


  
The logo for the NUS Disabled Students Conference. It features the word "nus" in black, with the "s" inside a blue square. To the right of this, the words "disabled students" are written in a blue, sans-serif font. Below "nus" and "disabled students", the word "CONFERENCE" is written in a large, bold, blue, sans-serif font. The entire logo is tilted slightly upwards to the right.

# **nus** disabled students **CONFERENCE**

## Disabled Students' Campaign Live Policy 2017-20

If you need this document in another  
format contact NUS on 0845 5210 262  
or email [events@nus.org.uk](mailto:events@nus.org.uk)





## Purpose of this paper

This paper contains all the live policy for the Disabled Students' Campaign as agreed by Disabled Students' Conference 2017, 2018 and 2019. Policy agreed in 2017 will expire at conference 2020.

## Policy Lapse

### Policy Lapses in 2 circumstances:

1. If a subsequent policy over-rides it.
2. After 3 years unless Women's Conference votes to renew it.

Policy passed at Disabled Students' Conference 2017 will lapse at the end of Disabled Students' Conference 2020.

## What you need to do

If you are considering submitting policy to Women's Conference you should first check whether any policy is currently 'live' for that issue and whether you need to change the National Union's current stance on that area of work.


If you require this document in an alternative format contact [democracy@nus.org.uk](mailto:democracy@nus.org.uk).

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# Policy Passed at Disabled Students' Conference 2017

## Zone: Welfare and Student Rights

### Motion 101: Stop the Privatisation of Statutory Psychiatry Services

*Content Warning: Suicide.*

#### Conference Notes

1. The psychiatry service for 16-25 (up to 35 in cases involving psychosis) year olds has been privatised in Birmingham, being merged into a 0-25 service called "Forward Thinking Birmingham" (FTB)<sup>1</sup>.
2. This model of psychiatric healthcare is a pilot programme which is planned to be rolled out across the UK.
3. Some of the partners involved in the service are for-profit health care providers<sup>2</sup>.
4. As of November 2016, there has been at least one suicide associated with failings from the new service, particularly their home care and crisis teams.
5. There have been reports of people being treated as inpatients outside of the Greater Birmingham area.
6. One of the key concerns highlighted in service user feedback is that of high waiting times.
7. Issues around low-term sickness of staff members in FTB has been noted , particularly around stress related issues<sup>34</sup>.
8. There has been extremely high rates of PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) complaints , with a 71% increase from 12/15-12/16. There have also been multiple instances of patients being verbally abused by FTB staff because complaints have not been kept confidential<sup>56</sup>.
9. That there has been grassroots opposition to the process of privatisation of psychiatry services in Birmingham, both from local activists and disabled students' groups.

#### Conference believes

1. The privatisation of public services is a symptom of austerity.
2. The policies of austerity are leading (directly or indirectly) to the deaths of thousands of disabled people, through benefit cuts to the privatisation of the NHS.
3. The NHS, and the services it provides, should stay in public control, and should not be privatised and outsourced to for-profit companies.

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<sup>1</sup> [forwardthinkingbirmingham.org.uk](http://forwardthinkingbirmingham.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [www.bch.nhs.uk/sites/bch/files/bch\\_public\\_board\\_papers\\_29.11.16\\_v2.pdf](http://www.bch.nhs.uk/sites/bch/files/bch_public_board_papers_29.11.16_v2.pdf)


<sup>3</sup> [www.bch.nhs.uk/sites/bch/files/bch\\_public\\_board\\_papers\\_20.12.16\\_v2.pdf](http://www.bch.nhs.uk/sites/bch/files/bch_public_board_papers_20.12.16_v2.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [www.bch.nhs.uk/sites/bch/files/bch\\_public\\_board\\_papers\\_26.1.17.pdf](http://www.bch.nhs.uk/sites/bch/files/bch_public_board_papers_26.1.17.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [www.bch.nhs.uk/sites/bch/files/bch\\_public\\_board\\_papers\\_20.12.16\\_v2.pdf](http://www.bch.nhs.uk/sites/bch/files/bch_public_board_papers_20.12.16_v2.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [www.bch.nhs.uk/sites/bch/files/bch\\_public\\_board\\_papers\\_26.1.17.pdf](http://www.bch.nhs.uk/sites/bch/files/bch_public_board_papers_26.1.17.pdf)



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4. Statutory mental health care is a necessity to the lives of disabled students, particularly when HE and FE counselling services are underfunded and under resourced.

### **Conference resolves**

1. That the Disabled Students' Campaign lend its solidarity and support to the activists in Birmingham in their campaign – helping to plan and carry out actions such as lobbying MPs and forms of direct action.
2. That the Disabled Students' Campaign be mandated to campaign to stop the introduction of similar privatised psychiatry services in other parts of the UK.
3. That the DSO works with the VP Welfare to oppose the continuing privatisation of mental health care across the UK.

### **Motion 102: Put down the magnifying glass and look at the bigger, more inclusive picture**

#### **Conference Notes**


1. NUS is the self-professed national voice of students, with around 600 affiliated students' unions
2. NUS members include higher education institutions, further education institutions and apprenticeship providers. Within our members are specialist institutions including Derwen College, a specialist residential FE college for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities
3. NUS liberation campaigns are at the heart of our work, fighting for liberation from oppression
4. NUS this year has continued to develop the training programme – FE Leaders – developed specifically for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and has made an effort to begin to address inclusive practice

#### **Conference believes**

1. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are entitled to a voice within our structures, entitled to have their views listened to and their voice heard
2. NUS prides itself on access awareness, but, despite some raised awareness, still falls short for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Our campaigns and national conference remain inaccessible to this group
3. NUS has a continuing duty to ensure that all members are able to understand processes, to make an informed decision and choice. However, if learners with learning difficulties and disabilities cannot understand or interpret the information provided by NUS, then this is a barrier to participation
4. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are very limited in their choices for further education, and it is essential that their rights are promoted, defended and extended
5. Whilst some valuable work has been ongoing within NUS on addressing accessibility issues for this group of learners a more dedicated and consistent programme of training and a considerable organisation wide cultural shift is required

#### **Conference resolves**



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1. For the disabled students officer to ask the VPFE to further develop, maintain and deliver the FE Leaders programme developed specifically for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities
  2. For the Campaign to make a further call for the VPFE and VPUD to work with the Disabled Students' Officer to review NUS information, seek and undertake relevant training and produce accessible versions
  3. For the Campaign to make a further call for the NUS Disabled Officer, VPFE and VPUD to visit Derwen College Students' Union and other specialist providers to gain an understanding of how specialist colleges function to ensure that training is relevant to need

### **Motion 103: Nationwide student survey into mental health**

#### **Conference believes**

1. The number of students experiencing mental health problems has grown over the last decade
2. In 2013, NUS found 20% of students in higher education considered themselves to have a mental health problem, while 13% reported that they have suicidal thoughts<sup>7</sup>.
3. 78% of respondents in further education said they believe they have experienced mental health problems in the last year, (whether diagnosed or undiagnosed)<sup>8</sup>.
4. NUS research has shown course deadlines, exams and financial difficulties are key triggers of mental distress<sup>9</sup>
5. Mental health problems can be a contributing factor to students not completing their studies
6. Mental health and suicide provision needs to be a high priority of this government

#### **Conference resolves**

1. For the disabled students officer to carry out a national survey on mental health in students so that we can hear from them what they would like support in.
2. For the disabled students officer to provide activists guidance on how to lobby their institution for increased counselling provision.
3. For the disabled students officer to work with Universities to expand pre-existing mental health campaigns so that they are intersectional and reach more students
4. For the disabled students officer to work with the VP FE and National Society of Apprentices to ensure that the survey reaches all Unions.

### **Motion 104: Mandatory Provision of Dyslexia Screenings**

#### **Conference Notes**

1. In the UK it is estimated that 10% of the population are dyslexic<sup>10</sup>.
2. An estimated 4% of students enrolled at all higher educational levels (including undergraduate and postgraduate) had Specific Learning Difficulties in the 2011–2012 academic school year (SpLDs being

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<sup>7</sup> Mental Distress Survey Overview <https://www.nus.org.uk/Global/Campaigns/20130517%20Mental%20Distress%20Survey%20%20Overview.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Mental Distress Survey Overview <https://www.nus.org.uk/Global/Campaigns/20130517%20Mental%20Distress%20Survey%20%20Overview.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Mental Distress Survey Overview <https://www.nus.org.uk/Global/Campaigns/20130517%20Mental%20Distress%20Survey%20%20Overview.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> About The British Dyslexia Association: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about>





the umbrella term for Dyslexia, Dyspraxia / DCD, Dyscalculia, A.D.D / A.D.H.D)<sup>11</sup>. Many students are not included in the statistics because they have not been assessed.

3. Although students with dyslexia are entitled to the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) they are required to complete an assessment with a specialist teacher or an educational psychologist first. This can cost up to £600 and the student is often expected to contribute to or pay the entire cost for this<sup>12</sup>.

### **Conference believes**

1. There may be many students who are struggling with undiagnosed dyslexia without the means to access an initial screening or further support.
2. It is unreasonable to ask disabled students, who are already likely to have little money, to pay in order to receive assistance with a learning disability.

### **Conference resolves**

1. The NUS Disabled Students Campaign is to lobby universities and the government to make the provision of dyslexia screenings mandatory for Higher and further Education institutions.
2. The NUS Disabled Students Campaign is to lobby universities and the government to provide financial assistance towards Full Diagnostic Assessments.

