

## Introduction

The following notes outline the contents, use and format of this report.

Comments that are identified with "A" in the right hand column indicate areas of concern that require the implementation of appropriate actions and the submission of an improvement action plan to the National Code administrator describing how these issues will be addressed by the providing organisation.

Comments identified "O" are defined as Observations and show areas that the providing organisation should review, although not necessarily requiring any specific remedial action.

Comments that are **not** identified as "A" or "O" include statements of fact, positive observations, suggestions or supporting information recorded for the benefit of either the provider, the National Code Administrator or other interested parties.

This verification report was produced by sampling the evidence referenced within the self-assessment, previously completed by the provider organisation. This was done by reviewing documentation, discussions with the site management about site management systems and procedures, a site inspection including a sample of rooms, and where possible, gaining information from discussion with students experiencing what is being offered.

## Visit type

Initial verification	✓	Renewal verification		Follow up visit		Other	
<b>Verification team:</b>						<b>Visit date(s)</b>	

## Executive summary

The development concerned was purpose built as residential premises in the late 1960s – early 1970s.

The premises were purchased two years ago from the University of X with the intention of carrying out refurbishment of the site. The provider manages the site whilst the University of X market the site an book and allocate students to it.

Some of the fixtures and fitments are getting towards the end of their effective life and are in need of replacement or refurbishment. The provider has already carried out some modernisation/improvement and are continuing to invest in the property as part of an on-going improvement plan.

The verification process identified that the improvement of kitchen and personal washing and Wc facilities in particular would be an appropriate priority for investment.

## Verification plan

### Aspects reviewed at each visit

### Additional aspects reviewed on this visit

Marketing materials and ownership details	Complaints and maintenance requests	Mail handling, parcels and valuables		Service level agreements	
Allocations process	Risk assessment and H&S	Refuse collection		Improvement plans	

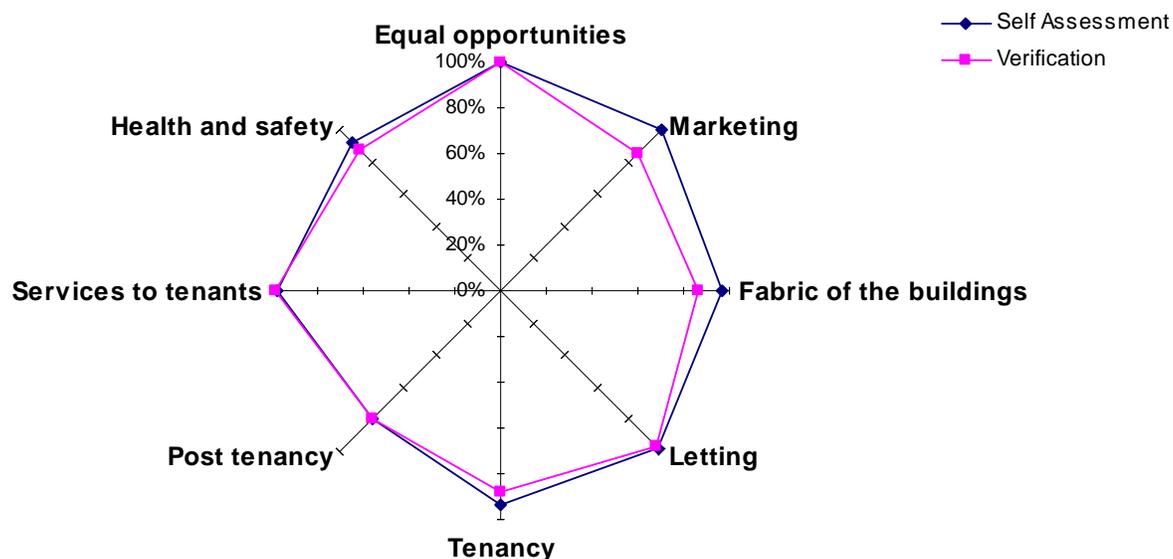
Tenant contracts and deposits	Fire/gas/electrical safety	Recycling provisions		Grounds maintenance	
Tenant induction	Security provision	Operational procedures		Disaster recovery	
Staff training and development	Room inventories	Tenant surveys		IT security	
Selection of rooms and shared facilities	End of tenancy	Performance management		Diversity and equal opportunities	

**Summary of action points recorded from the verification**

Action point	Summary description
A1	Increase the level of provision of personal washing facilities.
A2	Increase the level of provision of food preparation facilities.
A3	Undertake a survey of the windows in the building to assess their effective operation and carry out repairs and adjustments as necessary.
A4	Cut down or thin out the tall trees along the Western boundary of the site that are currently blocking out much natural daylight to the rooms overlooking this elevation so as to provide an adequate level of natural lighting.
A5	Make provision for possession notices to be served on tenants under the Housing Act section 21 two months before the end of their tenancy.
A6	The marketing material provided for this site on the website of the University of X needs to accurately reflect the fact that the premises are scheduled for refurbishment/modernisation and the presence of uni-sex bathroom arrangements.

