



NAVIGATING

THE FRESHER'S MINEFIELD

IT'S THE BIG ONE! OFF TO UNI, WITH A MILLION THINGS TO DO, TO REMEMBER... AND TO ENJOY!



BUT FAR TOO MANY FRESHERS BECOME PART OF THE 'WHAT WENT WRONG' STATISTICS. THAT'S BECAUSE THEY SIMPLY AREN'T PREPARED.

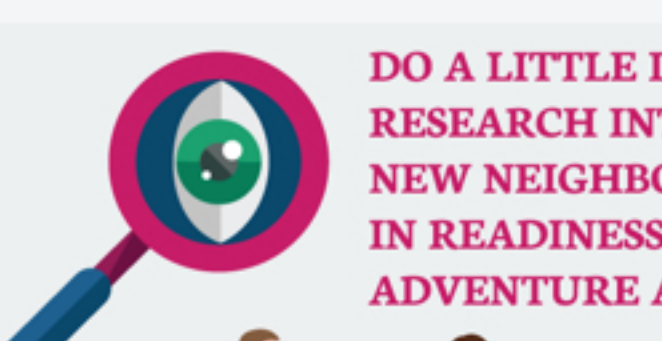
We asked the team at national security experts Leisuresec to apply the same principles they use when assessing the risks at a client premises, and to come up with some smart safety tips for freshers. Here's their advice:



- AN UNFAMILIAR ENVIRONMENT
- PEER PRESSURE
- CHEAP DRINKS
- INDEPENDENCE FROM HOME

IDENTIFY THE PRINCIPLE RISK ELEMENTS

1 SORT YOUR LIFE OUT!



FRESHER'S WEEK DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN FORGET ALL RESPONSIBILITY.

- ◆ Make sure you have paid your rent
- ◆ You can actually access the library, and so on.
- ◆ Keep your living area in a reasonable state. Mouldy food and dirty laundry strewn everywhere are fast ways to lose friends and alienate love interests!
- ◆ Don't be one of the idiots who spends their student loan for the term during Freshers' Week

2 GETTING AROUND

DO A LITTLE INTERNET RESEARCH INTO YOUR NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD IN READINESS FOR THE ADVENTURE AHEAD.

It's worth looking at tourist information - valuable knowledge about the area - plan safe routes to and from events.

Type 'student life' into your phone browser followed by the location of your university and you will receive all the information you need regarding where students are welcome and when. Occasionally, locals display resentment towards students so it's best to avoid establishments where there is any doubt about the welcome you would receive.

Have a look at the student based crime statistics in your area and take sensible precautions. Here's a link

<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/crime-in-university-towns-and-cities/>

3 TRAVEL SAFELY AT NIGHT

Store the numbers of some local taxi firms on your phone
Think about pre-booking a cab.
Only get in a taxi that is clearly licensed by the local council.

Don't hitchhike or accept a lift from strangers.
Never walk around at night on your own. Walk in groups and make sure you have all your friends before leaving a bar or club or making your way home.

Think about investing in a personal alarm
Stick to busy well-lit streets
Avoid underpasses
Walk facing the traffic so a car can't pull up beside you unnoticed.
Have your keys ready so you can get into your house quickly.

Take the time to plan your route home.
Be wary of casual requests from passers-by.
Someone asking for a cigarette or wanting to know the time could have ulterior motives.
If a car stops and asks for directions, keep your distance.
Avoid displaying expensive personal items that may attract the attention of thieves.

Plan your nights out - think about where you are going, and how you will get home.



4 SAFE CASH

Set aside some money at the beginning of the night to make sure you are able to get home at the end of the night.

Avoid ATMs in quiet deserted streets.

Withdraw cash during the day.



If you don't have enough money to get the whole way home, stay with a friend overnight

5 STAY HEALTHY

Pace yourself! No one can party until 4am every day without consequences - but many will try.

As a fresher you will be experiencing a range of emotions
It's OK to miss home!

Keep a balance - talk to your parents, but not more than once every couple of days.

Discuss home life with new friends, as they will almost certainly be going through the same process.

If you suffer from asthma attacks, nut allergies, epilepsy or any other potentially fatal condition make sure someone in your social group knows about it.

