

UoR Local Neighbourhood Guidance (Easy-Read Version)

Guidance supporting students and local residents to live together positively in the neighbourhood.

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What is UoR Local Neighbourhood Guidance?

This guidance has been created to help students settle into the neighbourhood, provide information on being a considerate neighbour and prevent problems arising from differing lifestyles. It also outlines the steps students and local residents can take if they are facing an issue.

Noise

A common misconception is that providing loud music is not played after 11pm, then it is admissible. The volume of noise must be reasonable at **all times**.

The majority of student houses have thin walls and are based on narrow streets, so noise is often amplified. This might mean that noise can be louder than your neighbours will hear.

Consideration of Noise

As noise can often be amplified, please be considerate of the following activities:

- Playing music or games (including in outdoor spaces such as gardens)
- Watching television
- Coming home after a night out

Furthermore, you are advised not to mount loudspeakers on walls shared with your neighbours, as this can cause damage to both your household and neighbouring properties

Please be considerate as neighbours in the student housing area include families with young children and elderly residents who would like to rest in a quieter environment.

As a household, you are **collectively responsible** for the noise created by both you and your housemates.

What else can cause noise at night?

We understand that students will go out in the evening, we ask that they are considerate when returning home, including considering:

- The slamming of doors in the property
- Late-night guests
- Conversations, taking place inside and outside of the property

- Footsteps on stairs, which can be amplified at night

You can help to reduce the noise by:

- Closing doors carefully, ensuring they are not left to slam shut
- It is very easy to unintentionally raise your voice, especially when inviting friends back to your home. We suggest keeping conversations to a low volume or having them during the day
- Removing footwear can help to reduce noise when ascending or descending the stairs

Walking through residential areas

Keep noise to a minimum when walking through residential areas at night and when waiting at the bus stops. Be aware of the cumulative noise created if you are with a large group.

Litter and bottles should be disposed of in bins. Broken glass is dangerous for our community, including animals and young children.

Walk through residential areas respectfully, this includes, but isn't limited to, ensuring you do not damage personal property, kick over bins, urinate or vomit in the street. Any criminal damage will be reported to the police.

Parties

When organising a party, give your neighbours plenty of notice and agree on a reasonable finishing time to ensure noise is kept to a minimum, particularly after 11pm. Please be aware, you are responsible for guests, so ensure they respect your neighbours when they visit and leave your home.

Please consider where neighbours have, for example, young children who need to get up for school the following day.

Hold your party at the weekend to minimise disturbance.

Waste

You are responsible for properly dealing with and keeping on top of all the waste you and your housemates create. This includes ensuring that:

- Only recyclable waste is thrown into your red bin (there should be no plastic bags, with recyclable waste disposed loosely into the bin)

- Your bin lids shut properly
- All rubbish bags are thrown into your bins and not left on the street or in your garden.
- Only food scraps and leftover food are thrown into your food bin.

Bins will not be collected if the above requirements are not met. You should be aware of when your bins are collected – you can check this by checking the Reading Borough Council [Waste and Recycling](#) website.

Bins should be stored in your front garden where possible, not leaving them on the street, so that wheelchairs and pushchairs can't get past.

Any glass should be taken to your nearest [glass recycling bank](#) on a regular basis and not left to build up in your front garden.

Bulky waste items left in your front garden or next to the bin on the collection date **will not be collected** by the council.

You can book a free slot and take it to the recycling centre if you have a car or by using the [Anglo Doorstep Collections](#) service to donate clothes, footwear and small household items.

Parking

You are strongly encouraged not to bring your car with you to Reading unless you absolutely need it.

Most student houses are based on narrow streets, so make sure you park considerately. There have been instances where bins haven't been collected as refuse lorries have been unable to drive down the street.

Further information regarding the parking permit scheme can be found on the [Reading Borough Council parking website](#).

If you are a student experiencing a problem while living off campus

Here are some steps you can take to resolve a problem you might be having in your household, with a neighbour or your landlord.

It is always better to deal with the problem immediately, no matter how small you feel it is, rather than ignoring it, which could potentially make it worse. Remember, you are not alone – the University and RSU are here to support

you.

1. Get in touch with the [Student Welfare Team](#). The team can support you throughout your university journey. They have a range of resources on their website to support you.
2. If you feel comfortable, speak to the person or people about the problem you are experiencing. Explain the impact it is having and try to find a solution or compromise so you can have a positive experience while living in the local community.
3. It might be your first time living in private accommodation, get in touch with [Reading Students' Union Advice Service](#), which has dedicated advisors who can support and discuss any problems with you.

If you are a local resident experiencing a problem with your student neighbour

The following are some steps you can take to resolve a student-related problem and how the University can help.

If the University is able to help, it is always better to make us aware of the problem immediately, no matter how small you feel it is, rather than ignoring it and waiting for it to get worse.

