



Sheffield City Council

Student Accommodation Strategy 2014-2019



Contents



Executive Summary and Key Messages	2
Chapter 1: The Context	5
Chapter 2: Student Profile	9
Chapter 3: Student Housing	13
Chapter 4: Factors Affecting Demand	23
Chapter 5: Enhancing the Student Experience	32
Chapter 6: Safety and Connectivity in the Community	35
Chapter 7: Community Cohesion	39
Chapter 8: Graduate Retention and the Economy	42

Executive Summary

Good knowledge-based institutions are crucial to building successful cities and a strong city and regional economy. Sheffield's student population has been expanding at a rapid rate over recent decades, and both of the city's universities retain ambitious plans for growth.

However, Government has recently made a raft of changes to admissions and funding policies, which will affect the number and demographic of future students living in our city. This is the first strategy of its kind for the city and has been developed under the guidance of a steering group with members drawn from: relevant Council departments, the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, the Student Unions, and South Yorkshire Police.

This strategy describes the current location and makeup of our student population, their current housing needs and preferences and predicts future changes. It also enables Sheffield City Council to be clear about our aspirations for student accommodation and neighbourhood services in the future to ensure that resources will be targeted to have maximum effect.

A wealth of data has been gathered for the strategy which is referenced and appended to it. This can be used to inform future Planning and Housing policy decisions and to provide an information pack for developers to help them accurately assess need for new accommodation provision. These measures will enable us to be proactive in guiding the student housing market by providing a steer which is in keeping with our own aims and objectives.

The city's student population brings many benefits, including: adding life and vitality to the areas in which they live, supporting local businesses and benefiting inner city urban areas. This strategy discusses the services which are provided by ourselves and our partners to support students and the communities within which they live and how we can encourage students to actively participate in their neighbourhoods. This strategy also discusses ways in which we and our partners are working to increase graduate retention to strengthen our city's workforce.

To support our strategic ambitions we have developed a 5 year action plan. This plan sets out realistic expectations for the activity which we and our partners will engage in to deliver the aims of the strategy. We will continue to develop new projects in line with the strategy and to respond to the ever changing policy and investment context, taking advantage of new opportunities as they arise.

Key Messages

This strategy and the information appended to it will enable us, as a council, to take a proactive approach to the accommodation and service needs of our evolving student population.

Student Profile

Standing at around 60,000, Sheffield has one of the largest student populations in England, with students forming 18% of our working age citizens. The number of international students living in the city has increased by 30% over the last 5 years and they now make up a fifth of the student body.

Following the increase in tuition fees and other policy changes, home student enrolments at the universities dipped in 2012/13 but are expected to steadily increase in future years. International student numbers are currently rising rapidly and it is predicted they will continue to do so.

Term-time address data from the universities and our own Council Tax records show that students are located in neighbourhoods throughout the city with particular concentrations in: the

City Centre, Crookes, Broomhill, Walkley, Broomhall and Endcliffe neighbourhoods.

Student Housing

The city has a mixed accommodation offer for students, with an increasing amount of Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA). Whilst demand for PBSA is continuing to grow, particularly from the newer international student market, our existing stock is still not at full occupancy, and there is a risk that the provision of more PBSA will lead to over supply and older blocks falling empty.

We will review our planning policies as part of a wider review of Sheffield's planning policies to develop a tailored approach that provides flexibility and has sensibility to the densities of student accommodation particularly in the city centre. We will also produce an information pack to help developers make informed decisions about future provision.

There has been a gradual migration out of some traditional student neighbourhoods towards the city centre, meaning private landlords are recently struggling to rent properties in some areas to students. The council will work with good landlords

to increase the supply of private rented housing which is available to non-student households.

There are perceived quality issues in some of the existing privately rented accommodation and the council will work with the universities and private landlords to improve the quality and safety of accommodation which is let to students.

Wider Student Issues

Students who have a positive impression of the city upon graduating are more likely to link with us in the future, boosting our reputation and business prospects. Conversely, the more positive an impression of students is held by our longer term residents, the more welcoming they are likely to be to future generations of students. Many students make an invaluable contribution to the city through their volunteering and fundraising work.

Neighbourhoods

To Let signs, noise and badly managed waste disposal can often be a cause of tension between landlords, students and their neighbours and can have a detrimental effect on a neighbourhood.

A future priority for this strategy will be to explore the potential to work with both universities and other partners to promote good housing management amongst student landlords and to promote positive, responsible behaviour to reduce conflict arising between students and their neighbours.

The Economy

The universities are key contributors to the city's economy. Combined, the universities employ around 9,900 staff and have an annual expenditure in excess of £658 million. A recent report estimated that international students currently spend £187.2m annually within the Sheffield economy.

Our ambition to improve the city's economic competitiveness requires that we continue to be successful in attracting students to Sheffield institutions, and that we are increasingly successful in retaining students in order to further develop our

burgeoning knowledge economy and capitalise on future economic growth. Students who have a positive impression of the city upon graduation are more likely to continue to live here and to link with us in the future.

What we aim to do

We will develop a detailed 5 year action plan to deliver the objectives of this strategy. This will be delivered and monitored by ourselves and partners through our Student Accommodation Strategy Steering group.





Chapter 1: The Context

Chapter 1: The Context

1.1 Introduction

Sheffield is one of the most popular destinations for students choosing to study in the UK, with two renowned institutions; The University of Sheffield (UoS) and Sheffield Hallam University (SHU). It has great transport links, and, with its location on the doorstep of the Peak District National Park, has developed a reputation as the number one destination for outdoor enthusiasts. It also boasts a wide array of; nightlife activities, cultural events and leisure facilities. All of these, along with the low cost of living, are key draws for prospective students.

Good knowledge-based institutions are crucial to building successful cities and a strong city and regional economy. Sheffield's student population has been expanding at a rapid rate over recent decades, and both of the city's universities retain ambitious plans for growth.

However, Government has recently made a raft of changes to admissions and funding policies which will affect the number and demographic makeup of future students living in our city. It is important that we understand the impact of these changes on our student community and that the council

sets out a clear strategic approach for student accommodation and services in the future.

1.2 Strategic links

Sheffield's Corporate Plan describes the council's strategic ambitions for the city. Learning beyond school-age is an important feature of this, with the plan recognising that Sheffield has a strong offer for people looking to develop their skills and knowledge, with: The Sheffield College, two Universities, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and numerous research and development companies in the city.

The plan concentrates on outcomes for Sheffield's people and identifies 8 areas where we will focus our efforts. We are aiming for Sheffield to be a 'Competitive City' and through this strategy we aim to create the environment to ensure that Sheffield is a destination of choice and to help the city to grow its economy and skilled workforce.

We also want Sheffield to be a 'Great Place to Live' and by this we mean to be a city that has successful places and sustainable communities with access to high quality housing, local services and

facilities. The Student Accommodation Strategy will support this ambition and the priorities of our Housing Strategy (2013 – 23) by ensuring that the student housing element is functioning to create balanced housing markets offering a range of good quality student accommodation in suitable locations.

1.3 Objectives of the strategy

There have been a number of national policy changes that have the potential to significantly affect the numbers and profile of students choosing to come to study in the city. This strategy will explore the potential impact of these changes on the existing and future accommodation provision in Sheffield. Our objectives are to:

- Describe the current demographic makeup and location of existing students, with supporting evidence appended to the strategy.
- Explore the potential impact of the recent raft of national policy changes.
- Set out our expectations for new and existing student accommodation provision in the city.
- Assess the impact of the various types of accommodation and assess where our Planning policy needs to

change to aid the creation of balanced communities.

- Identify actions to improve community cohesion and the quality of the public realm in areas with high concentrations of student accommodation.
- Look at how we can maximise the benefits students bring to the city in relation to both the economy and volunteering opportunities.
- Build on the strong reputation which Sheffield has as a welcoming student city and set out our intention to enhance the experience students have while they study here.

We established a steering group to help us understand the key issues relevant to students living in our city and to the organisations which support them. This will continue to operate and has members drawn from a range of stakeholder organisations including: Sheffield Hallam University, The University of Sheffield, both universities' Student Unions, South Yorkshire Police and a number of council teams.

It is also worth noting that the city has significant numbers of students studying at Sheffield College and the NHS teaching hospitals, but this strategy will focus primarily on university students.

1.4 The universities

In 2012/13, there were 59,487 students registered at Sheffield universities, making it the fourth largest student city in England (2011 Census data). Of these, around 48,000 were studying full time, the majority of whom will be living within the boundaries of Sheffield.

The University of Sheffield is a member of the elite Russell Group of Universities and has a strong academic reputation for both teaching and research. The Students' Union has been rated number one by the Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey for the past 3 years. It offers an extensive range of societies and activities, and is housed in a development which has recently undergone a £20 million improvement programme, with a focus on sustainability.

Sheffield Hallam University is the third largest higher education institution in England, and a leading provider of health and social care courses. Both universities are popular, as evidenced by their high level of UCAS applications each year. The UoS's buildings are clustered within walking distance of each other around the eastern edge of the city centre. SHU has

its centrally located City Campus near to the train station and a second, Collegiate Campus, which is a mile to the south west within the leafy suburbs. All are directly served by frequent public transport and within easy reach of a range of food outlets and numerous other purveyors of goods and services.

1.5 The universities and the economy

18% of Sheffield's current working age population are students which brings significant benefits to the city. The universities are key contributors to the city's economy, both as consumers and as part of our workforce. Combined, they employ around 9,900 staff and have an annual expenditure in excess of £658 million. In addition to offering employment to local people, they provide the environment needed to grow and develop our next generation of entrepreneurs, supporting the development of new small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the city. Once they have graduated, former students who remain in Sheffield form a key part of our workforce, with many making a valuable contribution to our knowledge sector. Our ambition to improve the city's economic competitiveness requires that we continue to be successful in attracting students

to Sheffield institutions, and that we are increasingly successful in retaining students in order to further develop our burgeoning knowledge economy and capitalise on future economic growth.

1.6 Student accommodation

Sheffield is a cosmopolitan city that welcomes a diverse mix of people. Whilst we recognise the benefit that students bring to the city, we are also mindful that students often have different needs to non-student Sheffield residents, particularly in terms of accommodation. Students tend to choose a different housing pathway to other households, leading them to be a very transient community, often with several housing moves in a short period of time. Students are also more likely to live in shared accommodation in the private rented sector; either in houses rented from private landlords or in larger Purpose Built Student Accommodation blocks (PBSA) run by management companies or the universities.

1.7 Student neighbourhoods

The presence of large numbers of students living in our communities can have a significant influence on the number,

type and nature of facilities and services available, such as the increase in provision of East Asian food and grocery outlets in the London Road area. The varied offer which this results in is often a positive and welcome occurrence, particularly when it brings life and vitality to areas which have previously been dominated by commercial buildings and non-residential uses. However, when the student to non-student ratio reaches a high level within previously established communities, it can cause a degree of tension between students and existing residents, which can heighten at key times throughout the academic year.

1.8 Delivery

Achieving our goals in an age of austerity will be challenging to say the least. The spending reduction required of local councils by Government, and the increase in demand for services has significant implications for how the council will allocate its resources in the coming years.

We recognise that we will not always be best placed to bring about the changes identified in this strategy and that there will be aspects of the strategy where influence is outside of the council's control. Therefore, we will show city wide leadership

and develop our ability to influence developments, projects and initiatives. We will build on strong partnerships and work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders across all sectors, and with local people and communities. We will also seek to combine our resources with new funding streams and to lever in additional private sector funding to maximise opportunities as they arise.

Both universities are currently considering the redevelopment of sites within their campuses, shaping not only the universities themselves, but a large section of the urban fabric of Sheffield. This provides the opportunities for us to work closely with the universities to develop plans for campus buildings and the surrounding public realm, improving routes from student residential areas and between and within campus sites.

We will also continue to work with the universities and other partners to develop and deliver a five year action plan to help us achieve the aims of this strategy. The action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to monitor progress and address any new issues emerging.



Chapter 2: Student Profile

Chapter 2: Student Profile

2.1 Summary

The number and background of students coming to study in Sheffield will shape the amount and type of student accommodation which will be required in the future. The combined intake of students to both universities is around 24,000 each year. Although the two universities offer very different courses and study options, their recruitment patterns over the past 5 years have been very similar.

