

A dark blue line-art icon of a house with a gabled roof and a chimney on the right side, positioned above the word 'home'.

home run

Landlord Information Pack



advice centre

Union of University of East Anglia Students' Union (UUEAS) is a registered charity (England and Wales no 013 9778)

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What is Home Run?

The private sector in Norwich is extremely competitive; however we have found that registration with Home Run significantly increases student interest in your accommodation. The University of East Anglia and the Union of UEA Students recommends that students find homes through Home Run. Accredited properties are advertised on the Student Union website.

Students recognise 'Home Run' is a service dedicated to helping them find safe, affordable accommodation and generally contact us first if they are looking for somewhere to live. Throughout the year, particularly in the new year (around the first Housing List release for the following academic year) and during the summer months, large numbers visit our website to look for available accommodation. Home Run is available to all UEA students (both current and prospective) and staff seeking off campus housing.

Home Run encourages responsible letting; many of the properties we register are in residential areas and in order to maintain good relations with residents we encourage our landlords to take responsibility for their properties. Properties that are not well maintained are often a cause of friction, so we would suggest keeping the exterior of the property in a good condition, including gardens and paths, thus making a positive impact on the local community.

It is Home Run policy that a registered landlord/agent must only offer their accredited properties for rent; any landlord/agent suspected of re-directing students to other properties that are not registered may have their accreditation suspended without notice. We do not advertise properties which are also advertised with a commercial property letting agency other than those who do not charge UEA students a fee. **A condition of registering with Home Run is that NO fees are charged to students.**

Home Run charges an annual registration fee, priced depending upon the type of letting ('Resident' or 'Non Resident'. See page 5 for further information). This fee is linked to the 'Housing List' release each year. If landlords wish to register a property for the first time outside of this event, they will be expected to pay the annual fee on registration and again (if they wish to re-register) when requested for the following year regardless of the interim period.

Accrediting Your Property With Home Run

In this guide you'll find all the information you'll need, along with our accreditation minimum standards, complaints and suspension procedure and a property registration form (alternatively you can fill in your details online at ueastudent.com/homerun). Ensure that you have carefully read all of the points in this guide before returning your form, as any errors in information submitted may result in a delay accrediting and advertising your property.

How do I become an Accredited Home Run Landlord?

Registering your property is an acknowledgement that your safety certificates are up to date, that you accept the Home Run minimum standards and that you are an accredited Home Run landlord. Home Run requires the following is provided in order to register your property:

- **A fully completed and signed online or paper property registration form for every property which is offered to students.** (Landlords are asked to register all student properties with Home Run each year, even if they are not available to let. Please see our minimum standards for further information).

- **The annual fee for registration.** This is £25 per property for non-resident landlords and £15 where the landlord resides in the property (**Cheques should be made payable to 'Union of UEA**

Students'. Multiple registrations may be paid for on one cheque). **Please note: this fee runs annually from one 'Housing List' release to the next. If you pay a fee during the year it is not calculated pro-rata and another fee would be required to re-register when requested by Home Run for the following year.**

For the following documents we require you submit the original. All original documents will be copied and then returned.

- **A current original Gas Safe Register Gas Safety Certificate for the property.** This MUST be from a Gas Safe Register registered technician and on Gas Safe Register stationery. The Gas Safe Register Gas Safety certificate is valid for one year from the date of testing and must cover all gas appliances in the property.

- **A current original Periodic Inspection Report (PIR) covering the electrical installation at the property.** This MUST be from an electrical contractor who is an accredited member of one of the following bodies: NICEIC, NAPIT or ELECSA (ECA). If you are unsure if an electrician is qualified to carry out this inspection, please contact Home Run and we can verify their status for you. This document is valid for 2 years for non-resident landlords and 5 years if the landlord is a resident at the property. If the recommended period for re-testing on the certificate is less than would be acceptable as outlined above, a re-test would have to take place at the recommended interval. This report must be on NICEIC/NAPIT/ELECSA stationery and may contain observations and recommendations for improving aspects of the electrical installation. Reports which show any 1's or 2's in the observations and recommendations section mean that remedial work is required. This work must be completed by a NICEIC/NAPIT/ELECSA registered technician and proof of this work must be supplied **before the property can be accredited.**

- **A valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) reference number** must be provided for each property that is available to let, unless each tenant has an individual tenancy agreement. If this is the case a signed letter **must** be provided by the landlord confirming

that individual tenancies are being issued. **Please note:** EPC's are a legal requirement unless single tenancies are offered.

