

## **Guide to sharing**

Threshold receives many queries from clients who have disputes with other tenants in shared accommodation. Often there are no laws governing these inter tenant disputes which can often be informally resolved.

The best way to ensure that you can enjoy your tenancy is to treat other tenants as you would expect them to treat you.

Below are some useful tips to make your experience in shared accommodation a pleasant one.

### **1. Finding the right property**

Invest the time in finding a property that is right for you in terms of location, facilities and that you can fulfil the tenancy terms and conditions.

### **2. Finding the right people to share with**

Find the right people that you can you share with. To avoid potential difficulties take the time get to know your prospective housemates. Ask questions such as how long they have been living in the property? Where do they work/study, what lifestyle do they have? what house rules do they have? How do they resolve problems etc.

### **3. Lease Agreements**

Be careful what you agree to as normally in shared accommodation the property is let as a whole. Whilst you may pay your rent if another tenant fails to pay the rent you will have to cover this or risk being given notice.

Do not sign a lease unless you are happy that you can fulfill all the terms and conditions.

### **4. Sharing accommodation requires compromise**

We all have different habits and life style. Living together requires compromise and tenants should be understanding of others otherwise it could cause problems.

### **5. House Rules**

We recommend that in addition to any tenancy agreement that may be in place that a list of house rules are agreed to. Usually ground rules cover issues such as loud music, visitors, cleaning etc

### **6. Paying Bills**

What bills are applicable e.g. electricity, gas, TV, phone etc. How are they worked out? The easiest way is to divide equally amongst tenants.

Copies of the bills should be available to all.

If someone does not pay their share of the bills, ultimately the account holder is responsible for payment. They will then have to seek reimbursement either through a deduction from the deposit by the landlord or by taking legal action against the person who failed to pay.

## **7. Privacy**

Whilst the property is shared it is advised that privacy is respected by all tenants. Tenants should never enter another tenant's room or borrow items without permission.

## **8. Cleaning**

The best way is for all tenants to chip in to keep the property reasonably clean. If necessary a rota could be agreed to but this will only work if everyone contributes.

## **9. Kitty**

Rather than having everything labeled, successful sharing may involve contributing to a kitty for communal items like tea/coffee, cleaning products etc.

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## **10. Disputes**

Where sharing there is always the potential for disputes to arise. It is advised that problems are not allowed to build up but are communicated as soon as possible.

Unfortunately most inter tenant disputes are not covered by law and therefore require tenants to sit down discuss the problem and try to reach a solution.