



## Your Hall Your Call 2015

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### **Overview**

This paper provides an evaluation of the findings from the 2015 Your Hall Your Call research project carried out by LSE Students' Union. The purpose of Your Hall Your Call is to consider the overall quality of student experience in LSE Halls of Residence. In preparation for this paper we visited 11 of LSE Halls of Residence and carried out an online survey with students living in LSE Halls.

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## Background and Methodology

From 16 February to 2 March 2015, 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 SU Community and Welfare Officer and LSESU staff visited 11 halls of residence to consult with residents in person. In addition, the 20-question survey was sent via email to all students living in LSE Halls.

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
- Urbanest King's Cross

Overall, we engaged with 471 residents, a 220% increase from the number of participants in 2014. Of the total responses received 187 were collected through the online questionnaire and 284 were collected in person by LSESU staff. 60% of the respondents are undergraduate students and 40% are postgraduate students.

We received responses from all 11 halls visited although some halls did outperform others in terms of response rates. The lowest response rate received was at Lilian Knowles followed by Urbanest Kings Cross. As the response rate from these two halls does not provide a representative sample we must be cautious on drawing conclusions about these halls from the findings of this report. However, we have opted to include the responses from these halls in this paper as qualitative rather than quantitative indication of the residents' experiences. Table 1 presents a breakdown of responses received by hall.

| Halls of Residence       | Responses (%) |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Bankside House           | 22            |
| Rosebery Hall            | 18            |
| Passfield Hall           | 12            |
| Butler's Wharf Residence | 12            |
| Carr-Saunders Hall       | 9             |
| Northumberland House     | 7             |
| Sidney Webb House        | 7             |
| High Holborn Residence   | 6             |
| Grosvenor House          | 4             |
| Urbanest King's Cross    | 2.5           |
| Lilian Knowles House     | 0.5           |

**Table 1.** Breakdown of total responses by Hall of Residence.

The main findings of the consultation are presented in the following pages, broken up in fourteen categories, which cover all the aspects of the university accommodation experience. The consultation revealed that many of the issues raised in previous years have been addressed, and overall satisfaction levels have risen. This trend is testament to the hard work of the residences team in responding to student concerns and options. It also demonstrates the role 'Your Hall, Your Call' playing in providing an annual comparative analysis of student experience in halls.

Issues explored in this year's research include maintenance and refurbishment, provision of IT facilities, transparency of halls pricing, rent levels, the provision of social space and the social activities that are provided by halls committees. At the end of this report we have made 17 recommendations. We look forward to working with LSE residences team to deliver these changes that we hope will further improve the experience of LSE students living in halls.

## **Positive Student Experiences**

Students who completed this survey highlighted many aspects of living in LSE halls which they value and enjoy. The central location of halls was one common theme highlighted by respondents as a positive aspect of living in LSE accommodation. Many students explained that they enjoy the sense of community that LSE halls provide. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students responded that they value the opportunity to socialise with other LSE students in their hall. Many students praised the staff who work in halls including front of house staff, maintenance staff and catering staff. The catering team at Passfield Hall received a very high number of positive comments from residents.

# Maintenance

There is a slight drop in satisfaction with maintenance compared to last year. However, the majority of respondents still appear to be satisfied with the maintenance of their halls, the updates they receive about maintenance and the timings of repair works. In most halls students commented that when they report an issue they receive a quick response from the maintenance team.

The residents who are least satisfied with maintenance and upkeep are those living Rosebery Hall, Bankside House and Lilian Knowles House. Students expressed frustration with ongoing maintenance works that take place during term time. They explained that such works can be disruptive to their studies and their accommodation experience.

**Bankside House:** Students appreciate the work of staff in sending out frequent updates about maintenance work. But overall students in this hall expressed dissatisfaction with the rate of frequency of breakdowns and the ongoing maintenance works that have taken place throughout their stay. Students told us that there have been ongoing issues with the hot water supply, wifi, fire alarms, heating, and power:

*Basic services rarely effective: water, fire alarms, internet isn't reliable.*

*[..] the maintenance of the building is very poor. There were over 10 occasions throughout the year where the hot water cut out and was unavailable for 24 hours at a time. This is unacceptable. The timings of the maintenance works was also highly intrusive and inconvenient. The maintenance work should be done during the summer holidays and not during term time for students, to minimise disturbance.*

*Informed well but have had too many problems. Lack of hot water.*

**Butler's Wharf Residence:** Residents commented positively on the information and regular updates regarding maintenance works. Students are satisfied with the speed their issues are being dealt with and commented that the staff are very responsive to student concerns. The main issues highlighted are the poor air ventilation in bathrooms (which creates mould) and irregular rubbish disposal.