- If the landlord is resident, a **current, original Council Tax bill** for the property on which the landlord is named and where the property is the same as that in which the rooms are being let. This is valid for one year.
- If the property has 5 or more occupants over 3 or more floors, an HMO Licence or Licence application.

Am I a Resident Landlord?

A landlord would **not** be considered 'Resident' if the following apply:

The tenant/s have an Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreement

The tenant/s have their own, private access to their part of the property (for example a private door that only leads to the basement /annexe / loft apartment, as opposed to having to gain access via the landlord's own accommodation).

The tenants have exclusive possession of the property (e.g. the landlord does not provide any cleaning, laundry or meal services etc).

It does **not** affect if a landlord is considered 'Resident' or not if the Gas and/or Electricity supplies or heating / hot water are shared between the main and rented residences.

An Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreement would not normally be suitable for lettings where tenants do not have exclusive possession. In these cases you can use a Lodger Agreement Form or your own agreement. Home Run would recommend you consult publications such as <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/rentingrooms> to be fully aware of your rights when offering rooms in your own home for rental.

What Happens Next?

Upon receipt of satisfactory documentation and the correct fee, you will receive a letter confirming that your property is accredited and registered. Once accredited, landlords may advertise for as long as they wish and re-advertise at any point within the year provided that all certification is satisfactory and current.

Please note that landlords will only be able to advertise properties as available for the coming academic year; for example if a landlord registers a property in January 2011 for academic year 2011/12 which is 'available September 2011', they would not then be allowed to change this advert to 'available September 2012'.

Properties you wish to advertise with Home Run will be placed on our database and our website. Paper copies are also available from the Union Advice Centre on an ad-hoc basis. You will be provided with a user name and password to allow you to access your own properties, upload photos and make changes to your property information. You will also be given access to view the list of available properties. Your contact information is available to UEA students throughout the world, so you may wish to think carefully about what details you provide.

We aim to update the database regularly and will not stop advertising a property until instructed to do so by landlords (unless the registration fee has not been paid or any of the required documentation has expired).

As part of your registration you will receive details of forthcoming events throughout the year, such as the Landlords' Open Meetings, as well as newsletters and information to keep you up to date with changes and news from both Home Run and the private sector as a whole.

As a new Home Run landlord you will also receive a copy of our approved Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) agreement which

we would encourage you to use when letting your property. Additional copies can be purchased for £1 per copy. Resident landlords will need to obtain their own Lodger Agreement Form which can be purchased from www.lawpack.co.uk or alternatively by calling 0207 394 4040.

Reminders relating to the annual fee and expiry of certificates are sent out but we would like to emphasise that it is the landlord's responsibility to ensure certificates are renewed. It is a legal requirement that Gas Safe Register Gas Safety Certificates are renewed each year and that there is no lapse between certificates.



HOME RUN MINIMUM STANDARDS

Last Revised: November 2010

Section 1: Pre Tenancy

- 1.1** NO fees are charged to students.
- 1.2** All tenants/licensees must be provided with a written agreement/licence/rent book which records the amount of rent to be paid, when it is due, what services, if any, are included, the rental period and finally any notice required to vacate the property.
- 1.3** Properties must be adequately equipped and furnished at the start of the rental period. Study bedrooms must contain at least a bed, desk, chair, wardrobe and drawers unit. All furnishings and furniture supplied by the landlord must comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988.
- 1.4** Property details including rent levels must be reported accurately on the original property registration form without misrepresentation to prospective tenants.
- 1.5** The letting agreement must clearly state the rental and occupation arrangement for the summer period (e.g. a "retainer" or "reduced rent"). The date that the tenants are entitled to take up occupation must be agreed and included in any agreement.
- 1.6** It must be made clear whether the owners of the property OR any other person authorised to act as owners or managing agents are managing the letting of that property.

1.7 All properties offered to UEA students must be registered with Home Run. If students are remaining in a property, it must be registered with Home Run. If a landlord or agent is suspected of offering or otherwise letting, or owning properties with UEA tenants in situ that are not registered, Home Run may suspend advertising ALL properties owned by that landlord/agent. Landlords who offer properties that are not registered risk being suspended from Home Run.

1.8 All tenancy/licence agreements must be accompanied by a detailed inventory. The tenants should check the inventory and forward a copy along with any discrepancies within 14 days of occupation. A full and final inventory is to be agreed by the tenants and the landlord/agent within 28 days of occupation.

