

Your Hall, Your Call 2016

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Foreword



Firstly, I'd like to extend my gratitude to all the students who took part in this survey and participated in the conversation about the right direction students wish the school to take in terms of offering a good quality, affordable and appropriate offer to our diverse student body.

This year was an exciting year for Your Hall Your Call as we have not only reviewed the satisfaction at halls of residences, but for the first time we have asked students what they want to see in the future of LSE accommodation. We all know that the cost of living in London is spiralling out of control with rent is causing the largest strain on student's budgets (which on average takes over two thirds of our income). This report shows that this is contributing to the increasing unaffordability of studying at LSE and could potentially put off many bright students from attending this institution in the future. It is vital we develop a thorough and workable affordable rent strategy in direct consultation with students that is for students.

Studying at LSE should be a positive experience for all regardless of their economic background. It's important that the school recognise this and take action to improve inclusivity and accessibility in line with targets on widening participation. We hope that the School take on this invaluable research and integrate it into ongoing discussions and actions surrounding the future of accommodation at LSE.

Aysha Al-Fekaiki

LSESU Community and Welfare Officer

Executive Summary

Your Hall, Your Call 2016 was conducted slightly differently from previous years, in that as well as gathering satisfaction data from students about their halls of residences, it sought to find out what they would like to see from any future halls developments. The research took place from the the 14 March 2016 to the 30 March 2016 and received a total of 460 responses.

Satisfaction Section

This section sought to find out from students as to how satisfied they were with their halls of residences. This section was broken down into nine themes.

Overall Satisfaction

Overall 78% of students were satisfied with their halls of residence; this represented a 6% increase on 2015.

Rent

Only 46% of students were satisfied with the rent that they pay, which represents a 5% decrease on satisfaction levels from 2015. Some students felt that the price they paid was reasonable due to the location however, many felt that the amount that they paid was simply too much.

Maintenance

In total 73% of students were satisfied with the maintenance in their halls, which is a 15% increase on 2015. However there was large variations between halls with the highest score from Bankside being 91% satisfied; however at Passfield only 41% were satisfied.

Refurbishments

Overall 51% of students were satisfied with the refurbishment of the halls, this was a 3% increase on 2015. In particular, only 11% of students at Carr-Saunders were satisfied as they were unhappy about the ongoing disruption of refurbishment works.

Wardens

In total 63% of students were satisfied with their Warden, this represents a 3% increase on 2015. Many students stated that they did not know who their Warden was, and some students complained that they felt that their Warden was too restrictive.

Wi-Fi

Only 54% of students were satisfied with their Wi-Fi in their halls of residence, with many residents stating that their connection was slow or unreliable. Students at Carr-Saunders and Northumberland House were particularly dissatisfied. As well as this students were asked how many devices they own, with nearly all students owning between one and four devices.

Kitchens

Only 48% of students were satisfied with their kitchen, which does present a 7% increase in satisfaction from 2015. Common issues were that kitchens were too small for the numbers of students using them. In particular Bankside students were only 22% satisfied this was due to the kitchens being locked overnight and because of the lack of ovens.

Catering

For those living in catered halls 67% stated that they were satisfied that this met their dietary requirements. The most common complaint is that there was not enough variety in the food choices for individuals with specific dietary requirements and that there was also a lack of healthy options.

Halls Committee Activities

When asked what activities students would like to see halls committees take up in the future, the majority of students would like to see the introduction of inter-halls sports teams, however there was also strong support for group trips and film nights.

Student Comments

Students used this section as an opportunity to highlight how much they enjoyed living in their halls; however others also commented that they felt that the cost was too high. Others also highlighted issues not contained in the satisfaction section such as concerns over contract length and issues concerning laundry machines.

Future Section

This section of the survey sought to find out from students what they would like to see from any future halls developments.. This section was broken down into five themes.

Affordability

In total 63% of students stated that if their rent was to increase then they would reconsider living in LSE halls of residences. The comments left by students to those stating 'Yes' were highly emotive and this shows that the issue of rent affordability is highly important to students. As well as this 80% of students would like to see LSE subsidise rents for students from poorer backgrounds.

Campus Living

In total 45% of students stated that they would like to live in LSE halls of residence for their entire period of study. However, when this is broken down into undergraduate level this reduces to 35% and increases to 63% for postgraduate students.

Features of Halls

Students were asked to rank from Most to Not At All Important different features of halls of residences, the features that students stated they found most important were it being close to campus and low rent; the least important feature of halls was having a studio room. Students were also asked as to if they could which feature of their halls of residence would they make larger, the majority of students chose a larger bedroom, with a significant number also choosing a larger kitchen.

Size and Location

Students were also asked as to what size of accommodation block they would most like to live in and also which Transport for London Zone they would be most likely to live in. Students stated that they would most likely live in a block of up to 100 students or in a block of up to 500 students. They also overwhelmingly stated that they would most likely live in Zone 1; however some did say they were likely to live in Zone 2.

Introduction and Methodology

From 14 March 2016 to 30 March 2016, LSESU conducted the annual 'Your Hall, Your Call' research project. This project is one of the biggest consultations of students in university accommodation undertaken by a Students' Union in the UK.

The purpose of this year's research project was to compliment the Residential Services own survey which is extremely comprehensive and attracts a high number of responses, using our own satisfaction questions to compare and contrast the School's own data. As well as this the survey was amended to include future questions to investigate what students would like to see in any future halls of residence developments.

Methodology

This research was carried out both through LSESU staff and the Community and Welfare Officer visiting halls of residences and asking students to fill in paper surveys, and via an online survey. The visits to halls of residence took place between the 14 March and 23 March 2016; the online survey was open between the 14 March and 30 March.

The online survey was promoted via:

- LSESU social media channels;
- An email sent to students living in halls of residences;
- An email sent to Halls Committee Presidents; and
- An email to SSLC reps.

The halls visited were:

- Bankside House;
- Butlers Wharf Residence;
- Carr-Saunders Hall;
- Grosvenor House;
- High Holborn Residence;
- Lilian Knowles House;
- Northumberland House;
- Passfield Hall;
- Rosebery Hall;
- Sidney Webb House; and
- Urbanest Westminster.

Students from halls not visited were able to respond to the survey online, responses were also received from students living in:

- Urbanest Kings Cross; and
- University of London – International Hall.

Responses

Overall, 460 responses were received, a 3% decrease from the number of participants from 2015. Of the total responses received 160 were collected through the online questionnaire and 320 were collected in person by LSESU staff. Of the total number of respondents, 59% were undergraduates, 34% were postgraduate taught, 4% were postgraduate research and 3% stated 'Other'.

There were differing response rates for all halls of residences; the halls with the highest response rates were Carr-Saunders, Passfield and Northumberland House. The halls with the lowest response rate were Urbanest King's Cross, Urbanest Westminster Bridge and Lilian Knowles. Please see the below table for a full breakdown of the response rates for each LSE hall of residence.

Finally, one response was received from the University of London, International Hall.

Hall of Residence	Responses
Bankside House	11.02%
Butler's Wharf Residence	6.16%
Carr-Saunders Hall	36.25%
Grosvenor House	17.18%
High Holborn Residence	10.74%
Lilian Knowles House	4.38%
Northumberland House	18.53%
Passfield Hall	22.57%
Rosebery Hall	13.86%
Sidney Webb House	7.27%
Urbanest King's Cross	0.85%
Urbanest Westminster Bridge	2.89%

It should be noted that the response rate is based on the total number of beds for each hall of residence not the total number of students resident there at the time of the survey, therefore a slight margin of error should be accounted for.

Findings

The main findings of the consultation are presented in the following report, this is broken up into two sections; firstly the satisfaction section which broadly covers the university accommodation experience; and secondly the future section, which covers what students would like to see from any future halls of residence developments.

The Satisfaction section of the survey is then broken down into nine themes covering issues such as overall experience, rent, maintenance, refurbishments, Wi-Fi and kitchens. This section of the paper will look at the experiences of students overall, as well as breaking this

down to an individual hall level where appropriate; where this takes place this will focus on LSE owned or affiliated halls of residences.

The data from findings of the Satisfaction section is looked at quantitatively in order to give an overview of student's experiences in halls. However where this paper looks at halls of residences individually those halls with a response rate of 5% or under do not provide a representative sample and therefore we must be cautious on drawing conclusions from these figures. In this case, the responses from these halls (when looking at individual halls of residences) are examined qualitatively rather than viewed as a quantitative indication of the resident's experiences.

The Future Section is also broken down into five themes covering issues such as affordable rent, the preferred features of new halls, size and location of new halls and what further activities Halls Committees should undertake. The data from this section of the survey is not broken down into an individual halls level but looked at overall. The data will be analysed quantitatively and contextualised with student comment.

It is important to note that overall students enjoy living in LSE halls of residences and value the experience that it presents them and that any suggestions for improvement does not negate this positive experience.

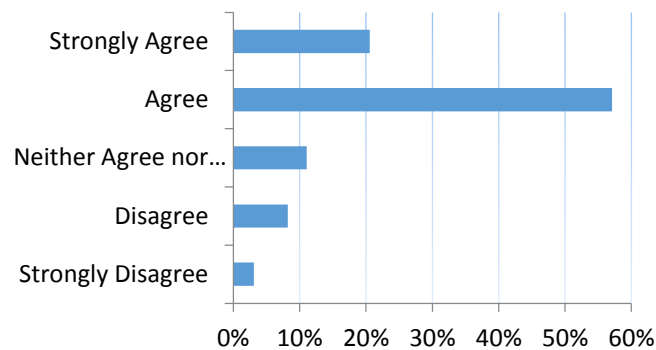
Future Actions

At the end of this report there are several recommendations for each section of the survey; we anticipate that the School will provide a comprehensive response to these recommendations. In particular, for the Future Section recommendations we expect acknowledgement of the issues raised and a meeting with the School in order to discuss these in full. We look forward to working with LSE to both improving the student experience in their current halls of residences and to ensuring that any future developments meet the needs of its students.