If you do find yourself on the verge of being physically sick through overindulgence but at the same time you have a more pressing desire to sleep, prop yourself up with pillows and cushions and lay slightly sideways.

By doing this if you do vomit during the night at least you are unlikely to choke.

Asphyxiation through vomit is a common occurrence.

6 MAKING NEW FRIENDS

Everyone remembers their first day at school and the fear that they would be unable to make friends and would not fit in.

Accept the absurdity of wanting to make new friends so much that you might do something stupid if you are presented with an opportunity to impress your new peer group.

This will typically involve risking life and limb in the process.

Beware Crowd Pleasing - While you are experiencing a disproportionate need to become an accepted member of the pack you are at your most vulnerable.

The most dangerous risk element to a fresher's safety is their 'crowd pleaser' frame of mind.

Up to this point, when confronted with one of life's risky situations, someone who knows well will tell you to stop showing off before you get hurt or get into trouble.

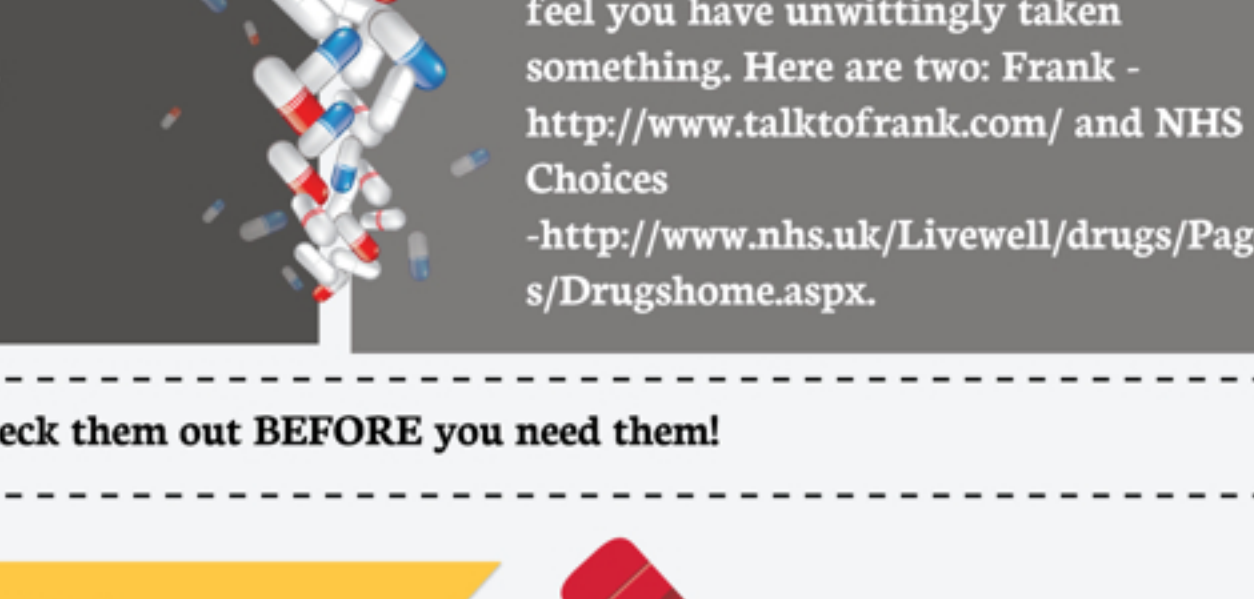
At university no one really knows you well enough - yet - and everyone wants to be entertained so you are far more likely to be encouraged to take risks.

The line between campus hero and campus idiot is a narrow one.



7 DRUGS

According to NHS choices, students are far more likely than the general population to take drugs.



Universities take student safety extremely seriously and support and advice is available in abundance on every related topic

Unfortunately many students just don't take advantage of the support on offer so raising awareness is important - maybe this will help!

Have look at NUS Nightline to see if their 24-hour support and non-judgemental listening service is available in your area - a telephone number will be on your NUS card.

There are some excellent websites giving you full details of the effects of drugs and the dangers and what to do if you feel you have unwittingly taken something. Here are two: Frank - <http://www.talktofrank.com/> and NHS Choices - <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/drugs/Pages/Drugshome.aspx>.

Check them out BEFORE you need them!

