This proposal is an amendment to the existing Housing Policy.

**Name of Policy:** Housing Manifesto

**Full Name of proposer:** Katharine Swindells - Welfare Officer

**Full Name of second proposer:** SU President - Lilian Jones

**Sheffield Students' Union Council notes:**

1. Housing is the single largest upfront cost for most students during their time at university.
2. A large minority of our students live in University-owned accommodation.
3. Our students comprise a significant proportion of the private renter population in Sheffield.
4. Student renters are afforded certain rights which they are entitled to feel informed about and empowered to act upon.
5. Every student deserves to feel happy and secure in their home.
6. That students are citizens of Sheffield and global citizens.

**Sheffield Students' Union Council believes:**

1. Quality, affordable and safe housing is a fundamental right to which all our students are entitled.
2. Students deserve the resources and support to exercise their rights as tenants and make informed choices about where they live.
3. The Students’ Union, including but not limited to the Welfare Officer, Welfare Committee and Student Advice Centre, has the responsibility to improve students’ access to quality, affordable and secure housing wherever possible.

**Sheffield Students' Union Council resolves:**

1. That it will adopt the attached Housing Manifesto which articulates what it aims to do to secure quality, affordable and safe housing for all students.
Our SU Housing Manifesto

1. Affordability and Cost of Living
Housing is the single largest upfront cost for students. University and private sector rents increase year on year and student finance has not kept pace with rising housing and living costs. We will campaign to make sure that rents are more affordable, and are kept in line with student funding. We will push for there to be a genuine choice and range of student housing to suit every budget. We will provide students with information and resources which will enable them to manage the costs of living and renting, with the principle that no student should have money problems that stop them from getting the most out of university.

*Key links to SU strategy T4 1.1, T4 4.2, T4 4.7*

2. The University as a Housing Provider
We believe that the University owned and managed housing provided by Accommodation and Commercial Services (ACS), should set the gold standard in student homes. We will work closely and effectively with the University (ACS) to ensure that students views and needs are represented and reflected in all ACS policies and procedures. We will work with Residence Life to ensure they offer the best quality experience, both for their residents and student employees.

*Key links to SU strategy T4 1.1, T4 1.2.; Auxiliary link to T4 1.9*

3. Influencing the Private Rented Sector
We believe that the Sheffield housing market should work for our students. We will tackle the culture which pressures students to commit to a housing contract early in the academic year, making it hard to make an informed, confident choice. We will work in partnership with the University, Sheffield City Council and other stakeholders to improve student housing standards and ensure that all students have access to good quality, safe and properly managed accommodation. We will promote Snug, or any future equivalent, and develop better links with private sector housing providers to ensure that all our students have equitable access to opportunities and support wherever they may live. Finally, we aim to influence the sector by partnering with the University to develop lettings agency services which promote access to the highest quality accommodation.

*Key links to SU strategy T4 1.2, T4 1.6, T4 1.9*

4. Empowering Student Tenants
We want to provide students with the skills and knowledge to not be exploited and to challenge bad practice from housing providers. We hope to partner with other institutions in Sheffield to use our collective power, representing approximately 60,000 students for greater political leverage.
We will ensure that students know their legal rights and responsibilities in respect to housing and equip them to be confident in asserting their rights. We will provide advice, training and support to student tenants so that they can find good quality accommodation and resolve any problems with their housing. We will combat the pressure placed on students to commit to a housing contract early in the academic year to ensure that students are able to take time...
in choosing a home. We want students to be able to mobilise where necessary to campaign for better housing provision.

**Key links to SU strategy T4 1.1, T4 1.2, T4 1.8, T4 1.9, T4 1.10**

5. Happy at Home

We believe that every student has the right to feel happy and secure in their home. Finding the right people to share your home with is as important as finding the right property to rent. Having a good relationship with your housemates can have a huge impact your home and University life and general well being. We will help students make informed choices about who they live with, develop the life and communication skills necessary to ‘live well’ in a home with others, be able to resolve differences constructively and overcome problems when they arise.

**Key links to SU strategy T4 1.3, T4 1.4, T4 3.1, T4 3.2**

6. Students in the community

We want our students to feel invested in the area they live in, because we believe students bring something positive and unique to the community. This means that students are active citizens both in their community and of the world. As a result, we want to encourage student engagement in activities external to the Students’ Union and University. We want to encourage strong relationships between students and their local communities by giving students the skills, resources and opportunities to do this. We also want students to be invested in how they look after the world around them, and to understand their impact on where they live. We will champion projects which encourage students to be conscious about their impact on the environment and how they can look after their home through sustainable lifestyles.

**Key links to SU strategy T3 2.10, T4 1.5, T4 1.7, T4 1.8, T4 1.10; Auxiliary links to T4 2.2, T4 2.4, T4 3.2**