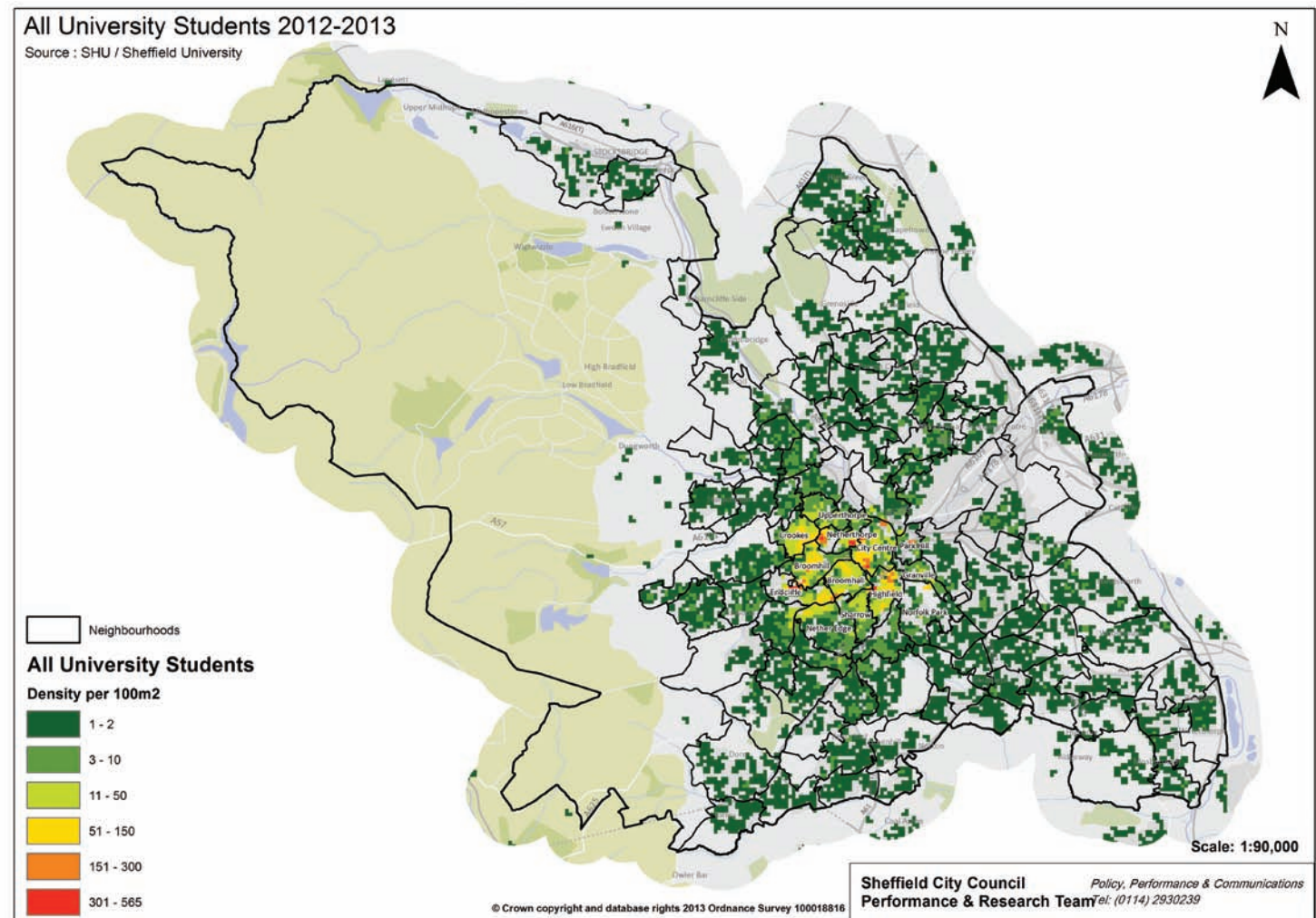
Both universities increased their student numbers steadily between 2008 and 2011, but in 2012, in line with national trends, both saw their numbers fall with more than 3,000 fewer students registered citywide than in 2011. It is yet to be seen whether recruitment will recover to previous levels but early indications from a UCAS report of national applicant levels and through talking to the universities, suggest that student numbers will return to an increase post 2013.

There are a rapidly growing number of international students

studying at our universities, and we expect to see an increase in students already based in Sheffield and in those commuting

from outside our boundaries, as people look to reduce the costs of their studies.

Map 1



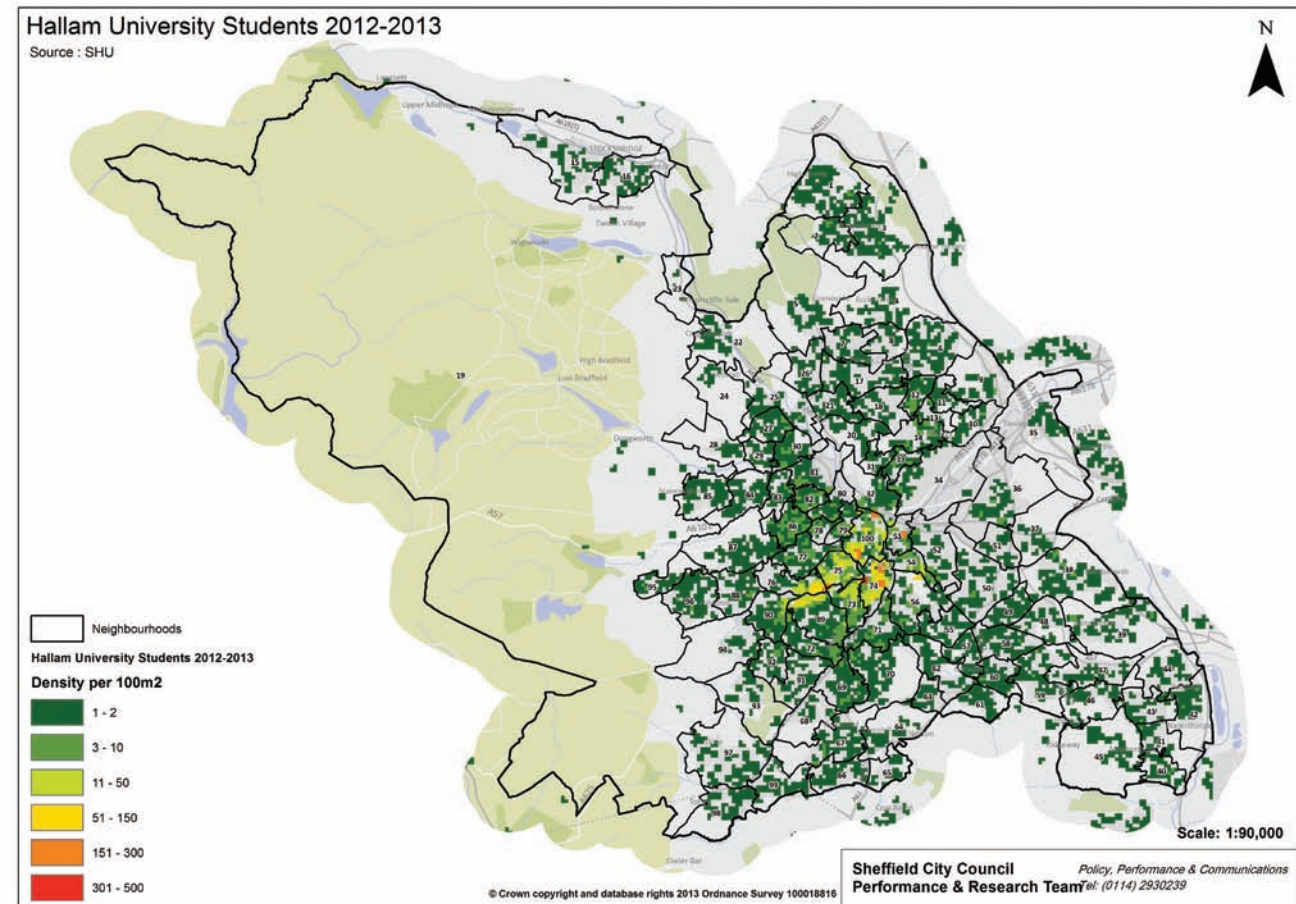
In the 2012/13 academic year, there were 34,720 students enrolled at SHU and 24,767 at UoS, 75% of whom were studying at undergraduate level. The number of international students has increased rapidly over recent years, and now, around a sixth of all students travel here from outside the EU, with 5,870 overseas students enrolled at UoS and 4,321 at SHU, representing over 125 countries.

Between 2008 and 2012, the universities saw a 39% increase in the number of international students enrolled. This is a trend which they expect to continue. In 2011/12, the trend for a majority of female to male students continued, with 54% and 46% respectively. Around a tenth of all students considered themselves to have a disability, some of whom may require specialist accommodation.

2.2 Location

Data from the universities and our Council Tax records shows that students live throughout the city, though some neighbourhoods have high concentrations while others have very few. The university that a student attends influences where they will chose to live (see maps 2 and 3).

Map 2



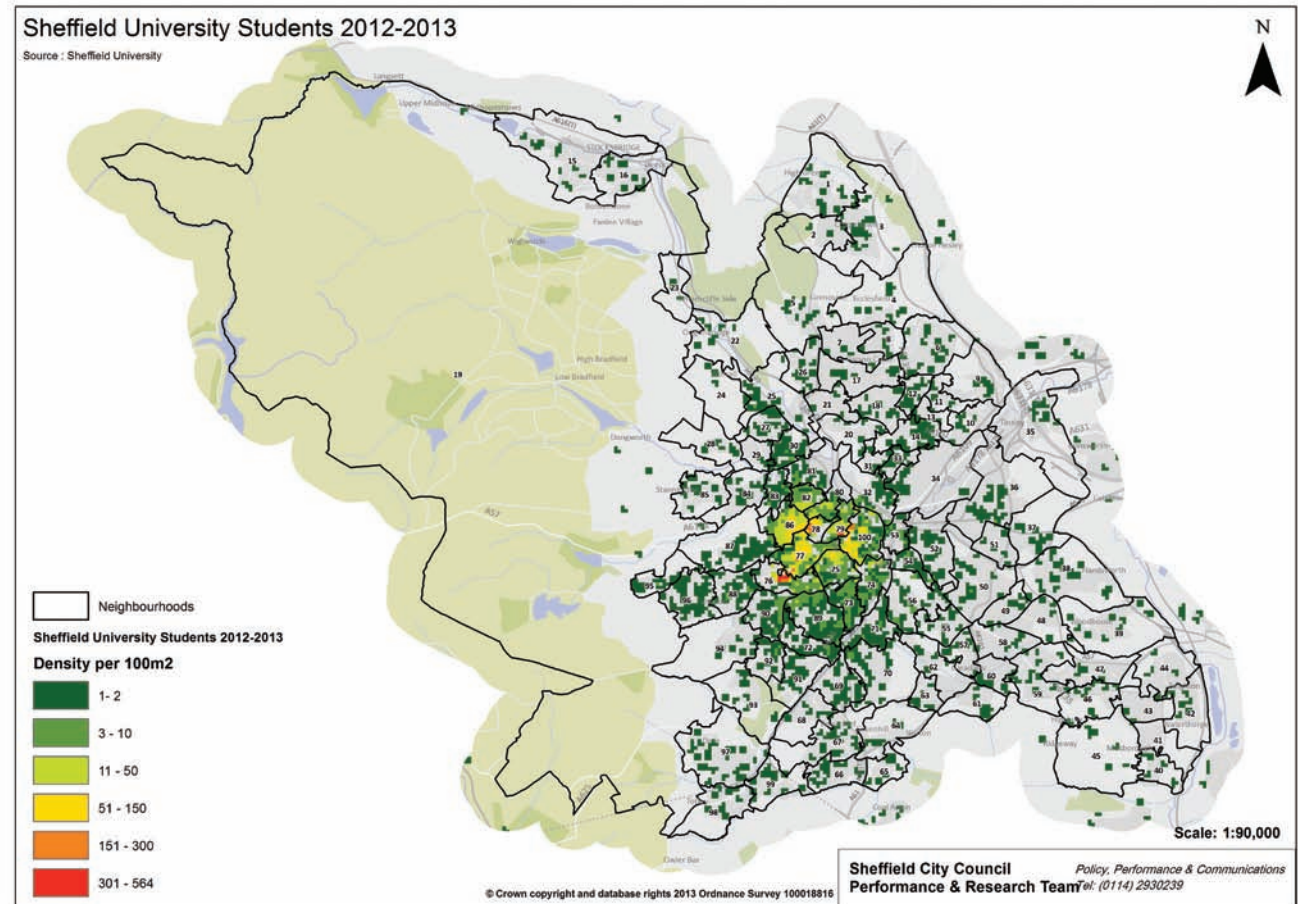
For example, traditionally UoS students have been located to the west of the city centre, mainly around the Crookes, Broomhill and Walkley neighbourhoods and SHU students have been located to the south west along Ecclesall Road into

Nether Edge and in Sharrow and Highfield. High densities of students are also to be found in the Broomhall, Endcliffe and Crookesmoor neighbourhoods. Students from both universities are increasingly choosing to live in the city centre.

