HOUSING TOOKLIT

For College MCRs

University of Cambridge Graduate Union

Housing is one of the more important aspects of a student's university experience. Affordable and decent shelter must be a basic right for every student: without proper accommodation, everything else falls apart. In Cambridge, while undergraduate housing has been a point of wide-spread debate and discussion, postgraduate housing has often not been given as much attention. Private or college-owned, the key question remains:

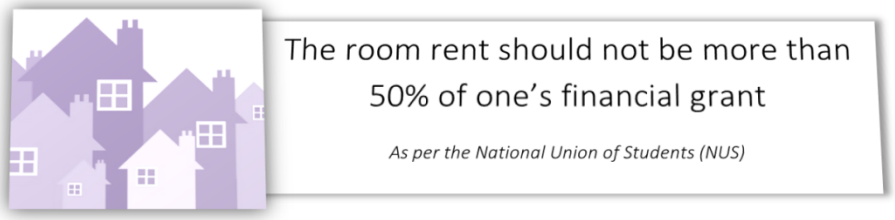
Are we getting a fair deal when it comes to postgraduate housing in Cambridge?

55% Postgraduate students in Cambridge live in University owned accommodation while rest stay in private accommodation.

£147 per week is the overall average weekly rent for students across the UK, according to the NUS-Unipol Accommodation Survey 2018

17% Accommodation are relatively cheaper standard non-ensuite accommodation for students across the United Kingdom

We have found that there is a lack of transparency and student-consultation when it comes to students' housing in the Collegiate University, with hidden charges and lack of student involvement in setting of rents.



In our recent Graduate Union Mental Health Survey, we received responses from students on this front too, with 31% reporting that housing problems have affected their mental health. Others highlighted that college housing was Unreasonable and overpriced. The decline in number of standard stock rooms is arguably the largest cause of concern for the student housing sector in the UK today. More expensive studio rooms have increased significantly. There is seen to be a lack of housing for postgraduate students with children and families in the University, and the special needs of students in terms of special facilities for disabled students are also often overlooked. Welfare support can also be improved in most housing facilities in Cambridge.

Many postgraduate students in Cambridge are partially funded or self-funded for their courses. With housing being as expensive as it is in the Collegiate University, the wellbeing and education of the students are adversely affected. A place where unfairness also creeps in, when it comes to postgraduate housing is the lack of transparency by some colleges in the charges associated with housing. Colleges should make all charges needed to house a student clear from the get-go and not seek what can be regarded as *hidden charges*. This includes kitchen charges, internet charges and various other miscellaneous charges. Private options can be way cheaper than college accommodation in Cambridge for postgraduates but they come with their share of problems, such as the need for deposits and guarantors, and lack of student community space. International students may not have the cultural understanding of renting in the UK to be able to make safe decisions about where to live. Not to forget, landlords are often unwilling to rent to students, and especially to those without a UK rental history.

Having looked at the various nuances of postgraduate housing, we believe that the onus therefore comes to the Collegiate University, not only to talk to Colleges to reduce rent, be transparent on charges, but also to build more purpose-built student accommodations, possibly with more coordinated efforts with the City Council when building or upgrading existing stock.

We, at the Graduate Union, are motivated to work towards helping create meaningful change on postgraduate housing in the Collegiate University, and campaign for the provision of affordable and accessible housing for postgraduate students in the University of Cambridge.

What can MCRs do?

Section A

Understand your accommodation

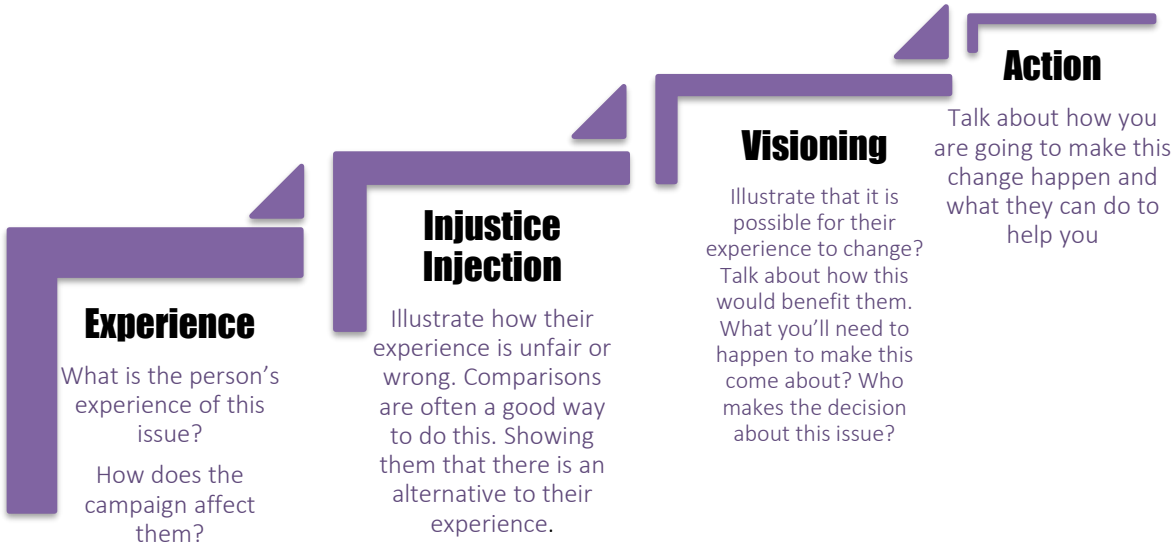
First of all, it is important to understand what buildings your college owns, and also where it leases from and what the future looks like. The data can be collected from a number of places. Things to consider

