



HullSTARS Advisory Committee

Held on Wednesday 5 July 2017 at Student Central

Attending:

Samantha Page (SP, HullSTARS); Toni Proctor (TP, HullSTARS); Jennie Watts (JW, Welfare & Community Officer); Gina Rayment (GR, Advice Centre Manager); Liz Pearce (LP, Membership Services Director); Ian Sanders (IS, Hull City Council); Jill Cooper (JC, University Accommodation Manager); Christine Kirk (CK, Hull Student Landlord Association); Danny Gough (DG, Chair Humber Landlord Association); Michael Rainsford (MR, StuRents);

Non-committee members:

Tom Walker (StuRents); Sam Moore (Loc8 Me); Dan Alison (Kexgill); George (MyPad); Jeb Alphonsus Marian Bvumburai ; Graham Borill; Keith Jackson (The Village); Claire Butters (Unicom); Osaro Otobo (HUU Officer Team); Salman Anwar (HUU Officer Team); Caitlin O'Neill (HUU Officer Team); Jack Craig (HUU Officer Team); Emily Normington (Executive Support Co-ordinator, minutes)

1 Welcome/Apologies

SP welcomed attendees to the meeting.

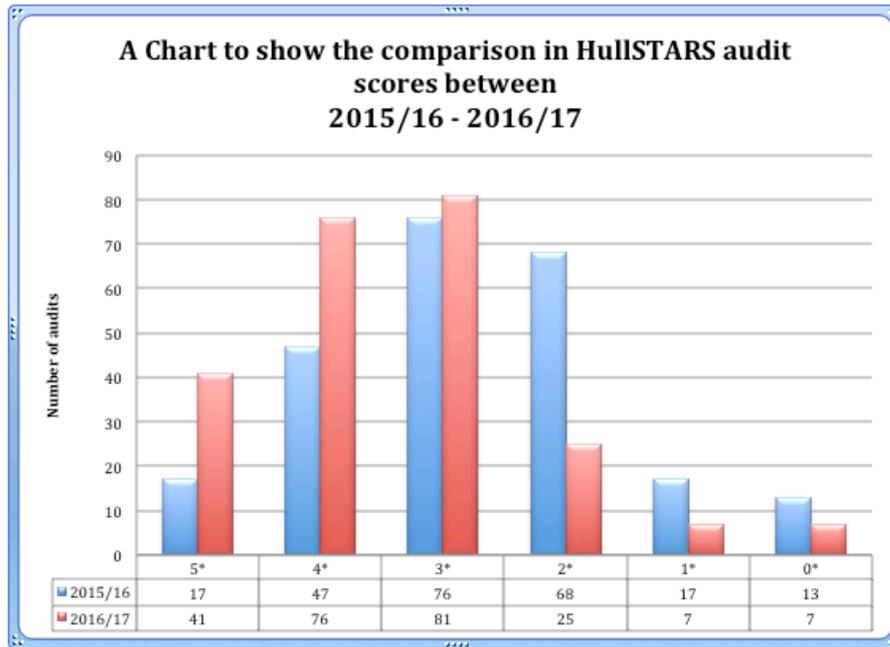
2 Successes from 2016/17

SP gave an overview of key figures for 2016/17, compared to figures from the previous year as shown below.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Total properties	180	273	248
Total beds	657	1624	1628
Total re-inspections	27	50	27
Average score	69%	74%	73%
Total biennial subscriptions	25	57	59

The figure for 2016/17 did not include the 53 properties currently on carried forward from 2015/16 on their final biennial subscription year. To add these to the figure above, would equal a total of 301 registered properties, and 1903 bed spaces.

SP said there had been a reduction in properties receiving low ratings, leading to an increase in 3, 4 and 5 star ratings. SP discussed the graph below, outlining significant improvements to star ratings from 2015/16 – 2016/17. SP thanked landlords for their hard work and dedication to improving the standard of accommodation in Hull.



SP thanked landlords for completing feedback surveys following the Housing Fair in December 2016 and presented the below data.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Info prior	92% +	100% +	100% -
Marketing	65% -	50% -	90% +
Dates	79% too late	80% right date	50% right date -
Organisation	78% +	90% +	100% +

SP noted the significant progress made to waste management in the student area following the proactive Multi Agency Waste Management meetings involving various stakeholders. The meetings take place every 6 months and minutes can be found on the HullSTARS website.

