

A problem shared



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

Issue 2 (November 2018)

We're back!

As promised we're back with our second issue of a problem shared, the Union Advice team's regular newsletter around issues we know impact on the student body here at the University of Derby across all of our campuses. There are two key messages we want to promote this issue and through the additional work we do as a service on a day-to-day basis.

Firstly, as we quickly approach the Christmas break, we know this can be a tough time of the year for many people and this includes students. For some students they can't go home for Christmas and spend time with their family, for others going home can be an anxious and stressful time and for others, returning to University after the Christmas break can bring back the feelings of homesickness and loneliness they experienced at the start of the academic year. One of our key articles is about dealing with conversations about suicidal thoughts and we hope that our tips can help you manage the situation should someone you care about be in such a situation.

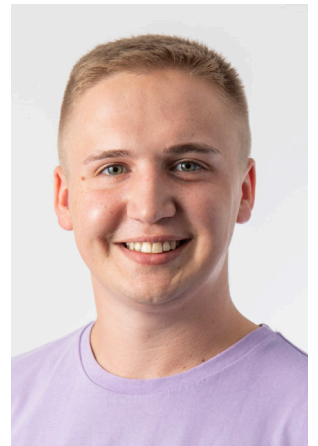
Secondly, at this time of the year students often rush into signing contracts for a house for the next academic year. Our message is simple: DON'T RUSH! There are plenty of houses available so don't feel like you to

make a quick decision now without properly knowing who you're going to be living with, properly inspecting the property or properly understanding your contract – once you've signed for the house it is very difficult to break that contract. Use the article in this newsletter and all the support and guidance the advice service offer around housing to make an informed decision when it comes to where you are going to live.

We hope you enjoy this issue, if you have a question or are affected by anything you read in this edition please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Union's Advice Service. Don't forget we want to hear from you, so if there are any issues you want covering in future issues – let us know.

Hello from your Vice President (Welfare)

Hey everyone, my name is Jacob and I'm your Union Vice President (Welfare). It's been a busy start to the academic year and I hope you have settled well into university life. The first few months are often the most challenging, for both freshers and those returning from the seemingly endless summer break. Whilst I hope that you have settled, I know that for some, this won't be the case.



I know from my own experience that this time can be quite a frightening and lonely time, a new place, new people and no idea where to start. What I'll say is, if this sounds like you, you aren't alone in feeling like this, and if this isn't you, it's likely you're living with or sat next to someone that is feeling like it.

Well what can I do or how can I help I hear you ask?

It might sound silly, but just getting out there can really help, for most people including myself this formed the biggest obstacle, especially in the lull after freshers when everyone seems to have found friends and seem to be just getting on with it – alas the world is not ending and there is always time!

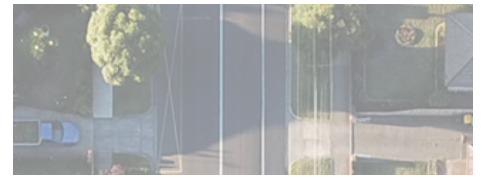
For those that feel they can, try asking if your housemates or course mates want to do something, perhaps a

coffee or the cinema, another great place to start getting involved and getting out there is the Union. With over 40 sports clubs, almost 100 societies and countless volunteering opportunities on offer, there's going to be something for you to get involved with. Although making that first step can be frightening, you won't regret it at the end of the year.

For those who aren't feeling apprehensive or alone, I have a simple request, be kind and try and go out of your way for others. Having a cuppa and a chat with your flatmate might not be a big thing for you, but for them it might be the first chat they've had with a person that day and you never know you might even make their day. Don't underestimate the power your actions have.

Student Housing

Making a house into a home



The Union advice service supports many students with a variety of issues relating to student houses. Many of these problems stem from students either not fully reading or understanding their contracts, rushing into choosing a house early on in the academic year without really knowing their housemates, or feeling like they don't have the power to negotiate or raise concerns with a landlord or estate agents. The Union's advice service, in conjunction with a professional housing advice organisation, can advise students on all these housing matters and more – so please don't hesitate to get in touch. Here are our top tips to ensure you have a successful experience in renting your student house.

