

## **Fast Track Tribunal**

### **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2009, Unipol Student Homes**

The Fast Track Tribunal discussed a complaint brought against Mr Raj Samra

The complaint, brought by former tenants of one of his properties, led to an inspection of the property being conducted because of allegations relating to the physical condition of the property.

The inspection revealed evidence of non-compliance with a number of aspects of the Unipol Code, including the lack of a 30 minute fire door on the kitchen and automatic smoke detection on only one level of the two storey property. Mr Samra was therefore invited in writing to respond not only to the allegations brought against him by the tenants, but also to advise Unipol as to his timescales for undertaking works to bring the property up to the standards of the Code.

A total of three letters were sent to Mr Samra in July 2009, but none were responded to. In early August he sent an email to Unipol claiming that the former tenants had withdrawn the complaint against him. They denied this was true, although in late August they did officially withdraw the complaint.

Mr Samra was asked via email in September to provide Unipol with timescales for undertaking the works in the property to bring it up to the required standards. Mr Samra claimed to have completed some of the works, including the fitting of a fire door, but disputed whether other works were necessary.

Because no timetable of works were provided by Mr Samra, the Chair was notified that the matter would need to be referred to the Tribunal and it was agreed that Mr Samra be suspended from membership of the Code (Chair's Action), pending the hearing of the Tribunal. Mr Samra was notified of the date of the hearing and submitted a written statement in advance of the meeting stating his position. Given Mr Samra's concerns about the findings from the original property inspection, it was agreed that an independent third party inspect the property prior to the Tribunal hearing and that the Tribunal be provided with a copy of the resulting report.

The Tribunal discussed whether it should take into account the original complaint brought by the former tenants. It was agreed that as the complaint was officially withdrawn by these former tenants then it should not be taken into account.

The Tribunal did, however, agree to discuss Mr Samra's alleged failure to respond to Unipol's requests for the timetable of works AND the physical condition of the property. The Tribunal expressed some concerns at the way in which Mr Samra had reacted towards Unipol staff when undertaking their duties and recommended that he be reminded of the requirement of the Code

to behave in a professional and courteous manner. In respect to the physical condition of the property, the Tribunal considered Mr Samra's statement – which suggested that he had rectified some of the previous Code breached identified. However, as the report from the independent inspection (tabled at the meeting) identified on-going non-compliance – including the lack of a 30 minute fire door on the kitchen – it was recommended that Mr Samra's temporary suspension should remain for a period of 3 months. It was further recommended that should Mr Samra wish to re-join, then both of his student properties should be re-inspected to ensure compliance with the Code.