National Codes Annual Report

to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

2019

NATIONAL CODE
assured accommodation

Contents

Introduction and Background

This is the thirteenth Annual Report on the operation and development of the ANUK/Unipol National Approved Codes for student accommodation controlled and managed by both educational establishments and private sector providers, but the first to the newly created Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.

Previous annual reports have focused mainly on the ways in which the ANUK/Unipol Codes for Larger Developments were meeting with the objectives set out in the Government's consultation document concerning Approved Codes of Practice. These were that:

- the development of the Codes should be an on-going process
- an annual review would take place based upon regular monitoring of compliance with the Codes' terms
- the review and progress of the Codes will be guided by committees of management.

Although this edition of the report references these objectives, it also focuses on activities that have taken place during the course of the year (July 2018 to June 2019) in managing, developing and promoting the Codes. Also outlined are the benefits that have been derived from this method of regulation of this growing section of the student housing market, including the fact that members of the Codes (who play an active part in their on-going development) have agreed to meet higher than statutory standards *and* be accountable for their performance; a clear sign to student consumers that they are committed to provide the best service and standards.

What has become very clear to those involved within the PBSA sector over the last 12 months is that the differences that once existed between the ways in which private providers and educational establishments manage and operate this type of accommodation have all but disappeared. Whereas once it was possible to identify particular management traits between the two sides, especially in terms of the approaches that they would take to the issue of student care, now it is the case that private providers have embraced wholeheartedly the need to address such issues as a matter of course and, in some cases, they have gone above and beyond what any educational establishment has been able to provide.

For these reasons the ANUK/Unipol National Codes believe a new regulatory framework for student housing is required, which will include:

- treating ALL PBSA accommodation that is covered by the 'Approved Codes' in the same way;
- HMO licensing and selective licensing should not apply to PBSA where they are members of an Approved Code;

- the Building Regulatory system should be tightened when PBSA buildings come on line and the Local Authority should have the central role in approving that buildings are suitable for high density occupancy;

- educational institutions should have a greater responsibility for their students living in the private sector, particularly relating to wellbeing, but should also become more active participants in the development of future accommodation. HEIs should not simply absent themselves from the process of housing their students as many have done. Institutions should also look at affordability with a view to encouraging the development of lower cost student accommodation on their patch. There are the beginnings of this debate within Augar.

- measures should be taken to stop students signing up so early for their tenancies in subsequent years. The fact that many students commit themselves to tenancies for the following academic year as early as 30 days into their first year of study is undesirable and unnecessary.

Format of the Annual Report

The objectives set by the Government provide a framework when compiling an annual report and this report therefore includes the following sections:

- Membership Report 2018-2019, including details of all new members who have joined in the last year
- Governance of the Codes, a report on who has been involved in the decision making process and what changes, if any, have been made to the operations of the Codes
- Joint Codes Conference Report
- Meeting the Challenges of the Thirteenth Year
- Assessment and Verification Procedures, focusing especially on the number of visits completed and the outcomes from these
- Complaints and Tribunal Procedures, including the number of complaints received and how they were dealt with
- Website Visits and Online Training Course, a new section providing some insights into the usage being made of the National Codes website
- Conclusion – including a list of challenges for the fourteenth year of operations

Simon Kemp
National Codes Administrator

Section 1: Membership Report 2018-2019

As of the 30th June 2019 there were a total of **331,725** bed spaces accredited under both the ANUK/Unipol National Codes, an increase on the numbers reported in the last edition of the report of 10%, almost entirely due to members adding new developments over the summer of 2018. The majority of these bed spaces fall within the Code for Non-Educational Establishments and, as a result of this, the ratio of bed space numbers between the Codes stands at 89:11, a change from the 87:13 figure that was given in the 2018 report.

The total number of private providers and educational establishments signed-up to both of the ANUK/Unipol Codes was 157. The majority of these (109) were members of the Code for Non-Educational Establishments, with 48 belonging to the Code for Educational Establishments**.**

The total bed space numbers registered under the Educational Establishment Code was 36,734, an increase of just 162 on the figure for the end of June 2018. The Code for Non-Educational Establishments saw numbers increase by 29,802 to stand at 294,991 bed spaces.

Over the course of the 2018-2019 period a number of new providers joined the Codes and some either withdrew, were removed or suspended from membership.

Table 1: New Members Joining and Withdrawals/Removals from Membership in 2018-2019

New Members	Members Withdrawn/Removed/Suspended
Aparto	Fortis Student Living
Cube Students	Linthorpe Property Management
Fawleybridge	Oxford Court Student Village
FHP Student Living	Parrish Court Developments Ltd
Glenfern Student Lets	Six Degrees Nottingham Ltd
Goodenough College	St Modwen SAC 2 Ltd
S Harrison Group	Universal Student Living
McComb Students	Varcity Living Ltd
Openarch Property Ltd	Wilson and Sharp Investments Ltd
Orange Living	
Sharples Property Co Ltd	
Stoney Street Ltd	
Student Digs Management	
UNINN Student Accommodation	
Valeo USL Ltd	

Table 2: Changes of Management Platform Names in 2018-2019

Previous Name	New Name
Allman RP L2	Realstar Management Ltd
Carr Mills Accommodation	Njoy Student Accommodation
Nido Collection	Nido Students
Whitfield Estates	Openarch Properties Ltd

It is likely that future increases in membership will come either from smaller providers, many of whom are looking to offer well managed, but lower cost, accommodation than their larger competitors can or it will be from new management platforms that emerge to manage accommodation that is currently being managed by an existing platform.

The last few years have witnessed a relatively high turn-over in the operational management of developments, either between existing members or involving new applicants for membership. As it has been agreed that developments undergoing such changes of management platform cannot be registered under this Code until a re-verification visit has taken place (which in turn requires the new platform to be operating the site), the site 'falls out' of registration until a visit has occurred and the verifier has recommended that the development be re-registered. As of the end of June 2019, a total of 40 developments fell into this category.

In addition, and as a result of a decision by the Committee of Management that the National Codes Administrator actively monitors the number of additional bed spaces to be added by members as a result of them bringing new sites into operation, it can be reported that from September 2019 at least another 17,000 bed spaces will be added once all of these new sites have been registered.

Analysis of the geographical spread of developments belonging to the Codes reveals that 89 different locations in the UK had at least one building signed-up to either Code, two more than in 2017-2018. Most of these are in England (72), but 10 are in Scotland, six in Wales and one was in the North of Ireland. Table 3 (below) details which locations outside of England currently have accommodation registered under the ANUK Codes

Table 3: Locations Outside of England with National Code Developments

Country	Location	Different Provider Numbers	Development Numbers	Bed Space Numbers
North of Ireland	Belfast	3	5	1,405
TOTALS		**3**	**5**	**1,405**
Scotland	Aberdeen	8	18	3,338
	Dornoch	1	1	40
	Dundee	4	4	1,525
	Edinburgh	16	31	7,334
	Elgin	1	1	40
	Fort William	1	1	40
	Glasgow	16	37	10,463
	Inverness	1	1	300
	Paisley	1	1	237
	St Andrews	2	2	368
TOTALS		**24** [1]	**97**	**23,685**
Wales	Aberystwyth	1	1	252
	Bangor	2	5	719
	Cardiff	8	22	7,204
	Newport	1	1	442
	Swansea	1	1	722
	Wrexham	1	1	156
TOTALS		**12** [1]	**31**	**9,495**

[1] These totals are for the different providers operating in the whole of these nations

In terms of the number of buildings registered under the two Codes, the total stood at 1,996 - a net increase of 137 on the figure reported in 2018.

Table 4 identifies the 10 locations that had the most bed spaces covered by the two Codes, along with the number of developments being operated under them.

Table 4: Top Ten Locations in the UK with Student Developments Covered by the Two ANUK/Unipol Codes

Position	Location	Provider Numbers	Development Numbers	Bed Space Numbers
1	London	39	161	48,464
2	Leeds	24	92	19,596
3	Cambridge	40	810	19,388
4	Nottingham	30	79	18,178
5	Newcastle	20	44	16,045
6	Liverpool	21	54	15,485
7	Sheffield	17	49	14,137
8	Birmingham	13	34	13,507
9	Manchester	13	43	12,724
10	Leicester	19	47	10,521

London continues to have the greatest number of registered bed spaces under these Codes, and the numbers increased slightly in 2018-2019 from the previous years, as did the number of providers operating in that market and number of developments registered under the Codes. However, the bed space numbers also rose in all but two of these locations (Birmingham and Manchester) in comparison to 2017-2018, and the number of developments operating under the Codes also increased during 2018-2019 in all but three locations (Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle). More providers were also found to be operating in half of these markets than in the previous period (Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London and Newcastle), whilst the numbers for the other half remained the same.

In terms of changes in relative positions from 2017-2018, the top four stay as they were, but Newcastle climbs to fifth from seventh and Sheffield from ninth to seventh, with Liverpool, Birmingham and Manchester all falling down at least one place. Leicester remains where it was.

Differences between the 157 members of the Codes in terms of the number of bed spaces that they are operating is shown in Tables 5 and 6, which reveal who the top and bottom 10 providers are in respect of bed spaces as well as the number of developments that they operate.

Table 5: Largest Members (by bed spaces covered) in the Two ANUK/Unipol Codes

Position	Provider	Total Number of Bed Spaces Operated	Total Number of Developments
1	UNITE	48,701	126
2	Liberty Living	23,886	51
3	IQ Student	20,912	42
4	Student Roost	17, 287	48
5	Fresh Student Living	16,636	57
6	CRM Students	14,333	60
7	Homes for Students	12,926	57
8	CLVUK	11,298	22
9	Host Student	9,864	39
10	Hello Student	9,126	83

The most significant finding from Table 5 is the emergence of the one new platform into the top ten, Hello Student, who have taken on the management of a large number of sites that were previously being operated by other members of the Code for non- educational establishments. Also of significance is the fact that of the other nine providers listed, only Unite had fewer bed spaces in 2018-2019 than they did the previous period, and this was due to them selling off a number of sites.

