

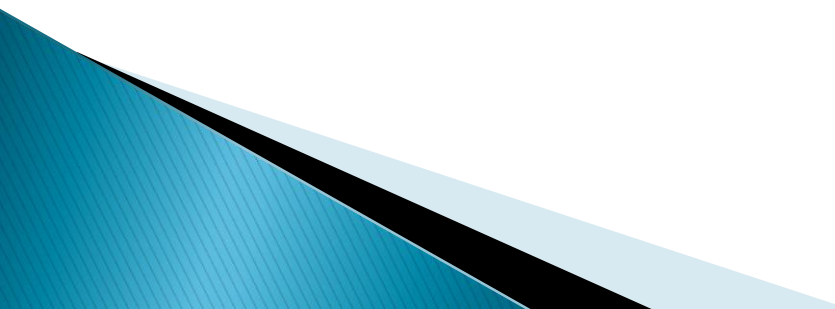


Student Housing Survey Report: 2012



CYMORTH
SUPPORT

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Introduction

This report has come about as a result of an increase of issues with Aberystwyth Private Sector Accommodation. The initial focus of this survey was on costs, such as high admin fees, and deposit protection scheme registration fees, which students were finding hard to afford on top of the other living costs.

It was essential for us to see how much rent per week students are actually paying, after a BBC Article quoted the average cost from 2011, to be £62.01 (Article found in Appendix 1), which did not correlate to a lot of the agreements we had seen. It was also important to establish what people had included in their average rents, and we have broken this down accordingly in the next few pages.

The release of the NUS Housing survey gave 156 student views on Housing in Aberystwyth and went into a lot of detail on costs, deposits and condition of properties. As there are around 6000 students in the Private Sector, it was important for us to conduct more investigations to get a wider picture. We received 308 valid responses, meaning that the figure is more representative of the situation, however is still only 5.13% of private sector responses. However, it is to be noted that a considerable amount of students filled out the survey on behalf of their households, making the Report a more accurate account of the current Housing situation in Aberystwyth.

Last year 2011-12 saw students queuing around the block for some letting agencies and messages received from students saying they needed rooms urgently. It also saw bunk rooms introduced into University Halls due to oversubscription. This put gigantic pressure on an already limited market to house the extra students and led to the campaign of 'Don't Panic - Fools Rush In'. In the survey, we see students referring to this *panic* and how they felt under pressure to sign contracts due to feeling that there wasn't enough accommodation in the town to house them.

With the introduction of a new fee structure of £9000 per annum in place for University, there has been a decline in the intake of students to the University, as well as the introduction of several new housing developments, such as the Old Crown Buildings and the University's new accommodation for 2014. This, and other planned developments, will see poor quality accommodation drop off the radar and standards increase, as a result, and hopefully the escalated prices that the survey has seen will fall.

It is important to note that this survey contains reviews of up to 18 Letting Agencies and a considerable number of Private Landlords, therefore when looking at the pie charts it is important to observe that the low number of reviews received about each company can affect the pie chart's negative/positive score which they received and is not necessarily a full picture of what the Agency is like.

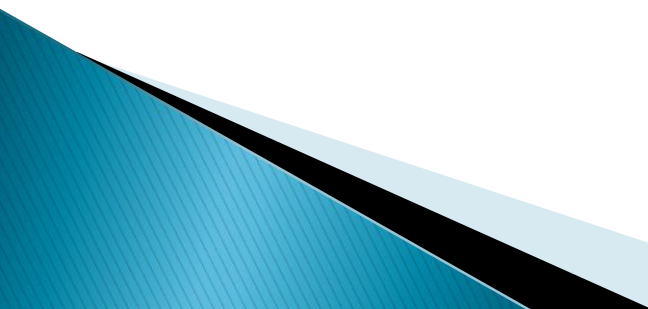
The table of scores on the number of positive, neutral and negative results received does not mean that the Students Union is more favourable to particular letting agencies or against others. This survey was conducted in the matter of gathering information, therefore bias should not be given to certain agencies. The comments chosen for each agency reflect the comments received by other students, and full comments for each agency have been individually sent to them. A full copy of comments can be requested by emailing the address detailed below.

Leaving a comment in the comment box was optional and means that some students who were satisfied with their accommodation did not put a comment, and thus were regarded as neutral.

The end of this report shows our observations and conclusions of the Housing situation in Aberystwyth, and how we intend to address the issues raised in the report. It is hoped that we can work together with the County Council, Letting Agencies and Private Landlords to ensure that students are being treated fairly, and living in a better standard of accommodation in the future.

I hope you find the survey insightful, and if you have any observations or comments you would like to make, or you would like to discuss any housing issues, then please do not hesitate to email union.support@aber.ac.uk

Laura Dickens
Student Support Officer
Aberystwyth Students Union



Comments on the Report

With accommodation costs as high as those in Westminster, students in Aberystwyth deserve better. Having lived here for two years it is explicitly clear that there is a housing crisis - which the University, the Guild, and Local Government need to recognise.

