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# The Christmas Vacation 2010–2011.

Your handy guide to staying in  
Sheffield over the Christmas vacation

[www.ssd.dept.shef.ac.uk/christmas](http://www.ssd.dept.shef.ac.uk/christmas)

## Are you staying in Sheffield over the Christmas vacation?

In the city of Sheffield there are over 8,000 International Students from more than 120 different countries across the world who live alongside British students and local residents. During term-time the city buzzes with activity, however many of these students also stay in the city over the vacation period too.

This guide aims to provide information about the different activities which are on offer to students who stay in Sheffield over the Christmas vacation. It also gives advice about how to stay connected to the University community over the holidays.

We hope that you will find this guide helpful and that you will get involved in the activities on offer in order to make this vacation truly memorable!

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### Sheffield Hallam or University of Sheffield?

Many of the events listed in the **Events Programme** are open to students of both Universities. We would like to encourage students from both Universities to mix and to take part in the project together! If an event is only open to students from one University (e.g. IC World Cinema) this will be stated.

## A sense of community during vacations

Research shows that people who feel connected to a sense of belonging experience greater wellbeing in all areas of life, including in academic work. This happens when people feel respected, valued and when they can contribute in shaping the life of a community. This also happens when people are able to build healthy relationships and share their experiences.

The project hopes to encourage a sense of community by supporting students in the transition from the autumn term to the vacation period. By providing a varied programme of social activities during December and January we hope to combat isolation and instead build community among those living in Sheffield. We also hope to raise awareness about the International Student experience across our Universities and encourage students to take ownership in building community on and off campus.

### How to stay connected

With so many students staying in Sheffield over the vacation there is no need to spend the holidays on your own. As well as International Students, many **British postgraduates** will be on campus during the vacation, and **local commuter students** will also be nearby. If you are from one of these student groups, you are also invited to come along to all of the activities!

The best way to stay connected is by joining the 'Staying in Sheffield over Christmas?' Facebook group where you can start conversations, join in on events, and request to become friends with those you meet at the group events. On the Facebook group you can also create your own events such as meeting for coffee and invite others from the group to join you. What events or activities would you like to organise this vacation?

Be aware that while the group is monitored anyone may join, so be careful about giving out personal information or inviting people into your home unless you know them.

### Stay in touch

On **Facebook** search for 'Staying in Sheffield over Christmas?' or visit [www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=160246847322817](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=160246847322817)

**Check the website** for up to date advice and information about all our events  
[www.ssd.dept.shef.ac.uk/christmas](http://www.ssd.dept.shef.ac.uk/christmas)

Follow us on **Twitter!**  
<http://twitter.com/stayinginshef>

For all other questions **email**  
[christmas-vacation@shef.ac.uk](mailto:christmas-vacation@shef.ac.uk)

## What to expect

The festive period is a busy time for most people in the UK, and it is often a time when people spend time with their families or close friends and eat specially prepared meals and exchange gifts. Many people celebrate Christmas as a Christian festival, and local churches and Sheffield's Cathedrals will be holding concerts and services across the season. It has also become a cultural festival here in the UK with lots of parties, markets and carol singing. Traditionally, the Christmas period is a time when people are encouraged to consider how they can share what they have and be more generous with people who are disadvantaged. However, it has also become a very commercial festival in the UK and the shops can get very busy around this time (especially Meadowhall!)

Be aware that public transport may be affected during this time so it is best to check this before you travel. Visit [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) for details about UK train travel or visit [www.travelsouthyorkshire.com](http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com) for information about local transport and ideas of places to visit during the vacation.

### What is open?

Most shops and public buildings such as Museums will be open every day except **Christmas Day** (25th Dec) and **New Years Day** (1st Dec). However, many shops will have reduced opening hours on **Christmas Eve** (24th Dec), **Boxing Day** (26th Dec) and **New Years Eve** (31st Dec).

Remember to buy enough food before Christmas Day as many places will be closed for a few days! Also, Monday 27th and Tuesday 28th December are public holidays in the UK.

