PBSA Occupancy Survey Academic Year 2023-24

1.1 Since 2014 the Council has carried out an annual occupancy survey of PBSA which has confirmed that there have been consistently very low rates of vacancies in all types of PBSA within the City.

1.2 This survey has been an important piece of evidence and has given the Council the confidence to continue to pursue its policy of promoting PBSA in appropriate locations.

1.3 The same survey has been re-run for the 2023-24 academic year and the findings show that the PBSA market has been a lot more challenging for PBSA providers with a noticeable increase in the number of voids this year. A summary of the findings is set out below.

- 31 providers responded to the survey, representing approx. **92% of the known PBSA bedspaces** within Nottingham.
- Reported **vacancy rate for the 2022-23 academic year is 3.5%** which is **a marked increase from the 2022-23 academic year which was 0.8%.**
- A much **higher proportion of studios are reported to be vacant at almost 5% (4.7%).**
- With **cluster beds having a lower vacancy rate at 3% (2.8%).**
- **In general, older PBSA schemes, outside of the City Centre and University campuses have higher number of vacancies.**
- **There is also a loose correlation that those schemes with a higher proportion of studios also having a higher proportion of vacancies.**

1.4 The vacancy rates including previous years are shown below.

Results from the PBSA vacancy surveys

Academic Year	Reported Vacancy Rate %
2023-24	3.5%
2022-23	0.8%
2021-22	1.1%
2020-21	N/A*[1]
2019-20	0.6%
2018-19	0.3%
2017-18	0.5%
2016-17	1.2%
2015-16	0.7%
2014-15	1.6%

1.5 As part of the survey the providers were also asked to confirm the breakdown of the type of students who live in their schemes, ie 1st years, returners (2nd and 3rd years), and postgraduates as well as the origins of the students, either home or international. Not all

[1] Due to the pandemic, alternative survey carried out – this found that 84% of providers expected the PBSA market to return to 'normal'/past trends post Covid.

providers responded to these questions therefore the return rate is lower and doesn't allow a true comparison from the previous year.

1.6 Based on this lower return rate, the following two pie charts (Figure 1 and Figure 2) below show the breakdowns from the latest survey. Overall, approx. 49% of PBSA in Nottingham accommodates first years and just over 58% home students. This indicates a growing proportion of non-1st years (51% compared to 37% to the previous year) and a rising proportion of internationals students (39.5% compared to 33.7%) in PBSA compared to the 2022-23 survey, although this is based on different PBSA providers reporting.

Figure 1: PBSA occupancy broken down by type of student (year of study)

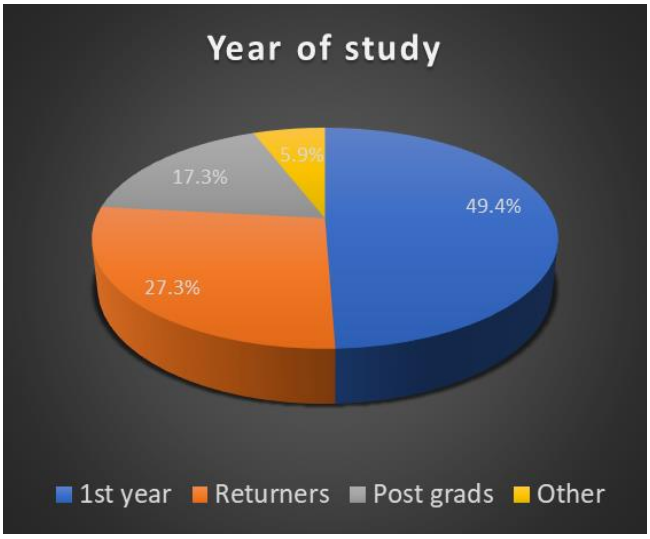
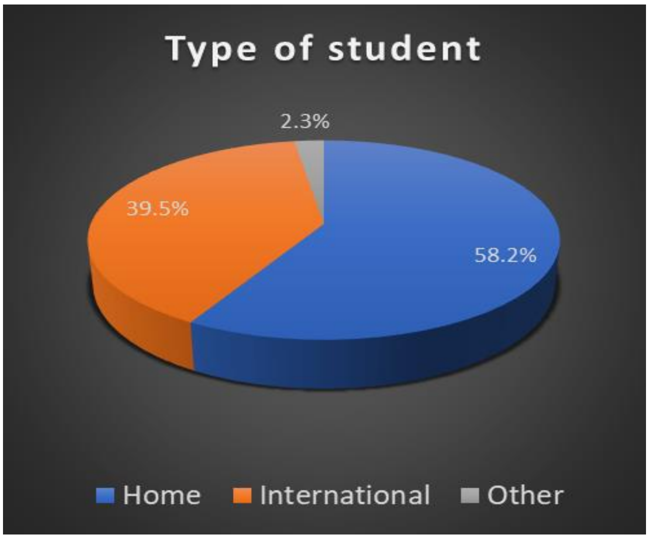


Figure 2: PBSA occupancy broken down by type of student origin



1.7 The results of the Occupancy Survey indicate that Nottingham is becoming a more competitive PBSA market, following years of under-provision of bedspaces. This will likely put pressure on providers to limit rent increases, improve existing facilities, and offer incentives to attract students to live in PBSA. It may be that some providers of smaller, older, and less well-located PBSA schemes may consider exiting the market – a trend that will need to be monitored. Additionally, the higher vacancy rates for studios compared to cluster flats suggest that Nottingham's PBSA market has a generally sufficient capacity of studio accommodation. This therefore provides further evidence on the Council's position that future PBSA schemes should be focused on shared living accommodation and limiting studios.