



University of Plymouth Student Accommodation Office



**a guide to choosing
approved
accommodation**

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Welcome and introduction

The aim of this booklet is to provide you with useful information that will help you find somewhere suitable to live in Plymouth. Please take the time to read this information. If you would like further advice, please contact our office.

We understand that it may be difficult for you to take time out of your summer to come to Plymouth and look for accommodation. However, due to the type of agreement that the landlord will ask you to sign, it is in your interest that you do not accept a property without first having seen it for yourself.

Please note that rooms within university-managed halls or university-allocated cluster flats may occasionally become available due to a cancellation. **Due to the tight timeframes available, these can only be offered to a student who personally visits our office.** Therefore if you are visiting Plymouth to look at approved accommodation, you may wish to call into our office to check if there are any cancellations on that day.

New Students' Welcome Centre

The University invites all new students to visit the Roland Levinsky Building (number 33 on the campus map) between Monday 12th September and Thursday 22nd September to obtain details of clubs, societies, organised social events for new students and other general information.

Student Accommodation Office

Contact Details

Ground floor office, Mary Newman Building
[Campus Map](#) number 22

Telephone +44 (0)1752 588644

Fax +44 (0)1752 588645

Email accommodation@plymouth.ac.uk

Website www.plymouth.ac.uk/accommodation

Opening Hours

Monday - Thursday 8.30 am – 5.00 pm

Friday 8.30 am – 4.30 pm

If you are unable to visit during office hours, arrangements can be made for you to collect printed details of available properties from the Security Operations Room during a weekend. Please contact our office by 12 noon on the Thursday before you plan to come.

Our Service

Our office has a large database of private accommodation in Plymouth. Each property is visited by our team to check standards of safety and suitability. The safety provision varies depending on the size and set up of each unit of accommodation.

Safety standards

The University requires that the properties have:

- a current gas safety certificate
- a fire alarm system suitable for the type of property
- fire extinguishers installed and fire blankets situated in the kitchens
- an electrical safety certificate

Plymouth City Council Private Sector Housing Department also gives advice and guidance to landlords. However, the ultimate responsibility for the property's safety lies with the landlord and we suggest that you always ask to see the relevant safety certificates.

Grading

Properties on our database, except homestay, are graded A, B and C. **All properties must meet safety standards regardless of the grade.**

Grade A: A grade properties will have been maintained to an 'as new' standard, offering quality facilities, décor and management. Grade A properties often include additional features such as broadband, dishwashers and digital TV.

Grade B: B grade properties offer a good standard of accommodation. Some features may not be 'as new', for example, the carpets may be perfectly sound but are now slightly marked. The range of facilities may be comparable to an A grade property although they may be less consistent in quality. In some cases a B grade property may have smaller rooms or less communal space.

Grade C: this is a basic standard for properties that must also be presented in a clean condition at the start of the tenancy. General furnishings and fittings may be older and marked, and carpets may be older and worn. The interior and the exterior of the property could possibly benefit from redecoration. Grade C properties may have only basic furnishing with fewer additional comforts e.g. a microwave may not be provided.

The grade was given at the time of the last visit and therefore when you view the property the standards and range of facilities may have changed.

Types of accommodation in Plymouth

We have provided a basic guide here, showing the range of accommodation available. Further information and photographs can be found on our website.

Student share houses	Average weekly cost £65 - £90
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- Most common type of accommodation
- Generally within 15-20 minutes walk of campus
- Competitive rents
- Generally large bedrooms, separate communal lounge and courtyard gardens
- Most have parking in the residents' parking scheme - currently £30 per year
- Storage for bikes and surfboards is often available

Large Houses	Average weekly cost £65 - £90
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- Properties can range in size from 8,9,10 up to 31 bedrooms
- Particularly popular with first year students as they meet the general requirements many have for accommodation (i.e. living with other first year students, close to campus, with opportunities for making new friends)
- Some benefit from large communal rooms that have facilities such as a pool table and/or Sky TV
- Competitive rents

Studios	Average weekly cost £95 – £140
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- Small purpose built units usually for individuals but sometimes for couples
- Each unit has its own kitchen facilities, shower room and a combined living and bedroom area
- Most have been purpose-built for student occupation within recent years
- Ideally suited for students who want their own space
- Benefit from the same good locations enjoyed by the other types of accommodation available
- Some have communal areas

