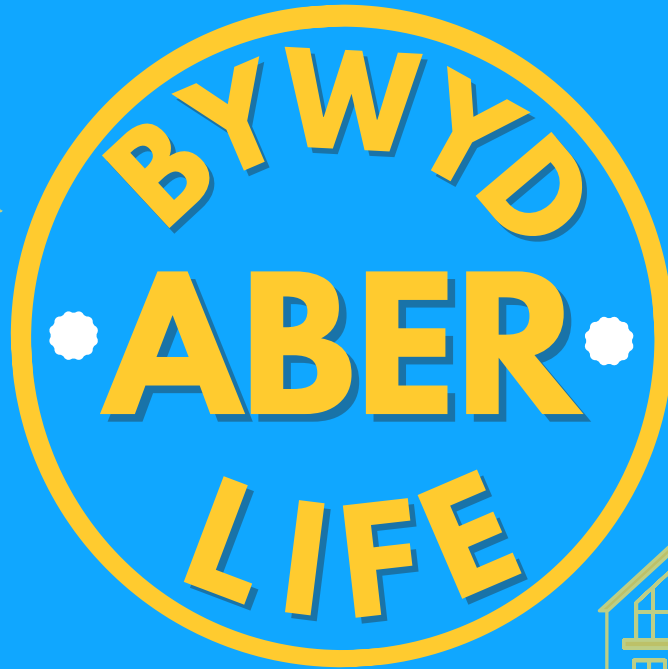


# Community Guide: Accommodating Each Other



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# Living with Others



Living with other people at university can be a fantastic experience and an important part of student life. Here at Aberystwyth, we have a large diverse cohort of students who have different lifestyles and habits, customs, and cultures. This can be an opportunity for personal development and growth, as well as meeting people and making new friends.

Most residents have positive experiences within our accommodation, but sometimes you may need some guidance. The Residence Life Team are here to support you with various aspects of living in your accommodation; they also carry out Flatmate Agreements, Patch Round visits, Drop-Ins and events in term time so look out for them in their yellow t-shirts.

# Flatmate Agreements

The key to success is honest, open and respectful communication.

When you first move into your accommodation, it's likely you will not know any of the people you are living with. During the first two weeks in your new accommodation, try to take the time to get to know your fellow flat/housemates.

Sit down together as a group to discuss some of the **following**:

- **Communal Cleaning** – Communal cleaning is an accountable requirement of living in the accommodation, and as such everybody needs to contribute. If you think it will help, creating a cleaning rota can help keep everyone organised.
- **Boundaries** - Establishing clear boundaries for food and personal belongings. Make sure to tell your flat/housemates what can or can't be shared with or without your permission.
- **Noise Levels** - Come to a mutual agreement surrounding noise levels. Remember to be considerate of other people studying and sleep schedules. Please note that quiet times in University Accommodation are from 23:00 - 08:30 as stated in the Residents' Handbook.
- **Over Night Visitors and Guests** – Make sure to inform your flat/housemates in advance that you have a visitor or guest as they are your responsibility to not leave unattended within your accommodation. Ensure that your visitor or guest fully understands the rules of the flat/house to ensure that they are considerate at all times. Please refer to the Visitor's Policy for further information.
- **Communication** – Keep communication open, clear and respectful within the flat/house. Talk about flat/house issues in person where possible. Even if you have the best of intentions, it is far too easy for the tone of a social media message or post-it note to be misunderstood.



# Guidance to Resolving Issues

What to do when things become an issue:

## Step One – Talk it Out

It's always best to try calmly speaking face to face to the person(s) causing you the problem. This may seem a little uncomfortable but often residents are not aware of how much stress they are causing and how much they are upsetting others. When they do become aware of the stress they are causing others, most residents will change their behaviour. When speaking to someone about a problem in the flat it is important to be honest about your thoughts and feelings. Remember, it is important to be polite but firm when discussing issues with flatmates.

## Step Two – Contact a Residence Assistant

If step one does not have the desired effect, come and chat to one of the RAs on a Drop-In or Patch Round for any support and advice. The information you provide will not be discussed with your flat/housemates without your permission. However, it will allow the member of staff to look at all issues involved. They can help to agree a way forward with you. They may also suggest facilitating a mediation meeting or refer the issue to the management team.

