

Policy Heading: **Online Accommodation Advice**

Date Proposed: 27 March 2019 (amended 27 February 2020)

Authority: Union Council

This Council Notes (Facts):

- For many students, private renting is the cheapest and easiest form of tenancy while studying at the University of Sunderland. Unfortunately, students are often led to rent properties that do not offer any conditions to live in due to lack of awareness of options and rights.
- Students when taking on a tenancy have certain rights which they should be made aware of and that they are able to effectively challenge their landlord or agency should these rights not be upheld.
- Students deserve to feel happy, healthy and safe in the properties they rent in Sunderland (and the wider North East).

This Council Believes (Opinions):

- Students should be able to live in private accommodation which meets a certain standard and are able to exercise their rights as tenants, should the landlord, letting agency not uphold these.
- Students should be able to access resources which inform them of their rights and that they should be able to access support without making an appointment to find a solution quickly and efficiently.
- The Students' Union, including but not limited to the President Wellbeing, has a responsibility to develop campaigns to spread awareness of housing options and to improve accommodation standards.

This Council Resolves (Actions to take & by whom):

- The Students' Union should offer a 'quick chat' opportunity, which does not involve making an appointment, to discuss housing issues with the Advice Advisor.
- The Students' Union should use social media to promote updates on housing issues on a monthly basis as a way to educate students about suitable properties and their rights.
- The Students' Union President: Wellbeing should work with the University's Accommodation team and Sunderland City Council to improve student housing, and actively report areas of concern to ensure appropriate action is taken.
- The Students' Union should work with an external online provider, which allows students to review their accommodation, landlord and area, to support students to make decisions on accommodation options based on real experiences.

Proposed by

Helder Cardinal Costa