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YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

LONDON

ACCOMMODATION GUIDEBOOK
London

Contents

You should start looking for accommodation as soon as you accept the offer to study at York St John University in London.

There are no dedicated York St John living facilities in London, so we have created this guide to help you to find safe, secure, and legal accommodation.

Types of Accommodation

Private House

A house rented through an estate agent or private landlord where you or your flatmates/family have exclusive use of an individual property.

Shared House

A house rented through an estate agent or private landlord where you rent a single room in a house with other people. They may or may not be other students. This type of accommodation is not suitable if you are a student with dependents.

Things to consider when choosing a rental property

Dependents

If you have dependents, such as children or elderly relatives, you will need to rent two or more bedrooms. Shared accommodation is primarily rented by the room with shared bathrooms and kitchens – this may not be suitable for dependents.

Please be aware that renting a single room is not suitable for families. However, there is a possibility that some landlords will rent out a room to couples. It is best to check and negotiate first.

Number of people living in the property

There should be a maximum of two people sleeping in a double bedroom and one person in a single room. Overcrowding is illegal in the UK.

Finding properties

To find a property you can use an online accommodation search website that enables you to communicate directly with the landlord, such as OpenRent.

If you're looking for a single occupancy, room SpareRoom. is a popular choice.

You may want to use a student accommodation provider such as Chapter London , Canto Court or IQ. Prices with these accommodations include bills and services.

Alternatively, you can use a general property search engine such as:

- Rightmove
- Zoopla
- On The Market

and search under Rentals.

Finding people to live with

The York St John Accommodation team have a useful Find a YSJ housemate Facebook Group to help you meet fellow students looking for housemates.

How these sites are managed

Property sites list properties that are usually managed by agents, or where landlords have asked agents to find tenants for them.

In the UK it is illegal for agents to charge a fee to find and arrange property rentals for you. If anyone asks for a fee to secure a tenancy/ view a property do not pay it. When paying a legal deposit, use PayPal or a credit card as this will protect your money in case anything goes wrong.

Where to Live

London is divided into six main zones to organise and differentiate different parts of the city. Transport for London (TFL) organises these zones to price journeys and fares. However, the different zones also impact the housing market, with zones 1 to 2 being the most central to the city and the most expensive. While zones 3 to 6 are cheaper but further away from the centre of the city.

Due to the high cost of housing many people who work or study in Inner London live in neighbourhoods further away.

Zone	Character	Typical Student Areas	Best For
Zone 1	Central London, highest cost	Bloomsbury, King's Cross, Aldgate, Westminster, London Bridge	Students who want zero commute and to be at the heart of the action
Zone 2	Inner London, strong value	Lewisham, Stratford, Canada Water, Shoreditch, Hackney	Students who want a balance of cost, space and fast Zone 1 access
Zone 3	Outer-inner London	Ealing, Walthamstow, Harrow, parts of Leyton	Budget-focused students who still want a fast Tube link in
Zone 4	Suburban, most affordable PBSA	Wembley Park, Ilford, Kingston	Students who want the lowest rent and don't mind a longer commute
Zone 5	Outer suburbs	Hayes, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Romford	Students near west/outer London campuses or the Elizabeth line
Zone 6	Greater London edge	Heathrow, Uxbridge, Croydon	Students at west London universities or near the airport

Figure 1 Priyanshu Raj Singh Acolyte Living (2026)

Areas surrounding the London Campus

The London campus is in Poplar which is situated in the Inner London Borough of Tower Hamlets in Travel Zone 2. The closest station to the London Campus is East India on the DLR line. Greenwich, Lewisham, Deptford, and Stratford are all accessible on the DLR. Surrey Quays, Canada Water, and Bermondsey or North Greenwich are close to the Jubilee Line, which links to Canary Wharf.

Your timetable is designed so you only need to be on campus 2 days a week so if you want to live much further away and travel in for your attendance days, you can stay overnight in cheap hostels or rooms that you can find on AirBnB or other secure, approved accommodation search sites.

London Transport System

To become familiar with the transport system, you can download travel apps like:

- Mapway
- Citymapper.
- TFL Go
- Bus Times

These apps will show you the available transport routes between various locations as well as all the travel zones.

Viewing the property

Most properties are advertised approximately 1 month before they become available. Regularly check websites such as, Rightmove and Zoopla. These websites allow you to browse properties from all the different letting agencies.