Most **Museums and art galleries** will be closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. With all public buildings it is best to call ahead, or visit their website to find out exactly when they are open over the Christmas holidays.

There are around 83 public **parks in Sheffield** and they are great spaces for children and adults to enjoy the winter weather (especially if it snows). Some parks have playgrounds, cafes, lakes and ponds. You can find out more about facilities, opening times and your nearest park at [www.sheffield.gov.uk/out--about/parks-woodlands--countryside/parks](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/out--about/parks-woodlands--countryside/parks)

The Peak District National Park is located on the edge of Sheffield and is the oldest national park in Britain.

Consider taking the **Sheffield City Centre Tour** which runs every Tuesday (apart from 28th January), 10–11:30am, from the Winter Garden Information Desk, for free. The tour is led by the City Centre Ambassadors and includes an introduction to notable buildings and open spaces and stories and anecdotes of memorable city centre events.

## Build your own Christmas

In the UK many people spend Christmas Day preparing a special meal which is eaten around lunchtime. Some people go to a service in the morning and reserve opening gifts until after coming home. Others play special games and turn on the television to hear the Queen's Speech at 3pm! In the evening people watch festive films or sit around sharing stories. This year, why not get together with other students and build your own Christmas Day, adding your own rituals and traditions from your culture!

### Make your own gifts or cards

Save money and get creative by making your own gifts! If there are a few of you, why not try organising a 'secret Santa'? This is where you all get given the name of another person in the group to buy or make a gift for! You can agree to only spend a few pounds or to all make a present instead of buying one.

### Non-alcoholic spiced punch

Place **1 pint Orange juice** in a saucepan with **1 pint Apple juice**, **half a teaspoon of ginger and mixed spice**. Take an orange and push a few **cloves** into the orange and place that in the mixture with a broken **cinnamon stick**. Simmer over a low heat for 5 minutes and serve!

### Make your own traditional Christmas cracker!

Christmas crackers were first invented by a British sweet shop owner called Tom Smith in the 1840's. They are a fun way to start or end a meal together and usually contain paper hats, jokes or small gifts! To learn how to make yours by hand visit the websites below:

[www.oldenglishcrackers.com/make-your-own-crackers.htm](http://www.oldenglishcrackers.com/make-your-own-crackers.htm) or

[www.bbc.co.uk/victorianchristmas/activity/christmas-crackers.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/victorianchristmas/activity/christmas-crackers.shtml)

### Gingerbread Christmas decorations

Preheat your oven to Gas Mark 4 (160C) then mix **75g butter** and **50g caster sugar**. Add **2 egg yolks**, **half a teaspoon bicarbonate of soda** and **50g golden syrup**. Add **250g plain flour** and a **teaspoon ground ginger** and **ground cinnamon**. Mix it all together. Divide the mixture into 2 balls, knead the dough and put it in the fridge for 30 minutes. Remove the dough after this time and roll it out using a rolling pin to a thickness of 1 cm. Using a cookie cutter, (or a knife!) cut out your gingerbread shapes. Make a small hole at the top for a ribbon to go through. Place them on a greased baking tray and cook for 10 minutes.

Be careful not to leave them hanging on the tree too long as they will go stale!

## Events Programme

For more ideas and **full listings of events** taking place in Sheffield visit the website!

### Launch Event

Thursday 2nd December,  
4–5.30pm, Sheffield Town Hall,  
**Free**

We will launch the Christmas Vacation Project with the opportunity to have afternoon tea with the Lord Mayor of Sheffield and get a special tour of the Council Chambers. Come along for your chance to meet other students who are staying over Christmas!

### Trip to Lincoln Christmas Market

Friday 3rd December, 10.25am,  
meet at train station

Meet us to catch the train to Lincoln's traditional Christmas Market, where you can stroll around over 300 stalls selling Christmas foods and gifts, nestled with in the medieval square. A truly festive experience! A train ticket will cost £15 (without a railcard) and you may want to bring spending money.

### Student Parent Coffee Morning

Saturday 4th December, Coffee Revolution at Sheffield University Student's Union, 9.00–12.00pm  
**Free**

All students with families are invited to attend a coffee morning where you can meet other parents. Children are welcome too! Followed by a trip to Weston Park Museum.

