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# **How Residence Life assists Student Mental Health**

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University of Leeds, UK

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# Introduction



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- 13 years – Student Accommodation
- University of Limerick, University of Manchester, Campus Living Villages
- MA Student Affairs Higher Education
- Chair ACUHO-I Global Initiatives Network
- ASRA Management Committee Member
- The Class Foundation – Community & Wellbeing module
- Podcast – ‘Free Food, Free Drinks’

# Introduction



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- 8 years – Residence Life
- Residential Life Assistant & Advisor - University of Northampton
- Residence Life Coordinator - University of Essex
- BA (Hons) Management
- Mental Health First aider
- Royal Air Force Military Police reservist

# Terminology



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- University Owned Accommodation
- PBSA – Purpose Built Student Accommodation (Private)
- PBSA Partnerships / Public Private Partnerships (P3)
- Residence Life / Residential Life / Res Life



# Student Mental Health – UK Context



## student minds

- UUK 2017 Stepchange Strategic Framework to address student mental health
- 94% of University Student Wellbeing Services reported spiralling numbers of students accessing their services
- More than 50% of students say their mental health declined in 2020 (NUS)
- More students presenting with multiple and complex issues

# Student Mental Health – Covid Impact



- Accommodation vs Covid environment
- Impact upon student experience
- Demands on service
- Required service adaptations
- Thinking outside the box
- Stimulated service innovation and learning

# The Role of Accommodation



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***“We provide accommodation – why are we discussing student community wellbeing?”***

- Smooth transition to University
- Student (customer) satisfaction
- Less flat disputes
- Anti Social Behaviour
- Increased occupancy
- Academic Success

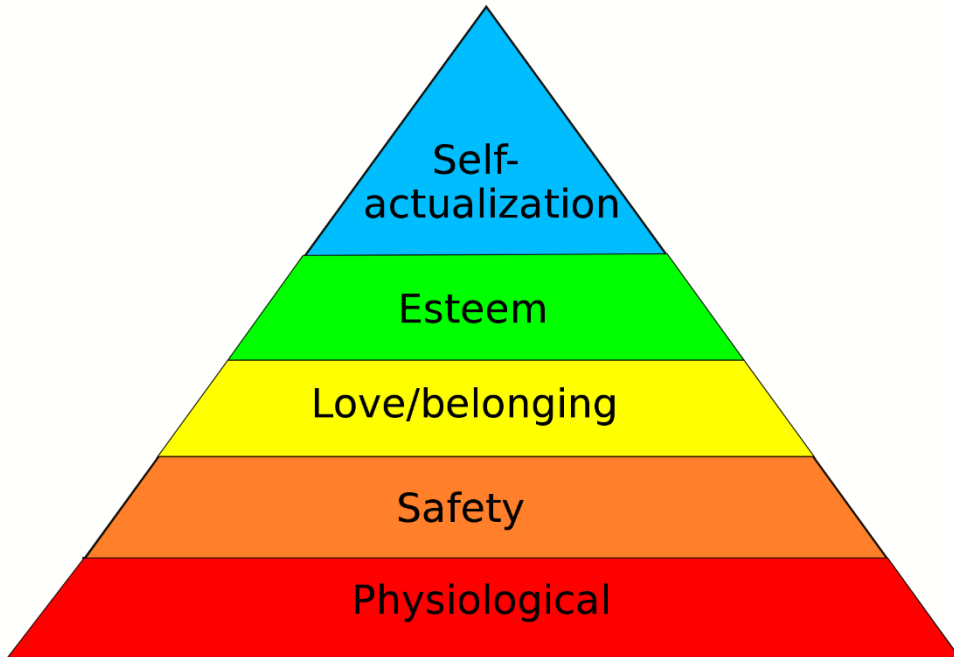


# Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

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- Sense of Belonging
- Cultivating a Community
- Community Student Wellbeing
- Whole University/PBSA commitment

# Community & Student Wellbeing



***“The healthy settings approach takes a whole system perspective and aims to make the places within which people learn, live, work and play supportive to health and wellbeing.”***

Healthy Universities Network  
StepChange (2019)

# Student Wellbeing in Accommodation



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- Welcome – Inclusive Culture
- Staff Training & Development
- Leadership – Visible, Open Conversations
- Health promotion – Eat, Sleep, Behave
- Healthy Culture - External and Internal
- Healthy Wellbeing- Connect, Give, Notice, Active, Learn
- Healthy Environment – well designed spaces which promote wellbeing

