

Subject: Support students in accommodation to waive term 3 fees

Dear (Local MP Name),

I am writing as a student or parent of a student in your constituency. As you are aware the Covid-19 outbreak has caused significant financial vulnerabilities for all students across the country and in particular those living in University or other student accommodation.

Most Universities, along with Unite Student Accommodation have done the right thing for students who have had to leave and return home at the request of University and Government social distancing request. They have shown commitment to their students and allowed them to surrender their tenancy and waived their accommodation fees for the next semester. With the government announcement of three-month mortgage holidays for buy to let properties, landlords should make the most of this and apply so they can waive rent fees for students who are at risk of financial difficulty. Unfortunately, providers are yet to react to these best practices and offer students the opportunity to leave their accommodation early and waive fees for term 3. It is also clear that the offer of mortgage breaks needs to be extended further to investors involved in student private builds which are increasing and expanding as a sector and are the ones currently refusing to help students.

For most students, maintenance loans just aren't enough to cover their rents and other financial obligations. Students are also now out of work as a result of Covid-19 and unable to apply for Universal Credit or other Government funding. There are also other issues of students who are parents and carers are in full-time study and can no longer put children in to care as well as students who do not make £118 a week to be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay if they need to self-isolate.

This crisis has highlighted issues that students have been shouting about for a long time. Student tenants need more protection. I urge you to act on behalf of students and put pressure on the Government to legislate on these matters so that students are able to terminate their contracts early in times of crisis and closures, as well as hold student landlords and companies acting on behalf of investors of private build student accommodation to account. It's time we recognize that student accommodation is not the same as private accommodation and that students require more support when it comes to housing.

I look forward to hearing from you soon,

(Names)