

A problem shared

The letters 'US' are written in a bold, yellow, textured font with a black outline, set against a purple circular background.

Your Union Advice newsletter – a little bit of help when you need it most

Issue 12 (Oct 2021)

Welcome from our President

Hello, I'm Jack and I'm your President here at Derby's Union of Students. I want to begin by saying what an honour and privilege it is to be part of such a fantastic community of Students here at Derby.

After growing up in Derbyshire and then going on to study in my home city, to then go on to be elected to represent the students, it really is a wonderful opportunity, to which I will give my all.

In my election you would have heard me saying that I believe that University is more than just a degree. This is something I truly believe. For me, it's not a about that piece of paper that you get at the end of your time here at Derby, it's so much more than that! It's the friends you meet along the way, it's the opportunities you take and all the experiences you have along the way – and this is where we at the Union of students can help!

At the Union of Students, we exist to represent you, provide you with lots of fun and exciting opportunities, and to make sure you have the best possible experience whilst studying at the University.

When you arrive at the University of Derby you immediately become a member of this fantastic, vibrant Union. This gives you access to all the services we offer and a whole host of interesting and engaging opportunities and believe me the opportunities seem to be endless! From Animation to Anime, from Theatre to Trampolining there really is so much you can try and give a go.

The best bit of advice I can give you if you're new to the Union or returning is to get involved and all of this starts at freshers! The 2021 Freshers offer was the best yet! So not only did we build a Freshers Village, bigger and better than last year there was a whole FORTNIGHT of club nights and parties.

You all had the chance to meet new, like-minded people. Say hello to our 40 Sports Clubs and almost 100 Societies! You could also try out our range of

student led services which includes TV, radio and a student newspaper. We also have a fantastic volunteering platform called Raise and Give!

Alongside all of these things to get involved in, the Union at its core is about change. This is how I spend most of my time as the President, my role is to listen to your voice in the student community and provide a collective voice that can be used to change all sorts of things that affect you during your time at university!

When I was elected this year, I campaigned on a manifesto that was built around real change, and this is what I aim to deliver over the next year....

Better communication from your officers, more money spent on societies, free sanitary products for students, discounted rates for students on non-university public transport, greater awareness of the union advice service and enabling more students to attend look after your mate training.

As a community of students, we have such great power, power to change and power to influence but this can only be done if we work together to talk to each other, share ideas, share views, share stories. There is real power in our union and its working for us all, for every student at Derby.

The union is working tirelessly to transform your student experience and you are at the heart of our Union. No matter what your journey looks like while you're here at Derby, the Union of Students will be alongside you every step of the way.

I look forward to working with you all.
Your President, Jack Tymon x



Top tips for securing the right accommodation

Searching for accommodation whilst you're studying can be both exciting and daunting. At the Union of Students, we are here to provide as much support and guidance as possible to ensure that the process is as easy as possible. Most importantly, we can support with reading over contracts to ensure that you fully understand what you're signing to prevent any future issues. Here are our top tips to make your house searching journey as smooth as possible.

Tip 1



Do not rush! Whilst you may feel pressured to find accommodation and sign a contract as soon as possible, the age-old myth that all the good accommodations will be taken up is exactly that... a myth! It's essential that you take your time to find the right accommodation for you. Think about what you want in a property. If you're struggling to think of things, we have put together a check list which you might find useful.

derbyunion.co.uk/advice/resources

Tip 2



Read your contract carefully! Don't feel pressured to sign any contracts without fully understanding what you are reading and please take up our offer to have your contract read and discussed with you by an Advisor. Remember, signing a contract is legally binding and so it is essential that you fully understand what you are signing. If it is a joint tenancy, you could be liable to pay for your housemates rent if they move out and refuse to pay.

Tip 3



Choose your housemates carefully. You shouldn't rush such a serious decision as you will be living with them for a long period of time and so having the right housemates can make all the difference. You might already have an idea of who you want to live with, but if you don't, you should consider people who are likeminded and reliable. If you are a tidy person, you may struggle to live with some of your messier friends. Take your time in deciding.

Tip 4



Create a realistic budget to work out what you can afford. Important things to think about are: do you have to pay a deposit? Are your utilities included? It is important for you to discuss how you are going to manage bills with your housemates and remember to be honest with yourself. If bills aren't included, you should shop around to find the cheapest and best deal for you.

Tip 5



Choose an accredited landlord! It's easy to be sucked into a nice-looking property without looking closely at the quality of the property. The University of Derby operates an accredited landlord scheme to ensure the landlords they promote are providing good quality accommodation. The Advice Team are available to talk to should any issues arise. Read more about the accredited landlord scheme on the university website.

derby.ac.uk/life/accommodation/private-accommodation

The most important tip of all

Make use of the Union of Student's Advice Service! We are here to support with any housing questions you may have, and we can read your contract. If you have already signed a contract and have moved in but are experiencing issues, book an appointment with us and we can provide support and advice.

To book an appointment with an advisor to discuss any housing queries, please use the details below:

Use our online appointment system at derbyunion.co.uk/advice

Call us on 01332 591507

Email us at advice@derbyunion.co.uk

How to stay safe at University

Your safety is our priority so here are some ways in which you can stay safe, provided by Derbyshire Constabulary.



Personal safety at university

Make sure your mobile is charged and able to make calls when you go out, in case of an emergency or if you lose the people you're with.

Try to stay with friends, keep money you need to get home separate so you don't spend it, and pre-book a licensed taxi or know the locations of official taxi ranks. If you use Uber you can share your location and driver's details with a friend.

