

How to fix student housing

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MEMBERSHIP SERVICES
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ALL inclusive bills nightmare as a Landlord for next academic year

#1

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Hello

I am a Landlord to HMO students and have fallen foul of the impending enormous price increases in energy which are due soon. I rent all of my student properties ALL inclusive with bills for a fixed cost. This isn't normally a problem, but as my students sign 12months in advance for the next academic year, I haven't been able to foresee the unprecedented massive energy price increases and now the rent I am charging for the next academic year when they move in Sep 2022 is no where near enough to cover the bill costs, i could normally absorb the costs, but the houses are huge 8 bedrooms 4 story buildings and im looking at bills going up from about £325 to over £800 a month!

I have tried to talk to the students and explain that I need to increase the rent to cover my costs, but they are playing hardball saying they have signed a fixed price contract.

Can I cancel the contract and re advertise the property as I think they are being wholly unreasonable given the circumstances on the national energy crisis.

They haven't moved into the property and their contract says it doesn't start until 1st September, however they have signed and paid a deposit.

What are my options in this scenario?

Tags: None

I am amazed





Some facts...

- 4.4 million households in England
- 16 to 34 accounted for 43.5% of the households
- 21% of homes in the Private Rented Sector are non-decent
- Augar was concerned about student accommodation costs
- NAO found no meaningful relationship between DfE and DLUHC
- Supply continues to be an issue in major student cities (planning)
- Student accommodation as a market not working for the tenant



Ambitions

- All tenants should have access to a good quality, safe and secure home.
- All tenants should be able to treat their house as their home and be empowered to challenge poor practice.
- All landlords should have information on how to comply with their responsibilities and be able to repossess their properties when necessary.
- Landlords and tenants should be supported by a system that enables effective resolution of issues.
- Local councils should have strong and effective enforcement tools to crack down on poor practice.



Story so far...

- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Letting agents have to belong to a redress scheme
- Tenant fees act
- Capping of deposits
- Emergency measures during the pandemic



1. Decent homes standard

- A legally binding Decent Homes Standard (DHS) in the Private Rented Sector for the first time
- Free from the most serious health and safety hazards, such as fall risks, fire risks, or carbon monoxide poisoning
- Landlords must make sure rented homes don't fall into disrepair, addressing problems before they deteriorate and require more expensive work.
- Kitchens and bathrooms should be adequate, located correctly and – where appropriate – not too old, and we'll also require decent noise insulation.
- Renters must have clean, appropriate, and useable facilities and landlords should update these facilities when they reach the end of their lives.
- Gvt will also make sure that rented homes are warm and dry.



Three DHS issues

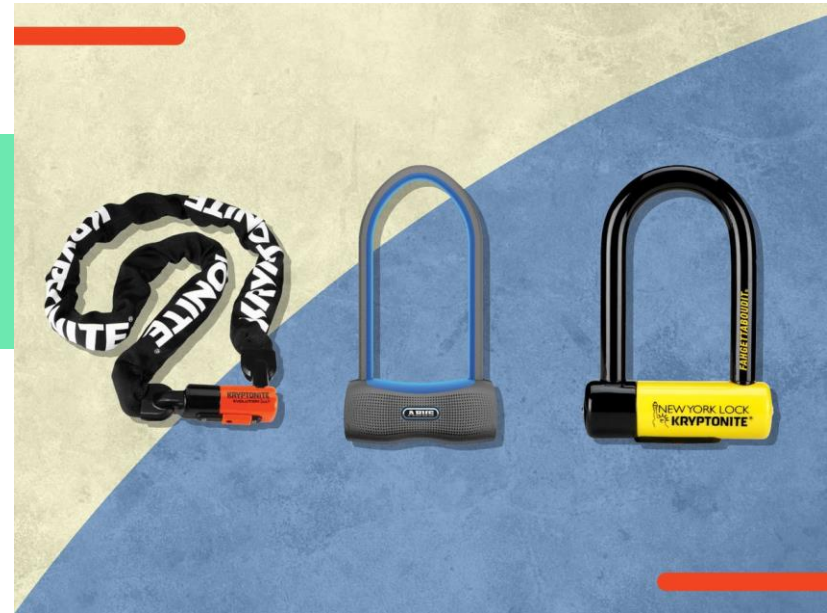
- Quality and watering down
- Enforcement
- Sustainability

