

# UoR Local Neighbourhood Guidance

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

It is a common misconception that providing loud music is not played after 11pm then it is ok. At all times the volume must be reasonable.

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 what your neighbours will hear.

Be considerate of noise when playing music, games, watching television or coming home after a night out, the noise might be disturbing your neighbours. Remember, your neighbours are trying to keep their children asleep, get rest for an early start to work or just relax in their own home.

Be aware of the cumulative effect of music played by you and your housemates upon your neighbours. Remember your neighbour will experience noise from everyone in the house and in your absence, you may not be aware of the noise that is being caused. As a house, you are collectively responsible for the noise created by both you and your housemates.

Do not mount loudspeakers on walls shared with your neighbours.

Noise should be kept to a minimum when in your gardens, especially after 11pm. Avoid using loudspeakers in your garden unless the volume and bass are low.

### What else can cause noise at night?

Slamming doors, late night guests, conversations and stairs/footsteps will all be amplified at night.

Make sure that doors are closed carefully and are not left to slam shut, especially doors that close automatically.

It is very easy to unintentionally raise your voice, especially when inviting friends back to your home, chatting with your housemates or being on the phone.

The sound of running up and down stairs might create a disturbance if heard by your neighbours. Removing footwear can help to reduce noise.

## 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.

You should use a bin for your litter and bottles instead of throwing it on the floor. Broken glass is dangerous, especially to animals and young children.

You should 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

Be considerate when having a party, give your neighbours lots of notice and agree a reasonable finishing time or make sure noise is kept to a minimum after 11pm.

Be aware that you are responsible for your guests. Make sure that your guests respect your neighbours when they visit and leave your home.

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.
- 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 is thrown into your food bin.

It is your responsibility if your bins aren't collected for any of the reasons above.

You should be aware of when your bins are collected – you can check this by looking on your local Council website.

Make sure that you store your bins 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.

Don't leave bulky waste items in your front garden as it won't be collected. You can organise a free collection on your local Council website or a book a free slot and take it to the recycling centre if you have a car. If your landlord has created any bulky waste, it is their responsibility to remove it so make sure you get in touch to request that they deal with it.

## 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.

## **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 RUSU are here to support you.

1. If your problem relates to your welfare or wellbeing, get in touch with the [Student Welfare Team](#). The team is here to support you at all stages of your university journey, regardless of where you live. You can find a range of resources on their website alongside ways to get in touch with the team and get the support you need.
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 the first time you're living in private accommodation or experiencing this problem, so if you need any support get in touch with the [RUSU Advice Service](#). The website has a range of resources and they also have a dedicated Housing Advisor who you can discuss your problem with.

## **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.

### **Dealing with the problem yourself**

If you feel comfortable, speak to the student or group of students 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 near students or the University.

## Getting support from the University

If you are unable to speak to the student or group of students, then get in touch with the Community Relations team via email at [community@reading.ac.uk](mailto:community@reading.ac.uk) or by calling 0118 378 3279 or 0118 378 3577.

You are also welcome to organise a meeting with the Community Relations Manager so you can discuss the problem in person. This can often work better when there are a group of residents facing similar issues.

Make sure to let us know the date, time and place the problem has occurred or is occurring. Where possible, **please provide evidence** of the problem as this will help with our investigation. If no evidence is provided, we will still investigate but it can be difficult to resolve the problem.

The Neighbourhood Complaints Officer works on a 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 Relations team will decide on what action to take next. Our complaints and disciplinary process is outlined below.

## Getting support from Reading Borough Council (RBC)

If your problem relates to ongoing anti-social behaviour or noise you should report this to RBC in addition to the University. You can do this by visiting their [website](#) or report on the Reportable app which can be downloaded for free.

If your problem relates to excess waste, fly-tipping and litter you should also report this to RBC in addition to the University. You can do this by downloading the [Love Clean Reading](#) app for free or via this [form](#).

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.

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.