*I greatly appreciate how quickly maintenance work takes place once staff have been alerted, especially regarding kitchen equipment.*

*Generally good, but the garbage is often left for a substantial amount of time.*

*The ceiling of the shower get moldy due to the lack of circulation. While I can request to get it cleaned every few months, it would be nice if the real problem, not the symptoms could be fixed.*

**Carr-Saunders House:** Students described the maintenance processes in CSH as speedy and satisfactory. A number of residents did highlight that they have experienced ongoing problems with the provision of hot water in the showers.

*Sometimes the water is really hot and sometimes overly cold, and we are not normally given prior information about this*

*Maintenance has been both speedy and satisfactory at all times and levels. Maintenance is very important for, you know, maintaining the high level of care that student halls should provide, and it has yet to inconvenience me or anyone I am aware of.*

**Grosvenor House:** Maintenance seems to be on average at a good level in GH and has massively improved compared to the responses received in 2014. Residents complained about fire alarms and elevators being out of service for long periods.

*.....only issue is the elevator continuously broke-down, the dryers never could dry your clothes in one session forcing to pay more for another drying*

*The fire alarm is constantly going off (therefore we will probably never take the alarm seriously during an actual fire). Elevators do not work for long periods of time without notice. Very irritating. Our bathroom has had an awful smell from day 1 and although we have asked many times no one has tried to fix the problem (drain problems).*

**High Holborn Residence:** HHR maintenance procedures appear to be improved compared to the previous year's findings, with most issues raised in 'Your Hall, Your Call 2014' having been adequately addressed. Residents complimented the staff team on their helpfulness and the overall good state of the hall. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement in communicating more effectively the timing of works.

*Some maintenance guys are very friendly and helpful. However, some maintenance was requested at the beginning of the year but take until Lent term to be done. Also, wrong information is provided about the day when the maintenance guy will come to your room.*

*It's always clean and employees are friendly.*

**Lilian Knowles House:** Students seem dissatisfied with the lack of communication or updates about maintenance works or power outages.

*I am dissatisfied with the notifications regarding the maintenance of the hall, and especially because of the power cut.*

*All advice has been poor and inefficient--notifications come in the form of a piece of paper stuck on the entrance of each block. Having had experience in other student halls, a general notice board at reception (LKH's reception is tiny for the provision of any information) would be more effective and saves lots of paper.*

**Northumberland House:** Residents appear very satisfied with the NH maintenance team and their effort to resolve requests effectively. However, there seem to be persistent problems with the lifts that have not been properly addressed and some students mentioned having issues with vermin.

*Very quick to fix things in our rooms for the most part and staff are very friendly. We've had a lot of problems with the elevator this year.*

*Elevator is always broken, internet simply does not work, there's always rats (even when we were told the exterminator team would fix it).*

**Passfield Hall:** As was the case in previous years, residents commended staff for their speedy response, but at the same time expressed dissatisfaction with reoccurring plumbing problems. They explained that there is constant sink or toilet blockages and sewage water overflowing in the bathrooms and other areas. Most maintenance works take longer than expected.

*Constant problem with toilets overflowing THROUGH the floors, disgusting and completely unacceptable. Full plumbing renovations need to take place. Some rooms leak when it rains and progress is slow with no results.*

*Very frequent problems in Endsleigh annex. Hot water not consistent. Sinks block easily.*

*Lack of hot water regularly and consistently. Lack of updates (e.g. 20/2/2015 weren't told lights wouldn't work in morning b/c maintenance.). Poor plumbing.*

**Rosebery Hall:** Satisfaction with maintenance has dropped significantly at Rosebery this year. In general, students seem to face a variety of issues from broken elevators and microwaves, to a lack of hot water and broken radiators. Students also reported that maintenance works not only take place during term time, but also take a long time.

*Quite frequently we have no hot water without any prior notice or any update on how much time it should take to rectify. I have complained about low shower pressure many times but no action*

*Significant disturbances in regards to my radiator - it was excessive and unproductive. Wrong that bathrooms are being renovated during term, disturbing students significantly. Many of the kitchens need taps etc fixing*

*Fire alarm testing, lift, internet, water. All have had issues in the time I've been there. I've really not been impressed*

**Sidney Webb House:** Satisfaction levels are not low at SWH, but students did identify some minor issues.

*If something needs fixing, it is usually completed within a day. Most fixes are however quick fixes and general problems remain (example: showers don't have pressure and shower heads are really old and disperse water unequally. later can be fixed, first is a bigger problem).*

*The response time and general friendliness is great, though sometimes problems seem to get fixed only halfway. The kitchen and bathrooms in our flat are all quite old and so often break. Considering the high rent we pay, it doesn't seem very fair.*

**Urbanest King's Cross:** By and large students seem satisfied with the state of the hall.

## Refurbishments

Satisfaction levels relating to refurbishments vary significantly amongst halls. The main sources of dissatisfaction are: refurbishment works that are conducted during term time, works not adhering to communicated timelines and a lack of prior student consultation. Students in halls where there has been partial refurbishment feel that it is unfair to charge the same rent for rooms that have been refurbished and those that have not.

