# Unipol Student Homes

## Trustee Applicant Information Pack
## November 2026



unipol

# Dear applicant

I am delighted you are interested in joining the Board of Unipol Student Homes as we search for new Trustees.

Unipol is a unique and influential charity at the forefront of student housing in the UK since 1973, with a turnover of £24 million, over 3,900 tenants and 72 staff. The new Chief Executive Sam Bailey-Watts took up his post in May 2025 and is leading the charity through an exciting period of strategic development. I was appointed to the position of Chair of Unipol Student Homes in May 2026.

The charity is based in Leeds but has national impact in its specialist area, operating Government approved Codes of Practice for the purpose-built accommodation sector, but also providing thought-leadership through its policy and research work. It has a diverse housing portfolio covering the range of students, from family housing through to high-rise PBSA.

The Charity is now looking to appoint up to **2 Finance Trustees**, with the expectation that within the next 12 months, one of these appointees will become the next Chair of the Financial Affairs and Staffing Committee when the current Committee Chair retires. We invite applications from suitably qualified finance professionals who share the ambition and values of the Charity and Trustee Board, and can make an important contribution to ensuring its continued success and development.

Thank you once again for your interest in these roles, and we look forward to receiving your application.

Professor Paul Marshall
Chair

# Introduction

Unipol Student Homes is a national charity working to improve standards and experiences in student accommodation across the UK. For more than 50 years, Unipol has played a unique role at the intersection of student welfare, housing standards, and the higher education and accommodation sectors.

As part of our forward Trustee succession plan in advance of Trustee retirements in 2027 we are now seeking to appoint up to two new Trustees to strengthen the Board's expertise and oversight of financial and staffing matters. In time it is anticipated that one of these appointees will become Chair of the Financial Affairs and Staffing Committee and lead this committee, working in partnership with the Director of Finance and CEO, ensuring that the Committee fulfils its responsibilities set out in the terms of reference. Both Finance Trustee roles will support the organisation in achieving the aims of Unipol in the areas of Finance and Staffing and will act as the channel of communication between the committee and the Board. We are seeking candidates with strong commercial and charity finance experience who will provide the board with robust oversight of financial performance and risk and ensure that financial information supports effective decision making, supporting the Board through its next phase of development, influence, and impact.

These are rewarding roles, offering the opportunity to shape the future of student accommodation policy and practice, and to support an experienced executive team delivering a clear social mission.



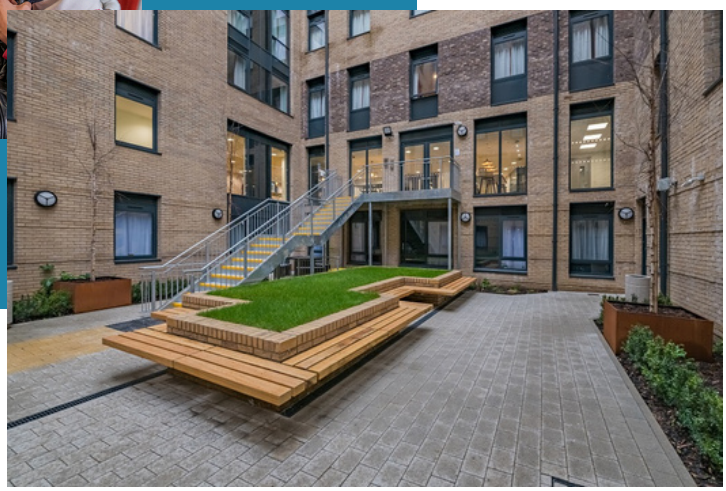
# About Unipol Student Homes

Unipol Student Homes is a registered charity and limited company. Founded in Leeds in 1973 by its four principal Members (The University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University and their respective student unions), it has grown and today it includes:

- Acting as landlord to over 3,900 students
- Providing housing advice and support to students
- Managing and promoting student accommodation standards through self-regulation including the Unipol/ANUK National Codes
- Undertaking sector-leading research and training
- Working with universities, accommodation providers, policymakers and students to improve quality, safety and affordability in student housing

We operate nationally, with our headquarters in Leeds, and a base in Nottingham, and work with a wide range of stakeholders across higher education, local government, and the private sector.



