

Welfare Zone

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Action Approve

Section 1 | Priorities for 2018-19

In this section of the report you will need to write in the projects you are working on and the progress made since they started.

Projects	Progress How has this area of work progressed since it's commencement
Housing & Student Accommodation Policy Motion 407 Not for Profit Halls Motion 408 Rent Strikes Motion 409 Rogue Landlords Motion 411 Housing	<p>Fighting rising costs and poor standards of student accommodation has been a priority of the welfare zone this year. As your VP Welfare I have contributed to and released the student accommodation costs survey in collaboration with unipol, this included an extensive piece of research into costs of purpose built student accommodation across the UK, revealing alot of very interesting pieces of information we will continue to use to lobby for better and more affordable accomodation. Including mapping accomodation costs in purpose built student accommodation across the UK.</p> <p>This piece of work received quite a lot of press coverage and I used this platform to call upon universities and private providers to cut the cost of rent but also to involve students and their voices more when designing or building new accommodation, we also encouraged universities not to sell off their accommodation as it more often than not leads to drastic increases in rent. Using the NUS affordability policy as an example as to how Universities should be setting their rents. This report gave us a UK wide view on accomodation costs and this evidence will help the Welfare zone to continue its lobbying on housing costs. It was also the biggest and most expansive piece of research of its kind and is available for all officers and students to use as evidence to their university to lobby for rent reductions and an improvement in conditions.</p> <p>As VP Welfare I work with Unipol and the National Code to ensure that all student accommodation providers are meeting certain standards and making sure that students are living in suitable accommodation.As co-owner of the Codes that regulate purpose built student accommodation I continued in my role as member of various governance and oversight boards, as well as adjudicating in students' complaints cases my role of Vice Chair of the ANUK Codes Tribunal. I have helped set up and pilot a new wellbeing strategy that we will hopefully implement in student accommodation soon, ensuring that at a minimum staff are well trained and able to offer support or signpost to areas of support for students as well as advocating for unconscious bias training for staff who work in student accomodation. I also delivered a speech at the Unipol student housing conference where I advocated for cheaper student housing but also emphasised the need for students to feel safe in their homes and the correlation between sky high rents and the mental health crisis.</p> <p>I Re-launched and released the Homes for for Study research, this looked at student living conditions in privately rented housing, alot of the findings were very shocking, including the link between poor living conditions and deteriorating mental health within the student body.This report has been used to emphasis the need for better regulation of landlords and estate agents, highlighting the poor conditions many students are living in. We also are working with other housing campaign groups to continue to lobby for rent caps and better living conditions for all. This report also recieved alot of attention from the press</p>

	<p>and I will continue to push for better regulations for student accommodation as well as re-launching the ready to rent material from NUS to make sure that students are aware of their housing rights.</p> <p>I responded to a consultation on Government plans for open-ended tenancies and attended a roundtable event at the Ministry of Housing to discuss the benefits of tenancy reform.</p> <p>Advised the London Mayors Office on potential strategic interventions in the private rented sector that would help students living in shared housing including the possibility for tenancy agreement reform to make it easier for students to leave properties that are unsuitable without having to pay significant sums of money to break their contract.</p> <p>Contributed to Ministry of Housing working group looking at reform of deposits in the private rented sector looking at measures to alleviate the financial burden of moving house, including deposit passporting, inventory best practice and tenant education.</p> <p>Continued work with student activist groups to help support grassroots campaigns, including the set up of housing campaigns at Sheffield Liverpool and Goldsmiths.</p> <p>I led and delivered two renters activism workshops one in London and one in Glasgow, these workshops featured talks from student activist groups including acorn, shelter and sabbatical officers. We did workshops on housing issues, the results of our surveys as well as campaign training for officers centered around housing campaigns and how to win on campus. These workshops are part of a larger piece of work around ensuring officers and students have a better understanding of their housing rights as students and how they can help empower the student tenants around them.</p>
<p>Maintenance Grants & Student Funding</p> <p>Policy Motion 403 Grants not Debt</p>	<p>In my role as VP Welfare I have sat on the Students Loans Company stakeholder group and have raised issues over breaches of privacy of SLC especially relating to estranged students and disabled students, this has led to changes within the company to ensure that students are not always treated with doubt when applying for student loans.</p> <p>Around student money more generally I launched a pilot campaign on student gambling and did the first piece of NUS research into student gambling habits to get a better overall picture of what is going on around the UK.</p> <p>Some of the results of this survey were very startling including the amount of students who gamble to make money because their loans do not cover their living costs and the students who are gambling just to pay rent, we are using this research to help universities create better support networks and more tailored advice for students in debt or who are struggling with gambling addictions. I am glad that I have been able to use my role as Vice President Welfare to really highlight the issues of student gambling and the need for better regulation, this has included meeting with the Gambling Commission to help guide their work with young people and promoting the use of the Gamban app that helps students stay away from gambling apps and websites.</p> <p>I have continued to fight for the reintroduction of grants and the elimination of debt and fees in education. Some of the ways I have done this are through government consultations and press appearances including appearing on BBC news to advocate for the reintroduction of bursaries and grants including DSA & EMA.</p> <p>The welfare zone also published the student support and benefits handbook, which explains the system of student support and social security benefits and how they interact for students. This book is incredibly important for those supporting students but especially student parents and disabled students who are struggling to keep up with the many government changes to their benefit entitlements and how these are to work alongside student loans.</p> <p>I have also supported the work of the Disabled Students and Women's campaign against the roll out of universal credit, highlighting the issues it has on students who cannot claim universal credit despite being able to have previously claimed benefits that have been replaced by Universal Credit and the need for the system to be scrapped.</p>