**Bankside House:** Students are not happy with the quality of refurbishment works at BH, their primary criticisms were the quality of refurbishments and the decision to remove ovens from kitchens.

*We were not informed about work going on in kitchen when we signed up for halls - chose this for the ovens and we were given no say on the matter.*

*The rooms are not in very good condition, with dirty carpets and cracked walls. The pipes in the bathrooms are very old and noisy. I could hear loud noises in my room whenever my neighbour used his sink or shower. The water that came out of the taps was very cloudy and tasted bad. The hall was generally in a very bad shape.*

*They spent 2 weeks fixing the kitchens during term time which was really noisy and they then took away the ovens, for the break periods we really need an oven in order to cook. its a bit ridiculous that we pay for a fully functioning kitchen and then they take the oven away.*

**Butler's Wharf Residence:** Students at BWR appear satisfied with the recent refurbishments at the common room and flats, but call for further work to the sections that have not been yet renovated.

*[...] The new common room is lovely, but my room could desperately use some new carpet.*

*The refurbishments in the common room are amazing and they actually make BW better, however I think the bathrooms (at least in flat 44) need some serious refurbishments, everything should be change, the shower and the toilets included.*

*I'm in one of the flats that hasn't been updated, and it's pretty old and grungy.*

**Carr-Saunders House:** Students at CSH are on the whole satisfied with quality of furnishings. Some students suggested small improvements that would make a big difference in the common room.

*All to a good standard*

*Again, primarily the common room in need of refurb. Perhaps a coffee machine rather than junk food and vending machines.*

**Grosvenor House:** Residents at GH responded with high levels of satisfaction about the quality and timing of refurbishment works. The main source of dissatisfaction is a low number of washing machines and driers. Students explained that the current laundry facilities are insufficient to cater for all residents.

**High Holborn Residence:** HHR residents argued against having the renovation works during term times, as *"Timing of refurbishments [is] inconvenient - often woke to drilling on the floor below (rarely adhered to stated times; always earlier)".* Residents also asked for *"more rooms to be refurbished."*

Students were happy with their common area explaining that the *"New common area is well equipped."*

**Lilian Knowles House:** The students consulted told us that the refurbishment works lasted longer than expected and caused “discomfort” to residents.

*During the Christmas break, Student Sanctuary promise to install the carpets and that the process will be finished before the Lent term started. However, it took two weeks INTO the Lent term until they finally finished it!*

*The refurbishment of LKH post-power cut took far longer than it was promised to students. The paints smelled really strong and the design of the entire estate was poorly equipped for ventilation so the uncomfortable smell lingered in the corridors for weeks. Even now in reception where another leak through the ceiling recently occurred, still smells strongly of paint.*

**Northumberland House:** Residents commented negatively on the condition of most of NH, and consider it unfair that some have to pay the same with others that enjoy refurbished facilities.

*Room and kitchen are very old, while other kitchens are new. Seems unfair that they are paying the same price as us.*

*It looks old and dirty in a lot of places.*

**Passfield Hall:** The exterior refurbishment work that took place at PH during term time was disruptive to students. Students also commented that refurbishments take longer than expected and some improvements need to be made to the interior.

*Take far too long, well beyond the time we were told it would be finished. Odd that the exterior is being improved when the condition of some of the rooms leaves a lot to be desired.*

*Has many problems e.g. shower has been 'out of order' for over 4 months.*

**Roseberry Hall:** The level of satisfaction with the standard of refurbishments is quite low. Students were frustrated that the bathroom renovation occurred during term time, and suggested that more could be done in relation to chipped walls and dirty carpets.

*Do them in the holidays, very inconsiderate*

*Sore need for refurbishment of all rooms.*

**Sidney Webb House:** Apart from the common room which seems to be in a good state of repair, residents explained that bathrooms, rooms and carpets are in need of immediate refurbishment.

