



## Unipol Student Homes

### Assistant Accreditation Officer

Unipol is a housing Charity established in 1973 by the University and the then Polytechnic in Leeds in co-operation with their Student Unions. In 1997, Unipol became an incorporated Charitable Company with a Board structure.

Unipol provides assistance in finding and supplying housing for students in Nottingham, Leeds and is the main private sector service supplier for the University of Bradford and Bradford College, Leeds Beckett University, the University of Leeds, The University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University, The Northern College of Contemporary Dance, Leeds City College, Leeds Trinity University, Leeds College of Art and Leeds College of Music.

Unipol operates a number of Codes which accredit landlords, managing agents and properties. This post provides important support and assistance, under the direction of the Development Manager, to those operating the Codes in Leeds (estimated at 60% of the post) and the National Codes (estimated at 40% of the post). You will be based in Leeds Accommodation Bureau and your duties will involve not only administrative support but undertaking some property inspections of off-street properties. It is vital to the success of the post that the Assistant Accreditation Officer has a close working relationship with those taking first line responsibilities for running the Codes.

This post requires a mix of skills ranging from complex and accurate administration, advocacy and negotiation techniques with owners and tenants. The Assistant Accreditation Officer has a key role in:

- maintaining record systems and databases accurately
- responding to enquiries about accreditation
- administering the verification processes
- undertaking inspections
- following up Action Plans and ensuring that compliance has been achieved.

There will be some anti-social hours working, including attendance at weekend events and evening meetings. All those working in Unipol are employed jointly by Unipol and the University of Leeds.

Experience of operating a computer records system and a working knowledge of Microsoft Office is an advantage and the ability to train in and operate these systems is essential. The post involves significant numbers of property inspections and although previous experience of implementing standards (either physical or management) would be advantageous, training will be supplied by Unipol to ensure this expertise is developed.

A full current valid driving licence and a willingness to drive is essential in undertaking the duties of this post. You will be based in Leeds and car parking in Leeds will be provided free of charge and a mileage allowance is payable for work-related travel.

Unipol, the University of Leeds and other universities and organisations are multi-cultural communities, which value diversity. You will be expected to treat all individuals fairly, with

dignity and respect and contribute to creating a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for all.

Further details are provided within the detailed duties of the post below.

**The post is a full time post and is currently on a fixed 2 year contract carrying a Scale 5 salary of £21,391 - £24,775 p.a. according to qualifications and relevant experience. The post holder is managed by the Development Manager who coordinates all accreditation systems operated by Unipol.**

Informal enquiries may be made to Victoria Loveseed, tel +44 (0)113 205 3412, email [jobs@unipol.org.uk](mailto:jobs@unipol.org.uk).

**Closing Date: 3 March 2015**

**Interviews are expected to be held week commencing 9 March 2015**

**Ref: CSUNI1003**

Click here for further information about Unipol <http://www.unipol.org.uk/home>

**Unipol Student Homes is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales NO 3401440. Registered Charity No. 1063492.**

## **Job Description**

**You will be managed by the Development Manager who coordinates all accreditation systems operated by Unipol.**

From time to time, the post entails some interaction with tenants and owners in the public areas of the Leeds Accommodation Bureau and the outpost of the Bureau located in the main Leeds University Union building and close co-operation and interaction with the Bureau team is vital.

### **Detailed duties of the post**

The Assistant Accreditation Officer has five key support roles in the running of accreditation:

#### **Maintaining record systems and databases accurately**

- Ensuring that the Code database for Leeds and the National Codes database are kept fully up to date, assisting, when requested, with updating the databases in Nottingham and Bradford. This information will include
  - the total number of properties in the Code
  - details of the properties
  - when the properties were last inspected
  - an electronically filed copy of any inspection reports
  - other relevant documentation connected to those inspections
- Providing regular statistical returns to the Development Manager about the Code together with total membership, number of properties and bed spaces covered and the number of complaints made and resolved
- Ensuring that members of the Codes are retained which involves:
  - contacting larger development providers to ensure their annual registration takes place (updating the number of bed spaces they have accredited in each of their developments)
  - maintaining membership of the Leeds and Supporters Code and ensuring that members re-join within every three year cycle
- Ensuring that Code members are charged the correct fee and issued with accurate membership certificates and (working closely with the Finance Assistant) ensuring that additional late payments and re-inspection fees are charged at the correct time and helping to chase any late payments
- Assisting in updating the National Codes web site so that there is an accurate record of who is accredited and which developments are covered
- Ensuring that details about key contacts in relation to the National Codes are also entered on to the main Unipol conference database and that details entered are accurate

