

Accommodation Essex

Management of Crisis and Emergency Situations

The University has in place processes to assess and manage the risks associated with identifiable hazards and, through the Crisis Management Group, measures to deal with any major crises or emergency situations which might arise.

This plan relates to crisis management within the residences owned or managed by the University and does not include any situation that would involve the Crisis Management Group.

This document is made up of two parts, Part A is for general information and is available publically. Part B contains specific actions and includes contact details and is therefore for internal use only.

Part A Management of Risk

1. Definitions

Crisis

A crisis is an incident which, because of its scale or impact, cannot be resolved under normal operating procedures or within standard timescales. A crisis management response can be triggered either directly in response to an incident or by the University's Crisis Management Group.

Emergency Situation

An emergency situation is an incident which requires an immediate response which cannot be dealt with under normal operating procedures.

Examples of an emergency situation are as follows:

- Sudden loss of key facilities in a residence
- Immediate closure of a residence and displacement of residents
- Sudden inability to maintain essential Health and Safety provision
- Sudden and extensive outbreak of a communicable disease

2. Risk Assessments and Protocols

2.1 Health and Safety

Risk assessments have been conducted and protocols developed to meet all Health and Safety legislation and include:

- Fire safety
- Legionella risk
- Protocols for communicable diseases

The University arranges for all portable appliances which it provides to be PAT tested annually. Electrical installations and gas equipment are checked in accordance with current legislation.

An annual condition survey is conducted of the estate and refurbishment works are prioritised to ensure the residences remain in sound condition.

The Residence Regulations prohibit dangerous activities, such as, burning candles or using dangerous equipment in the residences and there is a disciplinary process to deal with transgressions.

2.2 Business Continuity

There are a number of events that could affect business continuity:

- Loss of IT connectivity and or data during peak work flow
- Loss of personnel affecting service delivery
- Loss of office premises.

The impact of loss of such facilities would depend on the time of year and therefore the pattern of work. Interruption in the period July to October would have the most significant impact.

The University has a Management Information Systems office which has contingency plans to allow recovery of data or alternative systems to allow work to continue.

Loss of premises would require Estate Management to provide alternative working space and IT connectivity.

3. The Crisis Management Group

The University is prepared to deal with any major crisis through the Crisis Management Group. The Group has produced a Crisis Management Plan which can be viewed at: <http://www2.essex.ac.uk/academic/offices/acadreg/index.htm>

In the event that a crisis event occurs within Accommodation Essex which is managed by the Crisis Management Group, the Director of Accommodation Essex would be contacted and that person would then implement action in accordance with Part B of this plan and the University's Crisis Management Plan.

4. Security Provision

At the Colchester campus the University employs its own security service which works closely with the Essex Police Force where appropriate. Accommodation Essex funds a Community Police Officer who is based on the Colchester campus.

The security service is operational 24/7 and a patrol officer is based at University Quays,

At Southend, security is provided by a third party provider and in operation 24/7 at University square.

Accommodation Essex staff would work in conjunction with security staff in the event of a crisis. Security staff are responsible for contacting the emergency services where appropriate.

5. Student Support and the Residents' Support Network

Student Support is responsible for providing information and guidance to students on a range of welfare issues and for dealing specifically with welfare and support aspects of any trauma suffered by students including those who are living in the residences.

The Associate Deans for Accommodation are resident members of staff who are responsible on an on call basis for out of hours cover for residents including crisis management.

The Residents' Support Network is a network of volunteers who are based in the residences and provide advice to residents, are a point of contact for students to raise issues or discuss problems and can raise additional emergency assistance when required.

6. Local Crisis Management Support

The local authority has a statutory obligation to provide assistance in a major crisis. It is possible that this body could assist with immediate temporary shelter, accommodation or feeding if residences were evacuated.

The Health Protection Agency is able to offer advice in the event of major outbreak of communicable disease.

7. Contact Procedure

The senior managers in Accommodation Essex ensure that cover is provided at all time to deal with emergency situations.

During office hours notification is through the main Accommodation Office number. Normal office hours are 9am to 5 pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 4.45pm on Friday.

The Accommodation Office number is: 01206 873615

Outside of these hours any emergency should be reported to the Information Centre who can contact Accommodation Essex staff if required.

The Information Centre number is: 01206 872222

8. Key Actions

The following key actions are examples of action that might be required following an incident:

Initial Actions

- Evacuating residents from residential accommodation
- Re-housing residents
- Arranging for alternative facilities to be made available e.g kitchens, bathrooms
- Arranging for alternative power, water or heating source to be made available
- Arranging for residents to be isolated in the event of contagious illness
- Arranging staff cover to maintain essential services in the event of significant loss of human resource

Follow up Actions

- Arranging longer term accommodation provision and/or alternative facilities
- Communication and information dissemination surrounding the event
- Management of staffing resource to maintain services and business continuity.