Homestay	Average weekly cost Catered £80 - £95 Self-catered £70 - £90
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- Renting a room within a landlord's own home
- The most flexible type of accommodation - students sign a Licence rather than an Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreement
- If you pay rent on a monthly basis, you will be able to give a month's notice to leave the property
- Accommodation can vary from a typical family home to that of a student or single working person who has a spare room
- Generally considered to be a quieter type of accommodation
- Some landlords offer catered homestay, providing an agreed number of meals each week; there is a very limited availability
- Accommodation generally within either walking distance or a short bus journey

Managing Agents

There are also a number of managing agents that offer property for the student market who have signed up to good practice guidelines; these are listed on pages 23-26 and on our website. Please remember to thoroughly check any agreement before you sign it.

Please note that the SAO does not view the properties that are managed by agencies. You must therefore carry out your own checks on the safety standards within the property when you visit.

Please be aware that some agents charge a non-returnable fee for their service. More information can be found on our webpages.

Information about approved properties

Students can visit our office where our team can print out details of accommodation from our database and discuss your preferences. Alternatively, you can view the database of approved accommodation via the Applicant Portal. This allows you personally to search for properties. Each of these services is explained in detail below:

What you get if you come to the office

We can explain the different types of accommodation available.

We will print out details of accommodation from the database. You will then contact the landlord directly using the details provided and view the property to see if it is suitable.

The details will be a printout from our database which describes what is provided by the landlord. **These details do not form a binding agreement.** The landlord will give you a contract to sign which you should check carefully to make sure it reflects what you and the landlord have agreed. **It is the contract that is legally binding.** Should you require further details of accommodation, please return to our office.

You can also use the Applicant Portal to look at our list of accommodation for yourself. Details on how to do this are on the following pages.

What you get if you use the Applicant Portal

Students can access our database of approved accommodation without visiting our office. The Applicant Portal allows access to the database which includes a search facility to help you find suitable properties.

Logging on

To log on enter the following into the address bar:

<https://eservices.plymouth.ac.uk/app/>

You will be prompted to enter your personal details on our 'e@pplicant login'

Once you have entered the search facility, please follow the steps provided to look at property listings.

Searching for properties

- Enter how many letting bedrooms you need in your property. This is the number of vacant rooms in a property you require.

The results will be displayed according to the closest match to the number of rooms that you searched for. Shared houses of up to 31 letting bedrooms are available. Larger properties will always appear on the final pages of the list.

- Next, select the type of property you are looking for. Pages 6 and 7 of this document explain the different types of property available on the database.

Before showing your results some useful information will appear, please read this before scrolling down.

- Click 'continue search'.

Available properties that best meet your selected requirements will then be listed. This list may be quite long reflecting the wide variety of properties on the database. It may therefore be useful to consider different factors.

For example, if you are looking for a student share property, look at the total number of rooms in the property - how many people you would like to share with? You might also consider the grade of the property.

- Select a property to view information about it.

Details will include the cost of rent and the deposit; what is included in the rent (i.e. gas, electricity, water etc); the facilities in the property (e.g. washing machine, number of bathrooms etc); whether the landlord will accept smokers; and other information such as the landlord's contact details. Some landlords will also have provided photographs of their properties.

Looking at this information will help you to refine your search further. **Please remember that properties are listed in order of the number of rooms. Larger properties will therefore appear at the end of the list.**

Should you have any queries about using the search facility, please contact our office.

Viewing properties

Once you have details of available accommodation you should telephone the landlord and agree a convenient time to meet him/her at the property. Make sure that you have a written list of all the questions you want to ask, and a list of items that you would like within the property e.g. broadband.

We strongly recommend that all students visit Plymouth to choose their accommodation and suggest that you be prepared to stay at least one night. We appreciate in many cases that this represents a significant inconvenience and expense. However, as accommodation is typically secured by a fixed term agreement it is important that you are certain of the suitability of the accommodation selected.

If you book accommodation by signing an agreement with a landlord without visiting the property, you may still be liable for the rent for the length of the contract should you not take up residence.

Many landlords work during the day and will be unable to show their property until early evening.

The University offers temporary accommodation for this purpose at reduced rates, please see page 21 for details or see the Tourist Board website for details of guesthouses.