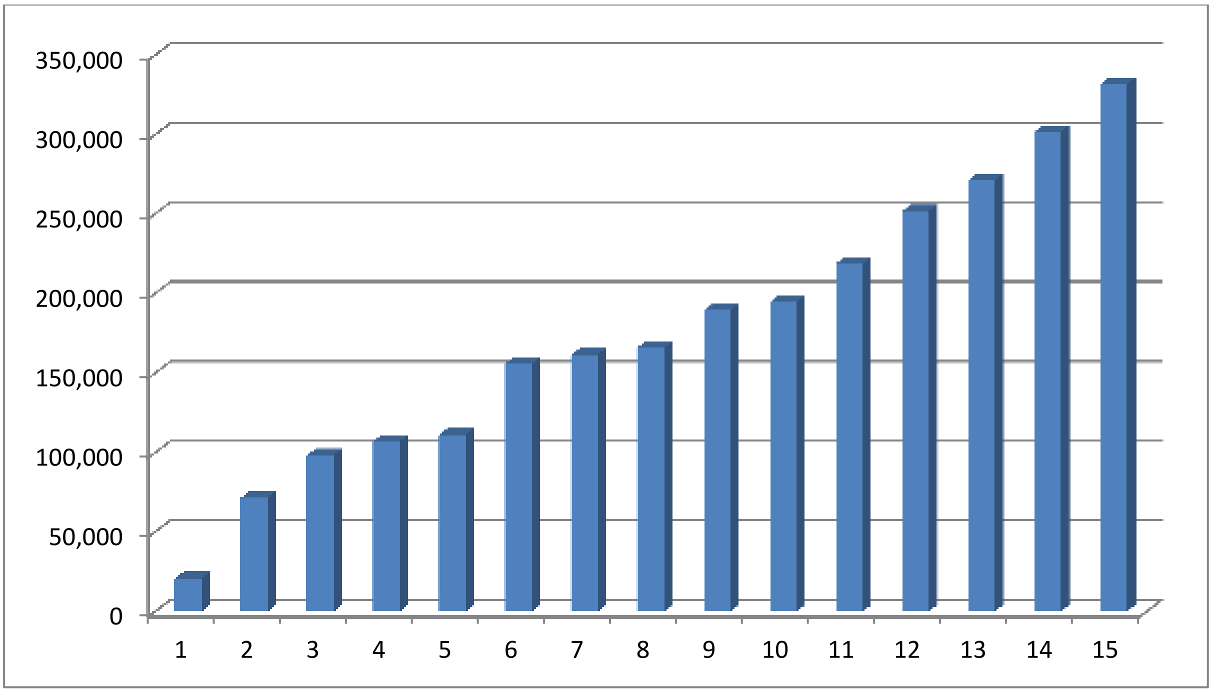
As was the case in the previous two editions of this report, all of the top 10 suppliers were members of the Code for non-educational establishments. The largest universities in terms of bed space numbers during 2018-2019 were the University of Leeds (4,958 bed spaces) and the University of Hertfordshire (4,709 bed spaces), who were 19th and 20th respectively in the rankings - four lower than in 2017-2018.

Table 6: Smallest Members (by bed spaces covered) in the Two ANUK/Unipol Codes

Position	Provider	Total Number of Bed Spaces Operated	Total Number of Developments
148	West Dean College	54	5
149	Ashwell House	50	1
150	Richmond & Hillcroft College	49	2
151	Shumei Eiko Ltd	41	1
152	SCIO	40	1
153	Congregational Federation	39	1
154	Orange Living	39	1
155	Student Living	35	1
156	The Vafai Trust	31	2
157	Baaz Properties	26	1

There were two members of the Educational Establishments Code in the bottom 10, along with four religious-based charitable organisations belonging to the other Code.

GRAPH 1: Number of Bed Spaces Covered by the ANUK/Unipol Codes - 2005 to 2019



Graph 1 depicts the increase in the number of bed spaces covered by both Codes since 2005, when the Codes were first launched. From just over twenty thousand bed spaces registered when the Codes were first launched, the numbers then more than tripled in the second year to over 70,000. Over the following three years the increase slowed, however, there was a substantial rise in 2010 of 40% - which was caused mainly by the inclusion of all 31 Cambridge Colleges. Although the bed space numbers have risen each year since 2010 the percentage increase has varied, ranging from as low as 2.7% to as high as 15%, the overall average rise was 8.84% per year.

Section 2: Governance of the Codes

Committee of Management

The Committee of Management (CoM), which is comprised of all the Codes' key stakeholders, continues to provide an active and important forum for members where information, good practice and concerns can be raised in a mutually helpful and co-operative environment. The CoM also sets the fees to join the Codes. The fees are set by those who have to meet them.

The CoM met on three occasions between July 2018 and the end of June 2019 - July 18th, 2018; November 15th, 2018 and March 28th 2019 - in order to operate the Codes in a transparent manner the minutes are freely available on the National Codes website.

Average attendance at meetings decreased a little, from 26 in 2017- 2018 to 25 in 2018 - 2019.

For the first time in 2018 the July meeting was conducted in a different way to the other two meetings which had taken place in 2017 - 2018. Whilst they were traditional business meetings, the summer event was focused only on the one topic - in this case it was the impact on the sector of HMO Licensing. Members were required to bring with them to the meeting certain information about how their organisations have been impacted by licensing, OR they were permitted to send an alternate in their place who had a more detailed understanding of this topic. Following an initial presentation from a specialist on the topic, members were then asked to work in groups in order to discuss their own experiences and to share these with the larger meeting via a feedback session.

The result was a very wide-ranging and informed discussion, the outcomes from which have been fed into a number of local authority HMO licensing consultations, as well as in submissions to government departments. On the basis of the success of the change of meeting approach, it has been agreed that the summer meeting will continue to be operated in a less formal way, and to encourage members to send relevant colleagues to the meeting so that they are able to get some understanding of the purpose and function of this body.

Just as significant churn has occurred in the operation of developments accredited under the Codes, the same is true with membership of the CoM. Between July 2018 and the end of June 2019 the following people ceased to be members - for a variety of reasons:

- Clint Bartman (Hello Student) - left the business
- Mark Davies (Derwent Students) - left the business
- Simon Dickinson (CLVUK) - replaced as the representative of that provider
- Diane Kendrick (University of Hertfordshire) - replaced as the representative of that provider
- Brian Lewis (Vita Student) - left the business

- Stephanie Taylor (UNITE) - replaced as the representative of that provider
- Simon West (Homes for Students) - replaced as the representative of that provider

In each case the Committee of Management thanked these individuals for their contributions to the work of the Codes and wished them all the best for the future.

A number of people also joined, or in some cases returned to, the CoM in the last year and they were:

- Mandy Blackburn (Homes for Students)
- Ian Fletcher (Deputy Chair)
- Simon Griffiths (UNITE)
- Claire Hartridge (University of Hertforshire)
- Joanne Pollard (CLVUK)
- Graham Sheeran (Derwent Students)
- Claire Sherlock (Vita Students)
- Dov Whittle (Co-Opted)
- Suzanne Yoshikawa (Urbanest)

Current Members of the CoM:

Tariq Akbar (Downing Students)	Sarah Amer (MHCLG)	Andy Attewell (Host Students)	Michael Ball (UniversitiesUK)
Stephen Battersby (Chair)	Mandy Blackburn (Homes for Students)	Alan Blackmore (Collegiate AC)	Martin Blakey (Unipol)
Richard Bolger (Student Living at Sodexo)	Laura Bryant (Chapter Living)	Karen Burke (ASRA)	Bryan Carroll (CUBO)
Linda Cobb (ANUK)	Eva Crossan Jory (NUS)	Jane Crouch (Fresh Student Living)	Cheryl Darnell-Hayes (Association of Colleges)
Nicola Dean (Co-opted)	Wendy Evans (Cambridge Colleges)	Ian Fletcher (Deputy Chair)	John Ford (Student Roost)
Sue Green (University of Leeds)	Simon Griffiths (UNITE)	Paul Hardy (Sanctuary Students)	Claire Hartridge (University of Herts)
Linh Hawke (Co-opted)	Stuart Henderson (GSA)	Allan Hilton (Co-opted)	Victoria Johnson (Co-opted)
Paul Milner (UPP)	Clare Ody (Liberty Living)	Joanne Pollard (CLVUK)	Ian Robertson (Unipol)
Paul Rowlinson (IQ Student Accommodation)	Grahame Sheeran (Derwent Students)	Claire Sherlock (Vita Student)	Fay Sherrington (AMoSSHE)
Richard Stott (Co-opted)	Keith White (CRM Students)	Dov Whittle (Co-opted)	Suzanne Yoshikawa (Urbanest)

The Codes' Consortium

Ownership of the Codes rests with the Codes' Consortium, which consists of representatives of the three organisations which first devised the Codes - The Accreditation Network UK (ANUK); The National Union of Students (NUS); and Unipol Student Homes. All proposed alterations to the content of the Codes, as well as the procedures that govern their operation, have to be endorsed by this body.

Previously it was felt that the Consortium should only meet as and when it was necessary, i.e. following the completion of a review of the content of one of the Codes, but since 2015-2016 it has met a couple of times a year - the most recent being in April 2019. The following issues were amongst those that were discussed:

- Changes of membership
- A report back from the most recent meeting of the Committee of Management
- Proposed alterations to the content of the Code for Non-Educational Establishments
- Outcomes from recent decisions of the Tribunal

Current Members of the Consortium

ANUK	NUS	UNIPOL
Linda Cobb (Decent and Safe Homes)	Eva Crossan Jory (VP Welfare)	Martin Blakey (Chief Executive)
Ian Fletcher (British Property Federation)	Vacancy	Ian Robertson (Board Member)

Section 3: Joint Codes Conferences Report

The ninth Joint Codes Conference took place on November 16th, at the British Library in London, and was attended by 102 delegates and speakers. All delegates were invited to complete an evaluation form and the average of the evaluation ratings for the event are shown below in Tables 7 and 8 (1 equals excellent, 2 equals very good; 3 equals good; 4 equals average. 5 equals poor).

