

THE PROPERTY MARKETING STRATEGISTS, TOGETHER WITH LEADING ON-CAMPUS STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PROVIDER UPP, HAVE UNDERTAKEN ONE OF THE LARGEST INDEPENDENT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION RESEARCH SURVEYS.

For details on the methodology [click here](#)

SUSTAINABILITY

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SUSTAINABILITY IS A CORE VALUE OF GEN Z AND A VITAL PART OF THEIR OUTLOOK. WITH THIS IN MIND, WE WANTED TO EXPLORE HOW THEIR HOME CAN MATCH THIS IDEAL, AND HOW THIS WILL BE CONNECTED TO THE PERTINENT ISSUE OF AFFORDABILITY.

FURNITURE

With Love Island ditching fast fashion brand partnerships in favour of eBay, this hints at the new heights of the circular economy and recycling initiatives. Upcycling and repurposing items is becoming the norm.

The survey elicited a positive response towards second-hand furniture. Of those surveyed:



"I ACTUALLY PREFER RECYCLED FURNITURE. AND NOT JUST FURNITURE, ALL MY CLOTHES TOO, I JUST GET THEM SECOND-HAND. I THINK IT'S A GOOD THING."

Interestingly, domestic 16-18 year olds were more inclined to use second-hand furniture than overseas students (74% v 70%). The response also presented a geographic bias with London residents having the lowest proportion of being comfortable with this (60%).

Residing in a building that uses second-hand, upcycled, and repurposed furniture can have a greater influence on these attitudes towards the circular economy. But accommodation providers can influence behavioural solutions much easier by going back to basics too. For example, how easy is it to actually recycle within your building? We cannot emphasise this cost and ease element enough. Consider how far do residents have to walk with their black sack, and the proximity of all recycling points. Are they easily accessible and easy to locate?

SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES

Many developers focus on sustainable features from a build perspective, **but these have little resonance to the tenants** as they may not contextually experience them.

There were many desirable features that received a positive response, but they are relatively new to the sector and will require different expertise from staff. **For example, biophilia and the growing of vegetables.** This is a more skilled job than general garden maintenance. Accommodation providers can't rely on students to maintain this feature since some living communities (such as students) are transient. Are there other ways in which this agricultural interest can be explored?

TRANSPORT

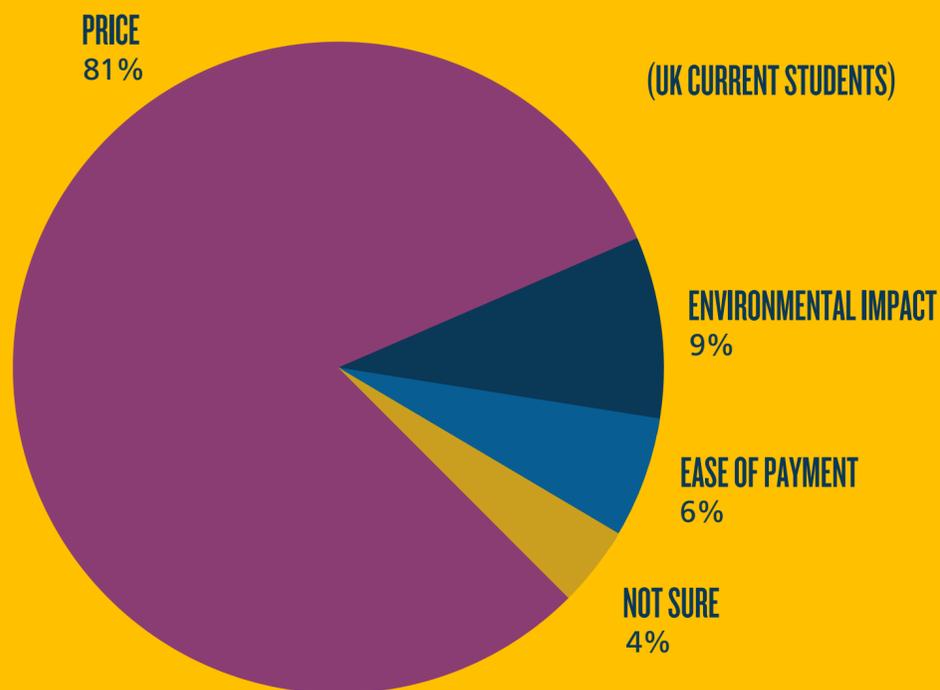
was also a desirable feature, with **74%** of future students considering access to public transport as an important sustainability feature. **But this was more important to females (81%) than males (62%).**



Students overall, expect sustainability to be included as a part of their package, and not added as a premium. This research has highlighted that **students value ease and convenience most** when it comes to these new additions.