- What property does the college own
- What does it lease (i.e owned by others)
- What does it use its space for
- Who paid for accommodation,?(was it paid for by donations for a specific purpose?)
- Are the rooms' en-suit? Do they have a wash basin? How many people share/toilet/kitchen/shower
- Where is it located?
- How much income does it earn off students, off confrnece, off other uses, how is this accounted for?
- What are the plans for the future?

Section B

Speak to your Students

There are a couple of ways to do this, but as a philosophy, the **Apathy Staircase**[1] is a good way of thinking about it. Remember, if you spend 10 minutes speaking a students, spend the majority asking about their experience, and whether this is fair. Start with action and you will be pushing them down the **Apathy Staircase**, "you risk breaking their legs".



Instead, you could begin with understanding from the students about their experiences relating to housing in the Collegiate University. *At the bottom of the Apathy Staircase*. You could do so effectively by[1]

- ✓ Using coloured sticky notes (distinct for each question), ascertain
    1. What would they like to keep being done, when it comes to college housing?
    2. What would they like to start doing, when it comes to college housing?
    3. What would they like to just stop doing, when it comes to college housing?
- ✓ Or a survey, the shorter the better, perhaps only one golden question (such as `what would you change about Cambridge?')
- ✓ If you can get a group of people in to a room, you can even get them to move about between 2/4 answers to your questions.

[1] NUS/ Jim Dickenson – see this video here https://youtu.be/c1K8KtCc4rw -

Recognise the Problem[2]

Firstly, is it that something is wrong (Deviation - D), that something could go wrong (Preventative - P) or that we are trying to be better at it (Improvement - I). It can cover more than one (please tick)

D	P	I

Think: Should you be solving the problem (do you need to take ownership of it) or is it about getting someone else's responsibility? – *this will change your objective from you solving a problem, to getting someone else to recognise something is a problem*.

