

Housing

To gather insight into the student experience with housing, we launched a survey to explore four key areas of students' journey of obtaining accommodation. This looked at: the process of getting accommodation, affordability, conditions of the accommodation and the location. The survey achieved 91 complete responses (this survey was only live for a period of one week and was not incentivised).





“There desperately needs to be more student housing built. I absolutely adore my course but I could not in good conscience recommend anyone to come here with how bad the housing situation is, and I've been relatively fortunate.

Private landlords and estate agents absolutely take advantage of the situation and get away with charging insane amounts of money for uninhabitable conditions because students have no other choice and are just desperate to have a place to stay. Poorer students with no financial assistance from their parents are impacted the most.

The anxiety of not knowing whether you will have somewhere to live next academic year or whether you'll have to drop out (or live in shared rooms in glasney which is absolutely not a solution to the issue) is agonising and my course work suffers because of that.”

Key findings



60% of respondents live in a shared student house

3.9

Process of finding a guarantor (with 1 being very difficult and 5 being very easy)

2.5

Process of finding accommodation rating (with 1 being very difficult and 5 being very easy)



29% of respondents that the cost or conditions of their accommodation had significant negative impacts to their university experience



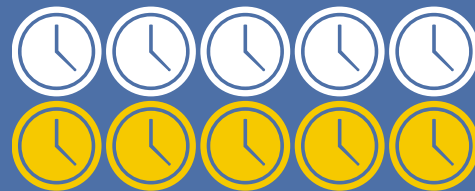
63% of respondents spend **between £501 to £700** on rent & bills a month

3

Conditions of housing (with 1 being not very good and 5 being very good)

2.7

Affordability rating (with 1 being very unaffordable and 5 being very affordable)



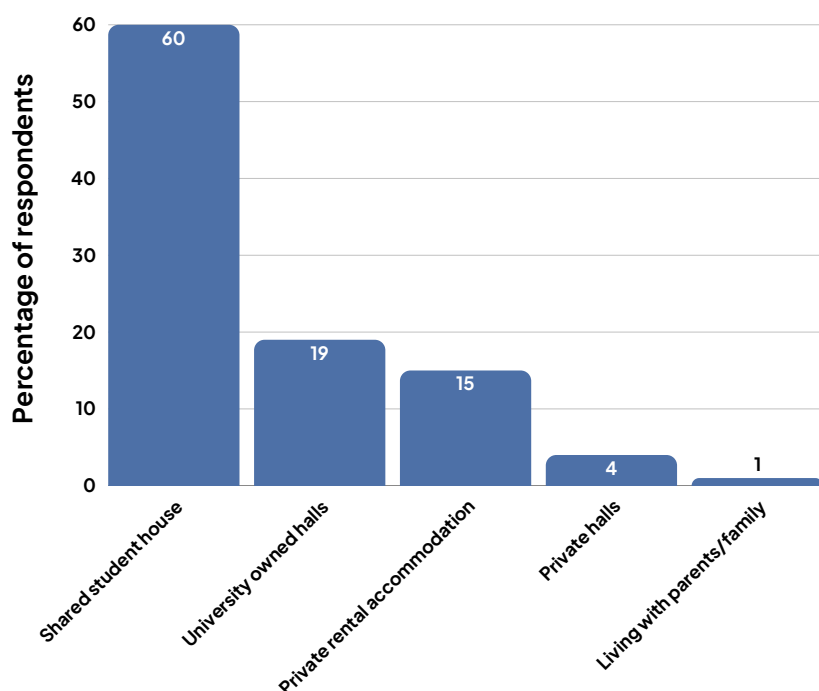
46% of respondents spend 15-30 minutes travelling to campus



