

Course Content (Vocational)

WINNER

Sheffield Hallam University Landlords Swap Rentbook for Textbook to Help Environment

The Landlords for Excellence Programme is a 25 hour course spread over 10 weeks aimed at improving the business effectiveness, safety, and sustainability of people renting property in Sheffield. It also helps provide better conditions for the many Sheffield Hallam students who are private tenants. The course is targeted to private landlords, especially those from BME (black, minority and ethnic) backgrounds, and those with properties in areas of regeneration. After satisfactory completion, participants receive a certificate and a logo to use in their marketing.

Landlords for Excellence is part financed by a grant from Transform South Yorkshire, and raised £75,000 for the University from the first 6 courses (which attracted 132 students). Participants are recruited by Sheffield City Council. Local organisations such as the Benefits Agency and South Yorkshire Police also provide input into the programme.

The course is run jointly by Development and Society academics and the Facilities department. It has sessions on waste management, energy and water efficiency (covering both design issues in refurbishment and day to day opportunities). It also covers other topics

such as fire safety planning, marketing, dealing with anti-social behaviour, property law and taxation, safety and substance abuse awareness, as well as supply and demand issues to try to avoid future dilapidation in some areas of the city. Hands on projects help to maintain interest and test understanding. The course is constantly evaluated by the Landlords, City Council and Transform South Yorkshire. A review by the National Black Community Forum also found that “the course was central to improving the sector, is excellent at providing participants with legal and management advice and (participants) would recommend the course to other landlords.” Some attendees have also enrolled on further courses, and have expressed interest in funding bursaries to fund poor students from their communities.

Marie May, Sheffield Hallam’s Community, Sustainability and Residential Development Manager, believes that the course “has helped landlords not only in providing information, but also by creating a peer network that they can use for support. It’s also improved the relationship between landlords, the University and the Local Authority, which at times was confrontational, and done wonders for our relationship with local residents.”

She also highlights staff benefits from the course. “Our academic colleagues are now much more aware about the issues involved in housing students, both for private landlords and university residence managers. And facilities staff have had an opportunity to teach and become involved in course administration which has been an eye opener. It’s also created lots of fun and personal satisfaction.”



Course members with Marie May (right)

Judge’s Comments on Course Content - Vocational

Sheffield Hallam University provides a commendable example of reaching adult learners and employers in a specialist area, and of effective collaboration both between different sections of a university, and between higher education and the private and public sectors. The success of the Landlords for Excellence programme is shown by its excellent feedback, and the fact that it has never had to advertise. We are also most impressed by the energy and enthusiasm of all the participants.