

A Guide to Living

How to Live Harmoniously and Comfortably

Learn How To:

- ✓ *Be a Great Housemate*
- ✓ *Manoeuvre a Dish Cloth*
- ✓ *Not Upset Anyone*
- ✓ *Operate Domestic Equipment*
- ✓ *Be Reasonable*
- ✓ *Change a Light Bulb*
- ✓ *Make Sure You Get Your Deposit Back*
- ✓ *And Much Much More!!*



SPENCER LETTINGS

Most problems in shared properties seem to arise from tenants not taking personal responsibility for communal areas – The '*someone else will do it*' attitude. People all living together can generate some disagreements. In this case we would advise calling an informal meeting of *ALL* house-mates to ensure a smooth running household. Most problems can be sorted out by talking.



Our 4 main criteria for living together; Don't be noisy, Keep the place clean and tidy, Pay the rent on time and Have a mutual respect for others. Simple!



Fire The hall, landing and stairs must be kept completely clear of any obstruction, at *all* times – this is a requirement of the local authority as they form the fire exit. Please keep all *your* belongings in *your* room.

In the case of fire – raise the alarm, (Shout 'Fire' as loud you can!) Call the fire brigade (on 999) from a safe place. Do not attempt to extinguish the fire and ensure doors are closed behind you.

This is a non smoking property. If smoking outside the property; please step away and close the door to prevent smoke entering the building.

Please do not place toasters under kitchen units when in use, plus you are not allowed to use deep fat fryers at this property.

If you bring any of your own furniture into the house, please ensure it complies with the safety fire regulations. (There will be a label). Common sense stuff!

Fire alarm system

The fire alarm system is very sensitive and will be activated by the slightest whiff of smoke! *The control panel will display the source of the smoke.* A false alarm in which either an engineer or the Fire Brigade are called out, will result in a substantial payment being made by whichever tenant has been naughty.



Kitchen Door



Be aware that if you decide to wedge open the kitchen door, smoke from cooking food in the kitchen may set off the smoke alarms, to the annoyance of anyone else asleep in the house!

Cleaner

The communal areas are cleaned every 2 weeks. Housemates are expected to maintain the property to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene in between times. It is advisable to draw up a cleaning rota with other housemates over a bottle of wine. If you wish to engage the cleaner to clean your own space, this can be arranged . . . at a price.



Viewings, Inspections & Maintenance

If a viewing or maintenance needs to be carried out at the property, you will be informed by text, 24 hours in advance. Whole house inspections are carried out at 3 month intervals. Please report any maintenance issues immediately.

Overnight Guests

It is a common courtesy to inform other housemates if you have the occasional overnight guest. How would you feel bumping into a stranger in the middle of the night? It's generally accepted that 1 night during the week is and 1 night at the weekend acceptable for overnight guests. Please inform *us* if you think sneaky housemates are abusing this rule.



Your Contact Information



Please inform us immediately of any change of email address and mobile number. Failure to do so could result in an embarrassing situation should we have to do a room inspection

This will also benefit you in ensuring that your deposit is returned promptly.



If you need a hand moving, call 'Man with a Van' on for a free estimate and a warm and friendly service.

Security

It is very important to close all windows and external doors securely when leaving the property unattended or you may be liable for missing items if it is determined that it was *YOU* that left the door unlocked! Maybe leave a light on in either the hall or landing if the house is unoccupied for a long period. (Like when Glastonbury's on!) The energy efficient bulbs cost very little to run.



Keys Please be careful with your keys - we charge £20 for replacements. do not have your own cut as they may damage our master key system.

Electrics and plumbing

Please familiarise yourself with the positions of the fuse-board and stopcock for turning off the water.



Blocked drains

Take care not to allow excess hair to clog the shower and basin. Also take care what is deposited into the kitchen sink and WC – You may have to pay for call outs and plumbers are r-e-a-l-l-y expensive!



Heating

In very cold weather please do not turn off the heating when the property is left empty. Set the timer so that it switches on for two bursts a day. This is to ensure that pipes do not freeze. Failure to do so may result in tenants being charged for any subsequent damage and repairs and plumbers are (See above)



If the water pressure low (below 1 bar) ... Check the boiler is turned on and if necessary, top it boiler. (Ask Lord Google how). If the thermal cut out tripped, reset it. If the pressure is constantly low it could mean there is a leak in the system, so please inform us ASAP. The overall heat of the house can be adjusted with the thermostat. Individual room temperatures can be adjusted with the thermostats on the radiator in your room. No need to adjust the boiler and don't forget to take into account your carbon footprint on your home planet!

Standing Order

As per your AST contract your **MUST** pay the rent via standing order landing in our bank on the 1st of the month. Failure to do so will break the terms of the contract. Any other method of payment **will** result in additional charges.