## **Motion 105: Students Deserve Better Doctor's Notes**

### **Conference Notes**

1. Students with Disabilities are more likely to have to engage health services, with people with disabilities making up around one third of NHS users<sup>13</sup>. This means they are more likely to engage with mitigating circumstances procedures.
2. A 'fit note' is used to provide evidence of a patient's condition and the advice the doctor has given them and is provided free of charge. Currently employees must give their employer a doctor's 'fit note' if they're off sick for more than 7 days in a row<sup>14</sup>.
3. Students who are going through mitigation are often required to obtain a doctor's letter or health records, which is charged for. Sometimes a simple 'fit note' is more appropriate and free.
4. Currently there is a large disparity in the level and quality of information being provided for students as evidence for mitigation.
5. For a copy of health records on a computer, GPs can charge a maximum of £10; for hand written and computer records they can charge a maximum of £50<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Higher Education Statistics Agency [HESA] 2011/12 first year students by disability: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications/students-2011-12>

<sup>12</sup> Assessments: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/services/assessments>

<sup>13</sup> Doncaster and Bassetlaw hospitals, Disability equality Scheme 2009-2012, (Providing a Context, p7), Online, Available at: [http://www.dbh.nhs.uk/Library/HR\\_training/Disability%20Equality%20Scheme%202009-2012.pdf](http://www.dbh.nhs.uk/Library/HR_training/Disability%20Equality%20Scheme%202009-2012.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> When do I need a fit note?: <http://www.nhs.uk/chq/pages/1062.aspx>

<sup>15</sup> What are the fees for accessing medical records (health records)?: <http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/2635.aspx?CategoryID=68&SubCategoryID=160>





### Conference believes

1. That if fit notes for employers are free, then medical notes for educational institutions should also be free.
2. That there is not enough government regulation on these fees, and doctors have the freedom to choose what they charge.
3. That students already face a struggle to balance finances with studies – this is particularly difficult for disabled students who may be unable to work.
4. Disabled students are disproportionately affected as they may require mitigation more often; if they are required to provide a doctors letter every time then the costs would add up.
5. People with long-term fluctuating medical conditions that they have learnt to manage themselves may not require the attention of a doctor every time their condition worsens. It is unreasonable to expect someone who is not well enough to attend university or meet deadlines to be able to go to the doctor just to get evidence.
6. That it is immoral for a doctor to charge an unwell person for a note simply so that they can get an exam or coursework extension or deferral.

### Conference resolves

1. For the NUS Disabled Students Campaign to lobby universities to accept 'fit notes' when appropriate instead of expensive medical notes.
2. For the NUS Disabled Students Campaign to lobby universities to provide funding / reimbursement to students who have no other option but to pay for a doctor's letter.
3. For the NUS Disabled Students Campaign to lobby universities to allow students with a disability or a long-term medical condition to request mitigation without the need for evidence for every individual instance.
4. For the NUS Disabled Students Campaign to campaign for the government to abolish or lower charges for students who need medical notes and to develop a set of standard guidelines to ensure all medical notes are of the same quality.

### Motion 106: Sexual and Domestic Violence

*Content Warning: This motion contains statistics of how prominent sexual and domestic violence is within the disabled community. This motion only will include phrases domestic/sexual/physical violence or abuse and stalking.*

### Conference Notes


1. Disabled people experience disproportionately higher rates of domestic abuse<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Public Health England, 2015,

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/480942/Disability\\_and\\_domestic\\_abuse\\_topic\\_overview\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/480942/Disability_and_domestic_abuse_topic_overview_FINAL.pdf)



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2. More than one in three people with mental health conditions have experiencing domestic abuse in the past year and one in 20 people with mental health conditions have experienced sexual violence in the past year<sup>17</sup>.
  3. In England, disabled people experience twice the rate of sexual assault, domestic abuse and stalking than non-disabled people<sup>18</sup>.
  4. Adults with disabilities are 1.5 times more likely to be a victim of violence than those without a disability, while those with mental health conditions are at nearly four times the risk of experiencing violence<sup>19</sup>.
  5. Disability is one of the characteristics most closely associated with domestic abuse<sup>20</sup>.
  6. That a loophole in legislation exists than allows carers to abuse the person under their care, for example not allowing Trans disabled people to transition, sexual abuse of learning disabled people<sup>21</sup>.

### **Conference believes**

1. Disabled people are disproportionately vulnerable to violence and our needs have been neglected for too long.
2. There are barriers to disabled students accessing support in ability to access services, accessibility of reporting structures and stigma relating to disability and mental illness.

### **Conference resolves**

1. For the Disabled Students Officer to create resources for disabled student officers to help support students who may have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence.
2. For the Disabled Students Officer to work with other third party organisations such as Disabled Survivors Unite and Winvisible and other DPOs.

## **Zone: Strong and Active Unions**

### **Motion 201: Disabled Students and Accessibility at NUS Demonstrations**

#### **Conference Notes**

1. In previous years, disabled students have faced barriers in getting to, or otherwise participating in demonstrations called by the NUS.

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<sup>17</sup> Public Health England, 2015[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/480942/Disability\\_and\\_domestic\\_abuse\\_topic\\_overview\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/480942/Disability_and_domestic_abuse_topic_overview_FINAL.pdf)


<sup>18</sup> Public Health England, 2015, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/480942/Disability\\_and\\_domestic\\_abuse\\_topic\\_overview\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/480942/Disability_and_domestic_abuse_topic_overview_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> World Health Organisation, 2012, <http://www.who.int/disabilities/violence/en/>

<sup>20</sup> Flatley, 2016, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2015/capter4intimatepersonalviolenceandpartnerabuse>

<sup>21</sup> The Mental Capacity Act outlines that carers must act in the “best interests” of those they care for, but this can be influenced by prejudice and allow the abuse of service users.



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2. The NUS has a commitment to accessibility and against disability discrimination, not just at democratic events, but in all their forms of protest and lobbying<sup>22</sup>.
  3. The #Wecantmarch hashtag used to highlight the problems disabled people faced in being included in direct action, with ways to make direct action more accessible<sup>23</sup>.

### **Conference believes**

1. DSC has current policy on the importance of free, funded and accessible education<sup>24</sup>.
2. DSC also has policy which calls “for a campaign of escalating direct action with the goal of preventing these cuts” regarding Conservative cuts and their austerity programme<sup>25</sup>
3. The barriers faced by disabled students in getting to and participating in the demonstrations can include:
  - a. Inaccessible/expensive transport
  - b. Inaccessible routes
  - c. Non-disabled students telling them they are “too disabled” to go/be useful
  - d. A lack of tasks or activities available/advertised to disabled students making them feel they do not have a valuable role within our movement
4. Despite these barriers, disabled students have gone on demonstrations and this should be facilitated.
5. Disabled students who can’t march can take part in a wide range of other activities leading up to, and on the day. Such as: arrestee support, graphic design, press work etc.

### **Conference resolves**

1. DSC should send out to SUs information about why it is important disabled students are involved in NUS demonstrations, and how to put in measures to ensure disabled student’s involvement.
2. That there are certain requirements for any route chosen, which include:
  - a. Stewards are clearly marked by wearing florescent bibs.
  - b. Stewards are to be trained and able to inform/direct on:
    - i. Accessible toilets at the start of the march, and along the route.
    - ii. Dropped curbs at the start and end of the route and where the leaving points are.
    - iii. Leaving points marked by stewards allowing people to leave.
  - c. The first bloc on any demonstration should be the Disabled Students’ Bloc, so they are able to set the pace of the demonstration.
  - d. That there be an accessible area for disabled people to listen to speakers during rallies, and that the stage itself is accessible.

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<sup>22</sup> [http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/nusdigital/document/documents/21531/NUS\\_Articles\\_Rules\\_January2016.pdf](http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/nusdigital/document/documents/21531/NUS_Articles_Rules_January2016.pdf) “Equal Opportunit


<sup>23</sup> [anticuts.com/2015/05/25/wecantmarch-on-may-27th](http://anticuts.com/2015/05/25/wecantmarch-on-may-27th) [wecantmarch.wordpress.com/2015/05/11/what-is-wecantmarch](http://wecantmarch.wordpress.com/2015/05/11/what-is-wecantmarch)

<sup>24</sup> [https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/16791/Disabled%20Students%20Policy%20201316.pdf?](https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/16791/Disabled%20Students%20Policy%20201316.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNQ&Expires=1472143894&Signature=918fEqhHLA%2Bkhzzs%2BcGPaab%2FY3A%3D)

[AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNQ&Expires=1472143894&Signature=918fEqhHLA%2Bkhzzs%2BcGPaab%2FY3A%3D](https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/16791/Disabled%20Students%20Policy%20201316.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNQ&Expires=1472143894&Signature=918fEqhHLA%2Bkhzzs%2BcGPaab%2FY3A%3D), Motions from 2015, 102+103

<sup>25</sup> Ibid from point 1, Motions from 2015, Emergency Motion: From Election to Austerity



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3. That there be an accessibility sub-committee for the planning of the NUS demos, in regards to the march and the route itself. This committee should be made up of the DSO and at least 2 other people from the Disabled Student's Committee, so that people with different impairments are consulted.
  4. That a "Demo HQ" be set up and facilitated by the NUS, along with the Disabled Students' Campaign, so that students who can't march can still participate in demonstrations, doing tasks that are essential to direct action.

## **Motion 202: Clear Accessibility information available for Student Union events**

### **Conference believes**

1. Accessibility information for union events nationwide are generally not available in a clear and accessible way. The lack of information regarding accessibility, particularly with the use of smoke machines and flashing lights, is endangering the lives of students with respiratory problems or photosensitive epilepsy.
2. The lack of accessibility information on event webpages can result in disabled students feeling excluded from all events or putting themselves in unnecessary danger. Unions don't understand the gravity of this problem and how easy it would be to solve it.

### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS Disabled Students Campaign should publish clear guidelines facilitating Student Unions putting on accessible events, with an emphasis on making information about the use of smoke machines and strobe lighting available on online events pages in a way that is straight-forward, reliable and easy to access.

## **Zone: Rules Revision**

### **Motion 301: Make NUS Events Accessible to Disabled Students**

#### **Conference notes**

1. Access needs of disabled students are disregarded/overlooked in terms of conference member behaviour and NUS structures.
2. Safety and wellbeing of disabled students is compromised.

#### **Conference believes:**

1. Lack of accessibility within NUS is a huge barrier to participation of disabled students<sup>26</sup> as the diversity of students' disabilities is not taken into consideration.
2. Members of conference are consistently violating the code of conduct through ableist<sup>27</sup> behaviours with no repercussions<sup>28</sup>.


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<sup>26</sup> In the NUS 2014 governance review it stated that the most common reason for lack of attendance at DSC was the inaccessibility of going alone and we would stipulate that this is a barrier to attendance at all NUS events.

<sup>27</sup> [www.stopableism.org/what.asp](http://www.stopableism.org/what.asp)

<sup>28</sup> NUS code of conduct states that discipline action may take place if there is a breach, which includes:

"Acting without due regard for the safety of others; and infringement of equal opportunities, safe space, safeguarding, no platform or staff protocol policy". The open letter above outlines examples of breaches at national conference specifically.