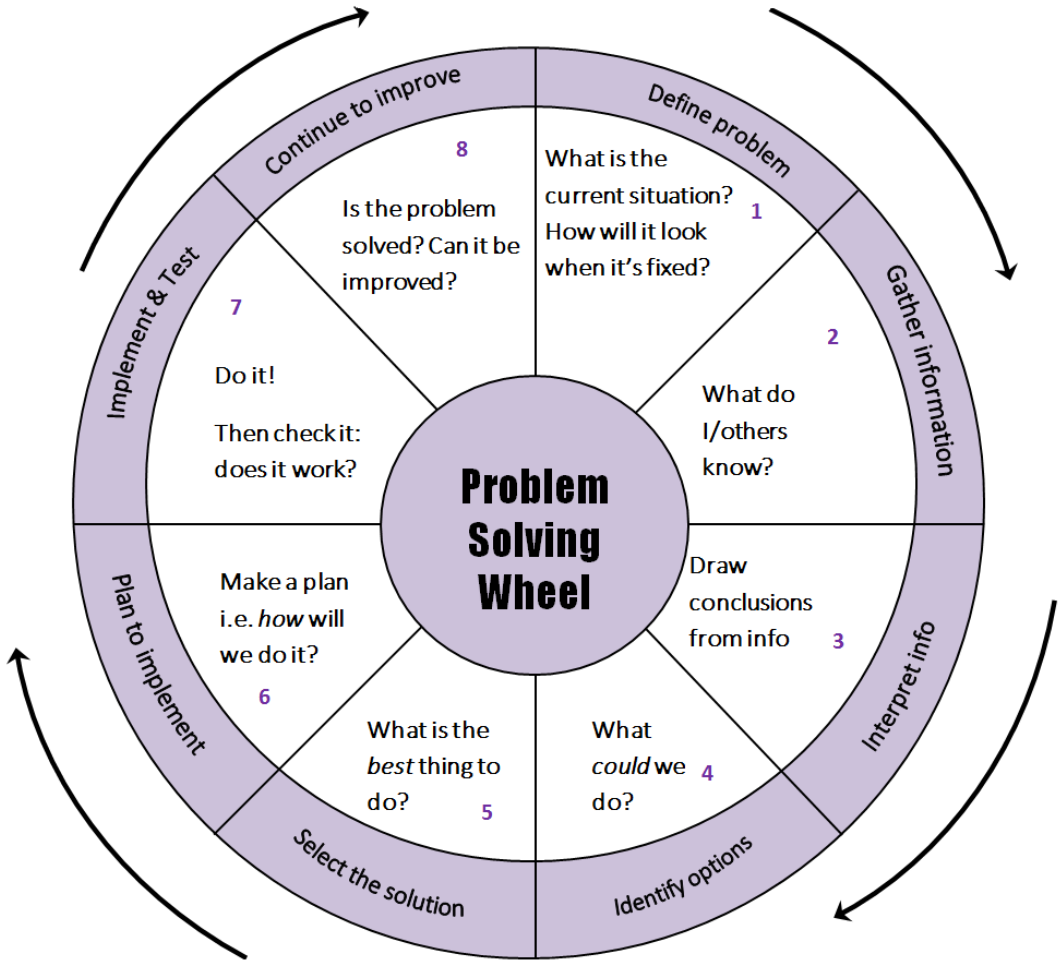
How widespread is the issue? (think `*Where, who it affects and when?*')

Think: Is this fair? Why is it wrong? Why do students think it is wrong, does it break any rules?

Visioning: what would a better situation look like?

What do we need to do to achieve change? *Be specific, have measurable goals, make sure that it is achievable and realistic, and what would be the time*

would it look like if nothing happened?You could use the **Problem-Solving Wheel**



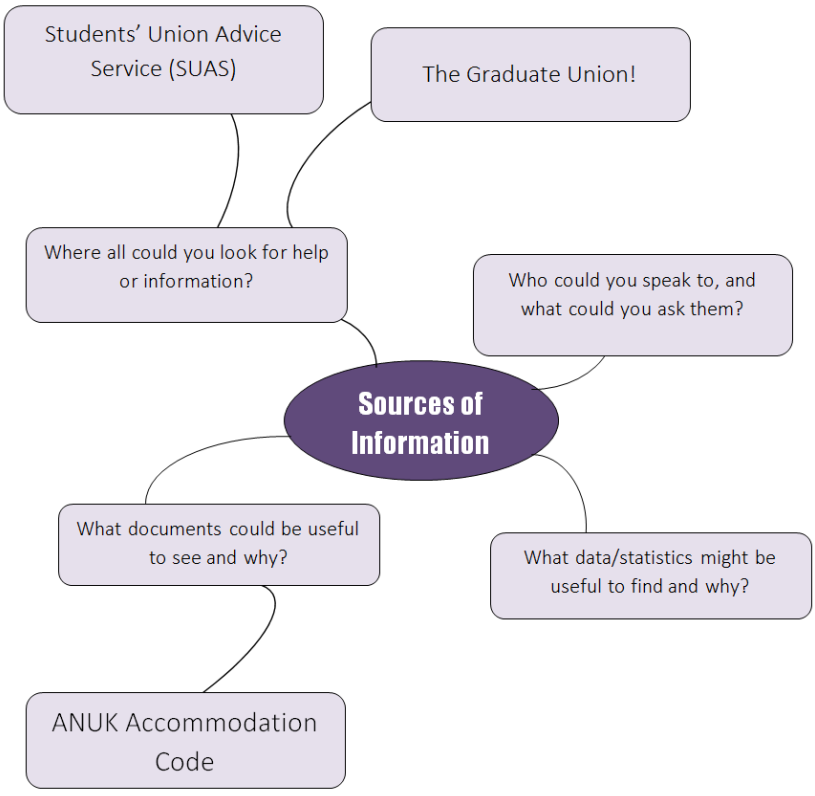
[2] We are thankful to the University HR department for allowing us to reproduce their resources here

Investigate the problem – gather and interpret information

To investigate the problem, you will need to gather information from a variety of sources (step 2 in the Wheel). You could, for example:

