

# UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

## Hospitality and Accommodation Services

### Student Accommodation Online Survey 2009/2010

Dear Resident,

Many thanks for taking the time to complete the above survey for which we value your contribution. We received a good response rate with over 16% of the residents completing the survey.

We carry out these surveys every two years and use the data and analysis provided by the responses to feed into service reviews and improvements in future years.

We consider that it is important that our customers receive feedback from such surveys so that you can see that you contribute to the future development of our products and services.

I have detailed below some headline results from the survey: and some other results which you have expressed some dissatisfaction with or suggested improvements to consider in future years along with a brief action plan on the work we plan to do in the future based on the key findings and observations provided by you in our recent survey.

#### **Headline Results**

- Over eight in ten (83%) indicated that they were satisfied with their accommodation overall.
- Just less than half (46%) of you feel that your accommodation represents good value for money and this has increased from 30% in the 2008 survey.
- Virtually all residents (94%) applied for their accommodation online. Of these, nine in ten (92%) found the online application process easy and seven in ten (71%) found the e-contract process easy to follow.
- In this year's survey an overwhelming number of students responded positively to the customer service provided on the Student Villages by site staff with over 62% of you rating the service as either Excellent or Good.
- Residents were positive about the staff on arrival to move into their accommodation. 90% agreed that staff were welcoming when they drove onto their Village, staff were clear with directions on where to pick up their keys (90%) and staff were helpful when they arrived at reception to collect their key (90%). 80%

agreed that staff were clear with directions on where to park and 62% disagreed that they had to wait a long time to collect their keys.

- Over nine in ten, 95%, of you feel safe within and around your accommodation (of which 45% feel very safe). In addition, two thirds of you agreed that CCTV systems providing coverage across University accommodation has a positive affect on how safe you feel.
- Residents are more likely to recycle their waste than they were in 2008 and the frequency in which they do this has also increased.
- The main advantages of university accommodation are proximity to campus, unlimited internet access and social life. When asked the single most important advantage two clear ones were identified as social life and proximity to campus.

I have detailed below some areas you have identified some concerns over or suggested improvements for us to consider in future years. Below each of these I have provided a brief action plan on the work we have done since the outcome of the survey or plan to do in the future based on your comments and observations in the 2009/10 survey:

### **Information on Choosing Accommodation**

69% of residents felt that they were provided with enough information to make an informed choice about their accommodation which is a similar rating to the 2008 survey.

We received a number of suggestions from students on where we could improve on the provision of information to assist students to make a more informed choice including:

- more pictures should be provided of the accommodation,
- opinion of current students could be shown on the website,
- information should be provided about when to apply

### **Action Plan**

Over the coming months we will be addressing the following to help prospective students make an even better informed choice

- We will extend the range of photographs of each residence in our literature and on the Living website
- Clearer information and advice will be provided on the accommodation application process itself which will include information on the start and end dates in the application process.
- Source quotes from current residents and include these in literature and on the web site to offer an insight into living in each type of accommodation and residence.

## **Allocation of Accommodation**

The feedback on the allocation process indicated there was a feeling that whether residents obtain their first choice of accommodation type or not is essentially luck as some who applied early didn't get their first choice while others who applied in July did.

### **Action Plan**

- Over the next few months we will develop clear information on the course application through to allocation of accommodation process to clarify to prospective students how this works and to demonstrate that the allocation process is dependent upon other functions before an offer can be made.

## **Living and Maintenance**

Those who have visited rated their experience positively, three quarters rated the speed of solving problems (75%), efficiency of staff (75%), friendliness of staff (77%) and overall service (71%) as excellent or good.

Nearly two thirds, 63%, would like to be able to report a repair to accommodation in Living.

### **Action Plan**

We plan to work with our colleagues in Estates and IT to explore and develop an on-line reporting tool for residents to log repairs from their accommodation and in Living.

## **Receiving information**

When asked about getting information from reception about issues such as maintenance and flat inspections, the most popular method indicated was by email to your University of Birmingham or personal account.

In terms of information on notice boards in accommodation, six in ten of you rated the accuracy and half of you rated promoting social activities you are interested in as good. Slightly fewer rated the information being updated/changed regularly, 44%, being relevant to you and providing information about your accommodation as excellent or good.

### **Action Plan**

Jarratt Hall commenced a pilot last year of producing a termly newsletter to update residents on news and useful information about Jarratt and university activity in general. Due to the success of the newsletter this approach has been adopted by The Vale Village and Pritchatts Park Village and will be introduced later in the year. Out.

In addition, the three student villages will roll out electronic communication to their residents by e-mail, including notification of past and parcel deliveries.

**When asked what “one thing you would change about your accommodation.....”**

When asked what one thing you would change about your accommodation and any comments, suggestions or feedback on any other facilities/services you would like to see provided within your accommodation, one or two similar themes emerged.

- Laundry facilities - you would like more change machines to obtain the correct change to use these facilities
- There were one or two items missing from the inventory list of some flats and in some cases these were still missing in December 2009

**Action Plan**

A new laundry supplier is planning to introduce cashless system in September 2010 to address complaints on availability of change and security issues.

The Village Managers will be introducing quality checks on inventory contents prior to arrivals to ensure all items are in place when students arrive in September 2010 and beyond.

I would finally like to thank you once again for participating in this recent survey. Student Accommodation considers customer feedback extremely important to the future development of our services and relationships with our customers.

We are committed to working with students to provide accommodation and services which continue to provide an environment conducive to study.

Lesley Stewart  
General Manager Student Accommodation

17 May 2010

