

# Birmingham Student Housing Co-operative



**8 homes**  
**Affordable rented**

**For further  
information:**  
[www.students.coop](http://www.students.coop)



**It's inspiring to see a new generation using the co-op model to solve their problems**  
**Vivian Woodell – Chief Executive The Phone Co-op**

Aiming to establish low cost ways to provide accommodation for Birmingham's student population, Birmingham Student Housing Co-operative was set up in 2014. The co-op's first building on Pershore Road in Birmingham was bought by the Phone Co-op who gave the co-op a 30 year lease with an option for the co-op to buy.

The co-op rents its 8 rooms (originally 7 rooms, but the co-op converted a garage into an additional bedroom) and the home's shared facilities to its members at a rent of £56 per week, considerably cheaper than other forms of student accommodation. The co-op buys some support services from service provider Birmingham Co-operative Housing Services, a part of Accord Housing Group, but manages most of its services through its voluntary members, including managing rent collection, repairs and letting new homes. With the co-op now into its second

year, and with a turnover of membership that has seen three members leave in 2015 and three leaving in 2016, the co-op lets its rooms exclusively to current students from the nearby University of Birmingham. Advertising for new members in the student union and on social media, applicants are chosen on the basis of their *co-operability*. The Co-op is current looking to buy a second house and is exploring raising capital.

Birmingham Student Housing Co-op is a member of Students for Co-operation, a federation of over 25 student-run co-operatives across Britain. The network includes on-campus co-ops selling food, bike repair workshops, a swap and reuse hub, and two other housing co-ops in Sheffield and Edinburgh.



Along with the student housing co-ops in Sheffield and Edinburgh, the progress made by Birmingham Student Housing Cooperative demonstrates that another way is possible for housing Britain's students - one that is affordable, empowering and free from landlord exploitation. There is no reason why this model can't work across the UK. In time these co-ops hope to purchase their properties outright, allowing generations of students to benefit and for the movement to fund its own growth.

**Mike Shaw, Network Coordinator for Students for Cooperation**



It was a two-year process to set up our co-operative. Due to the high price of housing and exploitative landlords who tend to prey on the transitory nature of student life with poor quality housing, it is especially important to create cheaper, more efficient ways of housing the student population.

**Helena Dunnet Orridge, a founder member of the co-op & of Students for Co-operation**