40% of respondents walk to campus with 34% taking the bus

The search for housing

Where participants currently live



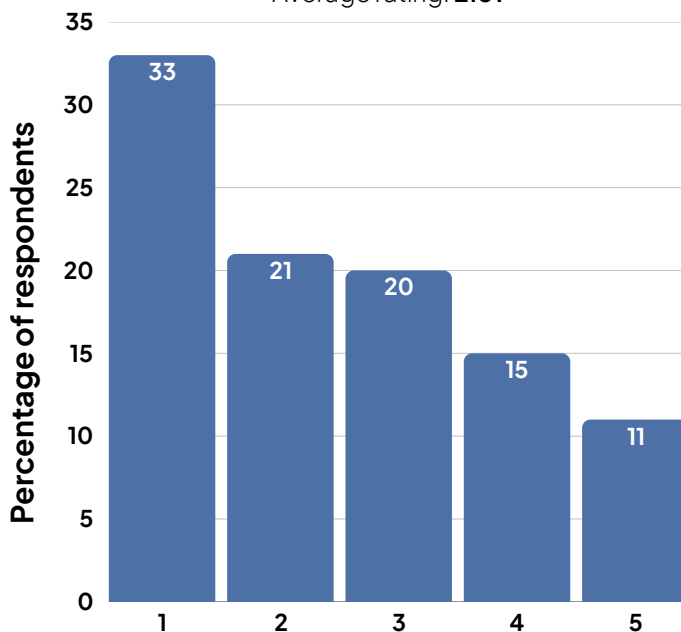
Most of the sample are living in a shared student house (60%) with 19% in University owned halls, 16% in private rental accommodation, 4% in private halls and 1% living with parents or their family.

Respondents were asked ‘**On a scale of 1 to 5, how was the process of finding your accommodation**’ (with 1 being very difficult and 5 being very easy). As shown by the chart, the average rating was **2.51** but 33% of the sample rated the process as 1 - very difficult.

This finding is echoed through many of the open-text comments, such as one student who shared:

“I literally couldn't get another house, there were no houses on the market, I'm not exaggerating when I say this but I applied for every single house that came on the market between November and February because I had another people to make a group of any size and I got one viewing on a house riddled with mould”

Rating the process of finding accommodation
Average rating: 2.51

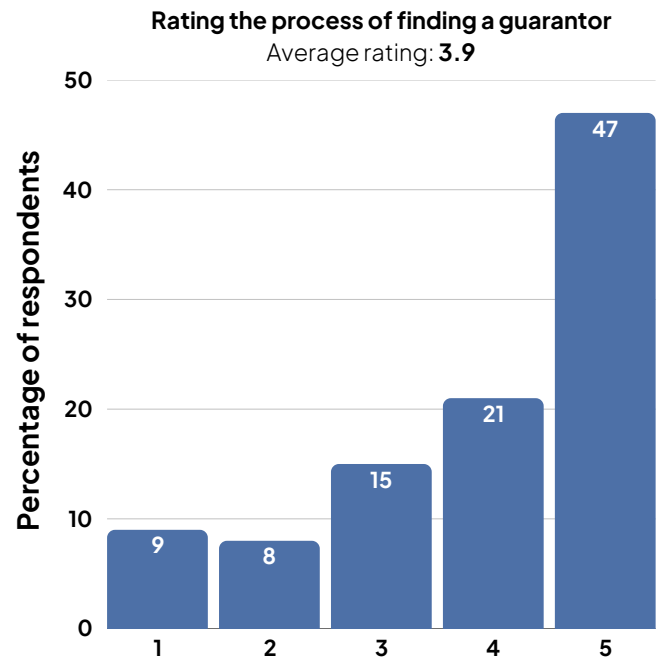


Respondents were also asked to rate their experience with finding a guarantor (with 1 being very difficult and 5 being very easy). As shown in the graph, the average rating was **3.9** with 47% of the sample rating the process as a 5 - very easy.

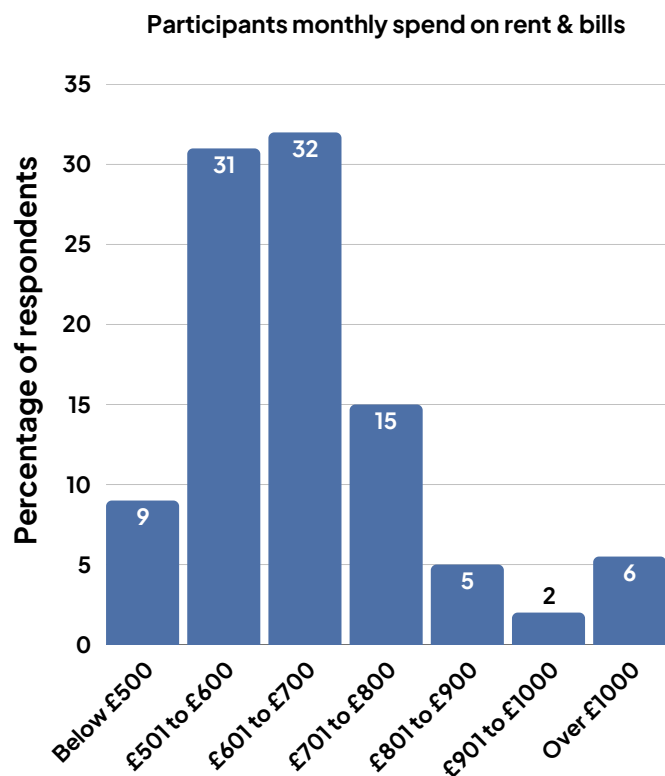
However, there were several free text comments surrounding guarantors:

“Considering I am an estranged student, I feel that there should be advice made specific for us in regards to guarantors, rent arrears, how to set up utilities etc”

“I just wish it was cheaper and as international student i wish housing here would offer more. And more accessible with less of a guarantor thing. Ig they had offer international guarantor then it would be fine but it's only limited to UK. “



Cost & Condition of Housing

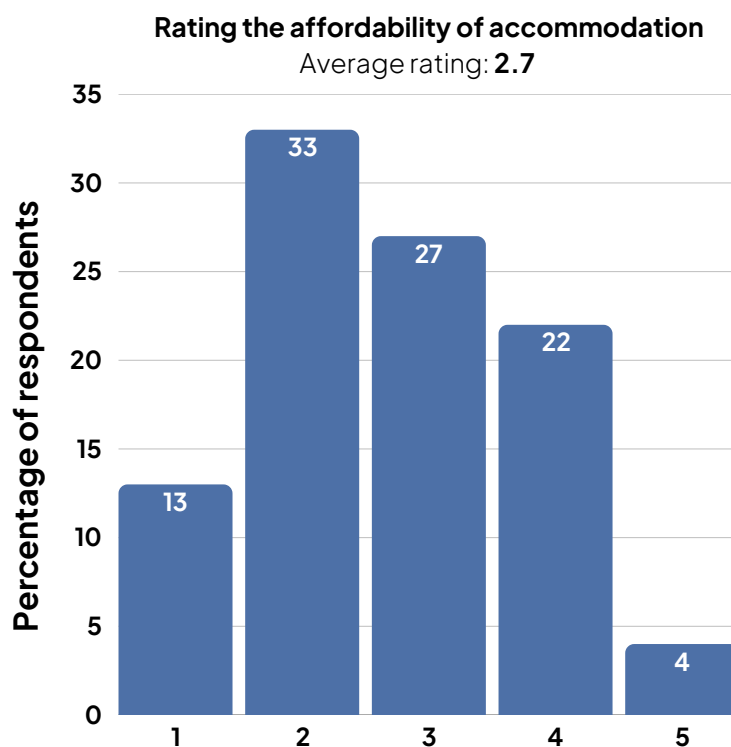


Our sample is on average spending between £501 to 700 and month on rent and bills (accounting for 63% of respondents). When considering this against the maintenance loans, students spending £600 a month (over a 12 month period) and receiving the maximum loan of £10,227, students would be left with £3,077 a year after rent & bills. This equates to approximately £256 a month to cover the cost of food, transport, course cost, extra-curriculars and their social lives.

This finding is echoed when respondents were asked to rate the affordability of their accommodation (with 1 being very unaffordable and 5 being very affordable). The average rating was **2.7** with 33% of our sample rating their accommodation as 2 - unaffordable.