#### **Responding to enquiries about accreditation**

- Ensuring that publicity material is available explaining the cost and benefits of using the Code
- Distributing merchandising around the Code to ensure its promotion
- Assisting in the production of regular newsletters about student accreditation to be

sent to tenants of accredited properties, members of the scheme and institutions

- Assisting with the distribution of an annual booklet to all of those living in Code properties in Leeds and Bradford explaining the Code.
- Undertaking promotional activities including information stalls, events, distribution of publicity and talks to promote the Codes to landlords and students
- Using social media to promote the Codes to landlords and students

### **Administering the verification process**

- Co-ordinate compliance testing (under the guidance and with the advice of the Development Manager) in respect of all Leeds Code properties (where a sample of properties are inspected on a three year cycle)
- Work with a team of external consultants who undertake a number of Code compliance inspections and ensure that best use is being made of their time and that they are fulfilling their duties as consultants to Unipol
- Take first line responsibility for undertaking an annual compliance test mailing of all tenants to obtain their feedback and acting on any responses received
- Assist in undertaking an annual garden and yards survey in Leeds to ensure that gardens are properly maintained and assist in the production of an annual report evaluating this exercise

In respect of the National Codes, you will:

- Assist the National Codes Administrator with the verification process by arranging visits with the provider and the verifier (normally an external consultant)
- Ensure that a written report is provided to both Unipol and the provider within the required time
- Log all inspection activity on a spread sheet
- Assist with the preparation for the National Code Audit Panel and Committee of Management by updating membership of the Committee, issuing papers and minutes and arranging venues and travel if applicable

### **Undertaking inspections**

- Undertake a number of inspections of properties located within Leeds. It is anticipated that inspections will take up about one day a week (about 5 inspections) or 20% of the load of the post.
- Ensure that for each inspection undertaken a report is written in a specified standard format which draws to the attention of owners to any improvements they need to make to meet Code standards and detailing any agreed Action Plan with the owner
- Ensure that health and safety documentation is checked as part of any inspection process and request full documentation where any suspected breach is suspected
- Give positive feedback from owners where compliance has been affirmed
- Undertake an annual compliance test involving a cross sample of existing owners together with obtaining tenant feedback
- Ensure that the outcomes of compliance tests and the dates of inspections made are placed on the Unipol data base

### **Following up action plans and ensuring that compliance has been achieved**

- Ensure that any follow-up action is undertaken and undertake any necessary re-inspections within a defined timescale to ensure that the Plan targets are met within the agreed timescales
- Report back to the Development Manager any failures to perform together with a recommendation for them to decide about how to proceed

### **General**

You will undertake general duties within Unipol as from time to time, as required, and shall accept periodic revisions of this job specification where transferable skills are utilised.

### **Financial systems**

You will be liaising with the Finance Manager to ensure that Unipol's financial systems are followed in all respects. If in doubt about those systems, particularly involving any cash transactions, you will have responsibility to ask the Finance Manager to outline and explain those systems so that no doubt can arise as to the procedures to be operated.

You will also ensure that all financial matters are reported properly to those operating Unipol's financial systems.

### **Career Expectations**

The University of Leeds is committed to developing its staff. All staff participate in the Staff Review and Development scheme and we continue to work with individuals, supporting them to maximise their potential.

Progression to a higher grade is dependent on an individual taking on an increased level of responsibility. Vacancies that arise within the area or across the wider University are advertised on the HR website - <http://jobs.leeds.ac.uk> - to allow staff to apply for wider career development opportunities.

### **University Values**

All staff are expected to operate in line with the university's values and standards, which work as an integral part of our strategy and set out the principles of how we work together. More information about the university's strategy and values is available at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/comms/strategy/>.