# University of Leeds Residence Life





# University of Leeds



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- **Established in 1884**
- **39,000 students (UK's 5<sup>th</sup> largest)**
- **A Russell Group university**
- **Ranked 91<sup>st</sup> in the World\***

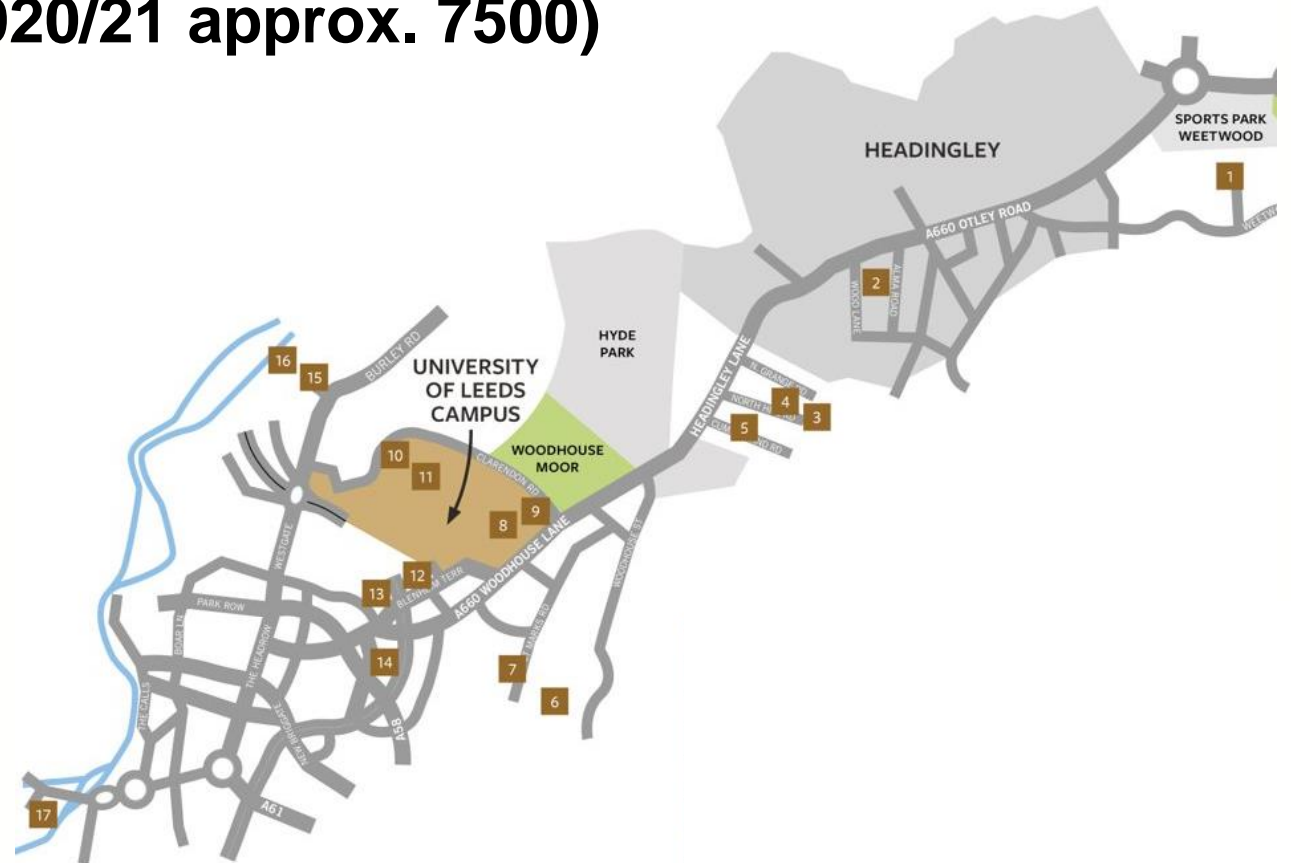
**\*QS world university rankings**

# University of Leeds Residences



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- 26 Halls of Residences (7 operated by private partners)
- Housing approx. 8,500 students (2020/21 approx. 7500)
- Mix of styles
- Mix of student
- Choice of locations



