

Unipol Student Homes
Housing Management Officer
September 2019

General Information

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, Nottingham Trent University, The Northern College of Contemporary Dance, Leeds City College, Leeds Arts University and Leeds College of Music.

Unipol fulfils four distinct but connected roles:

- 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 210 student families) located in Leeds, 310 students in Nottingham and 59 students in Bradford
- it runs three Housing Hubs providing a forum in which owners (including Unipol) can advertise their properties. Although owners are asked to pay a fee for Unipol's services the Housing Hubs are 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
- Unipol runs a number of successful voluntary accreditation schemes for owners letting to students that covers 79% of student housing need in Leeds, 65% in Nottingham and 99% in Bradford. The Codes are designed to maintain and improve property and management standards. In Leeds Unipol runs the Leeds Rental Standard for the City Council and in Nottingham Unipol, together with DASH (Decent and Safe Homes) runs the Nottingham Standard.

Unipol has a stake in two Government Approved Codes of Practice dealing with larger student developments in the United Kingdom. Unipol currently accredits an estimated 340,000 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 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 <https://www.unipol.org.uk/getattachment/Footer/Governance/Corporate-Documents-Unipol-Board/ForwardLook-2019-2022/Forward-Look-2019-2022-Final.pdf.aspx> on Unipol's website.

Unipol is organised into six operational areas:

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

The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive are supported by an Office Administrator and Homestay Coordinator.

ii) Housing Services and the Housing Hub is an integrated service and the staff teams operate operationally together. Certain Housing Hub operations are overseen by the Assistant Chief Executive - Hub Services and they are assisted by a number of Housing Hub Assistants and a Housing Hub Advisor.

The Housing team is overseen by the Assistant Chief Executive - Housing and consists of the Housing Manager - Logistics and Compliance, the Housing Manager - Operations and the Development Manager (who is directly answerable to the Chief Executive). In Leeds and Bradford day to day housing management is carried out by two housing management teams, each with a Team Leader who has an assistant to assist them in administrative matters supported by a number of other housing management staff.

Within the two housing teams there are two Senior Housing Management Officers, 2.5 Housing Management Officers and the teams are supplemented by Residents' Assistants (currently 20) and a number of part time Housing Assistants over the summer (normally seven who are overseen by one of the Team Leaders) and throughout the year (currently three). ***The Housing Management Officer fits within one of the housing teams.***

Located within the housing management team but directly answerable to the Deputy Chief Executive is the Tenancy Support and Wellbeing Coordinator and the Delivery and Development Officer

iii) The Nottingham service is overseen by a Nottingham Team Leader, a Senior Housing Management Officer supported by a Housing Management Officer and a Residents' Assistant. A Nottingham Services Officer operates the Housing Hub functions. The Nottingham housing management service will expand from its current 220 bed spaces to 558 in the summer of 2020 with the addition of Unipol's first large leased complex.

iv) The Standards Team is headed by the Assistant Chief Executive - Standards who oversees all accreditation and tribunal systems which is coordinated by the Unipol

Codes Administrator and a National Codes Administrator together with the Complaints and Code Investigator. Marketing, both in respect of brand and lettings, falls within this team and is undertaken by the Digital Marketing Coordinator and the Marketing Coordinator. The team also has the Conferences, Events and Design Officer who operates Unipol's conference operation.

- v) The organisation has a technical services arm that is led by the Assistant Chief Executive - Communications and IT who oversees an IT Manager, an Applications Developer, an ICT Officer and two part time support staff to ensure that the organisation maintains high quality IT and web services.
- vi) The Finance Team is headed by the Director of Finance and consists of a Finance Manager, two Senior Finance Officer, a Utilities officer, a Rent Collection Officer, two Finance Assistants and a part time finance clerk, supplemented by consultants for project work from time to time.

About this Post

The Housing Management Officer is an important member of Unipol's housing management team in Leeds and is expected to play a full role in interacting with other Housing Management and Senior Housing Management Officers and will work closely with a designated Housing Team Leader.

The Housing Management Officer manages a varied and rewarding portfolio which is likely to include a moderately sized student development, some family houses, some Unipol owned shared student properties and a number of properties managed on behalf of owners. All aspects of student housing management can be found within this portfolio: first year undergraduates, undergraduate returners, postgraduates and research students. Some tenants turn over annually but family tenants tend to stay for a number of years.

