

\*letter sent 6pm 14/01/21\* - feel free to add signature for if/when sent again

Dear Richard Smith and Directors of the Board of Unite,

We are writing to you as elected representatives of Students' Unions and Guilds across the country in response to the rent refund you have announced.

Whilst we are glad that the disruption to students' tenancies has been acknowledged, two weeks worth of rent is nowhere near enough compensation for students that have had no choice but to vacate their accommodation for months. We have been contacted by many of our students who are extremely worried, stressed and anxious about having to pay rent in this period. It is completely unreasonable to expect students to pay for accommodation whilst they cannot access it.

We are pleased with the addition of a four week contract extension as a measure, as this will really benefit students who might be unable to move out of their room on time due to restrictions. However, at this stage of such uncertainty, it is unhelpful to students who are currently unable to access their accommodation. More needs to be offered to support students in the here and now.

Further, in stating that students must apply for the refund, you have convoluted the process and we believe this will lead to many students not receiving the advertised compensation as the application process is not transparent and accessible. We suggest an automatic refund to all your tenants.

With further disruptions to learning ahead, a two week rebate is not good enough considering the thousands of pounds students will be paying for rooms they cannot use. Students are uncertain whether they will ever be able to return to their accommodation and Unite's offer should reflect this. Furthermore, your offer is not comparable to that which other providers have made, meaning that students are not being treated fairly.

Students have been particularly impacted by the financial implications of the pandemic through the loss of part time employment opportunities and we are seeing many students in financial hardship across all of our institutions. We hope you do not underestimate the anxiety and stress that rent payments are causing for many of our students. We urge you to take a more considerate approach to their situation and provide them with adequate compensation.

We are calling on you to reconsider your offer and provide:

1. A 100% rebate for those who cannot return from the 5th of January until the end of lockdown.
2. A 30% rent reduction for the period of lockdown for those who have had to return due to extenuating circumstances or their course starting.
3. No penalty contract releases for those who do not want to return to accommodation at all.

We urge you to meet with ourselves and representatives from the Unite rent strike group.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

Leeds University Union Executive Officer Team

Courtauld Institute of Art Students' Union

University of Nottingham Students' Union Full Time Officer Committee

Plymouth Marjon University Students' Union

Manchester Metropolitan University Students' Union Officer Team

Leeds Beckett Students' Union Officers

Durham Students' Union Officer Team

Carol Paige, Democracy, Operations and Community Officer, Students' Union UCL

De Montfort Students' Union Executive Officer Team

University of Sheffield Students' Union Officer Team

University of Birmingham's Guild of Students Welfare and Community Officer

University of Exeter Students' Guild

Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union

Liverpool John Moores Students' Union Officer Team

University of Southampton Students' Union

University of Bristol Students' Union Officer Team

University of Liverpool Guild of Students Officer Team

University of Cumbria Students' Union Officer Team

Christ Church Students' Union

Leeds Trinity Students' Union Officers

Bath Spa University Students' Union Officer Team

Northumbria Students' Union Officer Team