

Professor Julie Lydon OBE
Universities Wales
2 Caspian Point
Caspian Way
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF10 4DQ

Thursday 2 April 2020

Dear Julie,

I hope this letter finds you well, especially in the current climate. Firstly, I want to take the opportunity to thank you, the team at Universities Wales and the wider sector for your hard work so far in tackling students' issues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am writing to you regarding the lottery that students are facing in terms of housing refunds. Students across Wales who have had to leave their term-time accommodation early – especially those in the private rented sector (PRS) – are rightly concerned they will be left shortchanged.

We are grateful to institutions that have allowed students to exit university-owned accommodation contracts early at no extra cost, and we hope those institutions that have yet to commit to this will follow suit soon. However, many students in the PRS still face a great deal of uncertainty.

We admire steps taken by Cardiff University, in partnership with their students' union, to write to all purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) providers in Cardiff asking for the same conditions be applied to their students. We believe this is something all institutions in Wales can work with their students' unions to do, and we hope Universities Wales and NUS Wales can facilitate this.

There is also the more complex issue faced by students in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). It is up to the goodwill of individual landlords as to whether they release students from their contracts early, and we have not seen any evidence of this happening. We would like to seek a conversation about how best institutions and students' unions can work for their students in this situation.

I believe that together, we can kickstart the process of resolving issues facing thousands of students in Wales. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Rob Simkins
President, NUS Wales