

Student Homes

2015/16 Tenant Satisfaction Survey

<http://studenthomes.london.ac.uk>

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Student Homes

Report Produced - April 2016

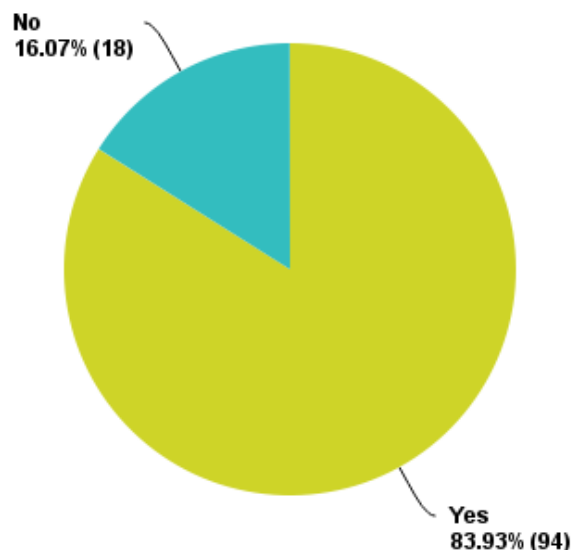
This report summarises the feedback we received from you – our 2015/16 tenants – and outlines how we're working to make changes and adapt our service in response to the feedback you gave us.

We launched our annual tenant satisfaction survey in late February 2016. Of the 219 students we house in Student Homes accommodation, 112 of you completed the survey which is a response rate of 51.14%

1). We asked you how easy it was for you to find out about the Student Homes Service:

Q2 Was it easy finding out about the Student Homes service?

Answered: 112 Skipped: 0



Your responses revealed that while most of you found out about Student Homes easily, a few of you weren't able to find out about the service, or find information about the service without some difficulty. We're working with our College Partners – King's College, SOAS, The Royal Academy of Music, The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, LCDS, Ravensbourne & Goldsmith's – to ensure that the information about our service on their respective websites is clear, easy to find, and up to date.

2). We asked you how you found the application process with us for your current Student Homes accommodation:

Your responses were largely positive, the most common of which can be seen through the text analysis below.

Clear Somebody Staff House Fairly Extremely
Simple Difficult Straight
Forward Smooth Room Contract Quick
and Easy Answered Application
Process Patient Efficient

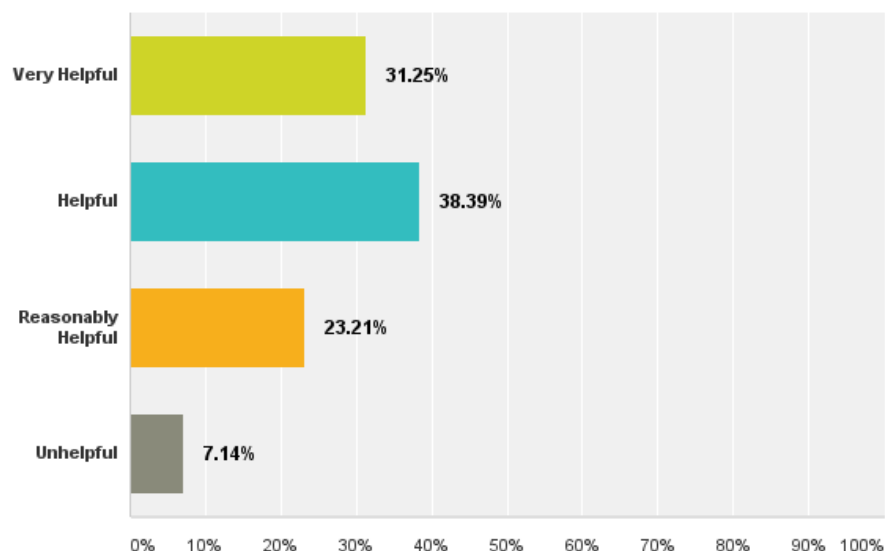
We feel that you're happy with the application process on the whole so will keep doing what we're doing in this respect.

Some of you indicated that it'd be easier to deal with one member of staff when applying, as opposed to several – we'll be working to do just this for the 2016/17 applications. Some of you also commented that our timescales are quite strict i.e. completing an application stage within 24 hours: due to the demand we receive for our properties we have to set and stick to these deadlines so rooms aren't held for students who later pull out while other students are struggling to find accommodation. We won't be changing the time allowed for each application stage therefore.

3). We asked you how helpful you'd found the service offered by the Student Homes Team:

Q5 How have you found the service offered by the Student Homes team?