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3. The culture surrounding disabled students and their access needs will not improve unless there is an active move to take disciplinary action against individuals breaking the code of conduct with regards to safety and inclusion of disabled students.
  4. The failure of NUS to its disabled members is in direct contrast to the core value of NUS.
  5. Lack of thorough vetting of venues for its accessibility exemplifies NUS's lack of commitment to its disabled members.


### **Conference resolves**

1. To allow disabled student to bring enablers to all NUS DSC events<sup>29</sup>.
2. Ensure access breaks, lunch breaks and food for all dietary requirements provided at all DSC events
3. Ensure an accessible registration queue is available at disabled students conference, and to make delegates aware of this
4. To reinforce to all delegates the requirement for adhering to practices to ensure committee meetings/disabled students conference are accessible to all, including;
  - a. Reduced cheering or unnecessary loud noises on conference floor, including whooping and clapping
  - b. Consequences for those who ignore this requirement
5. For NUS to evaluate whether it's practices make events inaccessible, including:
  - a. No food suitable for those with dietary requirements
  - b. Long days affecting those with chronic illness causing physical symptoms
  - c. Unfulfilled access needs
  - d. Unsuitable accommodation
  - e. Lack of publicity for accessible check ins
6. To actively implement consequences for individuals breaking accessibility practices
7. To ensure all DSC videos have audio captions and British Sign Language
8. Accountability questions are put on the projector in rounds of 3 and alternative formats provided for those with visual impairments or learning differences.
9. To ensure microphones be used at all times at disabled students conference
10. To ensure that accommodation for each conference/meeting;
  - a. Meets accessibility standards
  - b. Where possible, that delegates requiring an accessible room are not isolated from the rest of delegates and are close to the conference/meeting venue
11. For DSC to work with elections committee to advise the chief returning officer on setting and enforcing guidelines for campaign teams, including;
  - a. areas they are not allowed to campaign in
  - b. receiving consent before giving out material to delegates
12. For DSC to work with elections committee to advise the chief returning officer and to include all liberation campaigns and sections in how to make election procedures and conduct more inclusive and accessible.

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<sup>29</sup> Disabled students have been refused enablers at a number of NUS events including NEC and liberation campaign committee meetings.





13. To seek feedback on accessibility of events.

## **Motion 302: Give Nations the Vote We All Thought They Had**

### **Conference Notes**

1. The Nations are integral parts of NUS Disabled Students' Campaign
2. Representation is key in all the work we do
3. Nations Officers are vital in the work NUS DSC does

### **Conference believes**

1. Nations' Disabled Student Officers should be full voting committee members of NUS Disabled Students' Campaign.
2. NUS DSC Standing orders should be updated and changed to reflect this.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To change DSC Standing Order 101 Part D "The Disabled Student Officers for each of the nations; Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will act as observers for the nations they represent on NUS Disabled Students Committee."  
To:  
"The Disabled Student Officers for each of the nations; Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be full voting members for the nations they represent on NUS Disabled Students Committee"


## **Zone: Society and Citizenship**


### **Motion 401: Support for Disabled Students entering the workplace**

#### **Conference believes**

1. There is a lack of support and information available to help disabled students who are entering the workplace
2. Disabled students often find it harder to find employment after leaving education
3. Many interview processes make it challenging for some disabled students to demonstrate their abilities effectively.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. For the Disabled Students Campaign to work with charities like project 100 to support disabled students to make the best applications they can.
  2. For the Disabled Students Campaign to lobby the government to put more programmes of support in place for disabled students who are entering the workplace
  3. For the Disabled Students Campaign to lobby big companies and corporate organisations to adopt straight to interview programmes for disabled students to make the process fairer
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4. For NUS Disabled Students Campaign to create a series of guidelines for placement officers/career services on how to provide support, run services and give information specifically tailored to disabled students applying, interviewing and going on placements.

## **Motion 402: Disability and Sex and Relationship Education**

### **Conference Notes**

1. Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is an essential part of education and development.
2. Disabled people can have fulfilling sexual and romantic relationships.

### **Conference believes**

1. People with developmental, social or intellectual disabilities have less (if any) access to SRE than non-disabled peers.
2. That inclusive SRE is something that all unions should be providing.
3. Access to inclusive SRE for disabled people is further impacted by their intersections such as being LGBT+, Black, Trans, a student of faith
4. Due to de-sexualisation of disabled people and exclusion from SRE, it is an area poorly researched
5. Over 50% of people with a disability do not have any sexual relationship at all


### **Conference resolves**


1. NUS DSC will provide information to unions on how to advise disabled students on matters relating to sex and relationships (such as the existence of adaptive equipment).
2. NUS DSC to create resources on educating student carers or service users (whether under social care or cared for by family/friends) on the legalities surrounding carers and sex, with specific emphasis on rights of LGBT+ and Trans service users
3. NUS DSC to ensure that the work of other campaigns are doing on SRE are disability inclusive
4. NUS DSC to be open to working with 3rd parties i.e. Sexpression in promoting DSRE (Disabled Sex and Relationships Education)
5. NUS DSC to encourage NUS Extra to work with companies such as Lovehoney who sell adaptive equipment enabling mobility impaired people to have fulfilling sexual relationships.

## **Zone: Education**

### **Motion 501: Make Course Assessments Accessible for Everyone**

#### **Conference Notes**


1. The disabling impact of current assessment methods means that disabled students cannot fully access their courses in the same way as their non-disabled peers and that courses do not meet with the Equality Act 2010's guidelines of reasonable adjustments. (Novotney 2014)
  2. That assessments which do not work for students can have a negative effect on academic performance and health (DRUK, 2017).
  3. Some Courses/Modules offer a single point of assessment for students (Glasgow University 2016).
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4. Prescriptive assessment dates and multiple assessment dates close together (Durham University 2017) can impact on the mental and physical health of students, especially disabled students, and also not fit around existing health needs/medical appointments (Novotney, 2014).
  5. That the main motion makes important points regarding the accessibility of assessments in general but fails to recognise that for many courses, especially in FE, institutions do not have the final say on the assessment methods used as they are more likely to be bound by certifying boards, professional bodies and government.
  6. There are a wide variety of adaptations and systems for accessing these adaptations from institution to institution which can, in itself, be inaccessible to students as they transition to different institutions and have to relearn systems.

### **Conference believes**

1. Those on courses/modules with one point of assessment consequently have no other opportunities to rectify their marks if their performance is affected because of illness due to no resits/other assessments.
2. Assessments on courses and modules should be used to measure the knowledge and understanding of course content rather than how a student can present it. As such, the method of assessment should not matter if the aims of the module and/or assessment are being met.
3. Students should be able to choose from a variety of assessment formats with regards to how they are assessed and institutions should provide this option to the level of standard.
4. Universities are not making 'reasonable adjustments' with regards to assessments and are therefore breaking the guidelines of the Equality Act 2010.
5. Mitigating/Extenuating Circumstances (M/EC) for disabled students should be easier to apply for, as access needs of disabled students either do not change or worsen, however medical evidence is still required, you can only apply, if you fail, complicated by the presence of a "Student Support Plan".
6. 'Accessible Assessments' should be a universal process.
7. In order to make assessment truly inclusive the Disabled Students Campaign must work on a national level to persuade government departments, professional bodies and qualification providers to improve and standardise their rules around assessments and provision of adaptations.

### **Conference resolves**

1. For NUS Disabled Students Campaign to work with VPs Welfare, FE, HE to create a campaign for 'accessible assessments'.
  2. For NUS Disabled Students Campaign to collect case studies of students who have both benefitted from having the choice of how they are assessed and also of those who have had their studies affected by prescribed assessments, single assessment points, or no re-sits.
  3. For NUS Disabled Students Campaign to create a campaign toolkit which can be distributed to unions in order to build this campaign.
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4. For NUS Disabled Students Campaign to carry out research into the impact of single point of assessment/no re-sits/assessment dates and times/prescribed assessment methods on courses to gain a better insight of its impact.
  5. For NUS Disabled Students Campaign to create a set of guidelines highlighting inclusive practice for all new courses/modules as well as reviews on current courses/modules at all institutions.
  6. For NUS Disabled Students Campaign to encourage unions to hold institutions to account when 'accessible assessment' methods are not upheld.
  7. For NUS Disabled Students Campaign to campaign to make mitigating/extenuating circumstances universal and easier to access for disabled students e.g. self-certification
  8. To use the evidence gathered in CR2 of the motion to lobby and work with relevant bodies, groups and government departments to create standardised best practice on diversifying assessment methods and the processes for students to access these processes that balances the need for rigour and preserving/developing standards with fairness, accessibility and transparency.

## Emergency Motions

### Emergency Motion 001: NUS Volunteers Should be Allowed Enablers


#### Conference believes


1. In prior years, NUS Group volunteers at NEC, National Conference, liberation and sections conferences and committee meetings have been allowed enablers if they required them.
2. Some NUS Group volunteers (on committees and steering) have been told they are not allowed to take enablers to NEC and National Conference due to the "Access Budget" not being able to afford it.
3. It is not clear where this change in policy has been made, or whether it was passed democratically.
4. At least one volunteer had to go to A&E after an NUS event where they were not allowed to take an enabler, due to the amount of stress and pain they were in.
5. Under the Equalities Act 2010, volunteers for an organisation must be granted reasonable adjustments in the case of disability.

#### Conference further believes

1. Disabled students should be able to participate in NUS democracy and events to the same degree as their non-disabled counterparts.
2. NUS should uphold its responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010, including but not limited to reasonable adjustments such as enablers for disabled NUS Group volunteers.

#### Conference resolves

1. To mandate the Officer to lobby for all disabled NUS Group volunteers should be entitled to have an enabler for NUS democratic events.
  2. To mandate the Officer to lobby for the NUS "Access Budget" to be expanded to account for any enablers a disabled student may need.
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3. To mandate the NUS Disabled Students' Committee to further the aims of this motion and seek to make it policy across the NUS Group.


