

## Revised Residential Life Service Model

### 1. Feedback from students, staff and alumni has highlighted the following issues:

- The importance of positioning the proposed residential life model within a 'whole institution' approach to student support and particularly of strong links with student support in Schools.
- Students and staff care deeply about support for student wellbeing and community building in residences and want the best possible structure to support this.
- We should prioritise investment in the new support service over any potential reductions in student rents.
- While improved parity and consistency of support across halls was supported by many, the term "hub" received considerable negative feedback and there was support for retaining the distinctiveness of individual halls.
- It was clear in almost all the feedback that Senior Residents are the most visible element of the current model to students. The feedback urged that the proposed number of live-in student mentors should be increased substantially. Many urged that the title Senior Resident should be retained while agreeing that the roles could be better defined and supported. Flexibility of shifts to suit academic commitments and to enable responsive student support was requested.
- The proposed number of frontline staff (Residential Life Advisers) should be increased during the day and late at night.
- A wide range of opinions were expressed concerning the relative merits of the traditional warden system as compared to the proposed professional services model. The majority on both sides of the debate expressed appreciation for the commitment and passion of current and previous wardens.
- The importance of visible leadership in the residential life team was stressed and there were requests for further consideration of senior academic involvement.
- Community building and student wellbeing are equally important to support thriving, distinctive and inclusive residential communities.
- Although there is often a link between wellbeing and disciplinary matters, some urged us to uncouple those providing low level wellbeing support from those administering formal discipline processes.
- JCRs should continue to provide a focus for community-building and social activities within individual residences and across the cluster of residences.
- Sport and Bristol SU should continue to support student representation, sport and social activities.
- There were mixed views regarding the value of the current Hall Advisory Committees with some respondents being supportive of the current arrangements and others suggesting the

need to use these to strengthen the links between the student body, the Residential Life Team, academic schools and the University's central services.

- Many urged that that our current Hall of Residence Alumni Associations should continue to be supported and that changes to the residential life model should be communicated to the University's loyal and supportive alumni across the globe.

Further to the extensive feedback received, the following clarifications and changes are now proposed for the new model.

## **2. Organisational structure**

### **2.1 Student Residential Villages**

Initially, there will be three Student Residential Villages; Stoke Bishop, Clifton, and City Centre. Each will have approximately 2,500 bed spaces. An additional Temple Quarter Student Residential Village will be required as the number of bed spaces increases by another 2,500 bed spaces over the next few years.

Each Student Residential Village will comprise of constituent Halls of Residence with live-in peer support (see below) and have a Student Support Centre staffed by professional services Residential Life Teams on-duty 24/7/365, and supported by a Senior Academic Tutor, Bristol SU and Sport Exercise and Health staff, and a Facilities Management Team.

Each Student Residential Village will also have a Student Residential Life Advisory Committee whose remit is to advise on the quality and enhancement of support for inclusive community building, events and activities, as well as student wellbeing. The PVC Education and Students will lead a further consultation on the membership and terms of reference of these committees.

### **2.2 Halls of Residence**

Each Hall of Residence will continue to have a student-led Junior Common Room to represent student views and contribute to the life of the community. There will continue to be a team of live-in Senior Residents in each hall led by a Chief Resident who will work with the JCR, the Residential Life Team, Bristol SU, Sport Exercise and Health and other relevant divisions and organisations to provide vibrant and supportive communities. The PVC Education and Students will lead a further consultation on the role and operation of JCRs.

### **2.3 Alumni Committees and Associations**

The Alumni Committees and Associations will continue to be supported under the new model, and the Residential Life Service will work in partnership with DARO to enhance that support.

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

**3.1 Head of Student Residential Life:** The most senior member of the Residential Life Team whose core remit is to provide leadership across the Student Residential Villages and management of 24/7/365 support for inclusive community-building, events and activities, as well as student wellbeing. This role takes the strategic lead in the development and delivery of the Residential Life Service, through collaboration with colleagues. The role has responsibility for handling complex

disciplinary and wellbeing matters and critical incidents that require escalation to the Head of Service, but it is not a live-in role.

**3.2 Head of Residential Life (Student Residential Village):** a live-in senior member of the Residential Life Team whose core remit is to provide leadership for the Student Residential Village and management of 24/7/365 support for inclusive community-building, events and activities, as well as student wellbeing across each Student Residential Village and its constituent Halls of Residence. They will have the training, experience and networks to handle complex student cases including disciplinary and wellbeing matters.

**3.3 Deputy Head of Residential Life (Student Residential Village):** a live-in senior member of the Residential Life Team whose core remit is to manage the Residential Life Advisers to deliver 24/7/365 support for inclusive community building, events and activities, as well as supporting student wellbeing across each Student Residential Village and its constituent Halls of Residence. They will have the training, experience and networks to handle complex student cases, including disciplinary and wellbeing matters under the leadership of their Head of Residential Life.

**3.4 Residential Life Adviser:** a member of the Residential Life Team reporting to the Deputy Head of Residential Life (Student Residential Village) whose core remit is the delivery of 24/7/365 support for inclusive community building, events and activities, as well as proactively supporting and responding to concerns about student wellbeing. They will be trained across a range of areas, including mental health. Each post holder will line manage a Chief Resident and his/her team of Senior Residents.

**3.5 Senior Academic Tutor:** Each Student Residential Village will have a Senior Academic Tutor who will have regular office hours in the early evening, and occasionally at weekends. They will support the Residential Life Team with academic mentoring and complex academic issues in liaison with Schools. They will contribute to community-building through championing and engagement with academic activities and events, and membership of the Student Residential Life Advisory Committee. The role will not have pastoral responsibilities and will not live on site. PVC Education and Students will lead a further consultation on the role and remuneration of Senior Academic Tutors.

