



**HMO Study by Loughborough University**

There is an under supply of HMOs in Northampton and the demand is likely to increase. There is therefore a need to update the current planning policies for HMOs in order to more effectively manage the concentration of HMOs.

It is recognised that HMOs are an important sector of the local housing market. However, over-concentrations of HMOs in Northampton have had detrimental effects on the character of local communities and neighbourhoods. Therefore, HMOs need to be located and managed in effective ways in order to ensure they do not result in over-concentrations and that they provide high quality accommodation.

The relocation of the University of Northampton has shifted the geographical demand for HMOs to the town centre. However, the increase in demand for HMOs is not solely attributable to students. It is also caused by a wider range of social groups, including young professionals, workers in temporary jobs and vulnerable social groups.

In Northampton, there are employment opportunities associated with the logistics distribution centres and industrial estates taking advantage of being located near to junctions on the M1 and in relatively close proximity to London. Further planned expansion for business operators will also result in workers seeking accommodation – particularly in the sectors such as general industrial, warehousing and retail – and add to the demand for private rented housing.

Unless properly managed, HMOs can have a detrimental effect on the occupants, the neighbours and the physical environment of the neighbourhood.

During field visits and the focus groups with residents, landlords, letting agents, the University of Northampton, Council Officers and Councillors, the Loughborough University study observed the following impacts of over-concentrations of HMOs on the local characteristics of neighbourhoods:

- Poor management and maintenance of private rented housing
- Dilapidation of some housing stock and housing facades
- Increased noise nuisance

- Unkempt gardens and yards, and overspill from refuse sacks and wheelie bins (especially in alleys) affecting the appearance of the neighbourhood and resulting in more pressure on the refuse collection teams
- Increased dumping of unwanted white goods and furniture in the streets
- Removal of some garden hedges / fences / walls to allow tarmacking for car parking on gardens and driveways
- Seasonal de-population of neighbourhoods (especially where there are a lot of students) causing high levels of population transience and turnover.