

Student & Rented Properties

ADVICE FOR STUDENTS & PEOPLE IN PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION

Everyone is different..... Some people like marmite, some people don't!

This is the same type of problem that South Gloucestershire Council encounter when dealing with complaints about student accommodation. There are often lifestyle conflicts within communities that have a high population of student properties. This can cause tension between neighbours who own their properties and have a totally different lifestyle to students. So, with a little bit of respect and the following tips, the Environmental Protection Team can try and help you enjoy University life without upsetting your neighbours!

When You Move In

Be Friendly and Introduce Yourself to the Neighbours!!

If you try and make an effort to communicate with your neighbours, this can help to build a friendlier, relaxed relationship. It will also help your neighbours to feel less threatened and more likely to approach you if they do have a problem.

Your Hi-Fi / TV System

They look good, they sound good – but do the Neighbours agree?

Keep music down to a reasonable volume, or use headphones to prevent disturbance to your housemates and your neighbours. Try and avoid setting up speakers close to shared walls or on the floor, and reduce the bass on your stereo/TV - Bass travels really well through walls and floors!

Be particularly careful when you come in from the pub or club, as loud music and bass is not usually appreciated late at night.

Parties

If you are planning a party, it's a good idea to invite the neighbours or at least let them know of your plans. Your neighbours may be much more understanding if they are anticipating some disturbance, and are given sufficient time to make alternative arrangements if they want to.

Let them know the times they can expect some disturbance and apologise in advance. Remember telling them in advance does not mean you can get away with it – you still need to be considerate. Noise tends to cause more disturbances at night when background levels are much lower.

Garden parties and barbecues can also cause problems so you may want to remind your guests to be considerate to your neighbours (especially when they are leaving at night!).

Locate your BBQ where the smoke won't annoy your neighbours, and take the party inside before 11pm.

Cars, Motorbikes and Scooters

Keep your car stereo down when you are parked, waiting for someone, or returning late at night.

If your car has an alarm, ensure that it is maintained so that it does not go off when it doesn't need to! You wouldn't like to be woken up in the early hours of the morning and neither will your neighbours!

If we receive a complaint, we have the legal power to break into the vehicle to disable the alarm. This can result in the vehicle being towed away to a secure compound. This can cost a lot of money, and we are allowed to recover any costs from you!

Musicians

If you are lucky enough to be able to play a musical instrument, consider the times you practice and speak with your neighbours to arrange a mutually convenient time. You may want to have a chat with other students to put some money together and book somewhere to practice, or speak with the Students Union to see if they have access to somewhere. This would avoid potential disturbances to your neighbours.

Poor Sound Insulation

If you can hear your neighbours - they are likely to be able to hear you!

If sound insulation is not very good, noise will travel through walls and floors and disturb neighbours. Also, if you have people below, try to minimise impact noise from walking etc, e.g. don't wear shoes, don't run, and don't slam doors. It is surprising how much this can annoy someone.

When You Get In from a Great Night Out

When you return home late at night from a pub or club, keep the noise down. Raised voices, laughing, shouting and slamming taxi doors can wake your neighbours, especially late at night. These kinds of issues can build up over time, however one-off occasions are more likely to be forgotten.

Other Problems

The disposal of waste (or lack of it) can really upset your neighbours. It smells, it can attract rats and no one wants to live next to such accumulations. Make yourself aware of waste collection days, the correct use of black/green bins, and make sure your waste is put out on the right day. Try using a rota or have a nominated bin person to put the waste out.

Things you should know

- Every house in South Gloucestershire has 6 containers for rubbish, recyclable and compostable waste.
 - **Green box** for dry recyclables (Glass bottles and Jars, Food and drink cans (washed out please) Textiles (In bags please), Used engine oil, Metal foil),
 - **Green wheeled bin** for garden waste
 - **Large grey 25 litre food waste bin** with a green lid and **smaller grey five litre kitchen caddy** for food waste,
 - **Green paper** recycling bag
 - **Lime Green 60 litre bag** for your cardboard
 - **White 60 litre bag** for your plastic bottles and
 - **Black wheeled bin** for everything else.
- You get a weekly kerbside collection of food waste. A fortnightly collection of plastic bottles and the black bin for household rubbish that can't be recycled, a fortnightly collection of garden waste, cardboard, glass, paper, cans and a range of other items that can be recycled
- You need to know when your collection day is, and the cycle of "Green and Black bin" weeks. If you forget to put your black bin out, it will be a further 2 weeks before it will be collected again. If you are going to be away on your collection day, make arrangements with friends or a neighbour to put your bin out for you.
- If you do miss a collection, we would advise that you bag up all fresh rubbish and take it to one of the Councils SORT IT!* Centres (Civic Amenity Site) every 3 or 4 days, and not allow it to accumulate.
- Ensure your bin is put out on the kerbside and that the lid is down. Bins will **NOT** be collected if they are **not put out**, or if the **lid is left up** even a small amount.
- Side waste even if bagged up will **NOT** be collected.
- If you put the wrong rubbish in your bin eg. Refuse in the green bin, the bin will not be emptied, and you will need to remove the waste and place it in the correct bin or take it to the SORT IT!* Centre, before it will be collected.
- Large families (usually 6 or more) those with particular medical needs and families with babies may be eligible for a larger or additional bin, for which there will be a small annual charge.

Household waste can be taken to one of the 4 SORT IT!* Centres, located at; Collett Way, Yate. Station Rd. Little Stoke. Carsons Rd. Mangotsfield and Thornbury Industrial Estate.

And..... If Your Neighbour does Complain !

Your neighbour may feel comfortable enough to approach you with any issues they may have. Be sympathetic, try your best to address their problems and share their problems with your housemates.

The Serious Stuff

South Gloucestershire Council has a statutory duty to investigate complaints about noise, smoke, odours and accumulations of waste. In the event of a complaint, a letter will be sent to both parties asking for information to reinforce their case. This is usually done through completion of log sheets and communications with both parties. Officers will then consider the information and take steps to solve the problem; these steps can range from informal discussions to prosecution.

In the event of a Statutory Nuisance being found, an Abatement Notice can be served upon the persons responsible. This can prohibit noise or odours emanating from the premises and may carry a heavy fine should the notice be breached. Failure to comply with this Notice is a criminal offence and upon conviction, Magistrates may impose a fine of £5,000.

We also have powers to seize noise-making equipment, which is or has been causing a noise nuisance.

It is also possible for your Landlord to evict you if you are in breach of your tenancy agreement if you have signed a Shorthold Tenancy Agreement

Advice

The Environmental Protection Team can also provide advice on the following issues:-

- Smoke Complaints
- Drainage
- Pest Control
- Filthy and Verminous Premises
- Accumulations and Deposits

If you have any queries regarding noise disturbance or other environmental issues, advice is free and is available from www.southglos.gov.uk/envpro or contact the Environmental Protection Team at 01454 868001

If you have any other issues you can seek advice from the following organisations:-

Citizens Advice Bureau - www.adviceguide.org.uk

National Union of Students - www.nusonline.co.uk

Avon and Somerset Police – www.avonandsomerset.police.uk

University of West England Students Union – www.uwesu.net

Mediation UK – www.mediationuk.org.uk

Free Internet access is available at all South Gloucestershire libraries

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