



CITY BLOCK

WWW.CITYBLOCK.CO.UK

STUDENT HANDBOOK READING

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

Hello and Welcome

This handbook contains everything you need to know about your stay at CityBlock in Reading.

Got any questions? Have a flick through this handbook to find out the answers. If there is anything you are still unsure about, our on-site staff will be happy to help.

Key Contacts

Accommodation Team

01189 500216

Out of Hours Security

07801 059259 or 01524 852275

Central Support

01524 541251

Finance Team

01524 541277

Email Us

info@cityblock.co.uk

Visit Us Online

www.cityblock.co.uk

Moving in

What should I bring with me?

All our studios are fully equipped with pots, pans, crockery, cutlery, glasses, and appliances, so you just need to bring your personal belongings including:

- Bedding – pillows, duvet, bed linen
- Coat hangers
- Bathroom towels and toiletries
- Waste bin

UniKitOut

We have partnered with UniKitOut to help you get organised for the year ahead. You can order essentials such as bedding, bath towels and other homeware straight to your bedroom: <https://www.unikitout.com/?partner=Cityblock>

What do I do when I arrive?

Please book a check in appointment before you arrive – all details will have been sent to you via email. When you arrive, please come to the office where a member of the CityBlock Team will be there to meet you, give you your keys and show you to your accommodation.

Parcels and Post

Parcel Collection

Parcels are accepted on your behalf, and you can collect them at certain times in the day – please check with your lettings team when your parcel collection is. You will be sent an email when we receive a parcel for you.

Letters

Any letters or small parcels will be placed into your designated post box (this is located at the entrance of the building).

Address

Your address will be:

(Your name) (Your room number)
CityBlock Berkshire House
252-256 King's Road
Reading
RG1 4HP

We are here to help

What should I do if I get locked out?

If you are locked out during normal working hours (9am – 5pm) please call the office on 01189 500216. You could also contact your flat mates to let you back in if you know your keys are inside.

If you are locked out of your room outside of office hours (including bank holidays and weekends), please call the out of hours emergency number 07801 059259. Charges will apply for using this service, so keep your keys safe!

What should I do if I lose my keys?

Please make sure you keep your keys safe – always keep them with you and don't share them with anyone else. If you do lose them, please tell a member of your Lettings Team as soon as possible. Charges will apply for lost keys.

Maintenance Requests

Whatever you need, we are here to help. All maintenance requests can be reported through your Resident Portal.

Emergency repairs, including a complete loss of power, heating, lighting, hot water or any other health and safety issue will always take priority. These will be dealt with as quickly as possible and will be attended to within 24 hours.

If you have an emergency maintenance request outside of office hours, please call our out of hours number on 01524 852275 07801059259.



Your stay

Resident Portal

You can access your Resident Portal at any time on our website, www.cityblock.co.uk – just click the little person icon in the top left corner.

Wi-Fi

You will be given an early access code to set up your fast 200mb Wi-Fi before you move in, which can be registered on 6 devices. It is available in all buildings and indoor social spaces. Speeds can vary depending on usage or the time of day, however ethernet cables for wired access are available at reception. Don't worry if you haven't set it up before you get here – all information will be given to you at check in, any issues please contact glide directly.

Cycle Storage

All CityBlock sites have secure, sheltered cycle storage – this will either be at the entrance or in a designated cycle storage room depending on your block. Please check with your Lettings Team for further details. Please note E-Scooters are not permitted to be stored in your accommodation and can be kept in the cycle store.

Laundry

You will find your laundry room on the ground floor of your block. There are clear instructions by wash station on how to operate the laundry machines, any other issues please contact wash station directly on **0800 141 2331** or email service@washstation.co.uk

Parking

Car parking is not permitted on site. Please contact the site team who will be able to let you know of available options nearby.