This post requires flexibility, initiative and considerable organisation of own workload, under the guidance of the Team Leader. Certain health and safety routines carry a high level of personal responsibility and must be carried out with accuracy and rigour.

This post carries a Grade 5 salary of £23,067 - £26,715 according to qualifications and relevant experience. The post is for three years in the first instance and carries a probationary period of six months. The post holder reports to the Assistant Chief Executive - Housing and on a day to day basis to their Housing Team Leader. It is essential that the successful candidate should have an operable driving license and be willing to drive to fulfil the duties of the post. The post is based in Leeds.

All those working in Unipol are jointly employed by Unipol and the University of Leeds. The post will involve some limited late night working (up to 7.00pm) and weekend work at specific times of the year, together with the need to undertake cover and call-out arrangements over some public holidays when arrangements for dealing with emergencies have to be made by the Assistant Chief Executive - Housing. The post holder is also required to work some early mornings on a rota to answer telephone enquiries about repairs.

In the event of a major incident or emergency taking place at the developments or other houses the Housing Management Officer will attend and operate as Unipol's representative on site and direct incidents as necessary, additional payment will be made in respect of any time taken on fulfilling these duties. The post holder is also required to work some early mornings on a rota to answer telephone enquiries about repairs.

Unipol, the University of Leeds and the other universities and organisations are multi-cultural communities, which value diversity. The Housing Management Officer is expected to treat all individuals fairly, with dignity and respect and contribute to creating a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for all.

Specific Duties of the Post Include:

Property Management

The Housing Management Officer shall take responsibility for the effective day to day management of all the properties allocated to and managed by them on behalf of the organisation and carry out the following duties to ensure that those properties are properly managed. They take responsibility for:

- advertising the property/ies, liaising with the marketing team and Housing Hub staff in ensuring the property is properly advertised and is removed when let
- providing a good service to Unipol tenants and promoting Unipol as a responsible landlord so that tenants are encourage to resign with Unipol
- ensuring that properties are fit to view and that they are well represented on Unipol's websites, ensuring any shortcomings in the property which may hinder a let is remedied or brought to the attention of the Housing Manager - Operations
- undertaking "viewing days" and "open days" organised by nominating institutions/partners
- ensuring that Unipol has an adequate number of keys in order to provide each tenant with a front door key and for Unipol to retain two spare keys to be entered correctly on the key system. At the end of the let to take responsibility for the collection of keys, logging them into Unipol and having locks and additional keys cut for new incoming tenants where keys are not returned
- explaining to new tenants how a property and the appliances and amenity levels function
- ensuring that relevant buildings comply with the requirements of the Unipol Code and the National Code of Standards for Larger Developments and bringing to the attention of the Housing Manager - Logistics and Compliance any problems or related issued where compliance with these Codes is problematic or not possible
- maintaining all property records in the standard file format and for entering all tenant details on the computer and informing the Director of Finance of any changes in the letting arrangements within the property
- collecting deposits from new tenants and arranging for inspections at the end of the let, together with explanatory letters to ensure the return of those deposits or their retention for specific purposes, following procedures set by the Tenancy Deposit Scheme

- undertaking visits to properties under management on a regular basis to ensure that tenants are abiding by the terms of the tenancy agreement and arranging for the completion of any necessary repairs arising from the visits. Completing property inspection reports on all inspections made and ensuring they are filed in the property records
- taking part in the rota by which tenants can telephone in their repairs on a special telephone line and logging those details into the repairs system for other members of the housing management team
- undertaking repairs on behalf of Unipol, using Unipol's approved list of contractors and ensuring that complete records of each repair undertaken is placed on the Housing Management system. Liaising with tenants about access for repairs and ensuring that works are undertaken at times that have been arranged. Checking all works undertaken, to ensure that they have been satisfactorily completed and that the works are of the right quality and represent good value for money
- undertaking fire alarm tests and emergency lighting tests and ensure that each test is recorded appropriately in a log
- other safety checks in the property as determined by Unipol's Health and Safety Policy for Housing and maintaining an up to date knowledge of that Policy.
- dealing with any tenant issues or antisocial behaviour and referring complex or difficult cases to the Tenancy Support and Wellbeing Coordinator for further intervention and action.