During 2016/17, HullSTARS have held a number of 'Community Clean up' days which have been successful. Local businesses have supported staff and students who have taken part in the events, with all involved receiving thanks from local residents for their work. HullSTARS recently received an anonymous donation of £50 for completing clean up events despite bad weather; SP confirmed this donation would go towards the organisation and promotion of the Great British Spring Clean event in March 2018. SP also confirmed these community events will continue next year, and encouraged landlords to get involved. SP thanked those landlords to volunteered in clean up days.

This year has also seen HullSTARS trial new methods of engaging with students, including having stalls in the library to raise awareness of HullSTARS amongst students who may not be actively involved with HUU. SP said the new approach has been successful and will continue in the next academic year. In addition to library stalls in 2017/18, HullSTARS will be making roadshow visits to halls of residence including The Lawns, Courtyard and Taylor Court to promote the 'no rush, no pressure' campaigns. In 2016/17 HullSTARS received 1141 reviews. SP

reminded landlords that if they are unhappy with a review, they can report the review to HullSTARS, who will then launch their review reporting procedure. SP will include details on how to report a review in the next landlord's newsletter.

SP updated the committee on the recognition HullSTARS received at the HUU Staff Awards in June, where HullSTARS won 'Staff Team of the Year'. A 'Be Outstanding' award was also won by a member of promotional staff for their hard work and efforts throughout the year.

3 **Plans & Pricing for 2017/18**

SP presented the dates of key events in the HullSTARS calendar for 2017/18, as below.

Review Week	W/C 23 rd October 2017
	W/C 23 rd April 2018
HullSTARS Housing Roadshow does....	
Friending	Tuesday 14 th November 2017
No Problem	Tuesday 24 th April 2018
Housing Fair	21 st November 2017
Great British Spring Clean	Friday 2 nd March 2018

Friending events hopes to enable students to find friends and potential housemates. The 'No Problem' event will help students who have struggled to find a house, or are looking for a room swap.

Audits will commence 9th October 2017. SP said audit criteria has not been finalised due to potential changes to House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) legislation. SP advised that audit criteria will be circulated to HullSTARS members once confirmed, which will be in advance of audits. SP confirmed one amend to audit criteria relating to loft rooms; the ceiling height will now be 1.5m not 2m.

Pricing for 2017/18 will remain at the prices below and recommended landlords contact HullSTARS if they would like a quote.

4 **HullSTARS Awards**

Nominations for the HullSTARS awards are open until 29th September 2017. The shortlist will be announced on 23rd October, with winners announced at the Housing Fair in November. HullSTARS will hold the awards ceremony earlier in the day during the Housing Fair, to reflect feedback from the 2016 event.

SP reminded attendees of the benefits of nominating properties for awards, including a certificate, table banner and electronic artwork such as email footers.

5 **HullSTARS Housing Fair – Change of Date**

The 2017 Housing Fair will be held on 21st November, the move follows a lengthy consultation process involving a vote by students, meetings with HUU Advice Centre, SMT and other stakeholders, along with landlords surveys. SP confirmed that despite the earlier event date, all marketing material will include the 'no rush, no pressure' campaign to ensure students are not pressured into finding accommodation.

6 **StuRents News (Michael Rainsford)**

MR gave an update on changes to StuRents. The StuRents website enables students to filter searches to show HullSTARS accredited properties. StuRents are working to improve property search, by allowing searches for individual rooms within student housing and by landlord availability. Last year new features were added to the StuRents website, including contract signing, deposit management and rent payments; card machine access is also available for short term lets. References for tenants and guarantors can also be completed using the system. The tenancy platform can be embedded in landlord websites to improve processes and standardise procedures.

StuRents are continuing to ensure scoring remains relevant and reflects student needs, scoring is transparent, offering landlords an explanation for their score and advising what improvements can be made to achieve a higher score. MR presented data around price searches and bedroom requirements, which vary across the year with housing trends. For example, later in the academic year, searches increase for individual or pairs of rooms. JC queried how bedroom searches have changed over the year and whether students are first years or returning;

Action - MR to send statistical information to SP for circulation to members.