Before you even sign your contract:

- Do you know what type of contract you are signing? Is it a joint or sole tenancy agreement? What's the difference?
- Ensure you view the property at least two times. Use the advice services renting a property checklist during the viewing (a copy can be obtained from info point or by emailing the advice service)
- Book a Contract Check appointment with an advisor at the union advice service and they will be able to review the contract before you sign it.

Paying your deposit:

If you're in a shorthold tenancy agreement:

- And paid your deposit on or after April 6 2007, your landlord or estate agent must protect it in a government approved deposit protection scheme.
- This scheme helps ensure you get back what you're entitled to.

When paying a deposit for a joint tenancy:

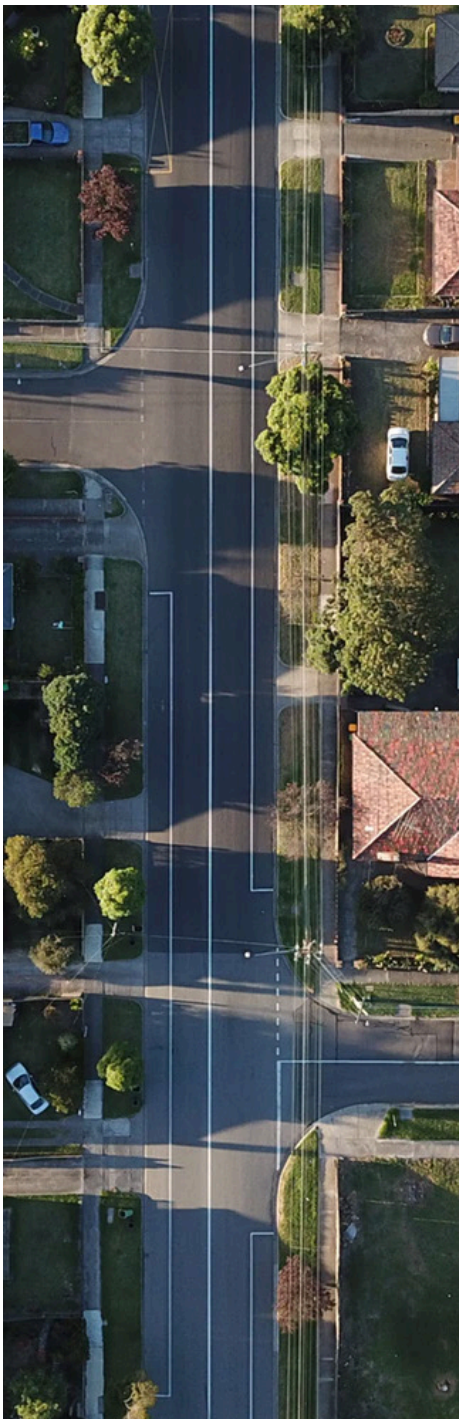
- When you share accommodation with other tenants under one agreement – the tenancy will be a joint one. There will normally be a single deposit for the whole of the joint tenancy.
- If another tenant doesn't pay their share of the rent or if they cause damage to the property, the landlord/estate agent can deduct this amount from the whole deposit. It would then be up to the other tenant to agree on how to divide the remainder of the deposit.

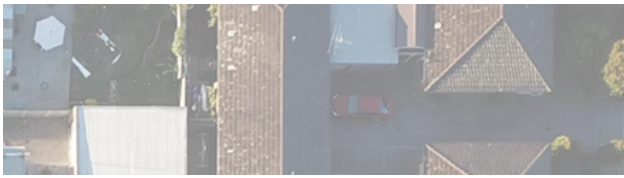
Getting your deposit back:

- Get a receipt for any deposits paid
- Agree an inventory with your landlord/estate agent before you move in. Note the condition of the property and everything in it when you move in
- Take photographs to accompany this inventory. Add dates and a brief description to the photos.
- Keep records about anything in disrepair – when you reported them and how the landlord/estate agent dealt with the issue. Try to do this by email initially so there is evidence of the reporting.