*The carpets in block F are really gross. My shower had mold on the walls when I moved in and it hasn't gotten better. The kitchen's in block F are horrendous and in dire need of refurbishment. The knob on the oven has the temperature worn off. Out of 8 cooktops, only one heats properly. The hot water in the showers only sometimes works, even after several visits from maintenance.*

*Our kitchen and bathrooms are incredibly rundown and my bathroom is covered in mold and appliances consistently break. Yet i'm paying as much as someone with a much nicer room. When my block mentioned this in a survey, the response was "well we're will refurbish it in summer 2015"....we will be gone by then.*



**Urbanest King's Cross:** No students reported any need for refurbishments at the UKC. However, some students raised concerns that UKC has intentionally failed to communicate upcoming refurbishments to the common room and the closure of the laundry room.

## Rent

Similarly to previous years, the high cost of rent was a major issue for students living in LSE halls of residence. This finding echoes the results of previous research carried out by LSESU into the cost of studying at LSE.

Students are aware that the central London location of halls means that rents will be comparatively higher than the rest of the UK. But many cautioned that increasing rent prices above the rate of inflation would make LSE accommodation unaffordable for most students. Students explained that the current cost of rent was placing them under financial strain. Students also warned that increasing the cost of rent would deter future applicants, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, from wanting to study to London.

*My student loan doesn't even cover it...*

**Sidney Webb House**

*Definitely could be made more affordable, fees are more than my student loan!*

**Carr – Saunders Hall**

*It is already very expensive and next year's planned increase in rents will deter a vast number of people applying to study in London.*

**Carr – Saunders Hall**

*My experience overall was great but the increasing costs are threatening to take away so much from students including financial security, social life from those who chose to live elsewhere due to cost. Halls are a core part of student life and if LSE doesn't begin to take this seriously their student satisfaction will drop and students will be deterred from coming here, which would be a shame.*

**Butlers Wharf Resident**

The residents we consulted feel that the above-inflation annual rent increases are putting pressure on their already stretched budgets. Many students called for a rent freeze that would make living in student halls affordable.

*The rent is exploitative and a rip-off. At such a distant part of London, sharing with 5 others in what is essentially an apartment is simply unfeasible. There are a lot of unnecessary expenditure that can be eliminated, such as lifts and using so much light in the stairwell at night.*

**Butlers Wharf Resident**

*Hope a rent freeze is put into place before next year.*

**Passfield Hall**

*The rent has increased by 30 pounds over the last 2 years and now is not good value for money.*

**Carr – Saunders Hall**

This research also found that there is a lack of clarity as to how room prices are determined. Students explained that you might end up paying the same rent rates for rooms that differ vastly both in size and in quality. Students told us that they feel this practice is unfair and based on pure lack.

*But I do not think unrefurbished rooms should pay as much as new rooms.*

**Sidney Webb House**

*Tiny room priced the same as huge ones because of criteria such as “closer to kitchen and toilets”. Obviously that’s not the most important thing. It should be fairer.*

**Passfiled Hall**

Some students also feel that the high cost of rent is not reflected in the services and facilities they receive. Poor maintenance, disrepair, water and electricity outages, under-equipped kitchens, poor internet connection speed are just a few of the problems cited by residents in their responses to this section of the survey.

*I feel like we're paying for services that have been taking away.*

**Bankside House**

*Price does not match the quality. I don't know what I'm paying for.*

**Northumberland House**

*While hall living is cheaper than finding a flat in London, for what we are paying we shouldn't have to wonder if we will have hot water for our showers, if our internet will work, of if the cooktop is going to heat up properly so I can cook my food. I can live with and understand old/stained carpet and general wear and tear. That's understandable (though refurbishment is definitely necessary). But internet, hot water, and working kitchen equipment are pretty basic in this day and age and for the cost of what we are paying to live here, I wish they weren't issues I had to deal with.*

**Carr-Saunders Hall**

## Wardens

Students are satisfied with the support and assistance they receive from wardens. Students appreciated the communication and help they got from wardens. Although some students explained that they are not always certain about what issues they can contact the Warden about.

**Bankside House:** Residents find that the *'weekly emails are useful'* and said that they have found their warden to *"be very helpful."*

**Butler's Wharf Residence:** Residents at BWR were happy with their work their warden does at the hall. A few students requested that they be informed of *"what are the kind of issues [sic] that should be addressed"* to the warden. This was a common theme across all the halls.

**Carr-Saunders House:** Students characterise their interactions with the warden as *'positive and instructive'* and praised the professionalism with which the warden deals with issues of homophobia and sexism. However, a number resident feel that some policies imposed can be quite strict. For example students are unhappy with the overnight guest policy.

**Grosvenor House:** Residents are happy with their Warden team. Some were unsure of what issues they could direct to the team.