1.9 At the start of the tenancy the property must be fully habitable. Any major structural works must be completed, the property must be clean and in good order and any old furniture/appliances must be removed and disposed of correctly. Landlords must ensure that there is adequate time between tenancies to clean (and refurbish) the property, to make sure it is in a suitable condition for the new tenants. In cases where tenancies run back to back, the landlord/agent must offer a pro-rata refund of rent to the new tenants for the period they are checking, cleaning or refurbishing the property.

1.10 Damage deposits (if taken) must be protected in accordance with mandatory Tenancy Deposit Protection (if letting on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy).

Section 2: During the Tenancy

2.1 Repairs, once reported to a Landlord, must be dealt with in a timely manner. Refer to the complaints and suspension procedure for the full repair schedule.

2.2 All parties must be included in negotiations should unforeseen work need to be carried out once the tenancy has commenced.

2.3 If the landlord or agent requires access to the property, they must give the tenants at least 24 hours notice in writing, stating the day, time and purpose of the visit, unless an emergency arises and it therefore becomes impractical to serve a notice.

Section 3: The End of the Tenancy

3.1 At the end of the tenancy, or when the last tenant is leaving, the inventory is checked and a record of any discrepancies and/or damage is made. This check should be performed in the presence of the tenants wherever possible.

3.2 Deductions made from tenants' deposits are only made for those items which the deposit was intended to cover.

3.3 Where a landlord or agent has retained a proportion of the deposit to cover costs incurred, receipts and invoices for work undertaken must be provided to the former tenants along with a written statement detailing the deductions.

Section 4: Other Provisions

Landlords or their Agents will ensure that:

4.1 All properties must comply with Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and an **original, valid** Gas Safe Register certificate on headed stationery must be provided for each property annually to cover all gas appliances in the property. This applies to LPG (liquid petroleum gas) and natural gas appliances.

4.2 A **valid, original** electrical inspection report must be provided for each property every two years for non-resident landlords, and every five years if the landlord is a resident at the property, unless the recommendation on the report is for an earlier re-test. We will only accept reports from NICEIC, NAPIT or ELECSA (ECA) contractors on headed stationery. Home Run does not accept reports that show 'code 1' or 'code 2' remedial works are required. These items would need to be remedied and a works

certificate provided in addition to the periodic inspection report. Any alterations to the property or the electrical installation may also require an earlier re-test.

4.3 From 1st October 2008, an original, valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) or EPC reference number must be provided for each property that is available to let, unless each tenant has an individual tenancy agreement. If this is the case a signed letter must be provided by the landlord confirming that individual tenancies are being issued. **Please note:** EPCs are a legal requirement unless single tenancies are offered.

4.4 If the landlord is resident at the property, a **valid, original** Council Tax bill must be provided annually to prove residency.

4.5 A Fire Risk Assessment must be undertaken for each property. This is a requirement under the Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) and failure to have a fire risk assessment is an offence enforced by the fire service. Forms can be downloaded at http://www.norwich.gov.uk/intranet_docs/A-Z/Housing/Fire_Precapution_Standards.pdf

4.6 Smoke detectors must be supplied and maintained at all properties. Fire blankets and/or fire extinguishers must be supplied at all properties. If fire extinguishers are supplied they must be serviced annually.

4.7 Landlords whose property/properties are classified as Houses in Multiple Occupation which are required to be licensed, must provide Home Run with the licence or a copy of their application.

4.8 Landlords are responsible for keeping the exterior of the property in a good condition. All gardens, paths and paved areas shall be kept in good order, and any plants or shrubs shall be properly maintained and not allowed to obstruct pavements or public areas surrounding the property.

4.9 The internal condition of the property - paintwork, woodwork, flooring, kitchens and bathrooms must be of a good standard. Home Run reserves the right to suspend advertising a property that is in an unsatisfactory condition.

4.10 Full Gas or Electric Central Heating must be provided.

Section 5: Further Recommendations

The following are recommendations and not compulsory.

5.1 Internal redecoration should be carried out every 3 years, external decoration every 5 years.

5.2 Adequate insulation should be installed to ensure maximum energy efficiency.

5.3 All electrical appliances provided by the landlord should be tested every two years and should carry a sticker to indicate the date of testing.

5.4 An energy assessment should be carried out even if not legally required, as it provides valuable information on how to improve the energy efficiency of the property.

If it is brought to Home Run's attention that a landlord is failing to comply with the Minimum Standards a decision to suspend them from registering with Home Run may be taken.