Map 3

Over the past 9 years, we have seen housing patterns change with students gradually moving out of the peripheries of traditional student areas, and migrating towards the city centre. We believe that there are a number of reasons for this, including: student lifestyle changes, the decommissioning of university buildings in outlying areas (e.g. SHU's Psalter Lane Campus), an increase in overseas students with a preference for city-centre living and the increasing provision of PBSA and city centre flats.

It is important that we understand the student housing market and exploring future patterns will form a key part of this strategy. The challenge will then be to ensure that future provision is meeting the changing needs and preferences of the student community.





Chapter 3: Student Housing

Chapter 3: Student Housing

3.1 Current Housing

Sheffield has an excellent and blended range of student accommodation on offer. There is a choice in size and location of privately rented houses and an ample supply of purpose built flats. Students typically share accommodation, usually in groups of between 3 and 6, although sometimes up to 15. The private rented sector accounts for the vast majority of our student housing.

According to the 2013 Sheffield Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), 83% of student respondents live in this sector. Student accommodation within the private rented sector is mainly comprised of blocks of flats (including university owned halls of residence and purpose-built private

student accommodation) and general private rented accommodation (houses and flats). A small number of students (or their parents) purchase properties in Sheffield which they live in for the duration of their course and then either continue renting or sell on departure. The proportion of students who do this is so small that it will not be discussed further within this strategy.

3.2 Private Rented Houses

Most houses which students occupy in Sheffield are brick built terraces. They are generally more spacious than newly built flats, with larger bedrooms, separate cooking and eating areas, a distinct living room and bathroom/s. Many of the higher end properties also offer deluxe seating and televisions. Due to their layout, there is

often a greater amount of spare space in hallways and cellars and generally either a garden or tarmacked outdoor area. They are also often of a sturdier construction in comparison to newer properties, with substantial walls which reduce the level of noise transmitted between houses and internal rooms.

Privately renting a house is popular with students studying in their second year and beyond, often giving them their first real experience of independence where they generally have responsibility for arranging payment of all bills and ensuring that their property is kept clean and secure. It also gives students an opportunity to integrate with their local community which is not generally afforded in PBSA. On-going maintenance of and improvements to these

Table 1 - 2012/13 Average rental costs in wards which have high numbers of students

Ward	Average monthly rent (£)	Difference between average Ward & City rent	0 bed	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5+ bed
Broomhill	759	1.23	430	568	690	811	1214	1648
Central	622	1.01	352	465	565	664	994	1350
Crookes	683	1.11	387	511	621	730	1092	1483
Nether Edge	737	1.19	417	552	670	788	1179	1601
City Average	618	-	350	462	562	660	988	1342

houses are usually carried out by local maintenance people, meaning that money is retained within the local economy and significant employment opportunities are provided to local people. Houses are usually let for a term of 12 months. The city average monthly rent for a property with 3 bedrooms is £660 and a 4 bed property is currently £988 (See Table 1).

Wards with high numbers of students have rental costs which are slightly higher than the city average, with prices for 3 and 4 bedroom properties significantly elevated in the Broomhill, Crookes and Nether Edge wards where the majority of shared student housing is located. The average price per person for a property in a student ward is: between £55 - £68 per week for a 3 bed and between £62 - £76 per week for a 4 bed. This amount is generally exclusive of all bills, but is still cheaper than rent levels in PBSA. In response to changing markets, many landlords now offer all inclusive packages.

3.2.1 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

HMOs are generally defined as houses or flats which have 3 or more unrelated tenants sharing kitchen and bathroom

facilities. All HMOs must meet a national standard. Larger HMOs are deemed to be a higher risk to tenant safety and require a licence from the Local Authority: If the property has 3 or more floors, and is lived in by 5 or more people, who are made up of 2 or more households (a single person or family).

To be granted a licence, properties must be inspected by SCC Housing Inspectors to ensure compliance with our Sheffield Standards for licensable HMOs. These set out the minimum requirements for: heating, washing facilities, kitchens, refuse disposal provision, electricity, ventilation and space per person. It is a legal requirement that landlords meet this standard and we have a programme in place to identify landlords who fail to licence their properties, which can lead to hefty penalties.

The map overleaf (Map 4) shows areas of the city with high numbers of HMOs, many of which we already know have high concentrations of students.

Our stakeholders have told us that in some parts of the city, particularly high densities of student HMOs can cause concern for local residents about a range of things such as; anti-social behaviour, problems

with parking, poor management of housing stock, the balance of communities and a loss of population outside term time.

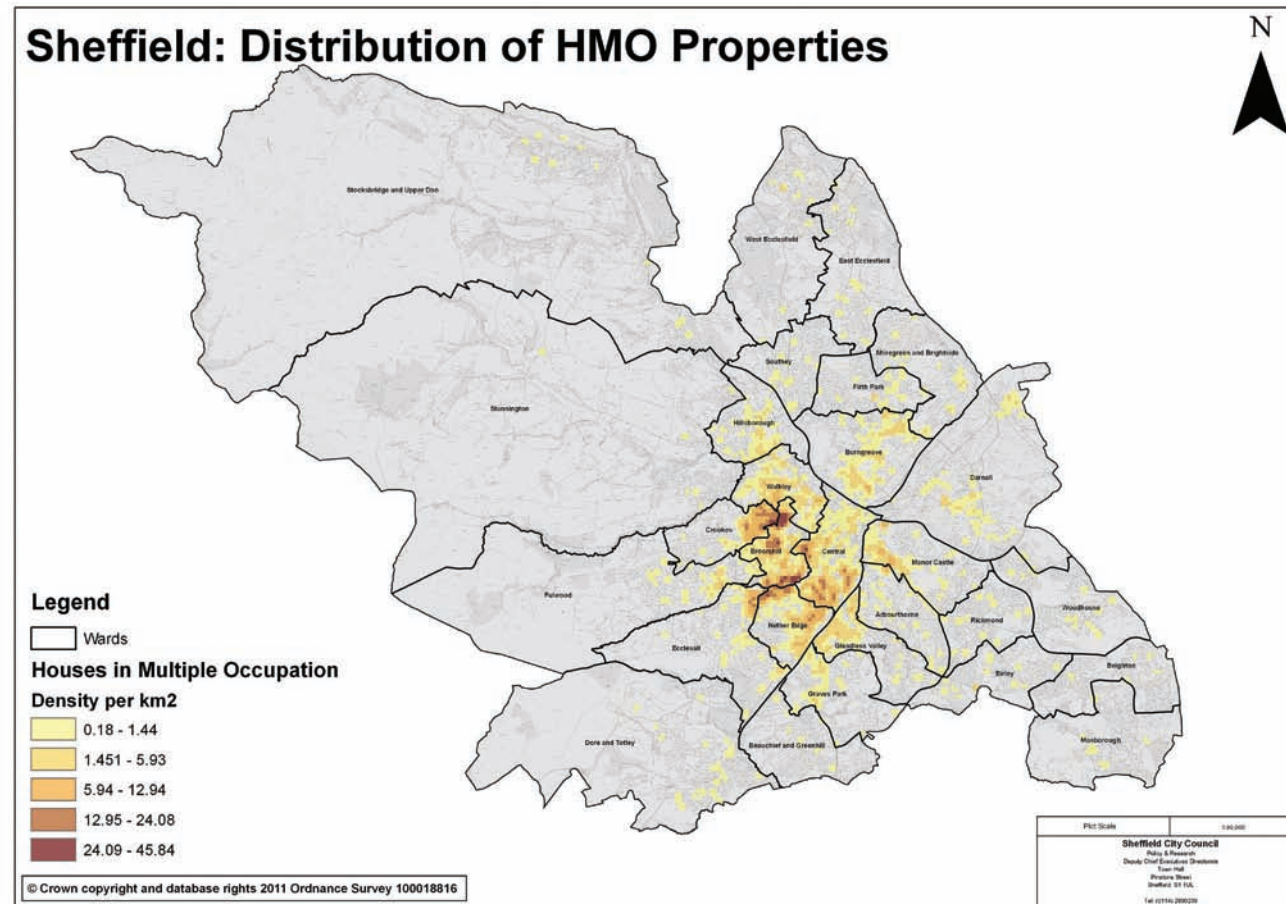
To limit high concentrations of HMOs within the city, we made use of our powers as the Local Planning Authority and created an Article 4 Direction. This applies to all properties within a set boundary and means owners of property within this area need to apply for Planning Permission to change the use of their house from family accommodation to a HMO (3 or more unrelated residents). This enables us to assess whether a proposed HMO is in an area with a concentration of shared housing and whether it would create an imbalance.

A priority for us will be to review our database of HMOs in the city and ensure that the information used for planning decisions is as comprehensive and up to date as possible.

3.3 Quality of private rented accommodation

In Sheffield, we believe that the majority of private sector landlords take their responsibilities seriously, particularly in relation to the licensing of HMOs and

Map 4 - Houses in Multiple Occupation



expectations of modern students is still apparent and landlords will face tougher letting conditions as further new build accommodation is provided.

We believe that many students live in private rented accommodation which is of a good standard. This was supported by our 2013 Strategic Housing Market Assessment findings (a survey of 3,363 Sheffield households, of whom 676 were student households), where 82% of students living in all types of private rented accommodation thought that their home was adequate for their needs compared to only 71% of other households in the wider private rented sector.

However, the survey also showed that students found flats more adequate than traditional houses, most of which we can assume to be PBSA due to the high number of respondents in their first year of study. Of the students who felt that their home was inadequate, three quarters stated that it was in need of improvements or repairs and over half said that it was too costly to heat.

Students in our focus groups told us that they had difficulty getting their landlords to carry out necessary or essential repairs

to minimising serious health and safety hazards. We also believe that the private rented landlords who are in the student housing market are amongst our most experienced landlords, with many having provided accommodation to students in

Sheffield for a significant number of years. We are increasingly seeing properties in better condition as landlords in the city face a competitive market from the new PBSA. However, a mismatch between the private rented houses on offer and the

and maintenance, and did not feel that they were taken seriously by them, often having to involve their parents in disputes before action was taken. The advice centres at both universities offer help and support with housing issues, sign-posting students to our Private Rented Standards team where appropriate.

3.3.1 Quality of private rented houses

As described later in 4.3, most students move to Sheffield straight from their family home and begin their time here in university allocated Purpose Built Student Accommodation. The majority of these PBSA flats have been specifically built, or converted from other uses into student accommodation, within the past 9 years. In contrast, many of the houses which students then proceed to rent in their second year are over 100 years old, so may not have the contemporary finish which some will have become accustomed to and prefer.

These older houses are more likely to become in need of repair and will be less energy efficient than modern flats, which may lead to lower perceptions of adequacy amongst students. Landlords have told us

that, although they feel the rental market is becoming increasingly competitive, they are confident that they will continue to be able to let properties which are of a high quality and at a price which reflects their distance from the university campuses. They also told us that they plan for varied and frequent repairs to their student properties.

In our SHMA focus groups, landlords told us that they felt demand from students for privately rented houses in Sheffield was decreasing and attributed this partly to an increase in PBSA and city centre flats in general and also to a rise in students opting to live at home and study at local universities.

SCC are working on a number of measures in partnership with the universities, unions and landlords to raise the quality of housing and the management of privately rented homes in the city. The newly launched Snug scheme deals specifically with student accommodation and commits us to ensuring that Sheffield can offer good quality and safe accommodation for students. It also provides a channel through which we can communicate with landlords about our expectations and advise them of new initiatives and policies.

The Snug property registration scheme is a partnership between SHU, SHU Union and ourselves. Landlords pay a small fee to register and agree to meet our property standards and management code. Our Housing Inspectors then visit each property to ensure that it meets our stipulations and meet the landlord to ensure they are a fit and proper person and understand the management requirements.

In May 2013, we had 1,712 licenced HMOs on our register. Not all HMOs are used for student accommodation, but the licensing standards help contribute towards the quality of student housing. In addition to the mandatory licencing of HMOs, we also pursue legal action in cases where a serious hazard is present in a property and the landlord fails to rectify it. This has legal implications and, in a number of cases, has led to a landlord being successfully taken to court by our PRS team.

In 2013, SHU's Student Union carried out a Community Audit which asked the opinions of over 600 residents in student areas, including both students and non-students. One key issue which this raised in relation to accommodation was students losing

part or all of their deposit. The universities' advice centres offer students information about deposits. The Government has proposed increased regulation of the existing Deposit Protection Scheme.