Students are a vital part of the local economy, yet at present are being exploited by the local letting agents and landlords, and this simply cannot continue if Aberystwyth hopes to prosper in the future.

Greg Dash, Co-Founder Aberystwyth Student Housing Union

“The Aberystwyth Student Housing Union has seriously struck a chord with many students here, and as a former student myself in the town, I know how critical this is. I welcome the work being done and am hopeful that it goes a long way in improving what can be a very distressing and stressful situation across Aberystwyth each year.”

“My own casework has involved a great deal of work in the local housing situation as it affects students, and I welcome the dialogue between students and the council.”

Mark Williams, MP for Ceredigion

It's encouraging to see such a strong response from the students to this survey, however it shows that private housing is a huge concern for those living here, not only before they have signed a contract, but throughout their time as a student and resident. Responses to the survey show that the quality of landlords varies wildly across Aberystwyth, however we hope it will go a long way towards encouraging others to join us in working with landlords to improve the quality of housing for the benefit of current students, and the many that will choose to study here in the future.

Robert Hardware, Representative Aberystwyth Student Housing Union



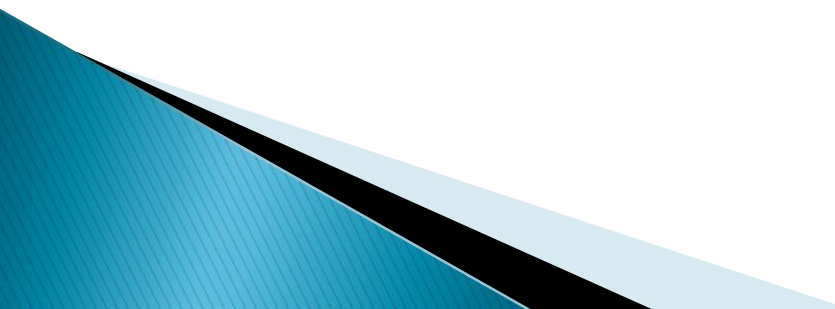
The Findings

The survey received **308** valid responses, with **116** about Private Landlords and **193** about Letting Agencies.

The Average price of Rent per week, **excluding bills** is **£81.74**, with the cheapest being **£48.00** and the most expensive being **£187.50**.

The Average price of Rent per week, **including some bills** is **£80.25**, with the cheapest being **£50.00** and the most expensive being **£127.00**.

The Average price of Rent per week, **including all bills** is **£91.21**, with the cheapest being **£69.50** and the most expensive being **£160.00**.



Estate Agency Costs Breakdown (£s)

Estate Agents	Rent Per Week	Deposits	Admin Fees	Other Costs
AI	62.50-100	150-450	50-150	-
ABA	70-105	200-450	10-50	-
Aber Letting	61-187.50	270-750	10-45	22-50
Aber Student	75-100	100-650	-	-
Alexanders	61.25-175	360-950	40-150	30-100
ALP	70-110	280-700	50-132	35-50
GD Lettings	75-85	250-350	25-40	-
MS Properties	50-110	200-450	10-200	100-120
Padarn	69-82	150-330	40-70	100
Philip Evans	73-150	100-625	20-100	-
Seafront Student	70-80	100-500	-	-
I Stop Lettings	105-127	425-550	15	

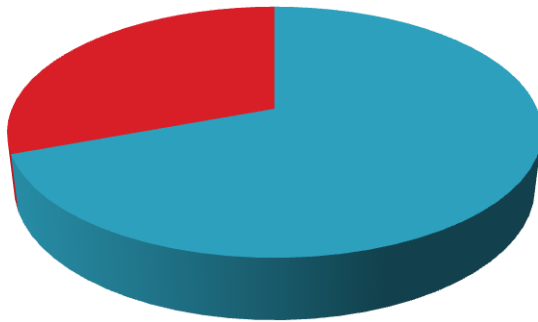
This information was taken from the figures provided to us by Students. Some did not specify if the rent included a deposit, or if the rent covered 2 persons, so this could account for higher variations. The figures also differ on the size and standard of property.