Lettings

The Housing Management Officer is part of the lettings team and will be expected to work closely with the marketing team in meeting lettings targets. The Housing Management Officer will:

- undertake visits of properties with potential tenants and promote those properties with a view to letting them, taking part in a rota to ensure potential tenants can view a property in a timely manner
- take responsibility for tenant screening, including refusing to let a house to any person not a student (with the permission of the Assistant Chief Executive -Housing) or who has treated a property badly in the past or who owes money to Unipol
- ensure that summer lets within their portfolio are promoted and publicising maximising lettings of rooms for the summer period
- sign up students as tenants and ensure that the legal implications of the let are explained to students. complete relevant tenant details forms, ensuring that all tenants receive the appropriate tenant information
- assist, as directed, in the operation of the Unipol Rent Online system ensuring details are accurate and regularly updated and that potential tenants are able to secure accommodation using this system when away from Leeds
- promote the use of Rent Online on the Unipol website, updating adverts where use of the system would encourage lettings
- carry out 'lettings inspections' of properties included within the Unipol portfolio, and make recommendations for works to be carried out as may be required to increase the letability of the property.

Social Media

The Housing Management Officer will work with the marketing team and the Housing Manager - Operations to ensure that:

- Facebook Group are established each year for tenants at ant Unipol complex managed
- new tenants are encouraged to join the Facebook Group prior to the start of their tenancy date
- Facebook Groups and blogs are regularly updated with regular articles about events for tenants
- the marketing team are updated with information about development and events so that promotional material can be created
- tenants' posts are monitored to check for unsuitable items, or items that may need dealing with and then advise tenants of the correct ways to report these
- they respond to Facebook messages and answer queries, ensuring they are responding in a timely manner
- they engage with prospective tenants by Skype as required
- they use web chat to answer questions about all aspects of Unipol's services. Web chat can be referred to a colleague in another section or to those with more information when appropriate and all feedback on the chat they have been involved with is recorded on a database.

Garden Maintenance

Unipol's generally undertakes garden maintenance for its managed properties and the Housing Management Officer will monitor the garden maintenance and report any issues to the Development Manager. Where garden maintenance remains with managed owners Unipol will monitor that works are being properly undertaken.

Health and Safety

Unipol has a detailed Health and Safety Policy for Housing and the Housing Management Officer is responsible for knowing its contents and ensuring that all properties managed by them are managed in accordance with that policy and, where problems or difficulties are identified, drawing this immediately to the attention of the Housing Manager - Logistics and Compliance.

There are a number of health and safety routines that carry a high level of personal responsibility and a number of health and safety routines that require rigorous monitoring by the Housing Management Officer to comply with legislative and regulatory requirements to ensure that:

- general planned preventative maintenance takes place as required
- fire servicing and testing takes place and that each test is recorded appropriately
- emergency light testing takes place and that each test is recorded appropriately
- external lighting is providing the correct level of illumination

- waste disposal is taking place properly, that all bin areas are clean and tidy and that all bins are in good and operational condition
- CCTV checked and where there are faults these are reported immediately to the Team Leader for rectification.

Financial Systems

The post holder will liaise carefully with the Finance Manager and will follow Unipol's financial systems in all respects. If in doubt about those systems, particularly involving any cash transactions, the post holder 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. The post holder will also ensure that all financial matters are reported properly to those operating Unipol's financial systems.

General

The post holder will maintain a working knowledge of Unipol's computer operations and shall have a working knowledge of Microsoft Office software.

The Housing Management Officer will undertake such general duties within Unipol as from time to time may be required and shall accept periodic revisions of this job specification where transferable skills are utilised.

Person Specification

Essential

A commitment to and experience of delivering excellence customer service

Good organisational skills with the ability to work autonomously and organise your own workload, under the guidance of the Manager

A flexible approach, with the ability to adapt priorities to meet deadlines and conflicting demands as peak workloads require

Excellent communication skills, both written and oral and the ability to communicate effectively with different stakeholders

A full operable driving licence

Awareness of the Unipol Code and its purpose.

Desirable

Experience of working in property management (preferably within Leeds)

Some local knowledge of the Leeds market including knowledge of local property resources and contractors

Specific experience of student housing management, although training will be provided in this area

Experience of working with students or young people

Experience of operating computer record systems

Mediation skills

Experience of successfully letting properties.

Unipol and University Values

All staff are expected to operate in line with Unipol's and the University of Leeds' values and standards. More information about these values is available at <https://www.unipol.org.uk/about> and <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/comms/strategy/>

Additional Information

The University and Unipol offers generous terms and conditions of employment, a wide range of benefits, services, facilities and family friendly policies. Full details are available on the Human Resources web pages accessible at www.leeds.ac.uk/hr