

Unipol Student Homes

Complaints Investigator

Fixed term for 2 years

This is an expanded and now dedicated post working on the firm foundations that have already been laid for a Complaints Investigator who operates a number of accreditation system complaints systems. The post holder can make a real difference to the housing experience by improving housing standards and taking a key role in conflict resolution between landlords and tenants. The post requires a high degree of personal initiative and commitment but support is offered from within the experienced accreditation, social media and marketing team.

The post has three main axis which is to:

- be the first point of reference for all those making complaints under Unipol's landlord accreditation Codes: the local Leeds Code (covering about 17,000 tenancies) and the Government approved National Codes (covering about 230,000 tenancies) and process and respond to complaints with a view to amicable dispute resolution and closure (*estimated at 50% of the post*)
- be the first point of reference for all those making complaints under the Leeds Rental Standard which is a cross-City wide scheme bringing together all accreditation schemes operated in Leeds on behalf of LCC who fund part of this activity (estimated at 30% of the post)
- assist the Deputy Chief Executive in respect of operating the Company Secretary and governance functions of the charity and helping with the induction and training of new staff (*estimated at 20% of the post*)

This is a forward facing post requiring three key skills:

- excellent face-to-face skills to maintain good relations with partners, senior managers, staff and consumers
- experience of maintaining customer care by investigating and responding to those making complaints under accreditation
- being a rigorous administrator, providing a timely and appropriate response within the envelope of defined administrative routines

The post requires accuracy, flexibility, rigour, initiative and considerable organisation of their own workload as well as requiring a high degree of personal integrity and confidentiality in much of the work undertaken. Previous experience of operating customer care systems and complaints handling would be a significant advantage.

At certain key times of the year the post can involve some limited late night working (up to 7.00pm) and some meetings may take place outside of normal office hours.

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

University Grade 5 (£21,843 - £25,298 p.a.) according to qualifications and relevant experience.

To explore the post further or for any queries you may have, please contact:

Sian Davies, Office Administrator and Code Complaints Investigator

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Ref: CSUNI1024

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

Reports to: Deputy Chief Executive

Main duties and responsibilities

Complaints Handling Under the Unipol Codes *(estimated at 50% of the post)*

The post holder has a key role in supporting both the National Codes Administrator and the Unipol Codes Administrator by dealing with all complaints made under these accreditation systems (known as “The Codes”). This includes:

- acting as the first point of contact for complaints from tenants, and others allowed to complain under the Codes
- maintaining a full understanding of the Codes complaints procedures and ensuring these are rigorously followed (and making any recommendations to the Deputy Chief Executive when those procedures seem inappropriate or could be improved)
- acknowledging complaints and taking action on them within defined time periods (determined by the Codes)
- investigating the complaint and deciding on an appropriate response and view
- following up complaints and, where necessary, offer mediation or an enabling facility to try to resolve difficulties prior to the referral by the Tribunal
- responding to all complaints with the aim of achieving satisfaction by the complainant
- monitoring all agreements reached by suppliers and tenants to ensure promises made are kept to
- where resolution is not possible under the complaints system referring the matter back to the National Codes Administrator or Unipol Codes Administrator for further action under the Tribunals system and providing documentation and a briefing to those staff to maintain continuity in responding to the complainant
- maintain a record of all complaints received together with their resolution and ensuring details of this are kept in the Code files and placed on the web as appropriate
- issue an annual report summarising any complaints received and identifying any trends or concerns.

The post holder will assist, where requested, administering aspects of the Tribunal hearing and system.

The post holder will have an important role in training housing suppliers and tenant representatives in how best to use the Code complaints systems (through either face to face or electronic advice on the web and/or social media) and will assist in undertaking targeted training for owners, educational establishments, student representatives, national bodies and Unipol staff in how complaints can be avoided,

how they should be dealt with before they escalate and what the complaints systems can (and cannot) deliver.

Be the first point of reference for all those making complaints under the Leeds Rental Standard which is a cross-City wide scheme bringing together all accreditation schemes operated in Leeds on behalf of LCC who fund part of this activity (estimated at 30% of the post)

Complaints Handling and Administration Under the Leeds Rental Standard

(estimated at 30% of the post) The post holder has a key role in acting as the central resource for dealing with all complaints made under the Leeds Rental Standard. The Standard has its own web site and consists of accreditation schemes operated by Unipol (who complaints are dealt with as outlined above), the National Landlords Association (NLA) and the Residential Landlords Association (RLA). This includes:

- maintaining an up to date list of landlords and properties covered by the Leeds Rental Standard (and liaising with the RLA and NLA to bring together a central list) and updating the website with this information
- issuing Leeds Rental Standard membership cards
- acting as the first point of contact for complaints from tenants, and others allowed to complain under the Standard
- maintaining a full understanding of the relevant systems accrediting properties and landlords (and making any recommendations to the Deputy Chief Executive when those procedures seem inappropriate or could be improved)
- providing documentation and a briefing to those staff to maintain continuity in responding to the complainant
- maintaining a record of all complaints received together with their resolution and ensuring details of this are kept in the Code files and placed on the web as appropriate and issue an annual report summarising any complaints received and identifying any trends or concerns.
- acknowledging complaints and taking action on them within defined time periods
- investigating the complaint and deciding on an appropriate response and view
- following up complaints and, where necessary, offer mediation or an enabling facility to try to resolve difficulties
- referring matters that cannot be resolved to those running the schemes or, where regulatory enforcement is required, to Leeds City Council, prior to the referral by the Tribunal
- responding to all complaints with the aim of achieving satisfaction by the complainant
- monitoring all agreements reached by suppliers and tenants to ensure promises made are kept to
- where resolution is not possible under the complaints system, or the RLA and NLA systems then referring the matter for further action under the Tribunals system

- in respect of the *Tribunals* the Complaints Investigator will recommend to the Tribunal Chair which cases should proceed to the Tribunal, prepare paperwork, reports and information for each complaint for Tribunal members, prepare briefing notes for the Chair of the Tribunal and liaise with them on the ordering of business for the meeting, keep notes and undertaking minutes for the meetings.