Estate Agency Results Breakdown

Letting Agency	Positive Reviews	Neutral Reviews	Negative Reviews
A1	0	9	4
ABA	4	4	4
Aber Letting	3	8	1
Aber Student	3	2	1
Alexanders	0	6	12
ALP	2	17	6
GD Lettings	0	2	6
MS Properties	2	13	6
Padarn	5	8	4
Philip Evans	3	28	11
Seafront Student	0	2	3
1 Stop Lettings	1	2	0

AI Property Management

Feedback



- Positive and Neutral
- Negative

Out of 12 results received

Comments

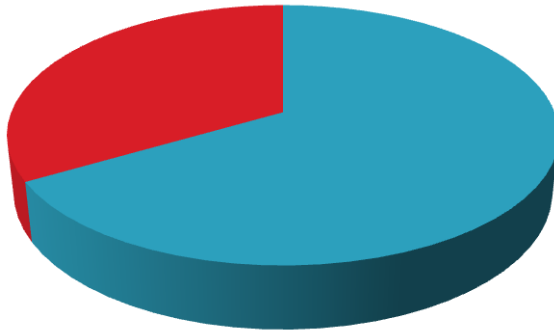
“The quality of the accommodation is poor all over town so I have ended up in expensive and poor accommodation but at least I have a sea view!”

“In my opinion AI property letting used an imposing tactic when it comes to students. I believe they use so called professionalism as a tactic that scares students to the point that they see them as the dominant force.”

“Full rent through summer even though we were not living there.”

ABA Property Management

Feedback



- Positive and Neutral
- Negative

Out of 12 results received

Comments

“He has been fantastic, any problems I've phoned (even at 8pm) and he's been over in 5minutes or less. So friendly and helpful :)”

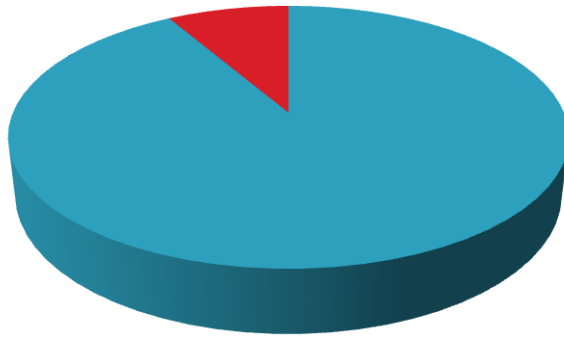
“Very friendly and very professional. When we first moved into the property we were given a list of services available if needed in an emergency which is very handy and helpful.”

“Rent is high for very little. Very small attic rooms for the same price per week as ground floor rooms 3 times the size and with high ceilings.”

“Not very good security on flat and landlord took months to fix things.”

Aber Letting

Feedback



■ Positive
and
Neutral
■ Negative

Out of 12 results received

Comments

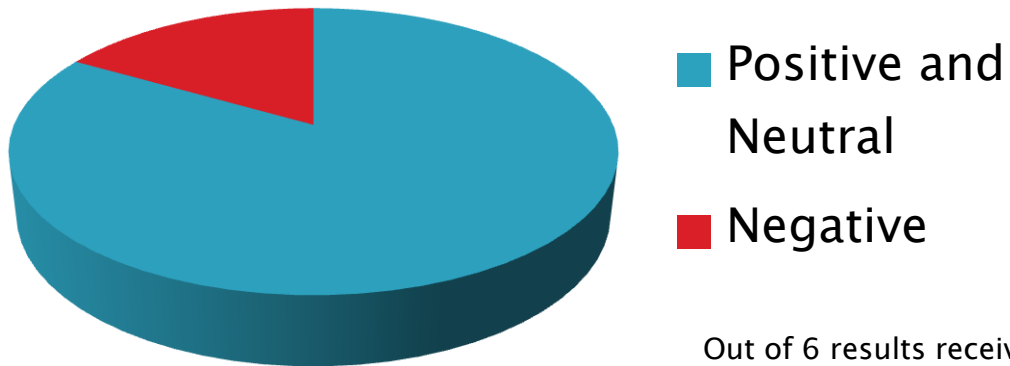
“Hated how early the flat started, wasn't told would start that early when signing, said it could be between 1st July - 1st September”

“Very happy with Aber Letting. Good contact all through the year, prompt fixing of things. Flat in good condition, contract coherent and fairly standard.”

“It's expensive and I have to get a job for it but it is really nice accommodation.”

Aber Student

Feedback



Comments

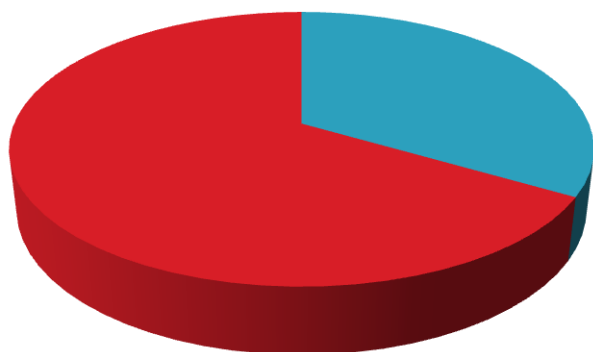
“Whilst everything is inclusive aside from electricity, and my landlord is very efficient compared to my previous landlady who was HORRIBLE, I still feel that what I am paying too much for what is essentially a 2 bedroom flat.”

“Large amount of space for pay.”