2. Quality improvements

- Pilot schemes with a selection of local councils to trial improvements to the enforcement of existing standards and explore different ways of working with landlords to speed up adoption of the Decent Homes Standard

3. Security and stability

- Abolish Section 21 'no fault' evictions and deliver a simpler, more secure tenancy structure.
- Reform grounds for possession to make sure that landlords have effective means to gain possession of their property where necessary.
- Single system of periodic tenancies



What

- Everyone can cancel on 2 months notice
- Everyone can stay forever (if they're prepared to pay the rent increase)
- Signing "early" impossible – can't offer before vacant
- Signing late might be a problem for those not around
- 12 months rent into 9 (PGR? Care leaver?)
- International students?
- Exclusively students ?
- Supply



#DontRushToRent

**DON'T RUSH TO
RENT. FIND OUT
THE FACTS.**

ccsu.co.uk/advice/housing



Section 21 and Assured Shorthold Tenancies are used by a range of housing sectors. Most students will continue to move property at the end of the academic year. However, for certain students, this is not appropriate, for example because they have local ties or a family to support. It is important that students have the same opportunity to live in a secure home and challenge poor standards as others in the PRS. Therefore, students renting in the general private rental market will be included within the reforms, maintaining consistency across the PRS. We recognise, however, that Purpose-Built Student Accommodation cannot typically be let to non-students, and we will exempt these properties – with tenancies instead governed by the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 - so long as the provider is registered for a government-approved code.[\[footnote 50\]](#)

NRLA

What are the NRLA proposed mandatory grounds for possession in student tenancies?

The association is proposing that the tenancy is fixed term, for a term not exceeding twelve months and:

- Not later than the beginning of the tenancy the landlord gives notice in writing to the tenant that possession might be recovered on this ground
- The property was let out by an educational establishment or to an entire household in full-time education.
- The notice period for this ground would be two months.

3. Security and stability

Possession...

- Wishing to sell a property
- Serious repeated rent arrears
- Criminal or antisocial behaviour
- If possession required time for a tenant to find new property
- In other words harder to evict in general, easier on specific bases

4. Dispute resolution

- Only allow increases to rent once per year, end the use of rent review clauses, and improve tenants' ability to challenge excessive rent increases through the First Tier Tribunal.
- Strengthen tenants' ability to hold landlords to account and introduce a new single Ombudsman that all private landlords must join.
- Work with the Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) to target the areas where there are unacceptable delays in court proceedings.

4.1 Rent increases

- Rent increases only once a year
- Two months notice of a rent increase
- End use of rent review clauses
- Require landlords to repay any upfront rent if a tenancy ends earlier than the period that tenants have paid for.
- Introduce a power through the Renters Reform Bill to limit the amount of rent that landlords can ask for in advance.
- Expand Rent Repayment Orders to cover repayment for non-decent homes



4.2 A new Ombudsman

- A single government-approved Ombudsman covering all private landlords who rent out property in England, regardless of whether they use an agent

We will explore extending mandatory membership of a redress scheme to residential park home operators, private providers of purpose-built student accommodation and property guardian companies. This would provide access to redress for residents across approximately 2,000 park homes sites in England, 30% of university students living in purpose-built student accommodation, [\[footnote 56\]](#) and approximately 5,000 to 7,000 property guardians. [\[footnote 57\]](#)

Keeping with standard practice, the Ombudsman's decision will be binding on landlords, should the complainant accept the final determination.

- Failure to comply with a decision may result in repeat or serious offenders being liable for a Banning Order.

