

STUDENT WI-FI GUIDE FOR HMOS

BEFORE MOVING IN

Before looking around the property, check who the service provider is and what level of package they are signed up to.

Internet services provided via fibre tend to be able to handle higher bandwidths.

Some internet providers offer 'Wi-Fi guarantees'. This gives an indication of good quality across all rooms, but depending how this has been set up, there still could be poor areas within the accommodation.

When looking around the property, conduct your own speed test - this can be done online.

Conducting a speed test is a good idea, as the quality of broadband across the accommodation can be variable – things like thick walls, distance from the router etc. will reduce the capacity.

As a guide we would expect that a download speed 18-20Mbps per person in an HMO would give a very good level of internet experience, and allow consistent streaming, online gaming and video-calling.

For an accommodation of four people, a total capacity between 60-80Mbps would be an excellent level. For an accommodation of six or more people, then 80-100Mbps should give all a very good service. These figures have been calculated with the expectation that not all members of the household would be using maximum capacity at the same time.

Capacity less than the above would provide a reasonable experience, but you may see signs of buffering when streaming and reduced quality. If levels are below 8Mbps, it is likely to have a regular and noticeable impact.



TIPS ON IMPROVING WIFI AFTER MOVING IN

See where the router is placed - if it's on the floor behind a chimney, next to large Hi-Fi speakers, or near a microwave, this could interfere with the signal. It's best to place it somewhere on a table or shelf, ideally in the middle of the property.

Each internet provider will have their own self-help pages, which you can use to do some basic checks before reporting problems. You will also be able to check to see if there have been any problems reported in your area.

If there are problems, turning your router off, and leaving it off for 30 seconds before restarting it, is unlikely to hurt. This is very much IT 101, but it does sometimes clear faults that build up over time!

Check with your landlord to see if you can upgrade the package. When checking for faults, if a laptop can be hard-connected via an ethernet cable to the router, this can check to see if the problem is with the Wi-Fi part of the router, or the connection to the internet from the router to the outside world.

Similarly, if the router is next to a shared TV, connecting them together via an ethernet cable can be a good idea (and certainly will not make things worse).

Wi-Fi range extenders can be added - these are easy to set up and are inexpensive. There are two types, those which amplify the Wi-Fi signal, and those which carry the internet signal through the power sockets. When looking to buy one, check the reviews first!

If someone is confident with the router (or can follow the help pages from the provider), there are options to change the broadcasting channel for the Wi-Fi – which can help with interference from a neighbour's device.

Streaming film/tv/video content tends to be the biggest demand on capacity – where possible, consider downloading content rather than streaming.