

Key Policy - University Owned Accommodation

Purpose Statement

To promote consistent and correct key management in order to protect your personal security, privacy and possessions and to safeguard University property.

Applicability and Scope

The policy applies to any person issued with a key for University Owned Accommodation.

Definition

Key: A key or other device that allows entry to a Building or a part of a Building.

Our responsibilities

We are responsible for administration relating to key issues, maintaining accurate records of all keys issued for access, and ensuring that they are returned promptly.

Where the key is a programmable device, we have the ability to monitor use of that key. We have systems in place to ensure that only authorised personnel have access to key data, and we only interrogate key data where we have good reason to do so. We do not routinely monitor students' movements through programmable keys. However, if an incident occurs, or if we have concerns about a resident's well-being, we may run key audit reports for the purposes of investigation. Data about key use will be processed in line with our data protection policy and used to protect our legitimate interests, such as providing a safe and secure environment to our residents.

We are responsible for replacing keys that are defective, but we may re-charge the cost to the resident if the key is defective because of misuse. We are responsible for de-activating programmable keys that are reported as lost or stolen.

Your responsibilities

You are responsible for keeping your key safe at all times to protect your personal safety and the safety of others if living in shared accommodation; this will be supported with a [ResLife webinar](#) that we encourage you to take advantage of.

Replacement Keys

Lost Keys

Replacement keys are issued at receptions and can only be issued to the occupier of the bedroom. Security checks will be undertaken to confirm identity. If you lose your key when the reception is closed, the Estate Security Service can help on 0191 208 6817 or use the free [SafeZone](#) app. If you find your original key you should return it to Reception as soon as possible.

Lost or stolen keys must be reported to your reception within 24 hours of you realising they are missing.

Damaged Keys

Any key which is bent or fractured will be replaced at no charge. If your key has snapped in a lock which necessitates the call-out of a locksmith, the cost will be met by the University. Inform your reception as soon as possible, or our Estate Security Service if the reception is closed. The cost of replacing keys and locks damaged by mis-use (by someone other than an intruder) may be re-charged to the resident.

Lock-outs

If you lock yourself out of your accommodation during reception opening hours, you will be issued with a replacement key, in accordance with the 'Lost key procedure' (above). If you lock yourself out of your accommodation when the reception is closed, the Estate Security Service can help. They will aim to respond as quickly as possible but if staff are dealing with an emergency elsewhere on campus, there may be a delay. Before you can return to your room, staff will perform security checks to confirm your identity and will let you back into your accommodation.

Access by people other than you

Access to your accommodation may be given in your absence, but only in certain circumstances, which include:

- Routine Cleaning
We will issue keys for access to your accommodation to the Residences staff who have responsibility for cleaning your accommodation on designated days.
- Planned Maintenance and Inspections
In most cases, you will receive at least seven days advance notice by email when keys to your accommodation are to be issued for access. This will state who will require access, the date, approximate time and the reason. For any viewings of vacant rooms within your flat, we will provide 24 hours' notice.
- Unplanned / Reactive Maintenance
Where you have requested a repair or maintenance to be carried out, or where the need for maintenance or repair has been communicated to you after a bedroom/kitchen inspection, we will not give you further advance notice of access by authorised university staff or approved contractors. They will attend to the repair/maintenance as soon as reasonably practicable.

We will contact you as soon as is reasonably practicable if emergency access is required.

- Unplanned Access for Other Purposes
We will not give advance notice before allowing access to your accommodation in an emergency, to stop a nuisance, where we reasonably believe you are in serious breach of the terms and conditions of your contract, where we have reason to believe a criminal offence has been or is about to be committed, or if we have serious concerns about your welfare.

We may not give you advance notice before clearing your belongings out of

your room if we reasonably believe that you have stopped living there or you will not return before the end of your tenancy period.

In exceptional circumstances (such as a pandemic) students may leave their accommodation expecting to return shortly afterwards, but they are prevented from doing so. If such a situation arises, we are likely to carry out an inspection of all rooms and shared areas and we will dispose of anything we consider to be perishable or hazardous.

- Access by, or authorised by, your trusted person
In exceptional circumstances, we can facilitate access to your room by your authorised representative. This may be where you need to obtain specific items from your room that you cannot conveniently collect in person (for example, if you are in hospital or if you have left Newcastle and cannot conveniently return) or where you have arranged for a specialist company to pack and ship your belongings after you have left.

We will normally only authorise access to your bedroom/flat by a person other than a member of our staff or approved contractors after we have received your permission to do so. You can give us your permission by email, but this must be sent from your university email address. Your email must state clearly who is to have access, approximately when, and for what purpose. The person authorised to access your room must bring photo identity with them (e.g., driving licence, passport or University Smartcard).

There may be circumstances where access to your room by a third party unconnected with the university is reasonably necessary, but you are not able to give us your permission. An example of this may be where you are very seriously ill, and someone needs to pick up your medicines or other possessions. In the first instance, we will deal with the trusted person that you have nominated as your point of contact. If anyone other than your trusted person requests access to your room without your explicit permission, we will ask your trusted person to contact them if the trusted person is willing to authorise their access on your behalf.

We do not accept responsibility for the actions or omissions of any third party whom you or your trusted person have authorised to enter your room.

End of your Contract

You are responsible for returning your keys to your reception at the end of your contract. If you lose your key and do not have a key to hand back, you must report this before leaving.

If you are not returning your keys to our Customer Services Team at reception in person, you should ensure that your keys are placed in an envelope and marked with your name and room number. Envelopes can be provided on request from reception. Keys should then be left at the designated key return point on departure. It is your responsibility to return your keys – you should not give your keys to someone else to return on your behalf. Keys should also not be left in your room, flat or in the letterbox of the flat you are leaving.

If you forget to return your keys in person or intend to return your key via post, prior to the end of your contract, we highly recommend that you use a padded envelope and a signed for delivery service, to include student name and student number.

Electronic access fobs/card will be cancelled to prevent further access from 10:00 on the last day of your contract period, therefore please ensure you have removed all personal belongings by this time.

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Policy owner: Senior Management Team, Accommodation Services