- ✓ Talk to people who the problem impacts on (stakeholders) – what suggestions do they have?
- ✓ Speak to others who may have faced similar situations – internally or externally
- ✓ Brainstorm alone and with others to gather information and generate ideas
- ✓ Depending on the situation, there may be other pieces of information that could be helpful to you at this stage (e.g. budgets or financial plans, work plans, performance reviews, time logs)
- ✓ Do wider research, internet, books, other people…

You can then interpret the information and draw conclusions from the information you have gathered (step 3 in the Wheel). Use a **Mind Map**:



Mapping Stakeholders

The first step in any campaign is mapping the stakeholders. Identify the key decision-makers and influencers in the college and determine what their motivations are. Think about the likelihood of getting their support. Remember to see what their role is in the system and how much power they have by virtue of their position. Do not only focus on the big stakeholders such as bursar or senior tutor. Also try to get the support of member of important committees who may have been interested in student issues and whom the MCR has a good relationship with. You could possibly meet them one-to-one and discuss this further.

Identify the possible options

Based on that, you can identify and list the possible options for solving your problem (step 4 in the Wheel). Keep an open mind and do not disregard any possible options at this point. In a group, get people to individually write out options (sticky notes work a treat), then bring them together and group them. Can anyone think of additional options?

Evaluate the possible options and choose the best one *(step 5 in the wheel)*

Use a decision-making technique to evaluate the various options you have come up and identify the best way to solve your problem. Use your objectives (from step 1) and consider any constraints (e.g. human, financial) when you are evaluating the options. Your final solution may combine one or more of the possible options you identified.

Consider any constraints when you are evaluating. These constraints could be:

Lack of authority	Cultural
Policy	Moral
Legal	Physical
Human	Financial
Time	Material

Either write a *Pro's and Con's list* or create a score card (a white board works best for this) – an example below

Objectives	Options				
To make housing fairer and more accessible for Postgraduate students by	Make a toolkit for MCRs to hold college to account	Make a league table of true costs	GU hold college to a count for the ANUK code	Distribute the code	Lobby the Uni to build more
Allowing PG to make more informed decisions**(x2)**	2 (4)	2(4)	0	1(2)	0
Remove hidden charges	2	1	0	1	2
Make living more affordable	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	4 (6)	3(5)	0	2(3)	2

Be Clear about what you Ask For

You will have to be clear about what you seek and prepare a strong case for them. If unsure where to start, you could aim for a fairly reasonable and specific initial demand, such as rents being increased by no more than RPI + 1% for the past year (often termed as 'Cambridge college inflation rate') and a lower rate in the first instance that is linked to RPI, CPI or the changes in financial support for students, within the housing campaign. You could ask for specific things such as freezing the rent for lower band rooms as part of the housing campaign, as an example.

Prioritize the broad theme of your campaign. For instance, in the housing campaign, remember that it is not just lower average rents that you should seek but rather have the focus on *affordability* in housing (as a percentage of available student finances). Do not be closed to the idea that some positions can be compromise or negotiated but be sure if that is what your college student body seek and investigate if there are any other ways of carrying out the suggested changes in your initial position.

Action Plan

The first step after realizing the problems and identifying the possible options for protest and campaigning is to devise an action plan. Think for the long term. For instance, in the rent campaign, if an immediate rent freeze translates to big hike two years down the line, that is not a very beneficial move, looking at the sustainability of such rent changes. Look at options that are sustainable, and lobby for a system for review and negotiation to be undertaken every year on this front, with student representatives included in these discussions.

As they say, in negotiations, one needs to pick one's battles wisely. Sometimes one must compromise on certain counts. You must prepare best-case and fall-back options for any position where you are flexible and establish what you just are not willing to negotiate. It is perfectly acceptable to negotiate with more than what you seek (to provide for some space for the negotiation), but it is good to be sure that the initial position is reasonable and that you have a clear case to support it.