Answered: 112 Skipped: 0



92.85% of you rated our service as being helpful (reasonably – very) which we were really pleased about: thank you.

Comments as to how we could be more helpful included:

- Responses could be more prompt at times.
- There should be greater clarity surrounding repairs and more timely responses in terms of work being undertaken.
- That rent statements should be issued at the same time as reminders sent out for missed or later rent payments: we'll begin doing this with immediate effect.

We agree with your comments – they were all constructive. We're working to improve our service in the following ways:

Although we're a small team we're working to ensure that there's always a member of staff available at the office should you need assistance (the nature of our roles means we do need to head out to properties fairly often). In addition to this we're looking to improve the comprehensibility of the out of hours support in place for tenants and to raise awareness of the help you can get outside of our office hours.

We've reviewed our repairs schedule, (details of this are on the Current Tenants section of the Student Homes website). We've produced and are having a new guide printed for the property owners we work with. This will be provided to all current owners, and any new owners, so the property owners know how repairs are to be approached and within what timescale a given issue needs to be addressed. The team have also been working hard to provide further support for owners, and therefore tenants, by sourcing additional contractors who can assist owners with repairs at their properties where necessary. In the near future, should you contact us about repair issues, our response will advise you as to how we'll be dealing with your repair and within what timescale i.e. 'a priority two repair – we'll aim to have a contractor visit the property within 5 working days'.

We hope this greater clarity surrounding repairs will be both reassuring and positive in that repairs will be addressed more promptly for you.

From this point onwards if we contact you about any rent that's owing we'll send you a copy of your rent statement out at the same time.

4). You were asked if you'd made use of the 'Current Tenants' information, guidance, and support on the Student Homes website:

70.54% of those who responded indicated that they hadn't used this section of the Student Homes website.

We are producing a printed tenant's handbook that we intend to issue to all new tenants from the 2016/17 academic year onwards. We hope that this will prove a more accessible source of information for tenants and will be helpful in answering common queries, in

walking tenants through simple issues i.e. heating controls and resetting a fuse board, and in tenants gaining a better idea of how we work and what support we're on hand to offer.

5). We asked you 3 questions about how you found your property to be upon arrival – cleanliness, furnishings, heating and lighting – in your bedroom, the kitchen, and toilet & shower facilities:

On the whole the feedback you gave us was very positive. The areas that you indicated could be better related to heating in the communal areas and lighting in your bedrooms.

We recorded a marked improvement as to how clean you reported having found your accommodation since we introduced a professional clean before each new tenancy as standard (please see the table below). We'll continue to work on this basis, and shall work with our cleaners to look to achieve higher satisfaction ratings at the start of future tenancies.

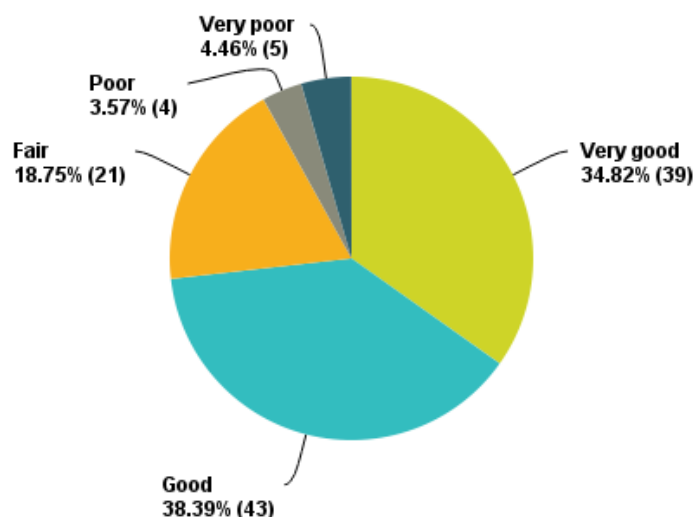
Year	Kitchen	Toilet & Bathroom	Bedroom
2014/15	83.75%	83.75%	85%
2015/16	90.18%	93.75%	92.86%
Improvement	+ 6.43%	+ 10%	+7.86%

To try and improve your experience of heating in the communal areas we'll be checking and bleeding radiators throughout all properties over the next few visits we make to inspect. To provide assistance with heating more generally, we'll ensure a boiler manuals and manuals for any heating controls are in all properties for tenants to refer to and we'll contact tenants in advance of the colder weather setting in with tips and advice about heating. Desk lamps should be provided in all bedrooms, we'll check these and the light provided by the main light fitting in bedrooms over the course of our next 2 inspections. If improvements can be made we'll look to have them made.

