

Social impact



A pillar of Unite's corporate strategy is to support the communities that it operates in. This commitment sees increased levels of engagement with stakeholders across local communities where our properties are located and allows us to have a positive impact on local residents and wider communities.

Responsible landlord

As a **responsible landlord**, the inclusion of community engagement plans in our operating model allows us to collaborate and work with local residents. In addition, we set out clearly with our tenants how everyone deserves respect to minimise and limit anti-social incidents, particularly during Covid given the range of new pressures that need to be accommodated by everyone.

COVID-19 response

We have supported students and our teams throughout COVID-19. To further safeguard both students and communities we have developed a **Home Charter** for students living together. Designed to clearly outline the expectations that we have as landlords of our tenants and what customers and communities can expect from students living with us. The Charter emphasises the importance and expectation of responsible behaviour – ensuring the safety and wellbeing of everyone within the locality. This measure sits alongside

the stringent health and safety procedures that have been established within our properties making uS one of the first UK companies accredited as a Covid assured workplace. We are the only Student Accommodation provider to be accredited with a 5-star rating by the British Safety Council.

- We were the first in the sector to cancel rental payments for students who didn't wish to continue living with us during the third term of 2019/2020.
- We **offered rental waivers** and deferrals to our business tenants amounting to in excess of c£500,000 (as of end of July 2020). To date, this has benefitted sole traders, locally owned franchises and charitable organisations.
- Established **welfare support** for students unable to go home during lockdown whilst frontline staff received key worker status to ensure customers safety.
- Operated at full capacity throughout the COVID-19 crisis with no employees furloughed.

Promote positive student behaviours

We are the only purpose build accommodation provider (PBSA) operating the UNESCO award-winning **Green Impact programme** in partnership with the National Union of Students (NUS). This attracts many students wanting to support communities and give back to wider society often by charitable donations or volunteering.

■ Volunteering

In the UK it is estimated that 30% of students volunteer throughout their academic year. Our Green Impact programme promotes this further by offering uS students accredited **volunteering opportunities** within their direct locality.

■ Charitable Giving

Through our **charitable partnerships**, most notably with the British Heart Foundation, our students and employees have donated the value of nearly £1 million across both local and national charities since 2017. This averages at £35,000 raised for each city that we operate in.

Case Study – STEPS

A team of Unite Students volunteers helped give a DIY SOS-style makeover to the premises of STEPS, a specialist nursery helping children with motor disorders and their families to live fuller and more active lives.

In 2019, our Loughborough estates team, comprising 40 volunteers, set to work completing a DIY SOS style makeover of the nursery. The team of over 40 volunteers, spent a day completing some

much needed refurbishment work for the charity, where they provide conductive education for children with conditions affecting motor skills.

The team also managed to secure over £50,000 worth of equipment and resources donated by business contractors and businesses to assist with the work. Film crews from the BBC and ITV, attended the event to see the makeover in action.



[Other case studies are available to view online at www.unite-group.co.uk/community-case-studies](http://www.unite-group.co.uk/community-case-studies)

Our purpose is to provide a Home for Success. This means providing a safe and secure home which is affordable and helps students to realise their academic potential while enjoying student life.

At a glance – some key stats



We are the largest provider of student accommodation in the UK



Each year we provide a secure home to some 76,000 students



We have 177 buildings across 27 cities



We currently partner with over 60 universities across the UK



Students living in **Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)** are **26%** more likely to report top grades and almost **twice** as likely to be 'very satisfied' with their physical health

(NUS Homes Fit for Study 2019 report)



Why book with Unite Students?

- **Safe**
Only PBSA provider to be accredited with a 5-star rating by the British Safety Council.
- **Secure**
Social distancing safeguards in buildings. All buildings have CCTV and mandatory secure access cards.
- **Social experience**
Majority of accommodation is en suite flats around shared kitchens which form small households.
- **Affordable**
Different lease terms depending on student needs and no deposit required. Accommodation is only £10 per week more expensive on average than shared houses, with all-inclusive services, bills and contents insurance.
- **Welfare and wellbeing**
All our students are supported by specially trained welfare teams who are classed as 'key workers' and can be relied upon to provide on site support.
- **Connected**
All our rooms come with high-speed broadband, perfect for remotely accessing lectures, studying, streaming and surfing the web.
- **Transition**
Our Department of Education endorsed Leapskills programme works with schools and parents to help students prepare for the 'leap' to university.
- **Scholarships**
Our Unite Foundation continues to widen participation in higher education with free, year round accommodation for care leavers and those estranged from families for up to three years.