

Host Homestay guide

Homestay is a scheme, which enables you to let a room or rooms in your own home to students who wish to live with a family and possibly experience British culture - for anything from 2 weeks to 6 months or more. Homestay schemes are especially popular with international students, although some UK/EU students also welcome the opportunity to live in a home environment.

Hosts will have to agree that their Homestay accommodation meets the standards and criteria defined in our Homestay Conditions of Registration.

We aim to visit all Homestay homes to check suitability, general condition and facilities, and to enquire further as regards local amenities and travel links. We will not be undertaking any statutory compliance checks, but can refer owners to the relevant body for further advice on such matters.

We will not advertise without a current Gas Safety Certificate. Before the room can be advertised you will need to agree to our Homestay Conditions of Registration and provide a current Gas Safety Certificate for your property. Compliance with the Homestay Conditions of Registration will hopefully ensure that both the host and the student enjoy the benefit of good standards of housing management and practice, where misunderstandings and disputes are reduced to a minimum and resolved promptly in a courteous manner.

We advise landlords to read the following publications:

- Student Housing Office Homestay Conditions of Registration
- Student Housing Office Homestay Guide
- “*Letting rooms in your home*” (GOV.UK)
- “*Do you have paying guests?*” (GOV.UK)
- Student Housing Office HMO info leaflet
- Data Protection Act 1998: Fair Processing Notice

You may also find the following useful:

- Non-smoking sticker
- Free Home Fire Safety Check <http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/keeping-you-safe/at-home/free-smoke-alarm/>

Please complete and return the following:

- Property Details Form
- Gas Declaration Form or gas safety certificate if applicable
- Payment

What are students looking for?

Student expectations of housing have risen and students now expect and demand quality accommodation and furnishings. Properties also need to have high standards of safety and security.

Most students, especially international students, will expect to share communal facilities with the host and their family and will appreciate the home environment that a family can provide.

Agreements and payments

Licence agreements

When you agree to let someone live in your own home, you both need to have a clear understanding of the rules and courtesies that each expects. The Student Housing Office suggests that you have a written agreement with the student, setting out the most important aspects of your arrangement. This helps to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. The University does not have a model agreement as not everyone's arrangements will be the same.

Your agreement should include the following:

- the full names of both host and the student
- how much rent is to be paid
- the amount of notice each side will give to the other if either wants to end the agreement
- the flexibility for the host and the student to end the agreement before the end of the term initially agreed
- what meals and services will be provided, if any
- whether a retainer will be charged for vacation periods.

Other things to discuss could be:

- arrangements for washing, drying and ironing times
- when students can use the bathroom to avoid inconvenience during the busy morning period
- whether or not students will have access to other communal areas of your house, such as the lounge and/or dining room.

Any house rules must be clear, unambiguous and non-discriminatory. Both you and the student should sign the agreement and keep a copy. If you want to end the arrangement, we ask you to give at least two weeks' notice. It is more usual to give a month's notice if the student pays rent monthly. If you think you have a good reason to end the arrangement with less than two weeks' notice, you must get in touch with the University first.

Energy Performance Certificates

According to the Communities and Local Government, "A letting of a room within your larger household does not constitute a rental of a building or part of a building therefore an EPC is not required."

Council tax

Students studying full time (21 hours per week or more and more than 24 weeks a year) for a full academic or full calendar year are not required to pay council tax. See www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/faq/answers/oq20.php.en for details.

Income tax

Hosts letting rooms in their own homes are allowed to earn a certain amount of rent without paying tax. Contact your local tax office for more details or visit the HM Revenue and Customs website.

Gas Safety

- **The Gas Safe Register have provided the following information on Landlord's responsibilities:**

"If you let a property equipped with gas appliances you have three main responsibilities:

- **Maintenance:** pipework, appliances and flues must be maintained in a safe condition. Gas appliances should be serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If these are not available it is recommended that they are serviced annually unless advised otherwise by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- **Gas safety checks:** a 12 monthly gas safety check must be carried out on every gas appliance/flue. A gas safety check will make sure gas fittings and appliances are safe to use.
- **Record:** a record of the annual gas safety check must be provided to your tenant within 28 days of the check being completed or to new tenants before they move in. Landlords must keep copies of the gas safety record for two years.