If you are arriving outside office hours please contact us. By prior arrangement, we can leave lists of some accommodation in the Security Operations Room (number 36 on [Campus Map](#)).

What to expect?

The vast majority of properties are within a 15-20 minute walk of campus and in areas that house many students. Within these areas you will often find cafes, bars, 24-hour shops and other facilities that contribute to student life.

As properties are occupied between September and June, landlords use July, August and early September as the main time to refresh and improve their accommodation, and introduce new facilities etc. We ask you to consider this when visiting properties as sometimes works may be in progress. If the landlord promises that works are going to be completed between the time you book the accommodation and when you move in, make sure that you get this **agreed in writing** as part of the contract.

Specific requirements

If you are a student with a family, please note that family accommodation is not easy to find in Plymouth. It will be necessary for you to use commercial letting agents in the city. Details of managing agents we work with can be found on pages 23-26 or on our website.

Most landlords do not allow pets in their properties. You would need to discuss the pet you wish to bring when initially contacting the landlord.

Important information about renting approved accommodation

Contracts

You will usually be signing an **Assured Shorthold Tenancy** agreement. This is a **legally binding contract for a set period of time**, usually at least 10 months. Once you sign, you may be **legally committed to paying the rent for the whole of the set period, whether you actually live there or not.**

Some landlords and agencies offer longer agreements but **most students only require 10 months in line with their course length.** Carefully consider whether you need a longer contract to fit your course commitments.

Students whose academic courses run for twelve months are advised to sign a contract for the duration of their studies. Experience shows it can be difficult to secure a room for those last few weeks when you may need to concentrate fully on your studies.

If you do not know the other tenants before you move in, then you should sign an individual contract for the property. Whilst you will all be liable for looking after the communal areas, you will only be responsible for paying your own share of the rent and any agreed bills.

Group tenancies are usually for groups of friends, who sign a contract together on the same day and, by doing so, become jointly liable for the whole rental period.

Some landlords may request details of a guarantor, who will be contacted in the event of non-payment to pay the outstanding rent.

Read the contract very carefully and check that it corresponds to what you have verbally agreed with the landlord.

Questions to ask should include the following:

- Which bills are incorporated in your rent and which are not?
- What cleaning and/or maintenance you are expected to do both during your tenancy and when you leave?
- What are your responsibilities as a tenant and what are the landlord's responsibilities?

In homestay accommodation, you will normally be asked to sign a **licence**. This is usually a set of 'house rules'. Listed will be dates for paying the rent and the amount you need to pay, any rules for overnight guests and possible times for turning off loud music etc.

If you have any doubts about signing a contract, you can check out your queries at the Student Accommodation Office or at the [Students' Union Advice Centre](#) before you sign.

When you sign a contract, you will usually pay an amount to reserve the property which will then become your returnable damage deposit when you move in. Obtain a receipt for any money you pay and make sure it states clearly what you have paid for. **If you do not take up the tenancy the landlord may retain this money and hold you to the contract.**

The contract will state how much rent you have to pay and the date on which you have to pay it. Most landlords ask for their rent termly in advance.

Tenancy Deposits

Any deposit paid to a landlord for an Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreement (please note this does not apply to homestay properties) must be protected in a government authorised **Tenancy Deposit Scheme**. The Government has introduced this scheme to ensure that, where entitled, tenants get their deposits back, and where there is a disputed amount a mechanism is in place for resolving the dispute.

It is important to check and sign a full **inventory** with the landlord at the start of the tenancy, as any dispute about damage deductions will have to be evidenced.

Within 14 days of the beginning of the tenancy, the landlord or agent is required to give you details of how your deposit is protected. This should include the following:

- contact details of the tenancy deposit scheme;
- contact details of the landlord or agent;
- how to apply for the release of the deposit;
- information explaining the purpose of the deposit;
- what to do if there is a dispute about the deposit.

If you require any further information on the Tenancy Deposit Scheme, please visit

www.direct.gov.uk/en/TenancyDeposit.

Bills

If the landlord is paying the bills they should notify the gas, electric and water providers that they have new tenants and arrange to have the meters read. You should check that this has been done and agree the figures.

If you are responsible for paying the bills, make sure you read the meters when you move in and advise the utility company. You do not want to pay for charges you have not incurred. Set up arrangements so that everyone is paying their share and ensure bills are paid regularly.

