



Huddersfield Students' Union
Queensgate
Huddersfield
HD1 3DH

01484 473555
students.union@hud.ac.uk

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Dear Vice Chancellor,

As the Officers of Huddersfield Students' Union we are writing this open letter to continue our dialogue regarding DIGS Student Accommodation as the University's nominated accommodation provider.

115 students responded to the public letter we sent about the fact that the only main Halls provider not to provide a 100% refund in term 3 was the University's approved supplier. 93 of the students who responded had to leave DIGs early and were disappointed that the University are not offering financial support to them, despite DIGS being the preferred, recommended and approved supplier.

Taking this information into account HudLets as the Students' Union's lettings service took the decision at its board meeting to withdraw from advertising agreements and referral commission from DIGs. In addition to this HudLets Board have agreed to refund the commission made from DIGS to the students that were referred through the HudLets service.

We do recognise that the University has been supporting students in other ways during this difficult time, particularly through the Student Hardship Fund, which has provided large amounts of financial support for students who have been impacted by the pandemic. We urge any students who have been impacted to make use of this and other support services in the University.

Looking forward, the Officers believe that the University needs to:

- Ensure there is sufficient flexibility in rent payments for students who book with DIGS if the start of term is delayed, suspended or the whole course moves to digital delivery at any point during the academic year 2020-21.
- Provide clear information for students looking to sign accommodation contracts with any provider to ensure they are aware that they could be liable for rent, even if the University delays the start of term or delivers content digitally.
- Review the agreement between the University and DIGS to ensure that students are sufficiently protected in line with other institutions and market leaders.

HudLets and the SU are committing to being as transparent as possible with both students and accommodation providers about the impact of COVID-19. There will be a specific focus on highlighting where there is limited or no contract flexibility. We believe this is not only in the best interest of the students but should help mitigate issues with future students who are trying to get out of contracts early.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Kind Regards,

Bethany Woodcock, Community Officer
Emmanuel Haruna, President
Adesewa Adebisi, Education Officer
Adetayo Opakunle, Equalities Officer
Lucy French, Activities Officer