Assisting in Operating the Company Secretary and Governance Functions of the Charity *(estimated at 20% of the post).*

The post holder will assist the Deputy Chief Executive (who is also Company Secretary) in:

- the servicing of Board and Committee meetings and in arranging the annual Board visit to properties including the coordination of draft papers for meetings and ensuring that staff provide the relevant support papers
- organising the induction of new trustees
- ensuring that new Trustees have and return relevant documentation required to be a trustee and that documentation in respect of Companies House, the appointment of Directors forms and the Directors register of Interests forms are obtained and stored
- maintain the database of Trustees
- arrange the Trustee peer to peer meetings
- assist with setting committee and Board dates on an annual cycle
- set up and service the board room and other meetings rooms for both meetings and visitors
- arrange car parking for visitors and trustees
- obtaining Board members signatures on formal documentation as requested

Governance

The Complaints Investigator will attend accreditation team meetings called by the Deputy Chief Executive. They will attend Tribunal and Audit panel meetings as required (estimated at three meetings a year in total). They will attend the Leeds Rental Standard Committee of Management meetings (three times a year) and service that meeting.

Financial Systems

The post holder will liaise carefully with the Finance Manager and will ensure that all financial operations fit within the rules and procedures governing 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 post holder 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

Knowledge

- Experience of working in a customer service environment and a good working knowledge of dealing with complaint handling
- Knowledge and competence in IT systems, including Microsoft Word, Excel, outlook.

Skills and competencies

- Ability to develop and maintain good relations with partners, visitors, senior managers, staff and consumers
- Proven administration skills being a rigorous administrator, providing timely and appropriate responses within the envelope of defined administrative routines.
- Excellent accuracy and attention to detail
- Good organisational skills with the ability to work autonomously and organise your own workload
- An ability to work under pressure and on your own initiative
- Self-motivated with good organisation, negotiation and problem solving skills
- Ability to effectively engage with tenants and landlords and demonstrate patience tact and approachability
- Ability to communicate effectively with strong communications skills both orally and in writing
- Possess a committed and flexible attitude
- Have a high degree of personal integrity and confidentiality

Desirable

- Experience of handling customer complaints and being the main point of contact for them
- Experience of working in housing and having an understanding of key issues affecting people in the student housing sector
- Experience of working in higher education or with young adults and a positive approach to the issues they may have

Additional information

Working at Leeds

Find out more about the benefits of working at the University and what it is like to live and work in the Leeds area on our [Working at Leeds](#) information page.

Candidates with disabilities

Information for candidates with disabilities, impairments or health conditions, including requesting alternative formats, can be found on our [Accessibility](#) information page or by getting in touch with us at disclosure@leeds.ac.uk.

Criminal record information

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

A criminal record check is not required for this position. However, all applicants will be required to declare if they have any 'unspent' criminal offences, including those pending.

More About Unipol

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 Trinity University, Leeds College of Art 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 310 student families) located in Leeds, 169 students in Nottingham and 58 students in Bradford
- 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 also has a stake in two Government Approved Codes of Practice dealing with larger student developments in the United Kingdom. Unipol currently accredits an estimated 248,000 student bed spaces

- it runs three Housing Hubs providing a forum in which owners 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

- 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

<http://www.unipol.org.uk/footer/governance/corporate-documents-policies/forward-look-2015-2018>

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 - Hub Services, the Assistant Chief Executive - Housing, the Assistant Chief Executive - IT and Communications and the Assistant Chief Executive - Standards (who is currently on maternity leave).

The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive are supported by an Office Administrator and the Complaints Investigator.

ii) the housing services team is currently in a state of transition and the organisation is mid-way through merging the housing services team with the Housing Hub teams in Leeds and Bradford.

The Housing Services team is led by the Assistant Chief Executive - and is supported by the Housing Manager, the Housing Services Coordinator and the Development Manager. There are four Senior Housing Management Officers and six Housing Management Officers (two of whom are located in Nottingham). The team is supplemented by Residents' Assistants (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 Residents' Assistants are overseen by the relevant Housing Management Officers.

The Housing Hub operations are overseen by the Assistant Chief Executive - Housing Hub Services. The Hub Marketing Officer works in this area promoting the housing hub and accreditation services. As the housing hub and housing services merge staff currently working between the two areas will have joint responsibility for

both areas of operation. There are also teams of temporary part time staff (normally students) to assist in the day to day running of forward facing services to both students and landlords.

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

iii) The Student Interface and Standards Team is temporarily headed by the Deputy Chief Executive (and will be returned to the Assistant Chief Executive - Standards on their return) who oversees all accreditation and tribunal systems (currently three), the conferences and training operation (with the Training and Events Officer), the Digital and Social Marketing Coordinator who oversees the developing use of social media throughout the charity. Accreditation is administered centrally by the Unipol Codes Administrator (who is based in Nottingham) and the National Codes Administrator (in respect of purpose built student accommodation), is marketed and promoted by a marketing officer and the Complaints Investigator deals with complaints.

iv) the Nottingham Service is led by the Nottingham Services Manager and consists of two Housing Management Officers, two part time Residential Assistants and a number of part time Housing Hub Assistants.

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

vi) The organisation has a technical services arm that is led by the Assistant Chief Executive - IT and Communications who oversees an IT Manager, two ICT Officers (one part-time), an Applications Developer and two part time support staff to ensure that the organisation maintains high quality IT and web services.