# Unipol's Purpose, Mission and Values

In 2025 Unipol's mission and vision was restated by the Trustees as follows:




**Our Strategy**

You can see our current strategic document, the Forward Look 2023 - 2026, here.

Since the appointment of a the new CEO in May 2025, the charity is going through a process of resetting and strategic reshaping in 2026. The new Chair will be instrumental in supporting the development of a new focused but ambitious corporate strategy for 2027 – 2033.

# Our core operations

**Housing Hubs (Leeds and Nottingham)**
We give straightforward information through our Housing Hubs that allows students to make well-informed choices about where to live and who to rent from; champion best practices; and provide housing ourselves that lives up to the expectations of Unipol as a professional and caring charity.

**Our Own Housing**
Unipol's own housing portfolio is located in Leeds and Nottingham, where we accommodate some 3,900 students, including student families. Additional accommodation is managed on behalf of private owners, who are required to meet the same high standards as in Unipol-owned properties.

**Accreditation (The Unipol Codes)**
In addition to the local Codes covering shared student houses in Leeds, Nottingham and Bradford, Unipol also operates the ANUK/Unipol National Code for Private Providers, an approved Code of Practice under the Housing Act 2004 which sets and tests standards in the PBSA sector. These activities seek to improve property standards, enhance student choice and bring transparency to the private rented sector. In all, these national and local accreditation schemes cover some 490,000 bed spaces.

**Training and Development**
Unipol is also the main national trainer in the niche area of student accommodation for all those involved in student accommodation provision across the UK. The training programmes keep us at the centre of the accommodation network and help to ensure we are up to speed on new trends and developments.

# Financial Position

Unipol has grown considerably in the past decade from turnover of £8 million to £24 million in 2025.

You can see our latest set of accounts here.

# Governance and Leadership

Unipol has a Trustee Board of up to 19, with 13 places for nominations from its Member institutions (The University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds University Union and Leeds Beckett Student Union, and Bradford College). In addition it has places for 6 co-opted Trustees. This size and composition of the Board was a key aspect of consideration in our recent governance review.

Members of the Board are both charity Trustees as well as Directors of the limited company.

The Board is committed to good standards of corporate governance and the Charity assesses itself against the Charity Governance Code for Larger Charities, with its most recent self-assessment available to see here.

The Board's specific responsibilities include:

- corporate strategy, plans and budgets;
- corporate policy and major business decisions;
- the framework for governance and management;
- monitoring organisation and executive performance.

The Board normally meets four times a year in Leeds (three business meetings and one Strategy away day). The Financial Affairs and Staffing Committee current meets up to 4 times a year in Leeds. Hybrid attendance is possible for meetings

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The Board fulfils its responsibilities through a number of other committees in addition to the Financial Affairs and Staffing Committee including Portfolio Committee, Review and Remunerations, Governance Committee and Health and Safety Committee. All Trustees are expected to sit on at least one committee.

**Senior Executive Team**

The Chief Executive Officer is supported by an executive team including the Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Finance, as well as Directors for Standards, Sales and Marketing, Operations, Hub Services and IT. You can find more detail about the staff team here.

# Role Overview – Trustee

As a Trustee of Unipol, you will help shape the strategic direction of the charity, ensure strong governance and contribute to our work improving student housing across the UK. Trustees bring independent judgment, expertise and oversight to ensure Unipol remains effective, accountable and sustainable. You will be joining the organisation at a pivotal time of growth, change and development.

Trustees work collectively as a Board, but with individual's selected for their mix of skills.

Key Responsibilities of the Board

- Provide strategic leadership and contribute to setting Unipol's long-term direction.
- Ensure compliance with charity law, regulatory requirements and the organisation's governing documents.
- Oversee the charity's financial health, approving budgets, monitoring performance and ensuring sound stewardship of resources.
- Support and challenge the Chief Executive and leadership team, promoting effective performance and accountability.
- Promote strong governance, safeguarding, risk management and organisational resilience.
- Act as an ambassador for Unipol, representing the charity externally and promoting its mission.
- Participate fully in Board meetings and relevant committees.