Satisfaction Section

Overall Satisfaction

Overall, I am satisfied with my Hall of Residence.



The total proportion of students who stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their halls of residence was 78%. This is a 6% increase in satisfaction from 2015, with more students choosing that they 'Strongly Agree'.

Bankside House

Overall 82% of students either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they are satisfied with Bankside. Nevertheless students cited issues such as the construction work from the Tate Modern being extremely noisy, the catering shuts too early, the dryers not working and difficulty obtaining visitor passes as points of improvement for the hall.

Butler's Wharf Residence

In total 62% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they are satisfied with Butler's Wharf. Students commented that issues such as disruptive maintenance works, lack of fridges in kitchens and small rooms did detract from their experience.

Carr-Saunders Hall

Overall 82% of residents at Carr Saunders stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied. Students stated that the positives were that there was a strong community feel at Carr Saunders, that it was inclusive, friendly and that the common room was excellent. However, students felt that the building works had been extremely disruptive, that a curfew and visitor restrictions were too harsh. Other students also cited concerns about the lack of sustainability measures at the hall.

Grosvenor House

In total 85% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with Grosvenor. Students were concerned that there was not a social atmosphere in Grosvenor and that the washing machines and dryers were difficult to pay for and often broken. In particular students stated that the installation of new door locks was disruptive.

High Holborn Residence

Overall 79% of residents stated that they 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with High Holborn. Students felt that whilst the hall was in a good location, there was not a social atmosphere and that it felt secluded and the facilities were dated.

Lilian Knowles House

Students generally agreed that they were satisfied with Lilian Knowles, however they felt that the experience was diminished by laundry machines being broken, noise from construction work and poor maintenance.

Northumberland House

In total 83% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with Northumberland. Students felt that the facilities were a bit dated especially in relation to kitchens, they also felt that the common room and social aspects could be improved, and that the laundry facilities were too small for the hall.

Passfield Hall

Overall 69% of students either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with Passfield. Whilst students stated that there was a good social atmosphere at Passfield, they were extremely concerned with the mice infestation. They also felt that the dated facilities, especially with heating, showers and toilets being broken detracted from their experience.

Rosebery Hall

In total 86% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with Rosebery. On the one hand some students felt that the social aspect to the hall was extremely good, however others stated that this did sometimes lead to excessive noise. Comments were also left about mice infestations and that some of the rooms were a bit dated.

Sidney Webb House

Overall 64% of residents either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with Sidney Webb. Students felt that the reception staff were very helpful that they felt the cost was reasonable. However, some students felt that the poor maintenance and that the building and facilities felt a bit dated detracted from their experience.

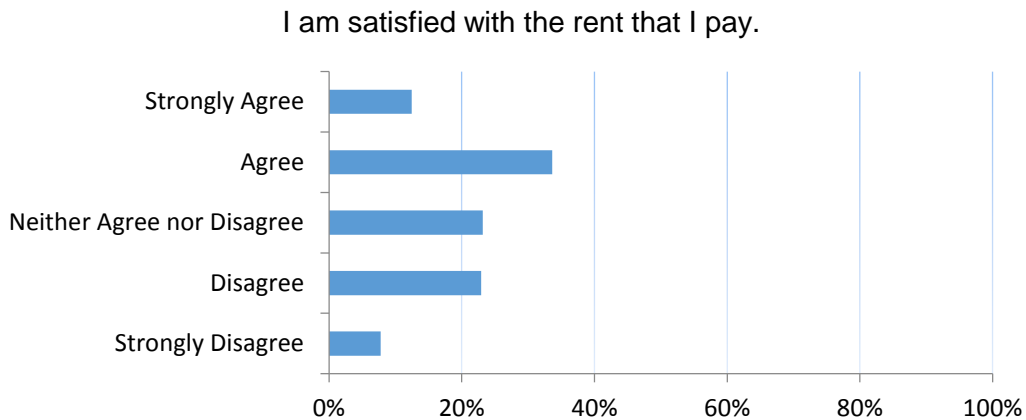
Urbanest King's Cross

Students were generally quite neutral about whether they were satisfied with Urbanest King's Cross. Students stated that they felt that maintenance works were not completed and that the staff were unhelpful.

Urbanest Westminster Bridge

Around half of students were positive that they were satisfied with Westminster Bridge. Students were concerned that maintenance was not being carried out, that the building was unfinished and that the staff were unhelpful.

Rent



The total proportion of respondents that stated they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the rent that they pay was 46%. Nevertheless this leaves over half of students who either stated that they were either not satisfied or felt neutral about the rent that they pay. It is significant that when these figures are compared to 2015 it seems that the level of satisfaction with rent is dropping with 5% less students stating that they were satisfied.

Interestingly, when analysing the comments left by students the most commonly used word was 'Expensive'. It seems very much that students feel that their accommodation is expensive, but that they recognise that living in London particularly Zone 1 that this is to be expected. Students stated they would like to see the rent subsidised further by the School and were concerned about future raises. Some students were unhappy with the rent that they paid as they felt that disruption caused by either refurbishment work or nearby construction work had a significant impact on their experience.

"#londonprices"

Passfield Hall

"Relative to accommodations in central London, rent is reasonable but as a student accommodation, I believe more should be done to subsidise this and to freeze it. it's a satisfactory hall but the price doesn't justify the fact that most of its rooms and facilities are rather dated."

Carr-Saunders Hall

"Quite expensive for a student. Of course, it's Holborn, so yeah."

High Holborn Residence

"I understand that London is a very expensive city, but I find that Halls should be more subsidized, the rents are too high."

Butler's Wharf Residence

"High, but to be expected"

Rosebery Hall

"compared to other halls, its good- you get food."

Bankside House

"Even if location is amazing, I think they should be more efforts in having more affordable rents. Main reason why I'm going to move next year."

Northumberland House

"Rent at LSE halls is exceptionally expensive."

Urbanest Westminster

"Issue of extra week in January not included! (for exams)."

Passfield Hall

"I have no money now"

Bankside House

"For the location itself"

Sidney Webb House

Many students felt that due to poor facilities, maintenance and due to construction work either in or near their hall that the rent they paid was too much.

"charged highest price for single room and have front-view of construction"

Bankside House

"Although location is great, the small room size and poor facilities do not justify the high rents, in my opinion."

High Holborn

"Rooms are REALLY small given how expensive it is. Especially for single rooms and/or non-refurbishes kitchens (we should pay less if we have older facilities)"

Northumberland House

"Construction noise not compensated for and it was £30 cheaper just 2 years ago."

Carr Saunders Hall

"It was a bit high, given the quality of the accommodations."

Rosebery Hall

“Rent should take into account the construction work & noise for those facing the street”

Lilian Knowles House

“Considering how much money the hall is making, it could really do with a freshen up (paint job, etc.) Also there's mice and often the showers/toilets are out of order.”

Passfield Hall

“It is too expensive for the items and furniture (everything is old)”

Sidney Webb House

its too expensive for the facilities. Location is great though. Room sizes are too small.

Grosvenor House

Some students commented that they were only satisfied with the rent because the fact that they shared kept the rent low.

“I am in a triple and we get dinners so I feel as if my accommodation is affordable.”

Passfield Hall

“But this is because I take a shared room. The single rooms are double the price, which is ridiculous considering the size of the rooms.”

Northumberland House

“Only because I share a room. Singles at Carr Saunders are too expensive.”

Carr-Saunders Hall

Finally, residents were also worried about any further increases in halls rents.

“please dont increase it to £200 next year! It becomes unaffordable and would change the diverse and open atmosphere CS stands for.”

Carr-Saunders Hall

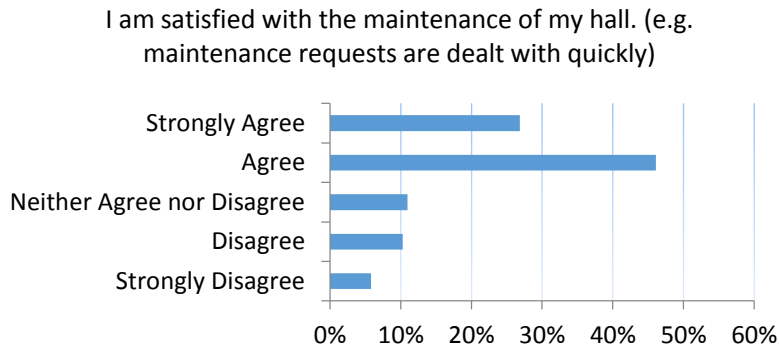
“Could reduce the rent or not increase it more - given most students are on loans and self financed. Rent can be expensive”

Lilian Knowles House

“Please cease the rent increment in any halls of residence”

Rosebery Hall

Maintenance



The total proportion of students who stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the maintenance of their hall was 73%. This represents a 15% increase in satisfaction on the same question from the 2015 survey. However, it does seem that this high level of satisfaction varies dependent on what hall the student is living in.

Bankside House

An overwhelming 91% of residents stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the maintenance at Bankside. Students commented that maintenance requests were dealt with quickly and efficiently, however some students did complain that the maintenance staff sometimes entered bedrooms without knocking or without prior agreement.