### Family-friendly trip to Weston Park Museum

Saturday 4th December,  
12.00–2pm, meet at Museum entrance  
**Free**

Families and curious students alike can join us on a group visit to Weston Park Museum to explore the world from millions of years ago to the present day's amazing collection of beautiful, varied and unusual treasures will be brought to life. We will end the day with a visit to the café. For more information visit: [www.museums-sheffield.org.uk](http://www.museums-sheffield.org.uk)

### Tour of Bramall Lane Football Stadium

Tuesday 14th December, 2pm  
**Free**

Join us for a free tour of one of the oldest football stadiums in the world and the home of Sheffield United FC – Bramall Lane! The tour starts off in the museum which hosts the original hand written rules of football and a replica of the F.A cup, continue into the dressing rooms, down the tunnel and on to the pitch. An ideal photo opportunity!

### Sheffopoly

Friday 10th December, 2pm, meet outside the Town Hall

We are bringing Monopoly to life so come along and get to know this wonderful city of Sheffield. In teams you will have to make your way around Sheffield to set locations, each location will be worth different amounts, like on a Monopoly board. A great way to meet new people and explore the city! Please bring your camera or camera phone with you.

### Assist Carol Service

Saturday 11th December, 3pm,  
Cathedral Church of St Marie on Norfolk Street, S1 2JB

Every year Sheffield charity ASSIST host an carol service with an international feel to bring together people who may be far from their own families. There is a collection to raise money for destitute asylum seekers who live in Sheffield.

### Homeless and Rootless at Christmas: Volunteer Training

Sunday 12th December, 1.30–2pm,  
meet at the Sports and Activities Zone at Sheffield Students' Union

Have you thought of volunteering during the vacation? Receive essential training to volunteer at a day centre for the homeless and vulnerable over Christmas and New Year.

### Christmas Cinema

Monday 13th December, 5–8pm,  
The Void cinema, Level 1, Owen Building, Sheffield Hallam University

Join us as we watch a festive film at Sheffield Hallam University!

### Tour of Sheffield Cathedral

Saturday 18th December, 11am,  
meet outside Sheffield Cathedral

The Dean of the Cathedral will take us behind the scenes of Sheffield Cathedral – one of the most historic and important buildings in the City.

### Folk Train

Tuesday 21st December, 6.55pm,  
meet at train station

Every fourth Tuesday of each month people gather on Platform 2C to catch the 19:14 folk train to Manchester! A traditional folk band will play as you travel along the Hope Valley and there will be more live music at the Rambler pub in Edale until it is time to catch the 9.30 train back to Sheffield. An experience of British culture ideal for the festive season! A return train ticket is £6.80 (without a railcard) plus money to buy a drink at the pub.

### Sheffield Conversation Club

Weds 22nd December, 2–4pm,  
Coffee Revolution, Sheffield  
University Students Union.

Come to Sheffield Union to take part in the Christmas Conversation Club! Students from both Universities will have the chance to get talking and make new friendships. There will also be quizzes and games. Bring money to buy a coffee or piece of cake.

### Family-friendly Festive Drop-in

Thursday 23rd December, 2–4pm,  
The Chaplaincy House, 119 Ashdell  
Road, S10 3DB

The University of Sheffield's Anglican Chaplain and his family will be having an open house for all students and student families. There will be tea, cake and a Christmas tree too!

### Christmas Day Lunch

Saturday 25th December, 10am or  
1pm, St Mark's Church, Broomhill,  
S10 2SG, £2.50

All are welcome to St Mark's Church on Christmas Day! will be families, individuals, International students and Postgrads: all ages and all people. At 1pm there will be a lavish traditional British roast with Christmas games and carol singing. are also welcome to attend the Christmas Day service at 10am. To book your place for lunch email [jelly@stmarkssheffield.co.uk](mailto:jelly@stmarkssheffield.co.uk) A tasty vegetarian option is also available!