“I consider myself very lucky as Mr Johnson has always been reliable in explaining legalities such as the deposit protection scheme and has made time to ensure all issues for example a failing lock are fixed very quickly.”

Alexanders

Feedback



■ Positive
and Neutral

■ Negative

Out of 18 results received

Comments

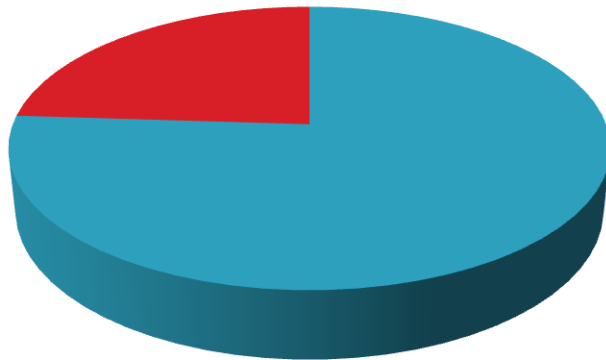
“So far so good, Alexanders staff have been helpful and polite, but require a bit of nagging to get stuff done.”

“Despite asking continuously for her curtain rail to be fixed the curtain rail in one of my housemates rooms came down and injured her boyfriend, luckily not seriously. Also mould was present in the house on arrival and the house was not ready to live till around 1 1/2 weeks after the tenancy started.”

“They also wanted you to sign the agreement straight away when we complained we wanted to carefully read through it all we got two days, which gave no time to post it to parents if needed.”

ALP Property Management

Feedback



- Positive and Neutral
- Negative

Out of 25 results received

Comments

“They are slow to fix anything in the house, however really good when you are going to be late on your rent, as long as you tell them.”

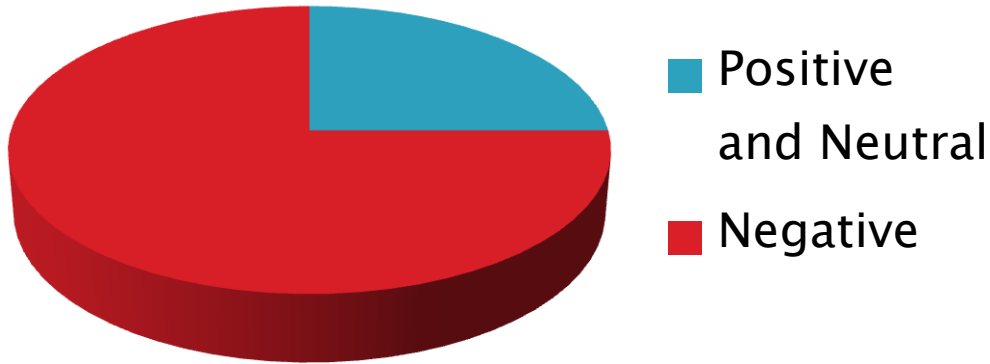
“We contacted them about the various problems with our flat (the locks on the front door are broken, the oven door fell off, the flat has damp, to name a few) and was told that we ‘complain too much’”

“ALP have had loads of bad reviews. But they're easy to deal with and they're decent people.”

“£50 "admin fee" per person, but I think it was partly the deposit protection scheme. We weren't told what it was for.”

GD Lettings

Feedback



Out of 8 results received

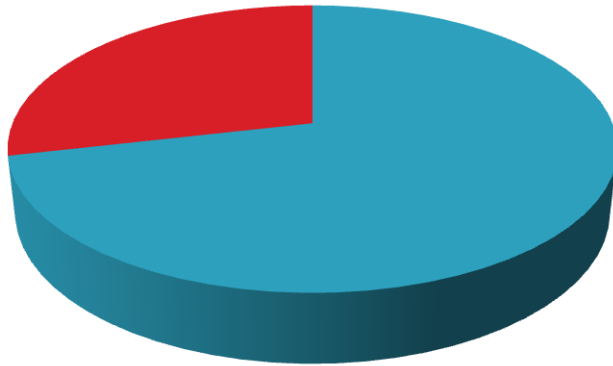
Comments

“Flat was not cleaned when the tenancy started. It was not even in a liveable state.”

“The accommodation is never an acceptable standard in my experience.”

MS Properties

Feedback



■ Positive and Neutral

■ Negative

Out of 21 results received

Comments

“Feel like a number, not an individual paying a lot of money for a house, better customer service needed.”

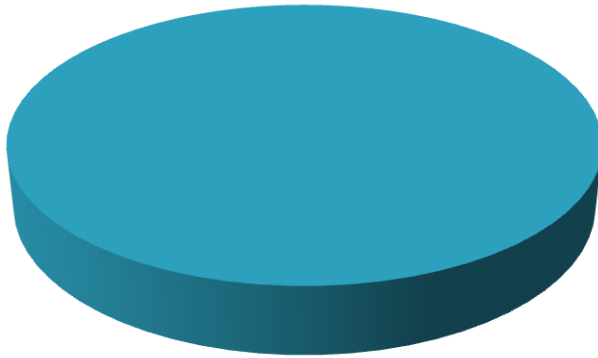
“MS properties seems to be a good agency. The owner is friendly and they repair things if broken quite fast.”