Table 7: General Ratings

Heading	Average Rating
Whole conference	1.6
Relevance to delegates' needs	1.8
Venue rooms	1.4
Location of Venue	1.5
Food	2.4
Unipol administration before the event	1.7
Unipol administration during the event	1.3
Overall Average	**1.7**

Apart from the usual excellent ratings for the work of the Unipol Training and Events Office, the venue and the conference as a whole scored significantly well amongst delegates, with only the quality of the food not receiving an excellent rating. Given that it was the first time that this venue had been used for this event, the scores were very encouraging and - as a result of them - the decision was taken to book it once again for 2019.

Table 8: Session Ratings

Session Title	Average Rating for Presentation	Average Rating for Relevance
Perspectives on the PBSA Market: Now and by 2023	2.1	1.9
Designing Sociability within Student Accommodation (1)	1.4	1.2
Tackling Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia in Student Accommodation	1.9	1.9
Confidentiality and Data Protection: What's the Difference and Does it Matter?	2.5	2.6
Innovation and Best Practice in Student Accommodation	2.1	1.9
Designing Sociability within Student Accommodation (2)	2.4	2.4
Creating LGBT+ Only Student Accommodation	2.7	2.7
Student Mental Health: What Support Can Accommodation Staff Provide?	2.1	2.0
Student Wellbeing in Practice	1.9	2.0

Two of these sessions were rated as 'excellent' for both presentation and relevance. One delegate commented as follows about the *Student Wellbeing in Practice* session "Well presented, extremely helpful. A difficult topic but so good to learn from others"

Overall the sessions at the conference were rated no less than ‘very good’, suggesting that once again those attending had found the event useful.

In terms of how this event compares (in evaluation terms) with the previous conferences, Tables 9 and 10 reveal the ratings for the aspects it is possible to show comparisons with.

Table 9: Average Ratings for General Aspects by Conference and Year

Aspect Event	Whole Conference	Relevance	Venue/Rooms	Location of Venue	Food
2nd Joint (2011)	2.5	2.2	2.9	2.2	2.8
3rd Joint (2012)	2.2	2.5	2.6	2.0	2.7
4th Joint (2013)	2.1	2.3	1.8	1.6	2.3
5th Joint (2014)	2.2	NA	1.6	1.3	1.9
6th Joint (2015)	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.7	2.5
7th Joint (2016)	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.4	1.9
8th Joint (2017)	1.9	2.0	2.4	1.7	2.1

Table 9 would appear to confirm the view that the 2018 event was probably the most successful of all, with the exception of the food option, and this is supported by the findings in Table 10.

Table 10: Average Combined Scores for Different Sessions at the Last Eight Joint Conferences

Year	Presentation Rating	Relevance Rating
2011	2.60	2.42
2012	2.62	2.57
2013	2.22	2.34
2014	2.64	NA
2015	2.35	2.02
2016	2.09	2.11
2017	2.14	2.22
2018	2.00	2.10

Finally, the evaluation forms asked three further questions (one more than the previous events): 1) Did the course meet your expectations?; 2)Did you feel that the subject matter, as advertised, was fully covered? and 3) Did you have a specific reason for attending this conference?

In terms of question 1, only one of the delegates who answered it replied ‘no’ - in other words 92% of delegates who responded did feel that the event had met with their expectations (NB as this was the new question it was not possible to compare these findings with those from previous years). As for question 2, all but two of the respondents replied ‘yes’. Finally, for question 3, a quarter of the delegates who responded stated that they had no specific reason for wanting to attend. For those who did express their reasons for doing so the most common were as follows:

- Networking
- Identifying best practice
- Gaining an understanding of how to comply with the Codes
- Gaining knowledge about what is happening within the sector.

Section 4: Meeting the Challenges of the Thirteenth Year

The last annual report set a number of challenges for the thirteenth full year of the Codes' operation. These were:

- Appoint a Tribunal Chair, Vice Chair and Provider Representatives;
- Agree new standards of student care and training for providers in response to the rise in mental health and wellbeing issues being experienced by students evidenced in recent research;
- Gather information from members who reported that they possessed developments containing ACM cladding on what actions they have undertaken as a result of that since the summer of 2017, to include details of whether the cladding has been removed or retained;
- Discuss with members a proposal that would require them all to commission independent Housing Health and Safety Rating System checks to be made of all of their sites;
- Evaluate the consistency of approach taken by members of the National Codes verification team when preparing, conducting and reporting on visits, via a questionnaire to be sent to the relevant providers;
- Introduce the revised version of the Educational Establishment Code;
- Revise the online self-assessment questionnaire to take into account the changes made to the Educational Establishment Code;
- Begin the process of reviewing the Code for Non-Educational Establishments;
- Assess the effectiveness of existing methods of communications with members of the Codes and investigate means of enhancing this.

Most of these objectives were either achieved, or are in the process of being so, but it may be helpful to provide some more detail on each of these areas of work.

<u>Appointment on Tribunal Chairs and Representatives</u>

When the Tribunal held its annual meeting in July 2018 it was reported that the Codes' Consortium had agreed to offer the Chair, John Martin, a further three year term of office and that he had accepted this. The meeting was also informed that the Vice Chair, Keith White, and all three of the provider nominated members of the Tribunal, had indicated that they wished to stand again for a further three year term, and it was agreed to recommend this to the Committee of Management meeting that was scheduled to take place in November 2018. When that body met, the recommendation was duly accepted.

However, in addition to recommending the re-appointment of the Chairs and provider representatives, the Tribunal instructed the National Codes Administrator to investigate ways of ensuring that all of the positions became subject to renewal at the same time again. Some proposals with respect to this will therefore be presented to the 2019 annual meeting of the Tribunal, which will take place in either late September or early October.

Recognition within the Codes of the Importance of Student Wellbeing

Having introduced into the revised Code for Educational Establishments some clauses that required members to meet certain requirements in respect of this issue, it was always just a matter of time before demands were made from within the PBSA sector to ensure that the code for Non-Educational Establishments was brought into line over these same issues. However, whilst a number of the larger PBSA private providers expressed the view that they would easily be able to adopt the same requirements as had been asked of educational establishments, it was acknowledged that many of the medium sized and smaller private operators would struggle. It was therefore decided that it would be necessary to devise some wording for the new clauses that would be appropriate to the whole of the private provider members.

A small working group was convened early in 2019 to discuss the overall approach that could be taken, which consisted of representatives of student organisations, charities and private sector providers. It agreed that any requirements introduced for members to follow should be easily understood by both providers and students, and that they would be easy for members of the national Codes verification team to check for compliance with. Similar messages emanated from meetings of both the Committee of Management and the Audit Panel, when they met in March and April 2019.

Following these inputs the National Codes Administrator devised some draft clauses and distributed them for discussion amongst members of the working group, who made a number of constructive changes to them and proposed that a further consultation with the full membership take place on the wording, before the Codes Consortium be invited to agree the final wording that would then be discussed at a meeting of the Committee of Management at the end of 2019.

Action in Respect of Buildings Fitted with ACM Cladding

The National Codes Administrator reported to the March 2019 meeting of the Committee of Management that of the 73 PBSA developments operated by members of the ANUK/Unipol Codes which were reported to have had some ACM cladding on them in the summer of 2017, by November 2018 just 14 still had some of this cladding and for which no plan had been put in place for its removal. By the time of the March 2019 meeting this figure had been reduced to 11.

The CoM discussed these findings and it agreed two specific courses of action. The first was for the NCA to write to the MHCLG contact to the Codes, Sarah Amer, highlighting the findings from the survey of provider members and requesting advice on what further action might be required in respect of this cladding by the department. The second was to make arrangements for visits to be undertaken to the remaining 11 sites with cladding in order to ascertain whether the fire safety procedures that had been put in place by the relevant providers following the Grenfell Tower fire were adequate.

As instructed, the NCA wrote to MHCLG on May 10th. In addition to reporting on progress that Code members had made with cladding removal, the letter mentioned the proposal to undertake visits to all sites where cladding had been retained and for which no plan existed for its removal and asked whether this was an action which would have the support of the Building Safety Programme. The letter also enquired as to whether the BSP would be willing to share details of which student buildings it believed retained ACM cladding, in order to check for differences. However, as of the end of June 2019, the NCA had received no response to this letter from MHCLG.

In respect of the second task, the NCA made contact with the operators of each of the 14 affected sites and requested updates from them about the situation with the cladding, which resulted in a decrease of a further six sites from the list that would require a visit. An appropriately qualified inspector was also identified, and the visits to the sites were scheduled for August 2019.

Evaluation of the Consistency of Approach Taken by National Code Verifiers

All providers that were subject to a verification visit from the start of October to the end of December 2018, and which did not concern a newly opened development, were invited to respond to a questionnaire that was designed to get some feedback on their experience of how the visit had gone and to establish whether it was possible to discern a consistent approach was being taken to these visits by the verification team. The questionnaire consisted of eight questions in total, relating to activities of the verifiers before the visit had occurred, during the visit itself and afterwards as well. Providers were also given the opportunity to make any general comments they wished to about their experience of the visit.

A total of 30 returns were received (a response rate of 53%) and these covered at least one visit that had been made by each of the nine members of the verification team. The results of the survey indicated that, on the whole, the approach taken by each of the verifiers is consistent and providers themselves are very content with how the system works. However, the following aspects require some improvement:

- Ahead of the visit, verifiers need to ask whether or not the site managers have had access to the providers own self-assessment questionnaire;
- At the end of the visit verifiers need to make clear to the provider how they can access the draft report from the online portal, and this information should be given to both the main contact for that provider as well as the relevant local/regional managers;
- Verifiers need to ensure that they follow-up with providers on any actions that their reports identified and that they copy in all relevant parties within the provider to such requests.

It is likely that this survey will be repeated in the autumn of 2019, so that comparative results can then be reported to the November 2019 meeting of the Committee of Management.