### **Emergency Motion 002: #SaveKelechi**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Kelechi Chioba is a young woman, and keen volunteer for the National Union of Students (NUS) Disabled Students Campaign and Black Students Campaign.
2. She is currently placed in home office accommodation in Derby who has asked for asylum on the grounds that she fears ill treatment from her parents and family members in Nigeria because of her disability.
3. Kelechi suffers from polio, is wheelchair bound and suffers from mental health problems. In Nigeria, she is regarded as a curse and a source of shame upon her family, due to her disability. She has suffered severe abuse at the hands of her family, including verbal abuse, beatings and attempts to end her life.
4. She came to study in the UK as a postgraduate student, having paid for her visa and fees herself through work. She was sexually abused in the workplace, which led to her attempting suicide in desperation.
5. She came to the UK to escape the abuse, her mental health and disability worsened. Her brother and sister, who arrived in the UK before her have been caring for her, however she fears that returning to Nigeria would mean they would succumb again to the societal pressures and strong influence of culture and kinship in Nigeria that discriminates against disabled individuals.
6. Having to cover the costs of the wheelchair herself, financial hardship meant she could not complete her course. This made it impossible to apply for extra leave when her student visa ran out. Seeking help from the advice bureau on how to remain permanently, they told her she would need to give up her student status and make a fresh application that would now need to be made from Nigeria.
7. Kelechi made a human rights' appeal for her case for fear of prosecution and discrimination, which was rejected by the Home Office.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. It is a human right that no one shall be subject to torture or inhuman treatment, and that everybody's life should be protected by law.
  2. It is reprehensible that the government can say 'there was nothing sufficiently serious in the family or private life circumstances that could possibly outweigh the need for immigration controls to be enforced'.
  3. If she returns, Kelechi fears that she will face further abuse, and be put in a psychiatric home. Having witnessed patients in psychiatric care being chained up and forced to take medication, she fears for her life.
  4. We should not have an immigration system which devalues the lives of those facing oppression such as Kelechi. We have an urgent responsibility, as one of the world's richest nations, to ensure that
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those fleeing oppression and discrimination wherever they come from, get the same right to a quality of life in the UK as any UK citizen.

5. Whilst in the UK, despite disability and difficulty, Kelechi has worked and volunteered to better the lives of others and it is shameful that the UK government refuses to protect her from the oppression she unfairly receives because of how and where she was born.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To mandate the Officer to write to Home Secretary and the Home Affairs team, demanding a meeting on Kelechi's case.
2. To mandate the Officer to ask all NUS Officers write to the Home Secretary in support of Kelechi's asylum application.
3. To mandate Committee to promote the fundraising and petition websites in support of Kelechi, by sharing on social media and circulating in the NUS jiscmail lists.
4. To reaffirm our support for migrants' rights, against borders, and for an end to cruel detention and deportation policies
5. To extend our solidarity with Kelechi, and all those in detention and facing threats of deportation.


## **Policy Lapse**

### **A Disabled Students Officer on Every Campus**

#### **Conference believes**

1. That representation at a campus level is often the most effective way of dealing with specific issues affecting students on a daily basis
2. Many NUS affiliated institutions have little or no representation for disabled students
3. There are still some unions whose disabled students officers are not reserved for students self-defining as disabled
4. That often students unions struggle to engage disabled students and have unfilled disabled students officer positions
5. Many students, officers and Unions generally are unaware of the need for self-organised disabled student campaigns
6. Disability and difference must be embraced, supported and promoted within any inclusive organisation.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. NUS Disabled Students Campaign stands firmly by the value that disabled people know best about our own liberation - 'nothing about us without us'
  2. It is vital that disabled students voices are heard and that they are not spoken for by non-disabled people
  3. That NUS needs to do more work supporting students unions in securing disabled representation in their democratic structures
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#### Conference resolves

1. To produce a 'why have a disabled students officer' resource that supports students unions in the arguments to increase disabled students representation by the development of disabled students officer positions
2. Provide support and guidance to students unions struggling to engage disabled students in democratic structures
3. Produce information about what disability is, the social model of disability, self-definition and examples of impairments that could fall within the campaign
4. DSO and Committee to work with local Unions to identify the numbers of disabled students locally, both using institutional figures, HESA (or equivalent in FE), and promote this to decision-makers within institutions and Unions – covering activities, academic quality/examinations and the facilities/estate.
5. Brief Unions on the spectrum of disabilities and the diversity of disability both generally and locally within a student body.
6. Support local Unions in their strategy to communicate clearly and accessibly with their disabled constituency.
7. To assist Unions in reaching out to their disabled part-time students and older students who are attending College or University for the first time, and to arm Unions with factual information about the general lifecycle of a disabled student, including mature and part-time disabled students.

#### Requests for resources and sharing of best practice


##### Conference believes

1. Student unions all across the country are doing incredible things for disabled students
2. Currently this best practice is not collated or documented anywhere

##### Conference further believes

1. The NUS is in a unique position to connect and collate the work of students unions from across the country
2. NUS could be doing more to share the wealth of knowledge from within the student movement

#### Conference resolves

1. NUS Disabled Students should be developing regular briefings for students unions about best practice across the movement this should include but not limited to:
    - a. Anti-cuts work
    - b. Mental health campaigns
    - c. Time to Change Pledge
    - d. Education policy such as mitigating circumstances, fit to sit, exam process
    - e. Making campuses accessible
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## Low Cost Disabled Sport


### Conference believes

1. That HE and FE unions often provide a range of sports
2. That some of these sports are more accessible for people with different impairments than others
3. That not all unions provide sports accessible to all disabled people
4. That there are not always standard disabled sports near to all unions
5. There are several organisations including English federation of disabled sport, British Universities and colleges sport, GB wheelchair basketball, UK athletics, English institute of sport and UK sport, that are already promoting and working on initiatives to get more disabled people involved in sport.
6. Those organisations are finding it difficult to get institutions involved.

### Conference further believes

1. Sport has become an important part of being at university and of the "student experience"
2. Many disabled students are cut off from being able to take part in sports because their union does not provide anything accessible to them
3. Students should have access to sports at their union
4. HE and FE Unions are often low on money
5. That students should have access to 'standard' disabled sports teams even if they're a distance away.
6. DSC to continue working with BUCS to improve training and participation of people in disabled sport within institutions and the wider student sport movement.
7. DSC to make available to all members the research conducted by EFDS and published in Autumn 2013 about participation in sport for disabled people.

### Conference resolves

1. That we should work within our own unions with the support of the DSO to make sure that accessible sport is available for all when they want it
  2. To remember that our needs as disabled people will be different from those of other disabled people and support all students who come to us and want access to sports
  3. The DSO to conduct research into low cost options for sports that people with different disabilities can participate in, whether serious sports or fun sports
  4. To include in this research a questionnaire in order that disabled students can share their experience with adapted sports and offer information
  5. The DSO to make the result of this available online and email it to all SUs so that they have a clearer idea of how to organise sport accessible to people with different disabilities
  6. The DSO to produce a model motion regarding mandating our union to pay travel costs where practical for disabled students to sports teams that meet their needs
  7. DSO to support unions who wish to write a motion to mandate their unions to assist with their disabled students accessing sport.
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## Accessible Freshers' Events

### Conference believes

1. Many of our Constituent Members work hard to ensure accessible freshers' events with some being exemplars of best practice.

### Conference further believes

1. Whilst many of our Constituent Members work hard to ensure accessible freshers' events, NUS should be encouraging them to continuously improve year on year.

### Conference resolves

1. To encourage Constituent Members to evaluate and improve freshers' events in relation to disabled students' participation.
2. To gather and share best practice with Constituent Members on accessible freshers' events.

## Full time of paid part time Disabled Students' officers


### Conference believes


1. It is very difficult to know the exact percentage of disabled students in FE/HE institutions as there is no clear way to collect this data, not all disabled students claim DSA, not all those that do inform their institution, etc
2. Few FE but many HE institutions have one or more full time elected sabbatical officers
3. That the number of sabbatical officers responsible for a specific liberation group is rising
4. That disabled people are underemployed with relation to the general population

### Conference further believes

1. That disabled students face specific needs socially and educationally during their time in education
2. That sadly the needs of disabled students are often sidelined and marginalised within our own unions
3. That having a full time sabbatical officer responsible for disabled students, where the budget exists, would help mean that the needs of disabled students did not get sidelined and marginalised within our own unions and keep our needs central to the running of the unions
5. That often this is not possible
2. That it can be very difficult for disabled students to find work, due to the extra amount of time our studying can take us, and due to how hard it can be to find employment
3. That as a result we are often given a choice between working for money where possible, or doing unpaid work within our own unions

### Conference resolves

1. To campaign for full-time disabled students' officers within our unions where possible and practical
  2. Where it is not possible and practical to campaign for paid disabled students' officers on a part time basis
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3. The disabled students' officer to do research into the plausibility of full time and of paid part-time disabled students officers in general in order to formulate arguments for this
  4. To contact unions with these arguments in the hopes of engaging in discussion with them about this
  5. To support disabled students' officers campaigning along these lines and give them resources and information to help them in doing so where possible

## **Renewal of the Access Challenge**

### **Conference believes**

1. That NUS runs an Access Challenge in collaboration with Attitude is Everything
2. That the Access Challenge provides students unions with an easy and supported way to improve the access within students unions

### **Conference further believes**

1. Inaccessible students' unions, clubs and societies and venues are often cited as a huge barrier to engagement for disabled students
2. The Access Challenge has helped numerous students' unions across the country to improve their services and facilities; in turn this has improved the lives of many disabled students
3. Over the last two years the Access Challenge has not been promoted as much as it should have and seems to have dropped off the agenda

### **Conference resolves**


1. To increase the publicity that this campaign has, encouraging and supporting students unions to engage with the resources that are available to them.
2. Aim to get another 15 students unions running the Access Challenge in the next academic year.

