

NEWS RELEASE

University of London launches next-gen property rental app

Students can now view, choose, secure and pay for private rented accommodation through single online platform

London, 3rd August 2020: University of London (UoL) students now have the ability to choose, secure and pay for their home for the academic year using an app which gives access to available private rented accommodation in thousands of properties across the city.

Working with SPCE - a real estate-oriented software / data company, which supports non-profit and public sector organisations in delivering transformative housing products, UoL's Housing Services team will be launching a free app based platform which allows landlords to advertise rooms, flats and houses to its student cohort. Students will be able to search the app for their requirements, and communicate directly with their landlord for the duration of their tenancy, in a secure, transparent, non-physical environment. Repairs, complaints, end of tenancy queries, deposits and rent payments can be recorded and dealt with in one digital location.

The University of London Housing Services team serves 184,000 students across 16 UoL member institutions and 9 external partner HE facilities. With 63% of that student body living in private rented accommodation, it's hoped that 115,000 people will have access to the new app, which almost doubles the use figure of 60,000 for the previous, less digitally accessible solution. Users will have access to over 600 private landlords, 30+ estate agents and over 30 providers of purpose-built student accommodation.

Private rental landlords using the app will benefit from sophisticated digital tools to manage their property portfolios, including online contract signing, rent collection and a dashboard to track financial performance of property. The property platform will also work with letting agents and providers of purpose built student accommodation (halls of residence) to ensure a consistent flow of privately rented accommodation.

Aisling Traynor, head of private housing and advice services at University of London commented: “We evaluated what our cohort needs most from their student experience in terms of support, and concluded that a more comprehensive, secure digital offering for managing their housing needs was necessary. UoL has provided help with property rental for a long time, but by placing the communication online and making it more transparent and trustworthy, we hope that students and landlords will get better outcomes.

“We know that many students, particularly our International community, find the hunt for and management of their accommodation pretty stressful. In the aftermath of COVID-19 in particular, our new property platform will eliminate many of the classic time sensitive, paper based and contact reliant elements of finding somewhere to live during study.”

Leon Ifayemi, founder at SPCE commented: “We are extremely pleased to be able to provide the University of London ("UOL") and all its constituent schools with a platform which supports the entirety of the property rental journey for their target users. By acting as a partner, we at SPCE are implementing mechanisms at universities that build their capabilities in response to housing challenges. This is particularly pertinent as we confront the COVID-19 challenge together.

“UOL has a great reputation with regards to supporting the student rental ecosystem in London. This collaboration will not only greatly enhance the experience of all the ecosystem's stakeholders, but inspire superior housing standards in higher education, both nationwide and beyond.”

Ben Liao, Managing Director of the Colliers PropTech Accelerator powered by Techstars, commented: “It’s fantastic to have one of our portfolio companies become the rental platform of choice for such a prestigious group of universities. Every year we fund and work closely with 10 of the most promising companies around the world that we believe can offer a significant improvement in their target markets, and it's exciting to see SPCE is doing exactly this for the higher education sector with its innovative technology. We look forward to continuing to support the team as they work with more universities in both the UK and

North America, to transform how they manage their student accommodation, offering an industry leading experience for both students and landlords.”

The property platform app, which has been extensively tested, is now available to landlords, and will be launched to students on the 11th August 2020.

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