Another key issue is that many students feel pressured to sign for accommodation for the following academic year in the previous November. As students' circumstances often change during the intervening year, many wish to exit these contracts, but are unable to. SHU's 'Don't Panic' campaign encourages students not to sign for houses early in the academic year, and to make sure that they have thoroughly inspected a house before signing a contract. This message is reinforced through the Snug scheme's Property and Management Standards. UoS also promote the message to their students that they should not sign for accommodation early on in the academic year.

3.3.2 Sustainability of private rented houses

We know that many privately rented houses have very low energy efficiency, and measures to improve this such as installing double glazed windows and external wall

insulation, are costly for landlords to carry out.

The Government has recently introduced Green Deal funding, where loans for energy efficiency improvements to a house can be made available. These are then added as a charge to the property and re-paid as a proportion of future electricity bills. For this to take place, both the student tenant and landlord have to sign an agreement. The Energy Act 2011 includes provision to ensure that from 2016, private residential landlords will be unable to refuse any reasonable request from a tenant to make energy efficiency improvements to their house, where Government finance is available (either the Green Deal loan or ECO funding). Over the next few years, we will allocate resources accordingly to support tenants in ensuring that they receive the service to which they are entitled from their landlord.

We are currently mapping fuel poverty in the city and have already identified some neighbourhoods which have a high proportion of student households and very high levels of fuel poverty. It is our intention to lever in ECO funding wherever possible to address fuel poverty issues on

an area by area basis and we are in the process of commissioning ECO providers to help with this. We will be exploring how we engage with student households and landlords to achieve large scale community improvements.

3.4 Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)

PBSA has become increasingly popular over the past decade due to a number of factors including: the increase in students at the universities, the increase in PBSA supply, change in student lifestyles and higher numbers of wealthy international students with a preference for city centre living. This has facilitated the growth of Sheffield's universities by meeting both the changing preferences and the increasing demand for accommodation from today's diverse range of students. Most non-university owned PBSA is located within or close to the city centre, with a particularly high density of developments in the Edward Street area of Netherthorpe and in the vicinity of St Mary's Road in Highfield.

At a conservative estimate, there are at least 16,500 purpose built and converted bed spaces within the city, which would accommodate about 28% of the current

student population. PBSA is either arranged into clustered flats or self-contained studios. Flats typically consist of around 2 to 6 (although sometimes as many as 15) individual bedrooms with a shared room containing a kitchen and living area, and shared bathroom facilities. Increasingly, they also have en-suite bathrooms. The flats are fully furnished and typically contain a single bed, although the size of rooms and beds can be upgraded for a premium. This modern semi-structured living environment is popular with first year and overseas students, as these groups are often living independently for the first time or, are more likely to be unfamiliar with the city when arranging their accommodation.

Modern PBSA blocks often have on site management offices with security staff and a range of facilities such as: high speed broadband connections, laundrettes, and common rooms (often containing pool tables and satellite television). Some PBSA developments also offer car parking, gym and swimming pool facilities, usually for an additional charge. The average rental cost for PBSA in the city is £99 per week. All utility bills and internet access are generally included in the rent, with most being let on 42-44 week assured short hold

tenancies.

UoS recently invested £160 million in the development of around 5,800 purpose built bed spaces, which they own and manage. These are made up of The 'Endcliffe' and 'Ranmoor' student villages which are located in the western Endcliffe suburb and some developments in the city centre. These developments all offer on-site facilities including food and drink outlets, 24 hour security, event organisation and welfare support. A place is guaranteed in UoS allocated accommodation for all of their first year under and post-graduate students who request one (by the given deadline). In 2012, 94% of their new intake undergraduates, 68% of international undergraduate students and 25% of postgraduate overseas students were housed in their accommodation. UoS had a lower occupancy rate of their accommodation in 2012/13 due to the unexpected change in student intake, but have returned to full occupancy in the 2013/14 academic year.

Sheffield Hallam University took a different approach in their Accommodation Strategy and chose to dispose of all the student accommodation which they owned (including catered provision) over the past



few years. They now work in partnership with a number of private providers of PBSA using nomination agreements, which they allocate predominantly to their first year and international students although all students can apply for this accommodation.

These properties are predominantly located to the south east of the city centre. In 2012/13, all 5,070 bed spaces in their portfolio were fully allocated to, with 19% being let to non-UK students and 10% to returning students.

There has been a surge in PBSA within the city over recent years, with an additional 2,438 dwellings created between 2004 and 2013. This development peaked at

628 in 2008/09 and has since tailed off dramatically (Graph 1).

The 2012/13 increase shown in Graph 1 is largely due to the construction of a development comprised entirely of self-contained flats, which gives the impression that building returned to a steep increase. There are presently a number of approved planning applications for large PBSA blocks, and our Planners continue to receive a high number of pre-application enquiries, demonstrating a continued interest from developers. However, actual construction has not started on the vast majority of these sites, implying that it is currently commercially unattractive to develop PBSA.

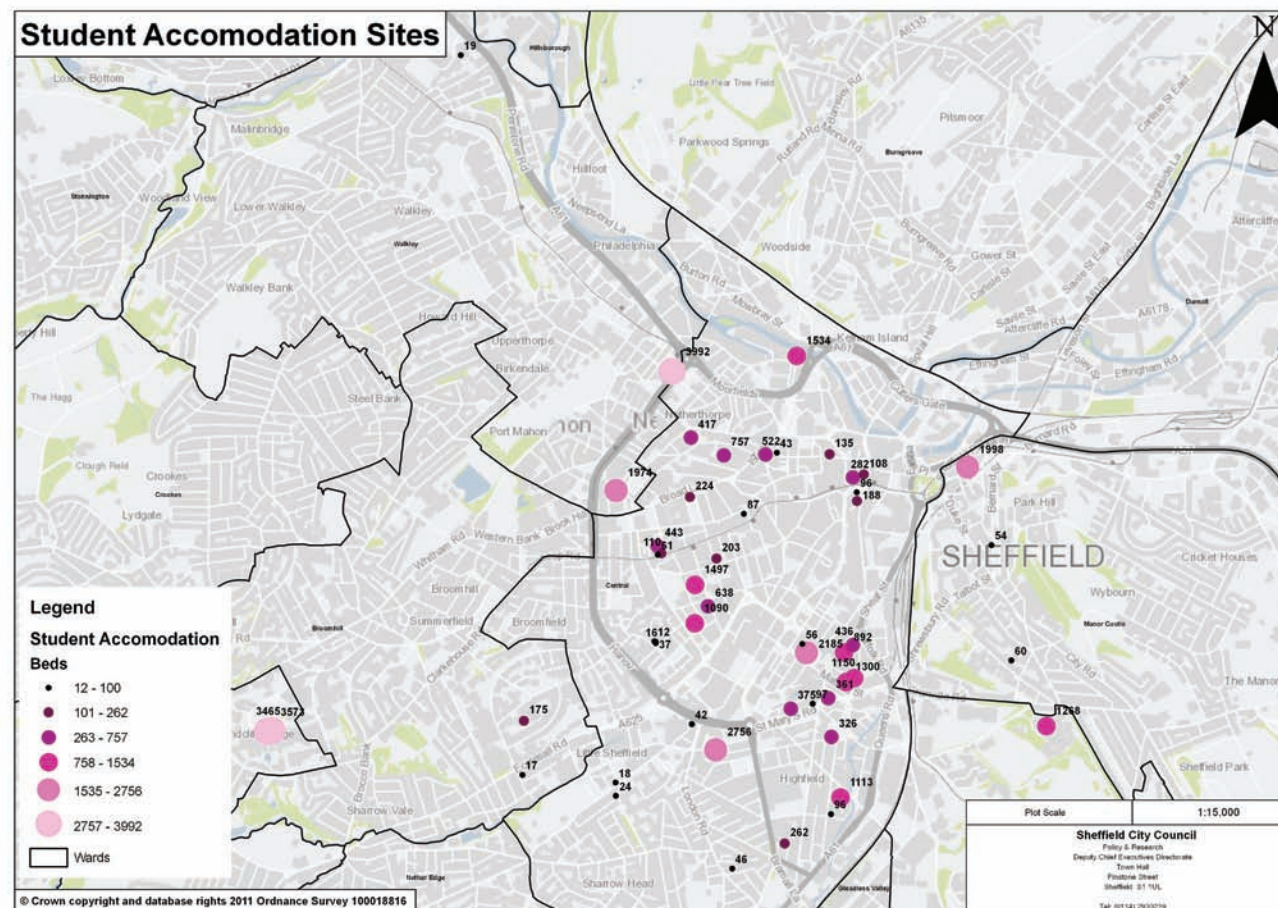
We also know that some of the large student accommodation providers with older developments are still advertising vacancies during term-time (online and outside their buildings) for the current academic year. We were told anecdotally that they had high vacancies in 2012/13, suggesting that PBSA supply currently exceeds demand.

We also hear from housing professionals that a significant number of students, particularly those from overseas, are living

in city centre flats which are not purpose built for students. Our Council Tax records confirm that many of these flats are fully occupied by students. This means that

they are not receiving a management service tailored specifically for students, and that they are occupying general use flats whilst PBSA provision remains empty,

Map 5 - Location of known Purpose Built Student Accommodation in Sheffield



Source: Sheffield Hallam University Accommodation Office, 2013

Graph 1 – Completed Student Cluster Flats



Source: SCC Planning Completions

which is not an efficient use of our housing stock. Some of the larger providers have a strong on-line presence abroad. To counter this and to encourage their students into accommodation more tailored to their needs, the universities carry out a lot of work to promote the properties which they allocate to.

3.4.1 Quality of Purpose Built Student Accommodation

Due to the recent construction or refurbishment of the buildings which house purpose built student flats, and their recently installed interiors and fittings, they generally require fewer repairs than older accommodation. Due to the nature of

PBSA, all flats contained within a building are owned by one provider, who will usually employ a dedicated management company for the whole development.

This often means that a dedicated repair line will be provided to students and that repairs are carried out quickly. This is reflected in our SHMA where ‘respondents reported a responsive maintenance service from PBSA unlike other city centre flats where each property may be owned by a different landlord’. However, some of the first generation privately owned PBSA is now becoming dated, with the décor and facilities which they offer no longer being in keeping with the standards expected by modern students.

There is a risk that these will no longer have sufficient occupancy levels to remain financially viable and will fall empty. The development of newer PBSA which has a more contemporary finish may provide sufficient motivation for the owners of older flats to refurbish them to ensure that they do not lose out on prospective tenants.

Concerns about the build of PBSA were raised in our SHMA “That’s the thing with purposely built student housing, the walls are ridiculously thin” (Student focus group).

Rooms in PBSA are often smaller than they would be in older shared houses and there isn’t always as much communal space as students may like and need in order to promote good health and wellbeing.

Design features are covered within our Local Plan policy CS64(f) which states that buildings must be designed to use resources sustainably, including designing buildings flexibly from the outset to allow a wide variety of possible future uses. We believe that to meet the changing needs of our population, building design should allow easy and affordable remodelling.

Therefore, we will continue to gather evidence and set out our expectations for the standard of new provision. We will also work with Planners to ensure that planning policy is applied effectively to future planning applications to encourage developments which are built to a standard which will be sustainable in the long term.

Excess litter around PBSA is sometimes cited as a problem by local residents, to counteract this, our Environmental Officers will work with the management companies of large blocks to ensure that the waste facilities provided are adequate and that regular communication to inform residents

of their responsibilities takes place.

3.4.2 Converted student accommodation

Converted student accommodation in Sheffield makes use of a wide range of buildings including; listed, historic, and industrial buildings as well as former office and retail accommodation. This is usually still classed as PBSA as interior adjustments are made to create accommodation specifically for students. Many of the rooms which SHU allocates to and which students choose beyond their first year are of this type. The majority of these rooms are to be found in and around the city centre, especially along West Street and in the Angel Street vicinity.

In recent years, the conversion of vacant upper floors of commercial buildings into residential space has added a life and vitality to areas formerly dominated by a retail offer. In the future we intend to explore the potential to make use of more existing buildings and to utilise more upper floors of commercial buildings as part of a sustainable approach to providing a wider accommodation offer in the city and reducing the number of

vacant properties. We describe our plans for city centre accommodation in the City Centre Masterplan, which is due to be approved in 2014.

We will also review our planning policies as part of a wider review of Sheffield's Local Plan to develop a tailored approach that provides flexibility and has sensibility to the densities of student accommodation in the city centre.

There is an emerging trend within the city for self-contained student flats which are aimed at the international student market. These are often serviced and decorated to a high quality specification and come equipped with all the household items a student may require. The Government has recently amended planning legislation to allow developers to convert offices into individual flats without needing to make a full planning application, with the aim of increasing the supply of new housing. However, this may lead to an over-provision of flats within the city centre. In creating great places to live we aim for new developments to create mixed and balanced communities, we will therefore promote our developer information pack to help developers to make more informed

decisions about the scale and location of these.