## **Anti-Cuts on Campus**

### **Conference believes**

1. That the austerity agenda is infringing on the support services offered by universities and colleges.
2. It is often peripheral support services such as disabled support office, counselling services and occupational health which are the first to be cut when finance pressures occur this can result in services being decreased or even closed

### **Conference further believes**

1. That these cuts are having a disproportionately negative effect on the lives and achievements of disabled students.
  2. Campaigns against cuts and closures should be specific and targeted.
  3. That campus level representatives are best placed to tackle threats at their own institution, but that they require support from the national campaign.
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### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS should carry out and publish research into the services and facilities most commonly under threat of downscaling or closure and measure the impact this has on the lives and achievements of disabled students.
2. NUS should Map the closure of support services e.g. disability support offices, counselling services at institutions across the country.
3. NUS should collate the best practice from the student movement in fighting cuts and implement a system whereby the strategies and tactics of similar campaigns can be shared by different universities and college.
4. To mandate the DSO to produce and distribute resources to aid campus representatives in their endeavours.
5. To mandate the DSO to pursue an anti-cuts agenda at a national level, including publicising the problem, collaborating with useful allies and co-ordinating synchronised action particularly around;
  - a. ATOS
  - b. DWP
  - c. Changes to benefits
  - d. Workfare
  - e. Shut down of reemploy factors
  - f. Bedroom tax

### **No privatization**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Privatisation of services disadvantages the most vulnerable members of society.
2. Privatisation of services, particularly counselling services, has been proven to have a negative impact on students.
3. That disabled students often suffer from the impacts of privatisation.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. That the privatisation of services is wrong.
2. The privatisation of services will further discriminate and disadvantage disabled students.
3. That these services are essential to the welfare of students, especially disabled students.


#### **Conference resolves**

1. To lead the campaign against privatisation of services.
2. To support officers and students in their individualised local campaigns relating to this.
3. To lobby the NUS to campaign on a national and political level against the privatisation of public services.

### **Motion 401: Accessible accommodation off campus: Let's Investigate**

#### **Conference believes**





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1. Kent Union, alongside the Canterbury council, Christ Church Union and Canterbury College have run a successful housing accreditation scheme, which rates local landlord's attitudes and quality of housing.
  2. This accreditation scheme not only helps students pick the most suitable accommodation and corresponding landlords, but it also inspires landlords to improve their practices and property in order to earn good reviews on the scheme and, in turn, attract more student tenants. All this creates a healthy cycle that gradually improves the quality of off-campus student accommodation.
  3. Until this year, Canterbury housing accreditation scheme had not included any focus on accessible housing for disabled students off-campus. Kent's disability campaign has now pushed for a focus in this area with great success.
  4. For many disabled students, there are extra, unsupported or additional costs that draw down on our budget for off-campus accommodation.
  2. The effect of this can mean that accessible accommodation – private, social or University-managed – is located in a place that many not be best for travel to class, or for daily essentials (shopping, post office, pharmacy/GP or the veterinary surgery etc), is unsafe/poorly lit or in some other way doesn't pay for accessible, safe and homely housing that one could rent without the "disability premium" being sliced off our budget.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Finding accessible off-campus accommodation is a major problem for a disabled student. The chances of finding a suitable place are disproportionately narrowed considering they have to find 1) accommodation on a student budget and 2) one that suits their particular and specific needs.
2. The ratio between housing that is accessible for those with disabilities and housing that is not is extremely minimal to the former.
3. This disproportionately is exacerbated, due to the transitory nature of student life in general, disabled tenants are likely to only want to live on short term leases and live in the property for a couple of years at most, and so they will likely need any adaptations already fitted into the property before committing to a lease, as they will not have the time to establish a long term relationship with their landlord and build up their unique preferences gradually.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. To investigate how many disabled student tenants actually prefer off campus housing to that of on-campus across the UK in HE and FE institutions.
  2. To investigate the possibility of other institutions across the UK' having housing accreditation schemes, or something similar, with an accessible housing focus in order to discover good practice and ways of improving the system across the UK.
  3. To investigate how to advise other institutions across the UK who may not have established systems on how to best implement and maintain them.
  4. To have all of this information collected in an accessible format by next Conference and made available to all delegates so we can look into pursuing this issue further by taking action.
    - a. This research will be carried out with regards to the following statements:-
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- b. Not all disabled students need the same type of accommodation: wc, solo with ensuite, shared, carer or guide dog accompanied, ground floor, charging points, car park needed, scooters storage and so on
  - c. Some institutions have no on campus accommodation to offer students, this is a typical trait of FE institutions but HE institutions cannot be ruled out either or cannot provide on campus accommodation that is suitable for disabled students, which forces the student to look for accommodation in the local area.
- 5. Some universities have policy for guaranteed accommodation for disabled students. The University of Aberystwyth, for instance, provides accommodation around the local area and guarantee accommodation for disabled students for the entirety of their course.
  - 6. DS Campaign to link up with the Welfare Zone to provide tools and information for our SU advice centres and officers, to better the campaign for accessible and affordable safe student accommodation by all providers.
  - 7. To calculate the "disability premium" of expenses not supported by maintenance or benefits across the spectrum of disability, and to engage with sector organisations in raising this with the relevant Ministers across the UK and elected City Mayors/Provosts/Cynghorau Lleol/OFMDFM.

## **Motion 402: Accessible Universities**

### **Conference believes**


- 1. Institutions do not always take accessibility into account when building new institution builds;
- 2. Disabled students deserve complete accessibility to all institution buildings as a whole;
- 3. Complete accessibility is defined as when disabled students can fully access anywhere within the institution grounds.
- 4. That some institutions fall short of legal requirements relating to disability access

### **Conference resolves**

- 1. To request the inclusion and consultation of disabled students in the planning for new buildings/refurbishments of existing buildings.
- 2. To campaign for institutions to ensure that accessibility is a top priority for any new buildings or refurbishments.
- 3. To campaign for institutions to fully incorporate the definition advertised above.
- 4. To campaign for institutions and their planners to adhere to accessibility law
- 5. To apply this policy to all forms of Higher Education and further Education institutions
- 6. To adapt campaign strategies in cases of listed and temporary buildings in order to be as efficient as possible in as many cases as possible

## **Motion 403: Access based on needs**

### **Conference believes**

- 1. Many disabled students find it difficult to navigate and travel across campuses' nationwide.
  - 2. The Equality act clearly states ... reasonable and adequate provisions.
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### **Conference further believes**

1. That no student should be discriminated against.
2. That adequate adjustments should be made to improve accessibility on campus across the United Kingdom.
3. That pre-existing provisions in institutions be reviewed periodically to reflect the standards of the NUS Access Challenge.

### **Conference resolves**

1. The NUS Disabled Students Campaigns will lobby for a review of accessibility provisions on campus every three years, to ensure that standards are upheld.
2. The NUS Disabled Students Campaign will support officers and students in this campaign by providing the appropriate documents and materials.

## **Prescription Costs**


### **Conference believes**


1. Prescriptions cost £7.85 per item and £15.70 per item of elastic hosiery in England.
2. Many disabled students are discriminated against in relation to medical care.
3. Many disabled students are then disadvantaged financially because they require regular prescriptions.
4. People receive free prescriptions in the rest of the United Kingdom.
5. Many disabled students enter further and higher education part-time, and any policy or campaign relating to prescriptions, prescription costs and access, must including fighting for part-time students too.

### **Conference further believes**

1. All students regardless of age, in HE and FE, should be entitled to free prescriptions.
2. That disabled students should not be disadvantaged financially because they require regular prescriptions.
3. That students on a low income and with savings of less than £16'000 can apply using an HC1 form for help under the NHS Low Income Scheme
4. Those people who receive income-related Employment and support allowance already have an entitlement to free prescriptions.
2. All students aged 16, 17 and 18 are entitled to free prescriptions whilst they are in education.

### **Conference resolves**

1. That DSC send a motion based on this motion to national conference so that NUS, as a whole, can campaign for all students to receive free prescriptions and more help with health costs.
  2. DSC will support all students who wish to run campaigns to get free prescriptions and more help with health costs.
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3. DSC will make information about the NHS Low Income Scheme available to all unions so students know how to apply.
  4. Part-time students to be actively included in the representation and campaigning work of NUS on prescriptions and prescription costs.
  5. Campaign and lobby decision-makers in government and in quangoes to allow and promote widespread availability of longer-term prescriptions.

## **NHS Prescriptions**

### **Conference believes**

1. The length of time needed when switching GPs does not accommodate persons who require regular medication;
2. This is disruptive to students who are changing location and have to acclimatise to a lot already.
3. Transferral methods of records differ throughout the United Kingdom and for students from outside the UK it can be even more complex.

### **Conference further believes**


1. Not all students change their GPs when they move to prevent a disruption to their care.
2. Transferral of records does not always happen for related health services, including wheelchair services and specialist health care.


### **Conference resolves**

1. To lobby the NHS to have a faster system of transferring records.
2. To provide guidance for those wishing to run a campaign to improve services at their institutions
3. To provide guidance to those wishing to campaign to the NHS in their area to improve the speed that records are transferred.
4. To look at where systems are effective in this regard and lobby for systems that have been proved to work to be implemented elsewhere
5. To increase the awareness the possibility of being a temporary patient in a surgery where applicable and encouraging such practice where not applicable

## **Mental Health – Away from awareness, towards action**

### **Conference believes**

1. This year the Mental Health Summit brought together for the first time students' union officers and staff, external mental health and health practioners, institutional academic and support staff to discuss mental health and how we can improve it for students.
  2. Audre Lorde was quoted as saying 'Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare.'
  3. Trade Unions fought for the right to have an 8-hour work day.
  4. Being healthy makes you happier and more productive.
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5. Mental health problems cost £26 billion across the UK economy<sup>30</sup>

### **Conference further believes**

1. NUS should be striving to create positive change around mental health
2. The Time to Change campaign has been a huge success in changing the rhetoric around mental health and supporting campaigning to move from awareness to action
3. That discussions from the summit provided some exciting suggestions for creating this change
4. Self-care is a political act.
5. Self-care is about trying to be more self-aware. Noticing when you are over-whelmed, ill, stressed or exhausted and making changes to your routine and lifestyle that will help to improve your wellbeing.
6. Being a disability activist or Disabled Students Officer can sometimes be an isolating role.
7. Continuously campaigning for the rights of disabled people can sometimes be upsetting, mentally and physically draining and have implications on people's health.
8. Activism is often based in a very macho culture.
9. Disability campaigning is about community and collectivism, as a group we can achieve much more than as an individual.
10. Disabled Students Officers and campaigners are more effective when they feel supported and not attacked by the rest of the movement.
11. As a campaign we need to be better at articulating the difference between accountability and bullying, publishing the appropriate channels for accountability whilst at the same time empowering officers to tackle bullying and harassment.