Plan how you will implement the solution *(step 6 in the Wheel)*

When you have chosen the solution, you need to plan how you will implement it, step by step, including what resources you need and who else needs to be involved. In the next section, we shall provide specific steps and ways to campaign. An action plan is helpful at this stage. It is also critical to identify who needs to know what you plan to do and how you plan to do it – if you don't communicate your plans effectively to the right people, implementing your solution may be much harder to achieve. An example action plan is given below

Action	Who will do it	Weeks	Resources	Communication method
Hold engagement events to understand students' views	MJ	1-3	Table cloth, banner, feedback cards, biscuits	Contact possible venues, communicate though lists/ FB/Newsletter
Create proof of concept toolkit	AC	3-5	Time, research, clarity of use	Email
Gather information	MJ	1-3	Research, contacts	Notes
Holding planning review meeting	AC/MJ	3	Meeting room, info	Email/calendar invite
Communicate conclusion to team	MJ	3	Usual team meeting	In person
Call for WG	MJ	4	Write up	Newsletter/FB
Circulate draft Toolkit to MCRs	MJ	6	Draft toolkit	Council list/ meeting
Process MCR info	AC	7	excel	Online form
Ask for additional info from MCRs	MJ	6	Create online form	Council list/ meeting
Additional Planning meeting	AC/MJ	8	Meeting room, info	Email/calendar invite

GANTT Charts

Gantt charts allow easily visual access to information and progress.

TASKS Week:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Hold engagement events to understand students' views								
Create proof of concept toolkit								
Gather information								
Holding planning review meeting								
Communicate conclusion to team								
Call for WG								
Circulate draft Toolkit to MCRs								
Process MCR info								
Ask for additional info from MCRs								
Additional Planning meeting								

Decide how you will monitor and evaluate it

Decide how you are going to monitor the situation and review your plan so that you can evaluate the effectiveness of your solution (i.e. how you will know if it has worked). You may need to take corrective action or simply congratulate yourself on a job well done and remember what to do well again in future.

This is best to agree these targets with the college/ University department, and make sure they are reviewed at regular intervals. For instance,

Objective	Who is responsible	Target
Minor repairs take place within 5 working days from them being reported	To be monitored by estates and reported to estates committee. Failure to hit this target in any month should lead to a meeting to re-evaluate this target	90% will take place within this time frame per month, with detailed reports of why any repairs have not happened.
All costs are advertised correctly to perspective students	Estates/ marketing & admissions – college council – this is legal target and escalation through the ANUK code or to the Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor	All accommodation costs are accounted in one bill All other costs are optional By 1 October 2019
Rents are accessible and affordable	College council/ estates/MCR & JCR	An agreed affordability scale is agreed That accommodation costs are realistically accounted for. That available information is used to compare private sector rents

Remember to communicate with your members about the aspects of the action and how much impact it had. Plan and see how to involve them in the next steps and take their suggestions on board. Always be sure if there are any facts or information that are confidential and cannot be disclosed to your membership, by asking relevant college authorities.

Pass it on

Remember to maintain the campaign and ensure its sustainability till the issue is addressed or demand is met. If it happens years down the line, your experience and tactics should help the students at that time. Therefore, writing a handover document with the process, your tactics and thoughts will be helpful for your successor(s). Provide guidance and pointers for effective campaigning on this front.

Intro to Private Accommodation

Just under half of Postgraduates live in private accommodation. This section is not meant to act as a guide, but an introduction to the sector, which is important to understand what is provided by the Collegiate University.

Private options can be way cheaper than college accommodation in Cambridge for postgraduates but they come with their share of problems. Due to a number of reasons incoming graduate students rely more on the latter than the former. For one, offers are often received late in the year and so the easiest option offered is the most attractive for the students. Student may also not be able to afford hotel accommodation for the time it might take to find a home. International students may not have the cultural understanding of renting in the UK to be able to make safe decisions about where to live and hear horror stories of student exploitation. Also, upfront rental fees and costs to establish a home are not covered by funding bodies though they may save money in the long run. Not to forget, landlords are often unwilling to rent to students, and especially to those without a UK rental history.

There are a number of different types

1. Housing that is owned by the collegiate, but is rented like it is private, i.e you have to contact utilities and set them up.

2. Living as a lodger, this is normally when you are living with a landlord, or sub-letting

3. Private Halls. These look like University halls, and have to follow codes of practice, but are owned by charity or more likely a profit making company

4. Private Rental, where you live together with your family, individually, or a group of friends like you are a family. This means you all collectively are a household and will be collectively responsible for the rent.

5. A house of multiple occupation (HMO). This is when a house is made up of multiple households, each room will have a lock on it, and you pay rent direct to the Landlord.

Though the Students' Union Advice Service or the University Accommodation service are the best place to refer students having issues, for more generally information, the charity SHELTER UK is a good place to start.