The Complaints and Suspension procedure can be found further on in this document.

COMPLAINTS AND SUSPENSION PROCEDURE

Last Revised: December 2010

We aim to provide an efficient and responsive service to both student and landlord, though our primary focus is to ensure that students are provided with accommodation that complies with our Minimum Standards.

This Complaints and Suspension document is a mechanism to ensure that complaints about Home Run landlords are dealt with fairly and quickly.

A complaint can be initiated in different ways:

- An Advice Worker can refer a case to the Student Support Services Manager.
- A student can make a complaint to the Student Support Services Manager.
- The Student Support Services Manager can initiate a complaint if there is a catalogue of events raised by students or if a serious breach of the Minimum Standards occurs.
- Any complaint made to Home Run about a landlord must be in writing.
- The Student Support Services Manager will write to the landlord advising them that a complaint has been made against them, providing them with details of the nature of the complaint.
- The landlord will be given 14 days (from the date of the letter) to respond. If the landlord does not respond, the landlord will be suspended from advertising any property with Home Run until contact is made with the Student Support Services Manager.
- The landlord may have the opportunity to meet with the Student Support Services Manager to put their case.

Overleaf are listed some of the most common issues that, if not attended to, may lead to suspension:

Repairs

Priority One – Emergency repairs

Any repairs required in order to avoid danger to health, risk to the safety of residents or serious damage to building or residents' belongings must be attended to **within 24 hours of report of defect (gas leaks, major electrical faults).**

Priority Two – Urgent Repairs

Repairs or defects which materially affect the comfort or convenience of residents **within 3 working days of fault being reported (complete breakdown of heat and hot water systems).**

Priority Three – Non urgent day to day repairs

Repairs affecting the structure and services but not regarded as prejudicial to the safety, health or security of the tenants or structure of the building **within 7 working days of reporting (direct water penetration, kitchen appliances breaking down).**

Priority Four – Day to Day repairs

Other reported repairs which do not fall into the above categories and do not prevent the reasonable occupation of the premises **within 28 days (furniture repair, re-tiling).**

Where a dispute occurs between the landlord and the tenants as to when a repair was reported, the accepted date shall be the date when it was reported in writing to the landlord.

Landlords who do not comply with the above timetable schedule where reasonably possible will have all properties removed from the Home Run list. We recognise that certain repairs will not be rectified within the specified time, but within those deadlines, if required, the landlord must be able to provide evidence that parts have been ordered/contractors notified.

Deposit Disputes

For deposits taken on or after 6th April 2007:

Damage deposits (if taken) must be protected in accordance with mandatory Tenancy Deposit Protection (if letting on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy) under the Housing Act (2004). (See Home Run Minimum Standards point 1.10)

Landlords have 14 days after tenants sign a Tenancy Agreement **AND** pay a deposit to register the deposit with one of the three Tenancy Deposit Protection Schemes.

Failure to protect a deposit may result in immediate suspension.

At the end of a tenancy landlords must refer to the appropriate Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme (TDPS) rules regarding the return of deposits.

- The process to return a deposit should be initiated in line with the appropriate scheme rules.
 - If a landlord wishes to make any deductions they must comply with the procedure of their chosen TDPS.
 - If an Advice Worker gets involved regarding a deposit dispute and writes to the landlord (to gather all details of the case) a further 14 days can pass to try and resolve the dispute satisfactorily.
1. The tenant may lodge a complaint if a deposit is still not returned beyond this date.
 2. The tenant may lodge a complaint at any stage.

Harassment / Breaches of Tenancy

Any breaches of tenancy or allegations of harassment must be put in

writing to the Student Support Services Manager. This will be treated as a complaint.

- The Student Support Services Manager will write to the landlord advising them that a complaint has been made against them, providing them with details of the nature of the complaint.
- The landlord will be given 14 days (from the date of the letter) to respond. If the landlord does not respond, the landlord will be suspended from advertising any property with Home Run until contact is made with the Student Support Services Manager.
- All parties may be invited to meet with the Student Support Services Manager.
- The Student Support Services Manager will take the decision whether to uphold the complaint. If a complaint is upheld, the landlord will be suspended from advertising any property with Home Run. If a complaint is valid but the landlord has rectified the problem a note of the complaint will be held on the database but the landlord may not be suspended
- Once a decision has been reached all parties will be written to and made aware of any outcomes.
- Regardless of whether a tenant is willing to make a formal complaint the Union Advice Centre will keep a register of complaints against landlords, including a list of landlords who are reluctant to return deposits.