6). We asked you how your experience of living with your housemates has been to date:

Q13 How have you found the experience of living with your fellow students so far?

Answered: 112 Skipped: 0



Your responses indicate that most of you have had a positive experience when it comes to the housemates you share with.

73.21% of you indicated that sharing has been a very good or good experience for you.

91.96% of you indicated that your sharing experience has been fine – very good.

8.03% of you said your sharing experience has been poor or very poor.

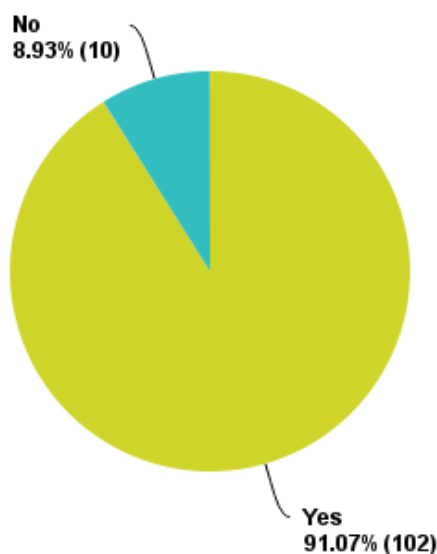
Student Homes offer rooms to students on an individual basis in order to be able to assist those who are looking for a room by themselves, as well as those who look for properties as part of a group. There will inevitably, and unfortunately, always be instances where tenants don't get on with those they share with given that no-one knew each other prior to moving in together in our individually let properties.

In an effort to keep such instances to a minimum we dedicate some properties to post graduate students (we assume you'll have similar study commitments), promote properties that are particularly well suited for individuals to rent – those with bedroom door locks, with good communal space, with weekly cleaning etc. In addition to this we also offer to introduce tenants via social media before the tenancy begins so students at least know who they'll be moving in with and can discuss the property and tenancy. We'll have a think as to whether there is anything new we could do to help ensure your flat/house shares are as harmonious as possible.

7). We asked you if, based on your experience as a Student Homes tenant, you'd recommend our service to other students:

Q16 Would you recommend the University Student Homes service to other students?

Answered: 112 Skipped: 0

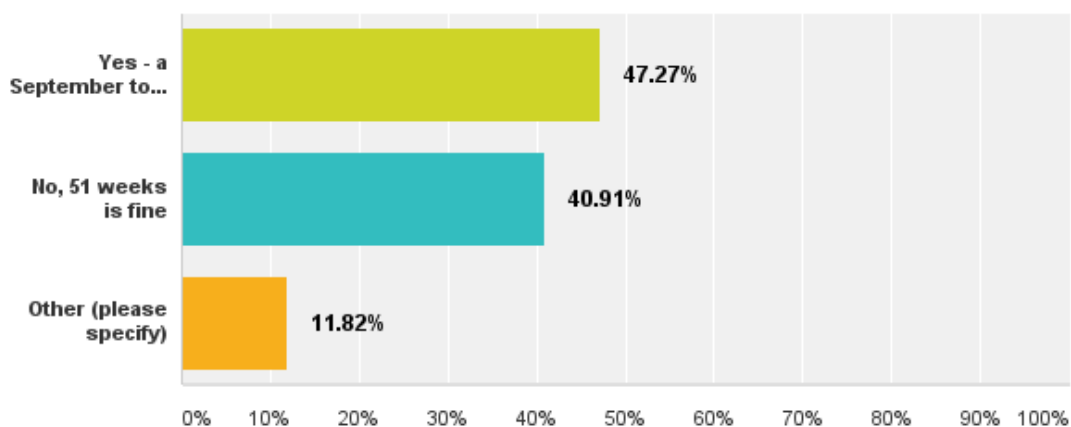


Just over 91% of you said that you would recommend our service – thanks again 😊 We'll be working on ironing out the issues that caused the other 9% of you to say no on this occasion. We'll measure our success in this respect when we launch the 2016/17 tenants satisfaction survey.

8). We consulted you about a number of things we've been thinking about looking to change or to implement so we knew whether to explore these options further:

Q18 Our tenancies are usually for 51 weeks: would you be interested in a shorter tenancy if we were able to offer you one?

