



Nottingham  
City Council

# Using Accreditation and Enforcement in Partnership in Nottingham:

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# Introduction

- What we will cover:
  - History
  - Working relationship
  - Information sharing
  - Tribunals
  - The future

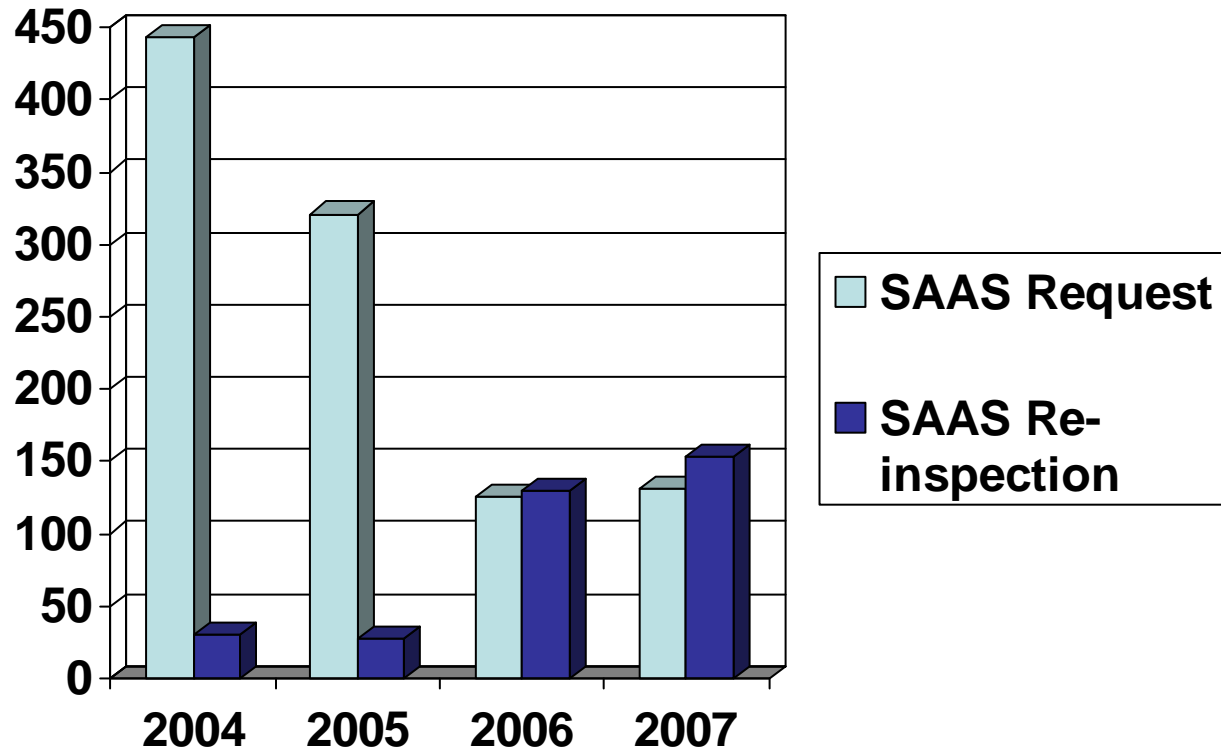
# Achieving Compliance

1. Promotion: through education, advice and information
2. Intervention: inspection and licensing
3. Reactive: investigation of complaints, accidents, burglaries etc

# History of Accreditation in Nottingham

- Nottingham City Council have run student accreditation schemes jointly with the surrounding Local Authorities and both Universities in Nottingham
- The aim of the previous scheme was to improve standards and quality of the accommodation on offer to students

# SAAS Statistics 2004 - 2007



# The Need for Change

- However, the accreditation standard was:
  - Outdated
  - Resource intensive for NCC
  - Not effectively encouraging students to choose high quality accommodation

# Unipol

- In 2007, it was agreed that NCC would help to fund Unipol Student Homes in Nottingham
- Stakeholders in Nottingham – NCC, both Universities and their Student Unions
- Unipol took over the administration of the student accreditation scheme

