

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Unite Students Commission on Living Black at University**

#### **1. Purpose and scope**

The purpose of the Commission is to respond to the findings and recommendations at a national level, and to take actions that support universities and private PBSA providers to implement the recommendations more effectively.

The scope of the Commission is to improve the accommodation experience for Black students in UK purpose-built student accommodation; implementing the recommendations will benefit other groups of students and will be useful to accommodation teams in other countries.

#### **2. Objectives**

To create change across the HE sector to address the findings of the research so that Black students can feel safe and comfortable moving to and living in PBSA.

To take actions at a national level on the report's recommendations that will support HE institutions and accommodation providers to embed the recommendations locally. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Socialise the findings and recommendations of the research, creating an appetite for change
- Embed recommendations into national standards and processes relevant to purpose-built student accommodation
- Embed recommendations into complementary processes and standards within the wider HE sector
- Embed recommendations into national training and professional development programmes
- Draw on pilot projects and complementary research to develop and share good practice guidance and examples

#### **3. Ways of working**

The Commission will run from April 2022 to April 2023 and will work to pump-prime the process of embedding the recommendations of the research at a national level. It is anticipated that key actions will be taken forward by Commissioners' organisations or networks as part of their core mission, either alone or in partnership with others.

### 3.1 Definitions and use of language

The Living Black at University research focused on the experiences of Black students, to avoid the homogenisation of non-White groups, which can hide significant differences between the experiences of those from different ethnicities. For the purposes of this research, the term 'Black' was used to include all those who are racialised as 'Black', whether home/EU or international students. Whilst there are differences between the experiences of Black home/EU students and Black international students, this research focused on the impact of being Black on the student experience in accommodation.

We chose to capitalise direct references to ethnicities in line with the Government's ethnicity facts and figures style guide. Where the use of the term for an ethnic group is not in direct reference to a person's ethnicity or an ethnic group, for example 'white space', the ethnicity is not capitalised.

The Commission will adopt the same definitions and styling as outlined above throughout all its work and written output.

### 3.2 Chatham House Rules

When a meeting is held under Chatham House Rules, participants are free to communicate the content of the discussion (unless otherwise agreed by the group), but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any participant, may be revealed.

Chatham House Rules will be in force by default throughout all meetings held under the name of, or in association with, the Commission. This will create an environment of trust in which we can discuss and resolve complex problems and ensures that the confidentiality of those in the room is protected.

### 3.3 Dignity and Respect

Commissioners will be expected to adhere to following the Unite Students statement on Dignity and Respect throughout their work with and on behalf of the Commission.

We aim to provide a safe, inclusive & prejudice free home for students and employees, living and working in our properties.

To create an environment where you feel safe and free of judgement we commit to:

- ✓ Zero-tolerance to harassment of any kind. Please ensure that you respect other people, their personal space and always ask for consent.
- ✓ Racism, ableism, ageism, transphobia, homophobia, xenophobia and fatphobia is not tolerated in our properties nor do we have any prejudice based on class, language ability, religious beliefs, and gender presentation.
- ✓ Please do not assume anyone's gender, if in doubt feel free to ask what pronouns they use.

#### 4. Agreeing and Taking Actions

Each meeting will focus on one or more of the research report's recommendations. Commissioners will decide on actions to be taken that will support the adoption and embedding of the recommendation in the HE and student accommodation sectors.

A meeting will be considered quorate if two thirds of members are present.

##### 4.1 Voting

Where actions will be taken under the name of the Commission, the Commissioners must hold a vote in order to decide whether to take forward the action. This will be achieved through a vote (either online or in person) with a simple majority of Commissioners constituting agreement. Where one or more organisations represented on the Commission are vital to the delivery of that action, Commissioners from those organisations will also need to have voted in favour of the action in order for it to be taken.

Each organisation represented on the Commission will only have one vote, even where they have more than one Commissioner.

##### 4.2 Taking actions forward

It is expected that Commissioners will make best efforts to take forward actions as agreed, and provide periodic updates to the Commission.

##### 4.3 Good practice

The Commission will agree a template for actions that embed good practice principles. One of these shall be that Commissioners will make their best efforts to involve Black students and

staff in developing or delivering actions in ways that contribute positively to capacity building and to the development of those involved.

## 5. Meetings

An introductory meeting will take place online to introduce Commissioners to one another and to agree a final version of the Terms of Reference.

The inaugural meeting will take place face to face to ensure there is an opportunity to engage with the researchers, students and other Commissioners.

Subsequent meetings will take place every two months on Teams or in person as agreed by members according to the following schedule:

- July
- September
- November
- January
- March
- April

It is expected and encouraged that members will also meet in smaller groups in order to take forward agreed actions, and will embed these actions within their core organisational activities where possible.

## 6. Commissioners

### 6.1 Chair: Professor Iyiola Solanke

Professor Iyiola Solanke is Chair in EU Law and Social Justice in the School of Law and Dean for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) at the University of Leeds, where she researches and teaches on EU Law, Discrimination Law, Race and Law and Alternative Dispute Resolution.

She recently chaired the inquiry into the history of eugenics at University College London, and is leading two research projects: [Co-POWeR](#), an ESRC-funded project looking into the impact of COVID on practices for wellbeing and resilience in Black, Asian and minority ethnic families and communities; and [Generation Delta](#), a RE/OfS-funded project promoting access to PGR study for BAME women. She founded the Black Female Professors Forum in 2017, and joined the HEPI Advisory Board in 2021.

Professor Solanke has recently been appointed to the Jacques Delors Chair of EU Law at the University of Oxford and will take up post on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

## 6.2 Conveners and secretariat

Sam Kingsley is the Senior DEIB and Wellbeing Manager at Unite Students (Co-Convener)

Jenny Shaw is the Higher Education External Engagement Director at Unite Students (Co-Convener)

Jen Steadman is the Higher Education Communications Executive at Unite Students (Communications Partner)

Amelia Pulvertaft is the DEIB and Wellbeing Co-ordinator at Unite Students (Co-ordinator).

## 6.3 Commissioners:

Unipol / National Codes	Victoria Tolmie-Loverseed
Student Minds	Nicola Frampton
University of Leeds	Rebecca O'Hare
Newcastle University	Iain Garfield and Sharon O'Donnell
Association of Student Residential Accommodation (ASRA)	Jordan Meates
London South Bank University	Rosie Holden
College and University Business Officers (CUBO)	Melissa Browne
Association for Managers of Student Services in HE (AMOSSHE)	Sammy Li
Advance HE	tbc
Universities UK	tbc
NUS	tbc
Office of the Independent Adjudicator	Jo Nuckley (Associate to the Commission)