<p>Hate Crime & Harassment</p> <p>Policy</p> <p>Motion 404 Anti Semitism on campus</p> <p>Motion 403 Hate Crime</p> <p>Motion 404 Online Harassment</p> <p>Motion 412 It's time to combat anti semitism</p>	<p>As VP Welfare I am part of the membership of the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector Stakeholder Forum run by the Home Office looking at safety issues and govt safety priorities. I also contributed to feedback and work led by UUK on how to tackle hate crime and cyber bullying looking at ways to make sure students are not victim blamed and are believed if they come forward. I have met with student faith groups including UJS to get a better understanding of what NUS can do to fight hate crime on campus. I also took part in the Lessons from Auschwitz trip that was organised by the Holocaust Educational Trust and the Union of Jewish students that was attended by over 100 student leaders and vice chancellors. This trip was incredibly important and a stark reminder that as student leaders we should be targeting hatred and bigotry wherever it raises its head and that we cannot be bystanders when we see hatred appear.</p> <p>I also worked with interfaith UK to promote the work of student faith groups on campuses across the UK and highlighting the work they have been doing and took part in the student bloc at the Stop Trump demo, marching with 1000s of students against hatred and bigotry.</p>
<p>Preventing Prevent</p> <p>Policy</p> <p>Motion 406 Preventing Prevent</p> <p>Motion 401 We do not comply: Preventing Prevent</p>	<p>In my role as VP Welfare i have continuously raised issues with and fought against the Prevent agenda in sector meetings and when asked by the media about my views on it. I have worked on raising awareness of the prevent agenda and the impact it has on muslim students, this has included a blog during IAM month that highlighted some of these key issues and well as publiscing the newly launched materials produced by the Black Students Campaign on how to campaign against prevent on your campus both as a student and a student officer.</p> <p>Much of my time this year has been spent developing a cultural competency framework for the sector on how to ensure that mental health support is culturally competent and does not exclude or ostracize students. A huge part of this is emphasizing the effect that Prevent is having on Muslim students who are trying to access mental health services on their campuses where the Prevent agenda stops them often from seeking much needed help for fear of being put on a watch list. The work on cultural competency will also use the research from the muslim student survey commissioned last year to help shape this policy and guidance for staff in HE & FE institutions.</p>
<p>Mental Health</p> <p>Motion 405 Prioritise student mental health now!</p> <p>Motion 402 Mental health and hardship</p> <p>Motion 405 Student mental health</p> <p>Motion 406 Mental health</p>	<p>Mental health has been a big priority for the welfare campaign this year. Much of this work has been around trying to get to the root causes of these issues, understanding that sticking a sticking plaster over mental health issues just wont work and that to really tackle the mental health crisis we have to investigate the root causes. This included linking the issues around pressure and marketisation of our education institutions to the increase in mental health issues and speaking to the sector about how best to support students not just in times of crisis but along their entire educational journey. The Welfare zone highlighted world mental health day and university mental health day with blogs and press appearances advocating for a change to the system and for institutions to be more supportive of their students who have mental health issues.</p> <p>As your VP Welfare I have been a partner in the production of the Student Minds Mental Health Charter for Higher Education. As a member of the steering group we have pushed the direction of the charter towards cultural competency ensuring that standards of</p>