How to Negotiate Rents

We are thankful to CUSU for allowing us to develop some of their resources here, which was developed by the Priscilla Mensah, President 15/16

Housing and rent play a pivotal role in the Cambridge experience of postgraduate and mature undergraduate students. As mentioned before, consumerism is increasing in the higher education sector, particularly on the housing front. In this context, negotiations for decrease in rent for student housing is an important point of discussion in the Collegiate University. The primary areas where the rents are used are for maintenance costs, building costs and staff costs. Colleges usually compare rents across the Collegiate University, with other colleges, to decide on rents. The reason this is unfair is because this disregards factors such as age of colleges, size of endowments, geographical location and sizes of the student community. Since college housing is a '*home away from home*' for the students residing in the colleges, it is even more important to stand up for their interests on this front. This section will look briefly at the ways to do this, besides the more general suggestions given in the previous section.

One of the challenges for any MCR on this front is to make the college heed to the points raised and act on them. For this, it is very important that student representatives across the university work on this in a concerted manner. For instance, it is important that if you have a JCR that you show a united front. The Graduate Union is always available to help during negotiations – you could get in touch with the Vice-President (vice-president@gradunion.cam.ac.uk) to arrange for a meeting and get support. In the meanwhile, you could specifically look at the following steps for beginning a campaign on rent and housing provisions in your college.

Rents and Affordability

College rents and related charges are mainly to provide and maintain the accommodation to students of your college. These charges should not cover any other aspects of your education experience such as library access and computing facilities, since these are covered in college fees. What should be avoided is to include overheads that are not related to this provision of housing, such as the building and maintenance of conference facilities in the college. One must be aware of the accounting trick of putting these costs under the general accommodation prices, when these could be tackled through other means such as servicing debts or depreciation of buildings.

Affordability is not just related to an absolute value. It is related to the proportion of a student's finances that is used up for financing housing, in this context. As has been highlighted in the introductory section, current rent prices are quite high, relative to the available financial support and scholarships in the Collegiate University for postgraduate and mature undergraduate students. An affordable housing solution will leave enough spending power with the student to pay for food, utilities, clothing, course material, recreation and supporting dependents, if need be. One must be cognizant of the varied financial situations and needs of the students. Cheaper options need to be provided for students with the most limited financial resources.

Rent increases could range from 1% to more than 10% in a single year, in the Collegiate University. Increase of more than 5% in a single year needs to be considered carefully and investigated. Usually, college costs rise by *Retail Price Index + 1%* and this is the measure that

is used in long term planning for college finances. In general, there is no reason accommodation costs should be more than general inflation of costs in colleges.

Analysing the Status Quo

Investigate and Research

Try to see what the process is for rent allocation in your college. Ask key questions: how much student consultation plays a role in rent allocation? How far in advance are rent levels fixed? Which are the relevant committees that approve the changes? Who all sit on these committees? Look at the recent records and see the important decisions or changes introduced. Most importantly, see if any negotiations were introduced in the past and how did they go. Check what rents cover and how subsidies generally in the college are related to these rents. Are there any sources of subsidies for rents, such as conference incomes, development campaigns or alumni contributions?

You can ask your college for information on rent and rent changes over the past 5-10 years. More specifically, see if charging regimes have been changed and what kind of charges have been incorporated in the core rent over the past years. Look at comparable rent levels across the Collegiate University. Also compare with private housing rent across the city, taking into consideration possible differences in contract details and extra charges like utilities (thereby not making them completely comparable, at times). Focus on such **extra charges** such as kitchen fixed charges, utilities and internet. Are these charged independently or included in the rent charged? Ask if these extra charges are fair, proportionate and representing good value for students?

Think about **affordability** and the **cross-section of students** in your college. Remember to not forget the interests of a minority group if a certain position that may benefit a majority is taken. See if any costs or charges are seen to be redundant or not useful to some students and research on these. Ask questions such as: are affordable rooms available to people in all year groups? Are the interests of international students looked after in your college, when it comes to housing? Are rooms for students with disabilities available? Are there affordable and accessible rooms available for students with children and families?

Remember that the housing problem is more *nuanced* than just rent changes. **Consult** your membership about this. Ask if changes in balloting/room allocation system, license durations and other aspects of the housing provided could help in alleviating the problems they face, or whether financial pressures have such an impact on student welfare that no such aspect being worked on would help.

Developing a Case

There are some lines of discussion that can help you make a case for rent negotiations and changes. You can develop this further, depending on the realities in your college. Different approaches and arguments can be targeted at different stakeholders within the college, such

as the Senior Tutor, Bursar or graduate tutors. If you feel you need any help customising the arguments to suit your college's case, please feel free to contact the Graduate Union!

Case for Welfare

It is widely seen that student support and bursaries do not rise with the rent rises. As a result, student's spending power and general welfare is affected due to personal finances being squeezed in this manner. This also directly affects the education of the students.

