
LSESU 'Your Hall, Your Call' Report – Update on Residential Services Response

Overview:

This paper contains the update to actions undertaken following the LSESU Your Hall, Your Call report from the beginning of 2011.

This paper is for:

Information

Resource implications:

N/A

Author:

Rachael Elliott

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LSESU 'Your Hall; Your Call' 2011 Residential Services Response

Your Hall; Your Call 2011 item	Residential Services Lead	Actions in response (as at 6.2.12)
Facilities		
<u>1. Maintenance</u>		
1.1 Students were reported as being unaware of how to report maintenance issues.	Front of House Manager/ Facilities Manager/Service Managers/LSE Partners.	<p>Focus has been given to ensure all 2011-12 residents are clear on how to report maintenance and fault issues. Communications include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Publication of a Student Service charter, available at each reception desk, on each hall dedicated UUK noticeboard and online on the Residential Services website;- Student Halls Handbook was made available as a paper copy for every resident 2011/12 instead of virtual;- Information TV screen content is available at each reception desk (except Sidney Webb and Lilian Knowles Hall. This resource is edited regularly by the Front of House team, with information and events for students;- Introductory emails and correspondence (eg, <i>Banksider</i> newsletter) at start of year. These have continued to address issues such as unexpected service interruptions, refurbishment works updates, etc- Residents who have ideas on how to improve the maintenance reporting, should contact their Front of House manager via the reception desk.

1.2 Inconsistency with handling maintenance reports and residents are not kept up to date on the progress of the report.	FOH/Facilities Manager.	The Student Service Charter has a clear statement on how feedback will be given to residents should delays occur. This will be corroborated by Facilities Managers with notes on progress and completion. For example, High Holborn use a calling card system to notify residents that their maintenance report has been actioned.
1. 3 Apparent lack of communication between contractors, LSE and hall staff when major construction projects occur.	Estates/Facilities Manager/Residences Senior personnel.	<p>Steps have been taken to improve communication about more substantive pieces of work which include upfront information for applicants, webpage information, sharing of overall planned annual works with Wardens. This will remain a priority for all work conducted during term time.</p> <p>Where reports have been received from students, Service Managers have been very pro-active at following up issues.</p>
1.4 Butlers Wharf students had issues with heating.	Facilities Managers.	It is important to draw out specific concerns whether by room, local to one room/flat, or by hall and encourage residents to report concerns on the spot. Some hall heating systems do not have the ability to be thermostatically controlled to suit individual room/flat resident needs. Butlers Wharf students are reporting issues with heating, and as a result, the Facilities Manager is able to act on changes.
1.5 Not enough lighting in some residents rooms.	Facilities Managers.	<p>As 1.4 and connected to 1.1 . There are plans to conduct a survey of lighting lux level, room by room/hall by hall. The absence of sufficient lighting has been identified through the UUK Code of Practice. North cluster halls have been identified as part of this piece of work. Task lights (e.g., angle poise lights) will be considered in some instances. The sustainability agenda will need to be respected and incorporated in to any improvement programme.</p> <p>Where present budgets allow, lighting has been prioritised for replacement. For example, in High Holborn refurbished rooms and in Northumberland House (August 2012) task lighting will augment the present lighting arrangements.</p>

2. Refurbishments

2.1 Students would appreciate disruptive works to take place during Michaelmas Term	Residences Management Team/ Facilities Manager/Estates Project Managers	Scheduled works in LSE managed hall will be prioritised for the most appropriate term, and where possible this has been actioned for 2011/12. Avoiding works during Easter break and Summer Term is recognised by all as highly desirable (not withstanding reactive works to serious problems). For Lilian Knowles and Sidney Webb House, this may not always be possible as the buildings are owned/managed by third parties. However, it is all stakeholder interests to keep disruption to an absolute minimum.
2.2 All Halls stressed the importance of prototypes that groups of students could have input in to.	Residences Management Team/ Facilities Manager/Estates Project Managers	This approach has been adopted immediately and is presently in operation in Bankside House (refurbished bedrooms) and Rosebery Hall (refurbished kitchens to snack points). This has also been prioritised for substantial pieces of refurbishment/redevelopment. Butlers Wharf also now has a focus group assisting with the specification of kitchen refurbishment.
2.3 Communicating accurate information regarding deadline completion.	Residences Management Team/ Facilities Manager/Estates Project Managers	<p>Projects change, deadlines shift. The important thing is communication. Additional efforts were made to both inform applicants for 2011/12 academic year accommodation of any major and minor works by hall, as well as keep up-to-date a central webpage with amendments and timelines. There is now a member of staff who is committed to providing updates to communication and works collaboratively across the Division to bring information in to one place.</p> <p>Front of House managers report that there is now more direct contact with contractors to FOHN/FM on day to day running of projects, ie, when a problem occurs, a more accurate timeline will be established, more detailed information so that we can keep residents up-to-date with projects and any changes to broadcast information.</p>