Call Thames Valley Police on 101 or 999 if it's an emergency or email [RedlandswithParkNHPT@thamesvalley.police.uk](mailto:RedlandswithParkNHPT@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 where we walk around the student area's and identify waste issues. Once a problem is identified we will take the following actions:

1. A first warning 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 warning 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 hearing.
3. If the problem isn't rectified within 2 weeks, the student tenants are summoned to a University disciplinary hearing. A University member of staff will be assigned to lead the disciplinary hearing, to review the alleged misconduct and decide on whether any misconduct has occurred.

We are both small teams and might miss a waste issue so please get in touch with the Community Relations team if you notice a problem via email at [community@reading.ac.uk](mailto:community@reading.ac.uk) or by calling 0118 378 3279 or 0118 378 3577.

At that stage, we can let you know if we are already aware of the problem and what action is being taken, otherwise we will add the address to our database and follow the process.

## **University complaints and disciplinary process**

The following are the steps the Community Relations 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 patrol residential streets between 10pm and 4am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

If the problem is waste related, the University and Reading Borough Councils Recycling & Enforcement team are working together to address the issues. This process is outlined above.

If the problem cannot be resolved informally or is serious then the following steps will be taken.

### **If the problem relates to a student property**

- We will consider organising a mediation meeting between the student tenants and those who have provided the complaint. This will be held by the Community Relations Manager with the intention that student tenants and residents are together able to find a solution or compromise.
- The Community Relations team will identify the student tenants and the lead student tenant will be contacted via phone or by visiting the property. They will be made aware of the complaint and will be given a formal warning. All student tenants will be sent a formal warning via email with information of the complaint, advice on avoiding further problems and awareness of the disciplinary process if the problem should continue. Personal details, such as the complainants name or where they live, are never shared.
- If the Community Relations team are made aware of further similar problems with the student tenants, they will be invited to a disciplinary hearing. A University member of staff will be assigned to lead the disciplinary hearing, to review the alleged misconduct and make a decision on whether any misconduct has occurred.
- The disciplinary hearing will require a clear indication that misconduct has been caused by the student tenants. It is important that, where possible, evidence is provided of the problem. For example, a photograph, noise recording or video footage. Please make sure that you prioritise your safety at all times when capturing evidence.
- Depending on how serious the nature of the complaint is, there may be instances where the Community Relations team decides to escalate the complaint straight to a disciplinary hearing.

### **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 Relations team to clearly identify the students. For example, a photograph, noise recording or video footage. 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 of the complaint, advice on avoiding further problems and awareness of the disciplinary process if the problem should continue. Personal details, such as the complainants name and where they live, are never shared.
- If the Community Relations team are made aware of further similar problems, the students will be invited to a disciplinary hearing. A University member of staff will be assigned to lead the disciplinary hearing, to review the alleged misconduct and make a decision on whether any misconduct has occurred.

- The disciplinary hearing will require a clear indication 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 Relations team decides to escalate the complaint straight to a disciplinary hearing.

## Hello Neighbour

We work in partnership with Reading University Students' Union (RUSU), Reading Borough Council, local Councillors and Thames Valley Police to proactively support students while they live in the local community.

Our Hello Neighbour campaign delivers a range of measures to help students settle into local neighbourhoods, including but not limited to:

- Hello Neighbour Welcome packs including advice on noise, waste, parking and safety alongside encouraging students to introduce themselves to their neighbours. These are delivered to students at the beginning of the academic year and door knocking sessions are run to share the advice verbally. Information is also shared across social media and on dedicated webpages.
- Hello Neighbour postcards posted through doors in areas where there are student houses encouraging local residents to introduce themselves to their student neighbours.
- Hello Neighbour Move Out packs including advice on preparing to move out and what to do if a student is facing any issues.
- Monthly waste audits are run with RBC to identify waste issues.
- A termly Landlord Forum aimed at building better relationships with student landlords.
- Charity collection points on Whiteknights Campus for any belongings that can be reused and unwanted food that is non-perishable and unopened.
- Free 3sixty shuttle bus organised by RUSU that picks up and drops off students to the nightclub on Whiteknights Campus on a Wednesday and Saturday night.