As soon as you find a property that you like, contact the agent to arrange a viewing. Viewings can be in-person or online; any reputable or trusted Landlord should provide viewing options that are accessible to you.

However, the rental market tends to move quickly, so it is not unusual for viewings to be cancelled. Plan to view several properties so you have plenty of options if a property is removed.

When viewing the property, you should also consider the following:

- Does the property include furnishings, such as bedroom furniture?
- Do you like the area, and can you see yourself living there?
- Is the street too noisy (or quiet) for you?
- Does the property feel safe? (Are there smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, fire escapes?)

Questions to ask when viewing a property:

- Who is the main manager of the property?
- Who do you report repairs or faults to?
- Are bills included?
- What is the length of the contract?
- Is maintenance included for any outdoor spaces?
- Can you park your car at the property or is there bike storage?
- Where is the gas, electric, and water meter? (When you move in, always take pictures of the meter readings)

When you view a property, it is important to pay close attention to the facilities and structure. Keep an eye out for signs of dampness, mould, electrical faults etc.

Securing a rental property

To move into a rental property, you may need to pay a few upfront costs. To secure most rentals you may be expected to pay:

- a holding fee - This will take the property off the market while the agency completes their checks. This fee may be offset against your first rental payment if your references are satisfactory.
- referencing/agency fees - This will cover the administration costs associated with reference checks, credit checks and the cost of drawing up a contract.
- tenancy deposit - This is usually 1 and a half times the monthly rent.
- This will be held in a secure deposit scheme until the end of your tenancy.
- the first month's rent.

The letting agent or landlord will be able to give you a clear breakdown of these costs before you begin the process. Ask them if there are any other fees that you should be aware of.

Rental laws and regulations in the UK

Strict laws and regulations exist for renting property in the UK. However, not all landlords follow those laws, so it is essential you protect yourself.

You should receive an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) Agreement or, if you end up renting part of someone's house, a Lodger Agreement. This contract allows you to know what the Landlord expects from you and what you expect from them.

In May of 2026, the UK government made significant changes to renters' rights under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 that include changes for international students; these include:

- The cap on advance rent - Landlords and estate agents are now prohibited from requesting more than one month's rent in advance. While security deposit remains legally capped at five weeks' rent and must be placed in a government-backed protection scheme within 30 days.
- The end of fixed term contracts - under the new law it means almost all private rentals are now Assured Periodic Tenancies. That means tenants are no longer "locked in" for 12 months. Your tenancy rolls from month to month from day one.
- The end of "no-fault" evictions - it is illegal for Landlords to evict tenants for no reason. Landlords must now give a legal reason to end your tenancy such as selling the property.
- Awaab's Law- Landlords are now legally required to investigate and fix hazards like damp and mold within strict timeframes.
- Bidding wars - It is now illegal for landlords or agents to invite or accept offers above the advertised rental price.

It is important to know that these changes affect private renting. While fixed-term contracts are gone, the UK Government did ensure that students, including international students, are protected under the "Ground 4A" Exception. This means that in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)—typically properties with more than 3 unrelated students- the landlord must give four months' notice to the tenants, and the move-out date must fall between **1 June and 30 September**. This means landlords of student HMOs can still require you to leave at the end of the academic year so they can rent out the property to a new group of students.

Eligibility for properties

If you are an international student and are new to the UK, you will most likely have to undergo credit checks or have a guarantor for the rent. The University has a partnership with Housing Hand a rent guarantor service. A guarantor is a person or service who agrees to pay your rent if you don't pay it. As a York St John London student, you can benefit from their guarantor service for a safer and more accessible renting experience. These services may have associated fees. If you cannot use a guarantor, you may want to consider taking out Rent Insurance.

Signing a contract/tenancy agreement

Before you sign anything, it is vital that you read through the contract thoroughly. It is also a good idea to ask a trusted relative or friend to read through it as well. York St John University staff are unable to read contracts for you.

The most important things to look out for are:

- Does the landlord own the property?
- Does the contract reflect what you verbally agreed with the landlord?
- Are there any unfair parts of the contract?
- Do you understand all aspects of the contract?

