



King's College London
Strand
London
WC2R 2LS

January 2021

Dear Private Landlords, Purpose Built Student Accommodation Providers (PBSAs) and Lettings Agents,

We are writing to you about the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We recognise these are challenging times for everyone and hope that you, your families, friends and colleagues are keeping well and safe.

You will be aware that national and regional lockdowns, and government restrictions, have significantly impacted on our students, resulting in financial difficulties, affordability issues, and lack of access to their accommodation. A proportion of our students rely on part-time and full-time work to fund their living costs during their studies; often finding employment in sectors which have been the hardest hit, such as the hospitality industry. Consequently, some of our students have reported that they are struggling to maintain payment of rent.

Since March 2020, the university has been reviewing and adapting the support offered to our students. This includes provision of both financial aid and mental health support to all students, alongside adjustments to our own accommodation offer, including

- All students living in King's residences, and who have not been able to use their accommodation because of the impact of travel restrictions during the national lockdown, will not be charged for the period they have not stayed with us.
- Since September we have ensured a range of flexible options and support for our students living in King's accommodation. This includes the option to defer and cancel their accommodation contracts, in line with teaching plans for the semester, and reimbursement for any periods of self-isolation.

Many of our students in private accommodation have informed us that they face similar issues and may not be able to use their accommodation at present. We know that the pandemic has put us all in challenging circumstances **and we kindly ask you to consider whether you may be in a position to support our students in a similar**

way, by potentially offering rent rebates and rental discounts to students who have been unable to access their accommodation, as well as a no-fee contract cancellation of the property for the remainder of the academic year.

King's College London and King's College London Students' Union are both committed to protecting the physical, mental and financial wellbeing of our students throughout the pandemic, and we believe that the adjustments and support the university have put in place reflect this. **We recognise the valuable relationship that we have built with private sector providers, both large and small across the capital, and would appreciate it if you could now consider if there are any steps you can take to similarly protect our students' safety and well-being through these challenging times.**

COVID-19 has presented us all with extra burdens and challenges but we hope that you will be able to work with us, and our students, to find a solution. To that end, we are continuing to work with partners and higher education bodies such as the University of London and Universities UK to encourage the government to support accommodation providers during this crisis, and reduce any negative impact you may face. We hope you can work with us to do the same for our students.

Yours sincerely,

Tasnia Yasmin, Vice President, Welfare and Community, King's College London Students' Union

Niall Berry, Vice President, Activities and Development, King's College London Students' Union

Professor Evelyn Welch FKC, Interim President & Principal, King's College London

Mr Steve Large, Senior Vice President (Operations), King's College London

Professor Nicola Phillips, Vice President & Vice Principal (Education), King's College London