## Self assessment and verification profile

### Self assessment - Verification



#### Commentary on the profile

The verification process has amended the provider's self-assessment score to account for:

Marketing – the verification process has reduced the a self assessment score on account of the marketing material not making reference to the fact that the premises are to be the subject of a programme of modernisation/refurbishment.

Fabric of building– the verification process has reduced the self assessment score on account of the low level of provision of kitchen and personal washing facilities

Tenancy – the self-assessment scores has been reduced to account for possession notices not being served.

Health & safety - self-assessment scores reduced to account for the need for the windows to be overhauled and the trees along the western boundary to be cut down or thinned out.

*The areas planned for verification during this visit have been reviewed and the action points recorded in this report have been discussed and agreed with the provider's representatives as appropriate:*

Verifier

Signed.....

Name:

Date:

Report on the activities completed and action notes raised	Type/ref
<p>The regional and site managers provided certain documentation about their policies, procedures, service delivery systems and health, safety and tenant welfare information including a copy of the student welcome pack.</p> <p>The University of X audit service level agreements that have been agreed with the provider in order to check that operational policies, procedures and service delivery systems are being complied with. Additionally, the provider has their own corporate system of auditing of specific operational functions.</p> <p>The cleanliness of the buildings, communal areas and fixtures and fittings was good.</p> <p>Laundry facilities were provided in adequate numbers.</p> <p>The mail delivery system was secure.</p> <p>Full fire precautions were installed.</p> <p>Essential services for example, emergency lighting and automatic fire alarms systems were regularly checked and the details logged.</p> <p>Comprehensive security systems were installed and security advice provided to tenants in their welcome pack.</p> <p>The provider uses feedback from customer satisfaction surveys to assist with ideas for improvements.</p> <p>The numbers of personal washing facilities were low in proportion to the number of tenants using them.</p> <p>A total of 27 baths &amp; showers were provided for 161 tenants, which equates to a ratio of 1:6. However 6 shower units were provided in unisex facilities that were unsuitable because the shower facilities did not provide private space to dress/undress between the showering and communal areas.</p> <p>The situation was exacerbated by the allocation arrangements of the University of X that did not appear to take account of the amenities provision for men and women. The consequence was that personal washing (and WC provision) was inadequate for women (who were the majority number) but plentiful for men (the minority number). Additionally 8 out of the 27 bath/shower units were baths without an over-bath shower facility. This has the effect of reducing the availability of quick use personal washing facilities.</p> <p>During the verification visit a number of female tenants questioned about their view of their accommodation responded that the provision of personal washing facilities was inadequate.</p> <p>The provision of personal washing facilities needs to be reviewed with the aim of increasing the provision, and with sufficient flexibility to account for the variations in proportions of male and female users from one letting period to another.</p> <p>The numbers of cookers and sinks provided for food preparation and washing were low in proportion to the number of tenants using them.</p> <p>The large kitchens used by 13 people have only one sink for food preparation and</p>	<p>A1</p>

<p>washing. An extra sink with draining board should be provided or the existing sink replaced by a double sink with double drainer.</p> <p>In the D Wing section the small kitchen containing only one cooker, one sink and one fridge/freezer is shared by 12 people. An additional kitchen should be provided to reduce the currently unsatisfactory high ratio of users to facilities or alternatively additional facilities provided in the existing kitchen provided that its use would be safe and hygienic.</p> <p>There is a high ratio of users to cookers ranging from a ratio of 1:6.5 to 1:8 (excepting the kitchen in D Wing). Additional cooking facilities should be provided. It is suggested that microwave ovens would be satisfactory as a means of supplementing the existing cookers.</p> <p>The action points A1 and A2 will be reviewed in the event that the provider can provide written confirmation from the local authority (usually Environmental Health Services) that in their view the level of provision of the facilities is satisfactory.</p>	A2
<p>The building was structurally sound and in satisfactory repair with the exception of the windows. The aluminium sliding sash windows were, in some cases difficult to open and close safely. A tenant when asked for their views on their accommodation confirmed this. The windows need to be surveyed to assess their effective operation and carry out repairs and adjustments as necessary.</p>	A3
<p>The environment around the site was not satisfactorily maintained in that a line of trees along the western boundary had been allowed to grow so tall as to substantially block out natural lighting to the rooms that overlooked this elevation. As a consequence the rooms were too dark. The trees require cutting down or thinning out to an extent that sufficient natural light is provided to the rooms affected.</p>	A4
<p>In order to comply with clause 3.00 of the Code of Standards to ensure obtaining possession provision needs to be made for possession notices to be served on tenants under the Housing Act section 21 not less than two months before the end of their tenancy.</p>	A5
<p>The University of X marketed the premises and booked tenants in. The information provided on the University's website about the site was only minimal. There was no information on the website that overstated the quality of the accommodation, however, conversely, there was no information provided that accurately reflected the fact that the premises are scheduled for refurbishment and modernisation. A tenant when asked for their views on their accommodation said that she was very disappointed with its overall quality. Additionally the site – Lettings at Intake survey 2007 i.e. tenants satisfaction survey showed that 4 out of five respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the décor and environment of the premises.</p>	A6
<p>There is a high ratio of users to the number of fridge/freezers provided (ranging from 1:6.5 to 1:8 (excepting the kitchen in D Wing)). It is recommended that the provision of fridge/freezers be increased so as provide one shelf/drawer for refrigerated and for frozen foods for each user.</p>	O1
<p>The kitchen cupboard and drawer units, and floor coverings are getting towards the end of their effective life. In order that the kitchens may be maintained in a hygienic condition it is recommended that these be replaced as part of the intended refurbishment/modernisation programme.</p>	O2
<p>The management staff were aware of the Code of Standards for Larger Student developments but they did not have copies on site and accordingly were not familiar with the Code's contents. It is recommended that copies be downloaded from the ANUK or UNIPOL websites and that staff be educated about the requirements of the Code and</p>	O3