There were many free text comments throughout this survey sharing experiences surrounding the cost of student accommodation, such as:

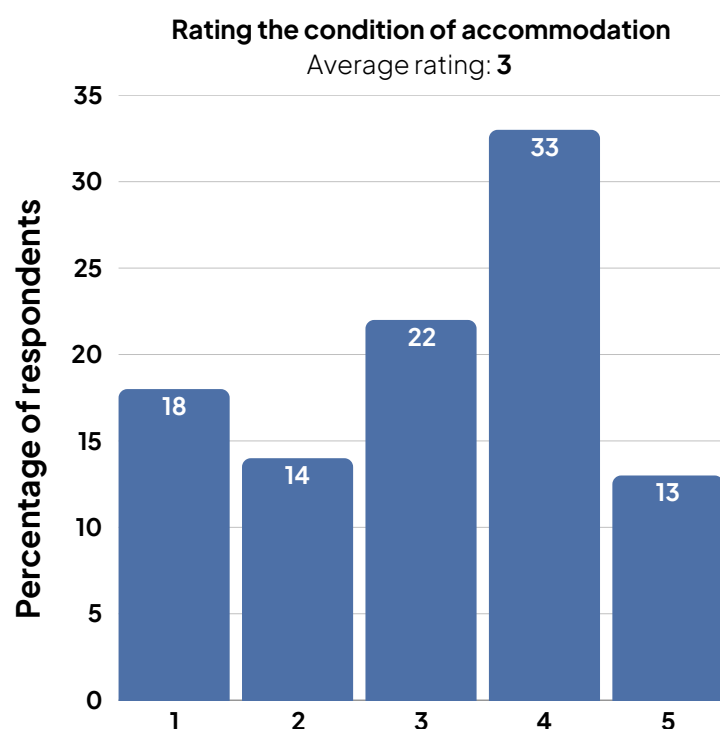
“Rents are way, way too high. Students do not receive enough maintenance grant to cover expenses. My rent & bills are about £630 per month, which works out to £7560 per 12 months of tenancy. I get maximum maintenance grant but live entirely in overdraft. At present, I am at -£1300 in my overdraft, and only have £200 remaining from my January student loan due to having to put in so much so early for 4 months of rent and bills.”



“Bursary, properties are far too expensive in the local area for students. Our house has increased by £700 for the next academic year, forcing us to move out.”

“Even though i receive the full student loan and receive a bursary, i cannot afford to pay my rent and also living expense without taking on a part time job alongside my studies which impacts the amount of time i can spend on my Uni work “

“The bus tickets to campus have increased hugely this year and I would not have chosen to live in Falmouth instead of Penryn had i of known the costs would become so high and increase almost every month.”



Respondents were also asked to rate the condition of their accommodation, with 1 being not very good and 5 being very good. As shown in the graph, the average rating was **3**, with 33% of the sample rating the conditions of their accommodation as a 3 - good, 32% rated the conditions as either a 1 or a 2, showing a poor experience.

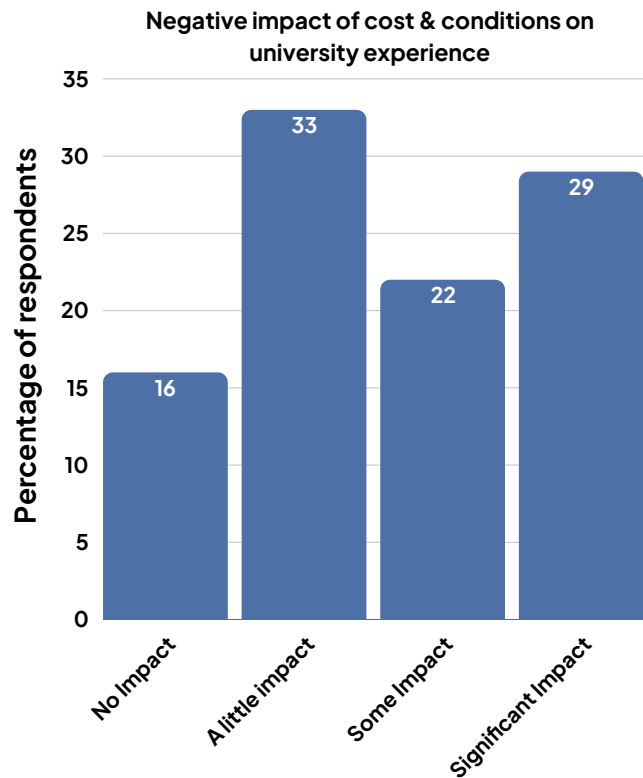
There were several free text comments, highlighting the poor conditions students are living in - such as:

“so many things wrong with the house, shower is always broken, mould everywhere even with windows open all

day, cost of bills is shockingly unaffordable. our house is very poorly insulated, the insulation was last legally checked in the 80s and has since fallen down the walls and gone rotten so any heat we put in the house goes straight out, and the landlord is impossible to contact all the time.”