Make sure that you know where the main stop cock for the water supply is located and where to turn off the gas and electricity in case of an emergency.

Please note that students with individual contracts who have their own TV are required by law to have a TV licence for their room. Please visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk/studentinfo for further information.

Council Tax

Properties which are occupied exclusively by full time students are not liable for council tax. The Council will cross reference the details which you provide to your landlord with a list of students provided by the University. However, if you do receive a form from the Council Tax Department, you must complete and return it as a matter of urgency. Please note: if you are a part time student, or cease to be a student, then council tax may become due.

Inventory

Make sure that when you move in, you check all the facilities against an inventory. The landlord will usually provide one but if he/she doesn't, make your own and give a copy to the landlord. This will act as a record of the condition of goods provided when you moved in. It is also advisable to take photos of the property so that if there are any discrepancies over damage or the condition of your room when you leave the property, you will have photographic evidence to present to the landlord; please ensure all photographs are dated.

Insurance

Make sure that your personal belongings are insured. If you vacate the property over the holidays, do not leave anything of value in the property.

Cleaning

Many students set up a cleaning rota - especially in larger properties - for the cleaning of the communal areas (such as the kitchen and lounge) and for taking out the rubbish each week. Each individual student is responsible for their own room and cleaning the bathroom after they have used it.

Security

- Close and lock doors and windows – don't give burglars easy access to your home.
- Leave a light on when you go out at night.
- Security mark your property with ultra-violet or permanent marker pen.
- Be responsible about who you allow into the house.

- Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are available to give safety advice to students.

Car Parking

There is a limited amount of car parking in Plymouth. In keeping with the University's environmental policy, we recommend that students **do not** bring their cars with them.

However, Plymouth City Council runs a residents' permit parking scheme. If you wish to bring your car you must check with your landlord, **before** signing any tenancy agreement, whether residents' on-street parking is available in your area (usually at an annual cost - currently £30.00).

Please contact Plymouth City Council on 01752 304021 for further information or see <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/permitparking>

Living in the community

Whatever type of accommodation you live in, your behaviour will impact upon your neighbours - many of whom will be families - or who have different work patterns from students. You should bear this in mind when coming home late at night and act responsibly.

Your rubbish must be put out weekly – check with your landlord the day of collection. **Plymouth City Council may apply fixed penalty charges for residents who put their refuse out at the wrong time.**

Any Problems?

If you have any concerns or problems once you have moved into your property, you should first discuss them with your landlord and put your concerns **in writing** to him/her.

When you leave the property at the end of the tenancy, you must ensure that you have thoroughly cleaned throughout, removed all food items from fridges, freezers and cupboards and put all rubbish out. Failure to clean the property could result in the landlord having to supply cleaners and deductions being made from your deposit. You should ask your landlord to come to the house on the day of departure to collect your keys and check through your inventory. If your landlord has not returned your deposit because of damage you have caused, he/she must provide you with receipts for items replaced.

You should receive your deposit money back if you have not caused any damage and have paid all bills. This will usually be returned within one month of you vacating.

If you have any concerns with regard to the return of your damage deposit, you must first write to the landlord asking for a written explanation.

Plymouth campus – check it out

University-managed halls are available at a reduced rate whilst you look for your accommodation.

You can stay in these halls during the summer vacation from £18.00 per night. You may use the communal kitchen to prepare your own food and drinks but bed linen is not provided.

Rooms are available from Friday 24th June – Thursday 8th September 2011.

For further information please visit www.plymouth.ac.uk/summeraccommodation or telephone 01752 588599

PLEASE NOTE: This service is provided by the Summer Accommodation Office not the Student Accommodation Office.

Summer Accommodation

University of Plymouth,
Drake Circus,
Plymouth
PL4 8AA.

