

ANIME SOC MINI-HOUSING GUIDE

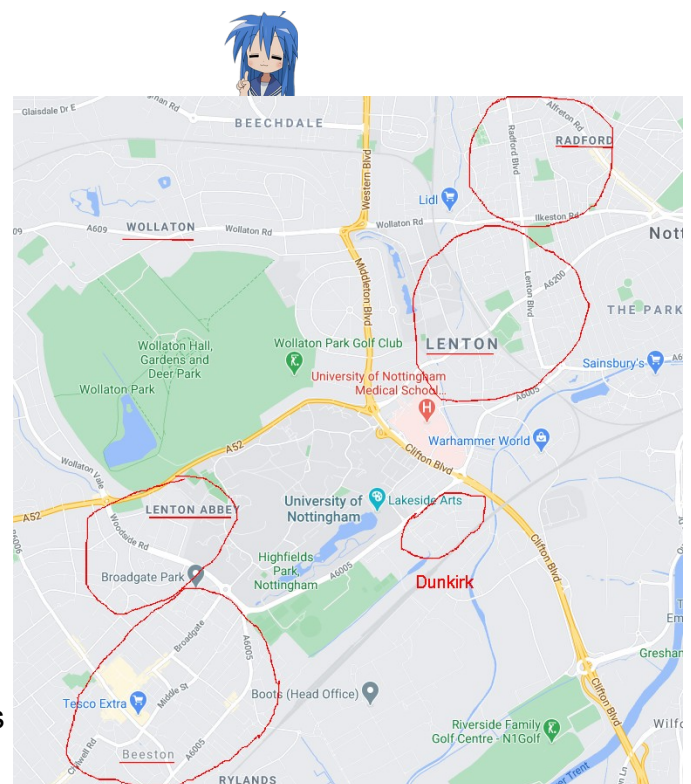
Akarin

Advice for housing is hard to come by; whispers of when, where and how to get a house are spread after lectures and between mates in halls, but the uni nor the SU give zero solid advice. Here's an updated document I put together last year for advice on how to find a house for your second year of uni.

Areas of Nottingham

There are four main areas of Nottingham to look for and I'll explain them in a kind of list format:

- Lenton: I live here at the moment. By far the most popular location for students, so you may end up with noisy neighbours throwing house parties. Plenty of local shops, close to town, close to both campuses – all round pretty convenient place. Can be a little dangerous at night, but not the worst; all round popular place for students to live.
- Dunkirk: Literally 5 minutes from Main Campus. I know people who get out of bed for uni 10 mins before the lecture starts. Complete student area; has no supermarkets except a single lonely vape shop.



- **Beeston/Lenton Abbey:** Other side of campus so it's quite far from Jubilee campus. All round quieter, more suburban and safer than the inner city. Loads of shops and supermarkets though – I lived there two years ago and it's a really nice area. Lenton Abbey is sometimes advertised as Beeston since they kinda blend into one another; Lenton Abbey is further from the big Tesco's tho, mind you. You will be quite far from town centre, however, but the tram is easily accessible from Beeston. Not as studenty as the past two, so you'll be living near everyday people.
- **Radford:** This is where I lived last year. A bit further from Main Campus, but pretty close to city centre. Cheap area, not as studenty, good shops in the area. Rather urban compared to somewhere like Beeston, and has a reputation for being one of the more dangerous areas of Nottingham. Last year, we had no issues with crime – just a lot of people shouting outside – but it feels less safe at night than Lenton.
- **Wollaton:** Adding this one on as a 5th option. Some people live in the nearest part of Wollaton which is a bit like a more upmarket Lenton. I know a few people on the far side, but you really need a car, especially for supermarket shops.

Areas are quite key – location, location, location, and all that – but it usually isn't a deal breaker unless you have a long way to walk to uni and back. But you may want to take a walk down to some of these areas just to get a feel for what they're like. If your classes are usually on Jubilee, Lenton and Radford are very nearby.

Finding house mates

People tend to find a house with their housemates or coursemates. Around this time of year, people start asking one another awkwardly, "Do you have a house yet?" or something to that effect. Don't be afraid to ask others; everyone ends up asking everyone else so be sure to be prompt. Most people find friends through their accommodation or their course, but societies are also a good way to find flatmates. I found all my flat mates through the anime society, so go ask people at Mooch after sessions if you're looking.

How quick should I be?

