



The housing market in the Tübingen–Hohenheim university region is extremely tight. The student union’s bed spaces are limited. Cheap housing is increasingly becoming a scarce commodity. So what can students do? We talk about this in this episode with Angela Muhl from our dormitory administration.

Mang: Welcome to a new episode of our my–stuwe podcast. I’m Philipp Mang, the press officer of the Studierendenwerk, and I’ll be answering your most important questions again today. In the last part of our housing series, you learned how moving into a hall of residence works, i.e. what you have to do before you can finally move into your new home. Today, we’re looking at all those who unfortunately couldn’t get a place in a hall of residence.

The housing market here in Germany is really quite tight. At the same time, the prices for gas, electricity, heat and food are going through the roof. Cheap housing is becoming increasingly scarce. So what can you students do? That’s what I want to talk about today with Angela Muhl from our hall of residence administration. You already met her in the last episode.

Mrs. Muhl, yes, it’s nice that we can be with you again. I already said it in the introduction. In this episode, we are dealing with a rather unpleasant topic: the housing shortage and the resulting difficulties for students. Unpleasant, but definitely important to talk about. Unfortunately, we can’t offer all first–year students a place in our halls of residence. So maybe we’ll start with some numbers or an assessment. What is the situation like here at the moment?

Muhl: Nice to have you back, even if we have a not so nice topic today. As you mentioned and due to the high demand in the market, especially in the winter semester, one can really say that we are managing a shortage of housing. The pressure on students with rising rent and energy costs increases the demand on the Studierendewerk. Even though our supply rate is above the national average, we unfortunately cannot offer every student a room, as much as we would like to.

Mang: OK, so you can definitely see why it is so important to talk about alternatives on the private housing market today. So how does the Studierendewerk try to help in such cases?

Muhl: We offer an online private room agency and support the housing exchange with advertising campaigns. Unfortunately, we can’t do that much beyond that.

Mang: Yes, the private accommodation service that Ms Muhl just mentioned can also be found on our website my–stuwe.de. Now the thing is: the Studierendewerk is certainly the largest provider of student housing. But there are other providers. Do you have any examples for us and how can I get the contact addresses?

Muhl: Yes, there are church and private providers and many other providers. We have a list of other providers on our homepage and, of course, it is always a good idea to do your own online research. You might find other providers via various search engines.

Mang: So now we have already got to know a few possibilities and alternatives. But let’s assume the absolute worst case scenario, I would say. In other words, students will not find accommodation either through private accommodation agencies or in the halls of residence of other providers or on the platforms you mentioned. What options are left then?

Muhl: The private housing market. WG–Gesucht, advertisements, Immoscout, but also simply include the area surrounding the place of study. There are often housing options there. They are usually a little cheaper. And with the semester ticket, the journey is free of charge.

Mang: The closer the semester starts, the more the

situation on the housing market usually gets worse. Are there any short-term ideas to bridge the gap until I find somewhere else?

Muhl: Youth hostel or look for an interim tenancy and on the private housing market. It is not uncommon for your own ad to lead to an offer of a flat. At least that's what students have reported.

Mang: In recent years, the media have repeatedly reported that the Studierendenwerk has set up so-called emergency accommodation for severe cases of hardship. Is that an issue again in the future?

Muhl: Yes. Unfortunately, the Corona situation did not allow us to continue offering emergency accommodation. But: now, for the future, it is planned again to offer emergency accommodation to students for a limited period of time. However, you have to be aware that this is a camp with cots. So privacy is rather non-existent here. That is why it is only ever an interim solution.**

Mang: Okay. Ms Muhl, you yourself have been working in the hostel administration for many years now. Is there perhaps one or two fates that have touched you personally in some way or that have remained in your memory? So stories that you have experienced in connection with students who were perhaps particularly desperate for housing?

Muhl. Yes, there are. So it certainly doesn't leave you cold when a desperate student stands in front of you and says: I need a room very urgently. If I or my team can offer a solution, then of course we are all happy and glad that we could help them. Unfortunately, there have also been cases where we couldn't help because we simply didn't have any more free rooms and had to leave the students behind in despair. And just refer them to these alternative offers that we mentioned before. It is really nice when we hear from the students afterwards that they have found temporary accommodation on the private housing market and that we were able to accommodate them in a room in a hall of residence at a later date.

Mang: It's certainly something that gets to you at that moment, when they're desperately looking for housing. So let's bring it back to the point. What advice can you give our first-year students if they can't get a place in a hall of residence with the Studierendenwerk right away?

Muhl: In any case, don't give up. Explore alternatives.

Don't lose courage. Apply again for the next semester. Stay on the waiting list. Sooner or later, everyone still gets a room.

Mang: Yes, those are really optimistic words to end on. That brings us to the end for today. Ms. Muhl, thank you very much for the interesting conversation today and for letting us be your guests in Hohenheim. I hope we were able to give you a few tips to help you make better progress in your difficult search for a room. As always, you can give us feedback on the episode on social media. Feel free to write us if you have any tips for other students on how you found your room. And otherwise, thank you for listening and I look forward to seeing you again next time. See you then. Ciao.

**Note: This transcription of the podcast was generated with the help of machine software. We apologise for any minor discrepancies or spelling mistakes.*

*** Please note that the above-mentioned procedures may differ depending on the university location. In case of doubt, please contact our dormitory administration.*