Please see **Page 9** for further information on Patch Rounds and Drop-Ins.

## Step Three – A Mediation Meeting

If the problem brought forward is not resolved by steps one or two it will be raised to the Residence Life Managers to review under the Occupation Contract. Management looks to resolve problems at the lowest level where possible and may suggest a mediated meeting.

### Mediation takes the following approach:

1. Giving individuals involved a chance to be heard and to think about how they can make reasonable adjustments to resolve the issues being raised.
2. Offering individuals involved the opportunity, with support, to find practical solutions that will help everyone.

The Residence Life Manager will remain impartial, and they will review issues raised on a case-by-case basis. They may also be able to offer alternative options such as moving you to either temporary accommodation or a permanent transfer within University Accommodation. Remember that mediation is a way of storing out issues raised, where a mediator helps residents in the dispute reach their own solutions.

# Noise Concerns

Many problems in shared flats or houses concern noise, particularly when deadlines or exams are near. Whilst living in shared accommodation, you have a responsibility to be considerate towards those you live with and to other students who live around you.

Remember, everybody has very different expectations of how they wish to live and what is deemed as a noise issues. They are likely to have different lifestyles, timetables and demands from their course and may be working part-time as well as studying.

Most noise problems can be resolved by communicating effectively about how the noise is making you feel – people may not be aware of their own noise levels and then can make reasonable adjustments.

## Top Tips:

- If you or the person making the noise have been drinking, or the noise is a "one off", it may be better to speak to the person the next day, calmly and politely explaining the problem you have experienced.
- Try not to accuse your flat/housemate of deliberately upsetting you; most people will be glad to do what they can to avoid disturbing others.
- If the noise nuisance is severe at any time please phone the 24/7 University Helpline on (01970 62) 2900. If required, staff will attend and investigate the complaint in confidence.

# Top tips for being the best noise-free flat/housemate

We can all do our part in helping to reduce noise nuisance to others. If you can communicate and are willing to listen, the situation can usually be improved for everyone. Remember your Occupation Contract contains noise restrictions and talks about not being a nuisance to your neighbours.

- Try to reduce the effect of noise from your TV, laptop, or speakers by not placing them directly against the walls.
- Keep control of the bass! Please make sure that the bass is turned down – the bass beat can be particularly irritating, especially at a time where people may be asleep.
- Make sure to use headphones as they will not create external noise and will ensure you can still enjoy your music, film, or gaming.
- If you live with people beneath you, remember to be considerate of your noise levels while moving about in your accommodation during quiet hours
- Remember to be considerate of your noise levels outside of the accommodation blocks at any time of the day.
- If you play a musical instrument, ensure that you practice it at a reasonable time and at a low level.
- Make sure to ask the permission of your flat/housemates if you are going to take over the communal area, or if you feel your evening will be particularly loud. It's considerate to inform them face to face, giving them plenty of notice where possible. Please remember to treat any open objections against your planned activity with respect.
- Be considerate if someone approaches you about the noise disturbance that you are causing. Listen carefully and try to understand others' points of view even if they differ from your own and work to reach a compromise.



# Your responsibilities within accommodation

As a resident, you have the following responsibilities to uphold whilst living with us.

## **Please remember that:**

- Large gatherings are not permitted within your accommodation and can have serious consequences.
- You are responsible for who you allow into your accommodation and how they behave whilst they are your guest. It can be distressing for other flat/housemates and those surrounding the accommodation if they are causing concerns.
- Be aware of others when returning home late at night or during the early hours of the morning. Close doors quietly, refrain from playing music and raising your voices as noise travels when it is quiet.
- Remember to be especially considerate of your noise levels when returning to your accommodation after a few drinks.

# Sometimes things do not go to plan

If you find that communication becomes ineffective and that noise concerns are a frequent issue either within the flat/house or from other accommodations, you can contact the 24/7 University Helpline (01970 62) 2900. This number is located on the back of your AberCard, by calling a member of the Security team they will visit to review the situation at that time.

The RAs of the Residence Life Team also offer assistance towards the residents within accommodation by running Patch Rounds and Drop-In sessions between **Monday to Friday during term-time**.