### **Conference resolves**

1. To develop ways that mental health support and understanding can be embedded into the structures of students unions by supporting unions to:
  - a. Lobby for relevant and appropriate training for all staff
  - b. Ensuring that academic policies do not cause undue additional mental distress for students experiencing mental health issues
  - c. Ensuring support services and institutional policies are clearly advertised at recruitment and pre-arrival stage and that disclosure of current or previous mental health problems is actively encouraged at application stage
  - d. integrate mental health into the widening participation agenda, both nationally and locally by providing outreach to people who may not have continued in education as a result of their mental health problems and including mental health in OFFA agreements
2. Help students unions to win on achieving well-supported, appropriate services for students, which are responsive to the feedback of students and service users and flexible to students needs both in terms of the type of service (i.e. not a one size fits all, counselling for everyone approach), but also the nature of the service (i.e. number of sessions available, services available in the evenings where possible)

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/NSF/Pages/Mentalhealth.aspx>



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3. Support students' unions to develop joined-up approaches across institutions and external services
  4. NUS Disabled Students Campaign will develop both informal and formal support networks for women's officers across the country.
  5. Steps will be taken to ensure self-care is embedded in the work and culture of the campaign and student movement.
  6. Self-care will be promoted out too members with practical tips and advice on how to improve self-care for activists.
  7. NUS will provide information and advice about bullying and harassment within the role.
  8. The Disabled Students Campaign will promote the NUS activist mental health guides to the membership.
  9. The Disabled Students Campaign will continue to promote the Time to Change Pledge which involves unions developing an action plan to improve the support they give to employees around mental health.
  10. NUS will provide information and advice around best practice for policies and procedures that improve the support that is available to staff and volunteers e.g. access to support services, TOIL, mental health policies, sick leave/pay, management mental health training and bullying policies.

### **Motion 503: Erasmus Years and Years Abroad**


#### **Conference believes**


1. Erasmus years or years abroad are mandatory in some degrees
2. These can generally be done through studying or working
3. If a large part of your degree is a modern language and you do not spend a year abroad studying or working this can put you at a significant disadvantage in your final year
4. These are often also available to students who are not studying a language degree

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Disabled students are often dissuaded from doing a year abroad because it is believed to be too dangerous or difficult medically or practically
2. Whilst for some students this might be true, for others it might not be, and the student themselves is best placed to know whether a year abroad is possible
3. When undertaken they can be an amazing period of self-discovery and a wonderful experience
4. Disabled people are often under-employed and may find it difficult to access work during their year abroad making study the better option.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. That giving disabled students access to a year abroad is critical
  2. To work with our institutions and language departments on this topic to ensure that no more disabled students are left at a disadvantage because their department has decided that in their opinion the year abroad could be too difficult or dangerous, and to help them treat disabled students as individuals with regard to this
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3. The DSO to place some information on the NUS Disabled Students webpage regarding Erasmus years and years abroad and disabled students for students to consult when considering an Erasmus year or year abroad
  4. This should include a list of important things for the student to consider or research such as the cost of medical treatment in different countries, flight times, whether they are in work or studying, the accessibility of the place they intend to go to, whether the place they are going to has additional support for them to access etc, in order that students are empowered to inform themselves about their year abroad
  5. The DSO to ask for submissions of blogs from disabled students who took Erasmus years and years abroad for the website, and place these on the website
  6. The DSO to contact Students' Unions regarding the way disabled students are dissuaded from taking Erasmus years sometimes and urge them to contact the departments that organise Erasmus years and years abroad and that there is support and advice available for disabled students who wish to consider this



# Policy Passed at Disabled Students' Conference 2018

## Zone: Society and Citizenship

### Motion 101: Vagrancy Act

#### Conference believes


1. Homeless people who are rough sleeping continue to be criminalised through the use of the Vagrancy Act 1824 which makes it an offence to sleep rough or beg;
2. This barbaric, archaic law that criminalises the very existence of those homeless forced to take to the streets or beg for survival was used 1,810 times in 2016-17;
3. It is no longer in force in Scotland and Northern Ireland;
4. It serves no purpose but the punishment, persecution and stigmatisation of some of the most vulnerable in our society;
5. 307,000 people are classed as homeless – similar to the size of a city such as Newcastle. In Manchester, host to the 2018 Disabled Student conference, 189 people are sleeping on the streets according to Manchester Evening News;
6. Between 2010 and 2016, increases of 53% were seen in the number of homeless households vulnerable through mental illness and for those vulnerable due to physical disability, 49%;
7. Students who may leave part way through their course or who have finished their course may be faced with homelessness and will sleep rough.


#### Conference resolves

1. To urge the Government to repeal this harmful and out-of-date legislation across the whole of the UK.
2. To support Layla Moran MP's Vagrancy (Repeal) Bill;
3. To mandate the Disabled Students Officer to raise awareness of the implications of the Vagrancy Act.

### Motion 102: Postgraduates

#### Conference believes

1. The Disabled Student Allowance is an excellent idea in principle to provide financial support for disabled students to attend university;
  2. The rates announced for undergraduates for the 2018/19 academic year is £21,987 per year for non-medical support, £5,529 in equipment for the course duration and £1,847 general allowance;
  3. The rates announced for postgraduates for the 2018/19 academic year is £10,993 per year to cover all and any requirements;
  4. Immense pressure is placed on students by Universities to apply for charitable funding to cover the shortfall in expenditure to meet access requirements;
  5. Time taken up with applying for charitable funding distracts from focusing on studies;
  6. Uncertainty about funding creates stress – will there be enough support for the course duration?
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7. Limited funding artificially reduces the number of PhD opportunities that are available for people to apply for.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To undertake research into the levels of shortfalls in funding and impact on students;
2. To campaign for fair funding for Postgraduate support needs;
3. To mandate the Disabled Students Officer to raise this issue with Department for Education and Skills;
4. To identify ways of sourcing funding and sharing experiences to reduce pressure on students.

## **Zone: Strong and Active Unions**

### **Motion 201: Race and Racism in Disabled Spaces**

#### **Conference believes**

1. The Disabled Students' Campaign is very white - for example, the last DSO who was a person of colour was Rupy Kaur in 2011<sup>31</sup>.
2. The National Union of Students had to recently undertake an Institutional Racism Review (IRR), prompted and fought for by officers and volunteers of colour, after multiple allegations of the NUS having been institutionally racist<sup>32</sup>.
3. The results of the IRR have caused NUS to create a number of immediate steps and policies. They can be read here: <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/strategy/institutional-racism-review>
4. The Disabled People's Movement and its history has been whitewashed, erasing the efforts and achievements of disabled activists of colour, particularly women.<sup>3334</sup>

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Without liberation for all disabled people, there will be liberation for no disabled people.
2. Disabled people of colour face often specific and different barriers, as they are multiply oppressed by both racism and disablism.
3. The Disabled Students' Campaign exists at the intersection of the student movement and the disabled people's movement, so any attempts to address issues of race and racism in our spaces must address the issues of both.
4. The work of making our Campaign more inclusive and anti-racist should not be left to disabled people of colour alone.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. For the Disabled Students' Committee to conduct a survey into the experiences and barriers of disabled people of colour in getting involved in disabled spaces.

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<sup>31</sup> <http://disabilityhorizons.com/2011/04/a-chat-with-nus-disabled-students-officer-rupy-kaur/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/strategy/institutional-racism-review>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.dominickevans.com/2017/06/defiant-lives-is-essential-viewing-though-problematic/>

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/sarah-blahovec/confronting-the-whitewash\\_b\\_10574994.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/sarah-blahovec/confronting-the-whitewash_b_10574994.html)



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2. This research should look at both disabled students of colour, and the wider disabled people's movement.
  3. For the survey to take into account both SU disabled spaces, and the NUS Disabled Students' Campaign, it's events, conferences and actions.
  4. The survey questions should be set with input from the Black Rep on DSC, other disabled people of colour in the DSC, the Black Students' Campaign and disabled activists of colour.
  5. The survey should also take into account the experiences and barriers that Muslim and Jewish disabled students face.
  6. For the Disabled Students' Committee to run focus groups into the specific needs and barriers faced by disabled people of colour and to integrate these findings into our demands and campaigns.
  7. For the Disabled Students' Campaign, Committee and Officer to encourage disabled people of colour to attend Disabled Students' Conference and to run for positions.

## **Motion 202: Disabled People and Brexit**

### **Conference believes**

1. The European Union (EU) Accessibility Act is now stuck in limbo, as the United Kingdom (UK) is due to leave the EU before it comes into force, which will affect the rights and opportunities of disabled people to have access to accessible products and technology in their home and public lives<sup>35</sup>.
2. Other EU directives which include accessibility and the rights of disabled people are at risk of not being integrated in UK law due to the timing of leaving the EU.
3. The European Social Fund is the scheme that aims to improve disabled people's access to employment in the UK - the UK will lose access to this fund once Brexit is complete<sup>36</sup>.
4. The threat to freedom of movement is extremely worrying, in terms of migrants rights and in terms of losing even more of the social care workforce<sup>37</sup>.
5. Social care is not considered by the UK Home Office to be "skilled labour".
6. The Great Repeal Bill is going to copy all existing EU law into UK law, with the exception of the Charter of Fundamental Rights; containing many laws relating to the rights of and protections for disabled people<sup>38</sup>.
7. The UK could lose access to the European Court of Human Rights - whose decisions outweigh any UK court<sup>39</sup> and therefore won't be available for UK citizens whose human rights have been violated.
8. The UK government was recently found to have committed "grave and systemic violations of the rights of persons with disabilities" during a 2016 investigation by the UNCRPD<sup>40</sup>.

### **Conference further believes**

1. The UK Conservative Government and the former Liberal Democrat Conservative Coalition were found to have committed grave human rights violations against disabled people, and should be held

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2017/12/what-happens-support-disabled-people-after-brexit>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2017/12/what-happens-support-disabled-people-after-brexit>


<sup>37</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/jul/05/brexit-fears-exodus-eu-health-social-care-workforce>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jul/13/great-repeal-bill-human-rights-clause-sets-up-brexit-clash-with-labour>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/brexit-and-human-rights>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37899305>





accountable by EU bodies, therefore disabled people should have access to the European Court of Human Rights in order to challenge the UK government on rights-violating policy and law.

