

## British Property Federation

1. The British Property Federation (BPF) represents the commercial real estate sector to government and relevant regulatory bodies – an industry with a market value of £1,662bn and which contributed more than £94bn to the economy in 2014. We promote the interests of those with a stake in the UK's built environment to government, and our membership comprises a broad range of real estate owners, managers, developers and supporters. The property industry, as the biggest contributing sector to UK GDP, is an important direct and indirect facilitator of growth in our economy, and we ensure the political agenda recognises this.
2. We are delighted to provide evidence to the Migration Advisory Committee and abet their review into the social and economic impact of International Students in the UK. We welcome the work done by the Committee and believe that this is an opportunity to outline the importance of international students to the Higher Education Sector and UK communities.
3. We would be delighted to provide further information on any aspect of this paper on request. Please contact Raja Hanna (Policy Officer), [rhanna@bpf.org.uk](mailto:rhanna@bpf.org.uk), 020 7802 121.

## Case Studies

### *Unite Students*

4. Unite Students is the leading provider of purpose-built student accommodation in the UK, providing homes for 50000 students, across 28 cities. They have 16,000 international students (including 11,600 non-eu) which makes up around 35% of their customer base, and they hold a number of initiatives which involve international students and provide value to UK students, the higher education sector, the economy and the local community.
  - 4.1. They undertake several events during the year and at check in, as well as mixing students up amongst cluster flats, so international students live and engage with domestic students to help students integrate themselves. This proves to be a valuable cultural learning opportunity to domestic students.
  - 4.2. They employ people who speak foreign languages to help offer support during the sales/move in period. As the UK has universities across its width and breadth, this provides jobs to local communities across the country, a key objective in the Government's Industrial Strategy.
  - 4.3. They also run a student ambassador programme, where second/third/post graduate students are recruited to act as ambassadors for the new intake of students. This includes undertaking remote viewings via skype, the ability for new international customers to talk to someone from their own country about their experiences of moving to the UK and the ambassadors also arrange social events to help new students make friends. This again helps with integration, cultural development and provides jobs and some source of income for the students which Unite employ, this obviously benefits the local economy, however the events that are run also provide additional services to the local community.

### **ASRA**

5. ASRA, the Association for Student Residential Accommodation, supports student accommodation professionals throughout the UK and Ireland. They hold several events and training programs, with one of their objectives: seeking to enhance the international student experience and integrating domestic and international students together. They have spent several years developing and refining a programme that now delivers over 1,750 events, attracting over 30,000 students every year for both international and domestic students. These events and training programs provide domestic students with a unique exposure to international students and their cultures. This is on top of the economic and employment benefits that such events bring to UK communities and local economies. Furthermore, many of the locations that these events are held, rely on nearby universities and students to be their primary source of income.

### **Conclusion**

6. Higher Education provides individuals with more than just an academic education, it also provides a social education that can be used in a variety of business and communal contexts. Albeit harder to quantify, exposure to international students will equip UK students with the ability to circumnavigate the ever-globalising world and feel comfortable with the many cultures and ethnicities that they will have to interact with in contemporary business and society. This conclusive statement is supported by the results of a survey commissioned by HEPI/HEA in 2015, indicating that over three-quarters of respondents believe that studying alongside people from other countries is 'useful preparation for working in a global environment'<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) and the Higher Education Academy (HEA) survey 2015

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