Contents of Agreements:

- Start date of the tenancy
- Length of the tenancy
- Amount of notice both you and the landlord need to provide if you wish to end the tenancy early; (this should be a minimum of 1 month)
- Exact monthly rent
- Amount of security deposit you have paid

Additional information contained in the Tenancy Agreements:

- List of utility bills covered/provided in the rent, if any, for e.g., Council Tax, water, gas, electricity or a TV licence (if you are renting a whole flat or house then you usually have to pay these in addition to your rent so you should budget for these)
- Responsibility for cleaning the property
- Responsibility for maintaining and repairing the property

Contract length

Most student contracts are a fixed 12-month contract; if you want a shorter contract, then you will need to negotiate this with the landlord and/or agency.

Remember, as soon as you sign the contract it is legally binding, there is no going back!

What is a break clause?

A break clause allows either the tenants or the landlord to end the tenancy by giving early notice before the tenancy officially ends. If your signed Tenancy Agreement includes a break clause, we would recommend you seek advice on this. Break clauses may be used unfairly so make sure to familiarise yourself with the new Renter's Rights and understand what protection you have.

Your rights as a tenant:

- Exclusive Possession - your landlord cannot come into your home without permission, without giving at least 24 hours' notice.
- Tenancy Deposit Protection - your deposit must be protected within 30 days and the landlord/agent must provide you with details of the scheme your money is held in.
- Protection from eviction - your landlord must have issued you with a Tenancy Agreement that provides a notice period of minimum one month; they will need a court order before they can evict you from your home.
- Repairs - your landlord will be responsible for carrying out repairs within a reasonable time frame.

Your obligations as a tenant:

- You must pay the rent on time
- You must keep the property clean and tidy
- You must report repairs to the agency or landlord
- You must replace light bulbs and smoke alarm batteries
- You must prevent the property from any damage

These obligations should be set out in your Tenancy Agreement. If they are not automatically included, then you must raise this with your landlord before signing the contract.

Deposits

Holding Deposits

The landlord or letting agent may ask you to pay a holding deposit. This is equivalent to one weeks' rent. It is usual to pay one week's rent as this holding deposit to secure the property before signing any agreements and paying any security deposit or rent up front. **Holding deposits are refundable if the tenancy does not proceed for any reason and you don't end up moving in.**

Security/Housing Deposits

Your security deposit should be held in a Tenancy Deposit Scheme so it can be refunded at the end of your tenancy. The maximum amount you should pay as the security deposit is 5 weeks' worth of rent. It is illegal to charge any more than this.

Once the deposit is paid, the landlord or letting agency will stop advertising the property.

At the end of your tenancy, the landlord or agency will return your deposit. They can deduct money from your initial deposit if there are any repairs or cleaning that need to be done to the property.

If you pay the deposit and then decide not to rent the house or room, you may lose some or all of the deposit. However, if the landlord changes their mind, you will receive the deposit back in full.

Top tips:

- Make sure you keep copies of all paperwork that is given to you by the landlord or letting agency.
- Ask and clarify what bills are included and what you must pay in addition to the rent before you agree to rent the property
- Find out what regular maintenance is carried out and who to contact if something goes wrong in the property, such as the heating system breaking down
- Arrange to have contents insurance for your own individual property, especially high value items such as laptops, phones and tablets in case of theft or loss

Moving In

After all the paperwork has been completed and you've been given the keys to your new home, there are still some things to bear in mind. Make sure you have:

- A copy of the tenancy agreement
- Check-in inventory and schedule of condition of the property on the day you move in
- Photographs of the conditions of the rooms in the property as evidence of the state of the property on the day you move in
- Gas safety certificate
- Energy performance certificate (EPC)
- Deposit Protection Certificate and information about the scheme

Private Accommodation estimate costs

Rent – room in shared house/flat	£900 to £1,729 per month
Rent – private house/flat/studio	£1500 to £2,271 per month
Bills (Gas, Electricity, Water)	£150–£250 per month
Internet	£25–£35 per month
Lunch and entertainment	£120 per month
Groceries	£66.20 per month
Travel	£200 to £500 per month
Stationery and books	£35 per month

TV Licence

If you watch or record live television programmes on a TV or any other electronic device, you will need to have a TV Licence. It costs £159 for a colour TV Licence and £53.50 for a black and white TV Licence per year. In some cases, you may be entitled to a reduced fee TV Licence.

Please be aware that you can be heavily fined for having an unlicensed television. Visit the TV Licensing website for further information.

Contents Insurance

You should make sure that all of your personal property is insured in case of loss, damage or theft. You can look online for insurance quotes once you have secured your accommodation and you have a confirmed address.