“We get cheaper rent over the summer because of building work that SHOULD be getting done.”

“Fully Furnished' in contract - includes bed, desk, chair, wardrobe, bedside table. Have to buy own book shelves. Have to buy own microwave, toaster, lamps.”

I Stop Lettings

Feedback



- Positive and Neutral
- Negative

Out of 3 results received

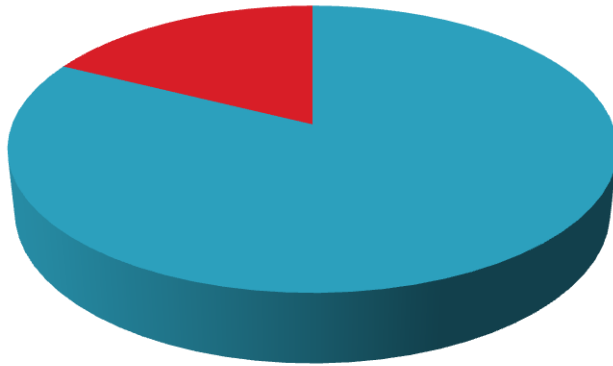
Comments

“I stop are by far the most student friendly in Aberystwyth.”

“£15 for background/credit check”

Padarn Lettings

Feedback



■ Positive and Neutral

■ Negative

Out of 17 results received

Comments

“A very nice letting agency and always easy and good to deal with. Nothing but praise for my letting agents and landlord!”

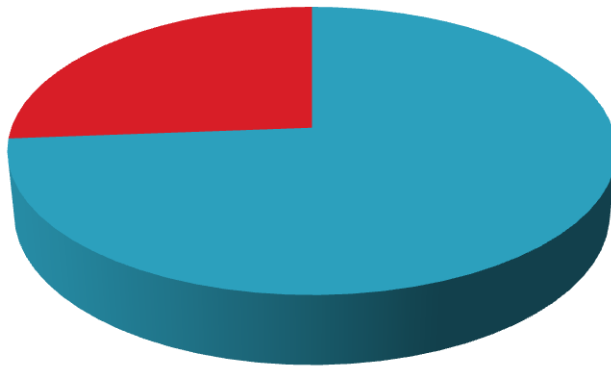
“A helpful letting agency, they did not rush us, I am looking forward to living in the town for my second year.”

“Deposit was a bit steep. Also, communications breakdown made moving in a bit touch-and-go because there was confusion over when I was allowed to move things in and live. Otherwise I've had few problems with Padarn, although sometimes they could be faster with maintenance issues.”

The letting agency are very pushy, and frequently disregard our privacy.

Philip Evans Estates

Feedback



- Positive and Neutral
- Negative

Out of 42 results received

Comments

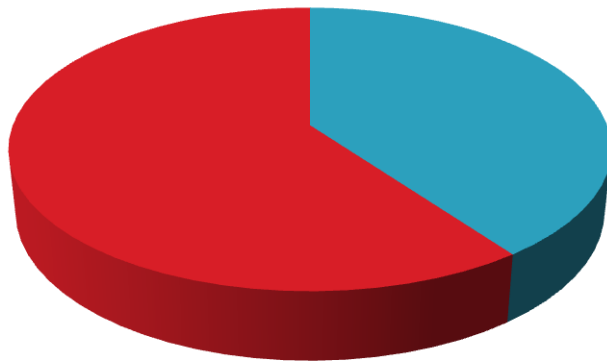
“Communication between landlord and estate agent seems very slow but repairs have generally been dealt with quickly (but at cost to us)”

“Estate agents have been brilliant. If anything's been broken or we've had any queries they've always been really helpful.”

“The mad dash to get accommodation sorted meant that we've ended up paying ridiculous rent with no bills included although we were with philip evans last year and they were pretty good when we had problems with the flat just don't be afraid to be pushy with them.”

Seafront Student

Feedback



■ Positive
and Neutral

■ Negative

Out of 5 results received

Comments

“Deposit required very early (December/January) which is extremely early and doesn't take student loan release dates into account. Rent due dates are prior to loan release from the student loans company which makes it very difficult to secure finance to pay the rent.”

“As the lists were staggered, it meant that everyone was fighting for the same houses - hence the problem. Scare tactics obviously worked by the letting agencies.”

Other Letting Agencies

For the smaller Letting Agencies and private style Halls, we received a small number of reviews, which are listed below:

Aled Ellis

“The contract was 30 pages long and we didn't read it very well so damage caused by the weather such as broken roof tiles or pipes damaged by freezing will be charged to us.”

