



Universities UK

# 'Studentification': a guide to opportunities, challenges and practice

Universities UK MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE





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# Contents

Foreword	4
Executive Summary	5
Acknowledgements	6
1 Introduction	8
Why is a guide needed?	
Who should use this guide?	
What does the guide include?	
2 Key findings	10
3 Context	12
What is 'studentification'?	
What are the effects of 'studentification'?	
What are the challenges of 'studentification'?	
What is the scale of the issues?	
4 Responding to the challenges of 'studentification'	20
Principles of a strategic approach	
Local level initiatives	
5 Conclusion	42
6 Checklist for stakeholders	44
Appendices	48
I Terms of reference and methodology	
II Further reading, references and contacts	
Notes	52

# Foreword

The growing numbers of students gaining access to higher education in recent years has had the effect of increasing concentrations of students in many towns and cities across the UK. The changes this has brought have been interpreted and experienced differently by local communities. Some local communities have witnessed largely negative and detrimental impacts in areas where relatively high concentrations of students have settled. In other contexts, some local communities, particularly within declining areas, have welcomed rising numbers of students. As this phenomenon of 'studentification' is relatively recent, there is no blueprint for a tried and tested approach effectively to manage high concentrations of students within houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in local neighbourhoods. However, many higher education institutions (HEIs) and students' unions, local authorities and communities have developed and are using innovative practice that could be useful to others. This guide should therefore be viewed as a starting point for HEIs and stakeholders planning to initiate or extend discussions and joined-up working, and to establish good practice that is sensitive to the local context.

*'Studentification': a guide to opportunities, challenges and practice*

has been published by Universities UK in partnership with the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) and in association with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the Local Government Association (LGA). The guide provides examples from a range of current practice. These, if applied in a way that is appropriate to their local context and circumstances, could have a major benefit for all local stakeholders and organisations.

# Executive summary

This guide draws upon the findings of research that was carried out during 2005. This sought the perceptions of a wide range of stakeholders and consisted of an analysis of existing literature and secondary sources and survey questionnaires to UK HEIs, all houses in multiple occupation (HMO) lobby groups within the national network and selected local authorities. In-depth case studies were also carried out in Brighton, Canterbury, Leeds, Loughborough, Manchester/Salford, and Nottingham. The six case studies enabled the identification of a range of innovative practice which had been developed in response to diverse local contexts and circumstances. The project was funded by the DfES and was therefore primarily focused upon practice in England, although the survey questionnaires were issued to HEIs and lobby groups UK-wide.

The guide provides a range of examples and practice upon which stakeholders can draw. It includes a checklist of activities as a basis for stimulating discussion among stakeholders, which can be used to support the effective management and integration of students into local communities.

# Acknowledgements

These guidelines have been produced in partnership with the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) and the Local Government Association.

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## **The members of the Steering Group**

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The respondents involved in the survey and case studies and the examples of current practice, many of which have informed the guide; and the Department for Education and Skills for its financial support.





# 1 Introduction

## Why is a guide needed?

- 1.1 The expansion of higher education has had the effect of increasing concentrations of students in residential areas in many towns and cities. This phenomenon, sometimes called 'studentification', has, in many places, led to profound cultural, social, physical and economic transformations. These have been experienced differently by local communities and other stakeholders. For some individuals and groups the added dynamism, and other positive effects which students can bring (including the impact on the local economy), appear to have outweighed any disadvantages. For others, changes to the characteristics of local neighbourhoods have been interpreted as largely detrimental. This emphasises the diverse impacts that students can bring to university towns and cities, depending on the local context.
- 1.2 It has been claimed that some local authorities and HEIs have neither acknowledged nor addressed these problems, and this has led to resentment among local communities. In extreme cases this has manifested itself in frictions between established communities and their local HEIs, with serious implications for community cohesion and well-being in the longer term. The National HMO (houses in multiple occupation) Lobby – a formally constituted organisation with representation from 27 towns and cities – has been campaigning for a number of legislative changes to address these effects.
- 1.3 The research conducted for this guide shows that there is significant variation in the scale and pace of 'studentification' throughout the UK and that it occurs in different ways in different places. Experiences of the issues and challenges also vary. The research concluded that the issues therefore need local attention and local solutions, which are sensitive to the neighbourhoods and established communities. As the phenomenon is relatively recent, there is no blueprint for a tried and tested approach. Nonetheless, a number of HEIs, local authorities and communities have developed a range of practices that could be of benefit to others who are considering how best to respond to these challenges. The guide therefore represents a 'stepping-stone' to support the effective management and integration of students into local communities, and seeks to stimulate local initiatives that ensure the benefits that students can bring to university towns and cities are nurtured. Since the changes are clearly dynamic, it may be beneficial for future research to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this innovative practice in various contexts in the mid- to longer-term and to share evidence between and across different locations.



## Who should use this guide?

This guide is aimed at HEIs and local authorities but will be useful to other stakeholders including students' unions and local residents' groups. Within HEIs it will be of particular interest to accommodation officers, community liaison officers, estates, strategic planning and marketing officers. Local authority officials who may be interested will include those working in planning, housing, environmental health, regeneration and development and community relations. The guide outlines the key issues and the nature of challenges. It highlights examples of practice that should assist stakeholders in devising strategies to influence the impact of concentrations of students on established communities. This is not an exhaustive or prescriptive list but is intended to be a helpful starting-point for activities.

1.4

## What does the guide include?

The guide has been developed as part of a research project, commissioned and funded by the Department for Education and Skills. Its remit was to scope and assess the scale and nature of the challenges associated with large concentrations of student populations, and to identify current practice to address these through consideration of some case study examples. Further information about the project and the methodology is found at Appendix I. In summary, the research gathered the views of a wide range of stakeholders – HEIs, local authorities, students' unions, residents' groups, the National HMO Lobby and private sector organisations. It consisted of analyses of existing literature and secondary sources, survey questionnaires to UK HEIs, all HMO lobby groups within the national network and selected local authorities. This was followed up with in-depth qualitative fieldwork – interviews and focus groups – investigating six case studies in greater depth: Brighton, Canterbury, Leeds, Loughborough, Manchester/Salford, and Nottingham.

1.5

# 2 Key findings

## 2.1

The key findings of the research undertaken for this project are:

- 'Studentification' is a relatively new concept which is not yet well-understood and measures to ameliorate its challenges and realise opportunities are still being piloted. It is therefore difficult to say definitively at this stage 'what works' but the emerging evidence provides some indications;
- In considering possible action that they may take, HEIs and local authorities should recognise the needs and welfare of both students and established residential communities;
- Partnership working is the key to addressing the challenges of 'studentification', as well as fully realising the opportunities. The complexity of the issues of 'studentification' can be considered only by a series of interlocking strategies;
- Effective communication channels are essential to foster consultation and discussions between different organisations and stakeholders. Processes to ensure a formal dialogue are very important;
- Achieving a consensual view of the issues and a common vision requires respect, transparency and trust between the stakeholder organisations – HEIs, local authorities, community groups, central government, students' unions, and private rented sector;
- The development of initiatives or strategies to address 'studentification' must be sensitive to the local context, given 'studentification' is expressed in diverse forms and occurs in different ways in different places, and is a dynamic process;
- There is a great deal of innovative practice addressing issues of 'studentification' in local contexts, such as the creation of neighbourhood helplines and community liaison officers;
- There is a need for all stakeholders to recognise that the growth of student populations can have both positive and negative effects, and that these will be perceived differently by different groups;
- Sharing of experience and practice between organisations and stakeholders, for example via regional networks and conferences, could be helpful.



# 3 Context

## What is 'studentification'?

3.1

The term 'studentification' was established by Smith (2002) to describe the growth of high concentrations of students within the localities of HEIs, often accommodated within HMOs. There are four dimensions to the process with the social tier being the primary factor:

- **Social:** the replacement and/or displacement of established residents with a transient, generally young and single, social grouping
- **Cultural:** the growth of concentrations of young people with shared cultures and lifestyles, and consumption practices, which in turn results in the increase of certain types of retail and service infrastructure
- **Physical:** the downgrading or upgrading of the physical environment, depending on the local context;
- **Economic:** the inflation of property prices and a change in the balance of the housing stock resulting in neighbourhoods becoming dominated by private rented accommodation and houses in multiple occupation, and decreasing levels of owner-occupation.

## What are the effects of 'studentification'?

3.2

As can be seen from this outline, and as the research conducted for this project showed, the growth of student populations can have different impacts. In addition, the research found that how the effects are interpreted often varies depending upon the perspective of the viewer. Nonetheless, the term 'studentification' tends to be used as if it is synonymous with 'problems' and this guide concentrates on addressing the negative effects of high concentrations of students. It is therefore important to note that growing student populations can yield benefits for university towns and cities. For example, many communities currently without HEIs are actively supporting their creation, partly because of the many benefits that large student communities bring to an area, and the fact that student accommodation has helped to regenerate areas that might otherwise have declined. In addition, local authorities and communities in some towns and cities have recorded negative effects as a result of students and landlords moving away from particular enclaves.



