345                                  |
| <b>Gas Safety Advice (HSE)</b>      | 0800 300 363                                   |

Produced by the Community Liaison Office,  
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