



Manager of the Year

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Winner

Fiona Stewart, Student Living by Sodexo

Stewart helped to introduce a pioneering Residency Living Model, which was piloted within Northumbria University and is now fully operational within her business and across the wider Student Living portfolio nationally. It will soon be launched in mainland Europe.

Stewart presented the new model to her client and instantly they could see the commercial value and benefits the model would bring, and they agreed to roll it out. So she recruited a Residency Living team that is integral to the student experience. The services they provide support the transition from living at home and studying at school or college, to living and studying independently.

The Residency Living Team is made up of everyone who works within the accommodation areas. Whilst Residency Living has been associated with a specific team made up of Residential Advisors (RAs), Residence Living Team Leaders and Residency Living Managers, this is not the complete picture of creating the residence experience.

The team provides access for residents to fully embrace the opportunities that the university has to offer, through sport, cultural and other activities and events.

These are increasingly relevant to academic life and employability, both through the pastoral support it provides and through blurring departmental lines to create seamless links with Wellbeing, Library, Students Union and the Career Development Services.

Residency Living also works closely with the university's support services to ensure that vulnerable students receive appropriate support in a timely manner. For instance, support services provide a quick response when concerned for a resident's health while specialists are called in.

Such an approach requires a joined-up system of management and extra provision is provided to vulnerable students within the university community – out of hours if needed.

Key takeaways

The Residency Living Model created a pleasant, stress-free living environment through the management of residential community issues in the following ways:

- The team assisted in the resolution of interpersonal issues that arose in shared living environments
- The team offered advice and guidance for appropriate behaviour and conduct to assist with personal development, independent living, and understanding how to appropriately interact with one's community
- The team spent time developing your team including regular, one-to-one check-ins and biannual appraisals
- The team formed part of the student discipline review committee for the development of the non-academic student discipline process
- Residency Living also links with academic departments and is used as an alternative communication channel between department and student if required
- Advertise the programme early (in this case at Open Day talks) so the student body is aware of it before coming to the university