Butler's Wharf Residence

Overall 78% of students stated either that they 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with the maintenance in their hall. Students generally commented that they thought the maintenance was quick and efficient; however students felt that the maintenance staff sometimes disturbed them.

Carr-Saunders Hall

In total 63% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the maintenance in their hall. Students were generally satisfied however they did comment that issues with hot water had been ongoing for most of the year.

Grosvenor House

Overall 89% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with the maintenance at Grosvenor. The majority of students stated that they felt the maintenance team were quick, efficient and friendly. However some students did state that sometimes the maintenance staff could disturb them, early in the morning for example.

High Holborn Residence

In total 87% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the maintenance at High Holborn. Most students stated that they were usually quick and efficient.

Lilian Knowles House

The majority of students stated that they were satisfied with the maintenance at Lilian Knowles; however some did report that issues over pipe leaks had taken quite some time to resolve.

Northumberland House

An overwhelming 90% of residents stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with the maintenance at Northumberland. Generally students commented that they felt the maintenance staff were quick and efficient, however some did report that for some services such as mould removal could be a bit slow.

Passfield Hall

Only 41% of students stated the either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the maintenance at Passfield, with 45% stating that the 'Strongly Disagree' or 'Disagree'. There seems to have been some persistent maintenance issues at Passfield in relation to hot water in the showers with this being the most common complaint. As well as this there were issues of maintenance being slow to respond and not dealing with the mice problem.

Rosebery Hall

In total 60% of residents stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the maintenance of their hall. It seems that there are sometimes ongoing problems in relation to showers, hot water taps and furniture replacement that maintenance team have been slow to respond to.

Sidney Webb House

Overall 68% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with the maintenance of their hall. From the comments left it seems that some students feel that maintenance requests are not dealt with quickly enough in particular in relation not cold water in the showers, mice, mould and heating.

Urbanest King's Cross

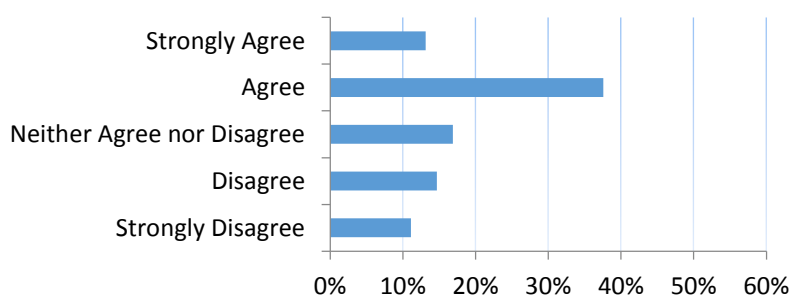
It seems that although the majority of students stated that they were satisfied with the maintenance of their hall; that the maintenance staff could be slow to respond due to being under resourced.

Urbanest Westminster Bridge

The majority of students disagreed that they were satisfied with the maintenance in their hall; with students feeling that their maintenance requests were often ignored.

Refurbishments

I am satisfied with the refurbishments of my hall.
(e.g. any refurbishment works are completed quickly and were not disruptive)



The total proportion of respondents that stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they are satisfied with the refurbishments of their hall was 51%. Interestingly, there was a 3% increase in students stating that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with refurbishments from 2015. It should be noted that although the intention of this question was in relation to ongoing refurbishment works, it seems from the comments that some students treated this question as referring to whether they were satisfied with the quality of the hall of residence.

Overall the comments left by students were that when refurbishment works are ongoing they are extremely noisy and disruptive. However, students living halls that have not been refurbished, particularly those that have been part refurbished, do want this work undertaken.

Bankside House

In total 71% of students stated they were 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the refurbishments of Bankside. Students commented that they liked the refurbishment of the common room in particular the addition of bean bags. Although some students felt that further refurbishments were needed for the hall.

Butler's Wharf Residence

Only 29% of students at Butler's Wharf stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' when asked if they were satisfied with refurbishments in their hall, with 47% of students stating 'Disagree'. Students were unhappy that refurbishment works seemed to be ongoing in particular the installation of a new fire alarm system was extremely disruptive.

Carr-Saunders Hall

Only 11% of residents stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with refurbishments at Carr-Saunders, with 51% stating 'Strongly Disagree'. Students were extremely unhappy that refurbishment works had been going on all year; they felt the works were noisy, disruptive and often took place outside of agreed hours. In particular students

were exceptionally disappointed that no compensation or reduction of rent had been offered for this.

Grosvenor House

Overall 80% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with the refurbishment of Grosvenor. Students stated that there had not been any refurbishment works but were pleased with the quality of their accommodation.

High Holborn Residence

In total, 63% of students stated they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with refurbishments of High Holborn. The students who stated they were in rooms that had been refurbished were extremely pleased with the quality. However those that were in rooms that had not been updated felt that this work was required and some students even reported rats.

Lilian Knowles House

The majority of students were satisfied with the refurbishments of their halls of residence.

Northumberland House

Overall 72% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with the refurbishments of Northumberland. Students stated that some refurbishments had been ongoing, with many not yet completed. They felt that the works were quite disruptive such as more students being required to share a kitchen and noise as well as taking a long time. As to completed refurbishments students were generally pleased with this, although some students stated that they were disappointed the study room no longer had printers.

Passfield Hall

Only 46% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the refurbishments at Passfield, with 35% of students answering this question to the negative. Students were disappointed that works took place during term time, as they found this extremely disruptive and felt that it went on for too long. Other students felt that the hall is quite dated and could do with further refurbishment.

Rosebery Hall

Overall 57% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the refurbishments at their Rosebery. Students stated they were concerned that there were different levels of refurbishments for different parts of the building. Some students felt that the works were extremely disruptive, that they were not notified in advance about them and that they went on for too long. Others felt that their section of the hall was in need of refurbishments, in particular the carpets.

Sidney Webb House

Only 42% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with the refurbishments of their hall, with 26% stating 'Disagree'. Students stated that only some of the hall has been refurbished, those living in refurbished sections seemed generally quite pleased with it. However students living in un-refurbished sections felt that the hall was quite dated.

Urbanest King's Cross

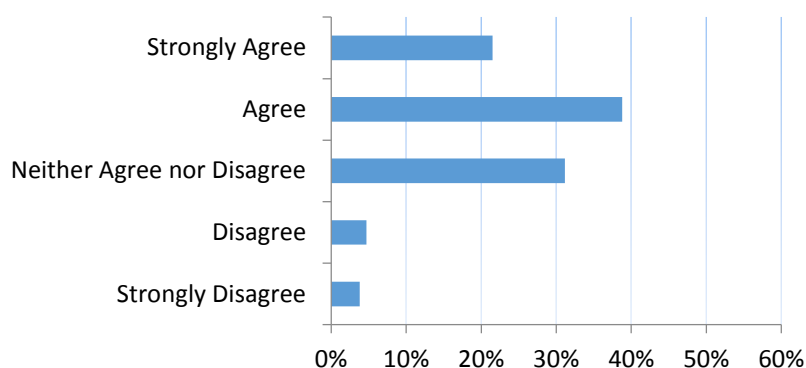
Half of students at King's Cross stated that they were satisfied and the other half stated they were not satisfied with the refurbishment of their hall.

Urbanest Westminster Bridge

Students were generally not satisfied in relation to refurbishments of Westminster Bridge, this was due to the building being unfinished when they moved in.

Wardens

I am satisfied with the Warden at my hall. (e.g. accessibility, helpfulness and deals with issues promptly)



The total proportion of students that stated they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their Warden in their hall was 60%. This is a 3% increase on the number of students stating that they were satisfied with the Warden from 2015. It seems from the comments that the main reason given for students choosing 'Neither Agree nor Disagree' is due to a lack of contact from the warden.

It should be noted that from the comments left by students it seems that some students conflated the Warden with the reception staff in the hall.

Bankside House

In total, 45% students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their Warden, with a further 43% stating that they felt neutral. Some students stated that the updates from the Warden were helpful; others felt that the Warden (and Sub Wardens) were sometimes unfair. Generally students stated that they either had no need to contact the Warden or were not aware of who they were.

Butler's Wharf Residence

Overall 78% of residents stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their Warden in their hall. Some students stated that the Warden was nice whereas other students did not know who their Warden was.

Carr-Saunders Hall

In total 61% of residents stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they felt that they were satisfied with their Warden with a further 32% feeling neutral. Some students stated that they felt that the Warden was approachable and helpful, whereas others stated that they did not know who the Warden was. Many students felt that the Warden was too strict in relation to the implementation of the overnight guest policy.

Grosvenor House

Overall 69% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their Warden, with a further 25% feeling neutral. Students felt that the Warden was helpful and accessible; however others did state that they had never met the Warden.

High Holborn Residence

In total 57% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with their Warden, with a further 36% feeling neutral. Students stated that they were not aware who their Warden was; those that had engaged with the Warden reported mixed responses, with some stating they were helpful and others commented that they were too strict.

Lilian Knowles House

The majority of students responded positively as to whether they were satisfied with their Warden, with students stating that they were very nice, although slow to respond.

Northumberland House

In total 73% of residents stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their Warden with a further 21% feeling neutral. Residents stated that they were not aware of who their Warden was, some felt that they were helpful. Others stated that they felt the processes in seeking support from the Warden could be bureaucratic.

Passfield Hall

Overall 73% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with their Warden, with a further 20% feeling neutral about this. Some residents felt that the Warden was nice; others felt that there could be more communication from the Warden. Other students felt that the Warden could be too strict.

Rosebery Hall

Overall 51% of residents stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their Warden, with a further 44% stating that they felt neutral. Students who had engaged with their Warden generally found them responsive and helpful, although some commented that they could be slow to respond. Many students stated that they were not aware of who their Warden was.