**Patch Rounds** consist of scheduled visits to your accommodation that allows you the opportunity to speak with your RA about any concerns you may have.

**The Drop-In** service has the RAs present in five different locations around campus with the purpose of listening to residents' concerns and providing the appropriate support, signposting, and guidance.

Throughout the Drop-In, the RAs also provide digital correspondence with their **Live-Chat service** being available during the active Drop-In times.

Please see below for the timetable of locations in which the Drop-In services takes place:

- **Monday:** Y Sgubor, Fferm Penglais
- **Tuesday:** Rosser D Lounge
- **Wednesday:** Hugh Owen Library, Floor D
- **Thursday:** Meeting Room 1, Pantycelyn
- **Friday:** PJM Yellow Lounge

All Drop-In services run between **18:00 – 20:00**

Once an incident has been reported, do bear in mind that a member of the Residence Life Managers may invite you to a meeting to discuss the problem and go through the options available to you.

## **These may include:**

- Support and friendly advice on how you can improve the situation
- Mediation or joint flat/house meeting to amicably resolve any issues
- The possibility of moving to alternative accommodation (subject to availability)
- Making a formal written complaint

# Anti-social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is a general term that refers to behaviour that adversely affects the health, safety, or wellbeing of other people.

Within our accommodation, this can include a variety of issues, such as, damage, setting off fire alarms, tampering with fire extinguishers and window restraints, dumping rubbish, excessive noise, and abusive behaviour both verbally and physically.

You should bear in mind that anti-social behaviour may be displayed by a friend of the resident. The resident contract holder is responsible for the behaviour of any guest brought into the accommodation.

The method of dealing with these issues will vary depending on the nature and extent of the behaviour. **Please be mindful of the following:**

- The University takes damage or tampering with health, safety, and fire equipment extremely seriously, including the removal of window safety restrictors.
- The removal of campus furniture, traffic cones, signs, shopping trolleys and similar items from their original locations is regarded as theft and will be dealt with as such by the University and police if appropriate.
- It is very important when dealing with anti-social behaviour that all residents work together to deal with the problem. Behaviour which may appear amusing at first, can soon be seen as anti-social when it occurs during coursework deadlines, exams or adversely impacts on others.

# Illegal Drugs

The possession, use or supply of illegal substances is not permitted on University campus, as stated within your Occupation Contract.

Here at Aberystwyth, we aim to provide a safe, healthy and supportive environment for our students and staff. We also aim to reduce the use and misuse of drugs and increase awareness and understanding of drug-related issues.

Please remember that:

- The University adheres strictly to the law.
- The use, storage or selling of any illegal drugs, is not permitted in any University managed accommodation or campus grounds.
- The possession, use or storage of nitrous oxide, or any other legal highs is not permitted.
- Students found to be in possession of, or supplying these substances may be required to vacate their accommodation and University disciplinary procedures could apply.
- We have a duty to pass details of any illegal activity occurring within our accommodation and campus to the police.
- If you or someone you know has a problem with drug use, Student Services, and the Student's Union have information and helpline numbers. Student Services also have a confidential Wellbeing service.
- For impartial advice please visit: **[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)**
- For confidential and non-judgemental services please visit **DDAS: [www.Barod.Cymru](http://www.Barod.Cymru)**

# The consequence and costs of anti-social behaviour

Most years some residents' behaviour lands them with an expensive repair or damage bill, and sometimes even disciplinary action or police investigation.

