Accommodation Services

University-owned and managed accommodation key policy

Purpose Statement

To promote consistent and correct key management - to protect residents’ and guests personal security, privacy and possessions and to safeguard University property.

Applicability & Scope

The policy applies to any resident or guest who has a contract or a booking to stay in University-owned and managed accommodation.

Definition

Key: The instrument which locks and unlocks the accommodation eg metal key, access card or fob.

Responsibilities

Customer Services are responsible for administration relating to all key issues and charges. Any exception to the key policy must be approved by the Residences Manager.

Start of Contract

At the start of any booking/contract Customer Services will issue keys for access. (Additional keys are held as spares and for works access.) When keys are issued to a resident or guest, a signature must be obtained on the key card and the date entered when the key was handed over.

Keys must not be issued unless the booking/contract has been accepted. The exception to this is if the resident or guest has with them and hands over the signed Accommodation Acceptance which should then be sent to the Accommodation Service in King’s Gate.

For residents or guests who arrive when Customer Services are closed and where they have been allocated accommodation but have not accepted the offer, Estates Security Service will, upon checking the Kx database and confirming that the resident or guest has a room allocation, issue keys to the allocated room but request their passport (or other valid proof of I.D.) be retained as identity and security. The resident or guest must make contact with Customer Services by 10am the next
working day, whereby the passport (or other valid proof of I.D.) will be returned and the resident or guest will be advised how to accept their booking/contract.

**Request Key**

**Lost Key Procedure** – Replacement keys are issued from Reception and can only be issued to the occupier of the room after the resident or guests identity has been confirmed. Identity can be confirmed by with a valid proof of I.D. ie passport, driving licence, bank card, staff I.D. card. In exceptional circumstances, if none of the aforementioned are available, a specimen signature should be requested which can be checked against the signature on the key card. Once identity has been confirmed the resident or guest must sign a resident charge form which advises how long they have to find their original key and return the replacement key to Customer Services. If the key is not returned Customer Services will arrange for the resident or guest to be charged for either a lock change or replacement key (this will depend on the circumstances on how and where the key was lost).

Any key which is bent or fractured will be replaced at no charge to the resident. Where a key has snapped in a lock which necessitates the call-out of a locksmith the cost will be met by the University.

Keys/fobs/cards will only be replaced free of charge if:
1. the key is broken or card chip becomes inoperable, but not due to negligence of the owner
2. a police crime number can be produced to indicate the key/fob/card was stolen due to a reported theft

**Lock out Procedure** – Residents or guests who are locked out are issued a key in accordance with the Lost Key Procedure. Where a resident or guest is locked out when Customer Services are closed between 8pm and 8am; Estates Security Service, after confirming identity and completion of a resident charge form, will let the resident or guest into their accommodation. There is a £25 charge for this service, all lock-outs attended by Estates Security Service are recorded by Customer Services; this fee will only be waived on the first occasion that the resident or guest is locked out.

All residence keys are licensed secure keys, residents or guests are not allowed to have keys copied.

Customer Services will only authorise access to an occupied flat/room, by a person other than the occupier, after receiving permission from the resident or guest authorising this. Permission can be given in a signed letter, where the resident or guest’s signature can be verified against the key signing-in card, or by email sent from the email address provided at the time of making the booking. The authorisation must state clearly who is to have access and for what purpose. The person authorised to access the room must also prove their identity by bringing with them an official form of photo identity (ie passport, driving licence or staff I.D. card). In
exceptional circumstances the Residences Manager, or their nominated deputy, can authorise access to a room, on behalf of a resident or guest, after proof of identity has been established, to obtain a passport or flight tickets etc. Where this is necessary the person authorised to access the room will be accompanied by a member of staff who will be required to sign a receipt for any items removed.

**Service Staff and Contractors** – Customer Services will issue keys for access to:

- Residences Staff who have a duty to clean and maintain the accommodation.
- Estates Maintenance Staff or University approved contractors – where the resident or guest have requested that a repair be carried out.

At all other times residents or guests will receive at least seven days advance notice when keys to occupied accommodation are to be issued for access. The notice should state who will require access, the date and approximate time and the reason. Customer Services is responsible for maintaining accurate key logs of all keys issued for access and ensuring keys are returned promptly. The exception for giving seven days advance notice, is in cases of emergency, ie fire drill or when it is believed that a breach of one or more of the conditions of booking/contract has occurred or there is reason to believe a criminal offence has been or is about to be committed.

**End of Contract**

Residents and guests are responsible for returning their own key to Customer Services at the end of the booking/contract before responsibility for accommodation charges will cease.

If leaving outside normal office hours residents or guests can request a key envelope from Customer Services. Keys should be placed inside the envelope, the envelope sealed, and posted through the Reception letterbox on departure. It is the responsibility of residents or guests to return their keys - they must not give keys to someone else to return on their behalf and they should not leave keys in their room or flat.

Where a booking/contract has ended and keys have not been returned, the resident or guest will receive correspondence (email and/or letter) from the office who issued the contract. The resident or guest will be advised they are still liable for accommodation charges at the daily rate until keys are returned - up to a maximum charge of £125 and unless keys are returned within an acceptable time period (maximum seven days) the University reserves the right to withdraw the additional accommodation charge of £125 and supersede it with a lock-change charge (up to £450). Should the resident or guest not respond to this email/letter, the appropriate Residences Manager, or their nominated deputy, will be advised to change the locks. Once the lock change has been carried out, the Residences Manager, Assistant Residences Manager or nominated deputy, will recover the cost from the resident or guest via the Accommodation Finance Team.
Residents or guests who intend to return their key via the post are advised to return keys in a padded envelope, using a signed for delivery service. The University will not accept responsibility for keys lost in transit and should this occur the University reserves the right to change locks and the cost is recharged to the resident or guest.

Residents or guests who lose their key and do not have a key to hand back at the end of the booking/contract must report this before leaving. Failure to do so will result in the resident or guest being liable for accommodation charges until they report that the key is lost. The University also reserves the right to change locks and the cost is recharged to the resident or guest.

Please note that electronic access fobs/card will be cancelled to prevent further access from 10am on the last day of the booking/contract period.

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Policy owner: Paul Bandeen, Head of Accommodation Services