



Housing and COVID-19- Frequently Asked Questions

I've been told I have to pay council tax for part of June as I'm a final-year student, can I get around this?

If you live in private rented accommodation and your course finishes before the end of your tenancy, you may be required to pay council tax. Most finalists will finish on or around the 12th with most tenancies finishing on 30th June. Reading Borough Council have estimated that most houses will be charged around £90 in Council Tax for this period. Make sure to pay the tax in a timely manner to avoid extra charges or court summons. If you need any help or support, contact the Advice Service on www.rusu.co.uk/getadvice.

Further information can be found on our website here:

https://www.rusu.co.uk/pageassets/advice/money/Finalists_May_2020_Final.pdf

Is it legal for me to go back to Reading to collect my stuff even though it's a 4-hour drive?

Students who left their student accommodation and now wish to travel back to recover their belongings that they may do so as long as they follow the precautions. More information can be found here:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/student-guide-to-coronavirus/student-faq/>

I left my student house in a rush and I have all my stuff- but do I need to come back to Reading just to do a deep clean?

You are still in contract with your landlord – therefore the terms and conditions are still in place. Costs for cleaning and damages can be taken from your deposit.

If you are concerned about the cleaning of your property, it will be worth speaking with your landlord to see if a cleaning company can be obtained – you may even wish to ask the landlord to go halves on the costs this may incur – however landlords are not obligated to do this.

More information in regard to deposit deductions can be found here:

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/tenancy_deposits/tenancy_deposit_deductions_your_landlord_can_make

I'm worried that my new house might not be clean enough, especially if a previous resident had Coronavirus. Do landlords/tenants have any extra cleaning responsibilities at the moment?

The Government's emergency measures for dealing with the Coronavirus does not excuse landlords from their legal responsibilities. They are still required to provide and maintain safe and decent accommodation, to provide those certificates demanded by law, to abide by their side of the tenancy agreement, including allowing their tenants 'quiet enjoyment' of their accommodation. They must also fulfil their 'right to rent' obligations.

Further guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

I have signed a housing contract for next year, but I'm an international student and I might not be able to come back to the UK in September- what happens now?

If you find yourself in this situation, contact the Advice Service as each case is individual and the advice team can support your unique circumstances.

I'm moving into a new house, but someone in that house won't be able to move out. What can I do?



Government advice states that if a person is self-isolating or has tested positive for Covid-19, it is not appropriate to move. More information on moving home can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-advice-on-home-moving-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Should you find yourself in this situation contact the Advice Service.

I'm an international final-year student still living in Reading, but I'm not allowed to go home- where can I live when my contract runs out at the end of June, and where can I keep my stuff?

If this may be a possibility for you, we ask that you seek advice, as each case is individual. Some further advice on leaving your belongings can be found on the Department of Education blog here:
<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/04/09/university-students-covid19-faq/>

My landlord/estate agent wants to come into the house for inspections, but I don't think that's safe! What can I do?

Landlords are still required to provide and maintain safe and decent accommodation, to provide those certificates demanded by law. Further guidance can be found under repairs and access to your home here:
https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/coronavirus#Repairs_and_access_to_your_home

Can we now book rooms for 2020/21?

Private rented accommodation and estate agents are now open providing they adhere to guidance. Further advice can be found here:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888843/Updated_Landlord_and_Tenant_Guidance.pdf

Further information on student University Halls of Residence can be found here:
<http://www.reading.ac.uk/Ready-to-Study/accommodation.aspx>

My landlord is trying to kick me out early- what can I do?

It is best to check what kind of tenancy you have with your landlord. The type of tenancy you have will effect what process your landlord has to complete in order for you to leave a property.

A tenancy checker can be found here:

https://england.shelter.org.uk/legal/security_of_tenure/tenancy_checker

Enhanced rules have been brought in around eviction (until June 30th) in light of Covid-19. More information can be found here:

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/coronavirus#Eviction_and_being_asked_to_leave

As many tenancies are due to expire on June 30th 2020 you can refer to the tenancy deposit scheme that your deposit is kept in for further advice and guidance on moving out due to the Covid-19. Further information can be found here:

TDS Scheme: <https://www.tenancydepositscheme.com/covid-19/>

My Deposit Scheme: <https://www.mydeposits.co.uk/uncategorized/landlord-covid-19-faqs/>

Deposit Protection Scheme: <https://www.depositprotection.com/news/latest-news/2020/deposit-protection-during-the-coronavirus-crisis-your-questions-answered/>

RUSU Advice Service

The RUSU Advice Service can provide advice to any Reading University students while they are enrolled or students who sought advice during the period of their enrolment which has extended into their period of graduation. You can get advice at www.rusu.co.uk/getadvice



Further advice from the University of Reading's Community Relations Officer:

How do I get rid of unwanted items?

There are lots of recycling banks around Reading and Wokingham. Visit the [Re3 website](#) or Re3cyclopedia mobile phone app and enter your postcode to find your closest recycling bank. You can also take items to the recycling centre (tip) but you need to [book a pre-arranged slot](#). Please do not leave rubbish and recycling on your kerbside or in overflowing bins.

How do I say goodbye to my friends and stay safe?

We understand it is tough not being able to celebrate with your friends in the usual way, but please do stay safe by socialising at a distance in the park or a local green space. Please do consider your neighbours who may have been in strict lock-down and who haven't been able to socialise or see family members during this time.