Council Tax

Council Tax is a tax on residential properties which is paid to local authorities by residents who live in the properties.

If you live in a property occupied only by full-time students, the property is exempt from Council Tax. However, you and your housemates will need to apply for a Council Tax Exemption. You can do this online.

If not everyone in your house is a full-time student, then they will have to pay Council Tax. If they are the only person living in the house who is not a student in full-time education, then they will be entitled to a discount on Council Tax. More information can be found online.

Staying safe

While the UK can be relatively safe, in the last few years there has been an increase in financial crimes. Financial crimes can have a serious impact on a person just as much as physical harm and can cause mental and physical stress.

Some adults can be more susceptible to financial harm, such as theft, fraud, pressure to provide for others and pressure to hand over property or money. International students are some of the most vulnerable

Examples of property related financial harm may include

- **Cuckooing**
  Where people take advantage of a perceived vulnerable person by taking over their house and abusing their hospitality. What could start as a 'party night' or 'coming over to hang out' can result in a group of people taking up residence. Using intimidating behaviour and threatening the adult to hand over their money and/or property.
- **Rental fraud**
  Rental fraud happens when prospective tenants are tricked into paying an upfront fee to rent a property, when in reality, the property does not exist, has already been rented out, or has been rented to multiple victims at the same time. The victim loses the upfront fee they have paid and is not able to rent the property. Rental fraudsters often target students looking for university accommodation. The property might be advertised through major rental websites such as Zoopla and OpenRent.

If you believe fraud has been committed, report it to the police immediately and report it to Report Fraud for advice and support

Advice – Issues and Repairs

If you have an issue with the property you are renting, you must report it. You can do this over the phone, in person or via email. It is important to keep a record of what was discussed and the date and time. It is also useful to send a follow-up email to check on progress and put everything in writing.

What details should I include in the report?

- What is broken/faulty or not working
- When the incident occurred
- All the problems resulting from the issue
- Provide evidence, photograph everything

Your landlord/agent should arrange to fix any problems as soon as possible. If you feel things are taking too long, then you should seek advice from your lettings agency.

Repairs

Your contract should outline what you are responsible for and what the landlord is responsible for. The law states that it is the landlord's responsibility to keep the property safe and in habitable condition. If you are unsure about who is responsible for certain repairs, then it is best to seek advice from the lettings agency.

Landlord's responsibilities:

- Heating, hot water and other water supplies
- Basins, sinks, baths and toilets
- External structure of the property
- Gas appliances
- Fixed electrical installations

What can I do if the problem does not get fixed?

f your landlord or lettings agency is not getting repairs or maintenance carried out within a reasonable time frame, they may be in breach of the tenancy agreement. It would be worth writing a follow-up letter/email to the landlord/letting agency. You can also reach out to your Local Authority Housing department for advice on such matters.

Am I allowed to carry out repairs myself?

It is extremely risky for you to carry out any repairs yourself. You would be responsible for any defects or further damage caused to the property. The landlord could also refuse to reimburse you for the money you have spent. You must not do any work that could endanger you or your housemates, such as electrical work

Am I allowed to stop paying my rent if this happens?

We would not advise you to stop paying rent if you are having maintenance problems; your obligation to pay rent is separate from the landlord's obligation to carry out repairs. If you decide to stop paying your rent, your landlord is entitled to evict you. They can also take you to court for rent arrears.

Mould and damp

If you have stale smells and discoloured walls or ceilings then these are signs that you could have mould in your house. Most dampness is caused by condensation which can be resolved by opening windows and ventilating the property better. If you experience any problems with dampness or mould, you should report it to your landlord or letting agency. Letting agencies and landlords are very quick to blame the growth of dampness and mould on students so make sure you keep the property ventilated and clean.

What causes dampness or mould?

- Condensation
- Lack of insulation
- Leaking pipes
- Rainwater coming through external walls
- Blocked guttering or overflowing drains

Things you can do to prevent the growth of mould

- Wipe down any condensation that is on walls or windows
- Check extractor fans are working properly
- Keep the property adequately heated and ventilated
- If you dry clothes on radiators, open the windows nearby to let moisture out
- Open windows in bathrooms regularly

Handy tips

- You can buy mould cleaners and removers to use on windows and walls
- If mould keeps returning, take regular photos to show the landlord or letting agent
- Inform the landlord/letting agent about any changes or updates to the situation

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