Sidney Webb House

In total 63% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they felt that their Warden was helpful, with a further 23% feeling neutral about this. Some students stated that they were not aware who their Warden was. Of those that had engaged with their Warden the majority felt that they were helpful, however others felt that they were slow to respond in the case of losing property.

Urbanest King's Cross

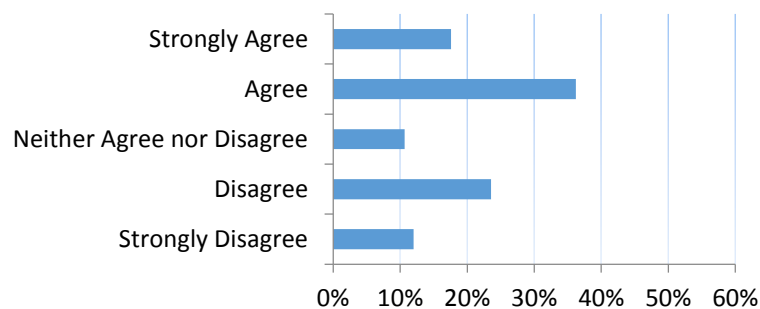
Students were generally quite neutral as to whether they were satisfied with the Warden; some stated that they did not know who their Warden was.

Urbanest Westminster Bridge

Students generally disagreed that they were satisfied with their Warden as they stated that they had been told by Urbanest that they did not have a Warden.

Wi-Fi

I am satisfied with the quality of the Wi-Fi.



In total 54% of residents that stated that they 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with their Wi-Fi in their hall, however a large proportion (36%) of students also answered this question to the negative. Many students commented that the Wi-Fi was slow, that their connection dropped on a regular basis and that they had poor signal strength. This is an issue that does come up consistently year on year and there does seem to be large variations in satisfaction between the different halls of residences.

Bankside House

Overall 72% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the Wi-Fi at Bankside. However, some students did comment that the connection was extremely slow.

Butler's Wharf Residence

Only 44% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they are satisfied with the Wi-Fi at Butler's Wharf, with 56% of students answering this to the negative. Students commented that although this is dependent upon where you are located within the building that the Wi-Fi has been a major concern for them this year.

Carr-Saunders Hall

Just 32% of residents stated either that they 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they are satisfied with the Wi-Fi in their hall, with 59% of students answering this question to the negative. The majority of comments left by students stated that the Wi-Fi was extremely inconsistent, with the connection dropping on a regular basis or being slow. Others stated that they did not receive Wi-Fi in their room.

Grosvenor House

In total, 56% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the Wi-Fi in Grosvenor, although 33% answered this question to the negative. Students commented that they Wi-Fi could be slow particularly at busy times and often the connection drops completely.

High Holborn Residence

Overall 56% of residents stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with their Wi-Fi in their hall, with a further 19% feeling neutral. It seems from the comments that for some students the connection could be good, but for others – dependent where they are located in the building – the connection is slow and drops consistently.

Lilian Knowles House

Students were generally satisfied with the Wi-Fi; however many commented that initially the Wi-Fi had been terrible, but now that the routers had been changed it was much better. Some stated that it could still be slow at busy periods, and that the speed of connection could still depend where you are in the building. The limit of only being able to connect two devices was also a frustration.

Northumberland House

Only 34% of residents stated that they 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the Wi-Fi in Northumberland, with 56% answering this question to the negative. Students commented that the connection was extremely slow and unreliable, with students reporting that they consistently get disconnected. Others stated that due to the location of their room they cannot get access to Wi-Fi.

Passfield Hall

Overall 73% of students stated that they 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with the Wi-Fi in their hall, however 21% did answer this question to the negative. Students commented that mostly the connection was good, however that they could be disconnected sometimes and that it could also be slow.

Rosebery Hall

Only 47% of residents stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with the Wi-Fi in Rosebery, with 39% of students answering this question to the negative. Students very much felt that the Wi-Fi could be slow, particularly during the evenings, and that it disconnected too often.

Sidney Webb House

Overall 72% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with the Wi-Fi in their hall, with a further 19% stating the neutral option. Although generally students stated that the Wi-Fi was good, they felt that the connection speed could be improved and other students reported being disconnected.

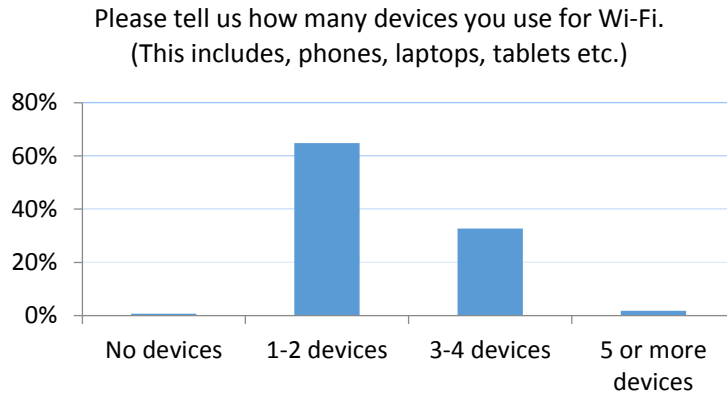
Urbanest King's Cross

The majority of students were positively satisfied with the Wi-Fi in their halls, they stated that whilst it was generally good it could be intermittent at times.

Urbanest Westminster Bridge

The majority of students did not feel satisfied as to the Wi-Fi in Westminster Bridge, with students stating that there had been a lot of problems with Wi-Fi this year and that the connection was generally unstable.

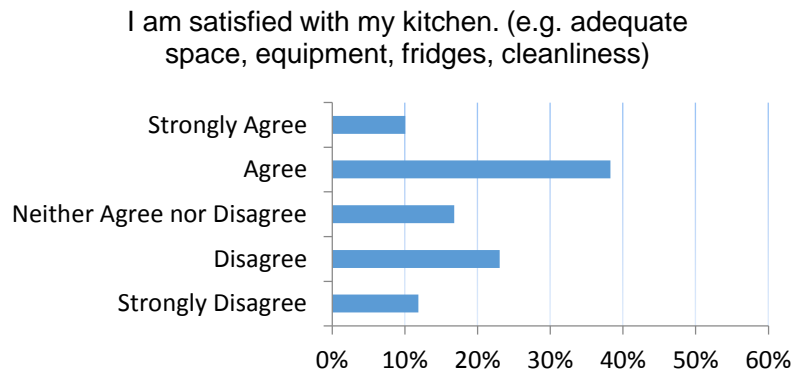
Wi-Fi Devices



As well as understanding how satisfied students were with the Wi-Fi in their halls the Students' Union also sought to find out how many devices students generally tended to use. In total, 98% of students used between one to four devices, of these students 33% are using either three or four devices. If it is assumed that the majority of the 65% of students who use either one or two devices actually use two devices then this means that policies such as limiting Wi-Fi usage to just two devices could be out of date with the lived experience of students.

As well as this when the School is looking to increase connection speeds in halls of residence it should not assume that each student only uses one device and therefore any decision on this should take into account that students are increasing the number of devices they use.

Kitchens



The total proportion of students who stated 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with their kitchen in their hall was 48%, although 35% answered this question to the negative. This does however represent a 7% increase in satisfaction from 2015. Similarly to previous years the most common cited issues that students raised were the lack of ovens, the lack of fridge space and the number of students sharing a kitchen. There were also large variations in satisfaction levels dependent on the hall and if they were catered or not, with students living in catered halls on the whole more likely to be dissatisfied.

It should be noted that other students not cleaning the kitchen or stealing each other's food/utensils was also a common complaint however it is recognised that this is not something the School has control over.

Bankside House

Only 21% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their kitchen, with 55% of students answering this question to the negative. The most common complaint by students at Bankside was the lack of ovens in the kitchens; the second most contentious issue was that the kitchens are locked overnight. Students were also unhappy about the lack of fridges, that the windows do not open and that too many students share one kitchen.

Butler's Wharf Residence

In total 67% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with their kitchen, with 22% of students answering this question to the negative. Students commented that there was variation in the quality of the kitchen; particularly some students felt that some kitchens were too small for the number of students using it. As well as this students felt that some kitchens could do with more fridges.

Carr-Saunders Hall

Overall, 51% of residents stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their kitchen, with 26% of students answering this question to the negative.

Students commented that there was not enough fridge space for the number of students using each question and they were also extremely disappointed in the lack of ovens.

Grosvenor House

In total 79% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with their kitchen. However, students were concerned that their kitchens did not have ovens, toasters, freezers or that their appliances were faulty and some even commented that they felt that the electrics were dangerous.

High Holborn Residence

Only 43% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their kitchen, with 38% of residents answering this question to the negative. Students commented that the kitchens were too small for the number of students using it, particularly that there was no room to socialise in it. As well as this the kitchens often do not have windows and therefore the ventilation in the kitchens was poor.

Lilian Knowles House

The majority of students stated that they were satisfied with their kitchen, however some students stated that there was not a lot of space, particularly in the fridges for the number of students using the kitchen.

Northumberland House

Overall 50% of students at Northumberland stated either that they 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their kitchen, although 35% of residents answered this question to the negative. The most common complaint by students was that the kitchens were too small, particularly that there was no space to socialise in them. As well as this some students stated that there were no windows and that appliances were old and broken.

Passfield Hall

Just 26% of students stated that they 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their kitchen, with 50% of students answering this question to the negative. Students were unhappy that the kitchens were not big enough for the number of people using them, that there was nowhere to socialise in them and that there was not enough fridge space. Students also complained that there were no ovens or freezers.

