

Sanctuary  
Students

water hygiene

**in your student  
accommodation**





## water hygiene in student residences

This leaflet explains some of the precautions you can take to help prevent Legionella.

### What is Legionnaires' disease?

Legionnaires' disease is a form of pneumonia, caused by legionella bacteria. Anyone can catch it, but it's more common in older people (most sufferers are aged 40-70). People with a weak immune system are at greater risk, as are smokers.

### How do people get it?

People catch Legionnaires' disease by breathing in elevated levels of legionella bacteria contained in small droplets of water, suspended in the air. It isn't spread directly from person to person, and you can't get it from drinking water.

The bacteria has to be in very small droplets, like spray from a shower or spray taps.

### What do Sanctuary Students do to help prevent legionella?

To ensure that our buildings are as safe as possible, we carry out the following:

- Weekly flushing of all infrequently used water outlets including taps and showers in vacant en-suite rooms
- Monthly temperature checks from taps and showers
- Quarterly shower head chlorination
- Regular storage tank checks and water sampling
- Hot water is kept in our system at a minimum temperature of 50°C



On average, 400-500 cases are reported in the UK each year, so it's quite rare. In domestic homes, the risk is rated as low.

The bacteria won't multiply in temperatures below 20°C and can't survive above 60°C. Stagnant water stored between 20°C and 45°C provides the best conditions for legionella bacteria to multiply to potentially harmful levels.

#### How can you help to prevent it?

Legionella bacteria can be found in most water systems, but doesn't usually cause any problems. Here's how you can help to keep bacteria numbers low and prevent disease:

- Ensure that all outlets within your flat are used on a weekly basis (taps and shower) - this will help to prevent bacteria multiplying.
- If you have been away, make sure you run each tap and shower for 5 minutes at full temperature (but not necessary at full flow) to flush out any water that has been left in showerheads, shower hose and feeder pipework.
- Turn on any taps slowly until there is just enough flow to flush them through without creating excess spray.
- Leave the bathroom whilst flushing takes place – but don't forget to turn the taps or shower off again!
- Report any deposits such as rust or any unusual matter flowing from your water outlets to your team.



# Sanctuary Students

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/legionnaires-disease](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/legionnaires-disease)  
[www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires](http://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires)

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