CK asked whether HullSTARS members with a 1 star rating would appear above non-HullSTARS accredited properties if they pay for a marketing upgrade on StuRents. MR said confusion can occur if a property is awaiting inspection, however landlords can improve their score with better listings and photographs. MR added that the system is able to detect duplicate photos.

If you have any further questions or queries in relation to StuRents.com or for Michael, please email michael.rainsford@sturents.com

7 **Changes to HMO Licensing (Ian Sanders, Principal Environmental Health Officer, Private Housing (Environmental Health) Hull City Council.**

IS advised attendees that Central Government are still working on changes to licensing for HMOs and was unable to confirm when legislation would change, however IS expects room size may be included in any changes.

IS clarified that HMO is covered under the Housing Act 2004 and is defined by 3 or more people living in a house who are not related by either blood or marriage, such as a student property. To license a HMO at the moment, the property must have 3 stories, contain a minimum of 5 people who share a bathroom and kitchen as well as identifying as 2 households. Under Article 4, planning permission must be sought to rent a property to 4 or more people. IS then clarified the differences between cohesive and non-cohesive groups who live together. Cohesive groups generally choose to live together and share a communal living space, often with one tenancy agreement. Non-cohesive groups are brought together as individuals to live in one property.

IS expects the number of floors to be removed with the new legislation, so for the purposes of HMO Licencing, a property with 5 or more occupants not related by blood or by marriage sharing bathroom/kitchen with however this cannot be confirmed.

Article 4 covers many properties in the University area due to the number of student HMOs. Hull City Council have produced a premises record for all houses in the area and identified properties they believe to be a HMO. Once this has been established, Hull City Council will focus on ensuring 4, 5 and 6 bedroom properties have and comply with licenses. IS advised that Hull City Council use the maximum 5 year licenses unlike some other local authorities, inspections are agreed in line with this and are essential to ensure landlords comply with their license. Once new legislation is implemented, landlords would have 6 months to submit their applications to Hull City Council; failure to do so would be considered an offence.

CK asked what the consequences of failing to register all properties within 6 months would be; IS said a monetary fine was likely, but processes will be simplified by submitting applications, payment and other relevant documentation online.

IS said the cost of applying for a license was still being agreed, however the cost may increase to cover costs incurred by the local authority. IS said there may be a discount for landlords who have completed relevant training courses or are accredited to some housing schemes. JC asked if training would need refreshing, IS said those who attend training may be expected to complete additional courses for a small fee, which are relevant to housing to maintain standards. DG advised that the HLA run 6 training sessions every 6 months with the same company used by Hull City Council.

TP said some properties may vary between cohesive and non-cohesive each year, DG said this is possible, but most housing meets the non-cohesive criteria. DG added that if a landlord's status change, Hull City Council must be notified, as licenses are non-transferable. CK said locks on bedroom doors are requested by students but are a non-cohesive feature, IS said this would be considered alongside other factors when determining whether a property is cohesive.

IS encouraged landlords with any questions to contact him on 01482 614361 or Ian.Sanders@hullcc.gov.uk

8 **Any Other Business**

SP welcomed additional items from attendees.

SP and GR will be distributing waste packs and Advice Centre leaflets to landlords of student properties during August. SP asked that landlords display the information in their properties or include it in the welcome pack when students move in to ensure waste is effectively managed.

GR gave an overview of the 982 housing related queries received between 1st August 2016 and July 2017. There were 618 new cases, with 358 repeat issues or ongoing cases. Of these cases, 121 were housemate problems, such as difficulty filling or swapping rooms; and 101 landlord related issues, varying from rent and repair disputes to a lack of response.

IS reminded landlords that smoke and carbon monoxide detectors should be placed on each floor of the property, regardless of property size and detectors should be regularly checked. Additional carbon monoxide detectors may be required in properties with a solid fuel burning device or open fire place. IS recommended contacting the manufacturer for guidance on servicing detectors.

IS received questions regarding Energy Performance Certificates (EPC), IS advised these are enforced by Trading Standards. DG reminded landlords to be aware of EPC expiry dates, as Trading Standards monitor EPCs using spot checks.

Next Meeting

Wednesday 11th July 2018 – Venue TBC