

## **HullSTARS Advisory Committee Meeting**

Wednesday 7th November 2018 – 10.30am

Meeting Room 3, Student Central

### **Attending:**

Toni Proctor – HullSTARS Manager; Shelly Bennett – HullSTARS Administrator; Ellen Jones - Advice Centre Advisor; Michael Rainsford - StuRents; Mark Badham - Humber Landlord Association; Christine Kirk - Hull Student Landlord Association; Danny Cough - Humber Landlord Association.

### **Apologies:**

Andy Costigan – President for Welfare and Community.

#### **1. Welcome/Apologies**

Objection noted that 2 members of the Humber Landlords Association attended.

#### **2. StuRents Update**

MR urged landlords to update their availability of their properties on StuRents. Of all listings, only half are eligible for viewings at present.

**Action:** *TP to email all landlords a reminder.*

StuRents have recruited new developers and are in discussions about making HullSTARS more prominent on the website. As soon as the new design team have come up with a template MR will send over a copy of the template for TP to view.

The standardise lease is now ready MR is now trying to get the document on a PDF for viewing and feedback hopefully by the end of the week. This may not suit everybody, and users are under no obligation to use the document, but it would be helpful if using that part of the StuRents platform.

StuRents have noted an increase in activity for this area which is indicative of the Housing Fair being earlier. In a few weeks more for data will be available. StuRents are using heat maps to recover data on property pages with the most interest. What is it that tenants are most interested in on property pages? Pictures? Description? Location? This information will be taken in to account when designing the new pages.

It was noted that a problem with the property search map has now been rectified.

**Action:** MR to send TP a copy of the AST when finished, draft of property page and information on website traffic for the start of the lettings season compared with last year.

### 3. Housing Fair

TP noted positive comments, with an overall feeling that the Housing Information Fair was a great success. Statistics look good and showed a huge improvement on last year.

TP gave the members a list of statistics relating to the fair. A survey given to landlords to complete shows the following statistics.

- Information before the fair 88% found very useful, 42% last year – TP noted that this was copied and pasted from previous years therefore the results were interesting.
- Venue 50% loved the venue, 0% last year
- Marketing/advertising 75% thought this was done well, and students knew about the event, 0% last year
- Date correct this year 72%, 28% last year
- Organisation of the fair 75%, 28% last year
- Footfall was 550+ students
- 7.75 overall compared to 5 last year
- Overall the feedback was that we should continue to hold a fair.

TP noted that there was a dramatic increase in traffic to the HullSTARS website following the fair and compared to the timing of last year's fair, most notably to the review pages and Awards pages.

TP discussed that the Monopoly Theme encouraged students to engage more with landlords and external stakeholders. Humberside Police, Humberside Fire and Rescue, The Advice Centre and Council's Love Your Street Team gave positive feedback in relation to footfall and engagement.

### Plans for next year second Housing Fair

Looking forward, TP shared provisional plans for a second Housing Fair to take place in February.

There would be two options:

- A smaller fair, charging registered landlords to attend.
- A larger fair with registered members who had already attended in October attending for free but opening up to the wider market which would be charged a substantial fee to attend.

**Action:** DG, MB and CK to gauge interest in a second fair and feedback by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018.



TP explained that a second fair would be in the interest of students, as those who understood and were receptive to the No Rush messaging would have the opportunity to find a property to suit them.

DG expressed that a second fair might see the number of landlords signing up to HullSTARS increase. TP explained that this wouldn't be the objective in the event, as our priority is to provide our students with the information, they need at the time they need it.

Some members of the group expressed concerns that the marketing of on campus accommodation will negatively impact on the student experience as it was felt that the University's marketing was too early, aggressive, made no reference to the No Rush campaign and it was felt that high prices would drive the market price up. DG raised concerns that Hull's USP was its cheaper living costs, but he felt that with rising accommodation costs Hull would be overlooked by students when choosing a university to study at.

TP discussed that HullSTARS will be adding to the website a page listing all landlords registered to HullSTARS and links to their HullSTARS registered properties in the near future.

### **Housing Social**

HullSTARS will again host a housing social in April specifically aimed at students who haven't yet found somewhere to live, have had someone drop out of a contract or would like to find someone to cover their contract.

### **Review week**

12<sup>th</sup> November 11-1pm Monday – Friday. There will also be a review week later in the year.

## **4. Advice Centre statistics**

Over a 6 weeks period from the start of the academic year the advice centre saw 111 students regarding housing issues down on last year's figures of 163.

Three main issues;

1. Landlords
2. Contract release after signing early and contract length.
3. Repairs; Environmental Health; vermin problems & sanitation.

It was felt that the environmental health problems are an educational issue regarding all tenants within the area, and not just one house.

## **4. AOB**

DG stressed the importance of landlords getting their licences completed. He also made the committee aware that a lack of licence could make tenants eligible for rent repayment orders.

TP highlighted that the results from last years housing survey will be used in an ongoing marketing campaign. The survey will be re-opened in January and results used to inform a campaign starting in September next year.

### **TABLE OF ACTIONS**

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
Toni Proctor	Email landlords a reminder RE StuRents availability and HMO licensing.	16 <sup>th</sup> November 2018
Michael Rainsford	Share data regarding search traffic, AST and changes to property pages.	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2018 or ASAP
Danny Gough, Mark Badham and Christine Kirk	Feedback any interest regarding a second Housing Fair.	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2018