On the whole, studies of the advantages of increasing numbers of students have tended to focus on benefits such as increasing spending levels in the local economy, prestige and recognition, lifelong learning opportunities, wider economic contribution to the community, spin-off companies, educational, cultural and other arts events, concerts and performances, sporting events and facilities and so on. There is often an underlying assumption that these benefits will 'trickle down' to the level of neighbourhoods. As such, benefits tend to be broad and not clearly definable (whilst disadvantages tend to be narrow and very clearly definable). However, understandings of the specific benefits of communities of students and how they could be nurtured at neighbourhood level are not well-developed. Future research could be helpful in deepening knowledge of the ways in which local neighbourhoods can proactively share these benefits.

The positive effects are summarised in Table 1.

<b>Social</b>	<b>Cultural</b>	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Economic</b>
<p>Student volunteering makes an important contribution to many aspects of social life</p> <p>Student housing needs prevent serious depopulation in many inner-city areas</p> <p>Increases the range of goods, services and attractions available to the town/city's population</p> <p>A critical mass of students can ensure transport links to the benefit of the whole community</p> <p>Student communities can also support nurseries and multi faith centres</p>	<p>Create a critical mass and demand for diverse range of cultural events</p> <p>Enhances reputation of city/town as vibrant, dynamic location and as an attractive destination for eg, night-clubbing, evening economy, or tourism</p> <p>Creates an international/cosmopolitan feel/outlook</p>	<p>Higher/rising property prices provide a level of incentive for upgrading properties which might otherwise remain empty, languish in a neglected state or be generally unfit for habitation</p> <p>Many older properties receive considerable investment by private landlords which extends their life</p> <p>The existence of large numbers of young people help to make city centres attractive to social and retail spaces</p> <p>Changes in type of retail and entertainment services available – eg, local shops becoming cafes, bookshops, live music venues</p>	<p>High demand for student housing and the stimulus to private rented sector leads to rising house prices</p> <p>Growth in buy-to-let market and private investment opportunities</p> <p>Students constitute a flexible part-time labour force undertaking seasonal employment</p> <p>Student presence can help stimulate urban regeneration</p> <p>Goods purchased locally by students make a significant contribution to the local economy</p> <p>Student presence ensures the viability of some retail businesses</p> <p>Repairs, renovations and extensions to student properties benefits the construction and service sector of the economy</p> <p>Availability of a graduate workforce</p>

## What are the challenges of ‘studentification’?

3.4 The research for this guide shows the challenges of ‘studentification’ are experienced differently in various parts of the UK. Nevertheless, there are some generic challenges which have been extensively documented. Drawing on local authority documentation, experiences of HEIs, academic investigation and the work of local community groups – in particular the useful suggestions of the Leeds, Nottingham and Loughborough HMO lobbies – this guide considers what action might be taken to address the main social, cultural, physical and economic impacts of students in their communities.

### Structural issues

3.5 ‘Studentification’ is occurring nationally as a result of a number of wider, often unrelated, economic and social trends and aspects of policy including:

- the growth of knowledge-based economies and societies, and the imperatives of economic competitiveness;
- the expansion of higher education by government in pursuit of a well-educated and highly-skilled workforce;
- raised aspirations and attainment levels leading to increased demand for higher education;
- an increased supply, and accessibility to, economic capital and mortgage finance, in conjunction with relatively low interest rates;
- the deregulation of the private rented housing sectors, and the encouragement of the private sector to meet current and future housing demands; and
- the rise of ‘investment cultures’ (eg, increase of private landlords linked to buy-to-let mortgages).

3.6 A significant feature of the recent increase in numbers and widening participation in higher education is that the characteristics of the student body have diversified. A single characterisation of the idea of ‘a student’ is no longer possible. Two-fifths of UK higher education students are studying part-time and are therefore already likely to be part of an established community.<sup>1</sup> Fifty-nine per cent of all students are mature.<sup>2</sup>

There has also, however, been an increase in the number of young, full-time undergraduate students living away from home. To cater for their accommodation needs, many HEIs and private companies have developed halls of residence, often locating them alongside residential neighbourhoods. Students leaving residences often wish to settle in the same local neighbourhood, finding accommodation in the private rented sector (Smith, 2002). As a result, the demographic composition of such neighbourhoods can change and become characterised by a population which is predominantly '*young* (late teens/early twenties), *seasonal* (here for only two-thirds of the year) and *transient* (moving every year, leaving after three)'.<sup>3</sup> The issues, from the perspective of some local communities, 'arise precisely when students cease to be in the community because their numbers increase so much that they outnumber the resident population – and the community finds itself *in* the students'.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note, however, that in other places, the changing nature of the student body in higher education, and coming to fruition of widening access policies, means that the students **are** the community.

The expansion in the numbers of young 'traditional' students in a community can bring a range of, often interrelated, effects. These are summarised at Table 2.



<b>Table 2: Communities of students – challenges</b>			
<b>Social</b>	<b>Cultural</b>	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Economic</b>
<p>Increase in low-level anti-social behaviour</p> <p>Concentration of vulnerable young people with low awareness of security and highly attractive possessions leading to increased levels of crime. This can result in higher insurance premiums (ie, house, contents, vehicle)</p> <p>Decreased demand for some local services leading to closure – particularly educational services</p> <p>Residents feel pressure to move to avoid becoming marginalised and isolated as permanent residents. This can lead to the demoralisation of established residents</p> <p>Increased competition for private rented houses</p> <p>Pressure for greater provision of establishments catering for night time entertainment and consequent detrimental impact on residential amenity</p> <p>Seasonal availability of some retail and service provision – development of a ‘resort economy’</p>	<p>Expansion of HMOs in traditional owner-occupied, family areas can lead to change in nature of communities</p> <p>Gradually self-reinforcing unpopularity of area for families wishing to bring up children</p> <p>Conversion of houses into student residences, often make difficult transformation back into family homes</p> <p>Transient occupation engenders a lack of community integration and cohesion and less commitment to maintain the quality of local environment</p> <p>Turnover and short stay are disincentive and barrier to self-policing and aversion to crime</p> <p>Different perceptions of what is considered acceptable behaviour and communal obligations by different social groups</p> <p>Lifestyle frictions – late night student culture disturbs children and working people</p>	<p>Reduction in quality of housing stock and neglect of external appearance to properties including gardens, due to lack of investment by absentee landlords</p> <p>Turnover of properties and preponderance of property letting boards – recurring annually – detract from streetscape</p> <p>Increased population density and increased pressures on services (policing, cleansing, highways, planning, public transport)</p> <p>Increased on-street parking pressures arising from shared households and seasonal traffic congestion (eg, at graduations, end of term)</p> <p>Increase of squalor (litter/refuse), as infrastructure is designed for lower density usage, low awareness of refuse collection arrangements and different conceptions of what is tolerable</p> <p>Noise between dwellings at all times especially music and at night – parties and gatherings and late night street noise disturbance</p>	<p>High demand for student housing and the stimulus to private rented sector leads to a rise in house prices, deterring access to housing ladder for other sections of community</p> <p>A rising concentration of students in particular streets acts as a strong inducement to owner-occupiers of non-student properties to take advantage of a lucrative sale to private student landlords</p> <p>Changes in type of retail and entertainment services available – eg, local shops becoming take-aways and cafes, and re-orientation of stock</p> <p>Fluctuating demand for private rented housing</p> <p>Seasonal employment (in shops, pubs) and provision of retail and leisure services</p>

It is clear from this listing that many of the disadvantages of concentrations of students in communities (such as landlord negligence), are the product of wider forces and not within the powers of HEIs and local authorities to address directly and also that many are not confined to students as a group – they could equally apply to concentrations of young people, or to tenants, generally. However, as the guide shows, there are actions that HEIs and local authorities can take to help prevent or ameliorate problems.

3.8

Many of the listed disadvantages are linked and it is often their combined impact which can cause concern and resentment in local communities. Whereas certain problems can be tackled individually, this guide also suggests ways that HEIs and their partners can take a more comprehensive approach.

3.9

## **What is the scale of the issues?**

The research for this guide suggests that the negative effects of ‘studentification’ are not felt evenly across the UK. The cities of Brighton and Manchester/Salford, for example, appear to absorb and manage their student populations with little complaint from established residential communities. Although further research would need to be carried out to ascertain exactly why this is the case, it appears that, despite having large concentrations of students in specific neighbourhoods, local authorities and local communities consider that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages. In London, students tend to be dispersed into the wider housing market, leading to limited student concentrations, and few complaints. On the other hand, Leeds, Nottingham, Loughborough and Belfast have each been the focus of highly-publicised problems.

3.10

There are issues about perception and communication that need to be addressed in towns and cities with large concentrations of students. The research to underpin this guide found that the incidence of local community groups raising concerns associated with student populations was more widely distributed throughout the UK than HEI responses had acknowledged. Whilst almost two-thirds of HEIs stated that local community groups had voiced some concerns to them about the impact of students in their area, almost 40 per cent of those HEIs did not believe that students had negative effects in their locality. At the same time, findings from the survey of HMO lobby groups revealed that local communities in many towns and cities had long held concerns about concentrations of students.