(1 review received – 1 Neutral)

The Cambria

“Rent was increased unilaterally from £80 a week to £100 for the next academic year with no real explanation ('everyone is doing it'). Contract signing was rushed. Facilities poor, yet heavily policed with weekly inspections.”

“I am disappointed with the work of the cleaners, they do not do their jobs and leave the place just as dusty, dirty and grimy as they found it. For this to be included in rent yet the service is not fully provided is terrible.”

(4 reviews received – 2 Neutral, 2 Negative)

Other Letting Agencies

Jim Raw Rees

“They weren't a student letting, so they were expensive, but at the same time, they actually cared. Couldn't fault the letting agents.”

“Advertised as "Bills included except for electric"

Everything in the house run on electric! Internet not installed when we moved in, had to pay to get it installed by BT and was of course not included in the 'bills included'”

(3 Reviews received – 2 Positive, 1 Negative)

Lloyd Herbert & Jones

“Rent is ridiculously expensive in Aber and there is a distinct lack of student housing.”

(2 Reviews received – 2 Neutral)

Look Letting (Westerly Ltd)

“Letting agency has no office.”

(2 Reviews received – 2 Neutral)

The Marine Hotel

“£600 to hold the property even though it was being let out as a holiday cottage and £200 Refunded deposit

..I would give the marine hotel 1/10 such bad landlords kicked us out 4 months early do they could make more money from holiday makers and then tried keeping our rent!”

(1 Review received – 1 Negative)

Rees Property Management

(1 Review received – 1 Neutral)

Private Sector Renting

The Average rent in the Private sector

No bills – £81.20 per week, with the cheapest being **£48.00** and the most expensive being **£112.00**.

Some bills - £80.58 per week, with the cheapest being **£50.00** and the most expensive being **£105.00**.

All bills - £94.33, with the cheapest being **£70.00** and the most expensive being **£160.00**.

Bills included:

Out of **116** Private Rented properties, **51** included water, **15** internet, **3** electricity, **13** gas and **2** TV licenses.

Comments on the Private Sector

Of the comments received on the Private Sector, there were:
7 Positive, **84** Neutral and **25** Negative

Positive Comments:

“My landlady is really good, she tries to keep costs to a minimum and she seems very fair. I haven't had to pay over the summer which has been a real bonus. I just wish that other people could have the same experience that I have had over housing!”

“Nice guy, will see what happens.”

“The rent is £355 p/m in an 8 bedroom seafront house, with living area, 2 kitchens (small!), 3 toilets and 3 showers. Our Landlord Brian is very fair and down to Earth, and easy to get a hold of and kind when you do. I would recommend him and his girlfriend Jennifer Thomas as Landlords who you don't make you resent your rent payments.”

“Friend's parents bought a house and are letting it to us, very easy and smooth process.”

“The house I rent is in Waunfawr - Rhoshendre. I highly recommend going private if possible. This landlord let us keep the house for second and third year and we've had absolutely no problems with her or anything in the house. Any problems, she's come and sorted within a week.”

“My landlady is very helpful and kind.”



Neutral Comments

“Be careful renting, even with a contract you can still get diddled.

Be aware that water, gas, electric, internet, phone line, TV license (along with your own mobile phone bill, travel expenditure, food etc.) all add up. The best advice I can give is to at least TRY and negotiate, try and get the water in with the rent (for the same price - or marginal increase) as an example. Also, watch those 12 month (or longer) contracts with the likes of BT, make sure you really need it.”

“In general, there seems to be a lot of competition for housing in Aberystwyth and a lot of it seems quite expensive for student housing especially during the summer months. I would imagine that the rent would be very reasonable during the summer seeing as there are not many students left in Aberystwyth but it doesn't seem to affect price at all.

My current accommodation expenses are not too bad as we received a discount due to the house being in need of renovation during the summer. Still I know of other people who are paying more rent for accommodation that is not of a particularly high standard

Also the university could do more to provide housing during summer as many students involved in masters courses wish to stay until the end of summer. Students who go into halls for the summer have to leave by the end of August which for many students is long before their dissertation work is due.”

“Gas and electric not included - costs paid on a meter. Shared cost between 3 people around £7 - £10 per week on electric and £5 - £7 per week on gas.”

“Landlady is very nice and helpful and the house is beautiful, but still all very expensive.”

Negative Comments

“Nope, just that's its damn expensive for the ridiculous states some of the housing is in, but because Aber is so small, you literally have no other choice. I've visited Newcastle University, and my friends have a brand new flat all newly renovated, double beds in every room, smells like fresh white paint. Amazing steel kitchen, really spacious, 3 bathrooms. About 20 minutes from the centre of Newcastle, and they pay £80 a week, which includes water as well. It's just the unfairness sometimes.”