Pretty quick. The good houses go fast. Most people get their housing sorted by Jan/Feb. In first year I got mine sorted by November and we managed to get a good house, but don't start feeling stressed yet, since most people won't have signed contracts yet. Nevertheless you should be thinking about it and trying to arrange something to be ahead of the curve. In second year searching for houses, we had some complications, meaning we only got our house in March. We were pretty stressed about finding a house so late in the game; but then again I have friends who managed to find a house in June a few years ago, so it isn't as if all hope is lost if you can't organise something fast. Last year in 3rd year, we were again late in finding a house, only signing the contract come March; finding a house for five was very stressful and for whatever reason over lockdown houses were going fast. Not sure what the market is like this year, but it'll hopefully be easier than last year.

Alternatives to private accommodation

Some people opt to carry on in uni accommodation like in halls or in a flat like Broadgate. Many return to their flats (often opting for all-in-one studio apartments) if they can't find people to board with or if they want to solitude of a one person house. The majority of people in the uni opt for private accommodation. I've heard that some people find the first-year lifestyle of partying and noise-producing highly irritating as a second-year in halls, even when they enjoyed it in first-year. Additionally, it's nice not to be in such a sardine-packed area and to be away from the universities rules. There's more freedom in private accommodation (and the rent will be cheaper).

Landlords

This section was written last year after a lot of agony. It'd feel wrong to make any edits

Avoid Purple Frog like the plague.

In truth, the main reason for writing this is I'm fucking pissed off at Purple Frog. I've been in a deposit dispute with them for four months and they refuse to respond to emails or anything. They're a big letting agency throughout Nottingham so on your housing investigations you will come across them but just pass them up. It isn't worth it. The SU has a list of bad landlords and letting agencies (Purple Frog is one of the bad ones) so check that out. In general, letting agencies are generally consistent and private landlords are a mixed bag. But there's nothing wrong with going with a private landlord, it's quite common also.

For my experiences so far: PurpleFrog were awful; last year had a private landlord called Mark, who was very helpful and a good landlord; this year we have a very small letting agency with around 6 properties, and they're a bit useless. Google the company or landlord's name: there are bound to be reviews.

Pricing

You can find properties for rent on all sorts of property rental sites. Just google for properties and you'll find a bunch. I suggest checking a variety of sites also as often they have a different selection. You'll see prices as either 'Exclusive' or 'Inclusive'. Exclusive is without bills paid, and inclusive is with bills paid. For an inclusive house, you'll be looking at around £90-£110 per person per week, depending on what you're looking for, and for an exclusive house you're looking at £80-£100 per person per week. Bills usually cost £10-£15 depending on whether broadband is included or not and how willing you are to bear the cold in the winter (hopefully the gas prices will fall again). You can find cheaper properties too: a year and a bit ago, we nearly got a £78 inclusive property, but missed it by about a week. But those are the ball parks to be looking for.

What to look for in a house

House viewings are essential. You'll be living there for a year, so hopefully you'll like the interior. For the first house I got, I went on only 2 house viewings, since we very much liked what we saw (oh how ignorant we were of Purple Frog), but the second time we saw roughly 5 or 6 houses. There's no firm number, but be sure to see the property you're signing on.

Other than that, here's a small list to check for:

- Tumble dryer. Washing machines are nearly always there, but tumble dryers are variable.
- Kitchen size. A lot of student accommodation has tiny cramped kitchens.
- Cupboard space and work surface space. Frustrating when there isn't any.
- A good front door. Should've checked that last time... Want something sealed and strong with a good lock.
- Gas or electric hob/oven. Depends what you fancy. Gas hobs cook food better, but I'm not so much a fan of the gas oven we now have.
- TV. Some houses come with a TV. Some even come with a TV license, although they don't always say.
- Garden. Most houses have some kind of garden. If so are there seats and table for a nice summer BBQ? Is there any grassy area that you may be obliged to maintain (which can happen, or so I hear – usually they don't care)
- Bathroom. Is there a bath? Is there a separate shower or a bath shower? All preference again. Is there a bathroom mirror? (we don't have one lol)
- Toilets. How many toilets are there. In a house with five people, you probably want two... But with that said, this year there's five of us with one loo and it's been fine.



With all these points, bare in mind that compromises will be made. You've gotta figure out as a house searching group what are the must-haves and where are you willing to compromise. In truth, you can probably adapt to most things – we're young after all – but nevertheless be sure to make sure everyone in your group is on the same page when searching.

And that's a wrap folks. I hope you all find a good house with housemates. If anyone has any questions regarding finding a house, by sure to ask!

- Nick