
Working collaboratively

Through ongoing dialogue and engagement with the local community, the University and Leeds University Union, work proactively to meet emerging local needs and play a positive role in society. We engage with local communities at a grassroots level by attending community meetings, committees and fora to provide a University perspective, and to listen to the needs of the community to support, enhance and develop our student engagement programme.

We are also involved with local working groups to address key student impacts. This includes working groups tasked with addressing noise nuisance and issues associated with the period when our students move out of their shared housing. Through these groups, issues are monitored and collaborative approaches are developed to address emerging issues. Student engagement initiatives are developed to educate and inform our students on how they can mitigate and minimise these impacts.

Student engagement

Our programme of student engagement has been developed to support their integration into the Leeds community, to ensure that theirs, and other residents', experience in Leeds, is a positive one.

Student engagement initiatives take place over the course of the academic year and are delivered in response to ongoing, as well as emerging, student and community needs. The focus of our work is 2nd and 3rd year students living independently in the local community and who may require our support to get to grips with independent living and make the most out of their time in Leeds.

Our Welcome to Leeds initiative, involves visiting both student and permanent resident households at the start of the Autumn term to provide them with information to support our student's integration and create a more cohesive community. Our aim is to welcome new arrivals, make students aware that they are living amongst an already established diverse community as well as fostering a greater sense of community for all residents. We provide our students with a copy of our Living in Leeds guide, developed to help our students make the most of their time in Leeds, as well as providing information on the essentials of being a Leeds resident. <http://2ej3yy3dhmmm499wwc3l4n36.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Your-guide-v1.pdf>

This is supported by a range of campaigns throughout the year that are aligned to the student lifecycle and key transitions through the academic year. We target educational campaigns when particular issues are likely to arise such as noise awareness at the start and end of the year and waste at the end of term, as well as encouraging engagement within the local community through promoting local opportunities and activities to get involved with.

Sustainability volunteering in the community

Our programme is supported by staff and student sustainability volunteers. The Hyde Park Volunteering Project, Up Your Street, provides an opportunity for students and staff to work with other residents and organisations in Hyde Park on projects that contribute to making Hyde Park an even greater place to live, work and study.

This includes projects that welcome new students and provide them with information to help them settle in, help increase recycling and clear pavements of bins, or projects that brighten up the area through litter picks, new planting or art murals.

We work in collaboration with a number of partners, including Leeds University Union, Unipol, Leeds City Council's Waste and Recycling Advisors, Keep Britain Tidy, Zero Waste Leeds and members of the Hyde Park community. This provides the opportunity for our students to get to know their community a little better and help make a valuable contribution to those communities during their time in Leeds.

Responding to issues in the community: Community Complaint Process

The University recognises that sometimes our students have a negative impact on the local community and have therefore developed a procedure to respond specifically to our student's behaviour in the local community. The following procedure details how the University will respond to any issues and complaints from the local community, involving students. Annex A sets out the procedure as a flow diagram.

Stage 1- Complaint received and assessment of impact

Issues involving our students are registered with the University through the process detailed in the Neighbourhood Helpline Code.

Where University of Leeds students have been identified as being involved with a complaint, the Sustainability Service initiates the University's community complaint process. This process has been developed specifically to manage and respond to issues involving student's behaviour in the local community.

An assessment is first made on the severity and impact of the incident reported, before determining the best course of action. Our assessment is based on the timing, duration, numbers involved and whether the incident is a recurring issue or one affecting a vulnerable neighbour.

Stage 2- Contact with students

Students are contacted by the University regarding the received complaint:

- **Minor or moderate incidents:** Each student found to be residing at the address complained about is written to within one week of receiving the complaint. The letter outlines details of the allegations made, the distress and nuisance caused, and that a behaviour change is expected of them. The letter also clearly outlines the sanctions at the disposal of the University and Leeds City Council, should further complaints be received. Advice and guidance on living in the community is also enclosed, as it often the case that students are not mindful of how their actions affect others. The letter provides the contact details of Leeds University Union Student Advice so that students can gain impartial advice.
 - **More serious incidents:** In the event of more serious incident which is causing significant distress or harm, staff may decide to bypass stage 2 and/or 3 of this procedure.
 - **No student involvement:** In the event that no University of Leeds students are found living at the property, complainants are referred to the relevant Institution or agency to deal with their complaint such as other Leeds universities or colleges, the Police, Leeds Antisocial Behaviour Team or Leeds Council Waste Services.
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Stage 3- Mediation & Neighbours' Agreement

In the event of receiving a further complaint or one of a serious nature, a mediation meeting will be held, with a minimum of seven days' notice, at the University. Both our students and the complainant will be invited to attend the meeting with University staff. This may also include a University Police Officer.

This meeting will explore further the nature of the nuisance caused by our students and provide an opportunity for all parties to have their views heard and understood. A Neighbours' Agreement will be discussed and agreed to provide clarity on the behaviour that is expected of our students going forward. Whilst not a requirement of the neighbours' agreement, as part of the mediation discussion, the complainant and students may jointly agree to actions being taken by our students that make amends for their behaviour. A copy of the neighbours' agreement will be provided in writing to all parties within 7 days of the meeting taking place. The Neighbours' Agreement will include a clear explanation about what should happen in the event of any breach.

Students and the complainant will be required to submit a completed mediation form before this meeting can take place. Where a complainant is unable to attend the meeting, University staff can support the complainant in completing the mediation form and can act on their behalf to develop the neighbours' agreement with our students in their absence. Student attendance is compulsory and refusal to be involved in this stage of the process will lead to an automatic referral for formal disciplinary action. Our students will be encouraged to seek impartial advice from Leeds University Union Student Advice as part of this process.

Stage 4- Referral for disciplinary

A referral for formal disciplinary action (to the Head of Student Cases) will be made where:

- A complaint is received for a very serious incident. For major/serious incidents, stages 2-3 of the Helpline process may be bypassed straight to stage 4.
- An additional substantiated nuisance is caused, that breaches a Neighbours' Agreement by our students.
- Students fail to engage with the Stage 3 mediation and neighbours' agreement process.

Sanctions may be imposed which range from fines, to exclusion from the University in the most serious cases

If there is evidence that the anti-social behaviour incident was the direct result of an event/party run by a student club or society, Leeds University Student Union will be informed and may also seek to take action against the club or society through its own disciplinary procedures. Action will be taken through the University disciplinary process before any action is considered through Leeds University Union's Disciplinary Procedures.

Annex A: Stages of the University of Leeds Community Complaint Process

