



Committee and date

Cabinet

9 November 2016

Student Accommodation Quality Accreditation Mark Scheme University Centre Shrewsbury

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This paper presents the Student Accommodation Quality Accreditation Mark Scheme to be implemented following Cabinet's consideration of the final report of the Task & Finish Group on 9th December 2015 and feedback from a public consultation earlier this year.
- 1.2 On 8th February 2016, a public consultation opened detailing the Council's proposed Student Accommodation Quality Accreditation Mark scheme. This consultation was completed on 18 March 2016. The consultation response together with the measures recommended by the Task and Finish Group on Student Accommodation are summarised in Appendix 1 alongside any proposed amendments. The revised scheme is detailed in Appendix 2.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers and approves
 - a) The introduction of the Student Accommodation Quality Accreditation Mark in order to set out standards expected at an early stage in the development of the University Centre.
 - b) The scheme will be introduced on 1st December 2016.
 - c) The fees for 2016/17 will be £135 for each property and £40 for a half day briefing session for each landlord. Fees are payable every 3 years.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 Poor quality housing can present health and safety risks to occupants. An accreditation scheme will provide assurance to landlords and prospective tenants that accommodation advertised through the University Centre Shrewsbury has been inspected by Shropshire Council and meets the required standards.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The proposed fees for the scheme are based on recovery of costs. The fee proposed for 2016/17 is £135 for each property to cover the cost of inspection and advertising on the University Website and £40 for a half day briefing for each landlord. The accreditation mark lasts for three years, on expiry a new Accreditation Mark will have to be applied for. Landlords are also required to attend the update briefing every 3 years. The fees will be reviewed annually.

5. Report

- 5.1 In December 2015, Cabinet agreed that a Student Accommodation Accreditation Mark be introduced in 2016 in order to set expected standards for landlords and prospective tenants.
- 5.2 A public consultation detailing the Council's proposed Student Accommodation Quality Accreditation Mark scheme was held between 8th February 2016 and 18th March 2016. The Consultation was active on the Shropshire Council Website during that time and was open to the public and all stakeholders to put forward their comments. The subject was also discussed with landlords at a National Landlords Association Branch meeting during the consultation period.
- 5.3 A number of enquiries seeking further clarification on the scheme were received, however, only one consultation response was submitted by the National Landlords Association on behalf of its members. The Task and Finish Group on Student Accommodation also made a number of recommendations for consideration.
- 5.4 The revised version of the Shropshire Student Accommodation Accreditation Scheme is attached at Appendix 2.

Background Papers

- Cabinet Report of the Task and Finish Group on Student Accommodation
9th December 2015

Cabinet Member/s

Portfolio Holder for Regulatory Services, Housing and Commissioning (Central)

- Councillor M Price

Local Member/s

All

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Consultation Responses, Changes and Amendments

Appendix 2 - Shropshire Student Accommodation Accreditation Scheme

Appendix 1 – Consultation Responses, Task and Finish Group Comment and Amendments

Ref	Comments	Response / Amendment to the Scheme
1.	<p>The National Landlords Association believes that if the purpose of the scheme is to provide students with access to good landlords, then it would benefit from the inclusion of NLA accredited members.</p> <p>The additional costs and possible lack of benefit to the landlord could dissuade NLA accredited members from signing up, so consideration should be given by the Council to recognising our accreditation scheme as other local authorities across the country have already done.</p>	<p>Landlords who are accredited with the NLA shall not be required to complete the half day briefing session. It is deemed that they will have completed the necessary training through the NLA Accreditation and this will be sufficient in matching or exceeding the training which will be provided through the Accreditation Scheme.</p> <p>All landlords will be required to pay the Accreditation Mark fee for each property. This fee includes the cost of advertising with the UCS accommodation office (currently £15), the initial assessment visit and any revisits within the first three months. The fee is non-refundable if accreditation is not successfully achieved within that time.</p> <p>For clarification, it is proposed that the briefing session for landlords who are not accredited with NLA will be a half-day session and not a full day session.</p>
2.	<p>Landlords will be responsible for the maintenance of the gardens of their let properties to ensure garden maintenance does not become a contentious issue within communities and to prevent the development of any environmental health problems.</p>	<p>This will be included in the checklist as a mandatory requirement.</p>
3.	<p>Standardised tenancy agreements for students to protect students.</p>	<p>Information regarding the law covering tenancy agreements and deposits will be provided in the half day briefing for landlords.</p>

