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# The UK Student Housing Market

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Unipol Student Homes



# What we will cover

- What are the key success factors when marketing less popular student housing?
- What features should be emphasised to boost appeal?
- What do young students value most when choosing where to live?

# Who is Unipol?

- A student housing charity incorporated in 1974.
- Operate over 3,000 rooms in Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) and off-street housing.
- Run the ANUK/Unipol National Code of Standards for Larger Developments, covering approximately 450,000 student bedrooms across the UK.
- Our activities include:
  - National Accreditation and Standards
  - Housing Management
  - Student Advice and Support
  - Training and Development

# Unipol's House of Purpose

The National, not for profit  
student housing specialist



# The UK Higher Education Sector

- 1.695m undergraduate students in 2023/24 – annual increase of 0.9%.
- 578k postgraduate students in 2023/24 – annual **decrease** of 5.5%.
- 301,705 more full-time students in Higher Education than 2018/19.
- 43.1% increase in postgraduate students in this period and continued long-term growth of undergraduate study.
- 30.8% reduction in student visa issuance in 2024.
- Reduction in entrant numbers of 15.1%, 4.3% and 35.8% from India, China and Nigeria respectively.

# The UK Student Housing Sector – 25/26 supply

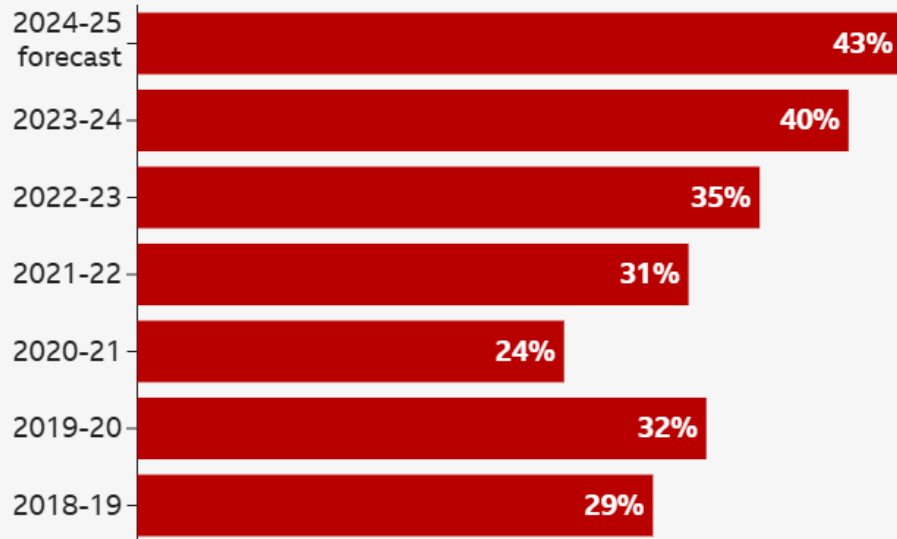
- 743,000 beds – an annual net gain of 10,000 beds on 24/25.
- 325,000 are ‘direct let’ rooms which is 44% of total and remaining are either university owned, in long-term partnerships on campus, or subject to shorter term nomination/lease arrangements.
- 60% of rooms are en-suite, 20% standard, 18% studios and 2% are other types.
- Data is provided by Cushman and Wakefield in their recently published Student Accommodation Report 2025

[Student Accommodation Report 2025](#)

# What's next for HE in the UK?

## Universities in deficit growing

Percentage of higher education institutions in deficit in England



Source: Office for Students/HESA

BBC

## UK's first 'super-university' to be created as two merge from 2026



UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The universities of Kent and Greenwich will collaborate in 2026

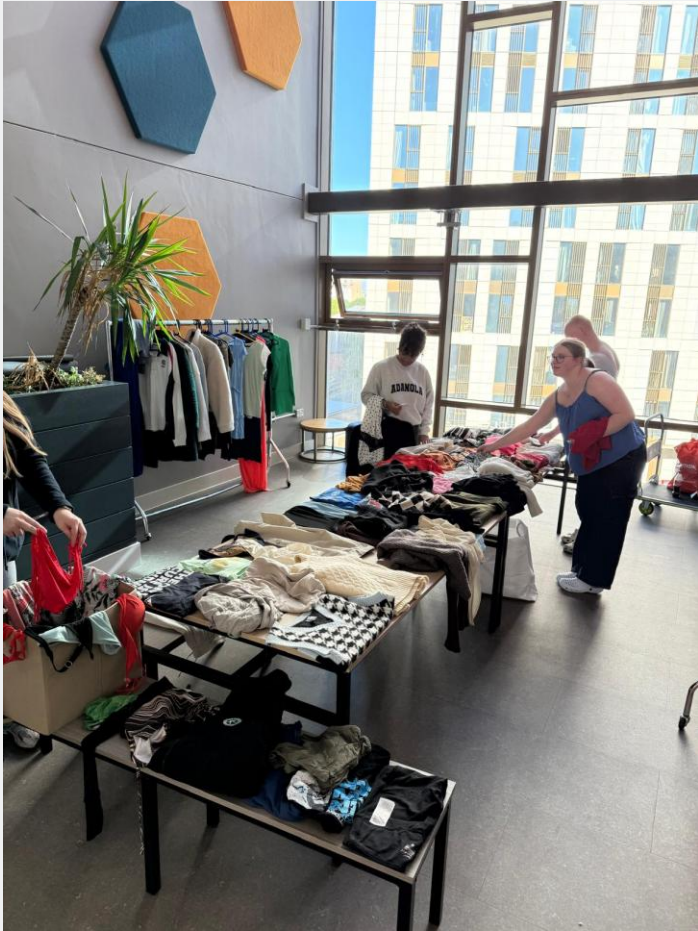
# What do young students value most when choosing where to live?

- Cost – affordability is the key criteria for choice.
- Location – proximity to campus, city or specific 'student' areas and access to transport links and local facilities such as supermarkets.
- Quality and condition of accommodation.
- Bill included and no hidden costs
- Accommodation type, size and facilities
- Safety
- Sense of community
- Information provided and responsiveness

# Communal Spaces



# Communal Spaces



# Communal Spaces



# Communal Spaces



# What are the key success factors when marketing less popular student housing?

- Affordability and value messaging.
- Location convenience.
- Quality of promotional materials.
- Inclusive rents.
- Strengthen community and wellbeing initiatives.
- Consider the different needs of student groups.

# What features should be emphasised to boost appeal?

- Plan your approach – focus on your Unique Selling Points.
- Highlight what makes the resident's experience better – convenience, clean, warm, good internet, sustainable, friendly.
- Contemporary spaces and rooms attract students – think about decoration and fixtures and fittings.
- Staff need to be well-equipped to deal with issues and responsive to issues being raised.
- Manage resident students with respect, friendliness and care.
- Develop programmes to support the resident's community.
- Link with university 'partners' to ensure there are clear lines of communication.
- Good technology to support operations – reporting faults through an app, managing rent payments, social activities etc.
- A sense of belonging is vital to a good residence.



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## Student House Hunting Behaviour Survey 2025

Supported by



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for **students.com**

# In summary

- Go to the Unipol website for more information about us and what we do in the UK  
<https://www.unipol.org.uk/>
- There are a huge number of private sector providers and architects spending significant resource on differentiating products from competitors. Look at the following for ideas:

<https://nowstudents.co.uk/>

<https://www.iqstudentaccommodation.com/>

<https://www.willmoreiles.com/>

Thanks for listening

Any questions or  
comments?