Answered: 110 Skipped: 2

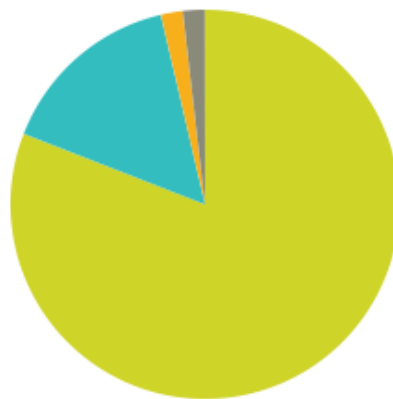


There was about a 50:50 split in terms of the answer for this question: students who answered 'other' generally went on to say that tenants should be able to pick their own tenancy length. Student Homes house fractionally more undergraduate than postgraduate students this academic year – this response appears to reflect the need for postgraduates to have longer tenancies (these students therefore being happy with 51 week leases), as opposed to the undergraduates who are housed and often finish their exams earlier and consider looking to leave London come June/July.

We'll certainly look to offer accommodation for shorter periods where possible. The property owners we work with to be able to provide Student Homes accommodation generally want security of tenure and long leases; we'll have to have a think about how we can still look to satisfy the owners we work with in this respect while being able to offer shorter lets to tenants.

Q17 Would you be interested in utility costs (gas and electric bills) being included in your rent via an energy supplement? (The University can purchase energy at a discounted rate through a bulk account we have – there is potential for us to share this saving with tenants if this is something our tenants are interested in).

Answered: 110 Skipped: 2



Yes - This sounds like a great idea Maybe - I'm not sure
No - I'm happy looking after my own utility accounts Other (please specify)

This is a service development that appeared to be received positively by you:

81% of tenants said yes.

15% of tenants said maybe - they weren't sure.

4% of tenants said no, or that their utilities were already provided.

Comments: *This is a great idea. However, the rent is quite high and a bigger number on the tenancy agreement might scare away potential students as they already have to pay thousands on their tuition.*

We intend to offer energy supplements at a selection of properties for the 2016/17 academic year. We want to ensure they work as well in practice as they do on paper before we offer the supplement to more tenants. We certainly don't want to deter students from our accommodation so shall continue to offer some accommodation where utilities are not included, and where tenants can set up and manage their own accounts.

9). Finally, we asked you if you had any suggestions that you'd be happy to make as to how we could look to improve our service for future tenants:

We've listed a number of your responses below *some responses haven't been included as the points made by a number of you are the same... great minds think alike:

- Include bills in the rent and explain a little more about the services like Glide.
- Wi-Fi included in rent and service installed pre-arrival (it took us lots of trial and error with different providers, resulting in the first month without any Wi-Fi).
- Make the contract more flexible, allow subletting (not Airbnb though) - many students don't stay in London for the summer.
- Details of the property owner to be provided to tenants. It feels quite strange to not know who ultimately owns the property.
- Provide a check list for former tenants on how to move out of a house: we're receiving loads of letters every week for at least six former tenants.
- The rent is a little expensive for the area, the overall monthly calculations were a little confusing and not fully explained. But other than that, the landlord and student homes have been lovely and understanding!
- It would be nice to have proper inductions before tenants move in. I did not have any proper one and I have not even met my housing manager yet although we communicate via email. A face to face meeting would have been nice.
- Better quality furniture in the bedrooms.
- If you will not include the price of the bills to the rent, please, at least find the cheapest option of energy suppliers for students.
- Flexibility regarding room viewings.
- Including bills and possibly a cleaner in rent.
- Have one agent on less properties so they have more time to deal with the problems coming up in the house.
- Household issues have been sufficiently addressed thus far but timing of repairs/etc. could be quicker at times (e.g. Wi-Fi). But overall good experience.
- Lower the rent.
- Door lock for each of the room as it feel more protected.
- Ensure that all appliances are in working condition prior to renting out the property.
- Shorter tenancies.
- More of an introduction when you get your keys. A secretary handed me mine and I had no idea about the property, a rather peculiar entrance, so it was very difficult when I first got here.
- Add bills and cleaner to rent, have some sort of housemate matching system so similar people can live together even if not in their first choice house.
- Provide better bike storage.
- More affordable accommodation.

We hope that you find this report interesting and that it demonstrates how we value your feedback and how it genuinely does inform the direction the Student Homes service takes and changes that are implemented to improve the service.

Thank you to all of you who took part in the survey, and congratulations once again to our prize winners:

- 1). 02 sunset climb (for 2) - Havard from SOAS
- 2). A £50 voucher of your choice – Johnathon from SOAS
- 3). A £30 Everyman Cinema Gift Card – Iobi from LSHTM

Kind Regards,
The Student Homes Team.