Monthly Bills

We **REALLY** don't want to charge you for excessive use of the Gas and Electric and so strongly encourage all housemates to play fair. It is in everyone's interest to keep all bills to a minimum. Just be sensible– don't leave the lights/heating on all day. Stick to this and you **WILL** one day earn total respect from your great-grandchildren for helping to save the planet's eco system.



Consumables

You have a responsibility to replace light bulbs/batteries. Please ensure communal bulbs are replaced immediately for safety. Buy LED's.

Emergency Numbers

The contact details for **EMERGENCY** repairs out of office hours are on the house notice board. Save them on your phone just in case.

These numbers are **ONLY** to be used in the case of an emergency.

If the contractor deems the repair not to be an emergency, **YOU** will be charged for their call out fees and you don't really want to do that, do you?



If you do have to make an emergency call out, please inform us first thing the following morning either by email or a quick phone call



Waste collection



Rubbish in the black bins will be collected every two weeks.

Please ensure you return the bin to its correct place ASAP after

it has been emptied. Try to get it all *in* the bin with the lid closed. Let's try not to make it easy for the rats!!

There is also the usual array of recycling containers for plastic, cardboard, food, foil, cans, glass. If you use the food container, please ensure it is regularly cleaned. Be the first to offer to clean it and earn the respect of the other housemates dude!!

Condensation & Damp

This is usually caused by condensation. With 6 adults in the house showering every day, plus cooking and the sometimes necessity of drying clothes in the house, the moisture level in the air increases so much that it can't all escape, sometimes causing damp and mould. Here are a few points to avoid problem and treat this problem.



- Cover pans when cooking, open a window and use the extractor fan.
- Washing clothes – Put clothes out to dry whenever possible. If you do air them in your room, leave a window ajar.
- Close kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use as these stops the moisture reaching bedrooms.
- Moisture is also produced by our breath. When at home it is a good idea to ventilate a room by leaving a window slightly ajar and to open windows wide for a few minutes every day to let the moist air out. Dry air in a house makes it feel warmer, so a better aired house uses heat more efficiently.
- After showering, ventilate the room by opening the window. Make sure the extractor fan is switched on
- In the morning, if you spot condensation on the window, wipe it down with kitchen roll or a cloth.
- Do not dry clothes on the radiators in the house. This is usually the biggest cause of mould problems. Google '[Indoor clothes dryer](#)'.



- **IMPORTANT** - If you start to see the first signs of black mould, it can be cleaned away simply and easily using HG Mould Spray available from B&Q for around £5. **Do not dry clothes on the radiators in the house. This is usually the biggest cause of mould problems. Google 'Indoor clothes dryer'.**



As tenants you have a responsibility to keep the property in a good state of repair, and take steps to ensure it does not become a problem. Work together to ensure a nice safe environment. If there is a damp /mould problem when you leave the property you will be charged for the extra cleaning/remedial work involved.

Communal Areas

Please do not place **ANY** of your personal belongings in communal areas. Other tenants may be too polite to tell you it bothers them! There are enough sets of crockery and cutlery etc in the house – please do not overload the cupboards with more!



*** * * Keep kitchen worktops free of clutter * * ***

IMPORTANT; If you think an unused item has been 'hanging around' the kitchen or bathroom, check with other housemates as to who actually owns it – if no one, dispose of it. Be power crazy and ruthless!

Generally

- If you think an unused item has been 'hanging around' the fridge, the kitchen or in the bathroom, check with other housemates as to who actually owns it – if no one, dispose of it.

We find that a house runs smoother when those who live there have a little respect for each other, this could be as simple as



- Closing doors quietly. Shhhhhhhh
- **Cleaning up communal areas straight after use**
- Not playing music too loud (use earphones?)
- Not turning TV up too loud (learn to lip read)
- Being considerate – it's why God put you on this planet!



- Using your indoor voice whilst indoors
- Sharing any jobs or working out a rota (House meeting & bottle of wine)
- No whining – housemates will roll their eyes behind your back!
- No naked flames please, in fact no nakedness generally!
- No pets are allowed at this property, not even rabbits. Grrrrr!



Tips For Keeping the House Looking its Best

Here are some quick and simple cleaning tips to help keep the house and furniture looking its best, follow these to help save money and make sure you get your deposit returned.

One of the main reasons that landlords withhold money from a tenants **DEPOSIT** is to cover the cost of cleaning, not just your room but your % of the house. Let's all respect each other.