**High Holborn Residence:** High levels of satisfaction at HHR as students describe the warden as *'Accessible and helpful.'*

**Lilian Knowles House:** Respondents were happy with the warden at LKH.

**Northumberland House:** Students are happy with their warden at Northumberland. But they did comment that they felt they may be missing out as their warden also works at other halls so may not be able to spend as much time as they would live in the hall.

**Passfield Hall:** Residents are overwhelmingly happy with their warden. They describe him as *'brilliant, very friendly and supportive'* and *'incredibly approachable, flexible. Hosts cultural events.'*

**Roseberry Hall:** Residents are overall happy with their warden.

**Sidney Webb House:** Views on the SWH team are predominately positive.

**Urbanest King's Cross:** The feedback on the LSE School resident was all very positive. Almost all students consulted highlighted the speed in which he dealt with all problems and his overall helpfulness and support.

## Pre-Arrival/Freshers/Orientation

The majority of students surveyed are very satisfied with pre-arrival information and orientation events, and the move-in has been well organised throughout the residences. In general, students described Pre-Arrival, Freshers and Orientation as *'inclusive', 'informative' and 'fun'* and highlighted that *'the tours and info sessions are very helpful.'* A few residents commented that they would have liked to receive more information beforehand or that it was a challenge to get in contact with the residences during summer term. Furthermore, a few instances were reported in which the rooms were not properly cleaned or they were still set up as hotel rooms upon the students' arrival.

*Generally satisfied, however, in summer I need to contact High Holborn to sort out some issues over booking and it has been really hard and confusing to do so*

### **High Holborn Residence**

*My room was not clean when I arrived. It would have been nice to know the times at which I could move-in earlier, so I could book airplane tickets accordingly. Hall events during Orientation were nice. Additionally, it would have been nice to know about the kitchen utensil re-use scheme before I purchased kitchen items.*

### **Butler's Wharf Residence**

*Very little information given upon arrival. Room was still set up for the hotel that LSE runs, which meant there were several days of people coming in and out of my room without letting me know.*

### **Grosvenor House**

Almost all students we consulted with complimented halls committees for their effort to organise *'brilliant events'* and create a truly *'warm and welcoming'* atmosphere. One notable trend that arose in the course of this research was students feeling uncomfortable with the link between socialising and drinking alcohol.

A number of students noted that they felt dissatisfied with the *'drinking culture'* that is present in their halls and they noted that this had been especially apparent during the fresher's period. The following comments encapsulates the feelings of some students about the need to provide more events in halls that are not solely centred around alcohol.

*I was happy with the information provided on arrival and the general welcome attitude of the staff. I just wish there were more events catered to people not drinking alcohol.*

### **Northumberland House**

*Not a lot to do except clubbing. Thought [sic] maybe should organise floor events because it took about two weeks to meet everyone on my floor. E.g. team games etc.*

### **Roseberry Hall**

## IT Services

Overall, there has been a significant drop in satisfaction levels with the IT provisions across all halls. A particularly serious issue has been the introduction of the WiFi provider StudentCom. Less than half of the respondents are satisfied with the IT services and provisions, as maintenance remains the greatest source of discontent across all halls, with computers and printers that do not work for long periods of time. Additionally, almost all halls reported significant issues with the WiFi and internet connection that was almost unanimously described as very slow and unreliable. Residents appear very frustrated that they need to deal with StudentCom individually, rather than reporting any issues that arise to the hall directly.

**Bankside House:** The general provisions of the IT room are considered satisfactory, but residents experience significant connectivity issues.

*Student com is terrible, Ethernet ports don't work*

*Computer room is great. Sometimes the connection gets lost.*

**Butler's Wharf Residence:** Very low levels of satisfaction with the IT provisions, as:

*The provision of wifi by studentcom is really horrible. Sometimes I have to log in to wifi every five minutes and I know that most of the residents at Butler's Wharf share this problem. After a great number of complaints was made to studentcom, the provision improved for a week, but went back to the usual state after that. Also, the hall staff advised us to send complaints to studentcom directly, which is not my job, from my perspective, as I signed the accommodation contract with the halls and not studentcom.*

**Carr-Saunders House:** Students at CSH are on average quite satisfied with the IT provisions, even though:

*Computers and printers are very old, slow and not reliable. WIFI is awful, slow and does not always work. It constantly redirects to student com website.*

**Grosvenor House:** Very low satisfaction rates at GH, with residents facing the standard issues of slow computers, disrepair, and poor internet connectivity.