Rosebery Hall

Only 48% of students stated that either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they were satisfied with their kitchen, with 36% answering this question to the negative. From the comments students were generally unhappy about the size of the kitchens particularly that there was not enough storage space and space in fridges. Another issue of concern was that the kitchens did not have ovens.

Sidney Webb House

Overall 69% of residents stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that they were satisfied with their kitchen, although 19% did answer this question to the negative. The major concern for students living at Sidney Webb, were that the appliances were old and/or broken and the kitchens generally quite dated. As well as this students were concerned about the lack of storage space and space in fridges.

Urbanest King's Cross

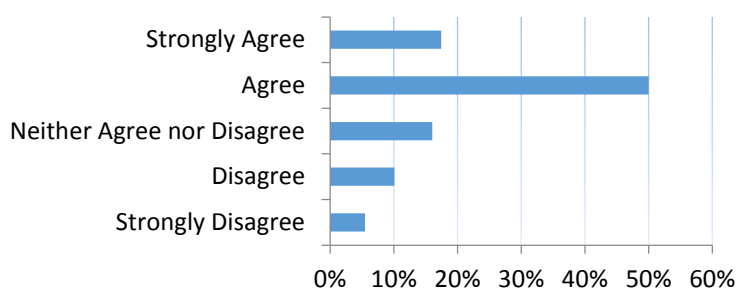
The majority of students were satisfied with their kitchen at King's Cross; some commented that they were concerned about cleanliness.

Urbanest Westminster Bridge

The majority of students were satisfied with their kitchen at Westminster Bridge; some commented that they were concerned about cleanliness.

Catering

The catering is sufficient to meet my dietary requirements?



The total proportion of students living in catered halls of residences that answered either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether the catering was sufficient for their dietary needs was 67%. The most common concern by students was that there was a lack of choice for individuals with specific dietary needs such as vegetarian, vegan, halal or kosher. Students were also concerned about the lack of 'healthy' options on offer.

Bankside House

Overall 68% of residents at Bankside stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they felt the catering met their dietary requirements. Students commented about the lack of choice for specific dietary requirements, in particular it seems that the menus do not include allergen information. As well as this students would like to see a wider variety of 'healthy' options and breakfast to be provided as well.

Carr-Saunders

In total 70% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether the catering met their dietary requirements. Students generally were not impressed with the quality or variety of the food, in particular that seemed to be a lack of vegetarian and halal options.

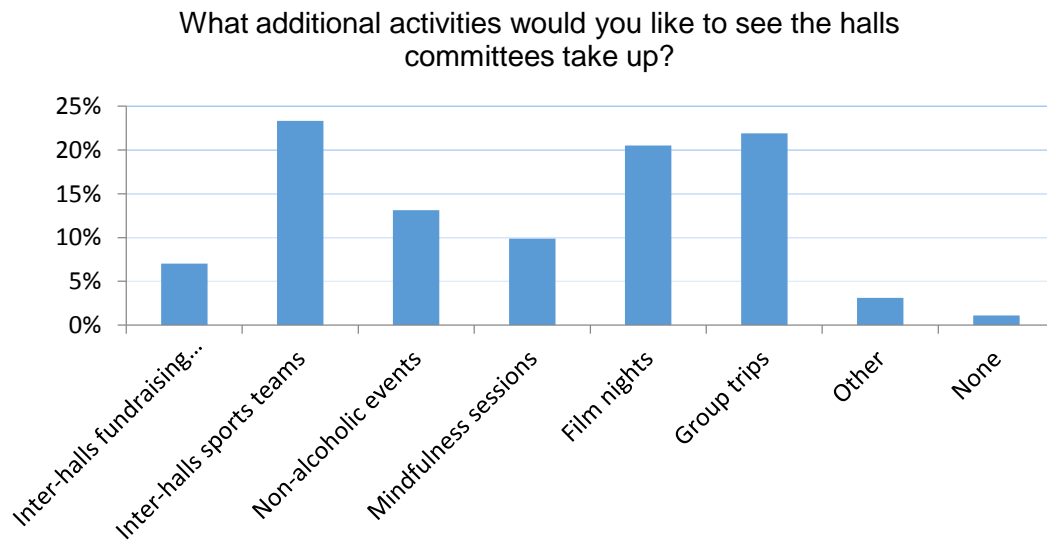
Passfield

Overall 59% of residents stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that the catering met their dietary requirements; however 29% answered this question to the negative. Students were concerned that there was a considerable lack of vegetarian or vegan options available to them. Others stated that they felt the quality was not consistent.

Rosebery

In total 75% of students stated either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' as to whether they felt that the catering was sufficient to meet their dietary requirements. Students were mostly concerned about the lack of concern for students with allergies and the lack of variety, in particular the lack of vegan, vegetarian, halal and kosher food. Some students suggested that they would like 'healthy' options; others were unhappy that during the holidays they were only given breakfast.

Halls Committee Activities



The Students' Union is committed to working with halls committees to ensure that they are properly supported in their role of engaging with students living in halls of residences. Therefore the purpose of this question was to give both the Students' Union and halls committees a guide as to where best to focus their activities in the future.

The three activities that students would most like halls committees to take up were; inter-halls sports teams (23%), group trips (22%) and film nights (21%). Interestingly, there was not much variation in preference between undergraduate and postgraduate students with postgraduate students only slightly more likely to have chosen group trips and film nights. Other examples of activities given by students included; pub crawls, more alcoholic events (including open bars), yoga, running groups, pizza nights and study sessions.

It is important to note that this is not intended to be a definitive guide as to where to allocate resources, more that the responses demonstrate that students value their committee and its role in fostering a community. What is clear is that both the Students' Union and the School should be working towards empowering halls committees to be able to deliver a wider range of activities for students living in halls.

Student Comments

Do you have any other comments about LSE halls of residences?

This question received 122 comments; although many students took this opportunity to provide positive feedback about their time in halls of residences others used this as an opportunity to raise issues not elsewhere covered in this survey.

The positive comments left by students included.

"Its been a great experience"

Butler' Wharf Residence

"I have really enjoyed my time at halls. I think it is a really good way to meet people and make friends, and I have found that staying in halls has definitely helped me to settle in at LSE."

Rosebery Hall

"You guys are doing a very good job!! I really appreciate it keep up with the good work :)"

Northumberland House

"I love Passfield Hall. It gives me good preparation for living in London next year."

Passfield Hall

"its awesome"

High Holborn Residence

The issue most commented upon by students was the cost of rent, some students felt that the rent was already too high and others were worried about further increases.

"Carr Saunders is the best! And please freeze the rents - international students like me can't choose to live at home."

Carr Saunders Hall

"Rents should be lowered!"

Bankside House

"Too expensive in general"

Urbanest King's Cross

“Great and essential for the complete LSE experience. Higher Prices would only seek to ruin the already stressful student lifestyle”

Rosebery House

“Location is fantastic, but housing prices in London are extremely high. Halls are still affordable to some extent but not for all. I feel the price does not reflect quality, but only location . I mean quality is OK, but could be better i.e. green spaces, bigger kitchen, better wifi and bed room furniture.”

Grosvenor House

Some students also commented on contract lengths which was not covered elsewhere in the survey, these comments were varied and suggest that students require a choice.

“We need more cheap halls with only term-time contracts, cheap single rooms. Priority for second year and third year students with financial difficulties should be introduced.”

Passfield Hall

“It is very important for Rosebery to offer 50 weeks contracts . There are a lot of master students having to move out before finishing their programs. At least a small percentage of Myddleton wing should offer this possibility instead of giving priority to the hotel“

Rosebery Hall

“Be more flexible with contract“

Sidney Webb

Finally, another common complaint not covered elsewhere in the survey was in relation to laundry machines, these were cited as either being broken or too expensive.

“... Would love if the laundry was cheaper and if the printer and vending machine didn't go out of order so often. Staff at the halls are awesome :)”

Grosvenor House

“Since sanctuary is a private company! Sometimes feel the LSE has little control over what happened here, for instance they charge us here more for laundry than in other halls.”

Lilian Knowles House

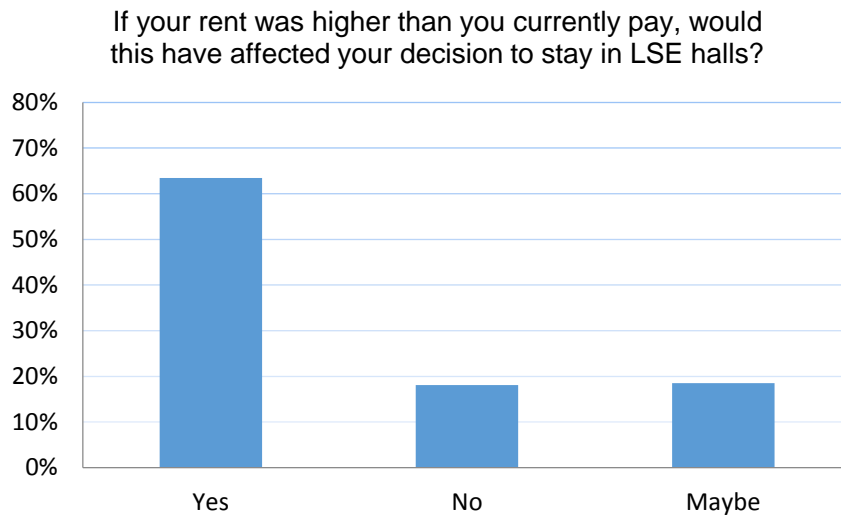
“improve washing and drying facilities “

Bankside House

Future Section

Affordability

Whilst LSE halls of residences may not be the most expensive halls in London, with increases in the price of rent each year (although the cost of shared rooms has been frozen for the second year running) it is becoming increasingly more expensive for students to live in LSE halls. Given that 63% of students when asked if an increase in rent would have affected their decision to stay in LSE halls of residences stated 'Yes', it is clear that affordability is a key concern.