Residential Life		
<u>3. Wardens/Sub-Wardens</u>		
3.1 Apparent lack of presence of Wardens and/or Sub-Wardens within halls. Some students are unaware of their position/role within the hall.	Head of Residential Life and Wardens	Very active steps have been taken by Wardens and Sub-Wardens to increase the awareness of their role to residents for 2011/12 start of year activities. This includes activities such as Wardens meetings and welcomes; the inclusion of photographs on electronic message boards; welcome email messages to students prior to arrival; extended feature in the 2011/12 Student Halls Handbook. Where halls receive new residents after September/October, these messages will be refreshed to ensure that messages are consistent.
3.2 Some Sub Wardens are inconsistent regarding the communication of different avenues of support available for students	Head of Residential Life/ Wardens/Sub-Wardens/Teaching & Learning Centre/School Central Services	<p>There is an annual Sub-Warden induction event each year which highlights the role of central School support services for referral and sign-posting. The aim is to compliment this introduction event (which all new and returning Sub-Wardens are invited to attend) with an extended series of lunchtime briefings for the 2011/12 academic year. This series is now in place. Furthermore, Sub-Wardens themselves, as active practitioners of pastoral support, are key to identifying their own development needs. This is being addressed with a participant survey during 2011.</p> <p>A further development for 2011/12 will be the introduction of further and different interview activities to test key competencies for Sub-Wardens.</p>
3.3 It was suggested that subwardens have a mobile phone that is transferred to whomever is on duty	Head of Residential Life	This is an operational necessity already in place for duty Sub-Wardens.

4. Pre-Arrival/Orientation

4.1 Information on LSE website was inadequate and inconsistent.	Residences Management Team	Website content and layout improvements were prioritised during January to May 2011 in time to inform 2011/12 residents. Positive improvements have already been commented on from student focus groups.
4.2 Suggested that the website has more pictures, information about i) hall layout ii) surrounding area and iii) rent payment information.	Accommodation Office/Front of House Managers/ Residences Systems	<p>Not all of these items are achievable for 2011/12 academic year start. Payment information is always given to residents at year start and was included at offer stage for applicants for 2011/12. Undertaking to capture realistic images of each room type, in each hall is a significant piece of work that won't be prioritised immediately. Providing precise weekly rental information (whether in rate band form or not) at the point of application, rather than later in the process is a key objective of the 2012/13 application cycle.</p> <p>Plans to develop digital information for applicants and students by the prioritising of virtual tours for display on LSE webpages.</p>
4.3 Suggested that a table be created that compares halls/rooms across uniform criteria.	Accommodation Office/Head of Residential Life	LSESU have some specific suggestions (from former successful publications) on how information might be presented in a useful way. Sharing this would be very constructive. A table of services was developed for 11/12 and a refreshed version is due for 2012/13. This will now become a routine part of information available in the application cycle.
4.4 Suggestion: Posting a link of the hall's Facebook page on the Hall's LSE website. Also, having the hall committee be involved with writing information for the website.	Residences Management Team/Accommodation Office/LSESU	There are real risks involved in connecting School data to Facebook pages. Will explore further with IT Services Acceptable Use policy. Hall Committees contributing to website data is very welcome.
4.5 Introduction to hall life was more difficult in halls where no committees are formed during orientation.	Head of Residential Life /Wardens/Sub-Wardens/	For exclusively postgraduate halls, this will remain a challenge unless and until a different model of is established. Student Committee comments would be welcome on this area. What shouldn't be underestimated is the extent to which Residential Services full-time staff and Residential Life Wardens & Sub-Wardens, e.g. Butlers

		<p>Wharf, step in to make events happen for newcomers where no formal Committee yet exists.</p> <p>Encouragement will be given to Wardens and/or outgoing Committees to make early contact with students planning to live in a particular hall in the next year.</p>
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5. Hall Committees

5.1 Constitutions need updating.	LSESU/Hall Committees	SU Community and Welfare Officer has initiated the process of rewriting all hall constitutions. Hall Presidents have been consulted and are currently giving feedback on the first draft. They will consult with their committees. The draft will be taken to the Hall Wardens, after which final approval is sought from hall residents, and eventually ratification in Residences Committee.
5.2 Hall Committees not having debit cards require the members to spend large amounts of their own personal money or keep large sums of money in their rooms.	LSESU/Hall Committees/Financial Controller	A review of Bankside House Committee finance functioning has already taken place during Michaelmas Term 2011/12. This has worked well, with Student Committee members commenting that they find the level of support from professional Finance personnel very useful. Further feedback from Committees is needed on the desirability or not of widening this service.
5.3 Access to funds is difficult because of the handover of one committee to the next	As above	As 5.2 and there is an opportunity here to develop protocols to aid smooth transition.