If there is a series of issues reported to Advice Workers the Student Support Services Manager can use their discretion to cease advertising vacant properties of particular landlords until further notice.

Suspension

If the Student Support Services Manager is considering any allegation against a landlord Home Run is notified. The landlord is notified of the nature of the complaint and that a suspension is being considered. The landlord will also be advised they have 14 days to respond before the suspension is put in place.

Once the Student Support Services Manager is able to consider the evidence they may consider a range of penalties which may include:

- that there is no case to answer
- that the landlord is advised a note of the issue will be logged on the database
- that actions and remedies are required
- that a temporary suspension is put in place
- that a landlord is suspended
- that a landlord is permanently suspended

The landlord will then be notified why the decision has been taken and advised of their right of appeal to the Union Management Committee.

A suspension will stand for 3 years from the date the landlord is notified of this decision.

In certain circumstances it may be considered appropriate for a suspension to be permanent.

A student who is not happy with a decision not to suspend a landlord has similar recourse to the Union Management Committee.

Appeals

The Landlord will be able to present their case in writing to the Union Management Committee.

The Student Support Services Manager will present the case in writing to the Union Management Committee.

Any decision taken by the Management Committee to suspend, reinstate or permanently remove landlords cannot be appealed.

A suspension will stand for 3 years from the date the landlord is notified of this decision.

Temporary suspensions will last until works are carried out or the matter rectified.

If you are unsure about any of the requirements, standards or procedures contained in this booklet please contact Home Run before submitting your registration.

Tips for letting to Students

Pictures, pictures, pictures!

Students expect to be able to see photographs of a property when advertised on the internet. If you were shopping online and there were two products available, one without a picture and one with at the same price, you would be inclined to purchase the product you could see. The same goes for advertising houses! As a registered landlord you can upload up to six photographs of each property to the Home Run website. If you're not confident at doing this you can also contact Home Run and send them by email or even bring them into the office on a data stick or CD.

Home Run also offers a property photography service. If you don't own a camera or just would like us to take pictures for you, for £35 per property we will come out and do everything from taking the photographs to editing them and uploading them to your property record. For more information or to book an appointment please contact Home Run.

Don't waste your words

Use your property description effectively! The Home Run website has tick boxes for facilities so there's no need to tell students there's a washing machine, or secure bike storage, as they can see this at a glance. Use the description to **sell** your property. What makes it a great home? Is it bright, airy, spacious, cosy or warm? Is it on a bus route, or easy walking distance to campus? Is it really close to shops, pubs or takeaways?

Let them know their rights

The Union Advice Centre, also run by the Union of UEA Students (UUEAS), offers a service where students can have their tenancy agreements checked by an advice worker, to make sure the terms are fair. At the same time the students are advised of their rights & responsibilities as well as those of the landlord / agent.

Home Run also offers its own Assured Shorthold Tenancy available to all accredited Home Run landlords. A copy is provided upon registration and additional copies are available at £1 per copy. It is quicker and easier for our advisors to run over a tenancy with students if the Home Run agreement is used.

Have a happy tenancy!

Good communication between landlords and tenants is absolutely vital and can make a real difference to everyone's experience. Be sure to give current, good contact information to your tenants and if you have any special requirements (not being phoned before / after a certain time etc) let them know! Also if you're going away on holiday, or live somewhere with an unreliable mobile phone service, give alternative contact details too so there's always someone available in an emergency.

Useful Contacts

Home Run

www.ueastudent.com/homerun

01603 592505

Norwich City Council Private Sector Housing Team

http://www.norwich.gov.uk/webapps/atoz/service_page.asp?id=1131

0344 980 3333

Communities & Local Government

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/>

0303 444 0000

The Deposit Protection Service

<http://www.depositprotection.com/>

0844 472 7000

My Deposits

<http://www.mydeposits.co.uk/>

0844 980 0290

Tenancy Deposit Scheme

<http://www.thedisputeservice.co.uk/>

0845 226 7837

HHSRS (Housing Health & Safety Rating System)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/hhsr-soperatingguidance>

Electrical Safety Council Guidance for Landlords

<http://www.esc.org.uk/stakeholder/guidance-for/guidance-for-landlords/>

Notes:

Home Run - The Housing Bureau

Union House

University of East Anglia

Norwich

NR4 7TJ

Open:

Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm

except Wednesday 11am - 5pm

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ueastudent.com/housing

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