Don't forget the landlord has obligations too:

- Quiet enjoyment – essentially, this means the landlord must interfere (or allow anyone else to interfere) with the tenant's enjoyment of the property. For clarity, your contract will include a specific definition of what this means.
- Give 24 hour notice for accessing the property.
- Ensure your deposit is protected in a deposit protection scheme.
- Have a gas safety certificate for the property.
- Share their address and contact details.
- Provide you with a how to rent booklet – this is a legal requirement.





Our top tips on keeping your student accommodation electrical safe...

Don't overload!

- Remember the 13 AMP rule, a maximum total of 13 Amps into one socket.
- Use a multi lead adaptor rather than a block adaptor.
- Only one adaptor per plug socket.
- Don't leave your mobile phone under your pillow when charging.
- Turn off any electrical items that you will not be using overnight. Fires can spread rapidly and can cause severe damage before being noticed, you can reduce the risk overnight by turning off any unused electrical appliances.

And remember:

- Your Landlord is legally obliged to ensure that your electrical installation is kept in repair and proper working order. Keep an eye out for constant tripping of fuses, flickering lights and scorching around sockets

Union housing fair

Get some advice and guidance on all things student housing

Thursday 6th December, 11.30am-2.00pm, at Kedleston Rd

STUDENT LIVING
DERBY



Union advice

Contact us if you need advice or help

Derby: 01332 591507

Buxton: 01298 330485

derbyunion.co.uk/advice

Upcoming Advice Drop-Ins

(11.00am-1.00pm)

One Friar Gate, in Blends

- Tuesday 4th December 2018
- Tuesday 29th January 2019
- Tuesday 19th February 2019

Markeaton Street, in MS116b

- Wednesday 5th December 2018
- Wednesday 30th January 2019
- Wednesday 20th February 2019

Britannia Mill, next to the Union Shop

- Thursday 7th December 2018
- Thursday 31st January 2019
- Thursday 21st February 2019

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

Free Condoms and Lube

If you're 18-24 you're entitled to free condoms, dams, and lube with a C-Card from your Union!



Talking about Suicide

A difficult but important conversation

Suicide can be a difficult thing for people to talk about. In recent years, the fivefold increase in student mental health disclosures at university has been accompanied by a steady increase in student's taking their own lives. Therefore, at a university wide level, it is essential that everyone is able to talk about suicidal feelings. In having these difficult, but important conversations we can work together to reduce the current level of student suicides. Family, friends, colleagues and fellow students can play a vital role by recognising the signs and being mindful of the support that is available to those who are affected by suicide or suicidal feelings.

Common causes of suicidal feelings:

- Mental health problems
- Bereavement
- End of a relationships
- Bullying or discrimination
- Financial difficulties
- Isolation or loneliness
- Feeling inadequate or a failure
- Addiction
- Sexual or physical abuse
- Sexual or gender identity difficulties

People often show signs of suicidal feelings by:

- Becoming withdrawn or isolating themselves from others
- Giving their possessions away
- Having definite ideas about how they would end their life and maybe asking questions regards death or methods of suicide
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, failure, loss of self-esteem

Having a conversation about suicide with someone

- Don't panic and rush them - you may feel anxious to hear their answer, but give them the time they need
- Listen! - people who do talk about their own suicidal thoughts and feelings do sometimes act on them, it's best to assume they are telling the truth and listen to them
- Ask open questions - ask questions that will help someone talk through their problem (not just "yes" and "no" questions). Use where, when, what, how, why
- Find out how they feel - don't forget to ask how they feel as someone may talk you through all the facts of what has led to this point but not how they actually feel. Revealing your innermost emotions can be a huge relief.
- Check they know where to get help - both within and outside of University there is a large amount of support available. Find details of the available support below.
- Respect - respect what they tell you. If they don't want help, don't push them. Be there for them in other ways like socialising or helping with practical things.

IMPORTANT: If you believe someone is at risk of harming themselves, seek professional help immediately and do not leave until help is in place.

Get support

Union Advice Team - 01332 591507 / advice@derbyunion.co.uk

Student Wellbeing Service - 01332 59300 / studentwellbeing@derby.ac.uk

Samaritans Helpline - 116 123

MIND - 0300 123 3393 / info@mind.org.uk / text: 86463

Student Minds - studentminds.org.uk/findsupport.html

Cruse Bereavement Care - 0808 808 1677