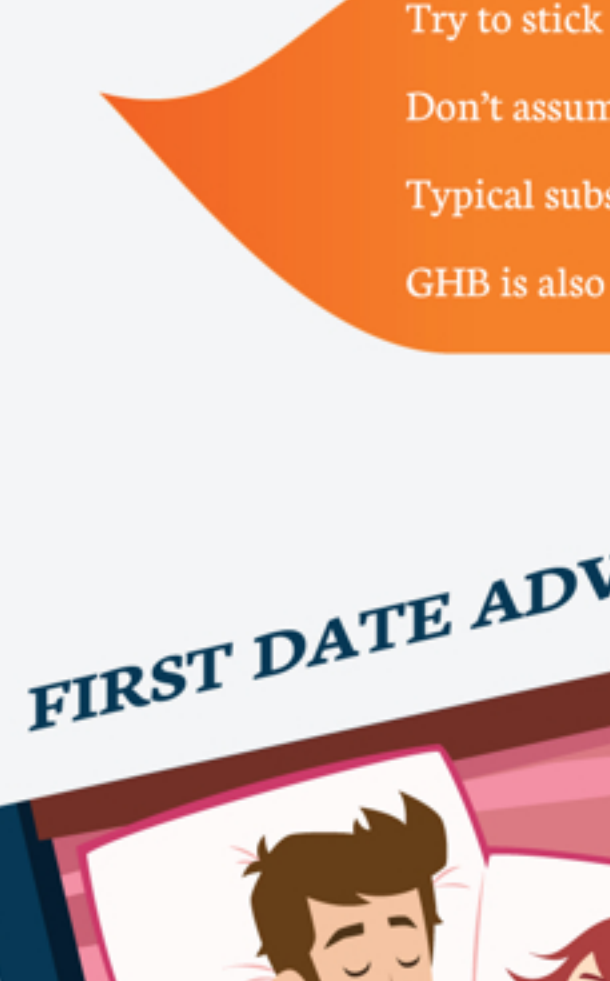
8 BOOZE AND BARS

This is where lots of the problems arise, so let's look at the best ways to avoid serious injury and death!

For the students who do drink, it's important to take some precautions:

- If you are going out drinking in a group, have at least one designated sober person to ensure that no drunk person goes home alone.
- Unconscious student customers are regularly found alone in toilets by security staff.
- The pub or club owe you a duty of care and will not let you out if it is not safe to do so.
- For this reason, our advice is to have a piece of paper with the address of your Halls of Residences and the number of at least one good friend printed in bold writing.
- Don't put your actual room number on the paper in case it's ever found by thieves!

Spiked drinks. It's a crime - irrespective of the accompanying motive.



Never leave your drink unattended
If you're heading to the dancefloor or toilets, ask a friend you trust to look after them.
Never accept a drink from someone you can't see the bartender pour it keep watching to ensure nothing is added prior to receiving it.

- Try to stick with bottled drinks, avoid punch bowls, or jugs for sharing.
- Don't assume soft drinks can't be spiked. They can.
- Typical substances used to spike drinks are prescription tranquilisers and ketamine.
- GHB is also used but you may at least notice an odd smell or notice saltiness.

9 SEX AND RAPE

FIRST DATE ADVICE:



Activate the tracker on your phone and permit at least one person to access it.
Let a friend know what time you expect to get home and agree to check in with them when you do.

Let your friend know where you are and who you are with if you need to turn your phone off.
The absence of the word no does not automatically mean consent has been given.

Being raped or accused of rape is no trivial thing.
If you are invited back to a fellow student's room find out who else is going to be there and make sure you are not the last one to leave.

Those photographs on the internet all came from somewhere - you will eventually regret their existence at some point so take precautions to avoid them being taken in the first place.

10 SMART TIP SUMMARY

1. Start budgeting today or regret it next month
2. Get to know your new neighbourhood
3. When travelling at night - plan ahead
4. Remember safe cash conduct
5. Stay healthy - pace yourself
6. Don't 'crowd please' - understand your emotions
7. Spiked drinks - be alert!
8. Protect yourself and others when drinking
9. Rape - be aware of the dangers for both the victim and the accused
10. Remember the students whose Fresher's Week turned to tragedy - make yours memorable for all the right reasons