We Will

- Review the information which we hold about existing HMOs in neighbourhoods which are popular with students.
- Launch the Snug scheme.
- Ensure licensable HMOs apply for a licence and are issued with one in a timely fashion.
- Create an information pack for potential developers of PBSA, detailing supply, demand and suggested design guidelines.
- Review our planning policies.
- Explore how we engage with students and landlords to achieve large scale energy efficiency improvements to private rented accommodation.
- Work with good landlords of privately rented accommodation to explore the potential for letting to vulnerable / low income households.



Photo courtesy of Rebecca Tovey

Chapter 4: Factors Affecting Demand

Chapter 4: Factors Affecting Demand

Understanding how demand for accommodation will change over the coming years will help us to make informed choices about the volume, type and location of new developments required. More specifically, the evidence contained within and appended to this strategy can help determine the level, scale and location of development of further PBSA required in the city.

Robust demand information will also help us plan for changes within the existing private rented market and to minimise the impact that reduced demand would have on current student areas, particularly in relation to empty properties and a reduced retail offer. It will also help us target the resources available to us to minimise high concentrations of student HMOs in residential areas, and to mitigate the effect that high concentrations of HMOs can have on community cohesion.

This chapter of the strategy will outline the key drivers of change in the size and demographic makeup of our student population. There are a number of changes that may have caused the drop in student numbers in Sheffield in 2012, which are likely to have long term implications for

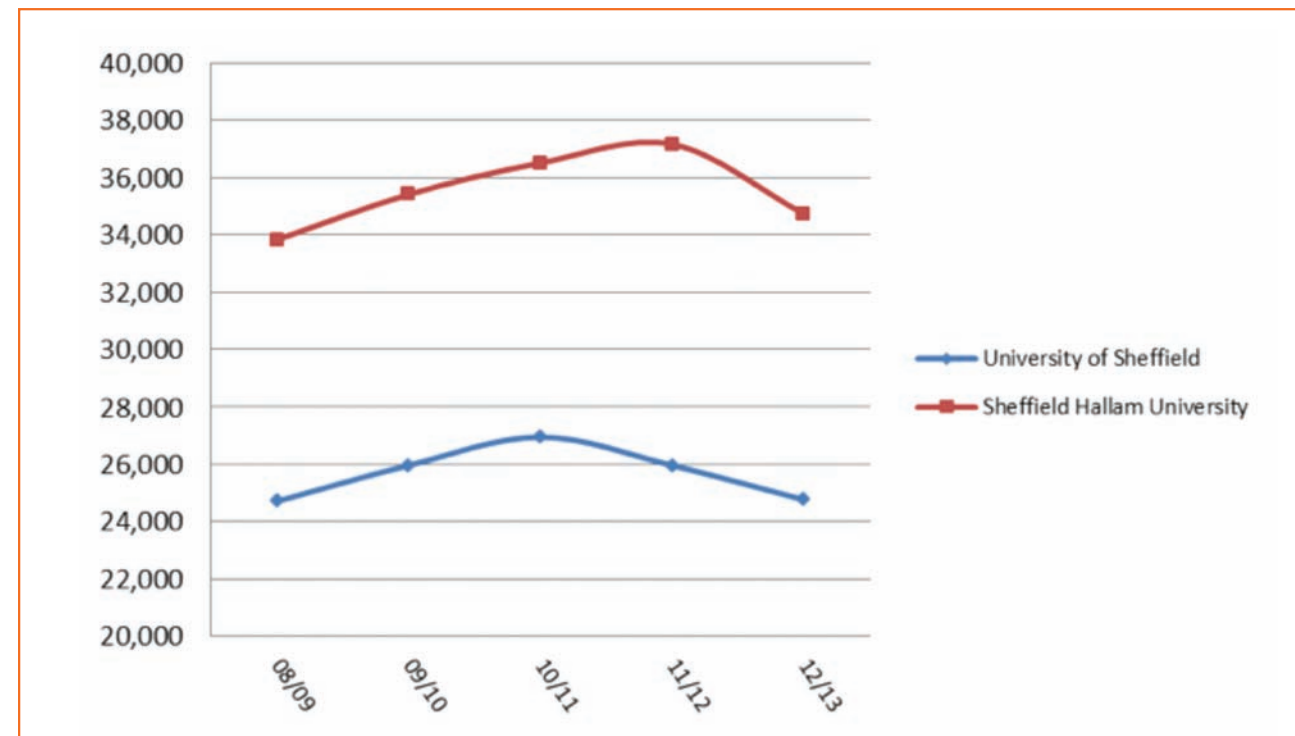
the universities and for the city, both in terms of accommodation provision and the economy. These are further explored in section 4.2.

In addition to the changes outlined below, Britain is currently experiencing challenging economic times, which will make it more difficult for some students to afford a university education.

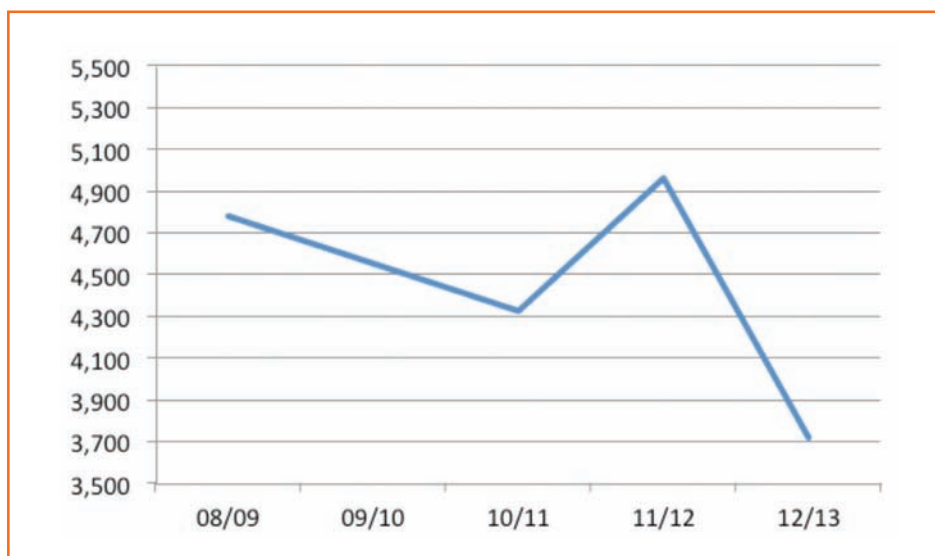
4.1 Sheffield's student population

The following graphs illustrate the increase in student population at both universities and the subsequent drop in the 2012/13 academic year.

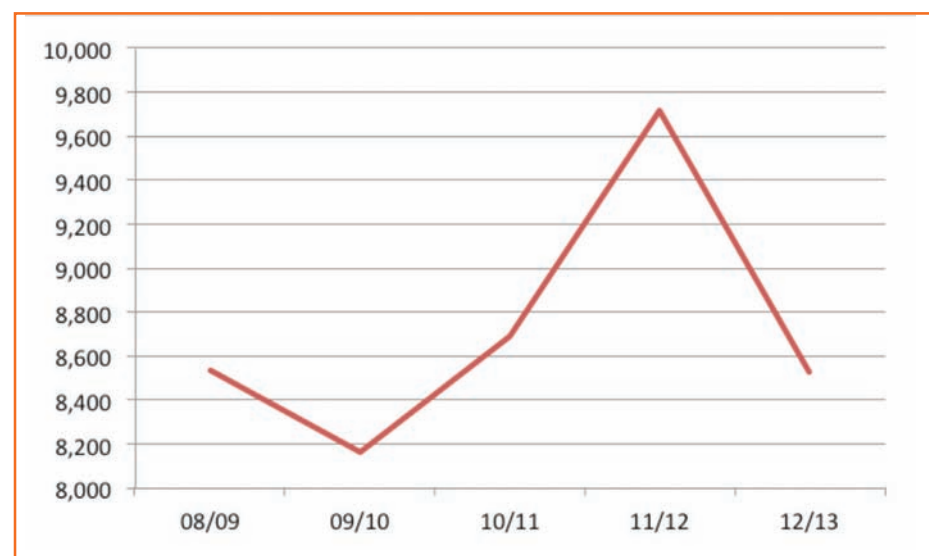
Graph 2 - Total Number of Students Enrolled at Both Universities



Graph 3 – Number of new full time undergraduate enrolments at the University of Sheffield



Graph 4 – Number of new home undergraduate enrolments at Sheffield Hallam University



Graphs 3 and 4 show the effect of the various policy and economic changes on the number of home undergraduate students admitted to both universities.

4.2 National Government Policy

In 2012, the Government amended a number of policies which will continue to have a significant impact on the number of students choosing to come to Sheffield to study in the future. Nationally, in 2012/13, there was a 10% reduction in take-up of university places. It is difficult to attribute

the fall in admissions to any particular policy, because several changes were made during the same year. In addition to this, demographic changes meant that there were a reduced number of 18 year olds living in the UK.

It is important to understand the detail of these policies to make informed predictions about the size and makeup of Sheffield's future student population and the accommodation which will be required to house them.

Due to the range of factors which will shape demand, and the interplay between them, we will need to monitor the effect which they have and regularly review our approach to student accommodation in the future.

4.2.1 Tuition fees

Due to a reduction in Government subsidy from September 2012, universities were required to increase the tuition fees which they charged students. The cap on tuition

fees that universities could charge was raised from £3,375 per year to £9,000 per year. Both SHU and UoS have set their undergraduate fees for 2013/14 at the maximum £9,000.

A report by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) states that '60% more home students chose not to take a gap year in 2011/12 compared with the previous year', it suggests this was because they wished to avoid the higher fees due for introduction in 2012. This artificially high intake in 2011 means that it is more useful to compare data from 2010 with 2012, which shows that SHU experienced a decrease in the number of new students they admitted, for which they had planned, whereas UoS saw a smaller decrease. Feedback from private landlords and letting agents in our SHMA suggests that they are expecting a reduced housing demand in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 academic years, which could result in reduced rents and an increase in the number of student properties which are empty, or an increase in other types of households living in the area.

Overseas students outside of the EU haven't been affected by the UK tuition fee changes as they are not entitled to

Student Accommodation Strategy | 2014 - 2019

UK government subsidy. 2013/14 annual international undergraduate fees at UoS range from £12,760 to £16,640 for most courses up to £30,080 for clinical courses. At SHU, they are between £10,320 and £11,520.

4.2.2 High Grades policy

Prior to 2012, there were a set number of Government funded university places which would be allocated across institutions by the HEFCE. The cap was set by central Government in order to control the budget for publicly funded student loans and grants for fees and maintenance.

In 2012, the Government announced that universities would be able to enrol an unlimited number of students who gained grades AAB or above at A Level (or equivalent). The aim of this policy change was to allow Russell Group universities to expand their capacity to enable high achieving students to access their first choice universities, whilst ensuring that Government subsidy for fees and loans remains sustainable. The implementation of this policy change however, coincided with a substantial fall in the number of students achieving grade As at A Level

and meant that many students were unable to take up the university place which they had been offered. This policy change did not have a large effect on SHU, but UoS, which generally require higher A Level grades, saw a reduction of 1,192 full-time students from 2011/12. The effect of the 2012 decreased intake will reduce demand for private rented houses and flats required in areas of the city popular with UoS students during the 2013-15 academic years.

The High Grades Policy requirements are adjusted annually. In 2013/14, universities are permitted to offer unlimited places to students achieving ABB+ grades (or equivalent), which is an increased pool of 35,000 students nationally. This could lead to a significant increase in intake for the University of Sheffield.

Universities which recruited above their allocated number of places were penalised by a reduction in the HEFCE grant they received. This caused universities to be cautious when offering places to prospective students, which further contributed to the fall in student numbers in 2012/13. It is a challenge for universities to recruit exactly their target amount of students, as they are reliant

on factors beyond their control to convert accepted applications into admissions.

4.2.4 Visas & international students

Students from different countries often have differing accommodation preferences to home students. Understanding the factors which affect how many students will come to study here and from which country will be central to helping us plan appropriate future accommodation. International students also provide a significant financial boost to the city's economy. A 2013 Oxford Economics report found that international students contribute a net benefit of £120million per year to the city and up to £176million to the wider region. It is also known that international students who have a positive experience in the city are more likely to form business or tourist links with us in the future.

The Government introduced changes to the visa system for non EU students in 2012. It was widely predicted that the new entry procedures would mean a large drop in the number of students coming to the UK to study. This would be significant for Sheffield as an increasing proportion of the students coming to study here are from overseas.