# Residence Life at Leeds – Past and Present

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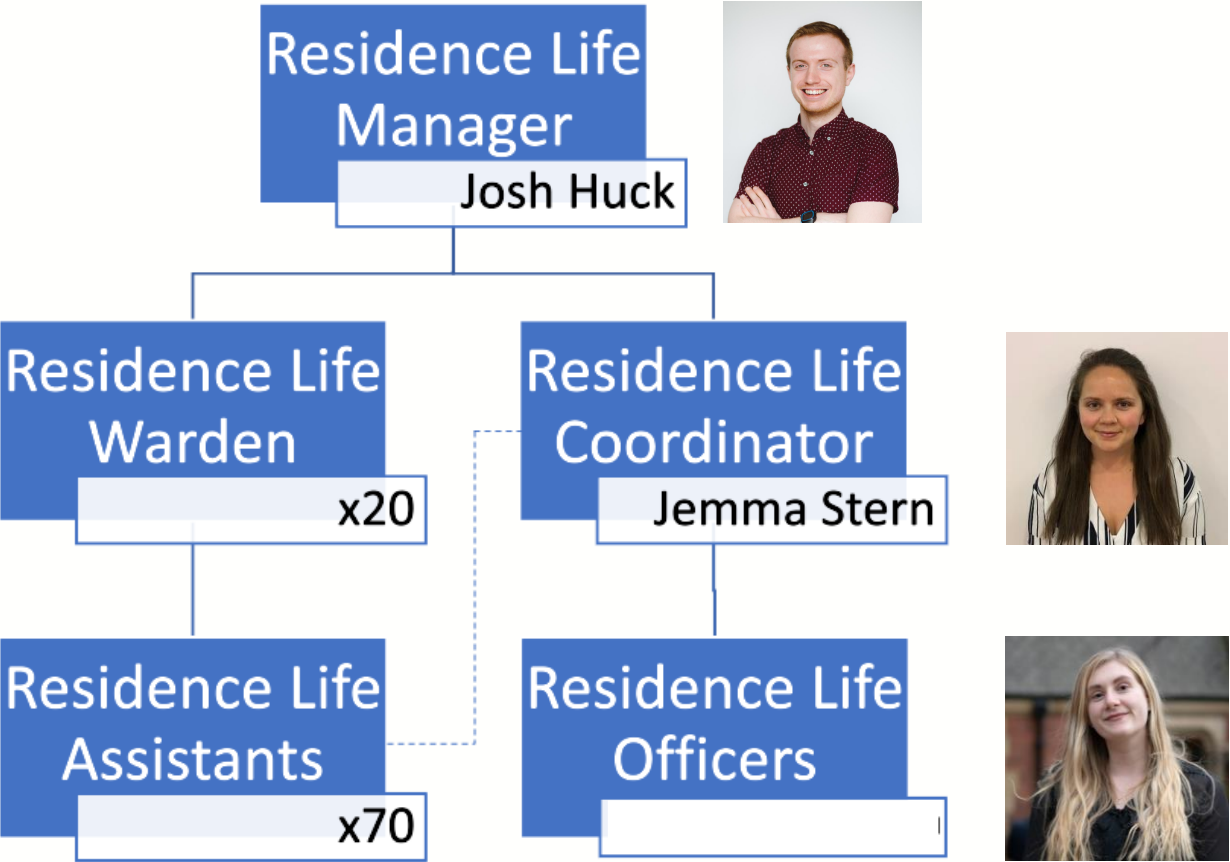
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- **New team established in Residential Services in July 2018**
- **Joined provision and services together to unify halls student experience**
- **Three key elements:**
  - Pastoral
  - Engagement
  - Community





# Current Model





# Support



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- **Available 24/7/365**
  - Peer support
  - Staff support
  - Senior management support
- **Links with University support services**
- **Assist with the smallest to largest issues**
- **COVID-19 and supporting self-isolators**
- **Support for those with additional support needs**



# Residence Life Assistants (RLAs)



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- 70 across 18 Residences
- Supervised by a Residence Life Warden
- Current students (Undergraduate or Postgraduate)
- Voluntary Workers; receive free rent
- Work 1 in 4 nights during term time
  - 6pm to 8am weekdays
  - 8am to 8am weekends/Uni closed days
- Undergo extensive week of training