3.11

- 3.12 These findings serve to emphasise that perception plays a very important part in any discussions about 'studentification' and indicates that 'studentification' does not necessarily bring significant negative effects. On the other hand, although HEIs may not perceive that there may be negative effects of 'studentification' taking place, local communities may take a different view. It is incontrovertible, however, that the negative effects of 'studentification' are evident in several towns and cities across the UK. These are inter-connected and can be summarised in the following way:

### **Social effects**

- 3.13 In line with the geographic trend of the concentration of social groups in society<sup>7</sup>, some common perceptions of change in student areas point to an increase in low-level anti-social behaviour. This can sometimes include issues such as noise- nuisance emanating from houses, streets or gardens, vandalism of vehicles, street furniture, private property, and vomiting and urination in the streets. Of course, such behaviour is not synonymous with students *per se*, but more widely linked to some youth cultures and increasing behaviour within wider society (ie, the 'Respect' agenda).

### **Cultural effects**

- 3.14 Many of the challenges associated with 'studentification' are a result of different cultures clashing. Whilst social, economic and physical changes may be the key concerns of local community groups during the early phases of 'studentification', research has shown that when large communities of students become deeply embedded within a location, significant cultural change may occur. The expansion of HMOs in traditional owner-occupied, family areas can lead to a change in the nature of communities. Transient occupation engenders a lack of community integration and cohesion and less commitment to maintain the quality of the local environment and there develops a gradually self-reinforcing unpopularity of the area for families wishing to bring up children.

## Physical effects

There can be physical disadvantages of having large concentrations of students in a neighbourhood. A general decline in the proportion of owner-occupiers can lead to physical changes including generally unkempt properties, squalor and dereliction. Such neighbourhoods can also suffer more permanent 'street blight', which may include estate agents' letting boards, neglected/concreted over front gardens and unsightly extensions. There is very little that HEIs can do directly to influence landlord behaviour although local authorities may be able to counteract some of the worst excesses through HMO licensing and planning regulations. Large concentrations of young people living in households with a high density can contribute to physical mess and noise, increased pressure on public services (policing, cleansing, etc) and traffic problems. Several HEIs have devised ways to ameliorate this.

3.15

# 4 Responding to the challenges of 'Studentification'

- 4.1 As described earlier, the capacity of all stakeholders effectively to manage students and housing within the neighbourhoods of established residential communities is affected by national policies and economic trends over which local HEIs have no control. These include, for example, the policy of expansion of higher education or low interest rates for buy-to-rent property over which local HEIs have no control. Indeed, many interviewees noted that preventing or alleviating the challenges presented by high concentrations of students will only be realised if some of the relevant legislation is amended. Such action is outside the remit of the project.
- 4.2 This guide therefore concentrates on the practical short to medium-term gains that may be achieved by HEIs and local authorities giving greater priority to implementing innovative practice. These can be divided into two main areas: Principles of a strategic approach; and, Local-level initiatives.

## **Principles of a strategic approach**

### **Acknowledging the issues**

- 4.3 HEIs and other stakeholders need to become fully aware of the issue of 'studentification' and to recognise that negative effects might be occurring, or in danger of unfolding, in their locality, even if there has been no organised community response.
- 4.4 HEIs, in partnership with other stakeholders, should also recognise that they have a responsibility towards the established residential communities into which their students migrate to help to redress any negative aspects of 'studentification'. The research showed that some HEIs have not been receptive to this on the grounds that they are not responsible for the off-campus behaviour of students. The evidence suggests that if HEIs do not act, it can cause and entrench resentment in the local community which may be more difficult to address at a later date. However, more positively, there has clearly been a marked shift in the cultures of HEIs since the late-1990s, with many HEIs accepting their part in addressing the impact of 'studentification', and formalising their responses within local housing and community strategies.
- 4.5 At the same time, it is crucial that local authorities recognise the phenomenon of 'studentification' within their locality and facilitate appropriate solutions in consultation with HEIs. Local authorities are often the pivotal 'neutral' brokers when issues of 'studentification' are to be addressed. This requires the adoption of a coordinated approach – most notably between the planning, housing and environment departments. Local authorities, HEIs and other stakeholders are already making use of existing planning and development powers, housing and environmental health legislation – some quite creatively – to address the challenges of 'studentification'.



### Partnership working

It is clear from the research that the disadvantages of 'studentification' are most effectively tackled through a range of stakeholders working together. Many interviewees stressed the need for effective coordination and shared visions, and organisational structures which foster such arrangements. The research indicated that where relationships between HEIs and local communities have been less effective, this has often been a function of a lack of effective communication.

4.6

### Common vision

A shared vision is not always easy to achieve but a good starting point for partnership working is the identification of shared principles. These can be derived through consultation between the different stakeholders, but will require commitment by all participants – 'whilst the Council can exercise its community leadership role through brokerage and arbitration between stakeholders, it is clear that unless there is a balanced and widespread consensus on the way forward, such brokerage and arbitration is fruitless.'<sup>5</sup>

4.7

An important underpinning principle is a recognition by all stakeholders that large concentrations of students do not inevitably lead to detrimental outcomes, and do also result in many benefits for localities.

4.8

Establishing a shared definition of a 'balanced community' is important although clearly 'balance' is a matter of perception. Existing practice suggests that parties can begin to overcome such ambiguities by seeking agreement on appropriate indicators. Useful precedents have already been established in Glasgow (no more than five per cent of HMOs in a street) and Loughborough (consultation proposes a maximum of 25 per cent students in a street in an inner zone and 10-24 per cent in an outer zone)<sup>6</sup>. It is essential that any initiatives that seek to encourage the dispersal of students away from existing residential student clusters, are well-planned, coherent and built into wider strategic objectives. It will be important to minimise the economic disadvantages which a loss of critical mass provided by students can accelerate in terms of a fall in demand for transport, shops and services.

4.9

**Practice: The University of Leeds' housing strategy 2003/04 – 2007/08 states that 'both universities in Leeds, (the University of Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan University) are agreed on the need to avoid random dispersal as this can be at the expense of creating a critical mass of students which can accelerate regeneration and ensure appropriate transport links are in place.'**

## Local student housing strategies

- 4.10 The research revealed that many of the strategies which bear on student accommodation-related issues, have been developed by HEIs and various local authority departments without coordination. As a result, contradictory statements and visions can arise within a particular locality. In local government, the research revealed significant differences of opinion between environmental health, housing, and planning and regeneration departments. Stakeholders are therefore encouraged to share the relevant aspects of their strategies with each other.

**Practice: Canterbury City Council has developed an overview and scrutiny committee, and one of its remits is to examine the impact of the student population on the district, and to review of performance of departments within the Council.**

Source: Canterbury City Council. 2004. *Overview and Scrutiny: Investigating The Issues That Matter*.

- 4.11 Ideally, common principles should be enshrined in regional and local housing strategies, and in appropriate structural plans. Anecdotal evidence from the research project has consistently pointed to student accommodation issues being excluded from local housing strategies and from forecasts of local housing supply and demand. Local authorities could usefully initiate action to include student accommodation in their local housing strategies. The introduction of Local Development Frameworks in England may provide opportunities for local government to tighten up strategic thinking about student housing and related issues. This could include the identification of sensitive locations for student housing developments which marry up with growth and expansion aspirations, and information on numbers and trends.

## Local student housing groups

- 4.12 Ineffective communication underlies many of the problems of 'studentification'. The research showed that whilst some locations have well-developed and established arrangements, resulting in effective communication channels, others rely on more informal arrangements. In particular, the research showed a need for improved communication between different stakeholders and that the establishment of a student housing group was an effective approach. In some places, in recognition that communication, dialogue, consultation and action are different activities, more than one group has been established – with membership drawn from different stakeholder constituencies. It may be appropriate that local authorities take the lead in organising such groups involving different stakeholders.

**Practice: Durham City Council, the University of Durham and others have established a group to ensure that the community does not become 'imbalanced' as a result of the size or distribution of its student elements. Representation includes private landlord providers, as well as resident stakeholders.**

Source: Durham City Council. 2004. *Student Households. Discussion Paper.*

### Local authorities and HEI action

This guide has highlighted that it can be difficult for an HEI to address the impact of 'studentification' particularly if this involves responding to activities off campus. There are, however, a number of powers available to local authorities to ameliorate its effects, for example, the Use Classes Order and HMO Licensing. New legislation could have a significant bearing on the incentives for private sector landlords to supply student accommodation, for students to participate in higher education and move into particular areas and for local government to regulate and control processes of 'studentification'. Legislation has provided local authorities with duties and powers to act (some of which are discretionary) in the fields of local planning, housing management, housing fitness, community services and anti-social behaviour. Housing, planning, environment and economic development are therefore the key service areas where policies are brought to bear on the issues of 'studentification'. Given that the powers and jurisdiction of the HEI are limited when responding to activities, it may be useful for the HEI to have a role in supporting and assisting the agencies, such as local authorities and the police, that already have the powers and procedures in place to address the issues concerned.