Students were deeply concerned about the prospect of the cost of the rent increasing and the majority of students stated that they would not live in LSE halls, with some even commenting that they would reconsider studying at LSE altogether. A minority of students did say that this would not affect their decision to live in LSE halls, but which hall that they chose to live in.

"I wouldn't stay and I wouldn't come to the LSE"

"I cant afford higher rent"

"My family can barely afford them as it is"

"I would not have stayed at LSE residences"

"I would have chosen a cheaper hall option but would still stay in LSE halls."

"Any higher and Urbanest would have been my choice"

"Northumberland was the highest I was willing to pay. When I applied I was hoping to be allocated cheaper accommodation."

"I probably wouldn't have been able to afford it."

“an increase of £50 is enough to get me with nothing to eat “

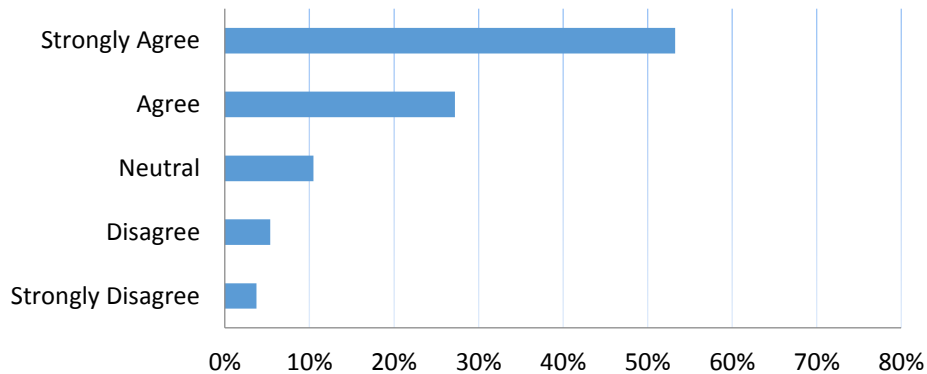
“Rent is my biggest consideration”

Of the 18% of students who stated that this would not have affected their decision, the majority of students commented that this was because they were on the General Course, an international student or because their home was too far away and that they felt that they had no choice but to live in halls no matter the cost. A minority of students stated that the location and 31 week contract were more important than the cost.

Affordable Rent Scheme

How much do you agree with the following statement:

'LSE should subsidise a certain number of single rooms at a reduced rent for students from poorer backgrounds.'



In academic year 2014/15 King's College London introduced the accommodation support scheme, in this scheme students from low socio-economic backgrounds were able to apply for a limited number of beds from across the halls portfolio at a reduced rent. The Students' Union would like to see a similar scheme introduced in LSE halls of residences. Therefore the purpose of this question was to ascertain if this was something that was desirable for LSE students.

An overwhelming 80% of students stated that they either 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree', with over half of students choosing 'Strongly Agree', that LSE should subsidise single rooms for those from poorer backgrounds. The majority of students who disagreed with this premise did so because they felt that all rooms in LSE halls of residences should be reduced for all students and there were also concerns that some students particularly non-UK and students from middle income families who do not receive less student support could be left out.

Of the students who do agree many stated that this was a hugely important widening participation issue and that they were surprised this was not already in place; other students also felt that the cost of rent should be subsidised for all students. Interestingly many students commented that the success of such a scheme would very much depend on the definition of a student from a 'poorer background', for example some students felt that this should not just be based on parental income but the money that students actually receive (or don't) from their families.

Analysis

It is not surprising that the majority of students were concerned with further increases to the price of their rent. The problem of the high cost of living and ever increasing rental prices means that studying and living in London can put a real strain on students' finances including those living in university run accommodation. The highly emotive comments left by students as to how they feel that they are being priced out of halls and for some even attending LSE are extremely illuminating of this problem. What is also extremely concerning were the number of student who felt that they did not have a choice but to live in halls of residence. This demonstrates that for some students whether this is due to the nature of their course or because the parental home is too far away who just need to live in halls whatever the cost.

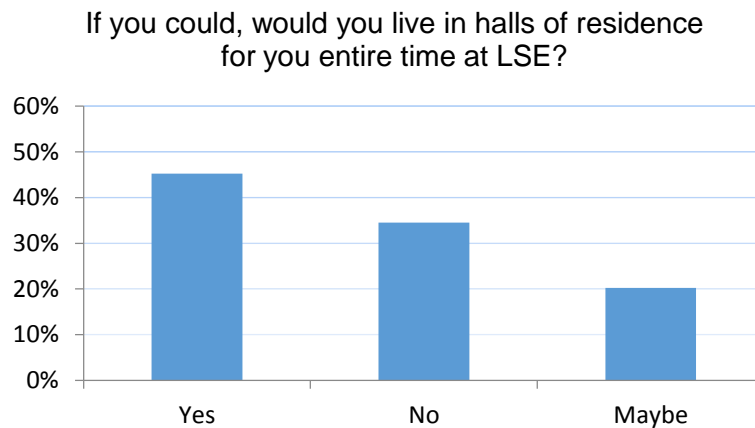
It is the view of the Students' Union that halls of residence should be treated as a form of 'social housing' for students and therefore be affordable to them. LSESU is aware that LSE does make a profit from its halls of residences and that this is used as a revenue stream for the School, this should not be the case and its halls of residences should be treated as 'not for profit'. LSESU believes that the School should consider either a more aggressive commercial strategy around holiday lets in order to subsidise rents for students or consider moving away from the self-financing of halls policy, as since this was introduced rents have risen considerably.

The affordability of halls especially affects the many students that feel that they have no choice but to live in halls; these students should not feel pressured into paying for rents that they cannot afford simply because they feel that they have no other option. As well as this, it should be recognised that the experience of living in halls is an important part of the student experience at LSE. Therefore the School should ensure that any students who want to live in halls are not simply priced out.

To this end it is the view of the Students' Union that the School should create an 'Affordable Rent Strategy', this strategy should embed the principle that halls should be treated as a form of social housing and the role that they play in Widening Participation. It should set out a clear definition of what affordable rent for LSE students looks like and should contain a commitment to take proactive approach to the long term sustainability of halls rents so that they do not become so inflated that it deters students from studying at LSE.

In the shorter term the Students' Union believes that LSE should implement an Accommodation Support Scheme similar to that at King's. However it is clearly not as simple as just targeting students from 'poorer backgrounds' and that any such scheme should ensure that it is as open to as many students as possible. Therefore it should be open to not just low-socio economic home students, but also to international students (particularly those on scholarships) and students who may be estranged from their families.

Campus Living



London universities are generally not campus based institutions and students generally do not tend to live in halls during their time at LSE, with some exceptions. The numerous redevelopments around the central LSE campus and the ever expanding number of students attending the School has given rise to the debate as to whether it is a desirable outcome for LSE to work towards becoming a campus institution. One particular aspect of interest is as to whether students wish to live in halls of residence for their entire period of study at LSE.

Interestingly, 45% of respondents answered 'Yes' to this question which is quite a large proportion of students. The reasoning for this given by students was that the location of their halls is close to campus, the fact they believed that living in halls was cheaper than renting privately, and as students perceived this as the easiest option due to not having to deal with bills.

For those students choosing 'Maybe' it seems that they would consider living in halls again, but there are several provisos that would need to be fulfilled in order to do so. Many students stated their decision whether to live in LSE halls would depend on if they were able to choose which halls they could live in, especially when this came to proximity to campus. Others stated that they would live in halls again only if they were able to choose to live with their friends. Some also stated that this decision to live in halls for more than a year would be dependent on any increase in halls rents.

Students stating 'No' to this question most often cited independence as the reason, they felt that living in halls placed restrictions upon them and they wanted the opportunity to learn how to live on their own or to live with friends and generally to feel more autonomous. Other students stated that living in halls felt too impersonal and they would like to live somewhere that they could feel more 'at home'.

It is also important to note that when these results are broken down into undergraduate and postgraduate only these numbers do change significantly. In total 63% of postgraduate students (including postgraduate taught) stated 'Yes', however when taken separately this changes to 64% of postgraduate taught and 46% of postgraduate research students. For undergraduate students only 35% stated 'Yes'.

Analysis

What was particularly surprising was that such a large proportion of students stated that they would like to live in halls for their entire time studying at LSE, although this did not amount to a majority. It was also highly interesting as to the extent of which there was a clear preference for living in halls for their entire period of study by postgraduate taught students. Due to the nature of their period of study this is unsurprising and is not actually a reflection on whether these students would like to see a more campus based institution, but rather an issue of contract length for their period of study. Overall there is not a currently a clear majority of students therefore a move towards students living in halls of residence for their entire period of study may not actually be desirable.

However, if the School were to work towards this aim, the data also shows that this would be a logistical challenge. It is clear that students would prefer to have autonomy over which hall they lived in and who they lived with, therefore the School would need to ensure that mechanisms were in place for students to be able to choose or change where they lived.

At present, given that LSE is moderately expanding student numbers, it is the view of the Students' Union that priority should be given to first year undergraduate students and international students for a place at halls of residences. Although it should be noted that the responses to this survey show there is a clear demand among postgraduate students for places in halls of residences, therefore LSE should ensure that any future strategy should seek to either maintain or expand the provision in halls for postgraduate students. However there is not enough evidence of a demand for second and third year accommodation so this should not be viewed as a priority.