5. Compliance and enforcement

- A new property portal to help landlords understand their legal requirements and “host” compliance evidence
- Stronger enforcement powers for local councils and more national oversight
- Tenants can check the decency thing

6. A positive experience

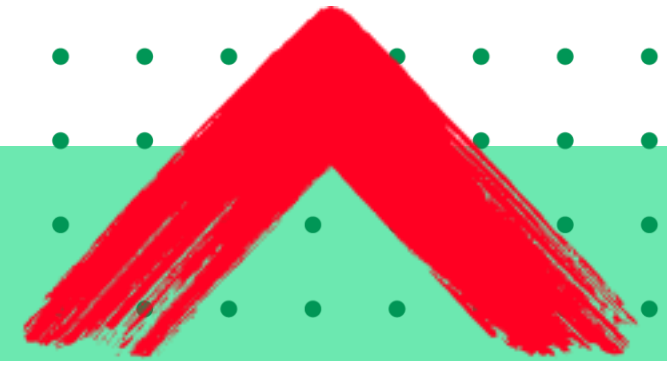
- Make it illegal for landlords or agents to have blanket bans on renting to families with children or those in receipt of benefits (so called 'No DSS' bans).
- Give tenants the right to request that they can have a pet in their property, which the landlord must consider and cannot unreasonably refuse.
- Work with industry experts to monitor the development of innovative market-led solutions to passport deposits.

Bits n Bobs

- Weak(er) regulation in university halls?
- Tenant Fees Act and universities
- Retention of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (ASTs) – which sort?
- Landlords trying to claim that houses are PBSA
- Nothing on rent

Shelter

- "A gamechanger"
- "Gone will be the days of families being uprooted and children forced to move school after being slapped with a Section 21 no-fault eviction for no good reason."



SHELTER

News

LATEST: Renting reform White Paper – its full shocking proposals go live

By Nigel Lewis - 16th June 2022

2843

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The Government has finally published its renting reform White Paper three years after it was first promised, with legislation based on its proposals not due until at least next Spring.

Introduced in parliament by housing minister Eddie Hughes (main picture) but prefaced by his boss Michael Gove, it claims to be both a game-changer for renters but also assumed that not all landlords are rogue or irresponsible and that most offer good accommodation and take their responsibilities seriously.

“We want to change the UK’s reputation as a place to both rent and own a home,” Hughes told MPs. “And we want renters to have the same peace of mind that owning your home gives.”

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It seems to have abolished the concept of a minimum 6 month tenancy term. Effectively that turns all properties into holiday lets doesn't it? Surely if landlords have no certainty of at least 6 months rent they will price far more properties at holiday let prices.

How is the student market going to work if students can just bail mid tenancy? The only way that could possibly work would be if Council Tax exemptions were abolished so students could be replaced with professionals. How will it work if one student wants to leave a joint tenancy? Will they bully and coerce their housemates to give up their home? In student HMOs on individual tenancy agreements it would massively change the whole student experience if random professionals or benefit claimants were put in to replace a departing student.

Some of the proposals look OK but others really haven't been properly thought through.



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Letter to VCs

- The planned changes will prevent landlords from being assured that their current student tenants are moving out at the end of the academic year... meaning they would be unable to advertise the property for next year's renters... this will be of particular concern for first year students looking to move out of halls of residence or purpose-built accommodation into private rented housing with their friends. It would be a recipe for chaos, confusion and could have a damaging impact on students' mental health.”

For now...

- We expect most students will continue to move in-line with the academic year. However, the proposed reforms will support student households who have children or local roots to remain in their properties after studying if they wish to. It will also mean that students are not locked into contracts when their circumstances change or if property standards are poor.

Next steps

- Levelling up committee consultation, Friday 19th August
- Lobbying of MPs and new minister
- Autumn presentation of Bill and passage through both houses
- Landlord lobby all over watering down

Supply?