4.13

Empirical findings suggest that it is helpful for local authorities and HEIs to review their informal and formal actions, procedures and powers to see if they are working to address problems that might be prevalent in 'studentified' neighbourhoods. These powers and procedures can be outlined to all interested parties including students' unions and local residents' groups. Although solutions to problems may not warrant the use of formal powers at first, it may be helpful if all parties are aware at the earliest point of the formal powers that exist. HEIs and public bodies such as local authorities and the police may wish to consider drawing up written protocols that outline the actions that can be taken by individual agencies and at what point. There are other areas where it is important to recognise the distinction between legislation and persuasive powers. Accommodation accreditation schemes, for example, may largely rely on voluntary membership although some of their conditions (such as gas safety, for example) will be mandatory based on legislative powers.

4.14



- 4.15 Such reviews are best done in the spirit of local partnership, through channels that allow partners to be frank about what they are to do and what is likely to work. It may be necessary for partners to experiment with best practice examples from other areas and be prepared to assess their effectiveness in the local context.

**Practice: University of Leeds Neighbourhood Helpline. This is run by the University of Leeds in conjunction with Leeds City Council and responds to issues and concerns such as noise and environmental problems. Regular review and planning meetings are held between the University and Council.**

**Practice: The University of Salford works very closely in partnership with Salford City Council and has established many links with the local community to help ensure the integration of students into the locality.**

### Planning for change

- 4.16 Large concentrations of students affect market demand for housing and often lead to a rise in house prices to the advantage of owner-occupiers and private landlords. It also creates investment opportunities in the buy-to-let market, and may lead to increased investment in and improvement of housing stock. However, it may also restrict access to the housing ladder for other sections of the community – for example, low-income families and key workers. Added to this, the repairs, renovation and extension to student properties can benefit the construction and service sector of the local economy, but again, communities may be unhappy about physical changes to their neighbourhoods.

- 4.17 Concentrations of students form a pool of flexible labour and as such are often welcomed by local employers, and many graduates work in the region where they studied. In turn, the availability of a graduate workforce encourages businesses to locate near HEIs thus boosting the local economy and providing additional employment. Considered as part of a local student housing strategy (see above) and other appropriate local strategies, a large student presence can be used to positive effect by local authorities to help regenerate declining areas and stimulate urban regeneration.

## Local-level initiatives

### Student accommodation strategy

The research revealed that there has recently been a dramatic growth in the number of student accommodation strategies developed by HEIs in many towns and cities. These vary in content and detail. Over 60 per cent of survey respondents noted that their HEI has a strategy for student accommodation. However, a third of HEIs reported that they did not have a strategy. Most accommodation strategies were first developed after 1999 but the survey found that the majority of HEIs that first developed strategies more than 11 years ago also reported that the negative aspects of 'studentification' have not become evident in their locality. This seems to point to the value of well-established student accommodation strategies in helping to manage the impact of 'studentification' in specific locations. On the other hand, simply having a strategy may not be sufficient in itself. Over 60 per cent of the respondents who stated that disadvantages were being felt in their locality had an accommodation strategy. However, the HEIs that are clearly at the forefront of tackling the detrimental facets of 'studentification' have accommodation strategies. It may be helpful for HEIs to review whether it would be useful for them to develop detailed strategies relating to both institutionally owned and managed accommodation and wider off-campus provision, including private sector accommodation.

4.18

As discussed earlier, many structural issues – relating to population density, for example – are beyond the remit of HEIs to tackle. However, HEIs could usefully ensure that their accommodation strategies are fully informed by the actual and predicted effects of other local policies and strategies. For example, many HEIs are reshaping their recruitment patterns to attract more postgraduate students. Such students are likely to be more mature than undergraduates, with different behaviour and lifestyles. A major implication of widening access policies is that more people drawn from the local community will be going into higher education. These changes in admissions will have an effect upon the pattern of the student population living in a community.

4.19

HEIs may wish to use their accommodation strategies and work with local authorities, local property owners associations and other interested parties to consider the supply, management and control and demand for student accommodation. Student demand is likely to be diverse and evidence suggests that preferences shift over a student's course of study. Different approaches will suit different student communities. For example, 2nd and 3rd year students may choose not to want to live in purpose built apartments but choose instead, having formed a freindship group, to rent a house or smaller property which is less institutional and where they can exercise their independence. In larger cities students will often have a wide choice of private rented accommodation. Where this is the case HEIs may tend not to provide accommodation for returning students, other than those with special needs, and or a small proportion of final year students who find a return to 'institutional accommodation' helps them to focus on their studies.

4.20

**Practice: The University of Leeds Housing Strategy, the first outward community facing University accommodation plan which was developed in consultation with the community and local authority.**

### **Student strategy managers/community liaison officers**

- 4.21 Many local authorities and HEIs are deploying strategies to manage the effects of 'studentification' and to promote community cohesion. At local authority level, evidence suggests that relations are best co-ordinated and communicated across the authority by a designated official, who is relatively senior, and who can effectively feed back into policy formulation.

**Practice: Nottingham City Council has employed a Student Strategy Manager, whilst in Durham a named student representative and named Council officer are the key points of contact for liaison on student housing issues.**

- 4.22 Several HEIs themselves have appointed officers at strategic level to relate to local communities, and this practice is welcomed by residents' groups which say that they value having a named contact. Evidence suggests that it is preferable for such a designated person to have a solid knowledge of the local context, and well-established relationships with external agencies and key stakeholders.

**Practice: Loughborough University has created the senior post of Community Relations Officer as a point of contact and with a budget to undertake community activities – good neighbour guide, newsletter for residents about the university, website for the community with information about university facilities they can use, alerting them to key dates – RAG activities, degree ceremonies, term dates and other major events (for parking and traffic purposes). The officer also takes a strategic overview of issues and monitors and acts upon trends in complaints.**

**Practice: The University of Nottingham has created the post of Manager for off-campus students with the support of the Students' Union, with the aim of building more positive relationships between students and their neighbours.**

## Accommodation bureaux

Many HEIs have long assumed a responsibility to accommodate first year students. In recent years they have been increasingly advising second and third year students, as well as supplying institution-owned accommodation for students in their later years of study. HEI accommodation offices can be a key influence on students' choices about where to live. Their advice can mitigate the adverse effects of 'studentification'. This appears to be most effective when co-ordinated by an institutional accommodation bureau, which has designated staff. Such an organisation, either within the structure of the HEI or at arms-length, provides a reputable central point for students searching for private rented accommodation. Working closely with students' unions, and in partnership with local authorities and local communities, as well as external agencies such as the police, primary care trusts and the local media, accommodation bureaux can influence the market demand for student accommodation, as well as the relations between students and residential communities, through the dissemination of information and advice. It is one major way in which the effective management of students and housing in local communities can be achieved through non-legislative, non-regulatory solutions. In larger towns and cities HEIs often collaborate to provide such services.

4.23

**Practice: The University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Salford, and their students' unions, collaborate through Manchester Student Homes 'the only place you will need to go to find housing. It is owned and managed by your universities and students' unions. This means that it is accountable, independent and does not exist to make a profit!'**

Source: University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University 2005. *Student Housing Guide: The Essential Guide To Renting Student Housing In The Private Sector*.

**Practice: Unipol is a charitable organisation established jointly by the University of Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan University. It has been running since the 1970s. Unipol provides an accommodation bureau, redevelops and regenerates property for the student housing market and operates a code of standards for landlords.**

Source: Unipol 2005. *A Guide To Housing. Returning To Leeds*.

## Student housing handbook guides and guidance

One of the most effective forms of practice is the production of student housing guides, with some excellent current collaborative examples by students' unions and HEIs. This is particularly effective when they are distributed to all students when enrolling and registering at the beginning of each academic year. In addition, house-hunting talks (incorporating 'being a good neighbour' information) are offered in some HEIs to students as they near the end of their first year.

4.24

**Practice: When first year students leave halls of residence at the end of the year, Loughborough University, in collaboration with the students' union, gives them a keyring promoting the Silent Students Happy Homes (SSHH!) campaign and a leaflet about being a good neighbour. Students are also targeted with similar information at registration the following year.**

4.25 Other examples of practice include information stalls at freshers' events, advertisements in local and student newspapers, and leaflets to student and non-student populations. There is also increasing use of the internet to disseminate advice and information.

4.26 As described above, one of the most effective informal ways of affecting the growth of residential student clusters is for HEI accommodation offices to influence demand by briefing students on a wide range of residential locations. This can be achieved by house-hunting talks, a student housing guide and other means. There are many examples of accommodation offices deepening students' knowledge and awareness of options by promoting the appeal of alternative residential locations.