### Walk in the Peaks

Monday 27th December, 11am,  
meet by the Town Hall

Sheffield is thought of as the greenest City in Europe – come along and find out why! An experienced British student will lead you on a leisurely walk to the edge of the Peak District. Wear flat shoes and you may want to bring something to eat along the way. There will be the option of getting the bus back, so bring along a few pounds just in case.

### IC Conversation Club

Thursday 30th December,  
4–6pm, IC Café  
(University of Sheffield students only)

Whether you are hoping to catch up with new friends or simply stopping for a study break, come to the IC Café and socialise with other University of Sheffield students who are staying over the vacation! A good opportunity to make some last minute plans together for New Years Eve.

### IC World Cinema

Monday 3rd January, 3–7pm, IC  
Level 4 Group Rooms (University  
of Sheffield students only)

An opportunity for small groups to watch a selection of films from across the globe. Feel free to bring your own favourite films for the group to decide on! Arrive early as spaces are limited.

### City Conversation Club

Friday 7th January, 4–6pm,  
Starbucks on Division Street

An opportunity for students to get together for conversation in the City Centre.

### Family-friendly Winter Stroll

Saturday 8th January, 11am, Meet  
at the entrance to Endcliffe Park  
(next to Hunters Bar Roundabout).

All are welcome to join this gentle wintery stroll through one of Sheffield's finest parks, through the woods toward Forge Dam where there is a playground, a café famed for its ice-cream and lots of local wildlife!

### International Student Wellbeing I

Tuesday 11th January, 11am,  
Sheffield University Students  
Union, Gallery

Helen Richardson from the University of Sheffield Counselling service will explain how counselling can help International students. She will explore some of the issues experienced by International Students and give advice on how to optimise physical and emotional health so that all students can enjoy their study and time in Sheffield.

### International Student Wellbeing II

Thursday 13th January, 2pm,  
Sheffield University Students  
Union, Gallery

Helen's second session will explore the 'transitional' experience of moving to the UK. The group will discuss the different cultural expectations of counselling and she will feedback on recent research into the International student experience.

There will also be some time to answer brief questions of a general nature.



## Looking after yourself

### Deal with Loneliness

Loneliness is normal for human beings so take the initiative to ring, text, email and skype friends and family in your wider network. They will want to hear from you as much as you will want to hear from them. Do not avoid things that make you feel challenged. The satisfaction at speaking to someone even for a few minutes can give you a good feeling that lasts all day.

### Get outside

At least once a day, make a plan to get out in the outdoors, even if the sun is not shining (which it often isn't in Britain at this time of year!). This is because it is good for the body and mind to get fresh air and to walk about. Mood chemicals also rise when the sun hits your face and the best time in winter is about midday.

### Plan your day

Not having the structure of University life can leave you at a loss. Check out activities taking place through the Christmas Vacation Project, in places of worship or locally. Ask other people to join you and ask them if you can do the same! Remember they are in the same position as you. Plan at least one pleasurable thing and one thing that gives you a sense of achievement the night before so you don't put it off. Remember it is a vacation so don't work all the time because too much work stresses the mind and makes you less productive.

### Be a stress buster

Stress or anxiety is caused by a high adrenalin level. Avoid caffeine if you feel stressed. It is present in coffee, tea and fizzy drinks. Avoid lots of chocolate or other very sugary foods as these cause blood sugars to peak and then fall which makes stress worse. Do relaxation exercises and take physical exercise as this has been proven to reduce anxiety hormones. A common way is to lie down and tense and relax each muscle group for a count of eight at a time whilst breathing slowly. Breathe out for twice as long as you breathe in if you are feeling panicky as this rebalances your oxygen levels.

### Share your worries with a trusted person

In Britain we say "a troubled shared is a trouble halved" and this is very true. You could speak to a friend, a tutor, a family member, a Chaplain or someone at the Counselling Service or Nightline. Being listened to helps you feel valued, everyone needs someone to talk to.

### Be your own best friend

Praise yourself for all the things that are going well – it has been a busy term full of work! . Don't focus on negative things at the moment, save that for when you can speak to someone. Use a journal to speak to yourself and care for yourself emotionally on the inside. This helps to come up with new ideas, relieves stress and helps you feel more independent. It can also help you to be much clearer and at ease with your emotions and it is totally private.

