Moving in to privately rented accommodation next year? The average student will spend over £500 each year on energy bills!

So… here are 3 steps you can take to keep your costs and environmental impact to a minimum.

1) Rent a decent home

All privately rented accommodation will have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) produced for it and the landlord is legally required to provide you with a copy of this. The EPC has an A to G rating system, where G is the poorest level of energy efficiency. The average EPC rating of a property in the UK is a D rating, if you want to try and minimise your energy costs then you should seek out a property which is D-rated or better. The EPC will have a list of recommendations for making the house more energy efficient and we recommend that you ask your landlord to carry out at least all of the 'low cost' measures as most of these will pay back in less than 6-months.

2) Waste less energy

When it comes to your heating make sure you….
- Keep warm by putting on layers and closing curtains and windows to keep the heat in.
- Learn how to programme your boiler so that you're not running the heating 24/7 (it's is a myth that it is cheaper to leave the heating on – turn if off when not required!).
- You can also fit some really simple low cost measures like "radiator panels" and "secondary glazing film" – just search on the internet to find more information about them.

When it comes to electricity/gas…
- Switch things off when you're not using them!
- Put a lid on your pan when you're cooking
- Don't overfill the kettle
- Make sure all your light bulbs are energy efficient. Even if the bulbs are a bit more expensive at the shop you'll end up paying less over the year.
- Try and buy "CFL" bulbs which are cheap and energy efficient. A bit more expensive (but more efficient) are LED bulbs and you can always take them with you when you leave the house at the end of the year.

3) Pay less for your energy

If you pay the energy bills yourself (as opposed to them being paid for by your landlord), then you have the right to switch energy supplier. Check out any the various price comparison website to see if you can switch to a better deal – the average household can save around £200 a year by switching supplier!

Useful links

If you want more detailed advice on how to save energy in your new home, check out the Energy Saving Trust website and if you want to know more about your right as a tenant to switch supplier, check out this really useful site from Ofgem (the people who regulate the energy industry).