Have precautions in place when going out

Know how you will get home, and plan ahead if you're going somewhere you don't know. Let someone know where you're going and when you expect to be back.

If you have to walk alone in the dark, try to avoid badly lit areas, parks, alleyways and underpasses. When alone on public transport, sit near the driver on a bus. Avoid using your phone in isolated places, as it can distract you from your surroundings.

Register your belongings

Mark your possessions with a UV pen – your student registration number and the initials of your university makes a unique number.

Dial *#06# for your unique mobile registration (IMEI) number. This is the first thing police will check for when recovering stolen property. Register your mobile's IMEI and the serial numbers of your electronic equipment on immobilise.com. This is a free UK property register, supported by police forces and used by them, insurers and the second-hand trade. You can also register your bike and other valuable items.

In the event of an item being lost or stolen you can register this on the Immobilise website. Contact your network provider to block the phone, same with your bank if you lose your bank card.

Cycle Security

Invest in a good quality bicycle lock and use it. Leave your bike in designated, well-lit public bike areas and lock it to something immovable. Lock it at home too, if you keep it in a garage or halls of residence – around half of bikes stolen are taken from the owner's home. In the UK, a bicycle is stolen on average every few minutes and it's often difficult for the police to identify the owner. Take a photo of your bike and the frame number.

Keep personal details safe

Don't leave yourself vulnerable to identity theft or be casual with your personal details.

Be suspicious of calls or messages that ask for any personal information, passwords, PIN numbers or account details. Don't give out such information unless you are 100% sure of the validity of the request.

Destroy papers carrying bank details, as well as your kept receipts, and destroy old cards by cutting through the chip and magnetic strip. If you lose your card, contact your bank straight away.

When you move house or flat, inform all the organisations you deal with of your new address and arrange for the post office to forward on your mail, to avoid strangers receiving your personal information.

Install security software on laptop

Don't assume you will never get hacked. Install security software on your computer and always carry it hidden inside a sports bag rather than in its own obvious case.

Be extra careful with money

Keep an eye out at a cash machine for signs of interference before using it. Never accept a stranger's help when using a cash machine, and be aware of people crowding around you and if you can, draw out money in the day. Never let your bank or credit cards out of sight in shops and restaurants to prevent cloning.

When shopping online, check the website for a padlock or unbroken key icon. Websites with 'https:' in the URL are secure, but if you don't see the final 's' when you come to checkout, stop the transaction immediately. The Verisign Trust seal means that the website company's identity has been verified and that the website has passed a daily malware scan

Students and personal safety | Suzy Lamplugh Trust

[suzylamplugh.org/students-and-personal-safety](https://www.suzylamplugh.org/students-and-personal-safety)

National Pubwatch supports Ask for Angela campaign | National Pubwatch

nationalpubwatch.org.uk/news/national-pubwatch-supports-ask-angela-campaign

Staying safe at university | thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk

thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/student-advice/after-you-start/staying-safe-at-university

According to a study carried out by the Office of National Statistics, one in four students will experience loneliness whilst at university. When you consider that the University of Derby has upwards of 20,000 students, that's a lot of loneliness.

At the Union of Students our Societies, Sports Clubs and Student Led Services are our most valuable players for reaching out to all our colleges and cohorts, with something that can bring everyone together! Something we started working on, pre-pandemic, and will be hoping to get back up and running again in 2021/22, is halls-based events.

In a chat with our friends over at Student Living, we discovered that there are a lot more students staying in, but that this can sometimes not be the best option. We spoke to our student groups about how their activities could be taken into university halls to engage with the students there, on their own patch.

Imagine this, it's a miserable day in November. The rain's coming down and you've not quite cracked that module assignment yet. You're a member of a society and they're meeting tonight at Kedleston Road, but it's wet and you really can't be bothered! What if the society's activity came to you?

Societies stepped up, bringing movie nights, pool tournaments, cultural evenings and dance classes into common rooms across our halls network. Bringing people together and

Beat Loneliness: Join A Club Or Society



highlighting the opportunities for students at the Union!

The thing about loneliness is that it can be a difficult rut to get out of. Student groups are little communities of support, cleverly built around something you love to do, and one of the best things about the Union is that if the thing you want to do doesn't exist, you can just create it!

You can see all of our student groups on the website at derbyunion.co.uk. Have a chat or email with the committees and try out as much as you feel able to. Many groups run Give It A Go sessions for you to try before you buy, and you'll be introduced to a lot of very awesome people too!



Come to our House Party!

This year we are hosting the Union of Student's first ever house party!

This event will include, food, drink, live music and an opportunity to talk to the Union about all of your housing needs.

The event will take place in before Christmas, keep checking our social media channels to find out the date when it's set.

[f](#) [t](#) [@](#) derbyunion



FREE Condom Postal Service from the NHS

Your Sexual Health Matters provides a free and confidential condom and lube by post service to people who live in Derbyshire and Derby City.

Packs are sent in a discrete plain envelope with a plain postmark and will fit through a letter box.

They will process one order per month per person.

For more information, please visit:

yoursexualhealthmatters.org.uk/contraception/condoms/postal-condoms

Improve the advice service

Any ideas on how to improve your advice service, we'd love to hear them. Either pop them onto the ideas forum via derbyunion.co.uk/ideas or contact us directly using the contact details below.

Live Chat

The Advice Team are now available through the Live Chat function on the Union website for quick guidance and information

derbyunion.co.uk/advice/livechat/

Your Union's independent advice service

Contact us on 01332 591507 if you need advice or help or email advice@derbyunion.co.uk

derbyunion.co.uk/advice