- Damage may not always be the obvious consequence of seemingly harmless fun, but please remember to consider that your actions do have consequences.
- You might think that it is funny to come back to your accommodation after a few drinks and activate the fire alarm system. Interference with fire and safety equipment constitutes to a serious criminal offence and a breach of your contract.
- Keep your flat/house doors closed at all times. One in three burglaries occur as a result of an unlocked doors or windows. Do not let non-residents or students you do not know follow you into a building.
- Smoking and the use of vapes and E-Cigarettes within University buildings is not permitted. It is against the law, and we take breaches of the smoke-free policy of the Occupation Contract very seriously.
- Leaving rubbish in the corridors will produce strong and unpleasant smells and is a potential fire risk. Removal of rubbish by the Facilities Team could cost you from £10 per bag, so please use the bins provided.
- Don't be creative on the walls – graffiti and drawings are expensive to remove and usually involves re-painting the whole wall at a cost to those responsible.
- If you come across any maintenance issues within your accommodation, please report it using our Report A Fault website, or scan the QR codes located on the Your Place/Your Base posters within your bedrooms and kitchen notice board to access the reporting website.
- Online fault reports will only be received and processed between Monday – Thursday (8:30am – 5:00pm) and Friday (8:30am - 4:00pm) excluding Bank Holidays and University Closed Days.
- In the case of emergency maintenance outside of office hours, please contact Site Security by calling the 24/7 University Helpline number (2900).
- If you do cause any damages, please do own up. You may still have to pay, but it's fairer on others who weren't involved and may help reduce any breaches within the Occupation Contract.

# Reporting a Incident

For the Residence Life Managers to act, it is necessary for them to investigate information about this behaviour or incident. This can be obtained through CCTV footage or witness statements. Our main source of information gathering is often from other residents.

## **It is important to provide accurate information relating to:**

- What you saw occur
- Who was involved
- When it happened
- Any witnesses that were around
- Initial outcome of the incident/issue/concern

We may involve the police and maybe the fire authorities over damage to fire systems and equipment. A criminal record is not something that anyone wants on their CV.

# Reporting a Incident

We quite often get anonymous and unsubstantiated information about who may be responsible for certain anti-social behaviours. Although it is useful, this will not allow us to take firm action.

If you are suffering from any anti-social behaviour or have been a witness to anti-social behaviour, please discuss this with the appropriate services immediately.

You will be asked to provide your details in writing (or by email) in order to gather information from everyone affected by the incident. Your details will not be shared without your permission unless we deem there to be a health and safety risk.

A member of the Residence Life Management Team may then contact you to arrange a meeting to discuss your complaint further.

Please help us to make your accommodation a pleasant and safe place to live and study by reporting anti-social behaviour.

## **Please find the options for reporting available to you:**

- Reporting criminal activity to the police (including vandalism).
- Encourage other residents to provide evidence, particularly witness statements.
- Help us to foster an environment where vandalism to property is not condoned.
- Make a formal written complaint by following appropriate procedures.
- We can offer a resident who is suffering from anti-social behaviour an accommodation transfer if this is applicable.
- We do where possible prefer to deal with any anti-social behaviour, as it impacts on others.

# Maintaining Communal Cleaning Standards

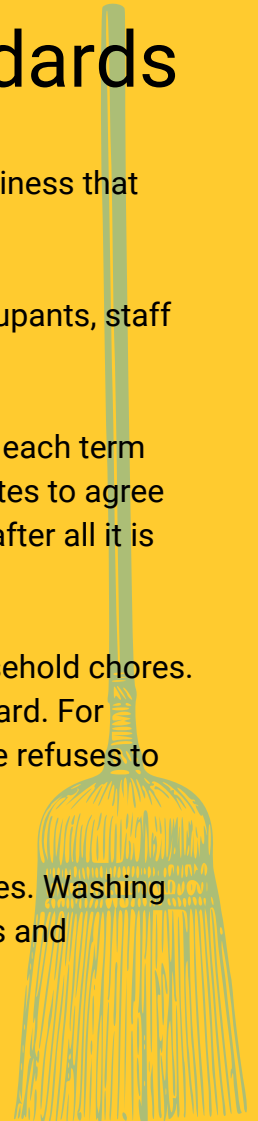
Some of your flat/housemates may have different expectations regarding the levels of cleanliness that should be maintained as part of living in shared accommodation.

Please remember that we have guidelines in place to ensure the health and safety of the occupants, staff and contractors working within the property.

We carry out scheduled communal and bedroom inspections of your accommodation during each term and will advise you of any issues. Between inspections, it is up to you and your flat/housemates to agree upon the levels of general cleanliness your accommodation will be kept in (within reason) – after all it is your home.

In a shared flat/house each resident should do an equal share of the cleaning and other household chores. Try to clean up after yourself as you go along as it can prevent cleanliness issues going forward. For example, a light clean of the hob/grill after use prevents it getting to the state where everyone refuses to use it.