**Practice: The Leeds Housing Guide 2005 advises 'the popular areas with students (Headingley, Hyde Park) attract a high weekly rent and LS6 has the worst crime rate. So don't just limit yourself to these areas. Leeds has a very good bus network and by moving further away from the immediate areas around the university you could find better, cheaper accommodation in an area with more local diversity and cheaper insurance. In Beeston Hill, just south of the city centre, many properties have recently been renovated and improved. This has resulted in more students in more quality rented accommodation becoming available and students beginning to choose to live in this area attracted by competitive rents and the other positive characteristics of the area; including good sports facilities'.**

Source: Leeds University Union and Student Advice Centre 2005. *Leeds Housing Guide 2005*

### **Cohesive Student Households**

4.27 Promoting 'happy homes', where students respect each other, can help to reduce friction which might otherwise, affect neighbours through, for example, high turnover and noise-related problems. Several HEIs actively encourage students to think carefully about the choice of co-residents and cost before searching for accommodation.

**Practice: Leeds Housing Guide 2005 advises students to ‘find a property that meets your budget not the other way round. It can be the cause of many inner house conflicts when one or more housemates cannot afford to pay all of the rent and the landlord expects the other tenants to pay what is owed’.**

Source: Leeds University Union Welfare Services 2004. *Scrap the Urban Myths*

**Practice: The Housing Handbook 2005 prepared by the University of Nottingham and its students’ union suggests ‘don’t assume that you suddenly have to decide upon your ‘friends for life’ to live with next year. It’s a strange situation when you have lived with people for only a few months and then have to commit to them for an entire year’.**

Source: University of Nottingham and University of Nottingham Students’ Union 2005. *Housing Handbook 2005*.

### **Being a good neighbour**

The research showed that issues of student behaviour are central to friction between students and resident communities. As well as explaining their rights when they rent a property, HEIs can inform students of their responsibilities as tenants and neighbours. Many already emphasise to students the need to respect the cultures of established residential communities.

4.28

**Practice: The Leeds Housing Guide 2005 says ‘remember that wherever you move to, you are part of that community. So be a considerate neighbour’.**

Source: Leeds University Union and Student Advice Centre 2005. *Leeds Housing Guide 2005*

**Practice: Loughborough University produces a good neighbour guide which is issued to students: ‘welcome to the Storer Road area, people have lived and worked here for 100 years! Enjoy a historic part of town where you too can make a positive contribution to community life’.**

Source: Loughborough University with Loughborough Students’ Union and Storer Area Community 2001. *Life in Loughborough: The Good Neighbourhood Guide*. The guide is endorsed by Loughborough Students’ Union and the Storer Area Community.

4.29

Developing this theme, there is a role for HEIs to promote neighbourliness amongst the student population. In one major example of practice identified by the research students were asked to introduce themselves to their neighbours, and to try to develop good relations.

**Practice: As part of the 'education' strand of its 'education, discipline, partnership' strategy, Queens University Belfast, jointly with the University of Ulster, commissioned a public relations agency to design a campaign to help them raise awareness among students about anti-social behaviour and the problems it causes. They then flooded the city with the visually striking 'Do you turn into a monster after dark?' posters, leaflets and beer mats. The campaign has received a positive evaluation in terms of changing attitudes and behaviour among students and will run again in the new academic session in 2005. A university Pro-Vice-Chancellor commented that 'the aim is to make sure that not a single student in South Belfast doesn't know what their responsibilities are'.**

#### Codes of behaviour

4.30

Some HEIs sign students up to a code of behaviour, as a prerequisite of their registration.

**Practice: The Housing Handbook 2005 prepared by the University of Nottingham and its students' union reminds students 'when you registered as a student at the University of Nottingham you signed up to this statement: 'I also acknowledge that I have responsibilities to the communities of Nottingham in which I am temporarily resident and undertake to act with consideration and respect for the welfare and interests of the wider community and my fellow students''.**

Source: University of Nottingham and University of Nottingham Students' Union 2005. *Housing Handbook 2005*.

**Practice: The community strategy of the University of Leeds (2000) states that Hall Wardens and Flat Advisers in university owned-accommodation are charged with seeking to foster good relations between students and their neighbours. Where there are examples of inconsiderate or anti-social behaviour originating from university accommodation, and those responsible for the nuisance can be identified, the university will intervene and, if necessary, institute disciplinary proceedings. Local residents are asked to report incidents to the university's accommodation services'.**

Some HEIs support their code of behaviour with detailed information so that students can be in no doubt of what is expected of them. It can also be helpful for established residential households to be aware of the details of the code and know how to gain access to it.

4.31

There is currently limited evidence of practice and many English and Welsh HEIs are currently exploring the legal aspects of what action might be taken when students do not abide by the HEI's code of behaviour. One example is provided in Queen's University Belfast's strategic response to 'studentification', entitled 'education, discipline, partnership'. The 'discipline' element of the strategy involves verification of reports of anti-social behaviour, followed up by various actions from warnings and fines to suspension and expulsion. Given that the student population is transient, its collective memory works differently from that of more established residential communities. HEIs, therefore, have to be persistent in reinforcing messages if they wish to promote and sustain certain forms of behaviour.

4.32

**Practice: At Loughborough University, the Registrar, security section and Community Warden are empowered to impose fines on students found to be in breach of its 'disreputable behaviour' ordinances. The university has also employed a case officer to deal with the hearing of evidence and due processes which have been developed to support this system.**

### Community strategy

Several HEIs have also developed community strategies that seek to widen the engagement of students in the community. This has been shown to be particularly effective in helping communities to cohere. Other HEIs might find it useful to consider whether it would be helpful to develop a community strategy.

4.33

**Practice: The University of Leeds' community relations strategy 'outlines the role of the university in the city; considers the benefits resulting from that presence, including activity directly relevant to local communities; and outlines the action being taken by the university to improve its relations with the local community'.**

Most HEIs and their students' unions facilitate student volunteering and there are many examples of students taking part in a variety of local community projects. Some interviewees reported that the positive atmosphere engendered by such activities is very valuable when problem arise. Sometimes such projects are deliberately aimed at tackling the negative effects associated with high concentrations of students.

4.34



**Practice:** As part of the ‘Manchester 100 Days Challenge’ run by the City Council to promote 100 days to clean up the city, Manchester students helped with the project and two days were designated for neighbourhoods with high numbers of student residents.

**Practice:** The Up Your Street project is a partnership led by students from the University of Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan University, aiming to improve the visual environment of Burley and Hyde Park and improve community relations between students and long-term residents. Projects include a winter festival for students and local people, graffiti clean-ups, bargain hunt events and landscape architecture projects.

Source: University of Leeds 2004. *City and Regional Annual Report 2003/4*.

### Complaint response strategies

4.35

Several HEIs have appointed community wardens to respond to day-to-day concerns including noise nuisance, and refuse and crime-related problems. In some cases the designated individual lives in the ‘student area’ so that they can be contacted day and night by residents. They can visit and discuss issues with students, as well as being proactive and helpful to students and promoting neighbourly behaviour.

**Practice:** Loughborough University has appointed a Community Warden. The Warden, together with a Sub-warden, liaises with the University, and between residents and students living in private accommodation in certain parts of the local community (where many, but not all students live), with the aim of helping the university to improve communication with local residents, and maintaining a good relationship between all groups.

### Neighbourhood Helplines

4.36

A major development which has improved relations between HEIs, students and resident populations is the creation of neighbourhood helplines. These allow HEIs to listen to their local communities, and to understand more fully the relationship between students and the community. Evidence shows that these work best where the HEI closely monitors the extent of their use and the nature of the feedback being received. This enables the HEI to respond to users’ needs, as well as continuously improving the service.

**Practice: The University of Leeds has established neighbourhood helplines for communities with high proportions of students. The service provides a 24-hour voicemail and email service to raise issues and concerns.**

Experience shows that it is important to publicise the neighbourhood helpline as well as developing a web site which provides useful contact numbers.

4.37

**Practice: Loughborough University uses its campus security service – which operates 24/7 – as an ‘on-call’ service for the community. Residents can call and security will attend and intervene. Loughborough’s Community Warden or Security Manager – with power to issue fines – will follow up in the daytime if the problem was serious or if it is persistent.**

### Crime prevention

Student households are likely to contain a high proportion of electronic consumer goods and as such they can attract burglars. In addition, students sometimes attract physical violence just because they are students. The perception of an increased risk of crime can be an important influence on the attitudes of established residential communities. Most HEIs have good partnerships with local government and the police with the aim of heightening student understanding of crime-related prevention strategies.

4.38

**Practice: The community safety unit of Newcastle City Council coordinates the student community safety strategy. It works with the police, HEIs, colleges, students’ unions and other departments to run education and awareness campaigns relating to all areas of student safety and also good neighbourliness and citizenship. Campaigns are run through student media and a student safety website and are jointly funded by Newcastle City Council, Northumbria Police, the University of Newcastle, the University of Northumbria at Newcastle and Newcastle Students’ Union.**

**Practice: The University of Manchester Students’ Union ran a ‘can you spot a student house’ anti-crime campaign with picture of an unkempt property, doors and windows open, old mattress in untidy garden, rubbish bags festering etc. A beneficial side-effect is that students will tidy up the appearance of their property, to avoid being burgled.**

## Accreditation schemes

4.39 One area where HEIs can have an influence is by developing accreditation schemes for private landlords. The effectiveness of these schemes is inherently linked to students restricting their search for accommodation to accredited properties. HEIs have often been in the vanguard of developing such schemes and some are run in partnership with the local authority. In some areas, accreditation schemes apply to landlords more generally – ie, whether or not the landlord is renting to students – for example there is a London-wide accreditation scheme to which all 33 London boroughs are signed up.<sup>8</sup> Accreditation schemes supply high-quality student accommodation by rewarding private landlords whose accommodation complies with a code. Accredited property receives priority on accommodation bureau lists, and this acts as an incentive for private landlords to obtain membership of the scheme. Such schemes therefore have a dual benefit of affording students some protection from unscrupulous landlords as well as raising the quality of the housing stock. HEIs could consider developing, reviewing and improving accreditation schemes, in partnership with local authorities, students' unions and landlord groups.