*No connection in the room & sometimes in the common room. Very slow to open the students account! 2/10 computers actually work. - Very slow connection. - The warden said we had to solve it; after we called student.com the man on the phone told me: "the problem is complicated and it may take sometime to get started". That was two weeks ago.*

**High Holborn Residence:** No major issues reported at HHR; however students suggested that the overall provisions could be more up to date.

**Lilian Knowles House:** Poor wifi connection was cited as the main problem at LKH.

**Northumberland House:** Very low levels of satisfaction at NH with the IT services as 'wifi has been really bad the whole of LT' and the 'provider doesn't respond to complaints.'

**Passfield Hall:** Most students at PH raised maintenance issues, since the 'printers are never working,' and the 'Wi-Fi is very bad.'

**Roseberry Hall:** The situation in RH appears to be relatively good, with the basic problem being the limited provision of computers and the fact that *'studentcom goes down a lot.'*

**Sidney Webb House:** There is a general dissatisfaction with the IT services at SWH, due to the lack of Wi-Fi provisions and the poor maintenance of printers and computers.

*I am only referring to the quality of the wireless internet connection, which has been awful. While it's possible to have a wired connection, some of the newer computers don't have ethernet ports and it seems ridiculous that we would have to spend additional money to purchase an adapter just so that we can do our school work.*

**Urbanest King's Cross:** Main sources of discontent at UKC has been the *'horrible internet provider.'*

## Common Areas

Almost all halls are satisfying students need for dedicated recreation space. A number of students commented that the common areas increase the opportunity for social interaction between residents. Issues of cleanliness were raised at some halls and likewise some residents requested that their common room be refurbished. Game tables, e.g. tennis table, pool table, foosball, are much appreciated when present and desired when absent.

**Bankside House:** Students are very satisfied with the current provisions, although a number of residents argued *'they should be refurbished'* and asked for a new pool table and Xbox.

**Butler's Wharf Residence:** All residents were particularly contented with the common areas. Residents however told us there is an urgent need for an additional study space apart from the computer room, that needs to be *'larger and have desk spaces for people to use their laptops.'*

**Carr-Saunders Hall:** High levels of satisfaction with current provisions, although some students suggested introducing a bar and lifting the current restrictions imposed on use of the basement.

**Grosvenor House:** Respondents reported to be happy with the common room.

**High Holborn Residence:** Residents are quite satisfied with current provisions and recent refurbishments.

**Lilian Knowles House:** Students suggested that the hall should consider providing 24 hour access to the common room.

**Northumberland House:** Residents commented that their common room was very small to cover the needs of a hall that accommodates over 300 residents and suggested the creation of an additional common room.

**Passfield Hall:** Residents appear relatively satisfied with the existing provisions, although they did request for a refurbishment of the pool table. Additionally, residents feel there is a need for more quiet study spaces apart from the computer room as it tends to get very noisy and disruptive in there.

**Roseberry Hall:** There was a mixed response from students at Roseberry regarding the provision of common room facilities. Residents feel that the common room is *'too cold'* and argue it is in dire need of refurbishment. What is more, the computer room is overpopulated so students requested access to extra quiet study spaces.

**Sidney Webb House:** Once again residents appear very appreciative of the pool and tennis table; however some students called for more cleanliness.

**Urbanest King's Cross:** Generally adequate levels of satisfaction, but there is a perception that the common room has been underused. Students told us that this could relate with the structure of the room since *'it's hard for people to chat or watch tv, when some people are playing table tennis.'*



## Kitchens

There has been a drop in satisfaction levels regarding kitchens this year. On top of the reoccurring issues of cleanliness, lack of storage, insufficient fridge space, and restrictions on access. The consultation revealed that the decision to remove ovens has caused a lot of frustration among residents. The following comments from the students we consulted illuminate the main themes of issues that residents face:

*No ovens in the kitchens is unacceptable. How are we supposed to cook? i.e. during holidays, when meals aren't being served in the restaurant, etc. Locking the kitchens at 11 means you can't have a cold drink past this hour. We should be able to access them at all times. Kitchens too small anyway, for the number of people who need to use them.*

### **Bankside House**

*The fridge space is pretty lacking, and it doesn't make much sense for halls not to come with any basic flatware. Students buy it every year and rather than just put one full set in each flat, they get rid of it at the end of the year, leaving an additional cost for the next year's residents. It's wasteful and financially unnecessary.*

### **Butler's Wharf Residence**

*No oven Not enough table, work top, fridge or cupboard space*

### **Carr – Saunders Hall**

*THEY TOOK AWAY THE OVENS FOR NO REASON*

### **Bankside House**

*Need ovens and a large communal kitchen per floor. Cooking food in the room, even with the windows and extractor on, still leaves the smell of food in the room for days.*