## Information for Student Families

### Introduction from Sheffield Students' Union Women's Officer

I'm delighted to be able to introduce the student families section of the Christmas Vacation Guide. We recognise that student families make up a large and valued section of our student community and the guide and the website are here to show you all the fun things on offer for student families over the Christmas holidays. Look out for more student family events at Sheffield Students' Union over the coming year 2011. You will be able to find out more about these events, plus services and other information for student families on our website. Happy Holidays!

**Rachel Steyne**  
*University of Sheffield Students' Union Women's Officer*

### Activities

The Christmas Vacation Project will be running the following activities for families. Please note that you will be responsible for your child at all of these events.

### Student Parent Coffee Morning

Saturday 4th December, Coffee Revolution at Sheffield University Student's Union, 9am–12pm  
**Free**

### Family-friendly trip to Weston Park Museum

Saturday 4th December, 12–2pm, meet at Museum entrance  
**Free**

### Family-friendly Festive Drop-in

Thursday 23rd December, 2–4pm, the Chaplaincy House, 119 Ashdell Road, S10 3DB  
**Free**

### Family-friendly Winter Stroll

Saturday 8th January, 11am, Meet at the entrance to Endcliffe Park (next to Hunters Bar Roundabout)  
**Free**

### Children's Services Pantomime

Tuesday 11th January, 2pm, Sheffield Union Auditorium, £2

A professional theatre company are putting on a Pantomime (a theatre performance aimed at families) for all students with children aged between 2 and 8 years old. The performance is of the children's classic 'Cinders and Buttons'. Tickets are available from the University of Sheffield Union Nursery.

## Family-friendly events for Student Families

Here are some family-friendly activities taking place in Sheffield over the vacation. For full listings please **visit the website** and look on the **Information for Families** section.

You can also visit [www.eventsheffield.co.uk/browse/11/children-and-families](http://www.eventsheffield.co.uk/browse/11/children-and-families)  
Why not attend one of our organised activities and make plans with another family?

### A Magical Christmas

10th–12th December,  
4.30–8.30pm, Botanical Gardens,  
Clarkehouse Road, S10 2LN.  
£5 for adults, free for children.

Enjoy a magical evening and be entertained by illuminations, carol singing, free traditional children's rides, a miniature steam train rides and fairies in the Glass Pavilions. Various craft, hot food and refreshment stalls will be available.

### Whatever Next!

15th December–8th January, The Lyceum, Tudor Square, S1 2LA. Visit [www.sheffieldtheatres.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldtheatres.co.uk) for information about tickets.

Whatever Next is a performance which tells the story of Baby Bear's quest to visit the moon. It explores the wonders of outer space using juggling, puppetry and imagination! It is suitable for children aged 3+.

### Christmas Wreath Making

Sunday 19th December, 1–3pm,  
Sheffield General Cemetery,  
Cemetery Avenue, off Ecclesall Road.

**Free**

An afternoon of festive children's crafts with refreshments.

### Kelham Island Museum

Monday to Thursday and Sundays,  
10am–4pm, Alma Street, S3

**Free**

Discover Sheffield's industrial heritage! The Museum is stacked full of objects and photographs to examine, touch and listen to. There are also trails, coloring sheets and children's books, as well as puzzles and activities on steelmaking and life at home and an interactive play zone.

### Heeley City Farm

Open everyday, 9.30am–4.30pm  
**Free**

Meet our friendly animals, play in our under 8's Playground, enjoy our Farm Café serving healthy, farm-cooked meals, browse our peat-free Garden Centre and our Gift Shop featuring local crafts.

