

Dear Ms Mackrory,

### **Student rent during the lockdown**

We are the elected representatives of students of all Falmouth University and University of Exeter (Cornwall Campus) students.

The large majority of those students live in Falmouth and Penryn with the effect that they live in your constituency. Hence sending this letter to you.

For most students, rent is the biggest single expense they incur. Over a year it tends to be in the region of £5,000. As you'll know, under the current lockdown there are restrictions on people's movement with the effect that through no fault of their own many students are unable to occupy their rented accommodation.

In addition, many students rely on income from part-time employment to help meet their costs, including rent. Again, as you'll know, the impact of the pandemic on jobs is huge so that the large majority of students who previously had part-time jobs are no longer working.

These financial concerns are among the factors having a significant impact on students' mental health, which is already rapidly declining during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We're appealing to you to show your support for students who by not returning to their term-time accommodation during the lockdown are protecting the health of the local community in Penryn and Falmouth.

Individually and collectively, students are a major part of our country's future – they are our future researchers, doctors, lawyers, creators, entertainers, entrepreneurs and politicians of our country.

Both Falmouth and Exeter Universities have now announced that they will pay the rent on behalf of students who rent accommodation in University Owned and Managed Accommodation that they cannot occupy during the lockdown. The Universities have done that because they recognise that it is the right thing to do.

However, the arrangement does not apply to students who rent accommodation that is not owned and managed by the Universities, which is around 60% of the Universities' students.

Therefore, we are asking you to help us call for the Government to oversee a local and nationwide reduction or refund of rent costs for all students who for reasons related to the pandemic have not returned (and are unable to return) to their term-time privately sector rented accommodation.

We do appreciate that this is a complex issue that requires Government to work with landlords, lettings agents and housing providers across the country. However, it is by reason of it being a complex national issue that a Government-led solution is required.

We are appealing to you to show your support for students who, by not returning to their term-time accommodation during the lockdown, are protecting the health of the local community in Penryn and Falmouth.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Charlotte Agnew (SU President Welfare & Inclusivity)

Amelia Banton (SU President Experience)

Cara Chittenden (SU President Exeter)

Lizzy Marshall (SU President Falmouth)