

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE AUTUMN TERM 2019/20

Dates for Autumn Term

- First year students are arriving into hall accommodation between 20-22 September and letters detailing the timed arrivals were distributed to local residents the w/c 9 September.
- RUSU's Freshers' Week (one-week only) is between 20 and 27 September.
- Autumn Term starts on 30 September and ends on 13 December.
- The University is holding its **Community Forum Meeting** on Thursday 26 September at 6pm, at London Road campus. If you haven't booked your place yet you can find out all the details and how to reserve a space on our website: <http://www.reading.ac.uk/news-and-events/Events/Event809010.aspx>

Official Welcome Week/Freshers Week plans

- RUSU has reduced its two week Freshers' events to one week only, with all events being held on campus so we can prioritise the welfare and safety of all students who attend.
- There are a number of alternative activities, which focus less on alcohol. These include quiz nights, karaoke, film and jazz nights throughout Freshers and a number of other events throughout the term.
- Please note there are three large-scale 3sixty nights during Freshers Week:
 - Sunday 22 September: Welcome event until 2am;
 - Wednesday 25 September: first Wednesday Union until 2am;
 - Friday 27 September: Freshers Ball until 3am.

Unofficial events

- We know that the Entourage Project, a local business, have a series of events aimed at students, including in the town centre and at Palmer Park. **These events are not affiliated or endorsed by the University or RUSU.**
- The University and Reading University Students' Union (RUSU) are no longer working with Entourage. This decision is based on previous experience of working with them, which led to concerns related to student welfare and negative impacts on the local community.
- Even so, we are working closely with Reading Borough Council and Thames Valley Police, to support student welfare and mitigate any disruption these events may cause. We have also highlighted our concerns about these events to the Licensing Authority and Trading Standards.
- Reading Police have a planned operation to manage any issues in the town centre, and both Reading and Wokingham police teams are organising patrols at Palmer Park. We have also briefed University Street Wardens to work extra shifts around these events.
- **If you experience any community disruption or you are worried about the welfare of students, you should do the following:**
 - Call the local police on 101 (or 999 if it is an emergency)
 - Complain directly to Entourage: <https://entourageproject.co.uk/contact>
 - Register a complaint about the event with the Licensing Authority/Trading Standards: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/tradingstandards>
 - Contact your local Councillor.

- As noted, these events are privately organised without University endorsement. Whilst we have worked closely with the local authorities, we have no oversight or management of this event. All complaints should be directed to the organiser, Entourage, and to Trading Standards.

Alcohol awareness and intervention work

- The University and RUSU have been working closely with Reading Borough Council's Community Alcohol Partnership, to build on our work to raise awareness of responsible drinking and to support vulnerable students.
- This includes expanding our alcohol awareness, vulnerability and brief intervention training to key staff, including bars staff and hall welfare teams, throughout term time. We are also launching a large-scale alcohol awareness campaign aimed at all students, with a focus on peer to peer support and students looking out for one another.
- All University and RUSU social events are being organised on campus and there are a number of alternative activities, including non-alcohol events.
- The University and RUSU have a range of support services available to students. This includes counselling and wellbeing services, local police support and first aid support to students on nights out. Our Security also offer a 24-hour chaperone service on request to students getting home across campus.

Expanded Street Support Team

- We created a street warden scheme in April 2018 to encourage students to be respectful when socialising late at night in residential areas. We are expanding the scheme this year, with an additional two wardens who will patrol a new area along Eastern Avenue/Whiteknights Road (near Foxhill Gate entrance/exit).
- The street wardens patrol Christchurch Road/Northcourt Avenue; Melrose Avenue area; Erleigh Road area and the newest area, Eastern Avenue/Whiteknights Road. They work between 10pm and 4am most nights of the week.
- We know the majority of issues are focussed around bus stops. We have spent a lot of time discussing this with local residents, local Councillors, Reading Buses and local police teams to explore various options, however each potential 'solution' is complex and comes with a set of other issues.
- For now we are focusing on expanding our street warden scheme, working closely with local police teams and improving our alcohol education programmes.

Supporting student tenants

- The University and RUSU delivers communications to student tenants at regular points throughout the year. We will be delivering move-in information in October which includes advice on being a considerate neighbour.
- The local community can also help us by speaking to their neighbours, helping them understand the rules and reporting repeat issues to the University's Community Relations team (email community@reading.ac.uk or call 0118 378 6764).
- There are Six Student Community Assistants in the Community Relations Team who help foster good community relations and provide advice to students living off-campus on a proactive and reactive basis.
- We will also continue our work to educate students tenants about recycling, in order to reduce contaminated bin issues and reduce end of year waste. We have created tools and materials to make it easier for students to understand the rules.