

## **Details of the service standards you should expect from the Sussex Student Lettings team and occasions where support may have to be withdrawn**

### **Sussex Student Lettings: Service standards**

#### **Statement of intent**

Sussex Student Lettings aims to provide good quality and affordable off-campus housing, as well as advice to any student needing assistance or experiencing problems with their housing, letting agency or landlord.

#### **You can expect**

- To be assisted with your housing needs; which includes being accompanied by a member of SSL staff to view any properties within our portfolio which we feel may be suitable for you/ your group.  
If we are unable to provide you with a suitable property, you will be given advice and details of other options available to assist with your search.
- To be advised of your rights and responsibilities as a tenant, and thereby empowering you to resolve issues you may be experiencing with your letting agency or landlord.
- To be treated considerately and objectively at all times by professional and experienced staff
- For the personal data you provide to SSL to be treated with confidentiality, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- We aim to provide a prompt service and will respond to your voicemails and emails as quickly as possible. Please be aware that at busy times of the year, or due to circumstances beyond our control, this is not always possible.  
However as a guide, we aim to:  
Deal with urgent maintenance telephone calls and emails within 3 hours  
Respond to all telephone and email inquiries within 2 working days  
Facilitate the return of security deposits within 30 days

#### **We expect you to**

- Treat all staff with respect with consideration.
- Comply fully with the Students' Union's [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) and these service standards - any student who does not do so, or who uses threatening/abusive language or behaviour, will be challenged and may be requested to leave

#### **We encourage you to**

- Make [comments and suggestions](#) to improve our service.

## **Refusal and Withdrawal of Service**

### **Sussex Student Letting: Refusal and withdrawal of service policy and procedure**

Whilst Sussex Student Lettings remains committed to its aim of providing a service to all students in Brighton, there may be occasions where after careful consideration, services are refused or withdrawn for individual users. This policy outlines the circumstances in which this may be appropriate, and details the procedure which should be followed.

#### **Circumstances which can lead to refusal or withdrawal of service**

- a. Service user threatening or using violence
- b. Breach of the Students' Union's Equality and Diversity Policy by service user
- c. Breach of the Discrimination Acts

This list is intended to serve as a guide for both service users and staff within Sussex Student Lettings (SSL). However, if an instance occurs that is outside these guidelines, which indicates that it is not in either party's interest for the relationship to continue, SSL reserves the right to refuse service after careful consideration of the situation. In all cases the service user is entitled to appeal the decision via the Students' Union's complaints procedure.

#### **Promotion of the policy**

All SSL staff will receive training on this policy via induction.

Where a potential refusal/withdrawal of service is identified, the user will be made aware of the policy and be offered a copy where appropriate.

#### **Procedure**

Where SSL staff have concerns regarding a service user in relation to the policy, the details of this should be discussed in the first instance with the Head of Campaigns and Representation. In addition the following action should be taken in relation to specific points:

##### **a) Service user threatening or using violence.**

If any staff member, elected officer, volunteer or other service users within the Students' Union has any concerns over the conduct of a service user in terms of violence, and communication skills fail to resolve the situation peacefully, or if a service user is being violent, the University's security staff will be contacted.

In discussions with others involved in the incident, the Head of Campaigns and Representation may decide to ban a user from the service. This decision will then be communicated to the user in writing. It will be at the Head of Campaigns and

Representation's discretion, in consultation with the Chief Executive of the Students' Union, to initiate the Union's complaints procedure, membership procedure and/or the University's disciplinary procedure in relation to the incident.

**b) Breach of the Students' Union's Equality and Diversity Policy**

SSL embraces the Students' Union Equality and Diversity Policy. In accordance with this policy, if informal measures to deal with the situation do not rectify the behaviour of a service user, SSL staff may refuse service in order to maintain an environment acceptable to other service users and staff.

It will be at the Head of Campaigns and Representation's discretion, in consultation with the Chief Executive of the Students' Union, to initiate the Union's complaints procedure, membership procedure and/or the University's disciplinary procedure in relation to the incident.

**c) Breach of the Discrimination Acts**

It is illegal for landlords to discriminate against tenants on the basis of race, gender, disability, sexuality or religion. This includes:

- Renting a property to certain tenants on worse terms than other tenants
- Treating certain tenants differently when setting policies regarding facilities. For example, this could include a laundry or garden access.
- Evicting, harassing or refusing to let your property to certain tenants because of their race, gender, disability, sexuality or religion.
- Refusing to incorporate reasonable demands in a tenancy agreement necessary for a disabled person to live at the property. For example, a landlord who has a 'no pets' policy must alter this if a blind tenant requires a guide dog.

**Standard actions**

In all circumstances where refusal or withdrawal of service applies the following should occur:

1. The decision must be taken in consultation with the Head of Campaigns and Representation, whose decision is final
2. The user should be informed in writing of the decision and an explanation provided as to why it has occurred
3. The Union's Executive Committee will be notified of the decision in order to monitor the policy and for social policy purposes
4. The Students' Union's complaints procedure should be offered if the user wishes to challenge the decision