If the School were to move towards facilitating students to live in halls for their entire period of study, the School should take into account issues such as the proximity of the halls to campus, cost in comparison to the private rented sector and the logistics of ensuring that students are satisfied with where they are placed. Finally, it is the view of the Students' Union that were the School to go down this road that they should ensure any such policy does not require students to live in halls of residences whilst they study at LSE.

Features of Halls

Students were asked which aspects of halls were most important to them; they were given a range of options and asked to rank them from 'Most Important' to Not At All Important'. The purpose of this question was not to find out definitively what features of halls are most important but to attempt to build a picture and provide some context to what student's value in their hall of residence. Especially in the current context with the rise of private luxury halls of residence; it can sometimes seem as though many assumptions are made about what students want from their halls of residences. The below table sets out the responses from students.

	Most Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not At All Important
Close to campus	49.43%	46.45%	3.89%	0.00%	0.23%
Low rent	48.17%	40.60%	8.94%	1.83%	0.46%
High quality furnishings	12.15%	43.46%	35.05%	7.48%	1.87%
Community feeling	22.90%	40.42%	25.47%	9.58%	1.64%
Studio room	8.79%	15.20%	33.02%	28.03%	14.96%
Single room	30.44%	45.20%	17.33%	5.39%	1.64%
Shared room	4.87%	18.98%	36.01%	22.87%	17.27%
Ensuite bathroom	24.82%	34.28%	21.51%	12.06%	7.33%
Shared bathroom	4.18%	20.39%	47.67%	13.51%	14.25%
38 week contract	28.30%	36.32%	24.06%	5.42%	5.90%
50 week contract	15.14%	24.52%	32.93%	11.78%	15.63%
Flexible contract	30.54%	36.83%	23.54%	6.29%	2.80%
Catered	19.67%	32.08%	26.00%	12.18%	10.07%
Non-catered	8.74%	13.83%	47.33%	17.72%	12.38%
Common room	24.47%	38.82%	25.65%	7.29%	3.76%
Kitchen	47.42%	42.25%	7.28%	2.11%	0.94%
Study space in halls	34.03%	33.33%	20.75%	6.53%	5.36%

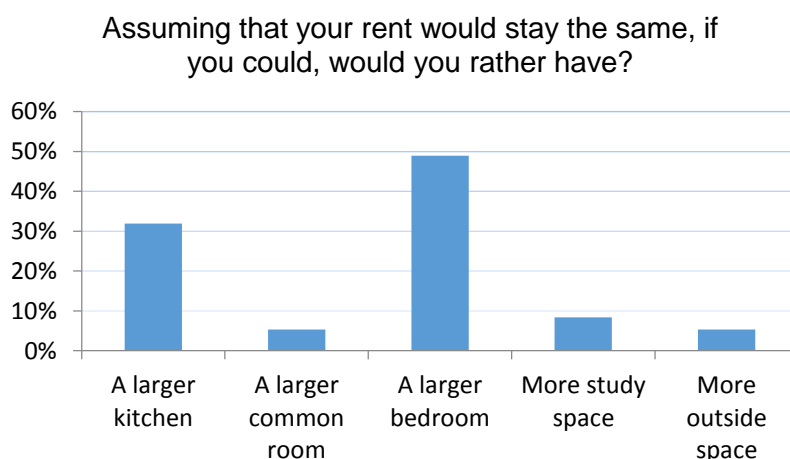
Perhaps unsurprisingly the two highest ranked features were 'Close to Campus' and 'Low Rent', although it is slightly surprising that the next most popular feature was a 'Kitchen'. Another surprising result is that the least important feature was a 'Studio Room'; however the shared room option was also unpopular which is to be expected. It is also surprising that students were relatively neutral as to how they felt about an 'Ensuite Bathroom'.

In terms of contract length, on the face of it, it looks as if the 50 week contract is particularly unpopular, as many students prefer to have a shorter contract as they may not choose to stay in halls for the holiday periods. However, when this is looked at specifically on a postgraduate and undergraduate level, postgraduate students are 20% more likely than undergraduates to class a 50 week contract as 'Most Important'. What is interesting in these

figures are that there are still a proportion of postgraduate students who do want a 38 week contract, as the difference between undergraduates and postgraduates choosing this as most important is only 13% (see below table).

	All	UG	PG	UG/PG Difference
38 week contract	28.30%	33.88%	21.29%	-12.59%
50 week contract	15.14%	7.63%	28.10%	20.47%
Flexible contract	30.54%	20.58%	47.50%	26.92%

The term 'Flexible Contract' was never defined within the survey and was left relatively vague to try to ascertain if students were more open to the idea of flexibility rather than a rigid contract. For example in the private sector many leases include break clauses that can allow tenants to leave the property before the end of the contract date but after a certain period. Therefore the purpose of including this option was to see if fixed contracts were actually desirable to students.



To further contextualise what features are most important to students, they were then asked which feature they would prefer. The majority stated that they would prefer a larger bedroom, with some student commenting that for the amount of rent that they pay they feel that their rooms were quite small. Others commented that the size of their bedroom meant that it was not sufficient for studying in. Interestingly the second most popular option was also to have a larger kitchen and one of the least popular options was a larger common room. Students who chose this option commented that they would like halls to feel less like a dormitory and more like self-contained flats.

Analysis

What is extremely interesting about the results from this section is how many of the assumptions made by halls of residence providers as to what students want from their hall of residence did not wholly resonate. In particular, the data showed that there was no real

consistency in importance as to the type of room that students found most important. It is to be expected that students would generally not find having a shared room appealing; however it is surprising that overall students mostly felt neutral about this type of room. Even more interestingly, considering the move by private providers to focus on high-end studio rooms it is also surprising how little students valued this option. Again in terms of bathroom type, whilst it is to be expected that students would prefer an ensuite bathroom, having a shared bathroom was not completely ruled out by many students.

This could suggest that whilst students would prefer a single, ensuite room they are willing to compromise in order to reduce the amount of rent that they pay. This hypothesis could carry some weight given that the second most popular feature of a hall of residence was 'Low Rent' with the most popular option for students being 'Proximity to Campus'. In London, Low Rent and Proximity to Campus will often result in a compromise; LSE's central location means that the closer to campus the halls, the more expensive the rent is likely to be. The survey did not seek to contextualise how far students would be willing to compromise on either variable; it is clear that further research is needed in this area.

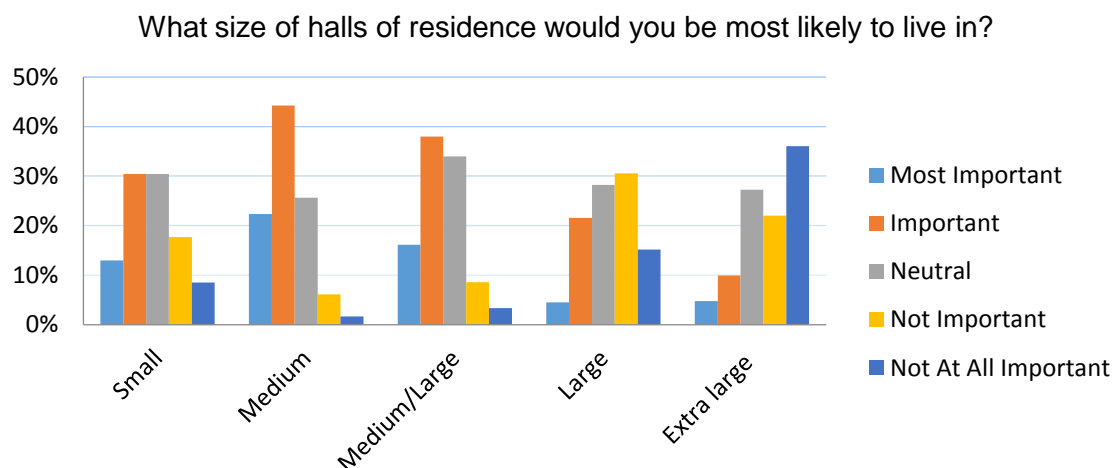
The findings from the different types of contract options listed seem very much to suggest that what students want from their hall of residence is flexibility of provision. Students have different living needs from their hall of residence, for some postgraduate taught students this is having somewhere to live for the duration of their course, for other students this having the ability to keep their rent as low as possible. It seems from this that students would very much value having more flexibility within their contracts and that this could be something that the School should explore.

Another interesting finding is how important the kitchen is to students living in halls of residence, including those living in catered halls. It seems that having this localised social space is extremely important to students, more so than having one large common room for their hall of residence. It seems that students no longer want to live in dormitory style accommodation but to live in smaller almost flat type accommodation. This does not necessarily mean that the halls of residence need to be small, but that within their halls students prefer to socialise in smaller spaces.

These findings are not intended to be the definitive statement on what students want from any halls of residences developments. However, if LSE were to explore taking on new properties then it is important that the views of students living in halls are taken properly into account. The School should use these findings as a starting point to ensure that it provides them with the ideal living space but allows students the flexibility to ensure they can keep their costs to a minimum.

Size and Location

Another important consideration for LSE in any new halls of residence developments is the size and location of the halls. The Students' Union recognises that acquiring property near campus can be challenging therefore it is important to find out what potential alternatives could be open to the School. Therefore the purpose of this section was to find out, what size of accommodation block and which Transport for London (TfL) Zones students would be prepared to live in.