Communal Living

Helpful Guidance

You will be sharing some great living areas and facilities whilst living at CityBlock. To ensure everybody has the best experience, we ask if you could stick to a few simple guidelines:

- Keep your room and communal areas clean and tidy
- Respect any item of equipment belonging to CityBlock or your flatmates.
- Keep noise levels down, especially after 11pm – use headphones and talk quietly.
- Do not smoke or vape in the building (you can smoke outside, at least 5m away from the building)

Visitors

We welcome visitors, but please remember they are your responsibility whilst they are visiting you. If you are in a shared flat, it is a good idea to let your flatmates know ahead of time-just to keep everyone happy, please refer to your tenancy agreement for more information.

Visitors may stay no more than 2 nights without written permission from the lettings manager.

Your Room/Studio

Appliances

A guide for using all the appliances in your room such as your heater, shower, and heated towel rail can be found on your Resident Portal.

Cleaning

Your room, ensuite and kitchen are cleaned for you every week – for your designated cleaning day, please check the “Quick Guide” on your noticeboard, or alternatively check with your Lettings Team. If access is denied over 3 consecutive weeks CityBlock will conduct a room inspection.

Noticeboard

On the wall in front of your desk, you will find a Perspex noticeboard, which also doubles as a whiteboard. This is a great tool for studying – important paper notes and reminders can be stuck on with sticky tack, and whiteboard-safe pens can be used on here, too.

Electrical Appliances

Large electrical appliances such as fridge/freezers are not permitted. If you bring any small, portable electrical equipment to CityBlock you must ensure that only one appliance is wired to one UK plug and that each appliance is in good working order.

Bathrooms/Showers

It is important to take care of the shower and sink in your ensuite room. Please do not block drains or allow basins or shower trays to overflow. The shower drain also needs to be cleaned regularly.

Pets

No animals including fish may be kept in your accommodation.

TV Licence

Your studio includes a smart TV. You are responsible for your own studio TV licence. For more information visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk.

Council Tax

As a student you are exempt from council tax for the dates you are enrolled on your course. This may not be the same as your tenancy term and charges may apply, if you receive any correspondence from the council tax department please do not ignore

Student Status certificates (obtained from university) may be required to send to Reading council.

Students facing challenges with council tax issues can seek advice from the Reading Student Union. They can contact this service via their online form: www.readingsu.co.uk/getadvice. The Reading Student Union also has information on their website which outlines the rules concerning council tax, which can be found here: <https://readingsu.co.uk/advice-&-support/council-tax>.

Insurance

You are responsible for insuring your personal possessions. If they are not included on your home insurance. Endsleigh insurance offer contents insurance for students <https://www.endsleigh.co.uk/>

A photograph of a building's exterior featuring a large, white, three-dimensional sign that reads "CITYBLOCK BERKSHIRE HOUSE". The sign is mounted on a blue-grey wall. Above the sign is a brick ledge. Below the sign is a glass entrance door with a black frame and a horizontal push bar. In the foreground, there are out-of-focus green leaves and white flowers on the left side.

CITYBLOCK BERKSHIRE HOUSE

Secure Access

At CityBlock, we consider your safety as paramount. Access to the building is by a fob access system for heightened security. Each resident is provided with their own fob which allows access to the main entrance, their bedroom or their studio and the social space, access to individual rooms is by a key.

Bedroom Security

Although we take great pride in our safe and secure buildings, it is important that you also take responsibility for your room and belongings, too. Please ensure to lock your bedroom door whenever you leave your room. Ensure all windows are closed and locked, with no valuable items in view. Please be aware of what others may be able to see when your lights are on, especially at night time – you may prefer to close your blinds/curtains for privacy.

Fire Alarm

Fire alarms are tested weekly. You can find the day that your fire alarm is tested on the “Quick Guide” on the noticeboard in your bedroom.

Window Locks

Window locks are fitted to reduce the risk of anyone falling from a window and to reduce the risk of intruders gaining access through the window. They are regarded as health and safety equipment. It is extremely important that you do not tamper with this equipment.

CCTV

There is 24-hour CCTV in operation to monitor the building-

Door Closures

Room doors, kitchen doors, and doors adjacent to staircases are fitted with hydraulic door closures. They are designed to reduce the risk of spread of fires and smoke. It is very important to not tamper with these devices or to prop open any door with a closure attached, as it is a fire risk and considered an offence.