Some colleges argue that the rise in rents is to fund bursaries for students. What they often forget is that there are many students whose family income is not quite in the lowest rung and they belong to what can be called the 'squeezed middle'. As a result, they get little or no bursary support. Bursaries for international students has been less in numbers in most colleges, as is the financial support offered to postgraduate and mature undergraduate students. Therefore, for such students, rent rise does not help with any additional financial support.

The increased rent instead affects their wellbeing, particularly with increased stress levels affecting their mental health. Students cannot focus on their studies and/or research in such a scenario and this affects their performance directly. As a result, colleges must prioritize decreasing rent as a way of advancing their core mission of providing education and supporting the welfare of its students.

Case for Access

Cambridge has often been cited as a very expensive city for students to live in, in the United Kingdom. Rents are one of the major factors in making it so expensive, with soaring property prices. Colleges tend to increase rents well above inflation rates, year-after-year. Lack of affordable housing presents a major access barrier as students are put-off by the cost of living in Cambridge relative to other universities.

Colleges often have access targets which they often struggle to meet. You could present a case that this cannot be brought about high rents. This only ends up risking widening participation efforts.

Case for Market

Colleges have a lot of power when it comes to accommodation. Students cannot live away from their college without permission and can only live within a limited distance from the University. Most of the housing therein is owned by the colleges. As a result, there is very little competition from private providers and students are led to opt for college housing if they want to reside in certain areas within the university town. Even the argument that other colleges are the housing competitors and set benchmark for rent allocation is flawed since students usually cannot avail housing from other colleges and do not usually switch colleges midway. Moreover, information on available housing is not provided before the allocation of the colleges, which makes the preference for a college by a student not an informed choice on the housing front.

Due to the lack of meaningful competition, colleges can together increase the average rents, and this faces no challenge from a competitive market, which could have led to decrease in the rents. Therefore, you can argue against your college using the point that there is a 'market level' for rent which they can use to increase rents to meet.

Case for Finances

Colleges often say that rent is the way to increase the college finances to meet general costs of functioning. This is not entirely true, in that there are other ways to support colleges on this front. These must be explored completely before any above-inflation increase in rent is thought of or implemented.

Conference income is a major source of subsidy for accommodation accounts of colleges. We feel more can be done on that front. This must be done without compromising on student wellbeing. Also, high rents disincentivize international students from applying, which leads to unintended reduction in financial resources that could be brought in through fees. In repeated surveys, international students have put accommodation costs as extremely important in their consideration for opting for an institution to pursue their courses in.

Alumni provide a lot of funds to colleges. Fundraising among alumni and beyond plays a major role in supplementing financial resources of colleges. By overburdening students with high rents, your college could risk making the students have a negative view of the college, thereby decreasing the likelihood of them donating money in the future and damaging future income streams. You could use a survey to assess this idea.

Planning your Campaign

You could begin planning for your campaign by talking to the Graduate Union. As part of our Housing and Living Expenses Campaign we have developed a database of information on housing across the university and have also been contacted about college-specific issues. Therefore, we could provide a perspective informed by the larger picture along with as required for your college. GU can help in all stages of planning and can provide advice and feedback on any resources/papers you may prepare for your campaign. We are also working closely with Cut the Rent, and therefore have access to additional resource persons, if so required.

Mapping Stakeholders

The first step in any campaign is mapping the stakeholders. Identify the key decision-makers and influencers in rent-setting and determine what their motivations are. Think about the likelihood of getting their support. Remember to see what their role is in the rent allocation system. Do not only focus on the big stakeholders such as bursar or senior tutor. Also try to get the support of member of important committees who may have been interested in student issues and whom the MCR has a good relationship with. You could possibly meet them one-to-one and discuss this further.

Be Clear about what you Ask For

You will have to be clear about what you seek and prepare a strong case for them. If unsure where to start, you could aim for rents being increased by no more than RPI + 1% for the past year (often termed as 'Cambridge college inflation rate'), and you could perhaps ask for a lower rate in the first instance that is linked to RPI, CPI or the changes in financial support for postgraduate and mature undergraduate students. You could ask for specific things such as freezing the rent for lower band rooms.

Remember that it is not just lower average rents that you should seek but rather have the focus on affordability in housing. Explore options such as variation in the system for room allocation, room banding systems, license periods and subletting in vacations that might increase the affordability angle to the housing issue. Do not be closed to the idea that increased rent could be useful in investing in quality of accommodation but be sure if this is what your MCR membership seek and investigate if there are any other ways of financing these improvements.