# RLA Responsibilities



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- **Be an active part of the residence community**
- **Support student welfare and manage discipline**
- **General student queries**
- **Minor mental health concerns**
- **Initial treatment of minor injuries/illness**
- **Flat disputes**
- **Dealing with noise complaint & parties**





# Residence Life Wardens (RLWs)

- **RLW role is performed in addition to a substantive role at the University**
- **Two types**
  - Residential
  - Non-Residential
- **Receive an honorarium**
- **Cover all sites where we have allocated students (Private and University sites)**
- **Work during UG term-time only (excluding PG sites)**





# RLWs Responsibilities



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- **Manage a team of Residence Life Assistants**
- **Support students with minor and complex mental health concerns**
- **Provides staff support out-of-hours with critical incidents**
- **Manage 'minor' disciplinary issues**
- **Support the student 'Hall Exec' in running social opportunities**
- **Lead in community building initiatives**



# Keeping track of incidents

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16

Home

Maintenance (Private)

Inspections (Private)

Events

Incident Reporting

Log Out

Conduct

All Records

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Fire

after

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Report an Incident

Please fill in the incident details.

Incident Date

Tue, 10 Nov 2020

00:00

Residence Name

(Unallocated)

Incident Title

<empty>

Incident Details

<empty>

Incident Type

(Please Select Type)

Reported By (Enter your full name)

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# Community building



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- Induction and transition from home to halls – Making Leeds Home
- Community living agreement
- Welcome talks
- Peer support
- Ongoing social events and activities



# Events and social opportunities



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- Exclusive programme for students in halls
- Five programme themes
  - Social
  - Community
  - Sustainability
  - Wellbeing
  - Sport
- Staff and student led events
- Big night in boxes



**RESIDENCE LIFE**  
**WHAT'S HAPPENING**

**THURSDAY 04 FEBRUARY**  
VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR  
11am  
Time To Talk theme

**FRIDAY 05 FEBRUARY**  
VOGUE MASTERCLASS  
6pm  
Dance masterclass with Darren Pritchard

**SATURDAY 06 FEBRUARY**  
YOGA  
11am  
With Instagram star @esthermarieyoga

**MONDAY 08 FEBRUARY**  
SIGN LANGUAGE CLASS  
1:30pm  
With BSL SignAbility

**TUESDAY 09 FEBRUARY**  
MACRAME WORKSHOP  
2pm  
Valentines heart wall hanger

**FRIDAY 12 FEBRUARY**  
CHINESE NEW YEAR  
12pm  
Calligraphy workshop

**SATURDAY 13 FEBRUARY**  
CHINESE NEW YEAR  
2pm  
Mandarin language workshop

**WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY**  
BURLESQUE DANCE CLASS  
3pm  
With Aurora Nova

**WEDNESDAY 24 FEBRUARY**  
DRAG QUEEN MUSICAL BINGO  
7pm  
With Rujazzle&CJ Banks

**FRIDAY 26 FEBRUARY**  
ANDY'S MAN CLUB TALK  
2:15pm  
Mental Health talk

**SATURDAY 27 FEBRUARY**  
FAT LIFE DRAWING  
TBA  
Body Positive life drawing

**TUESDAY 02 MARCH**  
VEGAN ITALIAN COOKING CLASS  
5pm  
#TastyTuesdays with guest host Sonia

**FRIDAY 05 MARCH**  
MACRAME WORKSHOP  
6pm  
Plant hanger

**SATURDAY 06 MARCH**  
COMEDY NIGHT  
6pm  
Musical stand-up with Edy Hurst

**TUESDAY 09 MARCH**  
YORKSHIRE COOKING CLASS  
5:30pm  
With MasterChef's Anthony

**TUESDAY 16 MARCH**  
VEGAN INDIAN COOKING CLASS  
5pm  
#TastyTuesdays with guest host Sonia

**THURSDAY 18 MARCH**  
DRAG QUEEN DANCE CLASS  
7pm  
RuPaul themed dance session

**TUESDAY 23 MARCH**  
BAKING CLASS  
5:30pm  
With MasterChef's Anthony

FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION AND BOOK TICKETS ON YOUR ACCOMMODATION  
PORTAL [leeds.starrezhousing.com/starrezportalx](https://leeds.starrezhousing.com/starrezportalx)