Launch and Approval of the Revised Educational Establishment Code

The revised version of this Code became operational from the beginning of 2019, however it was not formally approved by the Secretary of State until the start of June. Unfortunately, when the Statutory Instrument listing all educational establishment providers to be excepted from the definition of HMOs for licensing purposes was published, it did not include any of those in membership of the ANUK/Unipol National Code for Educational Establishments. This matter will be rectified in October 2019.

Revisions to the Online Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Having revised the Code for Educational Establishments it was necessary for the content of the SAQ relating to that Code to be altered also, and that work was completed at the end of January 2019 in time for the Cambridge Colleges to begin completing their revised SAQs ahead of their next round of cyclical revisits that were due to begin in the summer of 2019.

Review of the Code for Non-Educational Establishments

Although this Code is not scheduled for a review until 2020, the Codes' Consortium has taken the view that it would be useful to accelerate the timetable in order to encompass some of the new sections that were added into the other ANUK/Unipol Code, as well as to reflect likely legislative and regulatory changes that will impact upon the PBSA sector in the near future. The new and revised sections that are currently being discussed for early implementation are as follows:

- Add a reference to the new and refurbished buildings protocol into clause 3.7 of the Code and also incorporate the protocol (in a revised version) as an appendix to the Code itself;
- Revise the requirements in respect of Wi-Fi provision so that they better reflect the nature of provision within the sector;
- Require members to review their fire risk assessments on an annual basis and to have these completed by a competent person;
- Create a new heading of student wellbeing that contains similar clauses to the same heading within the Code for Educational Establishments but that reflects the ways in which private providers manage accommodation, both when in partnership with educational establishments and when they do so alone.

Challenges Which Remain to be Met

A total of two challenges from the thirteenth year are outstanding and these are:

- Proposal for independent HHSRS checks to be made on developments;
- Assessing the effectiveness of communications with code members.

These will need to be added to the challenge list for the fourteenth year of the operations of the Codes.

Additional Achievements of the Thirteenth Year

As well as meeting the challenges set for the thirteenth year, some other successes are worth reporting.

Reviewed the New and Refurbished Buildings Protocol

This document was first agreed in 2018, but was to be subject to a review after a year. This work was undertaken by a small working group consisting of some of the providers who had previously been involved in the creation of the original document, as well as some representatives of different providers. The group agreed that although the protocol had been a useful development, it lacked some impact on developers of PBSA because it was not imbedded within the Code itself.

It was further noted that the initial intention had been to devise some standard wording for letters that providers could send to students should they find themselves in the position of a building (either fully or partially) not being available at the commencement of tenancies, but that such documentation had not been devised. The group therefore agreed that some drafts be produced for members to consider and that the outcomes be discussed when the Committee of Management met in November 2019.

Publicised the Codes

In July of 2018 the National Codes were approached by a company that was working with the National Association of Student Money Advisers to produce a booklet entitled *Student Money Matters* and invited to place an advert for the Codes within the publication. It was agreed to place a full page ad highlighting the fact that students who chose to rent from Code members could rest assured as to the sorts of management standards they could expect from the provider, and the fact that they had recourse to a complaints system if the accommodation did not meet with those standards.

Responded to Government and Local Authority Consultations

Throughout the course of 2018/2019 the National Codes have responded to a number of different consultations affecting PBSA accommodation in one way or another.

In 2019 both Leicester and Liverpool city councils launched consultations concerning selective HMO licensing, which the Codes replied to arguing that providers of PBSA should be exempted from such schemes. In addition, the Government has consulted on matters such as the length of tenancy agreements and changes to building regulations, which again the National Codes have submitted responses to.

Section 5: Assessment and Verification Activities

Verification Visits and Re-Visits

A total of 202 verification visits were completed between the beginning of July 2018 and the end of June 2019 period. [NB: this figure does not include those visits undertaken as part of the location-wide series of visits that were conducted in May 2019].

As can be seen from Table 11 (below), the downward trend in the number of visits being undertaken that was identified in 2017-2018 can be considered to have been a 'blip', as the numbers for 2018-2019 significantly exceeded those undertaken in any previous year. The main reasons for the increase were a greater number of change of operational management visits along with a decision to conduct a series of visits to a provider that had been temporarily suspended earlier in 2019 and which manages a large portfolio of properties.

Table 11: Verification Visits Undertaken By Year

Year	Totals
2008-2009	43
2009-2010	48
2010-2011	62
2011-2012	64
2012-2013	77
2013-2014	120
2014-2015	131
2015-2016	135
2016-2017	158
2017-2018	142
2018-2019	202

An analysis of the number of visits that have been undertaken since the 2008-2009 period in comparison with the total number of developments that members have registered under the Codes is reflected in Table 12 (see next page). This table shows very clearly the increase year on year in the number of developments that are registered under the Codes, as well as the attempts that have been made to undertake more visits in order to ensure the percentage is consistent with previous years.

Table 12: Percentage of Registered Developments Visited By Year

Year	Total Number of Visits	Total Number of Developments Registered	% of Registered Developments Visited
2008-2009	43	395	10.88
2009-2010	48	484	09.91
2010-2011	62	1,243	4.98
2011-2012	64	1,257	5.09
2012-2013	77	1,357	5.67
2013-2014	120	1,425	8.42
2014-2015	131	1,472	8.89
2015-2016	135	1,682	8.02
2016-2017	158	1,682	9.39
2017-2018	142	1,827	7.77
2018-2019	202	1,996	10.12

Table 13 details the different types of verification visit that have been undertaken in the past two academic years and compares them with each other.

TABLE 13: Visits by Type, 2017-2018 to 2018-2019

Category	Totals 2018-2019	Totals 2017-2018
New Applicants	17	9
Existing Members	21	8
Cyclical Re-Visits	16	30
Change of Operational Management	65	18
New Developments	67	70
Complaints	1	4
Chair’s Action (Audit Panel)	12	1
Revisits	3	2

As can be seen in Table 13, only 18 visits undertaken in 2017-2018 related to changes of operational management, as opposed to the 65 required for the same period in 2018-2019, and then considerably more new applicant and existing member visits took place in the later period than the first. The category of Chair’s Action visits, although not new to 2018-2019, was used a great deal more during that period, due completely to the suspension and then later re-instatement of a member during the early months of 2019.

As in all previous years since the introduction of the verification procedures, visits took place to providers belonging to both of the ANUK/Unipol Codes during 2018-2019. However, the main focus of these was on the Code for Non-Educational Establishments - as can be seen from Table 14.

Table 14: Number of Visits Undertaken by Code and Category, July 2018 to June 2019

Non-Educational Code Category	Number of Visits	Educational Code Category	Number of Visits
New Applicant	17	New Applicant	0
Existing Member	21	Existing Member	0
Cyclical Revisit	15	Cyclical Revisit	1
Change of Operational Management	65	Change of Operational Management	0
New Development	65	New Development	2
Complaints	1	Complaints	0
Chair's Action (Audit Panel)	12	Chair's Action (Audit Panel)	0
1st Revisit	3	1st Revisit	0
2nd Revisit	0	2nd Revisit	0
Totals	**199**	**Totals**	**3**

The reason so few educational establishments had visits in 2018-2019 was because not many of those members were scheduled for a cyclical re-visit at that time. However, it is interesting to note that some of these members did add new developments and, as such, it was necessary for them to be visited so that they could be registered under the educational establishments' accreditation.

The table clearly reflects the extent to which visits due to the creation of new developments and changes of operational management dominate the reasons as to why visits are undertaken as part of the verification procedures as they apply to members of the Non-Educational Establishment's Code, however, what it does not reveal is how many visits were undertaken to different members of this Code and whether those providers required visits under a number of different categories. That information is detailed in Table 15.

Table 15: Non-Educational Establishment Code Members Visited, July 2018 to June 2019

Provider	Number of Developments Visited	Number of Categories of Visit
Abodus	3	1
Aparto	2	1
Aldwyck Housing Group	1	1
Asha House	1	1
Axo Student Living	2	2
Baaz Properties	1	1
Campbell Properties	1	1
Campus Living Villages	1	1
Cass and Claredale	1	1
Chapter Living	3	2
Cityheart Living	1	1

Clever Student Lets	1	1
Code Student	1	1
Collegiate AC Ltd	4	1
CRM Students	7	2
Cube Students	1	1
Derwent Students	1	1
Digs Students	1	1
Downing Students	3	2
Drinkwater House Student Accommodation	1	1
Dwell Student Living	1	1
Fawley Bridge Student Accommodation	1	1
FHP Student Living	1	2
Fresh Student Living	17	2
Global Student Accommodation	1	1
Goodenough College	1	1
S Harrison Group	1	1
Hello Student	18	3
Homes for Students	32	4
Host Student	15	1
IQ Student	12	2
Kaplan	1	1
Kexgill	2	2
Liberty Living	1	1
Linthorpe Property Management	1	1
Manor Villages	1	1
Mansion Group	2	2
McComb Students	1	1
Mezzino	1	1
Njoy Student Accommodation	1	1
Nido Student	1	1
Omnia Estates	1	1
Optivo	1	1
Opto Living	1	1
Orange Living	1	1
Prime Student Living	1	1
Primo Property Management	1	1
Purple Frog Group	1	1
Reed Residential	1	1
Sanctuary Students	1	1

Scape Student	1	1
Sharples Property Co	1	1
Stoney Street LLP	1	1
Student Beehive	2	1
Student Castle	1	1
Student Cribs	1	1
Student Facility Management	2	1
Student Living by Sodexo	1	1
Student Roost	5	2
Study Inn	1	1
Unipol Student Homes	1	1
UNINN	3	1
UNITE	7	1
Universal Student Living	4	4
UPP Broadgate	1	1
Urbanest	1	1
Valeo USL Ltd	1	1
Vita Student	1	1
X1 Developments	1	1
Yara Student	2	3

The Table above reveals that visits were made to 70 different members of the non-educational establishment Code during 2018-2019 (an increase from the 56 visited in the previous period), however, as three of these (shown in italics) were not within membership as of the end of June 2019, this means that 64.25% of the members of that Code had at least one visit during this period, a substantial rise from the 48.5% visited in the 2017-2018 period..