All installation, maintenance and safety checks need to be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

If a tenant has their own gas appliance that you have not provided, then you are responsible for the maintenance of the gas pipework but not for the actual appliance. You should also make sure your tenants know where to turn off the gas and what to do in the event of a gas emergency." For more details, visit:

www.gassaferegister.co.uk/what-to-do-in-an-emergency/

- In the Student Housing Office we require a completed Gas Declaration Form if there is no gas / gas appliance in the property.
- Please read your Gas Safety Certificate carefully. If the engineer has noted details of any defects on the certificate, please inform us of any plans you have for the appliances. We will not advertise a property until clarification is received.
- Advertisements will be removed from display if the Gas Safety Certificate expires and will not be re-advertised until a copy of the new certificate has been received by the Student Housing Office.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that the engineer is Gas Safe Registered. You can check if an engineer is registered with the Gas Safe Register:
 The number to check is 0800 408 5500 www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk

Studentpad.co.uk, the software provider which we use, currently provide a service to over 100 Universities and Colleges around the UK and have supplied us with a Bangor University specific accommodation website – www.bangorstudentpad.co.uk - which will advertise your houses, flats and lodgings. In addition, the site provides practical multi-lingual advice to students about renting accommodation. The house/flat adverts contain details of the property you want to let. The student user can make a targeted and specific search of houses to match their needs and can search from their home - wherever in the world they are based - and therefore can begin their house/flat hunt before they even visit the local area. This reduces the time spent hunting and lessens the possibility of students viewing properties that may not be suitable for their needs. Students are also able to register with the site and request property alerts to be emailed to them directly.

What are the benefits of Studentpad to landlords?

The benefits to landlords are proven to be many:

- You are able to provide information about your property – including photographs - with the intention of improving the chances of letting to students;
- The details of properties are displayed clearly to students and can be emailed between friends. Students can also request email updates of new properties. This allows information to be transmitted easily and, therefore, improves the publicity for your properties;
- As a landlord, **you will not need to have access to the Internet yourself**; the students can contact you by telephone. However, if you do have Internet access, you will also be able to receive contacts by email, and/or via the Studentpad system, as well as having access to be able to make changes to your advert yourself if you wish (any changes are made subject to approval by the Housing Office);
- Useful web links are provided for both students and landlords, to enable access to important information such as landlord and tenant rights and housing legislation;
- You will have no need to contact Studentpad directly as we operate the whole of the system - including making any changes to your adverts if required - from the Student Housing Office.
- Please ensure that you have read the Studentpad Advertising Terms and Conditions, which can be found here:
www.bangorstudentpad.co.uk/Landlords/AdvertisingTerms

Data Protection

- By registering to use the service, owners confirm that they have read and agree to the information on Data Protection.

Advertising

- All advertisements are accepted at the discretion of the Student Housing Office.
- Any associated fees (e.g. letting agent administration, referencing or credit check fees) must be clearly stated on the advert.
- It is important that all full names and contact details of both Owner and Agent (if applicable) are supplied and kept updated.

Student Housing Office Charges

- The Student Housing Office requests an administrative fee from owners wishing to advertise properties with us. These fees are outlined on Studentpad and include advertising on our website: www.bangorstudentpad.co.uk This site can be accessed within the University by students and staff, and also by prospective students coming from further afield. They will access details of the property, as per your description on the forms, and will have your contact telephone number(s) / email address for further details.
- Each property can be advertised any number of times throughout the year.
- Landlords will be charged according to the number of properties to be **advertised**. Any owner suspected of advertising fewer properties and redirecting students to other properties can have their registration suspended at any time without notice.
- For the purpose of charging fees, several bedsits/flats at the same address can count as one property so long as they are displayed as one advert. If they are to be shown individually then each will be charged as a single property.
- Payment can be made online, or by sending a cheque to this office.

- A Payment Receipt invoice will be issued via email once payment is made.
- Registration fees must be paid before any properties can be advertised.
- Advertisements are displayed until the Student Housing Office is informed by the owner/agent that the property has been taken. Once your room has been taken, it is important that you let the Student Housing Office know so that the relevant records can be updated. You will receive a weekly email Advert Reminder relating to any live adverts.
- Landlords can access useful housing information and details on current legislation via the website: www.bangorstudentpad.co.uk/Local Landlords can also access recent Student Housing Office mailshots / forum minutes from within the Landlord Control Site after registration.

More information

If you have any queries please contact the Student Housing Office during office hours on 01248 382034 / 382883 / studenthousing@bangor.ac.uk