

(Set high importance)

Letter from Aston Students' Union to [accommodation provider] re lockdown and accommodation rent

Dear [accommodation provider],

We hope you are keeping well at this very challenging time.

We are writing as the full-time Sabbatical Officers of Aston Students' Union as we are very concerned about the impact of the recently announced third national lockdown on Aston University students.

Most students who have contracts with you will now legally not be able to return to their accommodation and will not need to as most of their courses are entirely online. This pandemic has been particularly challenging for university students causing great distress and hardship for them.

Many students have lost their jobs following the closure of restaurants, bars, clubs, and many other businesses, while their maintenance loans usually do not cover the full cost of their rent. Covid-19 has financially affected millions of people across the UK and many parents will struggle to financially support their children studying at university.

As such, we are urging you to consider doing the following:

1. Refund the rent paid by students that never moved into their accommodation
2. Refund the rent for the weeks during the travel window before Christmas when students were legally obliged to leave their student accommodation early
3. Do not charge rent for the duration of the national lockdown from students who legally cannot access their student accommodation
4. Provide a rent reduction for students who are using their accommodation during the national lockdown as they are not receiving the full service they are paying for, such as access to communal areas
5. Provide all students with the opportunity to get out of their contracts with immediate effect and without financial penalty

We understand the financial scale of this request and the impact it could have on your business; however, we ask that you do the right thing by your tenants at this incredibly difficult time. Some student accommodation providers have already acted, such as Student Roost and iQ who have offered to not charge any rent for six weeks from students who have not yet travelled back to their accommodation. We believe doing this is in your own interests as it will help to maintain the long-term reputation of your business among university students who you generate significant profit from.

We would be happy to discuss this further with you and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Harry Sheppard, President

Jawad Ahmad, Vice President Education

Safa Ahmed, Vice President Welfare

Balraj Purewal, Vice President Student Activities