**3.6 Residential Experience Coordinators:** there will be one of these per village. Their roles will be to forge stronger links between the JCRs and Residential Life Teams on the one hand and with Bristol Students' Union and Sport, Exercise and Health on the other, thereby contributing to community building, social activities and healthy living in the residences.

**3.7 Chief Resident:** will normally be a live-in senior postgraduate student who will serve as the senior peer mentor within each hall of residence and whose role is to oversee and coordinate a team of live-in Senior Residents, to deliver community building events and activities, as well as to liaise with the Residential Life Team and Senior Academic Tutor on pastoral and academic issues facing students. They will also be responsible for the scheduling, contributing to and cover of evening working rotas by their Senior Resident teams, to ensure service delivery.

**3.8 Senior Resident:** live-in peer mentors (postgraduate or senior undergraduate students) within halls of residence who will provide advice to individual students, contribute to inclusive community-building events and activities in partnership with the student led JCRs, as well as identify at an early stage those students who may be vulnerable and need referring to the Residential Life Team. They will be required to provide active peer support to a group of students with the aid of the Chief Residents and Residential Life Advisors, and cover evening working rotas twice a week

#### 4. Student discipline

Managing student conduct effectively is a key element in ensuring safe and inclusive communities for all students. It is also the case that the misconduct of individual students can often signal an underlying wellbeing issue that is best addressed at an early stage in a supportive manner while maintaining appropriate boundaries in relation to student conduct in residences.

The Residential Life Advisers, Chief Residents and Senior Residents will play an informal role (Level 1) in managing student behaviour through reminding residents of appropriate conduct when necessary, and ensuring they are alert and responsive to any changes in behaviour that may indicate an underlying welfare issue.

Misconduct of a more serious and/or persistent nature despite any informal interventions, will result in formal disciplinary investigations and sanctions undertaken by the Deputy Heads of Residential Life and Residential Academic Tutors (Level 2), Heads of Residential Life (Level 3), and the Head of Student Residential Life (Level 4). Appeals against the outcomes of the formal disciplinary process will be dealt with by the University Secretary's Office.

#### 5. Resource levels

The priority when reviewing the pastoral provision in residences was always to provide consistently high quality, 24/7/365 support for inclusive community-building and student wellbeing, rather than to reduce costs and rent levels. Feedback has confirmed this order of priority.

Based on feedback received, the annual cost of the latest proposals will be £2.9m compared with the £2.6m cost of the existing service. This level of resource will be reviewed and adjusted in either direction as needed over time.

**5.1 Head of Residential Life (Student Residential Village):** it is proposed to recruit an additional Grade K post to provide each Student Residential Village with a Head of Residential Life to provide visible, local community leadership, and sufficient capacity and resilience in the management team to design, implement and operate the new service. These will each be supported by a deputy head.

**5.2 Residential Life Advisers:** it is proposed to recruit an additional 7.2 FTE advisers (22 in total) so there is one on duty in each Student Residential Village during weekdays, and two on duty in the evenings, overnight and at weekends. This will allow for follow-up activity and liaison in relation to student wellbeing during the day, as well as additional cover overnight.

**5.3 Senior Academic Tutors:** it is initially proposed that these roles will be compensated for by additional increments added to the salary of their substantive role, but this will be subject to further consultation.

**5.4 Residential Experience Coordinators:** the number of Residential Experience Coordinators will be increased by 2.0 FTE to ensure there is the organisational and administrative capacity needed to provide a rich and diverse programme of activities, in conjunction with the Residential Life team.

**5.5 Chief Residents:** 24 Chief Residents will be introduced into the model and will be paid an additional (circa) £2K per annum compared to the Senior Residents and required to work an additional number of hours per week.

**5.6 Senior Residents:** the number of Senior Residents will be increased to 96 so that the combined ratio of Chief Resident and Senior Resident to student residents will be approximately 1:60, with the

potential for a lower ratio for undergraduate students. e.g. a ratio of 1:50 for UG students would allow for a ratio of 1:85 for PG students. A ratio of 1:45 for UG students would allow for a ratio of 1:100 for PG students.

## **6.0 Transitional arrangements**

To ensure a smooth transition to the new service by September 2018, the following arrangements are being put in place:

- Introducing Chief Residents and increasing the number of Senior Residents will maintain continuity of peer led support. These roles are ordinarily recruited to at this time of year.
- Recruiting staff to the new Student Wellbeing Service has confirmed there is likely to be a high level of interest in these roles e.g. 800+ applicants for Student Wellbeing Adviser roles.
- The Director of Residential and Hospitality Services will continue to oversee and support the implementation of the new service until December 2018 with increasing input from the Director of Student Services given the change in divisional responsibilities. Both will be provided with additional capacity to support this undertaking
- An experienced Warden will be seconded full time to work jointly with the Head of Student Residential Life until December 2018 to lead on the implementation of the new model.
- The three Student Support Officers and the RHS Pastoral Project Assistant will provide additional capacity to undertake the detailed work required for the service implementation.
- A Project Manager has been appointed to structure and oversee the range of projects that need to be delivered as part of this implementation.
- Consideration is also being given to utilising the synergies and sharing resources between this implementation and that of the Student Wellbeing Service.
- An Independent Expert Group will be set up to advise the Vice-Chancellor on the implementation of the new service and monitoring its impact.
- A weekly implementation group will be chaired by the Deputy Registrar to ensure appropriate access to senior team support.

**Key**

Professional Services Staff Role

Academic Staff Role

Student Role

Student Residential Village

