



UNIVERSITY
of York

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YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY



5th February 2020

Dear private landlords, letting agents and students,

Supporting students in the City of York with accommodation costs

The University of York, York St. John University and their associated Students' Unions (YUSU, GSA & YJSU respectively) recognise that this is an extremely uncertain time for landlords, letting agents and students alike.

As you may be aware, both of York's universities have taken the decision to offer rent credits for the period of lockdown, so that those students who are following government guidance and not using their accommodation will see a reduction in later rent instalments based on the length of this lockdown period.

We know students living in private accommodation are likely to be aware of what the two universities are offering, and may be contacting you directly to discuss what options might also be available.

We believe the Government has a responsibility to address financial support and we have been lobbying Ministers to provide additional funds, so students who are unable to use your accommodation due to lockdown restrictions are supported by Government funding. We have asked the Government to provide this support as we know that many landlords are dependent on rental income and are not in the position to offer credits or refunds to students.

In lobbying Ministers, we have also stressed that many students are facing financial hardship, as student loans often do not match the ever-rising cost of living and Covid-19 has forced numerous businesses to close, meaning many of our students are struggling due to unavailability of part-time work. Students normally rely on this income to afford basic necessities and pay rent, allowing them to stay afloat. In addition to this, their families may also face financial difficulties and are often unable to offer them support (and in many instances, students do not have access to such support in the first place).

So we would like to thank those landlords who have been offering flexible options to help tenants in this period. This has included refunding underspent bills for students who are unable to use accommodation, allowing flexibility around payments and in some cases offering rent reductions for this period. We ask those who can to follow these examples, in recognising the difficulties we as a community face and supporting those facing hardship.

We know Covid-19 has affected everyone in some way, whether that's through illness, isolation, loss of job and/or income, and the subsequent welfare impacts this has had. If any other landlords are receiving such requests from tenants, and are in a position to offer flexible options, this will be very much appreciated. We know from our help and advice services that making financial payments, and covering rent for accommodation they have been advised not to use, are our students' most acute and worrying concerns.

We hope you are keeping safe and well.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick O'Donnell
President, University of York Students' Union

Carly Precious
Community & Wellbeing Officer, University of York Students' Union

Dr Pürnur Altay
President, York Graduate Students' Association

Clara Garcia Garcia
Vice President of Wellbeing & Community, York Graduate Students' Association

Professor Charlie Jeffery
Vice-Chancellor, University of York

Jamie Andrews
President, York St. John University Students' Union

Emma Palmer
President of Wellbeing & Diversity, York St. John University Students' Union

Professor Karen Bryan
Vice-Chancellor, York St. John University