<u>Location-Wide Verification Visits</u>

The National Codes Consortium, which determines both the content of the Codes and the procedures that govern their operations, decided when it met in January 2016 that verifiers should be required annually to undertake a series of visits to developments belonging to ALL members that are located in one town/city (to be specified by the Consortium), at the same time. The purpose of such visits is to assess general levels of compliance as well as to assist the verifiers to moderate their approach to the undertaking of such visits.

The Consortium took this decision on the basis of evidence from an initial location-based series of visits that were undertaken to developments in Bradford, which occurred in the late spring of 2014. This exercise was welcomed by both the providers concerned, who because all sites were being looked at on the same day did not feel as if they were being singled out, as well as the verification team.

In total there have now been five sets of location wide visits undertaken by verifiers since that initial exercise (see Table16), and on each occasion at least one development operated by members of the Codes in those locations has been subject to a visit by one or more members of the verification team.

Table 16: Destination and Extent of Location-Wide Visits

Year	Location	Percentage of Members Visited	Percentage of Developments in that Location Inspected
2014	Bradford	100	100
2016	Liverpool	100	29
2017	Newcastle	100	45
2018	Sheffield	100	39
2019	Glasgow	100	43

The original visits in Bradford were conducted on the same day, but because there were at that time just 10 developments in the whole of the city it was possible for the team of verifiers to inspect them all. Two years later, in Liverpool (and even with the addition of more verifiers and another day), it was not logistically possible to visit all 56 developments, therefore a selection was made of one per member with a contingency of a visit to another of their sites in the city on the second day should it be required. In 2017, whilst verifiers were able to inspect a greater percentage of the 38 developments operating at that time in Newcastle over the two day period allocated, it was not feasible to cover everything.

Sheffield was the selected location for the 2018 visits and the Audit Panel agreed that at least one site of each Code member operating within the city should be visited - a total of seventeen - and that as these visits were to be undertaken (where possible) by pairs of verifiers, and the most that could be completed in a day was three, the process was scheduled to take two days; the majority of members were to have a site completed on the first day, with the remainder undertaken on day two.

Glasgow was selected a s a location for two main reasons: firstly, the local housing authority had been implementing a mandatory HMO licensing system for a number of years and the Codes consortium wished to get some indication of whether that was impacting upon the PBSA sector in that city; secondly, because of the rapid increase in the number of developments operating within the city over the previous two years and the concentration of studio-style accommodation that was being offered. All but one of the sixteen planned visits were completed by pairs of verifiers on the first day, and the general consensus from the verification teams was that they had identified a high level of compliance with the Codes. Some questions were raised about how consistently the local authority applied its own HMO regulations.

General Verification Visit Outcomes

The next issue that needs to be reported on is the outcomes that have arisen from the completion of the general verification visits that were undertaken as part of the 2018-2019 visits programme, especially the extent to which they indicate adequate levels of compliance with the Codes.

When a verifier completes their draft report following a visit they make clear whether or not any actions will be required by the provider concerned in order for them to be regarded as being fully compliant with the Code. Where NO actions whatsoever are identified, the National Codes Administrator keeps a record of this and (on behalf of the Chair of the Audit Panel) sends that provider a congratulatory letter.

Table 17 details how common it has been for verifiers (over the last six years) to be unable to identify action points and the extent to which this has been the case in comparison with all visits undertaken during that particular visit period.

Table 17: Visits Where No Action Points Were Identified Compared with Overall Number of Visits Completed 2013-2014 to 2018-2019

Year	Number of Visits with No Action Points	Total Number of Visits Completed	Percentage of Visits with No Actions
2013-2014	25	120	20.75%
2014-2015	16	131	12.25%
2015-2016	36	135	26.67%
2016-2017	34	158	21.51%
2017-2018	47	142	33.09%
2018-2019	36	202	17.82%

Table 17 reveals that there has been some consistency over the last four years (with the exception of last year) in terms of the overall number of visits completed for which no action points were identified by members of the verification team, even if that’s not reflected with respect to the percentage of visits completed each year with no action point outcomes.

In terms the verification visits where action points were identified, verifiers make clear within the draft reports exactly which clauses of the Codes were not being complied with. In addition, verifiers make clear in the reports the deadline by when the works should be completed by. In the early years of the operation of the verification system these deadlines were left completely to the verifier’s discretion, but since the beginning of 2017 - apart from in the case of urgent actions relating to certain health and safety matters - verifiers are required to choose one of the following quarter dates: 31st March; 30th June; 30th September or the 31st December.

The National Codes Administrator records the details of these and requests that verifiers report on whether they have been notified that the required works have been completed and, if so, whether this was within the given deadlines they had set for them. The NCA prepares reports for each of the Audit Panel meetings detailing which, if any, providers have failed to complete actions by the given dates, so that decisions can be taken about how such failings should be dealt with.

Table 18 gives details of the outcomes from all visits completed during 2018-2019, by type of visit, and it also compares these with the outcomes from the 2017-2018 period (figures shown in brackets).

Table 18: Outcomes from Verification Visits Undertaken between 1st July 2018 and June 30th 2019, by Category (figures for same period in 2017-2018 shown in brackets)

Category of Visit	Number With No Actions	Number With Between 1 and 4 Actions	Number With Between 5 and 9 Actions	Number With 10 or More Actions	Totals
New Applicants	1 (2)	7 (3)	2 (0)	7 (4)	**17 (9)**
Existing Member	2 (1)	9 (5)	5 (0)	5 (3)	**21 (9)**
Cyclical Revisit	4 (2)	5 (11)	2 (7)	5 (10)	**16 (30)**
Change of Operational Management	3 (3)	31 (8)	20 (3)	11 (4)	**65 (18)**
New Developments	23 (38)	30 (30)	13 (1)	1 (1)	**67 (70)**
Chair's Action (Audit Panel)	2 (1)	5 (0)	5 (0)	0 (0)	**12 (1)**
Complaints	0 (1)	0 (0)	1 (3)	0 (0)	**1 (4)**
Revisits	1 (0)	2 (1)	0 (1)	0 (0)	**3 (2)**
Totals	**36 (47)**	**89 (58)**	**48 (15)**	**29 (22)**	**202 (142)**
% of Visits	**18 (33)**	**44 (41)**	**24 (11)**	**14 (15)**	

The overall findings from Table 18 are that the percentage of visits undertaken over the last two assessment periods that identify a small number of action points (less than 5) and a large number (10 or more) was roughly about the same. Interestingly, the same percentages for visits with a small and large number of actions was recorded for those completed during the 2016-2017 period too, therefore suggesting a clear trend. As for the number of visits that identified no actions whatsoever, whilst the percentage fell for the 2018-2019 period in comparison with the previous period, the findings were much more in-line with those identified for the 2016-2017 period. The percentage of visits with a 'medium' number of actions was much larger for 2018-2019 than any of the previous two periods.

The outcomes from visits to new applicants in the 2018-2019 period is precisely on a par with those for the previous two periods, in that most either had a small number of actions or a lot; the same has been true for cyclical revisits in the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 periods. A pattern can also be detected with respect to the visits undertaken to existing members, whereby the majority are found to have a small number of actions.

Visits undertaken as a result of the change of operational management or the creation of a new development have been the most common activity for members of the verification team since 2016-2017, but the outcomes have been varied in each of those periods. A substantial number of visits to new developments reveal no action points are required and a very small number have identified 10 or more actions. One likely reason as to why fewer new development visits completed during 2018-2019 reported no actions than in the previous period could have been because of significant delays with the delivery of some of these sites, and that may also be reflected in the number of visits to such developments that identified between 5 and 9 action points during 2018-2019, much more than in earlier periods.

The greater number of visits that were completed during 2018-2019 as a result of action taken by the Chair of the Audit Panel requires a brief comment on why this was the case. Most of these were undertaken to developments operated by one particular management platform which had been suspended from membership as a result of significant fire safety concerns identified at a newly built development it was operating. As part of the process of agreeing to lift their suspension, it was decided that a number of their sites be visited and an assessment be made of their compliance [NB a total of 19 sites in total were identified, but not all had been visited by the end of June 2019].

<u>Most Common Action Points Identified at Verification Visits</u>

Because verifiers report which specific clauses of the Codes they believe a provider to be in breach of, it's possible for an assessment to be made of the most common aspects of non-compliance with the Codes. Table 19 indicates which clauses of the Code for Non-Educational Establishments were cited in reports for 20 or more visits undertaken to members of that Code during 2018-2019. It also indicates the number of times the same clause was cited in the 2017-2018 period.

Table 19: Clauses of the Non-Educational Establishment Code Which Members Were Found Not to be Complying with Most Following Visits in 2018-2019 Compared to 2017-2018

Clause	Number of Visits Cited for in 2018-2019	Number of Visits Cited for in 2017-2018
The design of appropriate fire safety measures are determined in compliance with a fire safety risk assessment and the relevant requirements under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and in consideration of the local authority's HMO standards (6.13)	81	18
Information will be available about the minimum level of bandwidth that residents can expect within the WiFi system being provided to them (3.20)	59	32
In consultation with the Local Authority, and in having regard to any guidance that they may provide applicable to buildings of this type, buildings are maintained and managed so to ensure that the risks of	47	20

potential health and safety hazards, based on the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) are reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practical and cost effective, and no HHSRS Category 1 hazards remain (6.0)		
Where Wi-Fi is referred to it should be made clear whether this is being provided within the rent or at an additional cost; it should also make clear exactly what sort of provision is being made available to users, especially where 'free' elements cover only a base service and a charge is made for enhancements to this. (3.17)	44	15
The building has a security plan detailing an appropriate level of management to maintain security standards and this plan can, on request, be shown to tenants. The plan should also stipulate what security information will be supplied to tenants (6.24)	41	19
Suitable precautions are taken to prevent or control the risk of exposure to legionella (6.33)	38	15
All staff should be aware of our Emergency and Disaster Management plan (6.27)	33	15
A satisfaction survey of their student tenants is carried out at least every 24 or 36 months (5.0)	31	16
The Manager of each site will complete the online training course within 8 weeks of being appointed (1.2)	30	25
Non-completion of reported repairs within the target timescales is recorded and appropriate action taken (4.11)	28	13
The satisfaction survey will ask whether residents know that the development is part of the Code (5.3)	24	30
Where waste facilities are used by more than 10 tenants then a waste disposal plan will exist for the building (6.35)	24	20
The (satisfaction) survey should also provide an overall measurement of how the tenant rates: management, value for money, whether they would recommend the accommodation to a friend, and overall satisfaction (5.4)	22	14
Tenants are made aware of the organisation's equality and diversity policies as part of the information provided to tenants (2.3)	21	9
Occupants of ground floor rooms should be provided with specific security information (6.23)	20	7

There are a number of features to Table 19 that require comment. To begin with, in comparison to the number of clauses cited 20 or more times in the 2018 version of this report, there are considerably more listed in the 2019 edition - 15 as opposed to six. Part of the reason for the increase is the fact that a significantly larger number of visits were undertaken during 2018-2019 than in 2017-2018 (a 42% increase). However, it is clear from Table 19 that the differences in the number of times a clause was cited by a verifier during 2018-2019 was significantly greater than they had been the previous period, therefore other explanations are required to explain the increase.