4.40 Accreditation schemes are only successful if effectively policed on a regular basis by HEIs, and students are encouraged to inform them of problems as part of this process. It is therefore important that monitoring systems are effective and that sanctions are applied in cases of persistent non-compliance.

**Practice: Manchester Student Homes awards 'code compliant' and 'code plus' recognition to accredited landlords (who have met a basic standard) in recognition of the provision of additional features such as mortice locks, burglar alarms etc.**

**Practice: In Leeds, Unipol's voluntary code of standards requires properties to meet standards beyond legal requirements, and students are encouraged to rent properties covered by the code. Although the code is not legally binding, if landlords are found to be in breach of the agreement, they may be prevented from advertising their properties through Unipol in the future.**

Source: Unipol 2005. *A Guide To Housing. Returning To Leeds.*

## HEI-managed accommodation

The Housing Act 2004 introduced compulsory licensing for houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) in England and Wales. However, student HMOs that are managed or controlled by further or higher education establishments may be exempt from licensing, subject to compliance with a national code of practice that has been approved by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

4.41

A draft code of practice designed to apply to all HEI managed and controlled student housing in England and Wales has been prepared by Universities UK in conjunction with the Standing Conference of Principals, (SCOP), the Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE), the Association for Student Residential Accommodation (ASRA), the Conference of University Business Officers (CUBO), the University Safety and Health Association (USHA), the Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA), the Association of University Chief Security Officers (AUCSO) and the Association of Managers of Student Services (AMOSSHE). There are two other Codes that are also awaiting approval from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Both of these are organised by the Accreditation Network UK (ANUK): one code is for HEI-managed accommodation and another for large-scale student accommodation run by private landlords. ANUK and Universities UK have drawn up a protocol to ensure optimal co-operation between the various codes.

4.42

**Practice: The University of Brighton provides information for both students and owners of property which is managed by the university. This provides information on safety requirements and regulations, taxes and other payments and furniture requirements.**

Sources: University of Brighton 2005 *University Managed Housing 2005 Information For Owners*; University of Brighton 2005 *University Managed Housing A Student Guide To University Managed Flats And Houses*.

## Raising expectations of quality and management of accommodation

HEIs can help to improve the physical and management standards of student accommodation by ensuring that students are familiar with the appropriate quality and standards of housing. They can play a major role in raising student expectations of the quality of private rented accommodation, and extend knowledge of housing legislation and 'what to look for'. This, in turn, encourages private landlords to improve the quality of accommodation for a more discerning student clientele.

4.43

**Practice: The University of Nottingham and its students' union advise students to 'make sure the property property [they] choose is of an acceptable standard using the checklist enclosed and all other guidelines in this handbook'.**

Source: University of Nottingham and University of Nottingham Students' Union 2005. *Housing Handbook 2005*

**Practice: The University of Brighton provides detailed information of agreements and payment, length of tenancy and cancellation, what rents include, deposits, rent guidelines, inventories, safety and council tax.**

Source: University of Brighton, *2005 Accommodation Handbook*

### **Information directories**

4.44

Lack of consideration and ignorance often contribute to problems with the physical environment. Some students may not notice or mind litter or noise as much as other more established residents and other students. HEIs can help by bringing such issues to students' attention and explaining why they are considered to be a problem, as well as disseminating information about refuse days and other initiatives. A growing number of HEIs provide student information directories, which explain why it is important to address these issues, and detail all relevant contact numbers of organisations that students may require during their period of study. Such messages are sometimes more appropriately delivered by students' unions.

**Practice:** In *Students and The Community 2004/05*, a guide prepared by the University of Nottingham, it is pointed out that: 'There are many ways in which students can make a positive contribution:

- Don't leave your dustbin on the street – it can block the way for people with disabilities, and for people with prams and young children.
- Don't leave your rubbish in your garden or outside your property. It is easy to clear it up or to arrange for it to be taken away.
- Do not forget you are living in a residential area – your neighbours may work shifts, have to get up early in the morning, or put children to bed early at night when you are just coming to life!
- At certain times of the day there are large numbers of students walking between the campuses and their homes. Be considerate to other pedestrians, particularly those who are elderly or infirm, or have young children.
- Cycling or skateboarding on the areas reserved for pedestrians can be dangerous, cyclists should stick to the roads or, better still, to the designated cycle lanes.
- Do let your neighbours know if you are planning a party that might go on until late at night – try and agree a mutually acceptable time for it to end.
- Do get involved in your local community – there are lots of opportunities.
- Do take an interest and pride in where you live – it is your home and your neighbourhood too.
- Do frequent local businesses – they welcome your custom'.

Source: University of Nottingham *Students and the Community 2004/05*

### **Environmental blight**

Many HEIs and local authorities have made significant efforts to ensure that student households are aware of the need to minimise environmental degradation, refuse and litter. Local authority cleansing departments can circulate information to local HEIs to remind the students of bin days. Some have a regular feature in the student magazine and the local paper. Many inform students that they must not dump rubbish, and should minimise recycling and waste disposal problems.

4.45

**Practice:** The *Housing Handbook 2005* prepared by the University of Nottingham and its students' union states 'do NOT leave large items such as sofas, mattresses and tables out on the street with the assumption that they will be taken away with the rest of your rubbish. They won't. You need to call to get it taken away (see Contacts List)'.

Source: University of Nottingham and University of Nottingham Students' Union 2005. *Housing Handbook 2005*

**Practice: In Headingley in Leeds, the Council piloted the Streetscene initiative from January 2003 which it believes has been very successful in limiting the amount of refuse on the streets and making Headingley a cleaner environment. The Council promoted a multi-agency approach encompassing all street services (refuse collection, street cleaning, bulky household collection, graffiti removal, and weed control).**

Source: University of Leeds. 2004. *City and Regional Annual Report 2003/4*.

- 4.46 The end of term can be a particularly bad time for rubbish and HEIs have adopted a range of strategies to tackle this, often in collaboration with local authorities, including arranging special collections. As a group, students are generally well-disposed towards the idea of recycling and respond positively to opportunities to do so.

**Practice: Leeds City Council works with the HEIs to arrange student clean-ups at the end of the academic year. Charity shops are being encouraged to distribute and collect bags from student properties at the end of each academic year as a large amount of the items thrown away by students could be used by others.**

**Practice: In Nottingham, in recognition of the specific waste management issues in student areas, dedicated crews have been established to respond to student generated litter and fly-tipping. The special collections service and improving waste management arrangements features as an ongoing item of discussion with student landlords at regular liaison meetings.**

- 4.47 Estate agents' boards, and the use of fly-posting and posters and signs in windows to promote student leisure and recreational activities can annoy established residential communities and detract from the environment.

**Practice: Leeds City Council is working with landlords to restrict the display of estate agents' boards in specified areas of Leeds.**

- 4.48 Untidy gardens can be a source of annoyance to established residents. Although many HEI accommodation bureaux do not expect students to maintain gardens, many encourage them to keep front gardens free of litter. At the same time, HEIs (possibly in collaboration with local authorities) could usefully introduce regular garden surveys (eg, the garden survey carried out by Unipol in Leeds), to exert pressure on private landlords.

**Practice:** The Housing Handbook 2005 prepared by the University of Nottingham and its students' union encourages students to 'keep your front garden free of any litter. Although it's probably not yours, it makes the neighbourhood look unpleasant'.

## Noise

What constitutes a noise nuisance is often subjective. HEIs use a variety of routes to stress the need to maintain noise at levels that do not cause friction between students and established residential communities. Silent Students Happy Homes (SSHH!) campaigns have been initiated by students' unions in a number of HEIs.

4.49

**Practice:** The University of Nottingham Students' Union's Silent Students Happy Homes – SSHH! Campaign encourages students as a group to be more considerate in their communities generally, eg, 'if you are living in a terraced or semi-detached house, remember that the walls may be quite thin so any slamming doors, shouting, loud music, etc is likely to be heard by your neighbours. If there are six of you all coming home at different times in the night and you all slam the door, there is the potential for your neighbours to be woken up six times'.

Source: The University of Nottingham and University of Nottingham Students' Union 2005. *The Housing Handbook 2005. The essential guide to moving off campus – Told like it is*

**Practice:** Many students going home from campus events take a route through residential communities. The Silent Students Happy Homes – SSHH! Campaign run by Loughborough University Students' Union aims to raise awareness through providing free merchandise including lollipops ('if the students have something in their mouths they can't be making a noise') and cards to hang on their door handles 'LSU politely requests that you respect your neighbours and keep noise to a minimum whilst walking home tonight' and including a number of useful phone numbers.