### **Northumberland House**

*The kitchen is fully equipped but mine is really small, also it doesn't have window so it can get stuffy and hot sometimes. The kettle was very old and have disgusting bits and pieces inside but after my request, it was changed to a new one. Sandwich maker is just suddenly gone. The stove and can be adjust to high temperature relatively quickly but take ages to cool down.*

### **High Holborn Residence**

*My kitchen is quite nice, good space--two fridges between 4 people.*

### **Lilian Knowles House**

*The kitchen is way too small. It is impossible to accommodate everyone to cook. Also, there is almost no space for students to sit down at all. You can only hurry back room after cooking. No space to socialize with other floor-mates.*

### **Northumberland House**

*Small, mice, lack of freezer, where is the oven? Lack of fridge space.*

### **Passfield Hall**

*Not enough space, why the hell do we now have ovens if we are cooking approximately 10 meals a week? Are you suggesting we do microwave and fried meals? Great for health I am*

*sure. The space fridge is barely enough and a locker system needs to be put in place to stop the stealing of food and equipment.*

**Roseberry Hall**

*The kitchens for 8 bedroom flats are very nice but for the kitchen for 3 bedrooms, the ventilation is very poor and the smell stays in the flat or even spreads into our rooms.*

**Urbanest Kings Cross**

## Catering

Overall, there were good levels of satisfaction with catering in halls, with students stressing how much they enjoy the social aspect of eating in the canteen. Most dietary requirements were met successfully but some students did suggest that they would like to see healthier options served in their hall. The highest level of dissatisfaction is amongst students who are vegetarian and vegan. These students asked if they could be provided with a greater variety of options. A significant number of students also requested that more protein be included in vegetarian/vegan meals. Some residents asked if catering services could be offered during breaks.

*The catering at Passfield is excellent; the food always tastes good, there is a great range of choice and the portion size is brilliant. The staff are always polite and I have frequent conversations with them when they are working before and after dinner time.*

**Passfield Hall**

*The food is really good but I would prefer more protein options for vegetarian students.*

**Bankside House**

*Generally good, though vegetarian meals never seem to include protein.*

**Bankside House**

*Meals are nearly always excellent and there's a lot of variety*

**Roseberry Hall**

*Generally, meals are not good value for money. The meals are repeated (Sunday food again on Wednesday, etc. or Friday meat option is usually the leftover from the rest of the week). Quality of food is not great, it's usually very heavy and greasy. Would be great if there were healthier options, or ideally if we could opt-out. No need for meals during the weekend, as a lot of students leave London for a weekend and miss out, they shouldn't have been introduced. However, the canteen staff are all very friendly.*

**Carr-Saunders Hall**

*Thanks for the vegan options! But would appreciate more of them*

**Passfield Hall**

*Plenty of options, a balanced meal.*

**Carr-Saunders Hall**

*Quality needs improvement, as does variety - Nutritional info needs displayed - Fruit shouldn't be limited*

**Roseberry Hall**

*Good food and friendly staff*

**Bankside House**

*There should be vegan options! There is very little that a vegan can eat. It would be easy to make the vegetarian options without eggs, milk or cheese.*

**Roseberry Hall**

# Recycling

Residents are very satisfied with the recycling provisions at halls as well the guidelines they receive. Some students have commented that halls' management teams, wardens and the halls committees could do more in actively promoting recycling to increase awareness and residents' participation.

*Need a food waste bin*

**Bankside House**

*We had to contact the front desk several times because they didn't come to take the trash.*

**Butler's Wharf Residence**

*Segmentation of trash cans is easily explained.*

**High Holborn Residence**

*I appreciate that there are obvious ways to recycle conveniently (e.g. different bins provided for different wastes) as well as the fact that the green message is not in-your-face.*

**Northumberland House**

*No recycling bins in the kitchen (ground floor, myddleton wing) or in the hallways.*

**Rosebery Hall**

*There should be more campaigning on recycling.*

**Sidney Webb House**

## Study Space

A large majority of respondents asked for the provision of study space in halls to be expanded. The students we consulted with almost unanimously stressed there is a need to provide additional study spaces to the already existing computer rooms; especially since in most residences computer rooms tend to get overcrowded and noisy.

Such facilities would be particularly helpful for students living in remote sites, e.g. Butler's Wharf or Sidney Webb, as it would provide a convenient alternative to the library. In mixed halls students requested separate study rooms for undergraduates and postgraduates, in order to better accommodate their distinct study habits of these two groups.

