

  
**NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE**

# Welfare Zone Proposal

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<b>Proposal:</b>	We Do not Comply: Preventing Prevent
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<b>Submitted by:</b>	Welfare Campaign Committee
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### Conference believes

1. In September 2015, the Government made the Prevent Agenda a statutory duty so that institutions across the education, health and the prison service now must have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”
2. Frontline workers such as teachers, academics and health professionals are now obliged to carry out its recommendations.
3. In some institutions, Prevent recommendations have led to CCTV cameras have been installed in prayer rooms and Qur’ans being destroyed. In others, e-mails have been routinely monitored.
4. Student Unions are affected differently depending on their legal status, whether they are FE or HE, and their relationship with their “parent” institution.
5. The Prevent Duty has been condemned by a number of organisations for its reliance on racial profiling, from the Trades Union Congress to the Parliamentary Joint Committee for Equality and the Institute of Race Relations.
6. In addition, many academics and MPs have spoken out on the impact Prevent is having on freedom of speech. Members of the Lords, including Alf Dubs, have attempted to remove education institutions from Prevent legislation.
7. Due to a lack of state infrastructure, private companies such as INVICTVS have started delivering training in schools and other workplaces, for a fee.
8. 1 in 3 referrals to Prevent have involved people who identify as Muslim, while many more identified as non-White.
9. NUS has launched an independent helpline for students and sabbatical officers, to report incidents on campus and to seek advice on campaigns.
10. NUS is currently carrying out research on the impact of Prevent on UK campuses.

### Conference further believes

1. The Government’s counter-terrorism/security policy is fundamentally flawed in its approach; its concepts of ‘extremism’ and ‘radicalism’ are ill-defined and open to abuse for political ends.
  2. The implementation of this policy has had dire consequences: from FE students being stopped from campaigning for Palestinian human rights, to postgrads being interrogated for reading core texts.
  3. Regardless of a Student Union’s legal status or relationship with its “parent” institution, our movement has a duty to challenge and refuse to partake in any element of state-sanctioned racial profiling.
  4. Islamophobia is on the rise across Europe and legitimised by the mainstream media. Alienating already marginalised communities is actually counter-productive to preventing violent extremism.
  5. The identified ‘warning signs’ of radicalisation, used in Prevent training, are highly problematic and render suspect those with mental health difficulties, new friendship groups or who have recently made changes to their appearance.
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6. Islamic societies should not have more scrutiny than other societies, and unions should not put unnecessary barriers in place that inconvenience societies, their events and their members.

### Conference resolves


1. Continue to resource the NUS Prevent Helpline and use the recommendation from the research to inform future campaigns.
2. Begin targeting the private companies who profit from the implementation of Prevent, including direct action and shaming campaigns.
3. To mandate NUS Officers not to engage in Prevent *at all*, nor take funding from Prevent initiatives.
4. For NUS to encourage non-compliance by Students' Unions, and to provide guidance on lobbying institutions to leave section E of the Higher Education Funding Councils' Prevent reports blank, ensuring universities fail their submission.
5. Build links with Parliamentary groups, trade unions and other organisations in order to build a co-ordinated lobby for Prevent to be removed from all education institutions.
6. To continue calling for the Prevent Duty to be scrapped altogether, and encourage and support industrial action aimed at disrupting its implementation.
7. To call immediate national days of action on campuses where heavy-handed Prevent policy is identified, in co-ordination with SUs and relevant student groups.


**Proposal:** Mental Health and Hardship

**Submitted by:** Welfare Campaign Committee

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### Conference believes

1. A number of sources have reported a growth in the number of students experiencing mental health issues in recent years. An NUS survey has showed that 8 out of 10 students say they experienced mental health issues in the last year, while a third said they would not know where to get mental health support from at their college or university if they needed it.
  2. Alongside a rise in mental health concerns, students are under an increasing amount of financial pressure due to higher levels of debt, the scrapping of maintenance grants, bursaries and EMA; and a higher cost of living.
  3. Student suicides are increasing. Data from the Office for National Statistics for England and Wales show that the number almost doubled in the years 2007 – 2014.
  4. Research indicates a correlation between mental health issues, financial hardship and debt. A UK-wide survey of students by NUS found 63% of respondents worried about their finances very often and 33 per cent were considering work that may affect their wellbeing, such as night shifts. A further 38 per cent of Scottish students reported in the survey that they felt their mental health was being affected by financial concerns.
  5. In many cases, not enough adequate mental health support is available to students. Institution provided services are facing increasing demand, especially with the student numbers cap being lifted in HE, and cuts affecting FE service funding. Freedom of Information (FOI) requests by The Times published in 2016 show a rise of 68% in counselling service users at Russell Group universities since 2011. NUS Scotland has similarly reported a 47% increase in students requesting mental health support services, based on data from 12 institutions between 2011/12 and 2014/15.
  6. NHS mental health support services are under an increasing amount of pressure, with cuts to services and some departments being privatised. Average waiting times between referral and first appointments are also longer in NHS primary care services: 84 days versus 16 days at universities. YoungMinds also found that 75% of Mental Health Trusts, 67% of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and 65% of Local Authorities froze or cut their mental health budgets between 2013/14
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and 2014/15..

**Conference further believes**

1. Students in HE and FE should be able to access education with sufficient financial support that enables them a decent quality of life, and the ability to study without debt-induced anxiety. The current allowance of student finance does not go far enough in allowing students to live above the poverty line.
2. Financial hardship can adversely impact on the quality of students' learning experience, and is the main reason for contemplating leaving education, according to NUS's research from 2012.
3. Mental health support services, whether NHS or institution provided, need significant and serious investment in order to effectively serve the student population.
4. According to a tool developed by the Disabled Students' Campaign, the number of mental health practitioners required, as a ratio to students, needs to be higher in the majority of institutions.

**Conference resolves**

1. To re-affirm our support for universal living grants for all students, on the basis that education should be free and open to all, regardless of background, and launch a UK-wide campaign on these demands
  2. To explore further the link between financial hardship, debt and mental health amongst students and use the findings to inform the campaign.
  3. To calculate the sum of a living grant on the basis of the Living Wage Foundation's recommendations, taking into account certain benefits students have access to, e.g. council tax exemption
  4. To support student unions to influence local decisions on the funding and nature of mental health support services.
  5. To challenge institutions to evaluate the impact of their policies, such as academic appeals, and rules on students with mental health issues.
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