## **Person Specification**

### **Essential**

- Experience of operating a computer records system and a working knowledge of Microsoft Office, especially Word
- Excellent administration skills
- Experience of working in a busy and demanding environment
- Excellent communication skills and interpersonal skills including negotiation and mediation techniques
- A full current valid driving licence
- Good organisation skills and a flexible attitude
- Proven ability to organise own workload and use own initiative, under the guidance of the Develop Manager

### **Desirable**

Experience of assessing housing standards

Ability to train in the use of Microsoft Office

Experience of working with students, landlords or local authorities

### **Additional Information**

Details of the terms and conditions of employment for all staff at the University, including information on pensions and benefits, are available on the Human Resources web pages accessible at <http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/>.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service Checks**

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check is not required for this position. However, applicants who have unspent convictions must indicate this in the 'other personal details' section of the application form and send details to the Recruitment Officer.

### **Disabled Applicants**

The post is located Unipol Student Homes 155-157 Woodhouse Lane Leeds, LS2 3ED. The office is accessible. The postholder will visit properties where accessibility will be varied. Disabled applicants wishing to review access to the building are invited to contact the department direct. Additional information may be sought from the Recruitment Officer, email [disclosure@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:disclosure@leeds.ac.uk) or tel + 44 (0)113 343 1723.

Disabled applicants are not obliged to inform employers of their disability but will still be covered by the Equality Act once their disability becomes known.

**Further information for applicants with disabilities, impairments or health conditions is available in the applicant guidance.**

## About Unipol

Unipol fulfils four distinct but connected roles:

- it runs a number of Accommodation Bureaux providing a forum in which owners can advertise their properties. Although owners are asked to pay a fee for Unipol's services the Accommodation Bureaux is partially funded by the institutions listed above. Unipol's websites, which centralises all private sector vacancies, are a major source of information and advice for students and receives around 100 million hits a year

- it has its own Housing Section which develops, takes into ownership and manages refurbished properties and lets them directly to students. Unipol is currently responsible for housing around 3,000 students, including over 310 student families, all located in Leeds and has just started a small housing management operation in Nottingham housing a further 140 students

- Unipol runs a number of successful voluntary accreditation schemes for owners letting to students, Unipol runs the Unipol Code that covers 75% of the off street property market in Leeds, 45% in Nottingham and 55% in Bradford. The Codes are designed to maintain and improve property and management standards.

Unipol has a stake in two Government Approved Codes of Practice dealing with larger student developments in the United Kingdom. Unipol also operates a national Code for off-street properties in partnership with the Accommodation for Students (AfS). Unipol currently accredits an estimated 215,000 student bed spaces

- through its training arm "Unipol Training" Unipol is the main national trainer in the niche market of student accommodation, running a full annual programme. The training arm also undertakes some bespoke in house training and a number of briefings for different constituencies. Unipol has two in-house training facilities in both Nottingham and Leeds.

Unipol is currently following a Forward Look designed to maintain and upgrade its services to meet the increasing needs of its student clientele and increase its own accommodation services. A copy of this can be found at

<http://www.unipol.org.uk/footer/governance/corporate-documents-policies/forward-look-2012-2015> on Unipol's website.

### ***Unipol is organised into six operational teams:***

i) the Senior Management Team consists of the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive, the Director of Finance, the Assistant Chief Executive - Bureaux Services, the Assistant Chief Executive - Housing Services, Assistant Chief Executive - IT and Communications and the Development Manager.

The Chief Executive is supported directly by a Delivery Officer and there is a Personal Assistant that supports both the Chief and Deputy Chief Executive.

ii) the Development Team is led by the Development Manager, who works with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive to develop the organisation, maintain and enhance Unipol's property portfolio and oversee the conferences operation (supervising the Training and Events Officer).

