

SHARED HOUSING HARMONY



As part of our suite of youth housing products, we offer programs that accommodate shared housing to improve affordability and maximise housing options for young people.

More and more people (not just young people) are looking at the options of sharing to reduce the cost of living. We know that young people start out on minimal and low wages and there are simply ZERO options, other than sharing that are affordable in most towns across NSW and Australia.

Utility arrangements

Set up your utility sharing arrangements as soon as you commence your tenancy – whether that's with you both setting up an account or contributing to an established account your flatmate has set-up.

Utility bills should ideally be split equally although it's not guaranteed to eradicate disputes when bills arrive.

If one flatmate plays lots of video games, or uses lots of aircon or heating, it might be fairer for that person to pay a higher proportion of the energy bill (s).

If sustainability is important to your household, there are many changes you can make to reduce your impact on the environment (Google is your friend or refer to the NSW Government energy saving factsheets we give you at start of tenancy).

All household members wish to declare this home an energy efficient space – we can all achieve washing clothes in cold water and setting the aircon to the recommended energy efficient temps! No arguments here!

Upon vacating the property, remove yourself from the utility bills and make arrangements to pay the final bill.

Keeping your home and your bedroom secure

For privacy and safety, each tenant is allocated their own bedroom with a lock and key. It's important to keep your bedroom locked and your home secure when you come and go. Forgetting keys and relying on your flatmate to let you in or worse keeping doors or windows unlocked (including removing window screens) is not okay and it's your responsibility to manage your tenancy and keep the property secured.

If you lose or misplace your keys, report this to your Support Worker (you may have given permission at the commencement of your tenancy for them to also hold a spare key). If you have any fears that they were stolen or can be identified, **immediately** inform your Youth Housing Manager so a locksmith can attend.

Fire safety in shared houses.

There are additional legal requirements for fire safety in share houses such as our legal requirement to ensure

all locked bedrooms have their own smoke alarm along with a smoke alarm(s) in the common area space(s). All smoke alarms in share houses must also be synced so when one alarm goes off, the other tenant(s) in their rooms will be alerted. It's important that we all do our bit to ensure safety - please don't remove smoke alarms as they can be damaged and you can be breached (and charged) for doing so. Report any issues straight away (e.g. alarm activations) to your Youth Housing Manager.

Prioritise keeping shared spaces clean

Your room is your own personal space. Do with it what you will (as long as its hygienic and legal), but **always** clean up after yourself in communal areas especially kitchen, toilets, laundry and wash basins and don't leave belongings or rubbish lying around.

No one should have to clean up after someone else so create a roster for frequent cleaning requirements (e.g. bin days, use of washing machine, bathroom cleaning, lawns or courtyards). Personal hygiene in shared housing is important also as personal odours can create house odours and coming home in dirty work clothes and lying on couches. Yeah, not so cool?!

Food and cooking arrangements

The easiest way to avoid conflict is to allocate specific space in cupboards and pantries (sounds a bit pedantic but often necessary).

If saving money is important for the household, think about buying in bulk, by shopping online together and creating a kitty for things like toilet paper, washing detergent and powders

and shared condiments (milk/tea).

Living in a share house means respecting not just other people, but also their belongings. So be as considerate as possible. Check in with your flatmate on what items can be shared and which items they are a little more concerned about. Respect what they communicate.

A full fridge/pantry (of items that don't belong to you) is not an invitation for an empty stomach. At your age and in these rising cost of living times, all young tenants are having their own



BE MINDFUL

Just remember that all young tenants referred to our housing products were/are experiencing some form of disadvantage or life difficulties.

For most, this is their first independent living arrangement and the beginning of a learning journey. Varying hiccups and growth are to be expected.

Different backgrounds, race and cultures can lead to vast differences in expectations of living arrangements including living 'standards'. Some people may be use to others cleaning up for them, some may not know how to clean a bathroom and for others managing family and visitors may be really challenging.

Regardless of age or length of time as a tenant, all young people have equal rights. No one housemate should reign over the other (even if they have lived there longer). At the end of the day, you're in a shared space, so you'll have to compromise here and there.

Communication and check in points are key with your flatmate and your support worker. Share unresolvable issues before they implode or explode, and always report our zero tolerance non negotiables (see below) - for your safety.

levels of financial struggles so it's important not to put others in more hardship. If you don't have money for food, please know you are not alone, so please reach out, talk to your Support Worker or google [Ask Izzy](#) to seek options for food support and help.

Respect privacy and boundaries

Take note of thin walls and be respectful when others are in the house. If people are studying, or shift working, they're likely to be far more noise sensitive. Which is why, it's worth checking in – ask your flatmate whether they're happy with noise levels etc.

Sometimes flatmates are strangers or acquaintances sharing a home and that is totally okay (your flatmate does not have to be your best mate). Sometimes flatmates turn into friendships and that also is okay (friendships formed through house sharing can be everlasting). With either instance, at the beginning of

a new shared house relationship, sometimes with the excitement or nervousness of new beginnings, it's difficult to set boundaries (sharing clothing and belongings, lend money, fuel/driving etc) but after time when generosity starts wearing thin, boundaries are much harder to set and relationships can quickly turn sour.

Just remember being a harmonious flatmate is being responsible, friendly and respectful – you don't have to put your own privacy, personal items and money on the line. These boundaries are to be endorsed and respected!

Set visitor rules

Whether it's romantic attachments, mates or even family members, you must discuss when and how often people can stay over (your Support Workers will help you with this at the start of tenancy).

While your previous household may have been

cool with frequency and length of visitors, your current flatmate might not be.

Ensure your visitors are respectful and understanding of a shared house dynamic and never let any visitor make your flatmate feel unwelcome or uncomfortable in their own home.

We understand some young people will find it difficult with visitors (especially family) who can overstay welcomes and expectations. Discuss this with us if it is an issue for you.

Please remember, when times get difficult, communicate, don't let matters fester and most of all enjoy this period of growth and stability.

ZERO TOLERANCE IN SHARED HOUSES

Abuse, violence, discrimination or racism from you or your visitors

Illegal use of premises including selling drugs and stolen goods on property

Unauthorised occupants including friends, partners, family and pets (sorry)

We take these matters very seriously and will move quickly to protect the emotional and physical safety of any young person in harm's way and we will do this by issuing breaches, or for more serious matters issuing termination notices and reporting criminal behaviours to the appropriate authorities.