



How to help your tenants settle in

Making your students feel welcome



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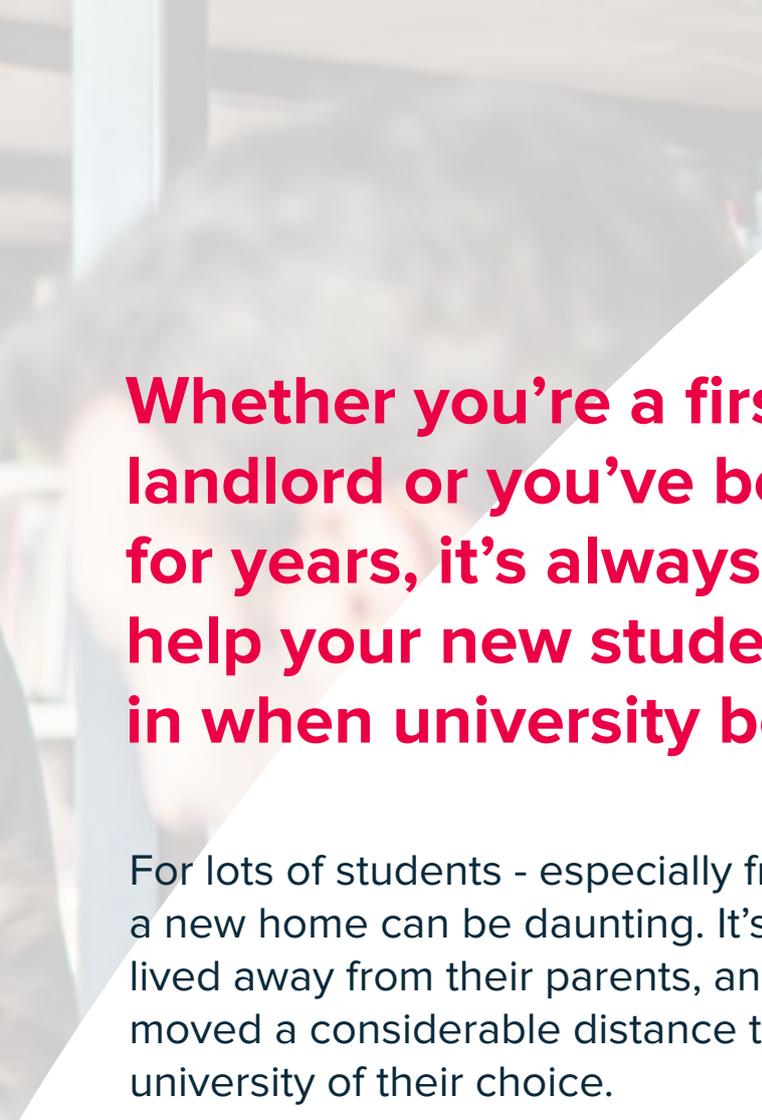
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Whether you're a first-time student landlord or you've been in the game for years, it's always important to help your new student tenants settle in when university begins.

For lots of students - especially freshers - moving into a new home can be daunting. It's the first time they've lived away from their parents, and they may have moved a considerable distance to attend the university of their choice.

Which is why making them feel welcome and comfortable in your property is key.

But you don't need to greet them at the door and over-emphasise how you're always available to achieve this. All you need to do is follow our simple guide – even small changes before your tenants move in will help them settle quicker and, most of all, enjoy their time living in your property.

After all, the more a student enjoys their living space, the more likely they are to look after it...



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Let them decorate

Not in a literal sense... you probably don't want them painting the walls or pulling up the carpets! But allowing your tenants a little freedom to put up posters and photographs could make all the difference as they're settling into their new home.

Follow these top tips:

- Decorate bedroom walls with neutral colours to give students a “blank canvas”
- Dark carpets/wooden flooring are a must
- Neutral-coloured furniture will help them reinvent their room
- Hammering nails into walls might be a no-go, but Blu Tack or Command Strips may be okay

Students like to create their own environments that feel like home. Allowing them to do this in their accommodation will build a trusting relationship and help them settle in.

Homely furnishings

Avoid cutting corners with cheap furniture that won't last – it usually ends up being a false economy. If it breaks, you'll only have to fix or replace it which can ultimately be more time-consuming. Why not spend a little more on durable furniture?

Bedrooms

If the bedroom space allows for it, try to provide double beds - students are likely to pay more for such a luxury. Getting a bed with drawers underneath will also provide much needed storage space.

You also need to think about wardrobes. While chests of drawers are great for storing t-shirts and underwear, most students will want a place to hang shirts, suit trousers and dresses, as well as keep their shoes out of the way.

