

Renting in London: What to Expect

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By Jade Joddle

Hey guys! Living in London: What to expect. This video is for you if you're curious about moving to London one day. You're a young person, you're on a low-ish kind of income. What kind of London life would await you were you to move to London? I'm just sharing my experience. I am from London...um, but I haven't been living there for a couple of years. And also, I didn't go to university in London. I went to a...and then my experience of living in London in my own place, in my own shared house, was a couple of years after I finished London [University]. So I'm mainly talking about that shared housing experience of living in London in this video.

And to sum it up in one word, I would have to use the word 'depressing,' living in London. The kind of houses I was living in were sort of Victorian, old houses. So, in our modern day, these houses are really cold to live in. And, if it's like rented accommodation to students or young people, often the landlords don't really care about the properties that much, to insulate them and to make them warm to live

in. Maybe the windows are loose; the houses are very draughty, they get very, very cold in winter. And, because heating is very, very expensive in London, using any of the energy to heat the house with the radiators and that kind of thing is expensive. People in shared houses tend to be quite mean about putting the heating on.

So you'll be living in this cold, draughty house in the wet and dark winter for quite a few months of the year. You know, like four or five months, the house is gonna be quite cold. Possibly going to be damp. I lived in a house where...well, I lived in more than one house like this, but, you wash your clothes, you dry them in the house, but you don't realize that even when your clothes are dry, they smell of mould! When I would go to my mum's house, she would just be like, "No, I have to wash this, I have to wash this!" Because she could just smell the odour of mouldy house on my clothes all the time. So yeah, you wash clothes in the washing machine: maybe they don't dry for two and a half days, 'cause the house is so cold. And you see like people washing their clothes all over the house; and maybe in the kitchen there's some clothes hanging up; any radiator in the hallway's always got someone's clothes on it, drying. You'll just see people's drying clothes around all the place. Probably in the bathroom you'll see mould

growing up the bathroom walls. And even if you wash it off, the mould will be back like ten days later, starting to come back. Even if you paint over the mould, the mould will start coming back!

What else? In a London house, you'll probably see loads of bikes in the hallway when you come in the door. And a typical London house is a quite a narrow hallway, corridor, when you come into the house. So you have to sort of go past five or six bikes sometimes all up the hallway, which makes it quite hard to get in and out of your house sometimes. You usually see a load of abandoned letters on the floor. Like nobody bothers to pick up letters and leaflets. I mean, I'm making it sound like every, every house is uh, is really trashy. I mean, all the places that I lived in, they did struggle a bit for...for hygiene, yeah. Because there were too many people living in the houses. There wasn't enough space; so there were too many bikes, too many extra boyfriends and girlfriends around, and no, no...people not really washing up straight after they cook.

So yeah, all the places that I lived in, they did have that student vibe, even though the people living in the houses were not themselves students anymore: they were working people. It's just they couldn't...they weren't affording somewhere better than the student kind of house, even though, a lot of...some of

the people I was living with were in their thirties, it was still the student kind of... muck, student kind of clutter around, and like student-y posters on the walls and things like that.

So, that's, uh, the kind of place that I was living in London before I left. So it was always in a shared place: too many people sharing the place. So every single time the living room, there wouldn't be a living room anymore: that would be a bedroom. And in some Victorian houses, you have a living room and a dining room. But in that case, they would be two bedrooms as well. So in this way you can turn a three-bedroom house into a five-bedroom house. And if people have girlfriends and boyfriends, then you can have extra people staying there also. So, the places were crowded.

And um, so let's talk about how much money I was paying. I can only talk about a couple years ago. I'm...so just add on some money now, basically. So I was paying at the time for one room in a shared house that I've just described—as lovely and charming as I have—I was paying 450 pounds a month for one room. It was in Zone Three, in an area called New Cross, in London. And, the house had a garden, but you know you don't really use the garden a lot; it's mostly overgrown for most of the year. And, the...yeah, not, not, not very nice, not really

near a train station. You have to walk for like fifteen minutes to a normal train station. And fifteen minutes to get to the... um, a London overground, which is actually quite a good line. But still it's like fifteen minutes' walk. So then it was costing me 450 pounds a month for this depressing room, with bikes all in the hallway, and old carpet, and draughts and cold.

Plus then of course you have to pay council tax. And you have to pay for bills. So after all that you're probably looking at more like 600 pounds a month for this quite depressing room. And this feeling that you are never not going to be a student, even though you've left university.

So yeah, for me it was kind of depressing. Would I say that story is representative? Well, without, uh, judgement on...without too much—no I am judging—without too much judgement on my friends in London, um... Obviously, there will be differences between people. Some people will find a place that's clean and a lot nicer to live in. But, generally speaking, when there's a lot of people sharing a house, it usually struggles for cleanliness and order. Just because there's so many people around and they can just cook something and not wash it up straight away, and then it can get out hand. Or you know there's

too many people trying to wash and dry clothes all the time. So there's just a lot of stuff around.

So that seems to be how people live in London, unless they've... really have got a good job. And I have to say, out of my friends in London, maybe because I was a literature—no, I think yes—because I was a literature graduate, my friends from university, people I know, they don't really have those well-paid jobs. If they have jobs, it's great. But I wouldn't say they have well-paid jobs. So I don't actually know anyone among my London friends who went to university and is now living this like glamorous London life in their own apartment, or a very nice apartment. I don't know, I really, I don't know anyone from my year, and my university, living that kind of London life.

In general, I'd say that people tend to move quite a lot in London. So you might get a house and sign a tenancy for one year, but if you're subletting from someone else, or you're living in a kind of studio place, then often in those places, people come, people go all the time. So the houses are changing a lot.

And for people who enjoy partying, and they want to live a kind of social life in London, do a lot, you know, you're there for the London experience. That, living

in those kind of places can be fun and can be good. I mean, definitely not for me, 'cause I don't like too many people around, and I don't want someone having a party in my kitchen three times a week and then leaving a mess there. I personally don't want that. But if you do want that, you'll definitely easily find that kind of way of living in London. And, you know, if you are there just for the exciting experience, maybe it's good for you. But if you're properly living there in your adult life, into your thirties, in that kind of way, I think maybe it gets a bit boring by then, or I would think.

In terms of other comparisons, other ways of renting, sometimes people are renting spaces in like warehouses or bigger spaces, where a bedroom has been made, but they don't have any windows. So they're renting a box within a bigger box, and in those kind of places, there's no sound proofing; you hear everything that the person in the...next door is doing and that kind of thing. And, yeah, so if you are sort of free and easy, compared, like, relatively, how you live and, and uh...you could, maybe you could have a good time living in one of those warehouse places, but it wasn't for me.

And um...yeah, if you do, if you've got, I would say, if you've got 700 pounds plus to spend per month on your room, in your shared house, then you'd be looking at

something a lot nicer than I've described, in a better area. You can find something. But um, if you're, if you're pinching your pennies, and, if your parents aren't gonna be paying your rent for you, you might have to make the kind of compromises that I've spoken about in this video.

So, thank you for watching and join me again soon! Oh yeah, and you can leave me a comment and let me know about your experience of renting in London.

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