### Graves Park Animal Farm

Open everyday, 9am–4pm  
**Free**

Graves Park Animal Farm provides a popular home to some of the rarest breeds of farm animals in the country. You can get up close and personal with Tamworth pigs; Highland cattle and Jacob sheep, plus goats, donkeys, waterfowl and many more

There will also be activities for children at local libraries or at Central Children's Library in the City Centre. Students can register to borrow children's books and CDs easily! Visit [www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/find/all/centralchildrens](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/find/all/centralchildrens)



## Volunteering during Vacation

Have you thought about using your vacation to volunteer? Volunteering is a way for students to get involved in activities which have a positive influence in society. It is also a great opportunity for International students to experience British culture and see a side of Sheffield which is different from the University. You can also get work experience, improve your English and build your confidence all for free!

**SheffieldVolunteering** and **Volunteering at Hallam Union** have organised a range of special 'one-off' volunteer opportunities which you can try out during December and January. These activities will be posted **on the website** and are a good way to try something for the first time. Why not have a go? All students who take part in volunteering during the vacation can receive a special certificate!

### Voluntary Activities at Hallam Union

Here are just a few of the activities taking place for Sheffield Hallam University students. For other voluntary opportunities at Hallam Union over the vacation visit: [www.hallamunion.org/volunteering/](http://www.hallamunion.org/volunteering/)

### The Festive Wrap

Tuesday 7th December, 5-8pm  
and Saturday 11th December,  
1-4pm, Activities Pod in the HUBS

The Youth Action Team are preparing a 'Festive wrap' to provide Christmas gifts for local families and Sheffield's homeless community. The selected charities this year are Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice, who provide care and support for children with life limiting conditions, and Homeless and Rootless at Christmas (HARC), who support the homeless community at Christmas time. We believe that these projects have a really positive impact on the City of Sheffield. Bring your gift along to wrap at the times listed above.

### Voluntary Activities at Sheffield Union

Here are just a few of the activities taking place for Sheffield University students. If you would like to attend please email [volunteering@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:volunteering@sheffield.ac.uk)

### Christmas Gifts Appeal

1st-10th December

Brighten up Christmas for the local homeless, families fleeing domestic violence, refugees and asylum seekers by preparing them a gift. On Friday 10th December from 1-3pm in the Sports & Activities Zone you can wrap your gift and drop it off! Pick up a leaflet from the SheffieldVolunteering office for more information.

### Homeless And Rootless at Christmas

24th December-1st January,  
5 hours

Help out at a day centre in the City Centre which provides food, entertainment and shelter for the homeless and vulnerable over Christmas and New Year. Volunteers can do just one shift (5 hours) within this period. You must attend training on Sunday 12th December to take part (see Events Programme)

### Christmas on the Farm

Saturday 11th December,  
11am-3pm, Heeley City Farm.

Inner city charity, Heeley City Farm need help to prepare and deliver a great day of Christmas entertainment and to raise money. Duties will include volunteering in Santa's Grotto, distributing Christmas trees, children's crafts, singing carols and serving Christmas food and drink.

### Carol Concert with the Elderly

Wednesday 15th December, 1-4pm

Volunteer at a carol concert with local elderly people in Broomhill. You will be involved in setting up the concert room, welcoming guests, serving refreshments, chatting to the elderly and listening to carols!



## Student Competition!

We would love to hear about the experiences of students who have stayed in Sheffield over the vacation. On our **website** is a **Student Experiences Blog** and we encourage all students to write a short piece describing the highlights and the challenges of your time staying in Sheffield over Christmas. **The best blog piece will win a special prize!**

## Feedback on your experiences

This is the first time the Christmas Vacation Project has been run in Sheffield and we would like to hear from you about what worked well and what didn't work so well. You can do this by filling in a feedback form which will appear on the website in January or by attending one of a feedback session on **Wednesday 19th January.**



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## **About the Christmas Vacation Project**

Accommodation contracts, visa issues and the cost of travel home are all reasons why many students stay in Sheffield, and there is evidence to suggest that a number of students experience real isolation during this period.

Through the Christmas Vacation Project, The University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University are proposing to work collaboratively to support transition from the academic session through the four weeks of the Christmas vacation.

We hope that our collaboration will increase our capacity to support students who live in close proximity and to develop more fruitful partnerships with other organisations in the local community and in the city of Sheffield by working together.

The Christmas Vacation Project is a pilot scheme for 2010–11 and is funded by the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education to support the International Student experience.