4.	No pre-payment meters in student accommodation. Common HMO tenancy agreements include utilities in rent. Pre-payment meters are incompatible with mains powered smoke detectors.	The electric meter supplying the property must not be a pre-payment meter to prevent a potential break in the utilities' services which could affect mains powered fire detectors.
5.	The proposed scheme requires Landlords to pass a fit and proper persons test in line with national best practice. Officers are asked to explore the inclusion of a DBS check in line with DBS guidance. Students are likely to be away from home for the first time and will in many cases be experiencing the private rental sector for the first time. As such they could be considered vulnerable to some extent and so procedures should be in place to ensure the suitability of accredited landlords.	<p>Enquiries have revealed that we can only request a basic disclosure and we cannot request landlords to undertake a DBS check for the voluntary student accreditation scheme.</p> <p>There are some merits in the use of a basic disclosure but they are only valid on the day of issue, they do not identify spent convictions for crimes such as fraud, rape or violence and they do not provide information about other issues such as lack of compliance with deposit regulations or unfair contracts. A robust system for assessing fitness is required which should also include the landlord's history of compliance.</p> <p>Some of the properties which will be accredited under this scheme will be higher risk houses in multiple occupation which require mandatory licensing. The licensing of HMOs includes the requirement for landlords to be a fit and proper person. Enquiries are underway to review that assessment and whether a basic disclosure can be included as part of that process instead of the voluntary scheme.</p>
6.	Consideration should be given to joint working with local recycling and reuse schemes such as Revive and Shrewsbury Furniture Scheme to reduce residual waste, to ensure usable items are not sent to landfill, to reduce end of year waste complaints and to benefit disadvantaged local residents and potentially future students.	Information regarding local recycling schemes will be provided in the half day briefing for landlords.

Appendix 2:

Shropshire Student Accommodation Accreditation Scheme

What is the Accreditation Mark?

The Accreditation Mark provides recognition that a property has been inspected by Shropshire Council solely for the purpose of advertising on the University Centre Shropshire (UCS) Student Accommodation List. It covers all types of student accommodation in the private rented sector

What is the Accreditation Mark Standard?

In order to qualify for the Accreditation Mark your property must be in a good condition and free from serious hazards. As a landlord you must adhere to good management practices that are fair and reasonable. In addition to this, we require your property to contain certain equipment and facilities that are specifically required by students e.g. desk with a chair, washing machine and access to a wireless internet connection.

A full Student Accommodation Accreditation Scheme checklist is attached and is available from the Community Protection Team at Shropshire Council or on our website www.shropshire.gov.uk

Why does the University Centre Shrewsbury (UCS) require me to have an Accreditation Mark to advertise my property?

Moving into the private rented sector for the first time is a big step for many students and their parents. The UCS takes pride in being linked with landlords who provide good quality student accommodation.

The UCS has given an assurance to both students and the parents of students, that all accommodation

advertised through the Student Accommodation Office has been inspected by Shropshire Council and meets the required standard; an Accreditation Mark provides this assurance.

What are the benefits of an Accreditation Mark?

You only need to apply for an Accreditation Mark if you wish to advertise your student property via UCS Student Accommodation List. An Accreditation Mark will be required for each property you wish to advertise.

An Accreditation Mark gives you as a landlord, as well as prospective tenants, the knowledge that your property meets the standards required for student accommodation. The student housing market is becoming increasingly competitive and we believe that an Accreditation Mark will give you a market advantage of being able to advertise your property through the UCS Accommodation Office directly to its students, including mature students, and families, who are all looking for good quality accommodation in Shrewsbury.

Who can apply for an Accreditation Mark?

Landlords applying for an Accreditation Mark must complete a half-day development course every 3 years (which will cost £40), agree to comply with a code of conduct and be a fit and proper person. Alternatively, if your property is managed by the University or a letting agent who is accredited with NALS or ARLA, they can also apply for an Accreditation Mark for your property.

Do I have to pay for an Accreditation Mark?

Yes, there is a fee for an Accreditation Mark which is £135 (in addition to the cost of the half-day training course). This fee will need to be paid for each property prior to the property being inspected and will apply whether or not your property is compliant with the Accreditation Mark criteria. The fee includes the advertising costs for the UCS Accommodation office. The fee covers any revisits within the first 3 months and is non-refundable.

What do I get when I am awarded an Accreditation Mark?

Following an inspection of your property you will be awarded an Accreditation certificate, subject to the property meeting the required standard. Your property details will be forwarded to UCS for inclusion on the Student Accommodation List.

How long does my Accreditation Mark last?

An Accreditation Mark lasts for three years, on expiry a new Accreditation Mark will have to be applied for.

What happens if my property does not comply with the Accreditation Mark standard?

We would always advise you to look at the Accreditation Mark checklist before you apply. The checklist is available from the Community Protection team at Shropshire Council, or can be found at www.shropshire.gov.uk. In the event that there are some matters that need attention, you will be given 3 months to do any works without incurring another charge for an officer to revisit. If the works have not been done in this 3 month period, you will need to make another brand new application and pay the fee again.

I have a HMO licence; do I still need An Accreditation Mark?

Yes, you will still need to have an Accreditation Mark to advertise your property on the UCS Student Accommodation List.

My property has recently been inspected; do I need another inspection for an Accreditation Mark?