It's also a good idea to try and include a desk and chair. Students need a quiet place to study away from the library, so why not make their new room a personal study space? Shelves are also important for books, photographs and other personal items your tenants may wish to bring with them.

Living area

A sofa is probably the most important piece of furniture to include. Students will want to lounge around and socialise after a full day of lectures, so a sofa is a great way of adding comfort to their home away from home, and helping your tenants settle in quickly.

Don't forget the TV. You don't need to fork out loads on a 3D curved model, or a SkyBox for that matter – just a TV that's big enough for the room. Pretty much every TV comes with Freeview installed – and if your tenants want to watch Netflix, they can always use a HDMI cable to connect their laptops.

If there's space, a dining table with chairs can help students feel at home. This will allow them to prepare and eat meals together, as well as use the space for working collaboratively.







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Keeping them connected

Students may need WiFi to do their assignments, so providing them with a strong broadband connection (or any broadband connection, for that matter) will be a huge selling point for your student property.

Make sure your tenants have the modem instruction manual should the WiFi cut out for any reason – if they can sort out the problem themselves, this will save them having to get in touch with you every time the WiFi goes down.

Every bedroom should also have plenty of power sockets. Your tenants will want to charge their phones and laptops, or in some cases plug in their desktop computers. They may also bring their own TVs or mini fridges.

Appliance instructions

Leave instructions for all the appliances you provide in the property. The kettle, the oven, the microwave... sometimes these may not work, and all it takes is a quick flick through the instruction manual to solve the problem. This will help you avoid call-outs to the property to fix something that your students could have sorted themselves.

If your tenants are required to conduct meter readings to pay their utility bills, be sure to make them aware of where the meter is, and how to take a reading. This will prevent any confusion further down the line.

If you don't have the manual for something, leave written instructions. If you know any tips or tricks for adjusting the central heating or flicking the fuses, let your students know these hacks so they can take more responsibility for the property.

Some appliances you should leave instructions for:

- Thermostat
- Vacuum cleaner (how to empty and clean)
- Washing machine
- Tumble dryer
- Dishwasher

If the hot water goes off, your tenants will almost definitely contact you - and this could be at any time of day. To avoid this, consider taking out **home emergency cover**. Home emergency will cover the cost of making your property safe and secure following unexpected damage or loss of essential services, such as plumbing, heating and power supplies.

If you do take out home emergency cover, leave the policy details in your welcome pack so that your tenants can go directly to the provider should they need to.





Legal requirements

If your property will be housing five or more students over three storeys, it classes as an HMO (House of Multiple Occupation). By law, HMO properties need to be provided with fire safety equipment, such as extinguishers and blankets.

HMO landlords are also legally responsible for annual gas safety checks, and providing enough rubbish bins to accommodate the waste generated by a property of multiple occupancy.

You should also make sure you've installed smoke detectors. Below are some further considerations:

- Install burglar alarms
- Get rid of any previous infestations (rats, bed bugs, ants)
- Remove any damp or mould

Learn more about [landlord responsibilities](#).

Going the extra mile

It's nice to offer your tenants some bonus comforts for when they first move in. This could be as simple as gifting a bottle of wine or box of chocolates for their arrival. You could even provide them with a "starter" pack of toiletries and kitchen essentials to make them feel welcome in their new home. This could include:

- Soap for the bathrooms
- Miniature shampoos and conditioners
- Toilet roll
- Kitchen roll
- Milk and teabags

Whatever you choose to provide for your tenants, leave it in a welcome letter. Your tenants will appreciate a note from their landlord, introducing them to the property and helping them understand their new surroundings.

If they're freshers, you could also provide them with a handy guide to the area, including:

- Transport schedules (bus/train)
- Numbers for local taxi companies
- Takeaway menus
- Directions to the nearest supermarket
- Details of local doctors and dentists

It's also wise to leave your phone number and email address in a welcome pack for your new tenants. That way they can remain connected to you should they need to ask any questions or report anything serious.





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Summary

Remember, being available to your tenants early on will help to build a trusting relationship. Give them the space to create their own environment away from home, somewhere to relax away from the hustle and bustle of campus.

You should try and help your tenants feel as comfortable as possible – from the physical comfort of beds and sofas, to the security of having burglar alarms and strong locks on the doors.

Don't forget to clean the house before they move in, and check to make sure everything works!

As the UK's No. 1 student insurance provider, Endsleigh understand how important it is for students to feel at home when they're away at uni. But we also understand that there are certain risks attached to renting student properties, and have developed a tailored solution for student landlords to protect their investments.

Want to insure your property ahead of new tenants arriving? Get a quote for Endsleigh's 4* defaqto rated student landlord insurance.



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