

Problems with Housemates

Sharing a house can be a great way to save money and live with friends, but it isn't always smooth sailing. It's really important that you think carefully about who you want to live with; your friend's bad habits could quickly become a serious annoyance and it's not easy to leave a house share as you'll be tied into a contract. Even if you have chosen your housemates carefully, major problems can erupt in a shared house and you may find that living with someone turns out to be incredibly stressful.

Common issues

In a shared house, there are many things that can cause an issue. For example, your housemates may not be paying their portion of the rent, or undertaking their share of household tasks. They might make too much noise, or behave antisocially.

Remember, everything you do in a shared house will affect your housemates in some way. It can be helpful to set some boundaries at the beginning of your tenancy. For example:

- Agreeing a date for split bills to be paid
- Knocking before entering bedrooms or bathrooms
- Letting your housemates know if you intend to have overnight guests
- Not taking other people's food or drink without getting prior permission
- Washing your own dishes
- Agreeing on a cleaning rota so everyone has a responsibility to keep the house clean
- Being courteous with noise levels after a certain time
- Keeping mess in communal areas to a minimum
- Be courteous when having guests round to your house

These may sound petty, but things like this are the most common cause of disputes between housemates.

What about when things go wrong?

The first step towards solving any problem with your housemates is to discuss the situation. You may be able to reach a satisfactory compromise before the problem gets too serious. Consider inviting an impartial person from outside your household to help negotiate.

It may be worth asking the landlord or letting agent for help if talking doesn't help sort out the problem. In some cases the landlord may be able to take action against the person responsible, though you cannot force them to do so.

We can help you through this process.

Extreme issues

In extreme situations, you may be able to get help from the council or the police. This is only likely to be possible when:

- Noise or damage is so severe that it has become a serious nuisance
- Another tenant has threatened you with violence

- There is racial, homophobic or sexual harassment.
- Another tenant is partaking in criminal behaviour such as drug use

In you are struggling with your housing situation, you can make an appointment to speak with one of our Advisors.