

Guaranteed Year–Round Accommodation

Blueprint for a #HomeAtUniversity

The Big Idea

Imagine trying to succeed at university... without knowing where you'll live for part of the year.

For many care-experienced and estranged students, this isn't hypothetical — it's reality.

The Big Idea behind Room 1 of the Blueprint is simple:



Students should have safe, stable accommodation all year round – including summer.

Why This Matters

University systems often assume students can “go home” outside term time. But for some students, there is no safe home to return to.

That creates real challenges:



Nowhere to stay during long breaks (especially summer)



Expensive short-term housing options



Constant moving between places



Increased risk of homelessness

And when housing isn't stable, everything else is affected:

Mental health

Academic focus

Retention and progression

Sense of belonging



If a student doesn't know where they're living next, everything else becomes harder.

What Good Looks Like

When this room is “built”, students experience certainty – not crisis.

Strong approaches include:

-  Guaranteed and priority access to halls during term and vacation periods
-  Proactive identification and communication (early and frequent information)
-  Emergency accommodation options when things go wrong
-  Joined-up support (housing + finance + wellbeing working together)



The key shift: From “support if things go wrong” to “stability built into the system.”

In Practice: University of Strathclyde

At Strathclyde, this room is already taking shape:

- ✔ Summer accommodation available for care-experienced and estranged students
- ✔ Priority / guaranteed access to halls
- ✔ Emergency housing for crisis situations
- ✔ Information shared before arrival and throughout the student journey
- ✔ Strong links between accommodation, support staff, and external partners

In one year, 16 students were supported over the summer.



What stands out isn't just the offer — it's how proactive and joined-up it is.

What to Watch For

Even strong systems can have gaps:

- Not all students may be eligible for accommodation support (e.g. estranged students)
- Some periods may not be covered



This means housing support must connect with financial advice and wider policy.

What This Means For SU Officers

You don't run accommodation, but you can shape how it works.

Ask your institution:

? Do students have access to accommodation all year round?

? Who is included – and who isn't?

? Do students know this support exists?

? What happens in a crisis?

And importantly:

 Amplify student experiences through your own and national student voices

 Highlight gaps and inconsistencies

 Advocate for housing as a basic condition for success, not a bonus or a response to 'hardship'

Key Takeaway

This isn't just about rooms or rent. It's about:

Stability

Fairness

And whether students can fully take part in university life



A #HomeAtUniversity shouldn't stop when term ends.



Next: Room 2

Published: August 2026 / Next Update: August 2027

The Unite Foundation is a CIO registered in England + Wales 1198601 / Scotland SCO51987