“My year 2 house was dire. Mould issues, damp, etc. Landlord unhelpful. Glasney accomodation also had these issues in year 1. Staff unhelpful. Private halls are fortunately clean.”

“In my last house, there was mould everywhere, a gas leak that wasn't fixed for a year, I had a hole in my wall that you could see through to the 'garden', I got unwell, I then couldn't find any accommodation and had to consider dropping out because there was no where to live and no one would give me any actual support”



We also asked respondents whether the cost & conditions of their housing had ever negatively impacted their university experience with 84% of our sample agreeing that their experience had been negatively impacted as a direct result of their housing experience - with 29% feeling that it had a significant impact.

Respondents were given an opportunity to share any additional comments about cost & conditions, which highlighted that several students have experienced health issues as a result of their housing as well as there being impacts to students' daily lives & mental wellbeing:

“Mould and damp should not be acceptable in a student house. It should not be up to the student to have to email and complain due to developing chest issues because their room is so damp, even if they live by the harbour.”

“Due to accomodation team not adhering to my llp and direct communications before I moved into packsaddle, the pain of being on the top floor physically forced me to need painkillers thrice daily and because of this I now have drug induced colitis. I now have to depend on my partner to help me with moving heavy things, doing food shopping, helping me physically because I can't rely on prescribed pain meds anymore due to it making me ill. I also have to decide what lectures/workshops are most important each week because the physical strain causes me to be in agony.”

“The stress of finding external housing separate from uni halls is very high as well as knowing who to live with as we've only been at uni a couple months when looking for second year housing. The local estate agents are awful and take advantage of students- conditions of houses are poor, no maintenance gets done when reported leading to the house condition getting worse and the rent is too high for what's included. I also found there isn't really any advice on dealing with housing such as sorting out bills, checking contracts etc. all of this has heavily impacted my second year as rather than being able to focus on my uni studies I find myself dealing with housing issues which I never encountered when living in university halls which overall was a much better experience”

Perhaps what is most alarming, when considering the cost & conditions of student housing, is the normality students associate with high costs and poor conditions. With one student sharing:

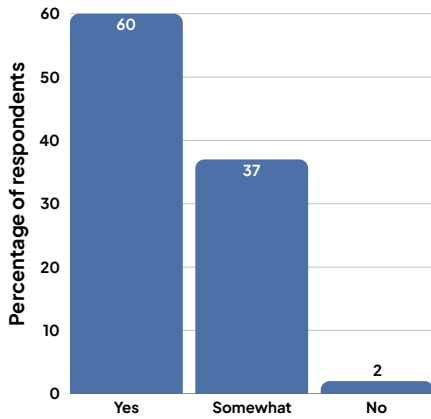
“Both student housing and private renting is universally expensive, and as someone who is fortunate enough to get the full amount of student loan - money is a constant worry. If it was any more expensive I would have no choice to work alongside my uni work, which some people don't consider that big of a deal but the way I see it I'm already paying too much and getting into too much debt just to not be able to concentrate 100% on my studies.

We've had multiple issues with our house like a faulty boiler (e.g. no/on and off hot water in one of the showers and the taps for months), the other shower leaking into the ceiling below, broken furniture, broken or leaking radiators, in addition to all the furniture just being old/damaged etc. Plenty of issues with mould but I understand everyone deals with that in Falmouth to a certain extent.

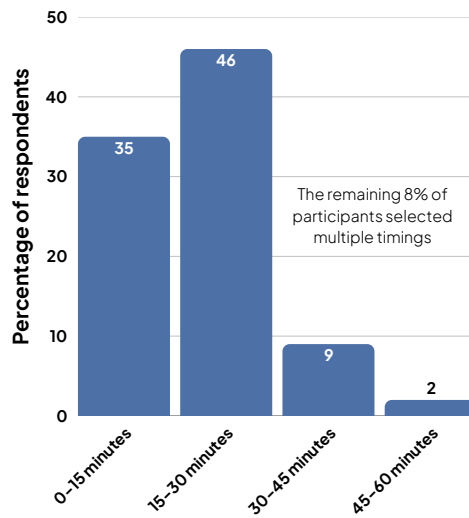
We pay too much in rent for what we have but at the same time we can't complain because everywhere else is more expensive and not necessarily better conditions, so despite all that I'm not even that mad because I know it could be worse.”