2. Disabled people in the UK should have the right to access all areas of public and private life, and there should be legislation so that the provisions are in place for them to be able to do so.
3. Disabled people's rights should be enshrined in law.
4. Freedom of movement is a human right.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To campaign to protect the freedom of movement of all migrants, EU and non-EU.
2. To lobby and campaign for the UK government to include the Charter of Fundamental Rights in UK law.
3. To lobby and campaign for the UK government to match the funding of the European Social Fund post-Brexit so that disabled people's access to work is not further detrimentally affected.
4. For the UK to continue to have laws at least in line with, if not surpassing, the EU directives on accessibility.
5. To campaign for the UK government to involve disabled people's organisations in any laws involving disabled people's rights or protections.

### **Motion 203: To Prioritise Working with User-Led Organisations**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Disabled People User Led Organisations (DPULOs), sometimes referred to Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) are organisations which are controlled and run by a majority of disabled people (51%)<sup>41</sup> at a board and membership level.
2. Deaf Peoples' Organisations run on a similar model.
3. Psychiatric Survivor/ Service User organisations also run on a similar model.
4. These organisations have been at the forefront of the struggle for disabled peoples' liberation.
5. Many disability charities have been criticised by disabled peoples' organisations and disability activists for their silence or complicity with the Tory Government's Austerity Agenda.<sup>424344</sup>

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Our liberation as disabled people has to come from a collective movement of disabled people.
2. 2017/18 was the first year in many years that the Disabled Students' Campaign has engaged with Disabled Peoples' Organisations in an organised way.
3. Although non-disabled allies have their place, we should not prioritise working with non-user led organisations if it is possible to work with user led organisations instead.

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<sup>41</sup> <http://www.pwd.org.au/student-section/disabled-people-s-organisations-dpos.html>

<sup>42</sup> <http://bworkfare.mayfirst.org/?p=1573>

<sup>43</sup> <http://blacktrianglecampaign.org/2016/10/14/mind-faces-boycott-call-after-policy-and-campaigns-manager-joins-dwp/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.disabledgo.com/blog/2016/11/mind-boss-lies-to-protesters-over-dwp-contracts/#.WmXx92xLFPZ>



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4. The Disabled People's Movement has a shortage of young disabled people involved in its' organisations and the Disabled Students' Campaign should be promoting their work and encouraging students to get involved.
  5. A long running slogan of the Disabled Peoples' Movement has been "rights not charity", referring to the complicity of disability charities in the oppression of disabled people, and also the power imbalance present between the disabled person and the charity.<sup>45</sup>
  6. The government has been criticised for working with charities, and excluding DPOs.<sup>46</sup>
  7. Self-organised disabled peoples' organisations and activist groups are responsible for many of the rights we have today.<sup>47</sup>

### **Conference resolves**

1. Where possible, the NUS Disabled Students' Campaign should prioritise working with user led organisations.
2. The Disabled Students' Campaign should encourage disabled students to get involved in DPOs and disabled peoples' campaigns.
3. If the Disabled Students' Officer is asked by SUs for recommendations of who to fundraise for, they should primarily recommend user led organisations.

## **Zone: Welfare**

### **Motion 301: Promote disability and mental health in the Black students' committee**

#### **Conference believes**

1. People of colour can sometimes have a poor understanding of mental health and disabilities. In addition, the black and minority ethnic (BAME) community can often hold outdated views on disability and mental health and often do not talk about or approach the subjects.
2. As people of colour, we are already marginalised by mental health services and face discrimination, not only because of the colour of our skin, but for mental health issues, disabilities and impairments we may also have.
3. There have been noted accessibility issues with Black Students' Campaign events.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Intersectionality is something that the NUS should continue to work on and promote to our students. We can do this by starting at the grassroots.
2. Disability and mental health are both important issues and with the decline in health services, welfare cuts and social care, we need to push out the message for disabled students who face multiple oppressions.

### **Conference resolves**


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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.drakemusic.org/blog/nim/understanding-disability-part-4-the-charity-model/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/dpos-to-write-to-minister-over-exclusion-from-social-care-meeting/>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/disability-34732084>



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1. The Disabled Students Committee and The Black Student's Committee should work closely to promote disability and mental health, as well as work closely with grassroots organizations that look at intersectionality and promote BAME disability and mental health.
  2. The Disabled Students' Campaign, and the Black Rep on the DSC should work with the Black Students' Committee in making more accessible events for black disabled students and committee members.
  3. In addition, the Black Students' Committee should work on raising awareness for BAME disabled students in writing articles, outreach via social media and other means.

### **Motion 302: End discrimination against students applying for disability benefits**


#### **Conference believes**

1. Many disabled students are being openly discriminated by assessors during their medical assessments due to the fact that they are in higher or further education.
2. This discriminates against students with invisible disabilities and impairments including mental health conditions because the assessors claim that the claimants are not 'significantly impaired or disabled' due to the fact that they can study at a university or college level.
3. The points system that the medical assessors use especially discriminate against disabled students with invisible disabilities such as mental health issues, specific learning difficulties (SPLDs) and autistic spectrum conditions because assessors do not award points if they attend university, irrespective of having reasonable adjustments and non-medical helpers at their educational establishments through DSA.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. For many disabled students who already find trouble with studying as well as finding accessible part time work during their studies, this is an issue.
2. Disabled students should not have to prove how much their impairment impacts on their life.
3. In the event of being denied the disability benefit(s), the appeals process is very tiring and can affect the claimant's mental and physical health.
4. The fact that assessors will not award points to people with SPLDs and autism spectrum conditions if they are studying could also be taken to imply that disabled people are not capable of learning at a higher or further educational level. This alone is very demeaning.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. The Disabled Students Committee should work with organisations that are against welfare cuts for disabled people.
  2. The Disabled Students' Committee should produce a list of resources that give advice to disabled students who are looking to apply for disability benefits and who have been discriminated against on the basis that they are in education.
  3. To campaign for HE and FE institutions to provide advice and support for students applying for disability benefits, and for those within the appeals process.
  4. To campaign for HE and FE institutions to provide adequate financial support for
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disabled students in financial need.

5. To campaign to end the current discriminatory system of disability benefit assessments.

### **Motion 303: Ongoing cultural shift to inclusive practice**


#### **Conference believes**


1. NUS is the self-professed national voice of Students, with around 600 affiliated Students' Unions
2. NUS members include higher education institutions, further education institutions, and apprenticeship providers. Within our members are specialist institutions including Derwen College, a specialist residential college for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities
3. NUS liberation campaigns are at the heart of our work, fighting for liberation from oppression.
4. NUS this year has continued to develop the training programme - FE Leaders - developed specifically for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and has continued to further its work to address inclusive practice

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are entitled to a voice within our structures, entitled to have their views listened to and their voices heard
2. NUS prides itself on access awareness, but, despite some raised awareness and training continues to fall short for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Our campaigns and national conference remain largely inaccessible for this group
3. NUS has a continuing duty to ensure that all members are able to understand processes, to make an informed decision and choice. However, if learners with learning difficulties and disabilities cannot understand or interpret the information provided by NUS, then this is a barrier to participation
4. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are very limited in their choices for further education and it is essential that their rights are promoted, defended and extended.
5. Whilst valuable work and progress has been made and is ongoing within NUS on addressing accessibility issues for this group or learners, a more dedicated and consistent programme of training and a considerable organisation wide cultural shift is still required

#### **Conference resolves**

1. To further develop, maintain and deliver the FE Leaders programme developed specifically for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.
  2. This conference mandates the NUS Students Committee and National Disabled Students Officer to request that the VPFE and VPUD work to continue to review NUS information, seek and undertake relevant training and produce accessible versions, especially including summarised motions to enable informed choice for those who find processing huge amounts of complex information difficult.
  3. A further call for continued visits from the NUS Disabled Students' Officer. This conference mandates action by the Disabled Students Officer and committee to request and call on the VPFE and VPUD
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through specialist providers to gain further understanding of how specialist colleges function and to ensure that training is relevant to need

### **Motion 304: Campaign to Stop and Scrap Universal Credit**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Full time disabled students in both FE and HE cannot claim Universal Credit, despite the fact they could claim some of the benefits that have been replaced by Universal Credit, such as Employment Support Allowance and Housing Benefit<sup>48</sup>.
2. For disabled part time students who can claim Universal Credit, there are many documented issues. These include: claimants going into rent arrears, claimants being in debt to the Department of Work and Pensions due to the delay on first payment, claimants having to use foodbanks and claimants in mental distress due to all the other issues with it<sup>49</sup>.
3. Many groups have come out against Universal Credit and have called for it to be “stopped and scrapped” including: Disabled People Against the Cuts<sup>50</sup>, Mental Health Resistance Network, and the People’s Assembly Against Austerity<sup>51</sup>
4. Unite Community, a union which represents students, claimants and people currently not in work, have also called local and national days of action to call for at least a “pause and fix” of Universal Credit<sup>52</sup>.
5. It is sexist, with payments being made to one person in the household, which prevents survivors of domestic abuse (and children) from leaving potentially abusive relationships<sup>53</sup>.
6. BME households are also more likely to end up in poverty as a result of already structural inequality and further issues caused by Universal Credit<sup>54</sup>.
7. Research shows that disabled people have on average £500 of extra impairment related costs a month that non-disabled people do not have<sup>55</sup>.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. For many disabled students, the money which they get through disability and welfare benefits is essential to help with the additional costs of living and studying.
2. Disabled people, including students, should have access to disability and welfare benefits in a way which is not invasive and punitive such as the current welfare system is.
3. A broad coalition of groups, student and non-student, disabled and non-disabled, is essential to fighting Universal Credit and its destructive consequences.

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<sup>48</sup> <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/students-and-universal-credit-briefing>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/oct/02/universal-credit-why-problem-can-benefits-system-be-fixed>

<sup>50</sup> <https://dpac.uk.net/2018/01/dpac-position-statement-and-motion-for-union-branches-on-universal-credit/>

<sup>51</sup> <http://syypeoplesassembly.org/event/universal-credit-day-of-action/>


<sup>52</sup> <http://www.unitetheunion.org/campaigning/events/stop-and-fix-universal-credit-day-of-action/>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/brexit/2017/10/woman-no-resources-woman-who-can-t-leave-why-universal-credit-feminist-issue>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.24housing.co.uk/news/bme-communities-disproportionately-impacted-by-universal-credit/>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/extra-costs>



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4. Although Universal Credit claims to simplify the benefits application process, it is based on a model of welfare which aims to stop “welfare dependency” which makes it irredeemable<sup>56</sup>.