Security Issues

During office hours, please call the office on 01189 500216. Outside office hours, please call the out of hours emergency number on 01524 852275 or 07801059259.

If there is a real crime, please call 999.

Smoking

Smoking (of any substance including the use of e-cigarettes, shisha pipes and vapes) is not allowed within CityBlock. If you do smoke, please stay at least 5 metres away from the building whilst smoking. Please do not leave cigarette ends on the ground and always dispose of them safely in a bin.

Room Access

When access is required to your room, for example for maintenance, viewings, or inspections, you will be notified at least 24 hours before this takes place. You do not need to be in when we require access to your room, but it is okay if you are there.

Compliance Documents

All compliance documents such as gas safety and electrical installation certification can be found on our website under “Useful Documents”.



Fire Safety & Evacuation

In the event of a fire, please follow the Fire Plan on the noticeboard in your bedroom. A copy of the Fire Plan can also be found in your Resident Portal as part of the induction process. Here is some further guidance for your safety:

- Fire blankets are provided in the kitchens to deal with small fires. Ensure that you know where this equipment is located and that you are familiar with the instruction for its use.
- The fire alarm is activated by breaking the glass cover on the red break glass point; these are situated next to fire exit doors in residences. Make sure that you are familiar with all the escape routes out of the residences, including routes that you may not normally use.
- Do not block corridors, stairs or doorways with boxes, cases or bicycles.
- Do not allow combustible materials, such as old newspapers, bags of rubbish/recycling etc. to accumulate in kitchens.
- Fire doors are designed to protect your emergency escape routes. They must be kept shut and never be wedged open or obstructed.
- Students must not interfere with firefighting equipment.
- Smoke detectors and heat detectors are fitted in all blocks and must never be covered.
- The use of candles, oil/essence burners, joss sticks etc. is strictly prohibited within the residences as they are fire hazards.
- Fairy lights may be used as long as they are battery operated and LED. Please place them away from soft furnishings and any other flammable items.



Finance

Rent

All payment dates and amounts can be found on your tenancy agreement, or in your Resident Portal. If you are unsure of the amounts or have any questions, please contact your Lettings Team.

How to pay

It is simple and easy to pay for your rent through our Resident Portal. If you are having problems paying on the portal, please contact a member of your Lettings Team with any questions.

Deposits

Your refundable tenancy deposit is protected by the Deposit Protection Service (DPS). This will be refunded back to you (less any damages or outstanding balances) within 28 days of your tenancy end date.

Repairs and Replacements

A full list of repairs and replacements (for any damages that may have unfortunately occurred in your room) can be found on the “Useful Documents” page of our website.

We are here to help

If you are having difficulty paying for your rent, please tell us as soon as possible. We are here to support you and to alleviate pressure as much as we can. In the first instance, please contact your Lettings Manager or our Finance Team for support.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

At CityBlock we work hard to focus on our residents' wellbeing - we are *All About Students*. Whilst moving to university is filled with excitement and fun, we recognise that it is also a huge life change for most people.

Training

CityBlock have invested in mental health training, allowing onsite teams to identify any concerns and signpost you to support at university.

Our on-site Lettings Team

Our teams are always up for a friendly chat or a cup of tea. They can help to introduce you to other students within CityBlock if you'd like to meet some new friends or find someone with similar interests.

Social Events

We organise regular get togethers on site, including pizza nights, games tournaments and quiz nights to help you get to know each other and you will also receive a calendar of events for throughout the year.

Social Spaces

Our buildings are designed to encourage students to meet and chat, with extensive social spaces.

Top Tips and Advice

Just as we exercise to maintain physical health, we should also ensure that we take steps to maintain our mental health. Here are 5 steps to improve mental wellbeing:

Connect

Connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues, and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships.

Be Active

You don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.

Keep Learning

Learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not sign up for that cooking course, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike?