Contact us

Get in touch with the Community Engagement team by:

- Calling us on 0118 378 3279 or 0118 378 3577
- Emailing community@reading.ac.uk

When contacting us, please include the following information about the problem:

- Date and time
- Place where the problem has occurred (address or if in the neighbourhood, the street)
- Provide evidence, for example:
 - Doorbell/video recording
 - Audio recording
 - Description of the problem, including any people

If no evidence is provided, we will still look into your concerns, but it can be difficult to resolve the problem.

The Neighbourhood Complaints Officer works on Tuesday and Wednesday morning, so our response may not be immediate. If you have tried giving us a call, please leave a message with your name and number so we can follow up as soon as possible.

Once a complaint is received, the Community Engagement team will decide on what action to take next. Our complaints and disciplinary procedure is outlined below.

Getting support from Reading Borough Council (RBC)

If your problem relates to Anti-Social Behaviour or ongoing noise, you should report to RBC in addition to the university by:

- Visiting the [Noise Nuisance website](#)
- Downloading and reporting on the free [Noise Reporting app](#)

If your problem relates to excess waste, fly-tipping and litter, you should report to RBC in addition to the university by:

- Visiting the [Waste & Recycling website](#)
- Downloading and reporting street cleaning waste on the [Love Clean Reading app](#)

Report the problem to your local Councillor. They are here to represent you, raise the problems you face and lobby for change. The University and local Councillors often work closely together to address problems and identify solutions.

Getting support from Thames Valley Police

If your problem relates to criminal activity, damage or behaviour, then please report it immediately to Thames Valley Police by calling 999.

If relevant, we will support the Police where we can in their investigation. We will only be able to consider disciplinary action (see the process below) if we can identify the students.

For a non-emergency, call 101 or email the local Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) Redlands with Park NHPT@thamesvalley.police.uk.

Process for dealing with student waste issues

The University and RBC's Recycling & Enforcement team are working together to address waste problems. These problems include, but aren't limited to – excess waste, contaminated bins, bulky waste and bins on the pavements.

We run monthly waste audits in the Erleigh Road/Addington Road and Grange Avenue areas, where we walk around the student areas and identify waste issues. Once a problem is identified, we will take the following actions:

1. A first warning notice is sent to the student tenants within 1 week of the problem being identified. Advice is provided to the student tenants about how they can deal with the problem, and a reminder that this should be rectified within 2 weeks to avoid further action being taken.
2. If the problem isn't rectified within 2 weeks, the student tenants are sent a final notice from RBC's Recycling & Enforcement team. Tenants are reminded that this should be rectified within 2 weeks to avoid being summoned to a University disciplinary investigation.
3. If the problem isn't rectified within 2 weeks, the student tenants are summoned to a University disciplinary investigation meeting in accordance with the University's [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#).

University complaints and disciplinary procedure

The following are the steps the Community Engagement team will take when responding to a complaint.

- If the problem relates to a specific property, we will first contact the lead student tenant and speak to them directly via phone or by visiting the property. We will then outline our conversation and subsequent actions via email to all student tenants in the property.
- Where appropriate, we will always try to resolve the problem informally first by sharing advice with the student tenants.
- If we are made aware of excessive noise or anti-social behaviour in the local neighbourhood, we can ask the Street Wardens to focus on that specific area. The Street Wardens provide advice to students socialising late at night, encouraging them to be responsible, respectful and safe when travelling through residential areas. They are

a trained team that patrols residential streets between 9pm and 3am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

If the problem cannot be resolved informally or is a serious breach of our [Regulations for Student Conduct](#), then the following procedure will be followed.

If the problem relates to a student property

- The Community Engagement Manager will consider a mediation meeting with the intention of finding a solution or compromise between the student tenants and residents
- The Community Engagement team will send a formal notice to all student tenants with information on the complaint, advice on avoiding further problems and awareness of the disciplinary process if the problem should continue.
- Personal details, such as the complainant's name or where they live, are never shared.

If the problem relates to students in the local neighbourhood

- When the problem occurs in the local neighbourhood, we need to be able to identify the students in order to fully investigate. Where possible, it is important that evidence is provided of the problem which allows the Community Engagement team to clearly identify the students. Please make sure that you prioritise your safety at all times when capturing evidence.
- If the students can be identified, they will be sent a formal warning via email with information on the complaint, advice on avoiding further problems and awareness of the disciplinary procedure if the problem should continue. Personal details, such as the complainant's name and where they live, are never shared.

Escalation of complaints

- If the Community Engagement team are made aware of further similar problems, the students will be invited to a disciplinary investigation meeting in accordance with the University's [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#). A University member of staff will be assigned to lead the disciplinary investigation, to review the alleged misconduct and make a decision on whether any misconduct has occurred.

- The disciplinary investigation will require clear evidence that misconduct has been caused by the student tenants. It is important that, where possible, evidence is provided of the problem.
- Depending on how serious the nature of the complaint is, there may be instances where the Community Engagement team decides to escalate the complaint straight to a disciplinary investigation. The team may also share the complaint with Thames Valley Police who may decide to run their own investigation.