# Accreditation Review

- In February 2008, a Code Review Group was set up to examine the accreditation scheme
- All stakeholders were consulted on the new Code
- The new Unipol DASH Code came into operation on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008

# Accreditation Review – Cont'd

- Moved from property accreditation to landlord accreditation - a greater focus on management standards
- Self declaration - owners sign a declaration confirming they meet the existing standards
- Unipol inspects a sample selection of an owner's portfolio at a ratio of 1:5
- Owners join the scheme for 3 years

# The Story so Far...

- 347 owners and 10 managing agents are now accredited under the Unipol DASH Code
- 1079 student properties in Nottingham have been inspected since October 2007
- 91 re-inspections have taken place to ensure that landlords are completing the required works

# Good Working Relationship

- Where problems found within accredited properties referrals made to NCC to follow up.
- For instance in the Unipol DASH Code it states that properties where mandatory licensing applies should have submitted a licence or possess a licence. If no such licence exists then this is passed to NCC to follow up
- Allows for NCC to target landlords who fail to comply

# Enforcement within Nottingham

- Follow principles of the enforcement concordat
- Prosecution procedure to ensure consistency within the teams
- Enforcement is the means of last resort

# To Date...

- Requests for service – 1,262/year
- Notices – 685/year
- Prosecuted 19 landlords
  - Fines of up to £62,000
  - 2 conditional discharges
- Issued simple cautions to 3 landlords
- Awaiting a sentence in the Crown Court

# Referrals back to Unipol

- Where prosecutions are successful these are then fed back to the Accreditation Officer especially where the landlord is an accredited owner.
- In the first instance we have been faced with a symptom of our successful relationship in that the channels of communication have been found to be too informal
- A more formal method of making referrals to Unipol following a prosecution has been developed

# Data Sharing Protocol

- Currently being established so that where we have information that would help Unipol act in the public interest this can be shared.
- This will hopefully enable us to share information which is not in the public domain for instance fit and proper person checks completed for licensing purposes

# Unipol Tribunal

- Students can complain to Unipol if they feel that their landlord has breached the standards of the Code
- Local residents can also access complaints system
- The purpose is to provide an alternative dispute resolution procedure. In the first instance every attempt is made to reach a solution before triggering the Tribunal process.

# Unipol Tribunal – Cont'd

- Where a resolution cannot be reached, complaint is referred to the Tribunal.
- Independent Chair
- The Fast Track Tribunal is designed for less important cases
- The Full Tribunal looks at major issues or misdemeanours and matters which may subsequently affect the future working of the Code itself.

# Recent Tribunal hearing

- Code landlord was prosecuted and fined by NCC for not having a licence.
- Information was shared with Unipol via email however system of referral and formal process had not been established
- NTU SU made a formal complaint which led to a Full Tribunal

# Tribunal Results

- The Tribunal ruled that the owner should retain her membership of the Unipol DASH Code, providing that she:
- submits a full Declaration of Properties to Unipol
- has all of her student properties inspected by Unipol
- keeps Unipol updated on the works completed to bring her properties to the standard
- attends some landlord training on property management

# Forthcoming Tribunal

- A Code landlord has been convicted of fraud and was prosecuted by the Fire Service
- Accreditation has been suspended by the Chair pending the Fast Track Tribunal
- Currently compiling evidence however due to the absence of a protocol for data sharing between NCC and Unipol, this is proving difficult

# Developing Accreditation for the Future

- The Unipol DASH Code is due to be reviewed in 2011
- Benchmarking between NCC and Unipol to ensure consistency i.e. with amenity provision, fit and proper person checks of landlords etc.....
- Develop accreditation further by promoting to NTU landlords so can create a pool of accredited landlords providing good quality accommodation in the Trent University catchment area – i.e. mail shots

# Conclusion

- History
- Working Relationship
- Information sharing
- Tribunal
- Future



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# Any Questions

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