“The rent is way to expensive, there is no washing machine, the flat is small - just 3 rooms with kitchen and bathroom, and we were forced to take it because there were no other places available. A lot a houses were free, but not for students.”

“I paid £90 per week in my third year, for a tiny room in a flat with no social living area, and a kitchen which you literally could not swing a cat in!!! In my second year I paid £70 per week for a house which was too big, with no central heating, therefore I froze during winter and spring!!! Aberystwyth student housing is a disgrace!!!”

“We only found a house by talking to a third year who was leaving next year. Terrible housing situation in Aber. Applied for and turned down by uni for uni accommodation. Went around all 15 letting agents we could find in Aber, none had any houses. This was in January. Went to Alexander's, who said they'd have a new list on 1st February and said to turn up any time because they were only booking viewings, not renting the houses at that stage. Turned up at 9AM on 1st February, apparently students had been queuing since 5AM and all the houses were now gone.”

“We received our first months rent back as the landlord had been letting other people live here, which we found out when we moved in and had nowhere to sleep/put anything.”

“House was wrecked and massive mess was left by the previous students.”

Observations

From the report, several key themes came out from the responses, which I think are important to explore:

High Rents are a big focus of this survey, and the prices that have come out over the course of the research have been quite astounding. When we compare what the BBC polled as the average of £62.01 per week (found in Appendix 1) and what we see the actual costs coming out as, shows that prices have inflated significantly over the past few years. However, up until this academic year, the demand for Private Sector properties was high due to the University taking on more students than it could accommodate, and this has meant that prices were able to rise. Now, there are once again more properties than students, and with more new student developments on the way, we will once again see competition drive down the price of rents.

Some private sector landlords compare their prices to those offered by the University, but it is key to remember that the University offers a lot of services in the inclusive price, such as site security, electricity, water and so on. Therefore, a repeated comment in the survey was to question why the rent was so high and to comment on paying too much for a little.

A concern, if prices do not go down, is that students will not be able to afford the high rents, especially with the way that Student Loans are rewarded in a means tested capacity. Therefore, they will have a shortfall, which will either mean entering high levels of debt, or relying upon parents to make up the shortfall, or the contingency fund from the Welsh Government which can be applied for, and both of these cannot be guaranteed to bridge the gap.

Full Summer Rent being charged, with the student not being allowed to live there, or discovering that the landlord is double-renting the room. is a further concern. We are actively encouraging students to ask why they have to pay so much, and why they can not occupy their rooms if full rent is being charged over summer. It is illegal to be double renting a room, and if students discover that this is the case, we actively encourage them to take legal action.

High Admin fees are a big concern to students. Some have experienced up to £200 worth of admin fees, and a lot of the time, the fee is non-refundable and it is questionable what the high price goes towards. The price of admin, as seen in this report, vary between the different agencies. However, it is a concern when the fees are high, as students are expected to pay a lot of money in a short amount of time when it comes to housing, and this can leave them with a significant shortfall and/or relying on parents or others to cover the cost.

Deposit Protection Scheme fees are a concern. Some students are being charged up to £50 per person in order to see their deposit placed within a deposit protection scheme, and every little cost adds up in the grand scheme of housing. With the deposit protection schemes available, it is not as expensive as that. The scheme 'mydeposits' charges £30 for the household, or £17.50 for registering online. Even inclusive of VAT, it is the price to store a household's deposit, and therefore students should not be paying more than that amount between them. Therefore it is important that students question why they must pay a high cost, and why the cost is inflated from the price given on the schemes' websites.

Condition of Properties are another concern. Students commented about how upon moving into their properties, the condition was not what they were expecting, and a lot of students commented on having problems with damp. Damp is a contentious issue as a lot of the properties in Aberystwyth are old and suffer from bad ventilation, but it is imperative to keep putting on heating and opening windows and not doing things such as drying washing on radiators. However, where the student has done their part, and the damp is still present, it is vital that landlords are keeping their properties up to scratch.

The lack of accommodation for students in Aberystwyth, up until this year, has meant that poor quality accommodation has been allowed to exist, and students have had to accept lower standards in order to have a roof over their heads. Now, with the increase in accommodation, the sub-standard conditions will not be accepted, and bad accommodation will drop off.

Pressure to Sign Contracts was a common concern, especially amongst this survey and the other feedback we have had back from last year when the 'Don't Panic – Fools Rush In' campaign was ongoing. Instances of people being told that they better sign quickly before it's all gone led to rushing to sign a contract, and accepting sub-standard accommodation. The Housing Crisis Centre in July 2012, managed to find 170 bedrooms in its first day, showing that the shortfall of accommodation to be far less than expected, and meaning this year that those who rushed in to contracts with sub-standard accommodation are now stuck with it until the end of the academic year. Now that there is enough accommodation and more choice, students need not feel that they have to rush to put pen to paper, until they are 100% happy with their choices. They have been advised that if they are being pressured to sign, and not being given enough time to properly read through the terms, then they should definitely consider other options, as it is better to be educated in your agreement.

