

Sharehouses - Checking out a potential housemate

You should talk about all the conditions and guidelines before you enter into a share agreement. A share situation is about matching lifestyles, so issues must be talked about and negotiated.

It is important to be open and honest with one another - otherwise you might find out that your lifestyles are just not compatible.

It is best to meet in a public place first rather than at the person's house. You could meet in places like the local deli, coffee shop or shopping centre.

You can talk about the following:

- **TIME** - how long are you sharing for? Is it for a fixed term (eg 6 months) or is it ongoing? (ie pay as you stay)
- **RENT** - how much? Is rent to be paid every week, fortnight, month? What does the rent include? (eg just rent or expenses such as phone, electricity, gas and food.)
- **LEGAL ISSUES** - Will the lease be in my name, whose names are on the lease, can my name be added?
- **BOND** - is there a bond?
- **BILLS** - how are bills paid?
- **FOOD** - how does the household manage food? Does everyone pay separately, eat separately or are food costs split? Do you have special eating habits eg vegetarian? How does shopping take place?
- **CLEANING** - are there rosters or does everyone work in a flexible way? Do your cleaning habits match the habits of other people in the household?
- **FRIENDS / PARTNERS** - how often can a friend / partner stay over?
- **ALCOHOL / DRUGS** - what do you feel comfortable with in the household? Remember that non-prescription drugs can attract the attention of the police.
- **SMOKING** - who smokes? Is smoking allowed inside or only outside?
- **LIFESTYLE ISSUES** - do you like music up loud, are you sporty, do you work late nights, are you a student or do you have other lifestyle needs that are important to you? Being aware of your own lifestyle will help you to find an appropriate housemate.

Set a trial period (for example, 4 weeks) where you can live together to see how it works. If it does work you can enter into a more formal arrangement. If it doesn't work out neither of you has any long-term commitment that you can't get out of.