Thinking Long Term

Think for the long term. If an immediate rent freeze translates to big hike two years down the line, that is not a very beneficial move, looking at the sustainability of such rent changes. Look at options that are sustainable, such as inflation-linked increases, and lobby for a system for review and negotiation to be undertaken every year on this front, with student representatives included in these discussions.

Negotiable and Non-Negotiable

As they say, in negotiations, one needs to pick one's battles wisely. Sometimes one must compromise on certain counts. You must prepare best-case and fall-back options for any position where you are flexible and establish what you just are not willing to negotiate. It is perfectly acceptable to negotiate with more than what you seek (to provide for some space for the negotiation), but it is good to be sure that the initial position is reasonable and that you have a clear case to support it.

Choosing the Right Tactics

It is important to select the right tactics for campaigning. This often depends on varying situations within a campaigning phase. Tactics must vary accordingly. So, when a reasonable discussion is sought, direct action may not be the right action, while if the college just would not listen to a reasonable point of negotiation, arranging for another meeting may do little other than delaying a meaningful resolution.

First Stage: In the beginning, it is good to play by the College's procedures and rules: have meetings with relevant authorities, write papers supporting a position and present it, besides speaking at the right committees. Look closely at why the college is seeking to increase rents. Approach the situation from the various angles and cases mentioned in the previous section. Counter the college wherever required and look for mutually beneficial solutions, without compromising on core non-negotiable demands. You must remember that goodwill is important for making headway in negotiations.

Second Stage: If the first stage fails, try escalating by circumventing those who block your path. Meet with the various stakeholders, particularly those on your side or on the fence, and convince them of your case. Approach secretaries and chairs of appropriate committees to get time to speak. Use the student voice in College Council or the governing body of your college.

Be prepared to speak against proposed changes and to vote down proposals if they are unreasonable. This is the point of your presence on the committees and so you should feel empowered to voice your concerns. This may push you back into the first stage but that just gives you more time build consensus among all stakeholders on your position.

Third Stage: If your efforts are not making much difference, and you are being ignored or dismissed, you may want to escalate further and employ various forms of protest to draw attention to the issue. You can demonstrate the degree of dissatisfaction among the students. Such tactics usually damage your goodwill with college authorities and therefore should be used sparingly. Some forms of protest include:

1. *Rallies and demonstration*: Gathering a large group of students to stand up for the cause you want to rally support for can be a powerful mode of action. This can effectively reflect the strength of the feeling and support among students for the cause.
2. *Flashmobs, Banner Drops or Visual Displays*: These are fun ways of protesting and can be organized with a smaller group of students than in a traditional rally. You can use your creativity to devise innovative ways to protest.
3. *Boycotts:* Walkouts from college services or their boycott could create quite a stir. For instance, a boycott of the dining and buttery services of the college could hit the college administration and remind the college of the power of the students. Such methods of protest only work if they are carried out by a significant percentage of your membership with a clear understanding about why it is being done.

4. ***Disruptive Actions:*** Disruptive actions such as rent boycotts and occupations of college buildings can be an extreme form of protest, but students must be aware that they may face disciplinary action for such actions. This should usually be the last resort and carefully considered before implementing. Widespread student engagement and participation is a must for such an action to be successful and to also shield any student or groups of students from facing serious repercussions.

Assess Impact

Always check and assess how successful a tactic or step has been. Look at ways in which things can be done better and any missed opportunities. You could also ask other stakeholders such as fellows about how the action went and whether it could be done in a different way.

Remember to communicate with your members about the aspects of the action and how much impact it had. Plan and see how to involve them in the next steps and take their suggestions on board. Always be sure if there are any facts or information that are confidential and cannot be disclosed to your membership, by asking relevant college authorities.

Pass it on

Remember to maintain the campaign and ensure its sustainability till the issue is addressed or demand is met. If it happens years down the line, your experience and tactics should help the students at that time. Therefore, writing a handover document with the process, your tactics and thoughts will be helpful for your successor(s). Provide guidance and pointers for effective campaigning on this front.

Relevant Links

1. Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), *UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law* compliance advice, 2015. Available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428549/HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf
2. Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), *Reporting possible non-compliance with consumer law*. Available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/411695/How_to_report_a_potential_consumer_law_breach.pdf
3. Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), Higher Education Providers: Consumer Law. Available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/411392/HE_providers_60ss.pdf
4. National Code, *ANUK / Unipol Code of Standards for Larger Residential Developments for student accommodation managed and controlled by educational establishments*, 2008. Available here: https://www.nationalcode.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=4abbcef3-0682-421a-96b7-589992ee7a88