ENERGY PROVIDERS

Here's how the responses looked when asked 'What is most important to you when it comes to paying bills & choosing energy providers?'



"WHEN I WAS IN STUDENT ACCOMMODATION, EVERYTHING WAS PAID IN ONE BUT NOW I'VE GOT A SMART METER, AND I CAN SEE HOW EXPENSIVE EVERYTHING IS, I WOULD RATHER PUT ON ANOTHER JACKET THAN PUT MY HEATING ON."

81% of current students and 85% of graduates said that price was the most important consideration when choosing energy providers **vs 9% and 7% on environmental impact**. This highlights the relationship between sustainability and affordability, and perhaps a reflection of the cost of living crisis. Would environmental impact have scored higher two years ago?

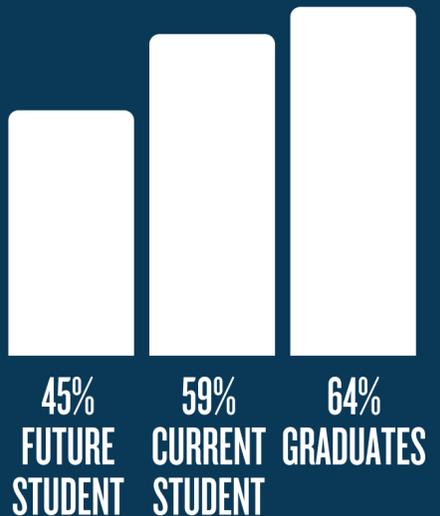
SMARTER LIVING

Interestingly, **smart technology** (to turn heating and lights off) was **favoured more by international students** than domestic students (46% vs 53%). But, more than half of students said they would **consider installing energy meters** to allow them to track flatmates' energy usage (**56%**). This was slightly higher from those who received Free School Meals suggesting they are more cost conscious.

This does however, bring about the question of whether this would be a consideration if it weren't for the cost of living crisis. Is this coming from a place of environmental consciousness, or rather, a way of saving money?

PEERS

When asked, 'Is it important for you to live with people who have environmentally friendly habits?' Each age group answered with more positive certainty. In each category, those from overseas rated this more important than their UK counterparts.



Both sets of responses show a growing consideration for sustainability from the older age-bracket compared to 16 – 18 year olds. This emphasises how much living independently nurtures sustainable living habits.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE FUTURE...

Generation Z are changing the course of our future. With a greater emphasis on sustainability, they have grown up to an awakened reality of how we have collectively accelerated the climate emergency.

When asked how important sustainability features will be when choosing a place to live in the next 5 years, 53% of future students said it would be an important consideration, 82% of current students said it would be an important consideration and 70% of graduates said it would be an important consideration.

It's become evident that they actively seek to engage in **more conscious ways of living**. However, at this point in time, it's clear that cost is driving decisions around sustainability. That shouldn't detract from the value that is quite evidently placed on this as a core feature. Embracing upcycled and recycled furniture, choosing to live with sustainably minded flatmates, and **actively seeking sustainable features** are all values that are close to this generation. What we can be sure of is that students do not expect to have to pay for sustainable features but **expect them to be the norm**, not a premium luxury.

KEEP AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Over the course of the next 6 months The Property Marketing Strategists and UPP will be releasing a series of reports and webinars focused on the key themes of Sustainability, Affordability, Technology, Wellbeing and Community to share the fascinating insight gained from this in-depth research. This will lead up to the final report being issued at the end of the year.

If you want to stay up to date with what Gen Z want from their future home, please **sign up** to the insight alerts, follow us on our social channels and **book a space on our webinars**.

Together we can build a property sector that exceeds the expectations of the next generation.