Tel: (01752) 588599

Fax: (01752) 588982

Email: summeraccommodation@plymouth.ac.uk

Web: www.plymouth.ac.uk/summeraccommodation

Useful telephone numbers

British Airways	0844 493 0787
Plymouth Airport	(01752) 204090
Plymouth City bus	0845 077 2223
National Express Coaches	08717 818181
Traveline - Bus Enquiries	0871 200 22 33
National Rail Enquiries	08457 484950
ELECTRICITY - Western Power 24hr Emergency	0800 365900
GAS - National Grid Emergency	0800 111 999
WATER - South West Water Emergency	0800 169 1144
HEALTH - NHS Direct	0845 46 47
HOSPITALS	
Derriford	0845 155 8155
Eye Infirmary	0845 155 8094
Mount Gould	(01752) 268001
Seven Trees	(01752) 260071
MEDICAL PRACTICES	
Beaumont Villas	(01752) 663776
Peverell Park Surgery	(01752) 791438
University of Plymouth Medical Centre	(01752) 222341
Plymouth City Council, Civic Centre	(01752) 668000
Police, emergency	999
Job Centre, Buckwell Street	(01752) 201766
Citizens Advice Bureau, 32 Mayflower Street	08448 269717
The Samaritans (24hr emotional support)	(01752) 221666
UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH	
Students Union	(01752) 588388
Security Operations Room	(01752) 233210
Health and Welfare	(01752) 782046
Student Funding	(01752) 587680
Library	(01752) 588737
Student Union Support and Advice	(01752) 588373
Racial Harassment Monitoring Group (24hr free phone)	0800 374 618

Managing Agencies

Disclaimer: Agencies and Managing Agents who specialise in letting to students are listed here. As these are professional management services working on behalf of property owners, the Student Accommodation team does not inspect these properties. Please ensure the property you choose has a current gas safety certificate. We cannot guarantee that any of the properties are safe or will meet your requirements. You must therefore rely on your own inspection and enquiries.

Accredited Agencies

[Chris Shorey Lettings Ltd](#)

Compton House
11-12 Gibbon Lane
North Hill
Plymouth PL4 8BS

Tel: 01752 600485

Email: director@chrisshorey.co.uk

Web: www.plymouthstudents.co.uk

[Cool Digs](#)

Chaplains House
Tavistock Road
Princetown PL20 6RE

Tel: 07949 150150 and 07908 150150

Email: info@cooldigs.co.uk

Web: www.cooldigs.co.uk

Home & Student Link

54 North Hill
Plymouth PL4 8EU

Tel: 01752 221186

Email: info@homeandstudentlink.co.uk

Web: www.homeandstudentlink.co.uk

Signpost Homes

Hawthorne House
Emperor Way
Exeter Business Park
Exeter EX3QS

Tel: 07977 014676 and 0845 4560 444

Email: susan.smith@sha.co.uk

Web: www.signpost-homes.co.uk

Tower Lettings and Property Management Limited

The Office
Central Park Towers
28 Central Park Avenue
Plymouth PL4 6NE

Tel: 01752 670666

Email: letting@towersproperty.co.uk

Web: www.towersproperty.co.uk

Registered Agencies

B & K Property Services

41 Glendower Road
Peeverell
Plymouth PL3 4LA

Tel: 07834 770190 and 07971 083216

Email: bsand37@aol.com

Web: www.plymouthstudentlets.co.uk

Clever Student Lets

2 Queen Anne Terrace
North Hill
Plymouth PL4 8EF

Tel: 01752 500511

Email: henry@ipsplymouth.co.uk

Web: www.cleverstudentlets.co.uk

Drake Accommodation Service

87 North Hill
Plymouth PL4 8JT

Tel: 01752 225995 and 01752 266878

Email: office@drake.uk.com

Web: www.drake.uk.com

Plymouth Letting Agency Limited

6 North Road East
North Hill
Plymouth PL4 6AS

Tel: 01752 267666

Email: info@plymouthlettingagency.com

SAMS Accommodation

13A Knighton Road
Wembury
Plymouth PL9 0EA

Tel: 01752 862730

Email: info@samsaccommodation.co.uk

Web: www.samsaccommodation.co.uk

Student Property Services

10 Queen Anne Terrace
North Hill
Plymouth PL4 8EG

Tel: 01752 204320

Email: info@spsplymouth.co.uk

Web: www.spsplymouth.co.uk

NOTES

Property	Details (rent, time of viewing, etc)



Student Accommodation Office
University of Plymouth
Drake Circus
Plymouth
Devon
PL4 8AA

Tel: +44 (0)1752 588644

Fax: +44 (0)1752 588645

accommodation@plymouth.ac.uk

www.plymouth.ac.uk/accommodation