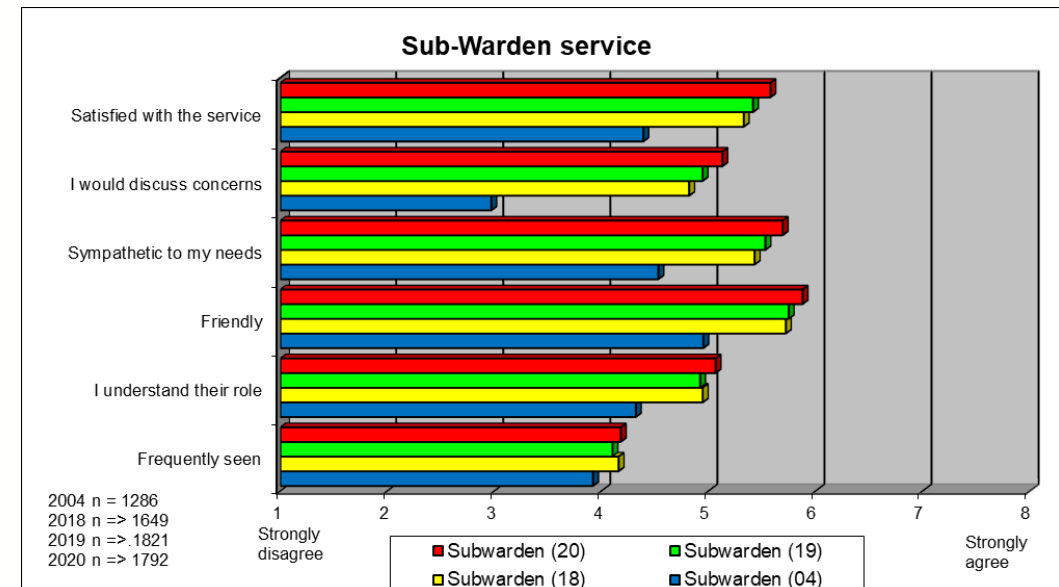
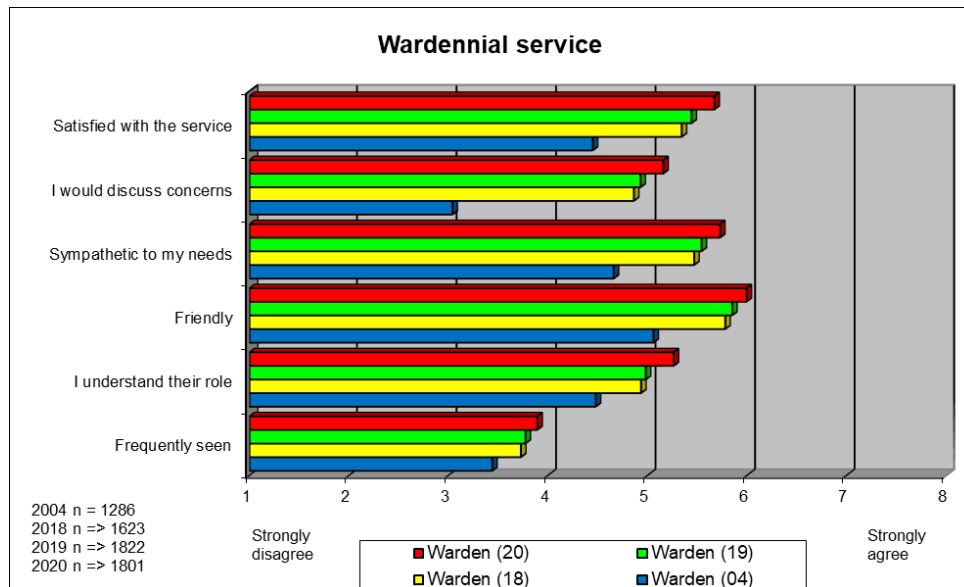


# Feedback



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- **Annual accommodation survey**
  - Year on Year improvements seen in both Pastoral support and events
- **On-going feedback**



# Going forward...



- **Community building initiatives**
- **Improve routes to support**
- **Review Conduct process and sanctions**
- **BSI 9001 quality management standard**

# Thank you Questions?

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<https://accommodation.leeds.ac.uk>