The main reason as to why verifiers have cited fire risk assessment issues so frequently is because they were instructed by the July 2018 meeting of the Audit Panel to pay specific attention to these matters when undertaking visits, especially to newly built developments and buildings which had been subject to a change of operational management. It should therefore come as no surprise that more than half of the visits where clause 6.13 was cited related to such categories of visit. The same is true in respect of clause 6.0.

The continuing appearance of two clauses relating to the sub-section of the Code for Non-Educational Establishments entitled *Wi-Fi Provision* - 3.19 and 3.20 - also requires some explanation, and there are two particular reasons as to why they were cited so often. The first is because verifiers were once again directed by the Audit Panel to highlight non-compliance with these aspects of the Code. The second reason, and the main cause as to why they have been so often cited, is that there is a clear disconnect between what information the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) supply to the head offices of these Code members and how much of that is then made available to staff working at developments, whom the verifiers meet with when completing visits. Frequently, site-level staff told verifiers that they cannot meet the set requirements in respect of Wi-Fi as they have not been given the relevant information that they request by either the ISP or their own head office.

Security issues also featured in Table 19, with two of the clauses from that section appearing (6.23 and 6.24). Analysis indicates that a significant number of providers who were no complying with these requirements were either new applicants OR - of more concern - existing members who had taken on the day to day management of a building from another provider. However, more in-depth analysis shows that in most cases the action required by the verifier was that the provider gave some evidence to show that a security plan was in place, and that the requirement arose because the local manager was unable to show the verifier the relevant documentation.

Table 19 also suggests that members continue to have difficulties meeting the requirements of most of the sections of the Code relating to satisfaction surveys, as three out of five of the clauses relating to this are listed (5.0, 5.3 and 5.4). From analysis of the type of visits where these clauses were being cited, most of those found to have an action concerning the lack of a survey were either new applicants or a change of operational management had occurred, and the new management platform was unaware of what the previous provider had used (if anything) in this respect. Where the action given related to the survey not containing a reference to the fact that the development was registered under the Code the evidence from Table 19 indicates the prevalence of this had decreased in comparison to the 2017-2018 period. Finally, with clause 5.4 the majority of the visits where this was cited were either new providers or change of operational management.

The majority of visits that included an action point relating to the need for precautions to be taken to control exposure to legionella were to new developments and this suggests that, at the time of the visit, verifiers were not being provided with details of the procedures that were in place on site. This may be an issue that requires some discussion with members who have brought on new sites to determine how best verifiers can ascertain such information when visiting such developments.

Finally, the two other clauses of the health and safety section of the Code that are listed in Table 19, 6.27 and 6.35, relate to the provision (or lack thereof) of certain plans, which the verifiers have asked for evidence of from the provider as it was either not given to them ahead of their arrival or during the visit itself. Significantly the most common type of visit where actions for theses clauses was cited were where developments had changed operational management. In many cases the verifiers report that the incoming management platform has been unable to locate the relevant plan for the building that was used by the previous operator - a claim that is echoed in respect of some of the other clauses already commented on above. As a result of these findings there may be a need to develop some specific guidelines governing what an outgoing management platform should be providing to the incoming one, especially in terms of safety matters and essential information for resident.

<u>The Audit Panel</u>

The Audit Panel met on four occasions between the start of July 2018 and end of June 2019. Two were hosted by Unipol Student Homes, in Leeds, whilst the other two were held at Helen Graham House, in London and hosted by Optivo.

The membership of the Audit Panel has changed slightly since the last annual report, with Victoria Tolmie-Loverseed going on maternity leave to be replaced by Nikki Verity. The one area of concern with respect to representation on the Audit Panel is the continuing lack of a presence by NUS; although it had been intended that they would nominate a relevant staff member from a students' union to undertake this role, they still have to do so.

The National Codes Administrator estimates that at least 157 visits will need to be completed before the end of June 2020, and that does not include any to providers who completed their SAQ after the start of July 2019 OR any planned changes of operational management/opening of new buildings that were not previously notified to the NCA before that same date. In terms of the types of visits to be undertaken, they break down as follows:

New Applicants	= 5
Existing Member	= 29
Cyclical Re-Visits	= 58*

Change of Operational Management	= 2
New Developments	= 61
Re-Visit	= 2

* includes all 31 of the Cambridge Colleges.

The current membership is as follows:

Mr Paddy Jackman, Chair

Ms Elizabeth Beattie - Verifier

Ms Mary Bright - Verifier

Ms Wendy Evans - Cambridge Colleges

Mr Derek Goss - Verifier

Mr Richard Lord - Verifier

Mr Philip Moxon - Verifier

Mr Jakub Pietruszewski - Verifier

Vacancy - NUS

Mr David Robertson - Verifier

Mr Nick Stanton - Verifier

Ms Nikki Verity - Unipol

Mr William Wilson - Verifier

Section 6: Complaints and Tribunal Procedures

Code Complaint Contacts

Table 20: National Code Complaints Received, by year and status

Year	Total No. contacting the NCA	No. of formal complaints submitted	No. of formal complaints referred to the Tribunal
2005	1	0	0
2006	5*	0	0
2007	5*	2	1
2008	20*	3	2
2009	21	7	7
2010	17	3	1
2011	27	6	2
2012	45	18	5
2013	40	14	4
2014	41	8	3#
2015	62	7	4#
2016	70	14	6#
2017	88*	16	3
2018	83	15	5
2019	50 (to end of June)	7	5
TOTALS	**575**	**120**	**48**

* one of these concerned a development that was not covered by the Codes

= one complaint was dealt with by the Full Tribunal

Table 20 indicates clearly the extent to which the Codes' complaints procedures have been accessed since the Codes were first launched, and provides a sense of the increased awareness amongst tenants (and their representatives) about the Codes and the complaints process that pertains to them.

Since 2016 it has been the task of a Complaints Investigator to record all contacts made by students (or their representatives) who live (or were living) in developments covered by the Codes which may be regarded as a complaint about a member not complying with the relevant Code. As can be seen, the number of such contacts steadily increased between 2005 and 2009, and then (with the exception of 2010) significantly increased after that - with 2017 having received the most number of tenant contacts in anyone year so far.

The number of complaint contacts made with the Codes during the first half of 2019 is significantly more than the number recorded in 2018 (when 30 had been made). Whilst it is not possible to predict the exact final number of complaint contacts that will be received in 2019 on the basis of the halfyearly figure alone, some analysis of the trend since 2012 (when contacts last began to rise substantially) suggests that, in percentage terms, the first six months have accounted for 50% or more of the final number of complaint contacts on three occasions, and less than 50% on the other three. There was a noticeable downward trend from 2014 to 2016, but it rose again in 2017. The fact that the percentages have not exceeded 50% in any consecutive years suggests that more contacts will be received in the second half of 2019.

Table 20 also makes clear that only around 20% of all the complaint-related contacts made over the years have developed into formal complaints, defined as complaints either issued on the prescribed complaints form or deemed as requiring a reply from the relevant member as a result of information provided by the complainant.

In terms of the number of formal complaints that it has been necessary to refer to the Tribunal, 40% have been referred, and in three cases the Tribunal Chair determined that the complaints were sufficiently serious to warrant a meeting of the Full Tribunal. As for the proportion of formal complaints that it has been necessary to refer to the Tribunal, this has tended to fluctuate in the last few years but there is no evidence to suggest that the increase in the number of formal complaints issued has led to a rise in the number of referrals made.

Whilst Table 20 is helpful in depicting the volume of complaints that have been received and processed, it does not convey any sense of the level of complaints in comparison with the size of the sector as a whole. Following a request from the Committee of Management in November 2016 for some analysis to be made of the number of complaint contacts received in terms of the number of bed spaces being registered under the Codes, the National Codes Administrator compiled this information - the details of which are shown in Table 21.

