

ADDRESSING HOUSING CRISIS AND PBSAS

PROPOSER

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SECONDER

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WHAT WILL WE DO?

1. The Union will use better understanding of individual Purpose-Built Student Accommodations and their student offerings when advertising.
2. The Union will explore alternatives by increasing their promotion of student friendly student accommodation platforms in Edinburgh e.g. Edinburgh Student Housing Co-op.
3. Relevant Full-Time Officers will create a student-led Housing Crisis working group to ensure an up-to-date and accurate information on the Union's Accommodation Toolkit, contribute to joint-events across Edinburgh universities, and hold the University and private partners accountable for the welfare of students.
4. Relevant Full-Time Officers will continue the Union's partnership with NUS and Housing Unions (e.g. Edinburgh Living Rent) to introduce policies and lobby the City of Edinburgh Council to disincentivise private PBSA development.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND TO THIS?

1. The average rent in Purpose-Built Student Accommodation in the UK has risen by 61% in the last decade, with a 34% increase on pre-COVID levels for PBSA rent in Scotland (*University Business, 2021*).
2. The maximum financial support a Scottish student can apply for through loans/bursaries is £7,750 per year. The average rent in Scotland is £6,853 which means that the average rent equates to 88% of their maximum financial package leaving the students only £22.42 per week for additional living costs. For students who receive the minimum financial package, the average rent equates to 144% of their loan (*National Union of Students and Unipol Student Homes, 2021*).
3. According to The Herald (2020), PBSA landlords with buildings over 30 beds are exempt from the Private Housing (Tenancies) Scotland Act 2016 which leads to students being left with fewer rights and protections than a usual domestic tenant.

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4. According to the NUS Research on Student Poverty (2022), 12% of all students experienced homelessness since starting their studies with a third of students (35%) considering dropping out due to financial pressures.

WHAT BELIEFS MOTIVATE THESE ACTIONS?

1. Relationships with PBSAs, which are often challenged and not respected by students, lead to a lack of trust in the Student Union and its values. The response in the comments of the last PBSA endorsement on the Student Union Instagram page indicates that these relationships are not welcomed by students.
2. There is a lack of initiative within the university to ensure that no student is priced out of education. Many students are being forced to pick up jobs alongside their studies to support themselves financially which has a significant negative impact on their mental health.
3. This motion will strengthen the connections between the Full-Time Officers and NUS and Housing Unions in Edinburgh to collaborate on student needs throughout the years.
4. Currently, the Student Union does not have an influential platform with which students can build rapport with student volunteers across Edinburgh universities and colleges to create impactful change. The Housing Crisis working group will provide a supportive and inclusive space for students to voice their concerns as well as create discussions around ideas and solutions on what actionable steps to take.