Location of Housing

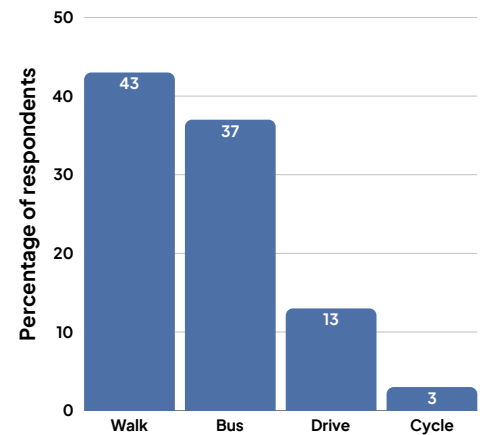
Do you feel that the location of your housing is convenient for your studies?



Time travelled to campus



Participants mode of travel to campus

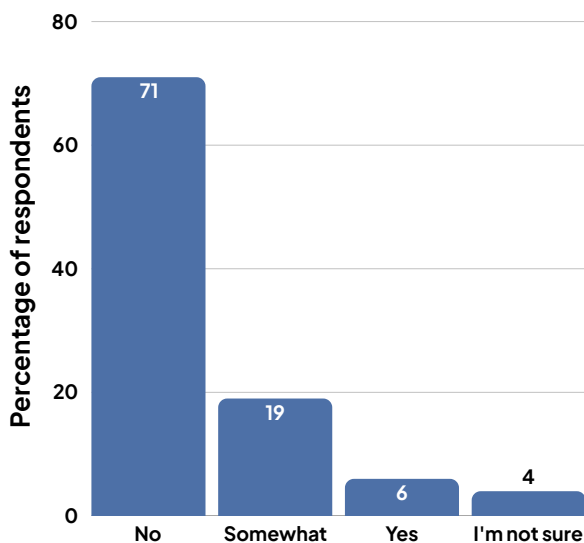


60% of the sample feel that the location of their housing is convenient for their studies, with 81% of respondents spending less than 30 minutes to get to campus.

The most popular travel methods for our sample were walking and using the bus. There were a few comments regarding the bus prices with one student sharing that:

“It was a good place to live but now that bus prices have been raised so much it is now way to expensive to travel to campus from Falmouth”

Negative impact of accommodation location to university experience



Overall, our sample are relatively happy with the location of their housing with 71% not experience any negative impact to their university experience but there are difficulties surrounding the cost of travelling via the bus to campus.

Additional Housing Support

Respondents were also given the opportunity to share comments on what further housing support they would like during the search for accommodation. This highlighted three clear areas :

- What to look for
- Specific Advice
- Landlords/Estate Agents

Respondents want to know what they need to find accommodation but vitally how much is it going to cost them, issues to expect with private housing (& how to deal with them) as well as opportunities for specific advice based on demographic - for example, international students, mature students and estranged students.

Whilst students were asking for things that already exist such as *“Giving 1st years a checklist on what they need to keep in mind when searching for a house: list of people they are living with, guarantor, location, transportation options.”* , there is a need to expand the way these are delivered to students and how it can be better communicated to these individuals. With one student suggesting: *“Sit down sessions with the SU to find affordable accommodations. Explain to people how hard it is to get a house, where to look, how much they should be spending, what to do if you get to April and you haven't got a house, this needs to be done in person because people are literally homeless, reading a webpage about it doesn't make it all alright.”*

There is also a need to involve co-creation with what to look for, giving students a space to share their own experiences with each other, with several students leaving comments related to student reviewed places or landlords:

“A page through the university where people can recommend places/landlords- I got lucky this year but last year I got stuck with an awful landlord so would be good to have been warned about that.”

“A list of student reviewed estate agents.”

Overall, students are seeking greater transparency on the reality of the student housing journey - from the process of finding accommodation through to dealing with their landlords & estate agents.



“The level of stress from searching for student housing last year forced me onto serious medication and backed me into a corner by making me resort to a far more expensive option than I'd originally wanted. Many other people I know have had similar issues which have impacted their time at university severely.”



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