*We already have one, but it would be great if we could use the dining hall as a study room outside meal times.*

### **Bankside House**

*We have the computer room, but it's a bit stark and depressing. A nice space with desks would be helpful to get out of our rooms.*

### **Butlers Wharf Residence**

*Hard to work in computer room*

### **Carr-Saunders Hall**

*Computer room seemed to function as a study space as well but another room would be appreciated by most hall residents.*

### **Grosvenor House**

*It would be really useful especially since LKH's distance to LSE.*

### **Lilian Knowles House**

*Definitely. We already have a computer room and a study room, but both rooms are too small and the study room has no wifi access.*

### **Northumberland House**

*PLEASE! Canteen can be too noisy and my room has little light.*

### **Passfield Hall**

*I'm wonder why the conference room not used as self-study room.*

### **Rosebery Hall**

*There is a small study place but its location is inconvenient since it is in the common room, where people tend to talk loudly and do different activities (which is to be expected). It would be better to have an isolated area to study.*

### **Sidney Webb House**

*The dedicated study space is quite small and right at the entrance - very noisy and hard to concentrate.*

### **Urbanest Kings Cross**

## Room Allocation

The majority of students consulted were satisfied with their room allocation. Some instances of unfit room pairings were reported as student preferences and characteristics do not seem to be taken into account.

*They make no attempt to match people on any bases than what room type they need. I have heard of people sharing rooms with people literally twice their age (18 year old freshers and executive master students in their 30s). They have nothing in common and it creates tension [...].*

### **Urbanest Kings Cross**

*A roommate compatibility match/survey would have been good, I think.*

### **Northumberland House**

*Roommate matching, e.g. sleeping times etc needs to be more reliable.*

### **Passfield Hall**

Finally, most students seem very contented with the size of rooms and cleanliness, although the issue of small bed sizes at Butler's Wharf Residence was raised again this year by multiple students.

## Halls Committees

Overall student opinions of hall committees were positive, with students commenting the important social function that committees fulfil in halls; organising social activities and providing an important liaison link between residents and the Warden. Notable praise was given to the committees at Butlers Wharf and Northumberland House where residents felt that their committees had really considered a variety of ways in which they could bring residents together.

When participating in the research members of halls committees themselves reported that they would benefit from a smoother hand over of the financial account and simplified reimbursements system, as they are often required to pay for halls activities through their personal resources, and might wait for a very long time to get their money back. This ambiguous system leaves committee members financially exposed and does not allow them to plan effectively and fulfil their role to the fullest.

## Conclusion

The Your Hall, Your Call research project is an important barometer of the current student experience within LSE Halls of Residence. This report provides the annual opportunity to gauge levels of student satisfaction with their accommodation and enables the School to respond quickly and effectively to student feedback.

This year the consultation revealed that students across all halls value the central location of their accommodation and the commitment of the halls' staff. They also appreciate the social aspect of living in halls of residence and the sense of community that is fostered by the warden team and the committee.

Below are 17 recommendations that emerged from our research. We have ranked the recommendations in order of importance and urgency. The most serious issues, needing urgent attention from LSE, are listed in the red category. Issues that have a less immediate impact on students' lives or issues that require a more long term solution are listed in the yellow category. Finally non-urgent recommendations are listed in the green category.

We look forward to working in partnership with LSE to further improve the students experience in LSE halls of residence.

## Recommendations

1. Major maintenance or refurbishment work should take place outside term time to avoid serious disruption to students.
2. Refurbishment works scheduled to take place during term time should be clearly advertised beforehand to allow students to make informed decisions about their studying and accommodation plans.
3. Complete necessary maintenance works as soon as possible and provide residents with frequent updates.
4. Repair and maintain communal computers and printers.
5. Improve the quality and speed of WiFi.
6. Provide a transparent account of how rent prices are set.
7. Implement a freeze on annual rent increases to avoid LSE halls of residence becoming unaffordable for the majority of students.



8. Review the meat-free and vegan meal options that are available in halls.
9. End the Schools relationship StudentCom and revert back to using LSE IT for the delivery of WiFi to Halls.
10. Develop an effective roommate matching service which takes into account student preferences and interests.
11. Maintain rooms to a similar standard, and ensure rent prices reflect the level of refurbishments.
12. Actively ensure residents of intercollegiate or private halls feel part of the LSE community by organising onsite events.
13. Develop a long term plan to increase the amount of study space in halls.

14. Ensure all common rooms are well maintained and facilities such as pool and football tables are in good working order.
15. Social activities and spaces should be as inclusive and diverse as possible, catering for everyone.
16. Actively promote recycling in halls to encourage more residents to live sustainably.
17. Clarify what issues residents can raise with their warden team.