An Accreditation Mark will only be awarded to properties that meet the required student accommodation standard. It is more than likely that an inspection of your property will be required, however, Officers will use their discretion in assessing how recently your property was inspected and for what purpose in determining whether a further inspection for an Accreditation Mark is necessary.

How can I get an Accreditation Mark?

You will need contact the Community Protection Team either by email at community.protection@shropshire.gov.uk or by tel: 0345 678 9000.

Once you have paid your fee, a Public Protection Officer will contact you to make an appointment to visit your property.



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Student Accreditation Scheme Checklist

Landlord Name: _____

Landlord Address: _____

National Landlords Association (NLA) membership no. _____ NLA expiry date: __/__/__
(If applicable)

Property Address: _____

House/Flat/Other:..... No of Bedrooms: _____ No. of Occupants: _____

Property Age: Pre 1920 1920 – 1945 1946 – 1979 Post 1979
(Approx.)

Brief description of property: _____

Standard Safety Issues property complies with:

Decent Home Standard	Y/N	Housing Act 2004 (HHSRS – No Category 1 hazards)	Y/N
HMO Amenity Standard	Y/N	No pre-payment meters	Y/N
Fire Safety Standards			Y/N

(Complies with: LACORS Housing Fire Safety Guidance, RRO/Fire Service Standards (if applicable). Building Regulations approval (if applicable).

Paperwork	Issue Date	Paperwork	Issue Date
Valid Gas Safety Cert <i>(Within 12months)</i>	Y/N __/__/__	Fire fighting equipment	Y/N __/__/__
Current Electrical Cert <i>(Within last 5 years)</i>	Y/N __/__/__	Portable Appliance testing	Y/N __/__/__
Fire alarm servicing	Y/N __/__/__	Fire Risk assessment review	Y/N __/__/__
Emergency Lighting	Y/N __/__/__	EPC Certificate	Y/N __/__/__
Details deposit lodged with scheme	Y / N	Deposit Scheme Ref numbers	Y / N

Date of Satisfactory Property Inspection:

Enhanced Student Issues

Carbon monoxide detector	Y / N	Front elevation tidy	Y / N
Refuse- info/calendar provided	Y / N	Rear garden/yard tidy	Y / N
House file/noticeboard	Y / N	Contract covers Noise, ASB	Y / N
Landlord contact details	Y / N	Suitable receptacles provided	Y / N
Disputes Procedure	Y / N	Detailed response times	Y / N
Candles, Chip pans etc. <i>(Not recommended)</i>	Y / N	Landlord responsible for maintenance of gardens	Y/N

Security

Burglar alarm* Y / N Locks on Bedrooms Y / N

*20 min cut-off Y / N Change locks at end of tenancy Y / N

Key-holder details provided to Local Authority: _____

(Considers security and noise nuisance)

Marketing Issues

Shared facilities (tick those present):

Aerial socket	Bathroom	Bicycle Storage
Broadband Internet	Cooking Facilities	Dishwasher
Double Glazing	Freezer	Fridge
Fridge Freezer	Garage	Garden
Lounge	Microwave	Off road Parking
Parking	Permit Parking	Satellite/Cable TV
Separate WC	Shower	Sofa
Telephone	Telephone Point	Television
Tumble Dryer	Vacuum Cleaner	Washer Dryer
Washing Machine		
Adequate no and siting of power sockets (Either 4 single or 2 double)		Yes/No

Private facilities (tick those present):

Bed	Chair	Dead lock
Desk	Drawers	En-suite
Pinboard	Shelves	Television
Wardrobe		

Other facilities

No Bathrooms Ensuites Showers WCs

Suitable for Disabled Yes / No

Services and Facilities

Heating Type	Gas CH	Elec CH	Water heating	Gas	Elec immersion
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Loft Insulation	Other	Cavity Wall Insulation	Other
Yes/No		Yes / No	

Approx. Depth _____

General The following are in satisfactory, safe repair:

Flaunching to chimney pots	Y / N	Pointing to chimney stack	Y / N
Lead flashing to stack	Y / N	Roof tiles/slates	Y / N
Verge pointings	Y / N	Verge flashing	Y / N
Gutters	Y / N	Rainwater Downpipes	Y / N
Bathroom Waste drainage pipework	Y / N	WC waste pipework	Y / N
Soil vent stack	Y / N	Pointing to walls	Y / N
External flues	Y / N	Damp proof course not breached	Y / N
Boundary walls & fences	Y / N	Gardens tidy & free of rubbish	Y / N
Exterior decoration	Y / N	Outbuildings	Y / N
Adequate foul and surface water drainage in good repair	Y / N		

No of rooms to rent:

Type of Contract:

Whole house/Individual:

Length of Contract:

Rent from to

Deposit from to

What is included (please tick):

Water Gas
Electricity TV Licence
Wireless Internet Cleaning
Telephone Gardening

Admin Fee £

Cleaning Fee £

Retainer £

Date Available from

Date advert to run from

Officer General Comments/Notes:

Property Decent

Free from Category 1 hazards

Officer Name:

Date:



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