



HullSTARS Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Agenda

12th August 2014 – 12.30pm

John McCarthy Bar, Ground floor, University House

Attending:

Toni Proctor (HullSTARS); Jennifer Day (Vice President for Welfare and Community); Gina Rayment (Advice Centre Manager); Ian Sanders (Hull City Council); Jill Cooper (University Accommodation Manager); Danny Gough (Humber Landlord Association); Christine Kirk (Hull Student Landlord Association); Michael Rainsford (StuRents).

Non-committee members:

Graham Jackson; Jennifer Barry; Keith Jackson; Rachelle Hunt; Karl Phillipson; Martyn Wild; Amanda Freeman; David Walker; Steve Welburn; Lynn Lawrence; Charlotte Mabbett; Paul Andrews; John Constable; Bela Raghunath; Jeb Alphonsus; Eileen Burns (x3); Beth Eales; Beverley Willson; Marian Bvumbarai; Pam Leach; Jeremy Southgate.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Meeting format

TP outlined what HullSTARS is and that its aim is to improve the overall standard of student housing in Hull. All attendees were asked to observe the conditions of attendance as emailed out prior to the meeting in respect of reserving all questions until the question and answer session at the end of the meeting.

3. Updates on pricing

As previously agreed, £45 per property based on one kitchen area and no more than 5 bedrooms. Any property exceeding 5 bedrooms will be charged at £2.50 per additional room.

Any properties with more than one kitchen would pay per kitchen and have 5 bedrooms included in that price, again any additional bedrooms would be charged at £2.50 extra per additional room.

Larger properties, i.e. halls of residence would be paid using the same method as above, however properties over 100 bedrooms would receive a 50% discount, over 150 bedrooms would receive 55% discount. This discount is due to not every room being audited, but the landlord must provide a floor plan and HullSTARS will pick and choose which rooms they would like to inspect. This is be non-negotiable and advised that larger developments should avoid booking an appointment during re-development if it can be avoided.

IS asked how HullSTARS defines a kitchen, TP confirmed that it would be per room as opposed to per set of facilities. It was confirmed that each property should have one set of facilities for every 5 people.

**An omission from the meeting was that the 10 properties that achieved a 5 star rating in 2013/14 would receive a 10% discount on their registration for 2014/15.

4. Criteria changes

Confirmed changes include:

Inventory added as a possible document upload. This will not be weighted but may assist in carrying out the audit inspection.

Properties over 10 bedrooms will not be required to have a telephone line in the communal area due to impracticality, providing that there is a hardwired broadband facility in each bedroom.

Broadband should be tested a second time if fails on first attempt. CK stated that she had written proof from KC to say that her property would never achieve 7.35mps, and how would it work. DG mentioned that certain areas would not be able to get light stream until 2015. ***It was agreed that should the test results not meet the requirements, the landlord could send in proof of the***





broadband package they have purchased and their mark would be adjusted providing it is within 10 working days as outlined in the System Processes.

Tolerance of 30mm +/- added for baths and showers.

Sink measurements apply to WC only; however still require a sink in all WC's.

"Has the landlord provided" questions require all information to be displayed in the property at the time of inspection, i.e. information on how to prevent damp etc., or sent into HullSTARS with registration documentation prior to audit.

The energy rating of tumble drier will now be recorded, and a more thorough look at whether a washing machine works as a tumble drier as this had previously been missed. DG asked how HullSTARS knows the energy ratings of appliances. TP confirmed that auditors take photographs of the make and model, if the make or model cannot be determined then there is a default mark, and if the auditor cannot determine either the make or model the appliance will receive the lowest score. DG asked if the landlord sends in the manual which outlines the make and model would that count. TP confirmed that this could be changed if within the 10 working days of audit, and providing the appliance outlined on the manual matches that of the photographs taken at the audit.

Proof must be provided for any listed building to show that they would be unable to, or at an unreasonable cost be able to double glaze windows. DG said that listed buildings can have their windows changed to double glazing and that it would just be at a greater cost and that the landlord could then decide whether they want to pay it. Two members of the audience disagreed and said that you could put in secondary glazing but not double.

TP to contact English Heritage to confirm whether or not you can change windows to double-glazing in listed buildings. If we do not get an answer before auditing starts, the question will be removed for the year.

Burglar alarm will not be required for properties over 10 bedrooms due to impracticality.

Fire door question has been split to have a self closer as one question and strips and seals and a separate question.

Stair measurements have changed to reflect domestic properties. CK asked whether there would be a second measurement for halls of residence etc. TP confirmed that there would be a separate measurement for larger properties that wouldn't fall into the 'domestic house' category.

The question relating to "identifiable hazards as outlined in the Housing Act 2004" was discussed and agreed that the question should be amended to "Are there any potential hazards that should be noted" or words to that effect due to the lack of knowledge of the auditors.

It was agreed to remove the question asking whether 100% of the light bulbs supplied were energy saving due to the potential of students replacing bulbs during the tenancy. The question asking whether 50% of bulbs are energy saving will remain.

It was agreed that the question surrounding separate recycling facilities should be left out as the question is already asked about recycling bins outside of the property.