- **Tidy;** The evening before the cleaner calls, put rubbish in the bin, do the dishes and clear the worktop - this will allow her to do her job.
- **Housemates** need to defrost freezer periodically. Total respect!
- **Oven:** Place a layer of foil in the bottom of the oven to collect spills. Replace when dirty. Yea it's a pain, but housemates will see you as their 'Leader'.
- **Grill pan:** Place a layer of foil in the pan so it covers the top edges. This will catch all grease and fat. Replace after use Leader!
- **Grills:** Once every couple of months, soak these overnight in biological washing powder, they will come up as new! R-e-s-p-e-c-t
- **Shower:** You can use a shower de-scale spray on the shower screen and shower head and ventilate the room, to avoid mould. Cool and double cool!



- **Stains;** If you spill something then treat immediately to avoid staining. (Always do this throughout your life)
- **Beds:** Do not remove the mattress protector from your bed. You will be liable for any stains on the mattress . . and it's yucky!
- **Coke** (the drink) is the probably the best cleaner on the market. It cleans sanitary wear, sinks, taps, cookers and

many other things. Minimal elbow grease needed. WC's - just pour the coke into a toilet and leave it overnight and in the morning – and 'ping'! Ha Ha - imagine what it is doing to your small intestine?! Drink water – it's free!

- There is no point in painting over mould because it is a living organism and will come back quickly. Any mould will need to be cleaned with HG Mould Spray before repainting.
- A dirty microwave is easily cleaned with a cup of lemon juice mixed with sodium bicarbonate placed inside and micro-waved for a couple of minutes. The lemon will evaporate and condense onto the metal surfaces melting the grease ready for a quick wipe out. The same mixture can be warmed and used to clean and deodorise a fridge or freezer. Tell your housemates to try it as a really cool scientific/magic experiment.



- If by some bizarre occurrence you create a dirty oven, there is a good product called 'Oven Pride'. It comes with a bag into which you put your oven trays and pour some of the liquid. Leave over-night and in the morning the grease has melted leaving the trays shining like new. The product comes with full instructions – now all you need to do is pour the remaining liquid into the oven and spread it around, within a few hours the oven is clean and ready to wipe out – again, very little elbow grease needed. No need to inform your landlord.

Living Together (Forced smile)



- Make sure you avoid arguments about the bin by making a rule about it. The first person who finds a full bin puts the bin bag out. Always check if you are running close to the end of the bin liner roll, otherwise its overflow time. Playing 'Bin Buckaroo' just isn't clever or hygienic.
- Remember that rule at the start – have a mutual respect for others? It can be tough at times when someone's habits are annoying you – but choose your moment and have a friendly chat to resolve before it makes your head explode!





- For some reason, the fridge is a particular bone of contention. If it drives you mad when other people take your milk then consider labelling it *'Milk experiment # 1'* or *'Urine sample'* on your carton of milk. No one will touch it. In fact, you might free up a whole fridge shelf in this way...

- Make a rota. Some (lazy) people find these restrictive and may claim to be illiterate, but it's a fair system and if you work it out well beforehand, it can really pay off. However, it is essential that everyone sticks to the plan, if not = house meeting with much tut'ting, shaking of heads and raised eyebrows.



- From time to time remove **ALL** items from the fridge and give it a good clean. If a fridge becomes too neglected and needs a professional clean, there will be a charge of £30. The same applies for all appliances.
- Do the same in the bathroom and the kitchen – from time to time have a right royal sort-out and determine if there are 20 almost empty jars just gathering cobwebs – this will mean more space for your caviar!
- Learn to accept that cleaning jobs won't always be split fairly, but karmic 'ally, it all balances out. Life will take revenge on that no-good lazy deadbeat!



Deposits

- Your deposit is held with www.DepositProtectionService.com . Save your deposit protection information – you will need this when you leave to enable your deposit to be returned to you. Your deposit will normally be returned within 5 days.

End of Tenancy

- ✓ Clean your room and your % of the house, inc fridge and oven.
- ✓ Remove marks, blu-tak & touch up paintwork
- ✓ Cut your % of the grass – use a tape measure to decide how much?!
- ✓ Replace broken or missing items – come on, play fair
- ✓ Return furniture to original position
- ✓ Leave keys in room or lock up and push them under the door
- ✓ We will return 100% of your deposit if the property is 100%
- ✓ Send us your friends who are looking for rooms and we will send you some money!



Maybe you can assist us in putting together some local information for tenants new to the area? *Email us*

- Nearest bus stop.....
- Railway Station.....
- Best taxi.....
- Good cafe.....
- Supermarket.....
- 24/7.....
- Dentist.....
- Doctor.....
- Good Music Pub.....
- Good Food Pub.....

If you have any ideas or suggestions or additional information with regard to the property please let us know. Cut and paste your thoughts - *Don't be rude!*

Thank you