Prior to 2012, students could be granted a visa to remain in the UK and work for the 2 years following their graduation. This right has now been revoked for all but a handful of post graduates. The opportunity to remain on in the UK and take up employment was a large draw for many international students from countries such as India, where work experience in the UK would enhance their employment prospects and often help repay the costs incurred when studying here.

Another reform affecting international students has been the tightening of UK Border Agency controls as part of a wider Government focus on achieving reduced immigration targets. This may have adversely affected the reputation which the UK previously held as a place which is welcoming of international students.

It is too early to say whether tighter border controls and the revoking of the right to stay on and work will significantly reduce numbers of international students choosing to study here, but while other countries such as Canada and the USA still offer the opportunity for students to stay on and work, prospective students may increasingly choose to study in these countries instead.



4.3 Housing pathways of home students

The traditional accommodation route for home students was to spend their first year within a hall of residence owned and managed by the university at which they were studying, and then to migrate to shared housing for further years of study. Undergraduate students have tended to change accommodation at the beginning of each new year of study and then again after their final year of study, usually within the private rented tenure. This pattern is confirmed by our Strategic Housing Market Assessment, where 69% of respondents planned to move out of their current home

within the next year, two thirds into private rented accommodation.

4.4 Housing pathways of international students

International students are crucial to the financial and academic success of both universities, making up almost a fifth of all students studying in Sheffield. Because their funding is not reliant on UK Government subsidy, there is not a Government cap on the number of students which universities can accept, and both universities actively recruit internationally. Over the past five years, there has been an increase of 2,341 international students and the accommodation offer in the city has evolved accordingly

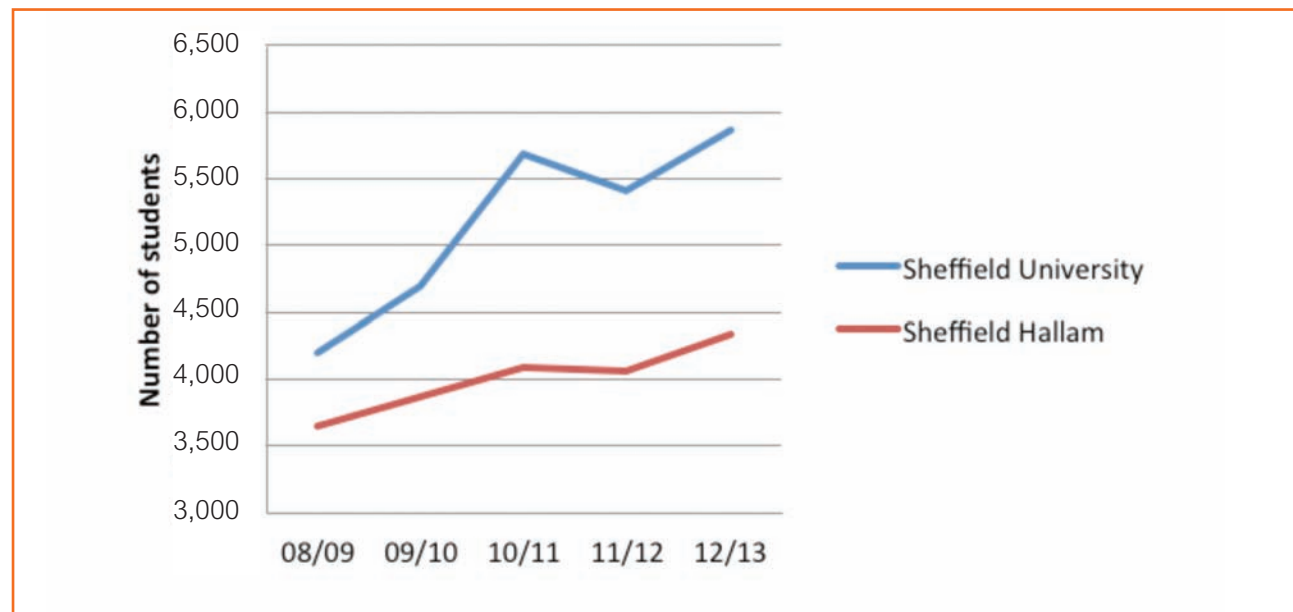
The universities' Accommodation Officers have told us that the preference of many affluent international students is to live in city centre flats which are close to their university and to other international students, and that modern, high rise, city centre accommodation is often viewed as a status symbol. Conversely, people coming to study from India often prefer to live in shared accommodation in areas of the city where accommodation is

more affordable, to reduce the costs of obtaining their qualification.

PBSA appeals to international students, because it is possible to book on-line in advance, enabling sign up to accommodation before arrival in the UK. Generally, it also offers modern facilities such as: high speed broadband, contemporary interiors, security measures and en-suite bathrooms. Consequently, a rise in this demographic should ensure

that demand for good quality PBSA remains buoyant. However, less wealthy international students have said that they find the living and accommodation costs in the UK quite a stretch and some landlords are reporting an increase in rent arrears, particularly for a number of international students. Graphs 6 and 7 show the enrolment trends of the four most represented nationalities at each university. Both universities have experienced a steep increase in the numbers of Chinese

Graph 5 – All enrolled overseas students



students which they receive, with a 182% increase at UoS and a 98% increase at SHU over the last 5 years. SHU has also seen a significant increase in Malaysian students. One of the most dramatic changes is the decrease in Indian students enrolled at SHU, which fell from a peak of 1,029 in 2009 to just 259 in 2012. This may lead to a reduction in demand from students for lower priced private rented accommodation in areas such as Heeley and Sharrow.

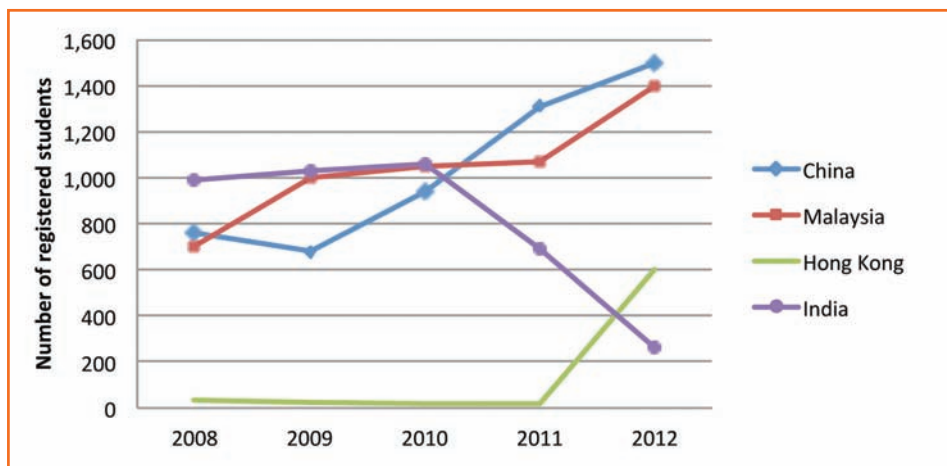
4.5 Sheffield and Commuting Students

Figures for local and commuting students have not been gathered in the past, but we hope to work with the universities to establish a baseline and monitor any increase in these groups. Indications are that these groups have already begun to expand.

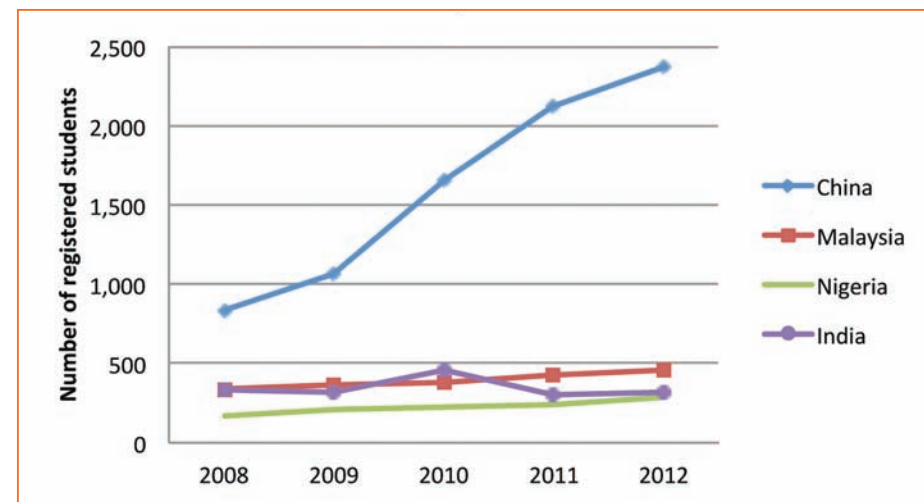
4.6 Future forecasts and how we intend to respond

Currently, both universities anticipate that they will experience a rise in the number of students they enrol, with more students in Sheffield equating to a likely increase in demand for accommodation. UCAS figures for 2013/14 applications showed a national increase of 3.8% in full time university applications and in August 2013, the UoS had received a 16% increase in

Graph 6 – Four top nationalities registered at the University of Sheffield



Graph 7 – Five top nationalities registered at Sheffield Hallam University



applications for 2013, compared to 2012. UoS's accommodation has returned to full occupancy in 2013/14 and SHU also expect that all the bed spaces to which they allocate, will continue to be filled.

In addition to an increase in students in the city, there is likely to be a continuing change in the demographic makeup of the student population. The universities expect that domestic student numbers will return to an increase, although not as steep as previously, and that the international population will continue to grow over the coming years. A continued increase in students from Malaysia and China is predicted, which we anticipate is likely to sustain demand for city centre flats.

Newly introduced national planning legislation generally encourages local authorities to reduce the regulation of and requirements for planned new development. This will restrict the level of control which we are able to exert over new developments. Previously, our responses to planning demands relating to student provision have been reactive. However, the evidence contained within and appended to this strategy, will enable us to take a proactive approach in future.

We intend to introduce new planning policies relating to PBSA. Our data can be developed to evidence the current market and to provide an information pack for developers detailing current supply and demand alongside detail of our planning policies. Through our planning policies, we will identify the most appropriate locations for good quality new provision and continue to prefer applications for developments which can be adapted easily and affordably, should demand from students subsequently reduce.

Increased tuition fees and living expenses and the current economic climate mean that most students will leave university in significant debt, currently estimated at £39,000 per person. This will most likely affect the ways students and their parents view higher education and we anticipate that students may respond in 3 ways:

1. Some students may apply to local universities and commute from their home address to minimise living costs.
2. To reduce costs, others will seek the most affordable accommodation available.
3. Some students may simply borrow more money to cover fees and living

costs. These, along with students from wealthier backgrounds, will ensure that they are living somewhere which they feel to be the best quality and which will maximise their academic chances whilst at university.

A rise in commuting students would reduce demand for first year PBSA and for houses in the private rented sector. We also expect that the increase in tuition fees, coupled with a potential reduction in overall home students in the city may reduce demand for private rented houses. As a result, we may start to see higher vacancy levels in private rented houses in neighbourhoods which are situated further from the universities. In response to this we aim to work with good landlords of shared houses and flats to explore the potential to utilise private rented accommodation for more vulnerable households.

In light of these changes, we believe there is real potential for the student housing market in Sheffield to polarise as more affluent and discerning students increase demand for higher quality private rented accommodation and others seek a more affordable means of studying. A drive from students to cut the overall cost of attending

university could lead to a rise in the provision of low quality, poorly managed private rented accommodation.

We will work with the universities and landlords to ensure that landlords are aware of their legal responsibilities to provide safe homes and to ensure that student tenants are aware of their housing rights. SHU have introduced mandatory membership of the Snug scheme as part of their private sector landlord registration process. We will encourage wide membership of our Snug scheme to ensure that student landlords provide safe and secure accommodation.

We expect that demand from wealthier students will continue to exert pressure on rent and occupation levels of student accommodation which is situated in prime locations. Our SHMA confirmed on-going demand from students for private rented accommodation in the south west, the city centre and city centre west.

This encompasses the existing student areas and some more suburban areas. We have the policy tools in place to limit the number of new HMOs that can be created in areas where large numbers of HMOs

already exist. We will look at the impact of this approach as part of our wider Local Plan review.

Students are currently included in Sheffield City Council's projections for an ageing population. Accounting for them more accurately may reduce the overall housing supply requirement. Looking at student housing separately has helped us begin to understand the scale and type of accommodation that will be required by future students studying in Sheffield. Our SHMA confirms that turnover will continue to be high in the housing markets where students live.

Understanding the longer term impact of students on Sheffield's housing market is more difficult, particularly when trying to assess the numbers of graduates staying on in the city and the impact that these households have on Sheffield's future housing requirement. Reviewing long term student population projections will be a priority for us over the life of this strategy.

