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**ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS ENTERS NEW COMMERCIAL ERA  
WITH VERSION 3 OF ITS WEBSITE**

*– Major developments to No 1 student accommodation website enable  
landlord charging and other key new features –*

(London, 8/2/05) Accommodation for Students (AFS) ([www.accommodationforstudents.com](http://www.accommodationforstudents.com)), the UK's No 1 student accommodation website, today announced the launch of the latest major website developments, Version 3, which will take it into a new era in terms of leading the online student accommodation market and transforming the already successful student website into a powerful revenue-generating concern.

Central to the re-launched site is a secure and sophisticated integrated online payment system for the charging of landlords and students for its services. AFS started off life as a free service to both landlords and students. Accommodation for Students' strategy was to run a free website initially so that landlords and letting agents could test for themselves the effectiveness and accountability of the service, especially compared to conventional offline advertising. The latest developments represent the culmination of the company's long-term plan to finally move to a payment-only system for all landlords and letting agents to advertise their properties.

Director and co-founder, William Berry, said:

“The site has been phenomenally successful since its launch 3 years ago and, is effectively, the only site on the market with full UK student and property coverage. We have over 200,000 registered student users and we deal with over 5,000 landlords and letting agents, and 15,000 properties. We also cover most of the main Larger Private Housing Schemes (LPHS) run by the likes of Unite and Jarvis, 135 in all throughout the UK.

We are number one in all the search engines, attract over ¼ million unique users and ¾ million page views per month, and receive 3.5 million hits a week on the website.

Our credibility is high with large corporations and we can list among our main sponsors and advertisers Virgin Mobile, STA Travel and Unite. We are also please to announce that, since the end of last year, we are now officially partnered with MSN where we have our own micro site in its Student Finance sector. Properties advertised on the AFS site now also appear on the MSN site with its own huge website traffic. We expect to conclude a similar deal shortly with Virgin Student.

Now that they are paying for the service, all this confirms to landlords that we attract the volume of student traffic that ensures the prompt renting of their properties once they advertise on the site. Our feedback confirming this has been superb – see below.

We charge landlords only £5 per month to advertise a property. For letting agents and LPHS this can come down to as little as £1

per month per property. Our new payment system ensures a full transaction and invoice history and allows the landlord to easily update his details. Our site also has more functionality and improved customer service. The latest technological developments allow multiple picture uploads and other helpful admin functions.”

Version 3 also features new student benefits. The search facility has been improved to include searches by move-in dates and university, whilst the already popular Notice Board now allows student to upload pictures and profiles. Students, for a small fee of £1.50, can now even post a detailed notice advertising a room to ensure better response. (They pay via a reverse SMS charge to their phone bill, which the student activates and confirms.)

Berry continued:

“This is a watershed in our operation and we have geared up in terms of investment and resource to reflect this increased commercial emphasis for our business. Early indications from landlord subscriptions and our own financial estimates suggest that we will increase our revenue five-fold to around £½ million in our first full year of charging. The excellent results both students and landlords have had over the past 3 years is now reaping its own rewards. We will continue to invest back into the site to continue to optimise the service to landlords and students alike.”

Already Accommodation for Students has received positive feedback on the effectiveness and value-for-money of its new, improved service, as evidenced in the recent e-mail correspondence below:

“Of the 4 enquiries we have had, the first one looks as though it has got the house let! We have got it to a good standard and are asking a very cheap rent in a good area of Newcastle but even so it’s a good result! If the let should fall through I will get back to you and re-advertise on your new version of the site. In the meantime thank you for an excellent service”, Martin Sinclair, a landlord from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2005.

“Hi! I have only just found your site and within 3 hours managed to let my house. Thank-you!! Thanks, Sarah”, Sarah Carter from Leicester, 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2005.

– ENDS –

### **About Accommodation for Students**

Accommodation for Students Ltd. was founded by William Berry and Simon Thompson, graduates from Manchester Metropolitan University, in June 2000.

### **Partners**

Accommodation for students is a content partner for MSN (MSN displays AFS content on its website) <http://afs.money.msn.co.uk> and Virgin Student.

Accommodation for students is sponsored by STA Travel, Virgin Mobile, Saxon Insurance and Barclays Bank.

### **Accolades**

- Nominated for Best Use of Web in 2004 New Media Age Awards.
- Highly Commended in the Best Industry Innovation category at the inaugural 2002 Property Business Awards

**The site's features include:**

**For students**

- A powerful search engine accessing a nationwide database of student accommodation properties
- An easy-to-use, comprehensive set of accommodation criteria, including geographical location, number of rooms (including required size of room), rent, availability dates, interior facilities (from satellite/cable television to dishwasher), exterior facilities (from garden to off-street parking) and service facilities (e.g. CORGI registered gas central heating)
- Notice board facility with student profile and avatar features. Also detailed messaging services.
- Clipboard facility to save accommodation details
- Landlord e-mail facility which sends an e-mail to the landlord with one click when a student finds a property they like. The e-mail specifies the house and student details and effects an introduction between the student and landlord.
- Chatroom to allow potential housemates to talk to each other and review house options.

**For Landlords**

- Sophisticated, user-friendly '**landlord admin suite**' which allows landlords to directly upload and edit their property details and pictures on the Accommodation for Students website. The unique measurement facility allows landlords to judge the effectiveness of the website in attracting student interest to their properties and ultimately their letting.
- Fully integrated online payment system with full transaction history and invoice reporting functionality.
- Multiple image and logo upload facility
- Easy contact system: Accommodation for Students '**e-mail landlord service**'. This service enables students to send a generic e-mail of interest to a landlord with one click. This also ensures the privacy of landlord email addresses.

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