Hall Services

6. IT Services

6.1 Each hall wants to retain a computer room.	IT Services/Residences Management Team	For 2011/12, there is support for this service but over the longer term it is likely that this service will evolve in to something different and better supported. As of 10 th October 2011, all computer rooms had received upgraded equipment.
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6.2 Some halls want to separate the study space and computer room	Service Managers/Front of House Managers	Building layout does not always lend itself to separate IT and group study areas but where there is space used for other purposes (e.g., conference room/dining room) then where possible an attempt will be made to make these rooms multi-functional and continue the support for Lent Term and Summer Term extended opening.
6.3 Computer Maintenance-some halls computers were not working and had not been consistently serviced	IT Services/IT Advisors/Service Managers	Greater co-operation and collaboration with IT Services and their appointment and induction of new IT advisors will be a priority for 2011/12, Also see 6.1.
6.4 Printers often break, run out of toner and are not serviced frequently.	IT Advisors/Service Managers/Front of House Managers	During the next IT Advisor induction, emphasis will be given to ensuring that an appreciation why this is important and how to maintain a consistent service.
6.5 Was suggested that a spare printer be kept in every hall	IT Services/IT Advisors/Service Managers/FOH	IT Services alerted to the request for Rosebery Hall.
6.6 Wireless internet was requested for every hall	IT Services/IT Advisors/Service Managers/FOH	The present hard-wired configuration makes this unlikely in the short term and definitely not achievable for 2011/12.

7. Catering

7.1 Bankside Residents would like a wider variety of food options	Head of Catering/Service Manager	Part of the Student Satisfaction survey aim is to canvass feedback on all halls services, including Catering. For Bankside House, the change to a catered hall for 2012/13 will provide residents with a feedback mechanism in to Catering Services.
7.2 Rosebery residents felt that incorporating the catering costs into the rent was not a good idea because it raised the rent costs.	Head of Catering	This new service has already been consulted on and agreed for 2011/12 during 2010/11. On-going feedback from residents highlighted that the catered element to Rosebery Hall was good, but the impact of sQuid use was not wholly considered a success. As a result of this, the recommendation from the Head of Catering is to switch to the "Passfield" model of operation from 2012/13 academic year.
7.3 Rosebery Residents would like the kitchens to be renovated to allow more opportunities for cooking. They would appreciate if the works took place over the summer vacation rather than term time.	Residences Management Team	Any substantial project work will be reviewed with student input. A prototype is in situ for consultation.
7.4 At Rosebery there were many requests for Kosher and Halal meals	Head of Catering/Head of Residential Life	Kosher and Halal meals have been implemented for Lent Term 2012 in all catered halls.

8. Room Allocation/Rent

8.1 Students are unclear on how room prices are decided	Finance Committee	Student rents are determined through the School's annual budget setting process, which then go on to be ratified through Finance Committee approval. This is an annual cycle as a part of the routine School Committee business.
8.2 In Rosebery, students report that some are paying the same price for different standards, even though some rooms have been	Residences Management Team	More accurate room descriptions before and after arrival should address any perceived discrepancies. Specific queries can be directed to Front of House Managers in halls.

refurbished more recently than others		
8.3 Northumberland - residents want more info on what makes a room standard or premium	Service Manager/Accommodation Office/Front of House Manager	As 8.2
8.4 High Holborn - students believed that rent increases each year seemed disproportionate	Service Manager/Accommodation Office/Front of House Manager	As 8.2
8.5 Students question whether the room pairing information filled in on their application form were honoured.	Head of Residential Life/Front of House Managers/Accommodation Office	A substantial amount of staff time is invested in reviewing applications, however if this is perceived as not effective for sharers then it might be worth reviewing the application process fully for 2012/13 to understand how fully information is acted on. This is now in hand for the launch of the application cycle for 2012/13 as questions about lifestyle to address areas of potential incompatibility are now embedded earlier in the cycle.
8.6 Room pairing application - students want to be asked about more broad interests, such as music tastes, etc.	Head of Residential Life/Front of House Managers/Accommodation Office	As 8.5. This is already in progress and already undertaken for University of London Intercollegiate Halls.
8.7 Students raised concerns about not knowing their room allocation or rent costs prior to arriving	Head of Residential Life/Front of House Managers/Accommodation Office	<p>Communicating accurate room rates through the application process and the 2 stage offer process (offer and confirmation) prior to arrival has been a priority for 2011/12 applicants and has been achieved in all halls in advance of arrival (in some cases this was only the day before arrival). However it is recognised that this is far from acceptable but occurs as a result of loading information in to the application cycle at the wrong time.</p> <p>For the 2012/13 cycle, applicants will be asked their weekly maximum budget at application stage.</p>

9. Other		
9. 1 Room checks are a bit intrusive and carried out when students are not present	Service Managers	Room checks are part of the service to students, are an obligation as part of good practice in building management. They should not be obtrusive. Clear information is available in the Licence Agreement and Student Halls handbook.
9. 2 In some halls, mail/parcels have been stolen	FOH	Reporting any suspicions of theft of mail is vital.
9. 3 Reception staff is unapproachable in some halls	FOH	Addressed through staff conference, Personal Development Reviews and training. There is a clear expectations statement in the Student Service Charter.

Updated version for Residences Committee Lent Term 2012 9.2.12