Use of Airbnb and Similar Service Providers (Business Travel: Accommodation)

On 16 February 2017, the University’s Health, Safety and Security Department issued specific guidance and caveats on the use of Airbnb when travelling on business.

It is now necessary to update this guidance so that it extends to any internet-based service that connects owners of privately owned accommodation with potential customers who wish to rent the property. Examples include (but are not restricted to):

- Airbnb
- Homeaway
- TripAdvisor Vacation Rentals
- Uniplaces etc.

The accommodation offered via these service providers can range from a spare room in someone’s house, to a large vacant holiday property. The University recognises that this type of arrangement can represent better value than staying in a hotel, particularly for group travel where a large, vacant property with sufficient bedrooms can be booked.

The Policy

The University’s Insurance Service providers will accept, the use of such service providers, subject to the following conditions (including health and personal safety) requirements being met:

1. You have already checked with the approved travel agent and they cannot offer comparable value for money;
2. You are making a group booking (for FULL property occupation by a group of staff/students);
3. You will NOT sub-let any of the accommodation space or rooms;
4. You are hiring a vacant property and will be eating out or preparing your own food;
5. You have checked with the property landlord (you can contact them via the External Accommodation Providers respective website), and confirm they have appropriate some and carbon monoxide detection installed and working and they can confirm/evidence the last test date of the system;
6. You have checked with the landlord that they have declared to their insurers that they rent-out the property and have appropriate cover for fire, damage and loss etc;
7. You have completed the University’s Business Travel Log so that Business Travel Insurance Cover is in place.

If criteria 1-7 are fulfilled, this can then be deemed as low risk and is acceptable. However, lone travellers (staff & students) should not rent out spare rooms under any circumstances.

You will need to make a card payment for this type of booking, via the Service Provider’s website. Please use a University purchase card where practicable. If you do not have a purchase card, the Procurement Office can advise which members of staff in your department hold a card.