# Additional Responsibilities for Finance Trustees/Chair of the Financial Affairs and Staffing Committee

Additional Responsibilities for Finance Trustees/Chair of the Financial Affairs and Staffing Committee

- Provide strategic financial oversight and support the Board in ensuring that the Charity's resources are managed effectively and sustainably and support the Board in understanding the key financial issues, risks and opportunities.
- To advise the Board on matters relating to Unipol's financial performance, procedures and planning.
- Ensure financial information provided to Trustees is accurate, timely and relevant.
- To receive annually and evaluate a three-year Budget Projection as part of advising the Board on financial performance and strategy.
- To examine the reserves and investment policies and have responsibility for custodianship of Unipol's assets and make recommendations to Unipol's Board about any changes needed in these areas.
- To seek assurances at an audit level of accountability as it deems necessary from external advisers.
- To oversee the effectiveness of internal controls. Audit arrangements and compliance with the Charities SORP.
- To oversee and make recommendations in respect of changes to accounting policies and practice.
- Undertake staff review and promotion matters with authority from the Board in respect of members of the Senior Management team other than the Chief Executive.
- Have authority, on behalf of the Board, to negotiate and agree to any necessary contractual changes in respect of individual staffing arrangements.
- To act as a critical friend to the Executive Team whilst providing constructive challenge and independent judgement.
- Explain financial information clearly for Trustees from non-finance backgrounds, to support effective decision-making.



# Personal qualities for Finance Trustee positions

We are looking for individuals who have broad leadership qualities and can add value across a range of topics with the remit of the Board.

Key essential qualities we are looking for in a candidate include:

- Commitment to Unipol's mission, vision and values
- Senior leadership or board experience, with an ability to think strategically and contribute to long-term planning.
- Business acumen
- A collaborative mindset and open, constructive approach to providing challenge
- Strategic thinking skills and to absorb, evaluate and question material on a wide range of matters
- Understanding of good governance principles (charity, public sector or corporate)
- A personal commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion
- Sound and independent judgement and a belief in collective decision making responsibility
- An understanding of the distinctive ethos and regulation of the charity sector
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and preparation for meetings and Board responsibilities.

**Desirable**

- Student accommodation or housing sector experience
- Senior experience of and update-to-date expertise in financial management, strategy or accounting.
- Cyber security
- Regulation and company law
- Marketing and sales

All Trustees need to complete a Declaration of Interests and sign a declaration confirming eligibility to serve as both a Charity Trustee and a Company Director as part of the selection process.

**Time Commitment and Term**

All Trustees are expected to join one sub-committee as well as attending the Board. We expect the time commitment to vary, but on average each Trustee spends 1 day per month, spread across various activities such as reading board papers, ad hoc discussions with board members and the executive team, and attending events throughout the year.

This appointment is for an initial three-year term, with potential reappointment for a further two terms.

# About this position and How to Apply

**Remuneration**

This role is not remunerated, but reasonable expenses are paid.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Unipol Student Homes is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and welcomes applicants from all backgrounds. If you require any reasonable adjustments during the application or interview process, please contact us so we can support you appropriately.

**How to Apply, Key Dates and Selection Process**

All interested applicants are asked to submit a CV and a short cover letter detailing their relevant experience and motivations for supporting the charity's work by **12noon on 27th November 2026** to the Company Secretary Victoria Tolmie-Loverseed on v.tolmie-loverseed@unipol.org.uk.

Any shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview which are expected to take place in Leeds or virtually in w/c 14th December 2026 as well as an informal discussion with the Chief Executive.

Any interested applicants with questions about the role can contact the Chair or Chief Executive, and this can be arranged via the Company Secretary Victoria Tolmie-Loverseed on v.tolmie-loverseed@unipol.org.uk.

Any recommendation to appoint will be subject to Board approval. This process is expected to take place in December 2026, with the new Trustees in place ideally from January 2027.

**Unipol Student Homes**
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