Other concerns that were raised focused around the time taken to make repairs, or instances where repairs were not addressed at all, communication between landlord and tenant, and the need for better communication on move in dates and clarification of things not in contract and the slow return of deposit protection fees.

Conclusions

This report has highlighted a need for the University and Students' Union to work together to provide more support and training for students when it comes to the private sector. The more educated students are when it comes to housing, then the better the treatment they are likely to receive.

The standard of accommodation which has been portrayed to us, and the standard we have seen when investigating student cases has been shocking, and often could have been avoided with better investment in properties and maintenance. It is my intention to ensure that future accommodation campaigns focus on the standard of accommodation and that we maintain a good working relationship with Ceredigion County Council and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

The high rent and other fees being charged to students is a large concern to me, especially in a time when living costs are high. A lot of pressure is put on parents to make up the shortfall, and although there is the Financial Contingency Fund, it is limited to how much the University is allocated each year and is not open to all students. Hopefully, now that the competition will be decreased by fewer students using the Private Sector and an increased supply of accommodation, this will naturally lead to more competitive and lower rents, and also lower admin and other fees which are passed on to students. We will still encourage students to question why they have to pay every fee they incur and what it goes towards.

In the long term, as mandated by the recent Student Assembly, we will be working towards a Union Letting Agency, by starting to look into a form of Union Accreditation for Letting Agencies. At present, we do not recommend agencies over one another in the interests of fairness, we can only report back what we have found in this survey and then the student can make their own judgements. The Union Letting Agency coming onto the scene, we can hope, will lead to better standards of accommodation, better working relations with the Private Sector and lower rental prices.

In the second semester of this academic year, we intend to hold a new 'Landlord Awards' in order to commend the good landlords and to give landlords something to aspire to. Far too often in Aberystwyth, we hear more about bad instances and bad cases, and this can be an extremely negative situation to content with.

Ultimately, we will be looking into all of the negative comments that have come out of this survey, so we can work with the local authorities, Letting Agencies, Private Landlords and students to ensure that these are addressed. We welcome responses from Landlords and Letting Agencies on any comments they would like to make on the report and how they feel things could improve.

We are always open to new developments, and to working with landlords and letting agencies to adjust to what students want, and we are happy to listen to where they think things can also improve. Our seat on the Landlord Steering Group is extremely important as an instrument for maintaining these relationships, and I hope this will be continued for the future.

Appendix I

BBC NEWS

WALES

22 August 2011 Last updated at 07:24

Wales' university students face rental price hike

Students in Wales are facing an increase of up to 11% in rental charges for private university accommodation, according to a survey.

Four out of the six main towns and cities show students will have to pay more per week on average, Accommodation for Students website say.

The biggest Welsh rise comes in Bangor where last year's average weekly rent has risen from £59.22 to £65.87.

The figures do not include university-owned accommodation.

But Newport students will not pay any more on average than last year while those living in Pontypridd will see a drop.

Luke Young, president of NUS Wales, said a rise in the cost of accommodation was "deeply worrying" at a time when students are already feeling the pinch.

"As the cost of private accommodation rises, students will be actively comparing prices to see what they can afford," he said.

"The immediate concern is that for some students it may mean choosing poor quality housing to keep budgets under control.

"Students are already feeling the pinch, so we need to be aware how price rises will have an impact."

Cardiff students will see an average £3.59 per week rise to £61.07 while those in Swansea will have to pay £2.42 more on average at £60.17.

Students in Aberystwyth will have a very small rise at £62.01 per week with Newport seeing the status quo maintained at £60.93.

Pontypridd rental prices have dropped from an average of £46.15 a week last year to £45.74.

Simon Thompson, co-founder and director of Accommodation for Students, said: "The rent increases for some cities reflect two key factors.

"One is the changing nature of accommodation coming on the market. The trend is for hi-spec, better quality student accommodation, and some locations are leading the way in this area.

"The other key factor is the popularity or desirability of attending some universities that puts pressure on the accommodation available and hence, the charging of higher rents.

"With such financial pressure being put on students with fees, the cost of accommodation is a real factor in university choice."

'Financial pressure'He added: "Either way, students who are going through the current clearing process are unlikely to be able to find university accommodation for their first year and so it is really helpful to know precisely how much they will have to pay for private rented accommodation.

"With such financial pressure being put on student with fees, the cost of accommodation is a real factor in university choice."

The increase in fees are mirrored across the UK.

Students in London face the highest rental charges averaging £108.33 per week with Exeter, Uxbridge, Guildford and Cambridge having to pay in excess of £90.

Middlesbrough is the cheapest place to be a student where they are charged an average £43.68.