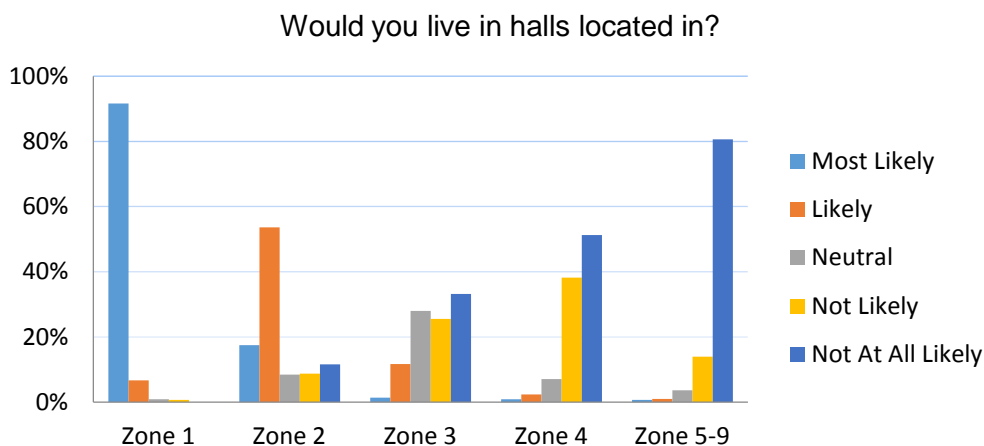
Students were given five different options of size of accommodation block and asked to rank these as to which size was most important to them. The different sizes of accommodation block were:

- Small – up to 50 students;
- Medium – up to 100 students;
- Medium/Large – up to 500 students;
- Large – up to 1000 students; and
- Extra Large – over 1000 students.

The purpose of this question was to ascertain what sized accommodation block students would most like to live in. The aim of this question was not to determine whether students would like to live in a 'student village' but rather the size of the individual building that they would hypothetically live in. Students were most likely to state either 'Most Important' or 'Important' for the Medium and Medium/Large sized halls of residences with 67% and 54% respectively. In total 58% of students stated that they would be extremely unlikely to live in an Extra Large sized accommodation block.

Students commented that they felt that if the accommodation that they lived in is too large then this actually hinders the student experience, in that it feels too impersonal as it becomes difficult to meet other people and to build a sense of community. Particularly, there were a few comments left from students currently living in Bankside who felt that it was already too large, and that it was difficult to foster a sense of community. A minority of students did

comment that either they preferred larger accommodation blocks or that the size of the accommodation block was not important to them.



Students were then asked which TfL Zone they would prefer to live in, it is perhaps unsurprising that students overwhelmingly chose Zone 1 to this question, with 92% of students choosing the 'Most Likely' option. What is surprising is the low numbers of students who would consider living in halls of residence outside of Zone 1. Although for Zone 2, 54% of students stated that they were 'Likely' to live there the number of students stating 'Most Likely' was 17%. However from Zone 3 onwards the number of students stating 'Not Likely' or 'Not At All Likely' increase substantially from 58.85% for Zone 3, 89.55% for Zone 4 and 94.69% for Zones 5-9.

Analysis

This section was highly interesting in terms of its findings; it firstly seemed to further corroborate the data gathered from the Halls Features section that students want to live close to the LSE main campus. This could be read as a clear statement that location is the number one feature that students at LSE want from their halls; however the School should be cautious of making such assumptions from this data.

Although students were not overwhelmingly positive about the prospect of living outside Zone 1, the data could be read as students stating that they would consider living in Zone 2. It would be interesting to test as to whether students would change their view on the location of their halls if other variables were introduced such as reducing the cost of their rent. This is especially pertinent given that from the Affordable Rent section of this survey that 63% of students stated that if their rent was higher this would have affected their decision to live in halls. Of the 18% who said that this would not have affected their decision, only the minority commented that this was due to location.

From this it could be suggested that whilst location is important, the question still remains as to whether this is more important than limiting how much students pay in rent. What is clear from this data is that further research on the interplay between cost and location needs to be undertaken.

Nevertheless, location is clearly a major consideration for students, so it would be desirable for LSE to investigate expanding its portfolio in Zone 1. However, if there is a reasonable assumption that acquiring property for student housing in Zone 1 is extremely difficult this could be challenging. Therefore it could be tempting to suggest that a simple answer to this challenge would be to expand the bed numbers within the halls it does presently own near campus. Although this may seem a simple solution, actually the data when asked what type of sized accommodation block suggests that this may not actually be desirable to students. Consideration should be given to the fact that students want to live in halls of residences that have a sense of community and feel more like a 'home' than a dormitory.

It is the view of the Students' Union that the School should not proceed with any developments to create a 'Super Halls' with large numbers of students in one accommodation block. This is not something that this data suggests that students particularly want and it could be damaging to the sense of community which can be difficult to foster within halls even at their current size. Further to this there is also a concern that such large halls of residences could have a negative impact on students' mental wellbeing. Preference should be given to ensuring that all options have been thoroughly tested, including investigating the option of acquiring halls outside of Zone 1. As stated further research is needed by the School to ascertain which features of their halls such as location, cost or size, that students would be most willing to compromise on.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Satisfaction Section

It is clear that LSE students enjoy living in their halls of residences and that it is a genuinely valuable experience for them. It is promising that for most categories (except rent) satisfaction is increasing and is testament to the work the residential services have put in. However, there are still too many areas where the School needs to improve, for example less than half of students were satisfied with the rent they pay and their kitchens.

It is unacceptable that students do not have ovens in their kitchens including those living in catered halls. This impacts not only on satisfaction but on student's welfare as well, as they are not fully able to cook for themselves which may mean that they are less able to maintain a healthy diet. As to Wi-Fi the Students' Union is aware that the School is working to resolve issues with connection, however this is a recurring issue, and one which will only increase in importance as more and more aspects of modern life rely on Wi-Fi connection. The School should prioritise improving Wi-Fi as this would significantly improve the student experience given the importance of technology to both the social and study aspects of university.

Another significant impact on the halls experience is the disruption from either refurbishments in the hall or from nearby construction work. Students should have prior warning that this will be taking place and given the option to decline the room or at the very least a reduction in their rent. Given the international nature of LSE it is concerning that there are so few options in catered halls for those with religious or specific dietary requirements.

Future Section

With student numbers increasing it could be argued that it is inevitable that LSE will have to increase the number of beds it currently has. This could be through expanding one of the halls they do presently own or by acquiring new halls of residence developments. Therefore the purpose of this section was to begin a conversation about what halls should look like in the future.

It seems that luxury features such as having a studio room are not the priority for most LSE students and that their two main considerations are price and location. It could also be tempting for the school to solve this future problem by expanding bed numbers in the halls it does currently own, however the data collected demonstrates that students would be put off living in any form of 'Super Halls'.

However, as it currently stands it may not be possible for students to have low rent and be able to live in Zone 1; therefore a very important conversation needs to begin as to how best to ensure that students have halls to live in, and what compromises they are prepared to make.

Recommendations

Satisfaction Section

1. Bring Wi-Fi in house across all halls of residences and ensure that it is of a suitable standard to meet the needs of students, including allowing them to use more than two devices.
2. There should be a review of kitchens in LSE halls of residence in particular looking at reintroducing ovens, increasing storage space (including fridges) and increasing communal spaces within kitchens for students.
3. Ensure that kitchens in Bankside are not locked overnight.
4. Review the Warden system in conjunction with the Students' Union taking into account best practice from other institutions to ensure consistency across all halls of residences.
5. Ensure that students are made aware at application stage of any planned refurbishments or nearby construction work and offer these rooms at a reduced rate of rent and the option to be allocated a different room.
6. Refurbish the older halls of residences, in particular Passfield and Sidney Webb so that all halls of residences are of a similar standard.
7. Offer students who are living in more dated rooms a discount on the rate of rent.
8. Ensure that there are no variations in dealing with maintenance issues between different halls of residences.
9. Improve the selection of Halal, Kosher, Vegan and Vegetarian options in catered halls.
10. Introduce healthy eating initiatives into catering menus.
11. Work with the Students' Union to facilitate the introduction of inter-halls activities such as fundraising and sports teams.
12. Facilitate the transition of responsibility for halls committees to the Students' Union.

Future Section

1. To introduce a scheme similar to the Accommodation Support Scheme run by King's College London, for the definition of low socio-economic students to include estranged students and international students (particularly those on scholarships).
2. LSE should use this research as a baseline to build a comprehensive policy on what features are essential to students currently and from any new developments. Such as recognition that students want 'flat like' accommodation and not dormitories.
3. LSE should investigate further the dichotomy of students wanting to keep their rent as low as possible and requiring to be as close to the School as possible, with a view to finding out which they would be more likely to compromise on.
4. LSE should not proceed with any expansion of halls that it presently owns without full consultation of students.
5. For LSE to work with the Students' Union to develop a long term Affordable Rent Strategy for halls of residences, which should contain:
 - a) A commitment that the founding principle of the strategy is that halls of residences should be a form of 'social housing' for students, that it should be 'not for profit' and recognising its role in widening participation.
 - b) A clearly set out definition of affordable rent, agreed to by the Students' Union, which should include linking rents to student support and taking account of the challenges faced by estranged and international students.
 - c) A long term commitment to an accommodation support scheme as set out above.
 - d) Include details of variations in the cost of certain rooms where the student experience may be reduced such as rooms that have not been refurbished, ongoing refurbishments works in the building or nearby construction work.
 - e) A commitment to ensuring that all future LSE halls of residences developments are owned by the institution to ensure that the School has full control over rent setting.
 - f) A proactive approach to the long term sustainability of the cost of living in halls rents, with a view to ensuring that rents of halls do not get so inflated as to deter students from studying at LSE.

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