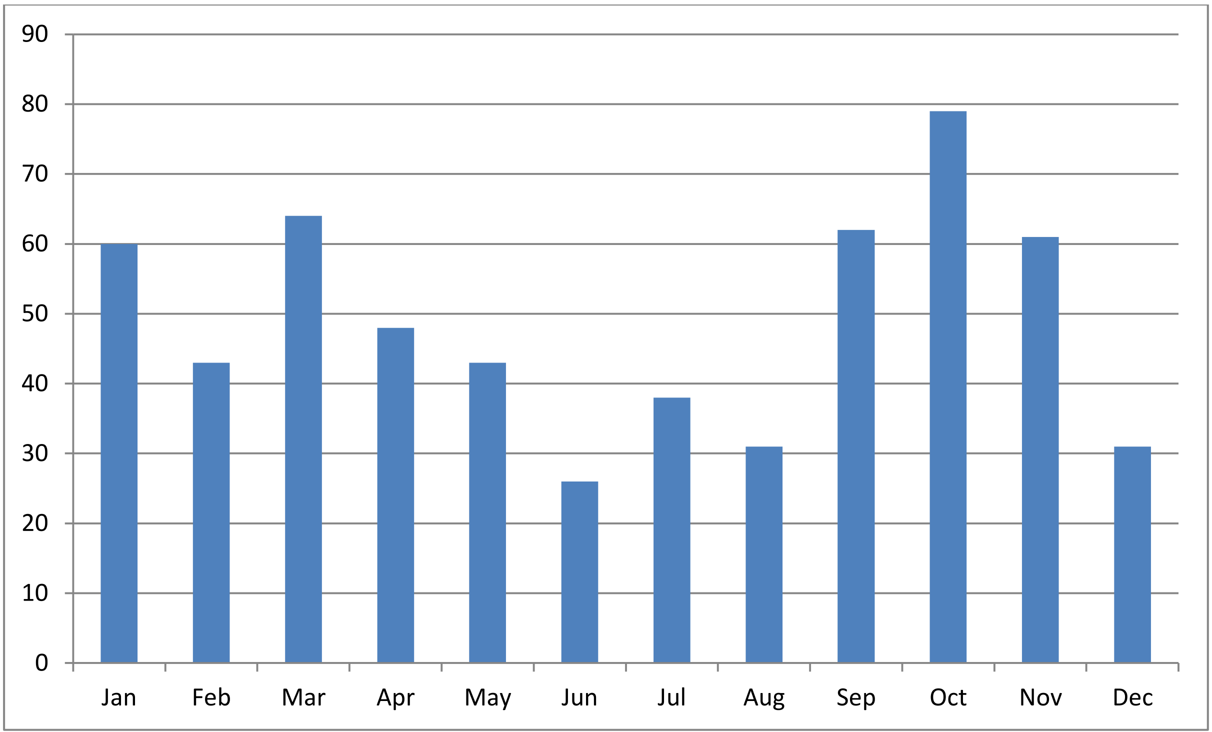
Table 21: Ratios of National Code Complaint Contacts s Received Compared to Overall Bed Space Numbers Registered

Year	Total No. contacting the NCA	No. of Bed Spaces Accredited (to nearest 1,000)	Ratio of Complaint Contacts Made (to nearest 1,000)
2005	1	21,000	1 in 21,000
2006	5	72,000	1 in 14,000
2007	5	99,000	1 in 20,000
2008	20	107,000	1 in 5,000
2009	21	112,000	1 in 5,000
2010	17	156,000	1 in 9,000
2011	27	162,000	1 in 6,000
2012	45	166,000	1 in 4,000
2013	40	190,000	1 in 5,000
2014	41	195,000	1 in 5,000
2015	62	219,000	1 in 4,000
2016	70	252,000	1 in 4,000
2017	88	271,000	1 in 3,000
2018	83	301,000	1 in 3,000

The picture that emerges clearly from Table 21 is that, leaving aside the first three years of the Codes' operations, levels of dissatisfaction with accommodation providers who are members of these Codes are very low. The decline in the ratios to 1 in 3,000 since 2017 are indicative of the increase in complaint contacts that have been made, a fact that is echoed by the small number which translate into formal complaints. Even so, the percentage of occupants of purpose built student accommodation who could be argued to have been sufficiently dissatisfied to want to make a complaint was just 0.34%.

In terms of when during the year complaint contacts are made, Graph 4 reveals some interesting patterns of spikes and troughs. There are significant spikes in October, January and March, which can be explained in terms of the cycle of the tenancy. The October contacts usually relate to dissatisfaction with the property conditions when the students moved in; those in January may relate to problems that had previously existed but which were perceived not to have been resolved during the Christmas vacation, e.g. proposed maintenance work; whilst March is the time of year that many private providers set as the date for their final rent instalment, and this may trigger complaints from those who wish to pursue long-running grievances and/or make a bid to claim a rent reduction. The troughs seen in June coincide with the end of the letting period for many students, whilst the slight spike in July is linked to dissatisfaction about end of tenancy arrangements, as well as representing a notion that it is a final opportunity to make long-held grievances known and - increasingly - to stake a claim for some compensation. There is then a small decline during August, followed by a considerably higher rate in September as new students arrive.

Graph 4: Complaints/enquiries received by month since 2005



Complaint Outcomes

The Codes' complaints procedures require that students raise any alleged breaches of these Codes with their accommodation provider directly and permit them time to address these. Where a complainant deems that the issues have not been resolved by the provider, they are then able to submit a formal complaint to the operators of the Codes and - at this stage - the provider will then be contacted formally and asked to respond, making clear what actions (if any) they took in respect of the allegations that they had breached the relevant Code. Should the matters not be resolved following that intervention, or where a dispute is reported to exist between the provider and the student over the allegations, then a referral will be made to an independent Tribunal that is empowered to adjudicate in respect of the complaint.

As can be seen from Table 20, 455 out of the 575 complaint contacts (79%) never progressed to the second stage of the procedures, and Table 22 sets out why this was the case.

Table 22: Outcomes from Non-Formal Complaint Contacts

Outcome	Numbers
The complaint had not been raised with the provider in the first instance	128
Complainant reported the provider had resolved the issue/s	172
Complainant made no further contact with the Codes	149
The complaint concerned non - members of the Codes	6
Total	**455**

Table 22 illustrates that most non-formal complaints had either been dealt with by the provider's own complaints procedures at the time they were raised with the Codes, OR, having raised the concerns, the student/s did not decide to pursue matters any further. In a smaller number of cases there was evidence to suggest that no contact had been made with the provider to make them aware of the alleged complaint. Finally, some contacts were received about providers who were not members of the Codes and which, therefore, could not be dealt with.

Whilst in previous editions of this report the most common reason for non-formal complaints not to progress was because those making complaint enquiries made no further contact with the Code, in this edition the most common is that providers resolved the matters. The reason for this change is due to the efforts of the Code Complaints Investigator making contact with those making enquires and being able to evidence that the concerns raised by them have been resolved by the relevant provider. This is something that whoever takes on the role from September 2019 will need to continue doing.

In terms of the outcomes of the 120 complaints that have been processed through the Codes' procedures, Table 23 details clearly what happened with those.

Table 23: Outcomes from Formal Complaints

Outcome	Numbers
Referred to Tribunal and Upheld	30
Referred to the Tribunal and NOT Upheld	17
Resolved by Provider before the matter was referred to Tribunal	23
NOT referred as no additional information was provided to support the complaint	27
NOT referred as the matter had not been subject to the provider's own complaints procedure	21
On-going	2
Total	**120**

Exactly a quarter of the formal complaints have been referred to the Tribunal and upheld by it, whilst a little over an eighth of them were referred and not upheld. Otherwise, almost another quarter of the formal complaints were not referred because the complainant did not provide additional information required by the Codes in order to make such a referral.

Over the 2018-2019 period a total of five complaints were referred to the Tribunal (the same as in 2017-2018) with two being upheld and three not being so. The reasons given by the Tribunal Chair for not upholding these three complaints were varied, however, in each case it was the Chair's view that no breaches of the Code had occurred.

Relationship Between the Audit Panel and Tribunal

All decisions concerning the removal of membership from the Codes are matters for either the Audit Panel or the Tribunal to consider, and both bodies possess the power to suspend a member whilst the matter is considered more fully.

Whilst these bodies exercise their right to remove and suspend members, they have previously not done so in relation to the same provider. However, during the 2017-2018 period both groups - independently of each other - questioned whether a member ought to remain within the Code as a result of failings identified through visits to a site and the outcomes from complaints received. It is therefore likely that some discussions will be had between the two bodies to agree how best that provider (currently suspended from membership) should be dealt with.

Tribunal Membership

The current Tribunal Chair, Mr John Martin (a Barrister and acknowledged expert in the field of housing law) has been in post since the Tribunal first came into operation, and he was re-appointed in September 2015 for a three year period.

The Chair is supported by two Vice Chairs, who are also appointment on a regular basis. One of these is nominated by the National Union of Students, whilst the other is nominated from the provider membership that is represented on the Committee of Management. The current Vice Chairs are Mr Keith White (CRM Students), nominated by the providers, and Ms Eva Crossan Jory, the recently elected Vice President (Welfare) at NUS. Mr White was re-appointed in 2015 for a three year period, whilst Ms Crossan Jory will serve until the end of her term of office.

There are a further six members of the Tribunal, nominated by provider members of the CoM as well as by the Codes Consortium, each of whom have a three year period of office. Currently these are:

Ms Jane Crouch (Fresh Student Living)
Mr Alan Hilton (Cass and Claredale)
Ms Nikki Verity (Unipol)
MR Paul Rowlinson (IQ Student Accommodation)
Vacancy (NUS)
Ms Nicola Brown (ANUK)

Section 7: Website Visits and Online Training Course

National Codes Website

The National Codes website was revamped in the summer of 2018, mainly due to the decline in usage that was being made of it. As can be seen from Table 24, that situation has been reversed and the site had its most ever visits during 2018-2019, and the second largest number of visitors and pages viewed

Table 24: National Codes Website: Visits, Visitors and Pages Viewed, 2011-2012 to 2018-2019

Year	Visits	Visitors	Pages Viewed	Desktop	Mobile	Tablet
2011 - 2012	9,406	7,476	29,808	94.96%	3.14%	1.90%
2012 - 2013	16,464	13,142	44,594	89.20%	5.59%	5.21%
2013 - 2014	18,657	15,010	48,108	83.48%	8.50%	8.03%
2014 - 2015	20,239	16,919	48,249	85.88%	8.02%	6.10%
2015 - 2016	23,526	19,968	59,724	82.32%	12.77%	4.91%
2016 - 2017	17,973	14,583	43,401	75.22%	19.15%	5.63%
2017 - 2018	17,455	14,167	42,434	71.56%	22.45%	6.0%
2018 - 2019	23,933	18,451	54,327	68.49%	26.66%	4.85%

In terms of how people chose to access the website, Table 24 confirms the decreasing trend in the use of desktops and a considerable increase in the numbers doing so with their mobiles. On the basis of the evidence that students are more likely to access websites using mobiles or tablets, Table 24 suggests that more than thirty percent of all users of the site during 2018-2019 were students , a slight increase from the previous years.