The question surrounding controllable temperatures in all rooms including hallways will remain, but the temperatures will be taken out as the auditors would be unable to measure this. ***TP to amend question.***

IS confirmed that the question regarding the size of the bath should be changed to 1700x700mm +/- 30mm. Pea baths should also be allowed. Similarly, the kitchen sink size will be reviewed. – ***TP to confirm average sizes of the pea baths and kitchen sink through B&Q or a similar company.***

Bannister height was discussed and IS stated that the measurements were about risk assessment and management, and the guidelines for a bannister are between 900mm and 1000mm. DG said that it was easy enough to increase the height of the bannister and that it should be up to the landlord to either increase the height or accept the loss of points. ***It was agreed that the question should remain as it is.***

TP to amend the audit with the above changes and the System Code, which will temporarily be removed while these changes are made.

5. Benefits to landlords





These include but are not limited to:

- Building reputation by being seen to be working with HUU and HullSTARS to improve the overall standard of student accommodation in Hull.
- Building a working relationship with HUU, who have direct contact with students.
- Involvement in making changes tenants want based on real student feedback, and therefore making your property more saleable.
- The ability to update your HullSTARS property page with a description and unlimited photographs to stand out from those non-registered properties.
- Your audit rating displaying on HullSTARS and StuRents.
- The right to reply to any reviews whether positive or negative.
- The ability to report reviews or photograph uploads and have them immediately removed pending a brief enquiry.
- An in-depth audit report and feedback on the three key areas to help you improve your score.
- Higher listings for HullSTARS registered landlords on StuRents, our advertising partner who will be advertised within the Union and on our website and social media.
- A dedicated HullSTARS landlord page on LinkedIn with regular updates.
- Embossed certification to display in your property.
- Discount on a HMO license (TBC with Hull City Council).
- Access to HullSTARS only events.

JD confirmed that there would be a housing fair for HullSTARS registered landlords on 5th February 2015, with advertising of StuRents to begin in December.

IS queried whether HullSTARS would be handling service level requests on behalf of the council, and that HullSTARS should contact the landlord in the first instance to rectify the issue and then confirm the action taken by the landlord. TP confirmed that HullSTARS were not responsible for enforcement

and that HullSTARS would contact the council for any non-compliance. CK asked if the council attend, would it involve a full inspection, IS confirmed that they would.

TP queried whether Hull City Council will give a discount on HMO licences for HullSTARS properties as previously with The Scheme, and also whether free replacement bins would be provided for members. **IS to confirm this when a decision is made.**

6. HullSTARS Awards

The Awards will be held on Monday, 15th December and is reliant on landlord submissions. Only categories with a minimum of three submissions will be awards, and the ceremony going ahead is dependant upon overall numbers.

Winners will have their awards displaying on both HullSTARS and StuRents property listings. The award winners will be listed on the award page of HullSTARS, will be on the news pages of HUU's website, and sent out following the ceremony, during the 'Make a Smart Move' campaign in the weekly newsletter sent out to our 18,000 students.

7. Any other business

- How to register was discussed – for more information you can visit the HullSTARS LinkedIn page or read the System Process at www.hullstars.com/landlords.
- IS asked why the fire detection and alarm inspection certificate isn't weighted. TP said that it had been added as an additional document to be uploaded on HullSTARS and could be weighted on HullSTARS if required. IS recommended that the fire detection and alarm inspection certificate be required and weighted. CK asked who should test the alarm. DG informed the panel that a qualified electrician should inspect the alarm system every 12 months. **It was agreed to include this in the weighted documentation section.**
- JC asked about statistics of complaints to HUU's Advice Centre, GR said that due to a change in systems the figures at present wouldn't be





accurate. ***GR to have the statistics available at the next meeting providing the software is up to date.***

8. StuRents

Michael Rainsford (MR) from StuRents gave a presentation on what StuRents have done historically, how they are working in partnership with HullSTARS to offer free, stress free web listings to landlords in Hull.

Properties registered to HullSTARS will get a premium scoring, helping them to appear higher on searches than non-registered properties.

- StuRents offer a number of services to help landlords and encourage landlords to provide good profiles, worthy of having their properties filled. Full profiles with photos, files, videos and HullSTARS membership will be rewarded with higher search rankings.

HUU and HullSTARS will work with StuRents to encourage our students to find their accommodation on StuRents.com, and this will be promoted in accordance with the housing campaigns ran by the Vice President for Welfare and Community, Jeni Day.

Landlords should input a unique reference for their property, which they will find through HullSTARS (in due course), HullSTARS will then check this, and once confirmed the rating to be displayed on HullSTARS and the additional scoring gained. Students will then have the option to search for 'only accredited' properties.

StuRents will be employing a number of marketing initiatives to push StuRents in Hull as it is a new base for the company, and will be working on joint marketing with HullSTARS.

MR stressed that StuRents is ready and waiting to help landlords and agents to upload their properties, and the sooner they can get this information online, the better opportunity there will be to get it right and get the maximum gain.

A discussion was had regarding when advertising should start, as historically there had been conflicting opinions with landlords/agents and the Union.

JD stressed that the 'Don't Panic' campaign isn't a 'don't sign' campaign; it is there to advise students not to rush. There is no right time to sign, but we want to ensure that the students have enough information to make an informed decision when the time is right for them. JD said that from December we

would be advising students to start thinking about looking for a property, but will not be encouraging it until semester two when we will be holding the fair.

IS summarised that we would need the facts in order to make an informed decision on when marketing should begin and that GR who would have the figures had already had to leave the meeting (due to overrunning by 30 minutes). This is likely to be a continuing problem due to the different agendas between the stakeholders.

9. Next meeting

Tuesday, 14th October – 12.30pm, venue TBC.

