

PURPOSE BUILT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION (PBSA) GUIDANCE

Information Document for Under 18 Applicants and their Parents/Legal Guardians - released 24/03/2026, updated 31/03/2026

Does INTO provide accommodation?

Yes, most of our Centres can arrange accommodation on your behalf as part of the application process.

We recommend that students stay in INTO arranged accommodation (where available), for the best student experience, safeguarding and support. In addition, students under the age of 18 living in INTO arranged accommodation do not require a guardianship service.

What other accommodation options are available for under-18s?

Under-18 students may live in Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) with a UK based AEGIS accredited guardianship service in place. Please see the guardianship services information document for more information on guardianships.

What is Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)?

Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) is housing designed, built or adapted for students in higher education. They are regulated and created with student life in mind. They combine comfortable living spaces, generally with shared facilities, all-inclusive bills, compliance with health and safety standards and on-site support.

These spaces are designed to support both academic life and social wellbeing, offering a more structured and reliable alternative to shared houses. PBSA usually offers all-inclusive rent, on-site staff, wellbeing support, secure access systems, and structured tenancy agreements aligned with the academic year.

The legal definition of "Purpose-built student accommodation" means a building, or part of a building, that is designed or adapted for occupation solely or principally by persons undertaking a full-time course of further or higher education at a qualifying institution.

What is the difference between INTO arranged accommodation and an alternative PBSA?

INTO arranged accommodation varies at each of our centres with payment being made to INTO. We have student safeguarding and welfare policies, and maintain high living standards. It close to the centre (which reduces travel time), offers dedicated student support, a built-in student community, and excellent safety standards.

Choosing Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) means that the under-18 student will be living in a more independent, adult-focused environment that operates separately from the centre. Parents should carefully consider whether the under-18 student is ready for this increased level of independence before selecting alternative PBSA.

What is 'safeguarding'?

Safeguarding refers to the policies and procedures in place to protect young people from harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. In the UK, accommodation providers have a legal duty to help keep students under 18 safe and supported.

Things to look for in a PBSA?

1. A PBSA covered by the ANUK or Unipol National Codes

The ANUK or Unipol National Codes have a voluntary accreditation scheme. This sets out best practice standards in the day-to-day management of PBSA.

Members of the Codes will clearly display the National Codes logo on their website and will make clear which of their developments are covered under the Codes. Look for this when selecting a PBSA.

2, A PBSA that accepts under-18 students

Not all PBSAs accept under-18 students, so you will need to ensure the PBSA you select will permit you to live there. Students and their parents/legal guardians must confirm this in writing with the PBSA before signing a contract.

3. Location

Choose accommodation that:

- Is within reasonable and safe travel distance of the Centre
- Has safe and reliable public transport links (if not within walking distance)

For safeguarding and welfare reasons, INTO strongly recommends that students under 18 live within a reasonable distance of their centre. Please see below table for more information.

International Study Centre	Recommended location / distance from Centre
City St George's, University of London International Study Centre	Greater London area
INTO London	Greater London area
INTO Manchester	Located in the city of Manchester
Lancaster University International Study Centre	LA1 and LA2 postcodes
Newcastle University International Study Centre	Within the NE postcode area
University East Anglia International Study Centre (UEA), Norwich	In the Norwich, or greater Norwich area with an NR postcode. No more than 45-minute commute
University of Exeter International Study Centre	Within 4 miles of the University of Exeter campus
University of Stirling International Study Centre	Located in Stirling
Queen's University Belfast International Study Centre (QUB)	Within 4 miles of the International Study Centre

4. Safety and security

Look for PBSAs with:

- Controlled entry systems and doors (keycard or fob access)
- 24/7 staff presence (reception/concierge and/or security staff)
- CCTV in communal areas
- Fire alarm and evacuation systems
- Clear visitor and guest policies
- Emergency contact procedures

What is INTO's minimum requirement for students choosing a PBSA?

As a minimum, for our under-18 students we require a PBSA to:

1. Be classified a PBSA.

This means the building, or a dedicated part of the building, is only for students.

2. From a safeguarding perspective for under-18 students, it should include:

- Members of / accredited by ANUK/Unipol
- Security and building access, typically CCTV and key-fob entry
- Ensuite facilities
- 24/7 staff presence (reception/concierge and/or security staff)

How can I find a PBSA?

The National Code provide a list of developments who are covered by the code and are accredited: <https://www.nationalcode.org/Pages/Category/which-developments-are-in-the-code>

For students at our London centres - City St George's, University of London International Study Centre and INTO London – we have an existing relationship with Magenta House, a PBSA in a convenient location for both centres.

Is there any guidance on PBSA contract and payments?

Accommodation contracts in the UK are legally binding agreements. Parents are strongly advised to read the full contract before payment. Before signing any accommodation contract, students and parents should carefully review:

- The contract length (usually fixed for the academic year)
- Total accommodation cost
- What is included in the rent (utilities, internet, insurance)
- Deposit requirements
- Cancellation policy
- Payment deadlines
- Whether a parental guarantor is required

Can a PBSA operate without ANUK or Unipol accreditation?

Yes, a PBSA provider can operate without ANUK or Unipol accreditation, as membership is voluntary. However, accreditation is crucial for meeting the approved National Code standards, which reassures students regarding safety and management standards.