Give to others

Even the smallest act can count whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can help to build new social networks.

Be Mindful

Be aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body, and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness".



Sustainability

At CityBlock, we are always finding ways to be kinder to our planet. Here are just a few examples of what we do:

Lighting

We use LED light bulbs with motion sensors to ensure we are using our energy as efficiently as possible.

Garden

We have a wildflower garden at our block in Reading, to encourage wildlife and natural habitats.

Heating

We fit timers on our heaters and towel rails so that energy is not wasted.

Appliances

Most of our appliances in our kitchens and bedrooms are triple A rated for efficient energy consumption.

Recycling

We encourage all students to recycle regularly using the bins provided. We set up drop off locations for students to donate items to local charities at the end of the year.

Energy Saving Tips for a Happier Planet

Small changes can really make a big difference when it comes to our energy consumption. Here are a few tips to keep our planet happy:

Chargers

Unplug your chargers when not in use.

Fridge/Freezers

Filling up your fridge/freezer can help to save energy, as the empty space takes more energy to keep it cool.

Lighting

If it is a sunny day, let the natural sunlight into your room, rather than using overhead lights. Remember to turn off your lights whenever you are leaving your room.

Electrical Devices

Change the settings on your electrical devices to go to sleep mode after five minutes – and turn them off completely when you go to bed.

Laundry

Laundry detergent is designed to be effective at just 30°C – you will save electricity at this lower temperature, and it is also kinder to your clothes!

Kitchen Tips for a Happier Planet

Whether you are showing off your culinary skills or just grabbing a bite to eat, we have some tips to help you to be kinder in the kitchen:

Share with friends

Reduce your energy usage by cooking a big meal to share with your flatmates, rather than each of you cooking separately. Bonus points for using a slow cooker, too!

Appliances

If you are just making one brew, don't fill the kettle to the top. This wastes a lot of unnecessary energy.

Efficient cooking

If using the hob, use the ring that best fits the size of your pan, to avoid using unnecessary energy. Placing a lid on top of your saucepan helps water to boil faster. This uses less energy, which is kinder to our planet.

Recycle

Make sure to recycle as much food and drinks packaging as you can – just look for the little “recycle” symbol on the packaging.

Waste Management

The bin store is located at the rear of the building, please ensure all rubbish is put in plastic bags that are securely tied before putting them in the bin. Do not leave rubbish on the floor of the bin stores





Moving Out

Booking a Checkout Appointment

In order to start your moving out process towards the end of your tenancy, you will need to book a checkout appointment with a member of your Lettings Team.

More information will be given to you towards the end of your tenancy.

Preparing your room for checkout

There are also a few requirements for your last day:

- Your room needs to be clear of all belongings by the end date of your tenancy
- You will need to return all keys and laundry card (if applicable)
- Please make sure your room is clean and tidy

Repairs and Redecoration

It is important to look after your room whilst living at CityBlock. It is a good idea to report any damage as soon as it happens (as this could help prevent further issues at checkout).

A full list of Repairs and Redecoration charges can be found on the “Useful Documents” page of our website.

Your deposit

Your deposit will be refunded back to you (less any damages or outstanding balances) within 28 days of your tenancy end date.



Complaints Handling and Appeals

At CityBlock, we put every attention into ensuring our residents are happy and feel their accommodation is a home away from home.

We are passionate about providing excellent customer service and going the extra mile for our residents, listening to their feedback and constantly looking to improve the services we provide.

We are aware that there may be occasions when issues arise and take complaints seriously, endeavouring to resolve them quickly and satisfactorily.

Complaints will be subject to the ANUK complaint procedure to ensure we have an open, fair and transparent process.

If you would like a copy of our full Complaints Policy, please contact a member of your Lettings Team.

Disclaimer

Please note that the information in this Handbook does not cover every aspect of your contractual obligations, and as a resident you are legally bound to the terms set out in your signed tenancy agreement.

Thank you

**Thank you for taking the time to read our Student Handbook.
We hope it was useful and provided the answers to any
questions you may have.**