## Traffic and parking

- 4.50 In residential neighbourhoods with limited kerb space and a growth in HMOs, parking is likely to become an area of conflict. There are many examples where local authorities have encouraged students to limit their use of private vehicles through the strategic deployment of car parking permit schemes. In addition, HEIs are increasingly seeking to restrict the use of private vehicles by students and encouraging considerate parking. Many HEIs are recognising the need to promote student use of public transport and cycling as an alternative. In this way, HEIs and local authorities can work together and this partnership approach can facilitate local authorities in negotiating with providers of local public transport to ensure that there is an adequate service and if possible to justify funding for dedicated public transport routes that could require subsidy to operate.

**Practice: Students in Nottingham are advised ‘how you move around the city and the surrounding areas has an impact on pollution and congestion. You are strongly advised not to bring your car to Nottingham unless there are special circumstances. In addition to adding to pollution and congestion, you should bear in mind that parking permits for university campuses are only given to students under very special circumstances. Residents’ permits for parking on the streets where you live also quite restricted. Do use public transport where this is possible. If you do use a car, please make sure you drive and park with consideration’.**

Source: University of Nottingham *Students and the Community 2004/05*

- 4.51 Traffic congestion is often experienced at specific times of year – such as the beginning and end of term and around major events such as graduations. HEIs can help local communities to manage this problem by publicising term dates and dates of major events.

## Shops and services

- 4.52 Goods purchased locally by students make a significant contribution to the local economy and a student presence can ensure the viability of some retail businesses. HEIs can also assist by making students aware of their important economic role and encouraging them to patronise local shops.
- 4.53 A changing population can lead to changes in the types of shops and services available locally. Most commonly-cited examples include local shops becoming take-aways and cafés. Local authorities can use their powers to limit changes of use of retail properties to certain categories such as fast-food outlets, and local authorities may find it helpful to have policies that seek to maintain an appropriate retail balance in such neighbourhoods.

Demand for leisure and recreation services has other knock-on benefits for the community. In cities such as Sheffield and Manchester a large student population has contributed to the development of a vibrant nightlife, for example supporting live music performances and the growth of a club scene which draws people to the city – both as visitors and residents. The negative effects of such growth may include an increase in public disorder associated with such venues, although this is linked to wider youth cultures.

4.54

# 5 Conclusion

## 5.1

Although activities aimed at promoting the benefits and addressing the challenges of high concentrations of students are relatively new and untested, there is clearly a range of actions which can be taken by HEIs and local authorities at both a strategic and practical local level. This guide provides examples of a range of practice which could bring short to medium-term gains to communities, if implemented in a way which is appropriate to the local circumstances. The following section provides a checklist of activities, derived from the research, as a basis for discussion among local stakeholders.



# 6 Checklist for stakeholders

## 6.1

This checklist poses a series of questions, in no particular order of priority, which have been drawn from the examples of innovative practice outlined in this guide. The list provides a resource for those concerned with the challenges of 'studentification'. It is not intended to be prescriptive but rather to stimulate consideration and discussion. Although some of the issues are clearly more relevant to particular organisations and locations, they are of general interest to all the stakeholders. One of the main findings of the research is the need for appropriate multi-agency partnerships and effective coordination. The checklist might therefore usefully form the basis for local consultation and the creation of multi-agency partnerships. It is also intended to help individual stakeholders seeking to develop their own strategies.

### All stakeholders

- Do stakeholders have firm evidence upon which they can base their understanding of the impacts of 'studentification' within their locality?
- Do stakeholders share a common understanding of whether the impact of 'studentification' is/is not being felt in the locality?
- Do stakeholders share a common understanding of the wider benefits and challenges of high concentrations of students in the locality?
- Is there agreement and common ground about the causes and effects of 'studentification' amongst stakeholders?
- Has a partnership framework been established for stakeholders to ensure there can be a coordinated approach to tackling issues of 'studentification'?
- Have a shared vision and general principles been agreed between stakeholders?
- Is there evidence of respect and trust between stakeholders?
- Have stakeholders agreed some objectives and exit strategies, and established mechanisms to review and monitor social, economic, cultural and physical changes within locations?

### Higher education institutions

- Have HEIs considered and agreed their responsibilities to students and established residential communities?



- Have HEIs developed student accommodation strategies? If so, are they effective?
- Are the student accommodation strategies of HEIs and other local stakeholders consistent?
- Have HEIs and other stakeholders explored the scope for the dispersal of students from areas of high concentration where this may be desirable?
- Have HEIs and other stakeholders considered the promotion of alternative residential locations to encourage the dispersal of students?
- Have HEIs and other stakeholders considered the adoption of an accreditation scheme for private student accommodation? If so, are mechanisms in place to monitor and review compliance?
- Have HEIs and other stakeholders encouraged students to move into accredited property?
- Have HEIs listed only accredited property, or has it been separately identified, on their housing lists?
- Have HEIs considered the development of a central accommodation bureau to advise students when searching for private accommodation? Have HEIs and other stakeholders considered the production of a student housing guide?
- Have HEIs and other stakeholders provided effective house-hunting talks on a regular basis? If so, do these events reach the target student groups?
- Have HEIs encouraged students to think carefully about their choice of co-residents, in order to reduce the turnover of student households?
- Have HEIs sought to promote and raise students' expectations of the quality and affordability and suitability of accommodation?
- Have HEIs informed students of their responsibilities as tenants?
- Have HEIs sought to heighten students' awareness of the legal responsibilities of landlords?
- Have HEIs sought to inform students of their responsibilities through a written code of behaviour?
- Have HEIs encouraged students to introduce themselves to their neighbours and to foster other forms of neighbourliness?

- Have HEIs raised awareness of the need for reasonable noise levels?
- Have HEIs and other stakeholders considered preparing and issuing information directories detailing contact numbers and addresses of key services?
- Have HEIs and other stakeholders considered the appointment of community liaison officers to foster cohesive relations between students and established residential communities? If so, are there mechanisms in place for community liaison officers to respond effectively to issues as they arise?
- Have HEIs considered the development of neighbourhood helplines? If so, is effectiveness monitored?
- Have HEIs considered the appointment of off-campus wardens to regulate student behaviour?
- Have HEIs explored their powers to control and reprimand students who undertake anti-social behaviour?

#### **Local authorities**

- Has the local authority established appropriate mechanisms and communication channels for stakeholders to discuss issues of 'studentification'? If so, are these mechanisms open to all stakeholders?
- Has the local authority explored opportunities to share innovative and good practice with other local authorities through local authority networks?
- Are the initiatives to regulate processes of 'studentification' included in wider local authority strategies?
- Are the activities of different departments within the local authority mutually supportive and integrated?
- Has the local authority fully considered student accommodation issues in preparing the Local Development Framework?
- Has the local authority considered the appointment of a student strategy manager to manage initiatives to regulate 'studentification'?
- Has the local authority fully reviewed and assessed whether they are making effective use of all their available planning, housing management and environmental health-related powers to regulate 'studentification'?

- Has the local authority considered the implications of the powers introduced by the Housing Act (2004), and in particular the mandatory licensing of HMOs?
- Has the local authority considered strategies to minimise visual pollution associated with to-let signs and fly-posting?
- Has the local authority considered implementing appropriate methods to inform residents of the services (eg, cleaning, refuse, recycling, burglary reduction advice) which are available in neighbourhoods with high residential turnover and population change?

#### **HEIs and local authorities**

- Have HEIs, local authorities and other stakeholders actively promoted crime prevention strategies to students?
- Have HEIs and local authorities considered strategies to minimise problems of refuse collection and litter?
- Have HEIs and local authorities encouraged student volunteering and engagement within established residential communities?
- Have HEIs and local authorities implemented schemes/annual surveys to encourage students and landlords to maintain gardens and to keep them free of litter and refuse?
- Have HEIs and local authorities considered strategies to reduce private vehicle usage by students?
- Have HEIs and local authorities as appropriate considered the use of parking permit schemes to encourage more considerate parking of private vehicles?
- Have HEIs and local authorities considered strategies for limiting local traffic congestion?



# Appendix I

## Terms of reference and methodology

The research project was commissioned in December 2004 by Universities UK and SCOP, in collaboration with the Local Government Association. The project was led by Dr Darren Smith (University of Brighton), with support from Jane Denholm (Critical Thinking, Edinburgh), and was funded by the Department for Education and Skills, in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The primary research was undertaken between January and March 2005.