There may well be a supply issue which will exacerbate the cost issue

Does this mean we should:

- Let the landlords win – there's other priorities
- Try to defeat the landlords – historic opportunity
- Cause universities to have a proper plan and take more responsibility for relationship between supply and their generated demand
- Some other confection

Provider name

The University of Salford

level of study

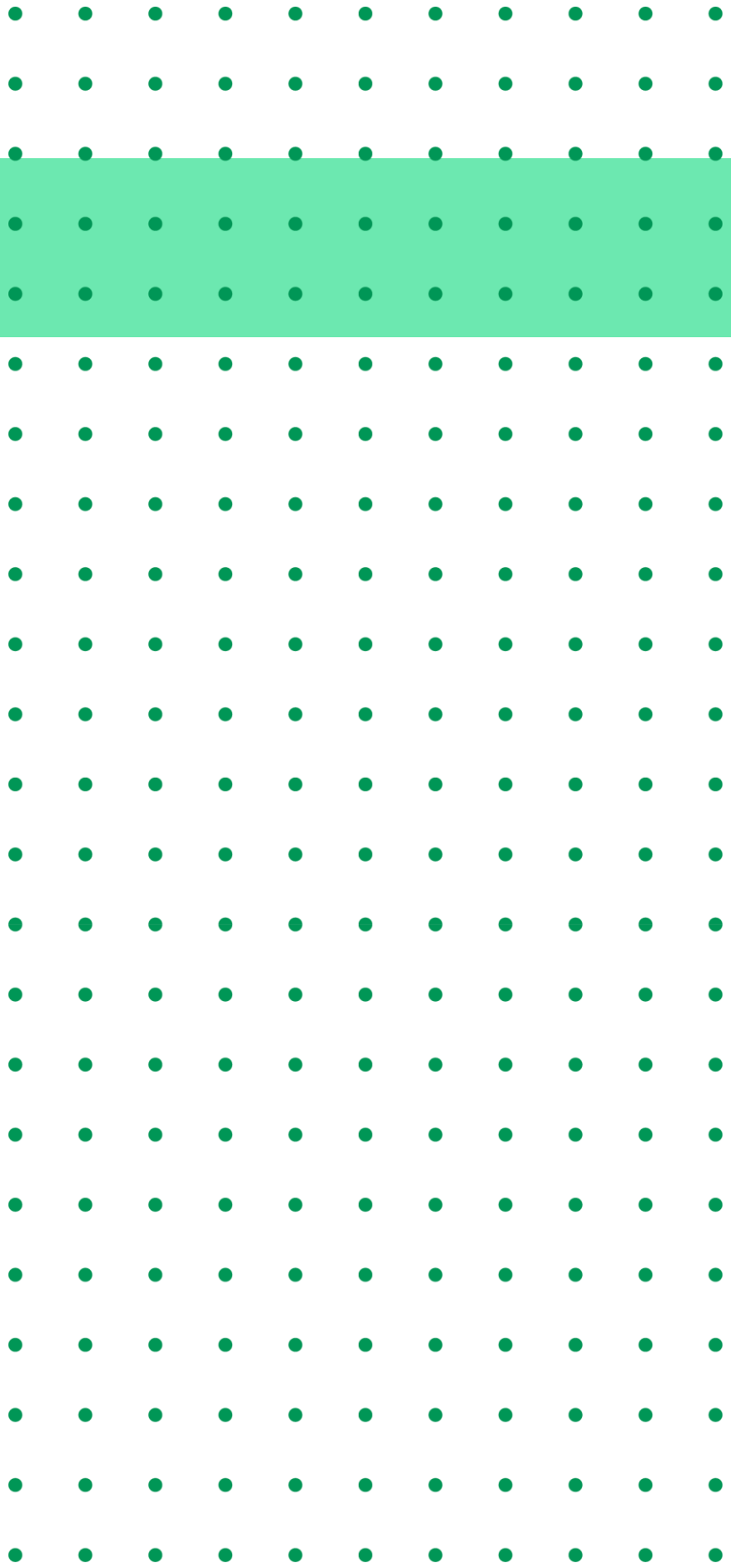
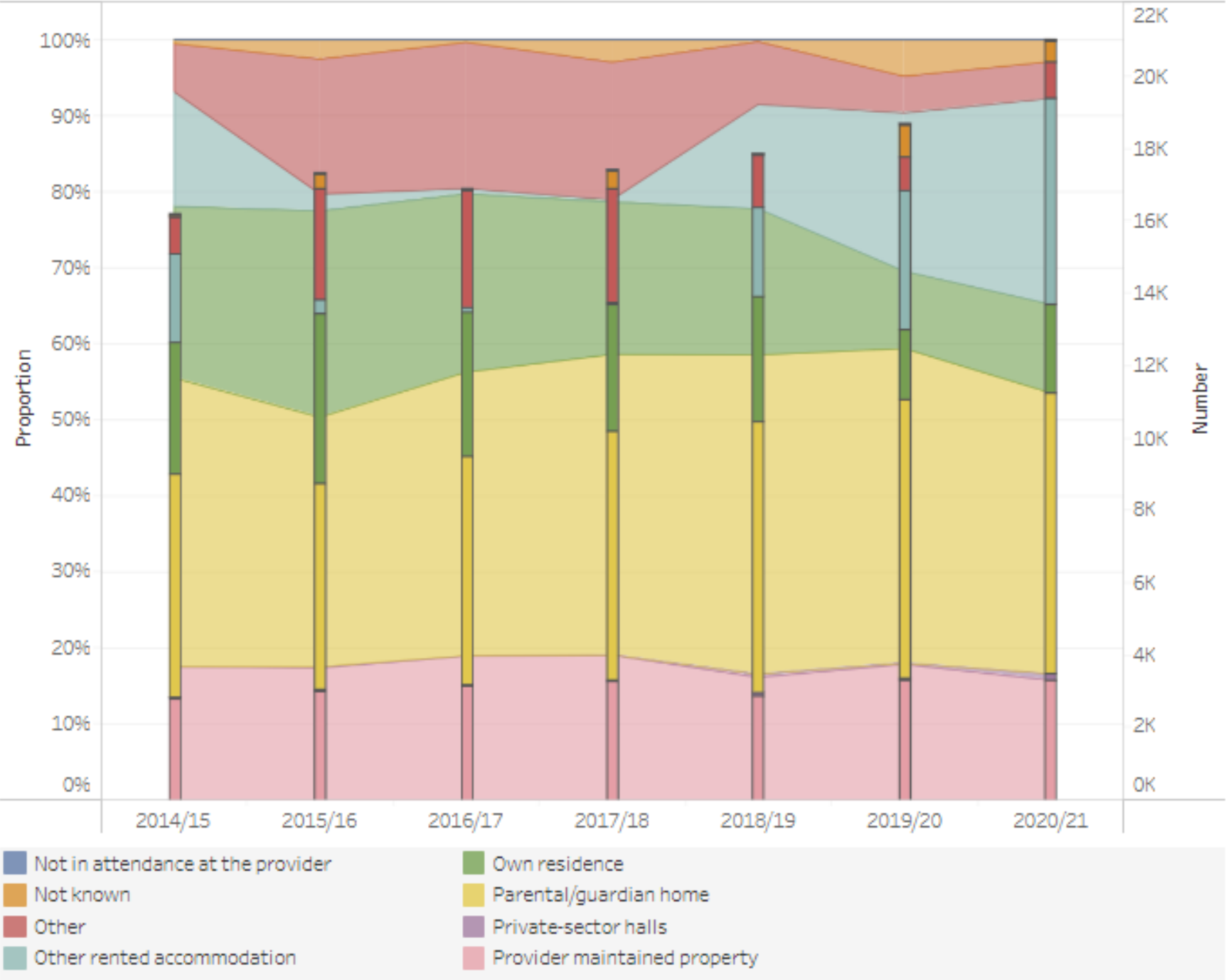
All

First year marker

All

Student accomodation type - The University of Salford

All, All years
Data: HESA Student



Student claims £1,600 accommodation is like a 'prison' with broken heating, cockroaches and bags of sick

Alice Sowerby lived in the flat for a year and claimed the conditions affected both her physical and mental health



SHARE

Comments 1

By **Kieran Isgin** Manchester Life reporter
13:24, 3 AUG 2022

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MOST READ

1



- <https://twitter.com/KwajoHousing/status/1488850915281022978>



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This Morning I met with the Secretary of State for Housing - Michael Gove to discuss Housing and how lives are being put at risk.

After both agreeing things need to change, I will be going back to meet him and his team again to propose and work on how to fix this 🙏