Equally, washing up shortly after you have cooked and eaten prevents a build-up of dirty dishes. Washing up (or a lack of) is the biggest cause of cleaning disputes so its best to set in place your rules and boundaries with your flat/housemates early on.





# A few tips for a clean and happy flat/house

Residents of the accommodation are collectively responsible for maintaining the cleaning of your communal areas and individually responsible for the cleanliness of your study bedroom. **Here are some ideas that you can build on.**

- Agree on a date and time when everyone can be present for a flat/house meeting. Perhaps write an invitation to those flat/housemates you cannot speak to in person.
- Think about whether you intend to make the flat/house meeting engaging and fun. Providing snacks, for example, can help open discussions and attract those less eager to attend.
- Be creative – think about fun and reasonable ideas to draw up a cleaning rota. For further guidance please see our sample cleaning rota on **Page 18**.
- Discuss sharing the chores. Be realistic – is a Sunday morning a good day for a flat/housemate to clean the kitchen floor for example
- Be open to listening, expressing your feelings, and **compromising**. Do not assume that the first solution that you come up with will be the best for everyone.
- Be reasonable – if your flat/housemates offer to make a compromise, see if other people can be encouraged to do the same.
- Perhaps discuss what to do if someone fails to do their fair share or forgets to do their chores. Try to establish clear communication surrounding these issues.
- Think about arranging follow-up flat/house meetings. Meeting frequently as a group can help you discuss any lasting issues.
- If you experience any difficulties, you can speak to an RA who will be able to offer practical help and advice on how to amicably resolve any issue.
- When discussing cleaning, **focus on the future and how a rota can improve the situation rather than going over who is to blame**, or who hasn't done their fair share in the past. Remember also that individuals have different standards and there is never a perfect solution.

# Cleaning Rotas

Cleaning rotas should be drawn up when everyone can participate so people can discuss and take ownership over their decisions. Rotas can be ineffective when a missing flat/housemate has been allocated cleaning chore without prior agreement.

The sample cleaning rota on Page 18 is an example of the cleaning rotas that can be provided by the Residence Life Team and discussed with flats/houses during their Flatmate Agreement meetings. Please note that all our cleaning rotas are adapted to accommodate each type of accommodation that we offer and can be requested for the flat/house either by raising this with the RAs within their Drop-Ins service or Patch Round visits or emailing the Residence Life Team via the Accommodation Office.

In some circumstances we may decide to inspect your accommodation more frequently. We may also need to arrange contract cleaning for any affected areas. This is usually when the standards fall well below what we consider an acceptable level of cleanliness. The associated costs for this could be passed to the residents responsible and who live in the accommodation. However, all residents will be given ample opportunity and notice to clean the affected areas prior to this action being taken.

## Top Tip:

- It's important to do your fair share and commit to contributing towards the cleaning of your accommodation as contract cleaners are expensive. Residents whose accommodation is left unclean at the end of their Occupation Contracting risk further cleaning charges being invoiced to them.

Flat/House: \_\_\_\_\_

# Weekly Cleaning Rota

## How to divide buying cleaning products:

- You can assign one cleaning product to each person in the house which they need to buy at the start of the year.
- Everyone puts £1 in a pot and that money is spent on cleaning products.
- You can use apps like Splitwise to share the cost of cleaning products.

## Cleaning Products to Buy:

- Multi-Purpose Cleaner (Wipes or Spray)
- Oven Cleaner
- Washing Up Liquid
- Toilet Cleaner
- Toilet Cleaner (For your Rooms)
- Degreaser for Hobs
- Black Bin Bags
- Cloths, or Paper Towel
- Sponges/ Scourers
- Gloves