### Methodology

The project involved two major phases of research:

- The first phase involved postal (or email) questionnaire surveys of all HEIs and local community groups captured by the network of the National HMO Lobby – a formally constituted organisation. The former was distributed to Vice-Chancellors' and Principals' offices, with a request for the survey to be forwarded to an appropriate officer. This strategy proved relatively successful with a response rate of 62 per cent, and 85 per cent of surveys being completed by an individual who self-defined themselves as an HEI accommodation officer or manager. The survey of local community groups also yielded an impressive response rate with completions from 17 university towns and cities. Both surveys captured a substantial depth of qualitative comments from open-ended questions, reaffirming the emotive and experiential effects of 'studentification' for many individuals and social groups.
- The second phase of the project involved follow-up, in-depth qualitative (semi-structured interviews and focus groups) research with a range of organisations and stakeholders in the six case study locations of Brighton, Canterbury, Leeds, Loughborough, Manchester/Salford, and Nottingham. A major focus here was to identify examples of practice to prevent or mitigate the adverse effects of 'studentification'. Official documentation, reports and an email survey of selected local authorities in December 2004 provided examples of practice.
- In addition, the study was supplemented by interviews with representatives of national interest groups (eg, HMO lobby, NUS) and key individuals.



### Case studies

A major objective of the research project was to identify in-depth issues and examples of practice from six case studies. These were selected by the Steering Group, following the analysis of the survey questionnaires and based on previous research into the issues. The rationale for selecting the six case studies was that all concurred with the following criteria, they should:

- Show evidence of practice and innovative responses to 'studentification';
- Point to different levels of 'studentification' and community concerns;
- Provide a breadth of different geographic and regional contexts;
- Provide a range of historical and diverse HEI contexts;
- Show that practice is influenced by 'external' contingent factors (eg, local economies, housing markets); and
- Were willing to participate in follow-up research.

The six case studies enabled the research team to identify a range of practices and explore processes of 'studentification' in diverse geographic contexts, and to consider the influence of different contingent conditions. There were substantial differences between the percentages of students and student households, the age profiles, tenorial structures and presence of local community resistance to 'studentification' within the six case study areas.

Case Study Area	Total Population (2001 GB Census)	% Population Aged 18-29 (2001 GB Census)	Total Student Population (HESA, 2001/02)	Total Student Population (HESA, 2003/04)	Membership of National HMO Lobby (National HMO Lobby)
Brighton	247,817	19.7%	30,010	31,630	No
Canterbury	135,278	17.3%	29,180	32,310	Yes
Leeds	715,402	18.3%	81,455	88,890	Yes
Loughborough	55,492 <sup>i</sup>	28.0%	13,855	16,860	Yes
Manchester/Salford	608,922 <sup>ii</sup>	23.7%	87,250	92,015	Yes
Nottingham	266,988	23.5%	52,815	60,290	Yes

i Source: [http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/your\\_council/about\\_leicestershire/statistics/research\\_info\\_population.htm](http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/your_council/about_leicestershire/statistics/research_info_population.htm)

ii Aggregation of total population for Manchester and Salford

iii The total student population is an approximation

# Appendix II

## Suggested reading

- Chatterton, P. (1999) *University students and city centres – the formation of exclusive geographies. The case of Bristol, UK*. *Geoforum* 30 117-133
- Chatterton, P. (2000) *The cultural role of universities in the community: revisiting the university-community debate*. *Environment and Planning A* 17 685-699
- Chatterton, P. Hollands, R. (2003) *Urban Nightscapes: Youth Cultures, Pleasure Spaces and Corporate Power*. Routledge, London
- Kenyon, E.L. (1997) *Seasonal sub-communities: the impact of student households on residential communities*. *British Journal of Sociology* 48: 286-301.
- Kenyon, E. Heath, S. (2001) *Choosing this life: narratives of choice amongst house sharers*. *Housing Studies* 16 619-635
- Rugg, J., Rhodes, D. & Jones, A. (2000) *The Nature and Impact of Student Demand on Housing Markets*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.
- Rugg, J., Rhodes, D & Jones, A. (2002) *Studying a niche market: UK students and the private rented sector*. *Housing studies*. 17 (2): 289-303.
- Rugg, J. & Rhodes, D. (2003) *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Failure to Agree on Regulation for the Private Rented Sector in England* *Housing Studies*. 18: 937-946.
- Smith, D.P. (2002) *Processes of Studentification In Leeds*. Report presented to the City and Regional Office, University of Leeds, Leeds.
- Smith, D.P. (2005) 'Studentification': the gentrification factory? in *Gentrification In A Global Context: The New Urban Colonialism*. Eds Atkinson R, Bridge G, Routledge, London pp 72-89
- Smith D.P., Holt, L. 2004, *Processes of Studentification In Brighton and Eastbourne*. Report presented to the Vice-Chancellors Office, University of Brighton, Brighton.

## Useful Websites

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts

<http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/asbos9.htm?fp>

Definitions of HMOs

<http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1155307>

HMO Licensing

<http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1152003>

[http://www.landlords.org.uk/presentations/LICENSING%20PROCEDURE%20RG.ppt#278,7,Are all HMOs licensable?](http://www.landlords.org.uk/presentations/LICENSING%20PROCEDURE%20RG.ppt#278,7,Are%20all%20HMOs%20licensable?)

Macmillan English Dictionary

<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/New-Words/040124-studentification.htm>

National HMO Lobby

<http://hmolobby.org.uk/>

National Landlords Association

<http://www.landlords.org.uk>

Noise Abatement Society  
<http://www.noiseabatementociety.com/tcms/home>

Noise Network  
<http://www.valweedon.org.uk>

Nottingham City Council  
<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk>

Student behaviour  
<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/policy/behaviour/4policy.html>

The Housing Act 2004  
<http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1150528>

The National Union of Students  
<http://www.nusonline.co.uk/info/housing>

The UK Accreditation Network  
<http://www.anuk.org.uk>

UK Noise Association  
[www.ukna.org.uk](http://www.ukna.org.uk)

University of Leeds Housing Strategy  
<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/about/housing/action.htm>

University of Nottingham Accommodation Strategy  
<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/marketing/ocsa/resources/The%20University%20and%20the%20Community-Strategy-.pdf>

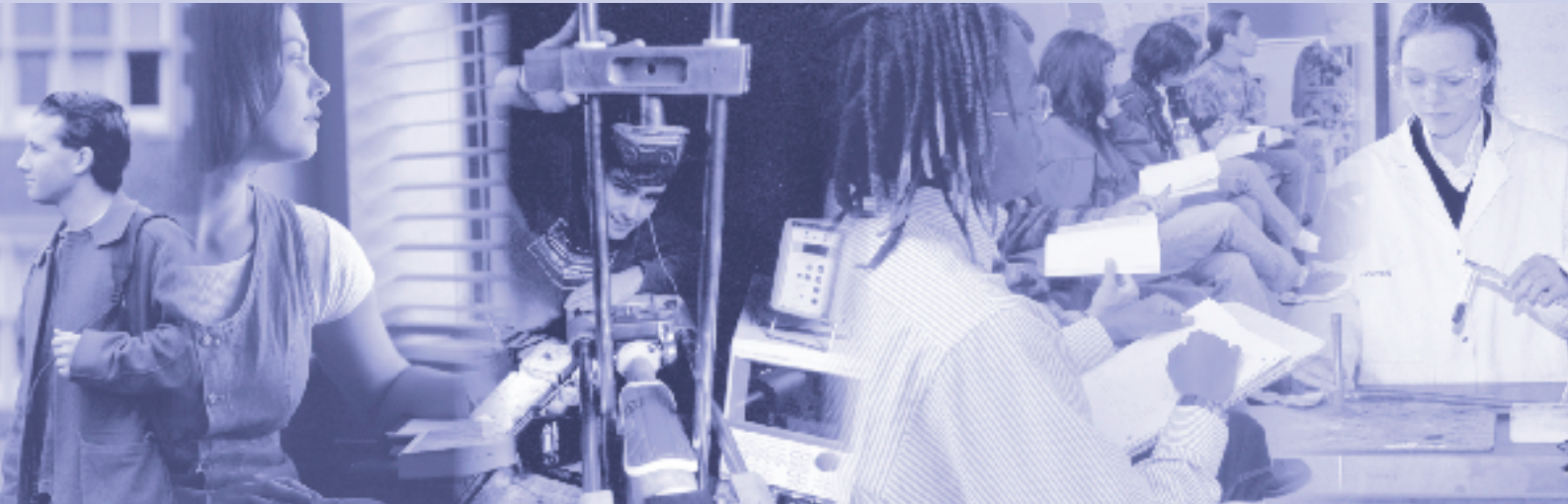
Use Classes Order  
<http://www.planning-applications.co.uk/uco.htm>

# Notes

- 1 Universities UK Factsheet 2005 Students at UK HEIs AY 2003/04
- 2 HESA figures for 2003/04
- 3 Leeds HMO Lobby Introduction webpage
- 4 Richard Tyler National HMO Lobby
- 5 Leeds City Council 2002. Privately Rented Shared Housing In Leeds: A Review Paper And Action Plan
- 6 Charnwood Borough Council 2005 Student Housing in Loughborough Consultation on proposals for Supplementary Planning Document (closed 24.03.05)
- 7 Dorling, D and Thomas, 2004, People and Places: A 2001 Census Atlas of the UK (Policy Press, Bristol)
- 8 Accreditation Network UK (ANUK) 2004. Accreditation Today



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