

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS REVIEW 2015



We are the UK's largest and most established manager and developer of purpose-built student accommodation. We have won multiple awards for our pioneering corporate responsibility and environmental sustainability work in our sector. We are the first to become a Living Wage employer. We are passionate about continual improvement.

It is crucial to us that our 49,000 students thrive in environments in which they feel comfortable. Our key business purpose is giving our students a Home for Success. This means balancing our economic, social and environmental commitments to support them.

In 2015, we launched a new corporate responsibility and sustainability strategy called **Up to uS**. It comprises four areas – The Environment, Social Impact, People and Responsible Business.

This review presents our key work to date in all four areas and our aspirations for the future.

If our work in this area interests and inspires you, we would be delighted to hear from you. Our contact details follow on the back page.





THE ENVIRONMENT

We are proud of our strong ratings from key bodies and we take opportunities to increase our rankings and scores as ways to drive innovation.

In 2015, we moved to the top three percent of real estate companies represented on the FTSE4Good Index. We gained the coveted Greenstar for a second year running after further improving our Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark (GRESB) score. We have relished the opportunity to measure our year-on-year improvements by reporting through the GRESB and Carbon Disclosure Project (CPD).

We have committed £21m to installing LED lighting across all of our properties and in 2015 half of this work was completed, including more than 20,000 student bedrooms. We also rolled out new heating controls to 50 sites, saving thousands of tonnes of carbon emissions.

We have committed to achieving a BREEAM 'excellent' rating for all our new builds, opening from 2018 onwards. BREEAM is the world's leading sustainability assessment method for masterplanning projects, infrastructure and buildings.

Not only do we strive to improve the environmental performance of our existing buildings, and work in innovative ways when creating our new ones, but we engage our students and employees in sustainability projects. 12 teams won NUS Green Impact Bronze awards in May 2015. Building on this success, our city teams are now working with more than 60 student volunteers with the ambition of achieving an award for every building.



...we engage our students and employees in sustainability projects



SOCIAL IMPACT

Our volunteering scheme gives every one of our 1,250 employees opportunities to increase the positive contributions they make to the communities in which they live and work.

In 2015, we introduced a company-wide scheme and more than a fifth of our employees seized the opportunity to volunteer in their cities for a day. They delivered 1,400 hours of volunteering across England and Scotland. Projects included participating in project workshops which give secondary school children insights into the world of work at Into University centres in Bristol, litter-picking in canoes on the River Soar in Leicester and helping a homeless hostel in Edinburgh tackle operational challenges. We had fantastic feedback to this project and anticipate a third of our employees to volunteer in 2016.

Unite Students is the founder of and major donor to The Unite Foundation, a charity which helps undergraduates who lack family support. The Foundation provides its scholars with accommodation throughout their study years and financial support. Applicants are selected by the universities to which they apply. Established in 2012, the Foundation has supported 125 young people in three years and we anticipate this figure to rise to 160 in 2016.

The first four Foundation scholars graduated in 2015. Three universities joined the Foundation programme in 2015, taking the total number of universities involved up to 10. These were Plymouth, Portsmouth and University College London.

Unite
Foundation

...The first four Foundation scholars graduated in 2015

During 2015, we also supported three charitable organisations which we believe closely fit our key business purpose of giving our students homes to support their personal and academic growth. These were IntoUniversity, Enactus and LandAid. The total amount of corporate donations from Unite Students in 2015 to these three charities and the Foundation was £1,255,000. In addition, we supported Cancer Research UK (CRUK) with donation stations throughout all of our buildings, enabling students to donate clothes and other items. These were valued at a staggering £106,000 by CRUK and contributed to our overall fundraising activities. This contributed to an amazing £171,000 in cash and in kind donations made by Unite Students to charities in 2015.

In 2016, we aim to empower our students and employees nationwide to raise money for Sport Relief.

PEOPLE

Our 1,250 employees are at the heart of our success as a business. Our goal is to attract and retain talented and motivated people, committed to our students and growing our business.

During 2015, we were very proud to be the first company in our sector to receive Living Wage accreditation. This recognises our commitment to paying our employees, and supply chain, a fair salary for their hard work and dedication.

We want to help our employees become outstanding at what they do. We passionately believe in the value of our high-quality training and development opportunities.

In 2015, 31 employees took our 'Becoming a Supervisor' course, with two thirds then appointed to supervisor roles. We launched a leadership programme for 34 board members and senior employees. We also piloted a summer internship programme.

Due to the success of all of these schemes a further 96 employees will take part in them in 2016 and we will welcome 10 summer interns.





RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

We believe we can make a significant contribution to our environment. Not only can we pioneer and develop best practice in design, and improvements to our buildings, but we can also support our generations of students, and 1,250 employees, in sustainable lifestyles. We can empower all of them to have positive impacts on their communities.

**Our Up to uS strategy is our
commitment to this work.**

If you would like to find out more about Up to uS visit
www.unite-group.com/responsibility

For more information about The Unite Foundation go to
www.unite-foundation.co.uk

If you have feedback or questions contact us at uptous@unitestudents.com

Up to uS



**UNITE
STUDENTS**