The Development Manager also oversees the overall operation of all property accreditation systems within the organisation. The Unipol Leeds and Bradford Codes are run by the Accreditation Officer -Leeds and the Accommodation Bureau Bradford Services Officer. The

Unipol Code in Nottingham is run by the Accreditation Officer- Nottingham. The ANUK/Unipol National Codes are run by the National Codes Administrator. The Delivery Officer also undertakes some work on the AfS National Code. *The Accreditation Assistant provides support to those administering all of the Codes that run from the Leeds office and some database support to those administering the Code in Nottingham and Bradford.*

iii) the housing management team is overseen by the Assistant Chief Executive - Housing Services and consists of a Housing Manager, with five Senior Housing Management Officers and four Housing Management Officers. The team is supplemented by Student Wardens (currently 17) and a number of part time Housing Assistants (varying from two in term time to seven over the summer). The Housing Assistants are overseen by the Senior Housing Management Officer (Procurement) and the Wardens are overseen by the relevant Housing management Officers.

Located within the housing management team but directly answerable to the Deputy Chief Executive is the Tenancy Support Officer.

iv) all of the Accommodation Bureaux teams (in Bradford, Leeds and Nottingham) and some overarching customer service responsibilities are overseen by the Assistant Chief Executive - Bureaux Services. There is an Administrator in each location together with three teams of temporary part time staff (normally students), currently seven.

v) the finance team is headed by the Director of Finance and consists of a Finance Manager, a Finance Officer, two full time and three part time Financial Assistants supplemented by consultants for project work from time to time.

vi) The IT team is led by the Assistant Chief Executive - IT and Communications who oversees a Senior ICT Officer, a Systems Administrator, an ICT Officer and Applications Developer, together with two part time support staff to ensure that the organisation maintains high quality IT and web services.

#### Accreditation the Operation of the Unipol Codes

Unipol operates a number of Codes which accredit landlords, managing agents and properties. These Codes operate within a number of geographical arena. Some Codes are specific to a given location and others are operational across the UK. Each Code has a specific purpose and relates specifically to property standards, housing standards and levels of customer satisfaction within the student private rented sector.

In all cases when Code standards are met, landlords, managing agents and properties are badged by the relevant Code logo (which comprises of a "thumbs up" logo with the relevant by-line underneath it pertaining to each Code).

Code standards, whilst fitting into a general framework, often differ in detail to reflect the precise niche requirements of a given location, type of housing stock, size of building or type of operator. Although the standards have differences they are never inconsistent or contradictory.

The administrative procedures behind the operation of the Codes: promotion, membership, inspection, verification, action plans (to rectify shortcomings) public recognition of membership and the complaints and tribunal systems; also fits within a general framework but there are important differences for each Code which reflects the precise nature of the Code, its purpose and operation.

All of Unipol's Codes are built around, and reflect, the ANUK four core values.



The Codes are run by different members of staff working in different locations but all of those involved in the Codes are part of the same team at Unipol who are committed to encourage and promote the Codes and the standards they set and ensure. Information, training and examples of good practice, operational efficiencies and mistakes made must be shared across the team on a regular basis.

Unipol operates a number of Codes and each Code is owned by a separate member of staff who has primary responsibility for ensuring that that the Code is properly promoted, administered and accurate records are maintaining and up to date. The co-ordination of the Codes team across all areas is overseen by the Development Manager who moderates and audits the performance of each Code.

***The Codes ownership is as follows:***

Local Codes

*The Unipol Code for Shared Student Housing Leeds* is owned by Amy Wood the Accreditation Officer - Leeds.

*The Supporters of the Unipol Code for Shared Student Housing in Leeds* is owned by Nicola Brown the Assistant Chief Executive - Bureaux Services.

*The Unipol Code for Shared Student Housing Bradford* together with the *Supporters of the Unipol Code for Shared Student Housing in Bradford* is owned by Jason Crowley, Accommodation Bureau Services Officer - Bradford.

*The Unipol Code for Shared Student Housing Nottingham* together with the *Supporters of the Unipol Code for Shared Student Housing in Nottingham* is owned by Faye Swanwick the Accreditation Officer - Nottingham.

National Codes

*The ANUK/Unipol Code of Standards for Larger Residential Developments for Student Accommodation Managed and Controlled by Educational Establishments* and *The ANUK/Unipol Code of Standards for Larger Developments for student accommodation not managed and controlled by educational establishments* are owned by Simon Kemp the National Codes Administrator.

*The Unipol/AfS Code for Shared Student Housing in the Private Rented Sector* is owned by the Development Manager.

Together these Codes currently cover approximately 220,000 bed spaces.