<p>and a culturally competent framework</p> <p>Motion 407</p> <p>Mental health first aid</p> <p>Motion W101</p> <p>Mental Health from the Roots Up</p>	<p>excellence reflected in the charter are helpful and meaningful for all students, including underrepresented/ liberation groups.</p> <p>Alongside the international students officer I sit on a partnership group looking at ways to share information to prevent student suicide in HE. Our role has been to represent students interests and to ensure that data sharing is done with consent. This has included advice given in the production of guidance for HE institutions on student suicides by the NHS.</p> <p>The Welfare & International zones also put in a joint bid for funding from OfS for a project on mental health for international students.</p> <p>The NUS welfare zone is also a Partner in Cabinet Office Partnership building on the Green Paper for young people's' mental health - representing the interests of FE and Apprentices - advocating for student engagement in solution and the creation of a student panel who would advise on necessary research and strategic interventions into the mental wellbeing of 16-25 year olds.</p> <p>I have also used by role to advise DfE and OfS in informal meetings on student mental health strategies as well as contributing to the Association of Colleges mental health strategy meetings where I highlighted the need for the NHS to do more to help students transition from CAHMS to adult mental health services.</p> <p>In my role I have highlighted themes of relationship between mental health and housing in national press at the launch of Accommodation Costs Survey and Homes Fit for Study and have attended roundtables to discuss how student accommodation can be better designed to create affordable sustainable homes that promote students' wellbeing.</p> <p>Advising on project being lead by British Property Federation on providing guidance to accommodation providers about the legal requirements and best practice in supporting student mental wellbeing in halls.</p> <p>Myself and Rachel the Disabled Students Officer spoke at the APPG on the ofS student mental health strategy in parliament, where we highlighted issues on fitness to study policies, the impact of marketisation of student mental health and the need for cultural competency within this.</p> <p>We also worked with the British Association of counsellors and psychotherapists (BACP) to improve on site counselling services shaped by student feedback as well as fighting against the outsourcing of counsellors and therapists within universities. We are also looking to work with them on how to ensure that counselors and psychotherapists have more training on cultural competence and unconscious bias</p>
<p>Sexual Violence</p> <p>Motion 409 It stops here: sexual violence</p>	<p>The work against sexual violence has continued to be a priority for NUS this year, primarily led by the women's campaign I have helped with projects and contributed funding to help promote this incredibly important and sector leading work. This year the women's campaign and FE zone have launched the first piece. Looking into sexual harassment violence and unhealthy relationships in colleges and sixth forms and I have continued to</p>

	<p>support this work in every way I can. Much of the work I have led around the alcohol impact project has been focussed on initiations and on lad culture and how to stop these harmful practices. I also visited Northern Ireland with Sarah the Women's Officer for their reclaim the night event focussing on ending sexual violence and harassment not just at university or college but everywhere. I am also looking to work with some allied medical students to review policy on sexual harassment in the workplace, which can be a huge issue for students on placements.</p>
<p>NHS Funding and Bursaries</p> <p>Motion 401- NUS for the NHS</p> <p>402- Save Our Services</p> <p>410 – NHS bursaries</p> <p>413- Dual GP registration for students</p>	<p>Much of the work on this project has been re-establishing relationships with various NHS campaigns including docs not cops and the unions that currently also support allied medical students. I have done work to ensure that when lobbying for bursaries to be-reinstated that we don't just talk about nurses but all allied medical students including paramedics and midwives to name a few.</p> <p>I have been working with other student organisations and student doctors to establish a much larger campaign into the reintroduction of nhs bursaries and an investigation into funding, this will launch later this year. This will also explore the mechanisms within which these students are able to raise issues around harassment in the workplace.</p> <p>The work around NHS funding has also been closely linked to the work me and the Disabled Students Officer have lead around Mental health, making it quite clear that the lack of funding for CAHMS and Adult mental health services have a huge link to the mental health crisis on our campuses.</p> <p>We have also campaigned on revamping the student loan system so that it is suitable to student doctors and other allied medical students who spend longer in education than the average student.</p> <p>We are continuing to lobby for students to be able to register at two GPs and looking into how we can work alongside AOC to make the transition from college to university easier.</p>
<p>Legal highs</p> <p>Motion 411</p> <p>Educate all FE & HE students on the risks associated with taking legal highs and lobby the government to include all legal highs within the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971</p>	<p>This year as your VP Welfare I & Rob the LGBT open place officer managed to secure drug testing kits on the NUS Purchasing consortium making them available to small and specialist unions and unions with less money, this was a huge win as before this only bigger unions had been able to afford drug testing kits.</p> <p>I also did a lot of press around the subject of student drug use and carrying on from the research commissioned last year have made strides to change the conversation around drug use in student communities and to advocate for support for students that doesn't just assume they are addicts.</p> <p>Linked to this work is the work I have done on the NUS ALcohol Impact scheme, this has included a lot of shifting conversations around alcohol, promoting better cultures and practices including helping students unions run less alcohol related activity but also working with the women's campaign on issues around initiations and dangerous drinking. A Lot of this has involved media appearances in which I have used my platform to emphasise the need for a better range of activities at unions but also the need for institutions to help support students who are recovering from alcohol addiction.</p>

