TOP 10 TIPS FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

Here are some tips to help living in the community run smoothly.

The majority of students in Edinburgh live in privately-rented flats with shared stair and entry ways which may be quite different to what you are used to. You will be moving into the wider community of Edinburgh and you may be sharing a tenement with people who are not students. This can include elderly people, young families and people who work shifts and you should be considerate of their needs. Your neighbours can make your life a lot easier. If you are friendly to your neighbours then they will be friendly to you.

1. Introduce yourself to your neighbours. Swap contact details so you can get in touch if there are any problems. It’s nice to be able to say hello and they may also be able to help if you need to borrow something or get locked out!

2. It’s reasonable to have occasional parties in your flat, but stick to weekends. Don’t have them often. Inform your neighbours and let them know the plan, such as if you are planning to move on to somewhere else at a certain time.

3. Your guests are your responsibility. If they are noisy or damage something in the communal area your neighbours will hold you responsible for this. Be careful with open invite parties.

4. Noise travels easily in tenement flats, especially where there are wooden floors. It’s worth noting that if the party or music noise gets out of hand, you may receive a £100 Fixed Penalty Fine or even have your equipment seized, so if anyone asks you to turn your music down, you should listen to them. Think about what times other tenants may be sleeping.

5. You have a right to peace and quiet. To report antisocial noise from a domestic premise, you can call the police on 101. If you feel able, try approaching the noise-maker directly first and being calm and polite. Avoid leaving passive aggressive notes.

6. Find out if there is a cleaning rota. You might be required to clean the communal stairs every couple of months or contribute to the payment of a stair-cleaner. You may also be responsible for contributing to the upkeep of a shared garden.

7. Try to keep communal areas like stairs and gardens free of rubbish. Don’t leave your rubbish on the street even if the bin is full as you may incur a large fine. If you’ve got furniture or bulky items to get rid of you need to arrange for the Council to pick them up. Find out how: call 0131 529 3030 or email special.uplifts@edinburgh.gov.uk. Some charities will pick up good furniture for free.

8. Be aware of security. Always speak to the person who rings the buzzer and don’t let callers in unless you know them. Put your name on your buzzer so guests don’t ring the wrong one. Close the communal door when leaving or entering.

9. Find out the rules about bike storage. Space can be limited in stairwells so if you want to lock your bike or other large item make sure everyone can still get past, especially if they have buggies or mobility needs.

10. Think about reasonable times of day. Occasionally (like when you move in or out) you will need to move big items and may block the stairwell as you manoeuvre. Avoid busy times such as when people are leaving for work and don’t leave items blocking access.

If you would like this in an alternative format such as large text, please ask a member of Advice Place staff.

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TOP 10 TIPS FOR FLAT-SHARING

Here are some tips for living with flatmates harmoniously.

Sharing with other students can be a really fun experience but in order to avoid arguments it is important to establish rules from the outset.

1. Don’t assume because you get on really well with the people that you do not need to discuss how you will live together. Sharing a friendship is different to sharing a bathroom.

2. Agree on how to keep the flat clean. This is always a tricky issue. Problems with keeping your flat clean and tidy come down to differences in personal preferences and expectations. A rota may be a good way to make sure everyone takes responsibility.

3. Identify what is for sharing. Sharing food and taking turns to cook you will save money and reduce the amount of time that you spend cooking. Are you happy with sharing milk but not with sharing toothpaste? Have a discussion about this, you may want to establish a kitty for shared items such as toilet roll.

4. Sort out your bills. In most private lets you will have to pay this money in addition to your rent. You may want all flatmates named on each bill, so you share responsibility. Everyone should budget for gas and/ or electricity (which can be a lot higher in winter), broadband and TV licence.

5. Cooperate. Resolving issues that arise between flatmates can be difficult. The key to solutions is cooperation and keeping channels of communication open. Have a conversation — this may seem daunting but it’s a much better solution than leaving notes or sending texts.

6. Discuss expectations. Would your flatmates worry if you didn’t come home one night? Is it okay to go into someone’s bedroom when they are not there? Do people mind if you have your girlfriend or boyfriend over all the time?

7. Establish a kitty. Ask everyone to contribute a small amount of money at the beginning of the month so you can buy things like toilet roll.

8. Have a tenancy agreement. Even if you are renting or subletting from a friend you should have a tenancy agreement and an inventory when you move in.

9. Don’t assume you can sublet. If any of you are planning to sublet (with the permission of the landlord) whilst you are away for a long period check if everyone is happy with this and agree on how you will select the subletter.

10. Get more information if you need it.


Shelter’s Guide to Neighbourhood problems: scotland.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/advice_topics/neighbourhood_issues

REMEMBER: THE ADVICE PLACE IS HERE TO HELP.