We Will

- Continue to work with the universities to update our information about the student population annually.
- Review the household projections for Sheffield to assess the contribution that students make towards household growth.
- Work with the universities to improve our understanding of local and commuting students.





Chapter 5: Enhancing the Student Experience

5.1 Successful neighbourhoods

One of our key ambitions is that Sheffield is 'a city that has successful places and sustainable communities with access to high quality housing, local services, shops and jobs as well as having excellent parks, streets and other physical infrastructure' (SCC Corporate Plan, 2011 – 2014). In our Housing Strategy, we state our aspiration for everyone to live in welcoming, safe and inclusive communities. It is therefore crucial that students moving into accommodation within our city can successfully integrate with the communities within which they are living. Students who have a positive impression of the city upon graduating are more likely to link with us in the future, boosting our reputation and business prospects. Conversely, the more positive an impression of students is held by our longer term residents, the more welcoming they are likely to be to future generations of students.

This chapter explores the pressures and opportunities arising from the increasing numbers of students living in the city, and looks at the support available to the communities in which they live. It also considers what steps can be taken to ensure that students have the best possible

experience whilst living, studying, and working in Sheffield.

5.1.2 Noise

Our stakeholders have told us, and the findings of our SHMA confirmed, that there are often different behavioural expectations from students and from their neighbours about what is an acceptable level of noise and at what hour it can be made. This is partly because a significant number of students tend to lead different lifestyles to the general population. Many courses allow students more free time, due to study schedules being much shorter than the average working week, although many students use this time to engage in part time work.

It is common for the social activities of students to involve drinking establishments, many of which hold events targeted at students on week nights. Collectively, this pattern of activity often leads to them returning to their accommodation when their neighbours are sleeping, or making loud noise within their properties, which can cause disturbance.

Both the council and the universities take noise nuisance seriously and have taken steps to mitigate the impact of night time

noise. The council now has a night time noise service and is working closely with the police to respond efficiently to a range of incidents.

In response to this issue, UoS promotes their campaign 'Staying Up? Keep it Down' through flyers and on their website. Sheffield Hallam University promotes their 'Noise Annoys' message using similar communications with students. These endorse the benefits of being a considerate neighbour to their students, along with tips for how they may achieve this. UoS also employ 24 hour security staff, which neighbours of their students can call to intervene if they are being unreasonably disturbed by noise. A future priority for this strategy will be to explore the potential to work with both universities to promote positive behaviour and reduce conflict arising from noise, between students and their neighbours.

5.1.3 Waste management

Badly managed waste disposal can often be a cause of tension between students and their neighbours and can have a detrimental effect on the appearance of a neighbourhood. Many students have only recently left their family home,

so are more likely to be unfamiliar with waste disposal and recycling practices, especially since each local authority takes a different approach as to how they achieve this. The tendency to live in larger shared houses whilst existing in the property independently may also mean that large amounts of waste are generated. All of these factors can lead to overflowing bins and, occasionally, incidences of fly-tipping, which can make the street-scene appear unsightly and upset neighbours.

To improve understanding of waste collection methods and times, representatives for the council's waste and recycling services annually attend a number of student events and call at houses in key student areas to make sure residents are aware of collection times and methods. Timed to coincide with the beginning of the academic year, cards showing how to use the bins and boxes and collection dates are delivered to all properties city-wide.

Towards the end of the summer university term, most university students leave their residences within the space of a few weeks. During this time, a large amount of unwanted items need to be disposed of. As bins become full, many of these items are left on the roadside in front of

vacated properties, which can lead to an accumulation of litter in areas with high densities of student accommodation. To counteract this, the council has developed, with partners, the Student Red Sack Scheme. Here, additional collections of waste presented in special red sacks provided to students are made on scheduled bin days. This scheme has been in operation for a number of years, and has greatly reduced excess litter in areas with high concentrations of students, with double the number of sacks being issued in 2013 than in 2012. During the departure weeks, Environmental Protection Officers and Housing Officers were present in key student areas to inform landlords and tenants of their responsibilities for leaving the exterior of their properties clear of household and building waste.

The partnership approaches described have been very effective, and our Waste Management team and partners plan to continue developing and delivering these over the coming years. In addition to this, both universities hold events in partnership with local charities during leaving weeks to help students recycle and reuse unwanted items such as clothing, books, DVDs etc. These items are collected from residences, university buildings and, in some instances, from the roadside.

5.1.4 'To Let' signs

A proliferation of 'To Let' signs outside properties affects the appearance of a street. To advertise their privately rented houses and flats, many landlords erect 'To Let' signs on the street facing side of their properties. A large proportion of landlords prefer to keep their property advertised even when it is occupied to ensure a rental for the following year. This means that in some neighbourhoods, boards regularly remain outside properties all year round. This is often a source of tension within communities, as people find the boards unsightly. They also identify houses as being occupied by students, which increases the risk of them being targeted by burglars.

In Sheffield we have reached an informal agreement with some landlords that they will remove signs within a given timescale and, where they have multiple properties on a street, will not put a sign on every property, thus reducing the visual impact.

Making greater use of the internet for advertising can alleviate the proliferation of To Let signs on properties. We intend to encourage landlords to make further use of internet advertising as part of our Snug quality assurance scheme and through our other communications with landlords.



Edward Street Open Space

Chapter 6: Safety and Connectivity in the Community

6.1 Travel

The transport choices which students make have an impact on the wider community. If students choose to bring their car to Sheffield and use it for journeys to study, this can add to congestion during key commuting hours, and reduce the availability of on road parking outside houses and offices. If the numbers of students commuting to Sheffield from other cities were to increase, this would place a strain on the transport networks of the city and surrounding region.

Regular student travel is 'sustainable' relative to other types of journey made in Sheffield, e.g. general commuters. The most frequent of student journeys are those made from their accommodation to various campus locations. The majority of these are made by foot and few are made by car. The University of Sheffield travel survey found that 76% of their student's journeys are by foot, 14% by public transport, 4% by cycle and 5% by car (including 1% car share).

The distances between the areas in which students live and the campuses where they study are relatively short and can be travelled by foot, bicycle, bus or in

some instances, tram. Sheffield is one of England's least congested cities, meaning commutes are faster and less time is spent stuck in traffic jams. The universities allocate students to halls which are within reasonable walking distance of their campus of study and provide walking route maps for all their residences.

We have a range of projects in place to improve the travelling habits of students, and to promote information about road safety. These include providing equipment for cyclists and campaigns, such as: awareness raising adverts, videos on road safety and workshops to influence student travel behaviour. We work with our partner Amey to ensure the safety of routes popular with students, by taking measures to ensure that they are well-lit and have clear sight lines. This has reduced incidences of theft from students.

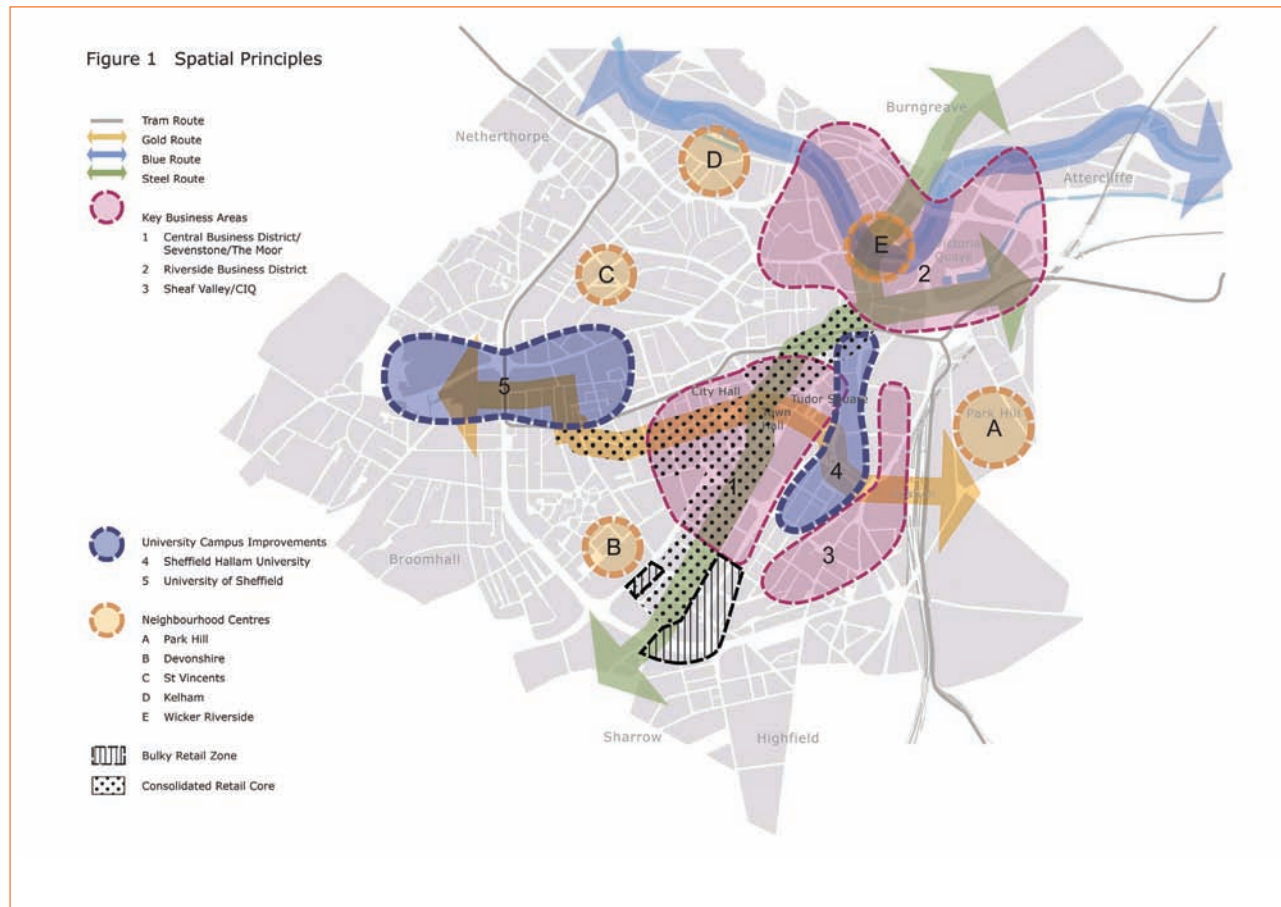
UoS has a dedicated Travel Planner and a Student Sustrans Society (affiliated to a national organisation which promotes sustainable transport). To reduce car journeys, a car-share scheme is provided through the UoS website for staff and students, as well as a social media based scheme which caters specifically for

students making the trip home at the end of term. The UoS's 'Cycle Hut' provides free repairs and maintenance advice to cyclists. They also offer discounted bikes in partnership with a local Social Enterprise Company alongside other cycling incentives. There are plans to introduce a bicycle rental scheme for students spending a shorter time at the university and a multi-site short term cycle scheme with immediately available bikes.

Sheffield Hallam University also encourage sustainable travel, most significantly by not providing on-campus parking spaces for students (except for disabled use), which limits journeys by car. Students at both universities benefit from heavily discounted bus fares which further incentivises sustainable travel.

Both universities are currently developing their Master Plans which will set out their vision for the development of their campuses and surrounding public realm including promotion of routes between student accommodation and campuses. Our own City Centre Master Plan spatial map clearly demonstrates the importance which the universities' campuses have to the continued improvement and success of our city centre.

Fig 1 - From the City Centre Master Plan



Sheffield's central location means it has excellent road and rail connections to the rest of the UK. There are three international airports within an hour's drive and many more within an acceptable travelling time. This is a significant selling point for the universities, as it enables

home students to make straightforward journeys to visit family and friends and provides an unrivalled base for international students to explore Britain and Europe, as well as the ability to spend breaks in their home countries.

6.2 Safety and Security

We need to ensure that students remain as safe as possible whilst living in and moving around our neighbourhoods. Young people in general are more at risk of experiencing crime, largely due to spending more time in public than other groups and a lack of life experience. Students in particular can be a target for robbery as it is expected that they will be carrying expensive consumer goods such as laptops and smart phones. Burglary can also be an issue with there often being lower levels of security in shared rented accommodation. It is often clear when a house is occupied by students, which can be attractive to burglars who are aware that there are likely to be multiple televisions and computers.

In our SHMA discussions, students described feeling unsafe in their neighbourhood and even in their own homes. Such perspectives were often informed by experiences of robbery and burglary, either of themselves or of acquaintances. However, many students are encouraged to study in Sheffield because of our reputation as a safe city. This was confirmed in the 2013 UK Peace Index report, which found that Sheffield is the safest large urban area in England,

due to its' low levels of violent crime. Statistics from South Yorkshire Police issued in April 2013 state that Sheffield has the lowest rate of violent crime per 1,000 members of the population out of the 8 Core Cities in England. Crime also reduced significantly in 2012/13, bringing it to the lowest levels in 26 years. In our SHMA, students living in PBSA reported feeling safer than those in private rented houses, largely due to many flats having 24 hour security staff and gated entrances to the complex.

