1. POLICY TITLE: AFFORDABLE, ADEQUATE AND INCLUSIVE HOUSING

2. PURPOSE

This policy sets out Ulster University Students' unions' commitment to lobbying and advocating for every student's right to live in housing that is: affordable, safe, inclusive and of an adequate standard.

Housing has a direct impact on students' education, mental health, physical wellbeing, financial stability and overall university experience.

As a multi campus university, Ulster University Students may experience very different housing pressures depending on location. This policy recognises those differences and mandates UUSU to take evidence led action on both campus specific and national basis.

3. DEFINITIONS

PBSA - Purpose-Built Student Accommodation

HMO - House in Multiple Occupation

Student Housing Co-operative - A student led, nonprofit housing initiative

Guarantor - A person or organization that formally accepts legal responsibility to pay rent, if the tenant fails to.

Biennial - Occurring or appearing once every two years

4. POLICY PRINCIPLES / COMMITMENTS

Advocacy and Lobbying

UUSU will support and reprsent students housing needs to Ulster University, accommodation providers, local councils and the Northern Ireland Executive. aiming to secure fairer, safer and more affordable housing options for students.

Student Welfare

UUSU recognises that poor housing can negatively affect student's academic performance, attendance, mental health and overall university experience.

Equity and Inclusion

UUSU recognises that housing barriers are experienced unevenly across the student population and will prioritise the voices of students disproportionately affected by affordability, access and tenancy barriers.

Student Housing Co-Operatives

UUSU recognises the value of Student Housing Co-operatives as a sustainable and affordable alternative model that can both empower students and reduce housing costs.

Awareness
UUSU will actively raise awareness of student housing challenges, educate students on their rights as renters and what student housing Co-Ops are to get sustained engagement with our housing campaign.

Campus Equity
UUSU recognises that housing pressures vary significantly between Belfast, Coleraine and Magee, and commits to campus-specific asks when campaigning where required.

5. OBJECTIVES

UUSU aims to:

- Lobby for affordable, safe and accessible student housing across all campuses.
- Campaign for reform of mandatory guarantor requirements in student housing.
- Lobby for the option of shorter tenancy lengths – particularly in PBSA's.
- Gather evidence on Housing pressures through recurring student surveys.
- Improve awareness of renter's rights, Student Housing Co-Ops and support available through UUSU and our advice bureau.
- Lobby for the Establishment of a student housing Co-Operative.
- Ensure students in university-owned accommodation are supported fairly and effectively.

6. ACTIONS

In order to fulfil this policy UUSU commits to:

Advocacy and Lobbying

- Lobbying accommodation providers and government for fairer rent levels, improved standards, and stronger protections for student tenants.
- Campaigning against only having excessive tenancy lengths (such as only offering 51-week contracts).
- Lobbying for the reform of guarantor requirements that unfairly disadvantage many students.
- Lobbying for increased affordable housing development where shortages exist, particularly around Magee.
- Develop, publish, and uphold a Mental Health Charter outlining UUSU's commitments to wellbeing, accessibility, early intervention, and stigma reduction.

Student Housing Co-operatives

- Raising awareness of co-operative housing as an affordable and Student-led housing alternative through social media and at our housing workshops.
- Lobbying for funding for the establishment of a Student Housing Co-Op within Ulster University.

Research & Evidence

- Delivering a biennial housing survey to gather evidence on student housing experiences.
- Survey topics will include affordability, living conditions, tenancy terms, why students aren't living in accommodation- is it personal preference or availability, accommodation type, and campus-specific concerns.
- Using survey findings to strengthen lobbying work with the University and government.

Education and Awareness

- Delivering renters' rights workshops across campuses in partnership with relevant organisations. Educating students on their rights as tenants and about deposits, contracts, guarantors and complaint procedures.
- Promoting UUSU Advice Bureau services for students experiencing housing disputes, disciplinary concerns, or unsafe living conditions.

7. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The policy implementation is to be led by our President and delivered alongside our Campus based VP's, With support from other officers as appropriate.

8. PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Advice Bureau – for support around renters rights/Accommodation issues and ongoing support for Student Housing Cooperatives.

1. NUS-USI + Amlé - for support with renters rights workshops and national lobbying campaigns to effect housing legislation in Stormont.
2. Work with relevant external stakeholder groups local to each campus.
3. Work with the University to try and secure a student housing Co-Operative.
4. Student housing Co-Operative groups to liaise with through the process
5. Local Councils - for engagement on local housing standards and enforcement of adequate conditions.
6. Department for Communities – for engagement on housing situation tenant protections, affordability measures, and wider government responses to the student housing crisis.
7. Cross Party-Political representatives – to build the political consensus to advance fair, affordable, and adequate housing.

9. MONITORING & EVALUATION

The designated UUSU officer will provide frequent updates to Student Council and Student Executive.

10. REPORTING & TRANSPARENCY

UUSU will provide open channels for feedback – get in touch with across any of our platforms:

- Email; info@uusu.org
- Instagram; UUSU_Online
- Website; **https://www.uusu.org/advice/getintouch/**

11. ASSOCIATED POLICIES / DOCUMENTS

https://www.nus.org.uk/housing

https://jnu.ac.bd/journal/assets/pdf/1_1_197.pdf

https://www.uusu.org/pageassets/downloads/Student-Housing-Co-operatives-2024.pdf

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm2x08x77z8o

https://www.nus-usi.org/housing

https://www.studentcrowd.com/page/cheapest-uk-cities-for-student-accommodation

https://www.studenthomes.coop/about/success-stories/

https://livstudent.com/room_type/belfast/bronze-en-suite-liv-student-belfast/

https://www.nus.org.uk/autumn-statement-response

Proposer:	**Lee Doran (On Behalf of Student Executive)**
Seconder:	**Gerard Boyle**
Policy Passed:	**06.05.26**
Lapse Date:	**May 2027**