how to comply with them.

The premises are occupied as a house in multiple occupation by more than five unrelated tenants on more than three storeys and the accommodation is not arranged as self-contained flats. Consequently the premises may be required to have an HMO licence. If an HMO licence has not been applied for, then it is recommended (1) that the provider seek clarification from the local authority as to whether the premises are required to be licensed and (2) that the results of that clarification are confirmed to Simon Kemp, National Code Administrator.

O4

The verifier was informed that the premises were to be the subject of a refurbishment/modernisation investment programme. It is recommended that details of that programme be provided to Simon Kemp, National Code Administrator, specifying the works to be carried out and the timescales involved. If the refurbishment programme is intending to include the action points listed above, then it can be placed on record that a commitment with timescales has been given by the provider to bringing the premises up to a satisfactory level of compliance with the Code of Standards.

O5

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**Action Note number - A1**

<p><b>Aspect of the code</b> HEALTH AND SAFETY – Personal washing facilities</p>
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<p><b>Action point</b></p> <p>Increase the level of provision of personal washing facilities. The level of provision to be discussed and agreed with the National Code Administrator.</p> <p>This action point will be reviewed in the event that the provider can provide written confirmation from the local authority (usually Environmental Health Services) that in their view the level of provision of the facilities is satisfactory.</p>		
<p><b>Verifier signature</b></p>	<p><b>Accepted by provider</b></p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>

<p><b>Planned action</b></p>	<p><b>Completion date</b></p>
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<p><b>Action verified as complete</b></p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
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**Action Note number – A2**

<p><b>Aspect of the code</b></p> <p>HEALTH AND SAFETY – Food preparation facilities</p>
<p><b>Action point</b></p>

Increase the level of provision of cooking facilities and sinks. The level of provision to be discussed and agreed with the National Code Administrator.

This action point will be reviewed in the event that the provider can provide written confirmation from the local authority (usually Environmental Health Services) that in their view the level of provision of the facilities is satisfactory.

<b>Verifier signature</b>	<b>Accepted by provider</b>	<b>Date</b>
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<b>Planned action</b>	<b>Completion date</b>
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<b>Action verified as complete</b>	<b>Date</b>
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**Action Note number – A3**

<b>Aspect of the code</b> HEALTH AND SAFETY – Safe use of windows
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<b>Action point</b>
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Undertake a survey of the windows in the building to assess their effective operation and carry out repairs and adjustments as necessary to ensure their safe usage,

<b>Verifier signature</b>	<b>Accepted by provider</b>	<b>Date</b>
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<b>Planned action</b>	<b>Completion date</b>
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<b>Action verified as complete</b>	<b>Date</b>
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**Action Note number – A4**

<b>Aspect of the code</b> HEALTH AND SAFETY – Natural lighting
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<b>Action point</b>
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Cut down or thin out the tall trees along the Western boundary of the site that are currently blocking out much natural daylight to the rooms overlooking this elevation so as to provide an adequate level of natural lighting to those rooms.

<b>Verifier signature</b>	<b>Accepted by provider</b>	<b>Date</b>
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<b>Planned action</b>	<b>Completion date</b>
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**Action Note number – A5**

<b>Aspect of the code</b> ENSURING POSSESSION
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<b>Action point</b>
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Make provision for possession notices to be served on tenants under the Housing Act section 21 two months before the end of their tenancy.

<b>Verifier signature</b>	<b>Accepted by provider</b>	<b>Date</b>
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<b>Planned action</b>	<b>Completion date</b>
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<b>Action verified as complete</b>	<b>Date</b>
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**Action Note number – A6**

<b>Aspect of the code</b> MARKETING
<b>Action point</b>

In order that the quality of accommodation provided matches the expectations of tenants, liaise with the University of X to ensure that the marketing material provided for these premises on the University's website accurately reflects the fact that the premises are scheduled for refurbishment/modernisation. It should also make clear the uni-sex nature of the bathroom arrangements.

<b>Verifier signature</b>	<b>Accepted by provider</b>	<b>Date</b>
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<b>Planned action</b>	<b>Completion date</b>
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<b>Action verified as complete</b>	<b>Date</b>
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