In terms of the pages of the National Codes sites that have been viewed (excluding the Home Page), the top ten most looked at pages during 2018-2019 are listed in Table 25. However, because some of the page titles were either changed or new ones created for the new website, it has not been possible in all cases to compare these figures with the same number of viewings for the previous period.

Table 25: The Top Ten Most Viewed Pages 2018-2019, Compared with 2017-2018

Page Title	Number of Page Views 2018-2019	Number of Page Views 2017-2018
Code Download	3,838	1,530
Members List	2,544	2,821
Why we Exist	1,350	NA
Online Training Course	1,243	NA
Code for Private Providers	1,220	NA
Code for Educational Establishment	908	NA
For Students and Parents	875	2,557
Which Developments are in the Code?	844	NA
For Members	777	2,050
How to Complain	642	707

The considerable rise in the number of occasions that the Codes were downloaded is probably explained by the fact that they are much easier to locate on the new site; this may also explain why visits to the separate pages for each of the Codes appears in the top ten for the first time. The reasons for the decline in visits to pages 'For Students and Parents' and 'For Members' is also probably due to the fact that on the new site the information provided under those headings is now located within 'Members List' and 'Why we Exist'. Finally, it is not immediately clear as to why there has been a decline in the number of views of the 'How to Complain' pages, as there has certainly been no decrease in the number of complaint contacts being made with the Code (see section 6 of this report). It will therefore be interesting to note in next year's report as to whether this was a blip or a trend.

Online Training Course

The online training course has been available for use since 2010, and up to the end of June 2019 a total of 6,538 users had either started or completed the course. Overall, usage of the online course has varied over time, as shown in Table 26, with the levels steadily increasing from 2011 to 2013, almost doubling in 2014, falling back in 2015, before then massively expanding in 2016 and 2017. Numbers then decreased a little in 2018 but 2019 witnessed the largest ever number of users.

The first of these increases was due almost entirely to the change that was made to the Code for non-educational establishments in May 2016 that managers of sites should complete the course as a requirement of membership, as opposed to this merely being a recommendation. As a similar requirement was included within the Code for educational establishments from September 2018, which has once again led to a rise in the numbers making use of the course.

Table 26: Numbers Making Use of the National Codes Online Training Course

Year	Number of Users
2010	53
2011	241
2012	352
2013	398
2014	785
2015	380
2016	630
2017	1,199
2018	983
2019	1,597

Section 8: Conclusion

Achievements of the Thirteenth Year

- Re-Appointment of the Tribunal, including Chair and Vice Chairs ;
- Recognition within the Codes of the importance of providers needing to take account of student wellbeing;
- Assessment of the extent of developments that still contain ACM cladding and visits to effected sites planned;
- An evaluation made of levels of the consistency of approach taken by members of the verification team;
- Government 'Approval' of the revised Code for Educational Establishments;
- Revisions made to the online self-assessment questionnaire, reflecting the changes made to the educational establishment Code ;
- Launch of the review of the Code for Non-Educational Establishments;
- Review of the new and refurbished buildings protocol;

Challenges for the Fourteenth Year

- Revise the Management Test (Appendix 1 to the Codes) in order to better reflect the key elements that indicate who has control of the day to day management of buildings;
- Discuss whether there is a need for providers who cease to operate buildings to make available to the incoming management platform certain information and documentation relating to that site or sites;
- Complete the review of the Code for Non-Educational establishments;
- Develop a standard set of information that can be provided to new members, that could include advice of where to display the Code logo and site other materials such as membership certificates and A3 posters;
- Review Code publicity posters and materials to ensure they are relevant, and launch an online newsletter and blog that encourages members to share information with one another;
- Recruit a Complaints Investigator;

The Codes continue to make a real difference to the rising standards of management in student housing and are held in high regard by universities and colleges and by the private sector, as setting transparent and verified benchmark standards and promoting best practice.

This has only been possible by the support of the Codes members and the efficient administration of an increasingly large membership managing very substantial portfolios.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE ANUK/UNIPOL NATIONAL CODES

The Educational Establishment Code

Blackpool and Fylde College

Chichester College

Christ's College, Cambridge

Churchill College, Cambridge

Clare College, Cambridge

Clare Hall College, Cambridge

Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

Darwin College, Cambridge

Downing College, Cambridge

Emmanuel College, Cambridge

Fitzwilliam College Cambridge

Foundation for International Education

Girton College, Cambridge

Gonville & Caius, Cambridge

Homerton College, Cambridge

Hughes Hall, Cambridge

Jesus College, Cambridge

King’s College, Cambridge

Leeds Beckett University

Loughborough College

Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge

Magdalene College, Cambridge

Murray Edwards College, Cambridge

Newnham College, Cambridge

Nottingham Trent University

Pembroke College, Cambridge

Peterhouse, Cambridge

Queens’ College, Cambridge

Richmond and Hillcroft Adult Community College

Robinson College, Cambridge

The Royal Veterinary College

SCIO

Selwyn College, Cambridge

Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge

St Catharine’s College, Cambridge

St Edmund's College, Cambridge

St John’s College, Cambridge

Trinity College, Cambridge

Trinity Hall, Cambridge

University of the Arts, London

University of Bradford

University of Chichester

University of Greenwich

University of Hertfordshire

University of Leeds

Warwickshire College

West Dean College

Wolfson College, Cambridge

<u>The Non-Educational Establishment Code</u>

A2 Dominion Group Ltd

Abodus

Aldwyck Housing Group

Alpha Student Management Ltd

Aparto

Asha House Management Co

Ashwell House

Axo Student Living

Bay View Breeze

Baaz Properties

Beyond the Box Student Limited

BPS Developments

Campbell Property

Campus Living Villages

Cass and Claredale

Chapter Living

City Block Ltd

Cityheart Living (Scotland) Limited

Clever Student Lets

Code Student Accommodation

Collegiate AC Ltd

Condor Properties

Congregational Federation

Cotton House Management Company

CRM Students

Cube Student

Derwent Students

Digs Student

Downing Students

Dwell Student Living

Fawleybridge Student Accommodation

FHP Student Living

FD Asset Management Ltd

Fresh Student Living

Glenfern Student Lets

Global Student Accommodation

Goodenough College

Guy Chester Centre

Hamstead Campus Ltd

S Harrison Group Ltd

Hello Student Management

Homes for Students

Host Student

Iconic

INTO Newcastle University

INTO UEA

IQ Student Accommodation Services Ltd

Kaplan NT Ltd

Kexgill

Lee Abbey London

Lewes Study Lodge

Liberty Living

Lutheran Council of GB

Manor Villages

Mansion Property Management

MARA Inc. London Ltd

McComb Students

Mears Student Life

Megaclose Ltd

Mezzino

G Murphy Properties

Njoy Student Accommodation

***Niche Homes (*Suspended June 2019)**

Nido Student

Notting Hill Genesis

Omnia Estates Ltd

Openarch Properties

Optivo

Orange Living

Parklane Properties

Prime Student Living

Primo Property Management

Purple Frog Group

Reed Residential Ltd

Sanctuary Students

Scape Student Living Ltd

Sharples Property Company Ltd

Shumei Eiko Ltd

The Stay Club Limited

Stoney Street Ltd

Student Beehive

Student Castle Ltd

Student Cribs

Student Digs Management

Student Facility Management Limited

Student Living

Student Living by Sodexo

Student Roost

Study Inn

Unilife

Uni2rent Ltd

Unipol Student Homes

UNITE

***Universal Student Living (*Suspended April 2019)**

UNINN Student Accommodation

UPP Broadgate Park Ltd

UPP Nottingham Ltd

Urbanest UK Ltd

U Student Group Ltd

Vafai Trust

Valeo USL Ltd

Vita Student Management Ltd

West One Student Accommodation

Winchester Student LLP

X1 Developments

Yara Capital Limited

YPP (Yorkshire Prosperity)

Zebra Housing Association

Zone Management

APPENDIX 2: Visits Undertaken in 2018-2019 at Which No Action Points Were Identified

During the course of undertaking visits to the following providers and developments, verifiers identified no action points at all and, as a result of this, the Chair of the Audit Panel sent the member concerned a congratulatory letter.

Aldwyck Housing Group (Sedley Court, Cambridge)
Axo Student Living (Paradise Street, Coventry)
Chapter Living (White City, London)
Code Student (Western Road, Leicester)
Collegiate AC (Hinton Road, Bournemouth)
CRM (Crown Place, Cardiff)
CRM Students (Crown Place, Portsmouth)
CRM Students (Capital House, Southampton)
Downing Students (West View, Glasgow)
Fresh Student Living (Avon Studios, Bath)
Fresh Student Living (Oxford Point, Bournemouth)
Fresh Student Living (The Barn, Exeter)
Fresh Student Living (Bailey Fields, Sheffield)
Goodenough College (London House, London)
Hello Student (3&4 Victoria Point, Manchester)
Hello Student (Trippet Lane, Sheffield)
Hello Student (Percy Lane, York)
Homes for Students (Parkside, Coventry)
Homes for Students (Duresme Court, Durham)
Homes for Students (The Wool Factory, Leicester)
Homes for Students (The Gateway, Lincoln)
Homes for Students (Crown House, Sheffield)
Host (The Elements, Sheffield)
IQ Student Accommodation (Twerton Mill, Bath)
IQ Student Accommodation (Sawmills, Brighton)
IQ Student Accommodation (Collingwood, Newcastle)
Kexgill (Trent View, Nottingham)
Manor Villages Ltd (The Village, Nottingham)
Nido Student (The Bridge, Newcastle)
Optivo (Welkin Hall, Eastbourne)
Prime Student Living (Sycamore House, Leeds)
Scape Student (Scape Bloomsbury, London)
Student Roost (St Mungo’s, Glasgow

UNITE (Houghall Court, Durham)
UNITE (Newgate Court, Newcastle)
University of Leeds (Ellerslie Hall, Leeds)