The universities work with their students to ensure they are aware of ways in which they can make themselves safer, including promoting specific routes to walk from their accommodation to university buildings and by providing discounted travel, late night transport for female students and the Sheffield Safe Taxi scheme. This enables students to use their University ID card as a deposit for their taxi fare in case they find themselves unable to pay for transport home.

South Yorkshire Police currently have a dedicated Police Constable who works with students to educate them about crime and the steps which they can take to avoid it. This includes information campaigns for students to register their possessions

on a national database and mark them in case of theft, and educating students about measures to increase the safety of themselves and their possessions. This is achieved by visiting groups of students newly arrived to Sheffield in their halls of residence, attending student events and using social media.

There are a number of issues which are of concern in relation to student health, but the university health professionals tell us that their main priority is alcohol consumption. When excessive drinking takes place, as well as having a detrimental effect on the wellbeing and studying capacity of students, it can impact on their safety and the community cohesion in the neighbourhoods in which they live.

Behaviour arising from excessive alcohol consumption by some students affects both the university communities and the wider Sheffield community. This can lead to late night noise after revellers leave drinking establishments or friends' houses, and other anti-social behaviour. It also leads to increased crime, such as phone theft, as inebriation can affect judgement causing some students to find themselves in a more vulnerable position than they would be when sober. There are also

serious long-term health effects which many students do not consider. To address this, the UoS set up an Alcohol Committee, which is attended by heads of department. This group implemented various measures, including a minimum pricing policy for alcohol sold on UoS premises and the introduction of a scheme whereby students who engage in alcohol related anti-social behaviour on UoS premises are offered two substance misuse sessions. These are in conjunction with information, advice and other disciplinary measures.

We Will

- Work with both universities to promote positive behaviour and reduce conflict arising from noise.
- Work with the universities to promote sustainable travel and limit traffic congestion.
- Work with South Yorkshire Police and the universities to educate students about safety and crime.
- We will work with the universities to ensure that the streets used by students moving in-between their neighbourhoods and campuses are safe and well-lit.



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Chapter 7: Community Cohesion

7. Community Cohesion

In SHU Student Union's 2013 Community Audit (a survey of 559 residents of student areas), 84% of respondents said that they felt students had a 'good' or 'very good' impact on Sheffield. However, residents surveyed in areas with high numbers of students gave a less positive answer about the impact of students in their own area. This was reflected in our Home Truths report which found that the long term community found students 'very transient and therefore less likely to engage'.

This could be because most students change their accommodation at the beginning of each new year of study and undergraduates generally only live in their accommodation during term time. This can mean that relationships are not built between students and their neighbours and that those areas with high densities of students can feel empty during holidays. This impacts on local businesses and affects how safe residents feel in their area.

To address these issues, SHU Students Union have appointed a number of Community Reps whose role is to be both representative of the student population to community groups and partners, and also

to encourage local students to engage with their communities and to make a positive contribution to areas in which they live. As part of the Community Audit, residents were asked what their priority would be for SHU Union volunteers, and the majority chose community clean-up activities such as litter picks.

UoS also have a Community Rep scheme in place. Many events which students attend are targeted solely at students, so both universities are also looking into opportunities for events which will encourage interaction between students and the wider community.

The work being carried out by ourselves and our partners as described in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 will assist integration between both student communities and our longer term communities.

7.1 Volunteering

Volunteering activities promote cohesion between the student and more permanent Sheffield communities. All student volunteer work takes place within the wider community, meaning that students have the opportunity to touch the lives of non-

student Sheffield residents, in a way that many will remember positively.

In 2012/13, 1,671 UoS students and staff volunteered a total of 32,496 hours through their Students' Union's 'Sheffield Volunteering' programme and were active in 77 different neighbourhoods in and around the city. In all, 199 local organisations benefitted from projects and volunteers. Numbers of student volunteers have been steadily on the increase, expanding by 31% over the last 5 years. In addition to this work, a significant amount of money was raised for local and national charities through Sheffield RAG (Raising and Giving).

Examples of university volunteering activities include: student-run projects involving people experiencing issues ranging from childhood bereavement to adult brain injury, schools outreach to raise aspiration and attainment, supporting student societies to use their skills and helping voluntary organisations provide local services using student volunteers. The dedicated Volunteer Team at UoS plan to continue growing their volunteering activities by promoting their activities to first year students in welcome packs,

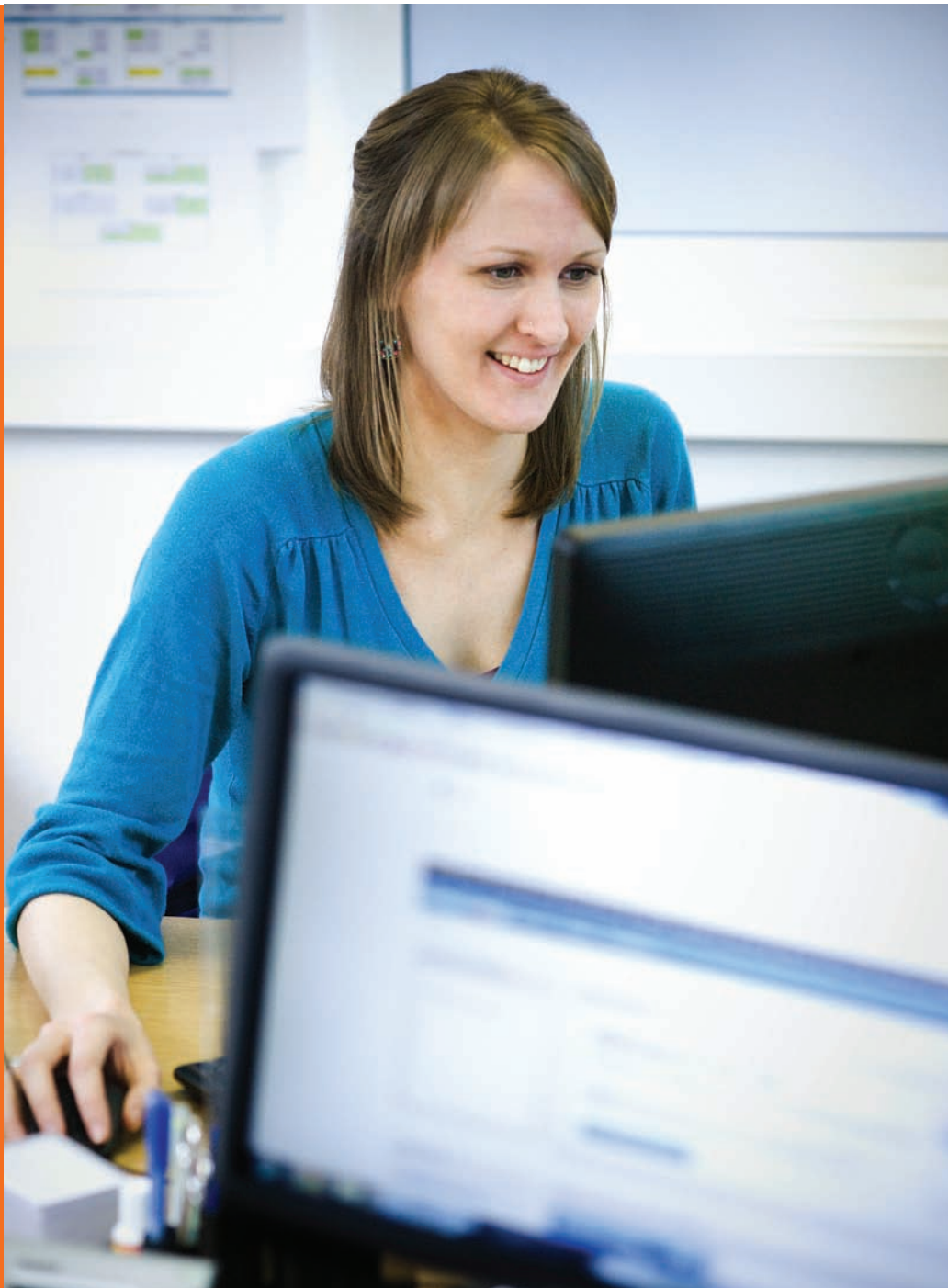
social media and running regular volunteer fairs.

SHU have embedded social entrepreneurship into their volunteering programme and have funded 17 social enterprise start-ups as a result. They use the expertise from their established Social Enterprise teaching programme to develop the skills of students and offer structured support to community groups. SHU's Volunteering team will be promoting their work through their website, magazine and volunteer fairs.

Sheffield City Council is committed to enabling individuals and communities to have more of an influence, to get more involved and to have the responsibility and ownership for doing some of the things that need to happen in our city. This includes supporting student volunteering both within the Council and in the broader community.

We Will

- Promote volunteering and positive student interaction, including exploring the potential to engage with the universities' volunteering teams.



Chapter 8: Graduate Retention and the Economy

8. Graduate Retention and the Economy

The contribution that students make to Sheffield's economy is important not only during their time studying in the city, but also following their graduation. Our Economic Strategy (2013 – 20) states: 'The city's two universities are a source of competitive advantage for Sheffield City Region's knowledge economy and are an integral part of the city's economic infrastructure.

They contribute to the growth and competitiveness of the city through the creation and transfer of knowledge – producing world class research that attracts investment, leading edge scientific and technological development to drive innovation and quality graduates to bring fresh talent to the city's businesses'.

Student spending power is considerable and can influence local economies by dramatically increasing the range of retail and services on offer. A report commissioned by UoS in 2013 estimated that international students contribute £104.5 million in fees income to Sheffield based universities and spend a total of £187.2 million per year in the Sheffield economy. Furthermore, a 2012 Ekogen report estimated that a full time student in

Sheffield will spend an estimated £11,688 per year on living costs with further expenditure on leisure and non-essential goods.

Retaining university graduates within our city will help us to achieve the ambitions set out in our Economic Strategy of growing a skilled and productive workforce and increasing innovation in Sheffield's economy. Our focus in relation to students is on retention and utilisation of high level skills, both locally and from elsewhere. Information about student retention is limited but the Destination for Leavers in Higher Education survey can provide an indication of retention levels. Of the employed graduates who responded to the survey in 2011/12, 19% of UoS students and 33% of ex Hallam students have taken employment in Sheffield (6 months after graduation). Our ability to succeed in increasing student retention will depend on Sheffield developing a sufficient supply of suitable jobs for recent graduates and of graduate employment schemes in relevant sectors.

Our information indicates that only 18% of the Sheffield City Region's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) currently

employ graduates, although these make up 95% of all businesses within Sheffield. There is a view amongst small businesses that students, though well educated, do not have as developed a business skill-set as other potential employees. We also found that SMEs do not have the structures in place to fully utilise graduates, contributing to a discrepancy between the skills on offer and the opportunities afforded to utilise them.

To address this we have developed the RISE pilot in partnership with local businesses and the universities. It has, amongst other measures, created 30 graduate placements within Sheffield SMEs as part of our on-going commitment to address this discrepancy. In the future, we aim to establish the Sheffield City Region Skills and Employment Partnership and work with our SMEs to improve their utilisation of graduates.

Because both universities have an internationally respected reputation for research and specialist expertise in a number of fields, they are in a strong position to foster links with existing businesses to introduce fresh thinking. One of the ways which they currently

achieve this is through Knowledge Transfer Partnerships. Here, skilled professionals and academics from the universities work in collaboration with local businesses to: develop new products, build new manufacturing processes, implement social policies and to find innovative solutions across a range of business areas including manufacturing and engineering, health care and low carbon. A large part of the work in these partnerships is carried out by recent graduates who may well find employment within the city as a result of this approach.

In addition to the city's job offer, graduates will be encouraged to stay on in Sheffield if their time in the city has been enjoyable and if they can access the homes and neighbourhoods of their choice. We know from our SHMA that many students plan to stay in Sheffield, at least in the short term.

Many expressed a desire to move within their existing neighbourhoods, though some also intended to move further north of the city centre, into neighbourhoods such as Hillsborough, Middlewood and Walkley Bank. Balanced and functioning housing markets will help provide more choice for all of Sheffield's communities. In the future we will continue to identify

opportunities to change the range of homes in neighbourhoods where the housing offer is limited and to ensure that we have the right mix of homes in the right places to support the city's existing communities and to attract and retain an appropriate level of skilled workers for Sheffield.

We will

- Work with the universities and small and medium businesses to increase the number of graduate placements available.





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