Name	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
	Glass Bin, Food Bin, Hoover/Mop Kitchen & Hallways	Hoover and Mop Kitchen	General Waste and Recycling	Toilet and Bathroom	Surfaces, Microwave, Oven and Hobs	Shower Room With Toilet	Glass Bin, Food Bin, Hoover Stairwell	Hoover and Mop Kitchen
	Shower Room With Toilet	Glass Bin, Food Bin, Hoover/Mop Kitchen & Hallways	Hoover and Mop Kitchen	General Waste and Recycling	Toilet and Bathroom	Surfaces, Microwave, Oven and Hobs	Shower Room With Toilet	Glass Bin, Food Bin, Hoover/Mop Kitchen & Hallway
	Surfaces, Microwave, Oven and Hobs	Shower Room With Toilet	Glass Bin, Food Bin, Hoover/Mop Kitchen & Hallways	Hoover and Mop Kitchen	General Waste and Recycling	Toilet and Bathroom	Surfaces, Microwave, Oven and Hobs	Shower Room With Toilet
	Toilet and Bathroom	Surfaces, Microwave, Oven and Hobs	Shower Room With Toilet	Glass Bin, Food Bin, Hoover/Mop Kitchen & Hallways	Hoover and Mop Kitchen	General Waste and Recycling	Toilet and Bathroom	Surfaces, Microwave, Oven and Hobs
	General Waste and Recycling	Toilet and Bathroom	Surfaces, Microwave, Oven and Hobs	Shower Room With Toilet	Glass Bin, Food Bin, Hoover/Mop Kitchen & Hallways	Hoover and Mop Kitchen	General Waste and Recycling	Toilet and Bathroom
	Hoover and Mop Kitchen	General Waste and Recycling	Toilet and Bathroom	Surfaces, Microwave, Oven and Hobs	Shower Room With Toilet	Glass Bin, Food Bin, Hoover/Mop Kitchen & Hallways	Hoover and Mop Kitchen	General Waste and Recycling

Please Note: You do not need to deep clean your ovens every week. You only need to wipe down the inside with an oven safe cleaner. You should only deep clean your oven as needed.

# University Service Departments & Key Contact Details

Here are some useful support options that you may wish to access during your time living with us:

## Report + Support

- Report + Support is an online tool developed by Culture Shift where staff and students can report issues of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, etc, anonymously. Report + Support is also home to information about internal and external support, policies and procedures.

## The Accommodation Office

- Our Accommodation Office Team can help with any general enquiries relating to your accommodation and can be contacted in the following ways: phoning **01970 622984** during office hours (8.30am - 5pm Monday - Thursday, 8.30am - 4.30pm Friday), sending an email to [accomodation@aber.ac.uk](mailto:accomodation@aber.ac.uk) or an in-person visit to the Accommodation Office based in Y Sgubor, Fferm Penglais.

## Site Security

- The Site Security Service operates 24/7, every day of the year. We are always available to offer assistance and advice to Students, Staff and members of the public on security related issues. To contact this service please phone the 24/7 University Helpline (01970 62) 2900 or visit them in person at the Penglais Campus Reception

## Student Services

- Student Services are here to help you make the most out of your time at Aberystwyth University and maximize your opportunities after graduation. Our friendly teams are available all year round, Monday to Friday, to give advice and support on a wide range of subjects, including accessibility requirements, wellbeing needs, financial advice, visa support, and career guidance.

## DDAS

- DDAS is the first point of contact for any adult over the age of 18 with a drug or alcohol problem in Dyfed. DDAS covers the counties of Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion and we support service users who have drug and/or alcohol problems themselves or who are concerned about someone else's drug and/or alcohol use.

# Fostering a Homely Environment

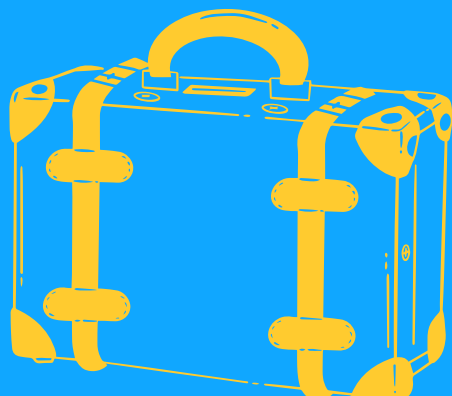
We hope that during your time within Residences that you will have no serious concerns or problems and that you have a positive experience.

However, sometimes things do not go the way you expect. If this occurs, we will do our best to ensure that there is support in place to help resolve any problems. The sooner you report any problems you are experiencing the quicker we can work with you to reach a resolve.

Thankfully, the majority of students have a trouble free and enjoyable experience living together within our student accommodation.

We hope you enjoy your time living with us.

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