### **Conference resolves**

1. For the Disabled Students’ Campaign to campaign for a “stop and scrap” of Universal Credit.
2. To work with other groups, such as DPOs, Trade Unions and other campaign groups to provide skills and training to disabled students and Student Unions in campaigning to “stop and scrap” Universal Credit.
3. To continue to lobby MPs to vote to stop and scrap Universal Credit.
4. To continue to maintain the Disabled Students’ Campaign’s position on the dehumanising nature of Work Capability Assessments and our position on their abolition.
5. For our demands around Universal Credit and other benefits to be intersectional, taking into account the multiple oppressions a claimant may experience.

### **Motion 305: Campaign to Implement the UNCRPD Recommendations**

#### **Conference believes**

1. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities sets out what our human rights are in the context of disability.
2. The UK ratified the convention in 2009 but since the 2010 move to a Conservative government, disabled people in the UK have faced the “significant cuts to social benefits that were affecting several of the rights of persons with disabilities enshrined in the Convention”<sup>57</sup>.
3. Disabled people are disproportionately affected by poverty and that social protection systems should protect and support disabled people throughout all stages of our lives.<sup>58</sup>
4. Since 2010, we have faced significant cuts to all aspects of our lives, driven by inherently disablist, ideological driven Conservative government.
5. These cuts and changes to legislation and policy has resulted in abuses of our human rights and as a direct result over 100,000 disabled people have died “preventable deaths”.<sup>59,60</sup>
6. The UNCRPD investigation took place between 12<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015, visiting all nations, meeting with more than 200 individuals from government officers, members of the House of Lords and House of Commons, members of devolved legislatures, independent monitoring organisations, trade unions, disabled people organisations and a whole host of civil activists, researchers, academics and lawyers.

#### **Conference further believes**

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/universal-credit-universal-panacea>


<sup>57</sup> CRPD Inquiry concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland carried out by the Committee under article 6 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, Report of the Committee. 6 October 2016

<sup>58</sup> UN General Article of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>59</sup> <http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/7/11/e017722>

<sup>60</sup> Mo Stewart, The Human Cost of Welfare reform



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1. The Conservative government repeatedly obstructed and disputed the investigation throughout its period, providing statements that “were not supported by evidence”.
  2. The UNCRPD investigation found that “the threshold of grave or systematic violations of the rights of persons with disabilities has been met”.
  3. The UNCRPD has made over 80 recommendations to the UK Conservative government.
  4. The UK Conservative government “dodged many of the UN’s questions, made numerous unsubstantiated assertions and, when they did have the data, often used it in ways that were misleading”.<sup>61</sup>
  5. The Conservative government has refused to acknowledge the findings of the UNCRPD report.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To campaign and lobby the UK government to recognise the findings of the 2016 UNCRPD report.
2. To campaign and lobby for the implementation of the UNCRPD’s recommendations.
3. To work with other disabled people organisations and groups for resolves 1 and 2.
4. For NUS Disabled Students’ Campaign to submit a formal request to the UNCRPD, to investigate the UK again, if substantial progress on the recommendations hasn’t been made.

## **Motion 306: Campaign Against Fitness to Study**

### **Conference believes**

1. Many institutions have ‘Fitness to Study’ policies in place<sup>62</sup>.
2. These mean disabled students are discriminated against due to their conditions, for instance in the case of prolonged hospital stays.
3. Many students will often always meet criteria for being “unfit” to study, whilst still being entirely able to complete their University degree to a high quality.
4. Some students choose not to disclose or access services due to fear of these policies, presenting safeguarding issues.
5. There is not a universal policy requiring support services to be up to standard and requiring the same policy to be implemented across Universities.
6. ‘Return to Study’ policies are very difficult, requiring many individuals to have support statements which are not easily obtainable.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Institutions place a vast amount of responsibility on the individual, and not on failing support services.
2. Fit to study policies are not always put in place in the interests of vulnerable students, but instead to ‘deal with problem students’<sup>63</sup>.
3. A ‘fear of fitness to study’ policies can be detrimental to students, due to a lack of ‘reasonable adjustments’ in line with Equality Act 2010 and safeguarding risks.

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<sup>61</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/sep/04/austerity-disabled-people-rights-uk-un-government>

<sup>62</sup> Durham University Policy [https://www.dur.ac.uk/university.calendar/volumei/policies\\_and\\_strategies/](https://www.dur.ac.uk/university.calendar/volumei/policies_and_strategies/)

<sup>63</sup> Fit to study? Dealing with Problem Students.

<http://www.idras.ac.uk/designing-a-better-system-for-dealing-with-complaints/is-there-a-dispute/fit-to-study-dealing-with-problem-students/>



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4. Nondisabled students, and those not affected, are rarely aware of this policy.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To lobby for a cross-University approach to 'Fitness to Study' which includes strict criteria, written in such a way as to prevent institutions using the policy as a tool for discrimination and exclusion of disabled students, or those with mental health issues.
2. To further raise awareness of Fitness to Study policies.
3. To submit Freedom of Information Requests on how many students are on 'fitness to study' policies.

## **Motion 307: Access and recognition for students with autism**

### **Conference believes**

1. Around 700,000 people in the UK are on the autism spectrum<sup>64</sup>.
2. Fewer than one in four school leavers on the autism spectrum stay in further or higher education<sup>65</sup>.
3. A 2011 study from the University of Leicester found that most adults on the autism spectrum go undiagnosed<sup>66</sup>.
4. A study carried out by Leeds Beckett University and Autism&Uni found the vast majority of students either do not disclose their autism to anyone at university, and even those that do, do not disclose it beyond disability services. Furthermore, "Survey data showed that 47% of responding students or ex-students with an autism spectrum condition had not been diagnosed by the time they started university. Nearly 30% of those who did have a diagnosis did not receive any support, either because no support was available or because they had not told the university about their condition. For those who did get support, 35% had it in place by the first week of studying. However, 48% had to wait for more than a semester"<sup>67</sup>.

### **Conference further believes**

1. There is evidence, statistical and experience based, that the current provisions of the NHS can be hit and miss with regards to adult diagnosis. This can also push people to seek a private diagnosis, which can be costly and more difficult to get accepted.
2. Autistic students who receive appropriate support in a timely manner often thrive in higher education. If their skills, expertise, and interests are recognised then they have the ability to grow and develop alongside their peers.
3. It is important for further and higher education settings to create a culture of inclusion that will lead to positive outcomes for all students.
4. More needs to be done across universities nationwide to increase accessibility for students on the autism spectrum, and to make it easier for them to access the support they need as well as diagnosis and recognition.

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<sup>64</sup> <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/services/assessments>

<sup>65</sup> Office of National Statistics (2009), Social Trends, No 39 and Data Service (2011), MI reports – Regional Learning Disability/Difficulty Report

<sup>66</sup> Epidemiology of Autism Spectrum Disorders in Adults in the Community in England:

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/211276>

<sup>67</sup> Autism&Uni D2.3 Mapping Survey Report: <http://www.autism-uni.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/D2.3-AutismUni-Mapping-Survey-Report.pdf>





### **Conference resolves**

1. The NUS is to lobby universities and the government to make further provision for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Higher and further Education institutions.
2. The NUS is to lobby and work with universities, further education institutions, and the government review the issue of Autism Spectrum Disorders going undiagnosed.
3. The NUS is to campaign for better access to adult diagnosis.

## **Zone: Rules Revision**

### **Motion 401: Adding the Opportunity of Job Shares to NUS Disabled Students' Committee**

#### **Conference believes**

1. NUS Disabled Students' Committee consists mainly of part time volunteers who have commitments outside of NUS.
2. Due to the nature of impairment and disability, the responsibilities on committee can become taxing for one individual.
3. NUS Disabled Students' Campaign should be at the forefront of inclusion of disabled people and all opportunities should be open regardless of disability.

#### **Conference further believes**


1. Due to the nature of impairment and disability, members are currently being excluded from opportunities with the NUS DSC.
2. We as a campaign should change our standing orders so that we are more inclusive.
3. NUS LGBT+ Campaign and NUS BSC already have the option of job shares for all but Full-Time Officer and NEC place.


#### **Conference resolves**

1. TO ADD to the "Terms of office and eligibility of the Committee":  
"108. a. All positions except the NUS Disabled Students' Officer and National Executive Council Representative shall be available as job-shares with a maximum of two people permitted to share each position."
2. TO ADD to the "Terms of office and eligibility of the Committee":  
"108. b. All positions which are filled as job-shares will remain having a single vote, with only one half of the job share attending any committee meeting in person. The other half of the job-share may attend via conference call or other accessible form of internet or telecommunication."

### **Motion 402: Making Motions Accessible**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Motions and amendments can be confusing and contain a lot of information, some of the language or requests may not be easily understood by delegates.
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2. Delegates should be able to read and understand what motions are asking, especially when there may be a number to read through and digest.
  3. Emergency motions may arise without being able for delegates to read through and understand content.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. That clarity through a brief summary can help accessibility
2. That clarity allows for delegates to understand and vote in the knowledge of what they are voting upon.
3. Giving reading time between emergency motions can assist delegates understand what is expected.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. Add to rule 336:  
"All motion proposals require a 100-word maximum neutral summary to explain briefly what the motion put forward is about and what it is looking to achieve."
2. Add to rule 337  
"All amendments require a 50-word maximum neutral summary to explain briefly what the amendment is and what it aims to achieve."
3. That all emergency motions require at least 10 mins of reading time before being discussed and voted upon.
4. That if standing orders are suspended and further motions or amendments are submitted, Steering committee must adopt the same action of emergency motions allowing time to read and understand such motions."


### **Motion 403: Trans and Non-Binary Inclusivity**

#### **Conference believes**


1. Trans individuals, including non-binary individuals, often experience marginalisation, even within liberation spaces.
2. Non-binary is an umbrella, not a single gender identity. Some non-binary individuals include 'woman' and/or 'man' in their gender identity, and some do not.
3. Non-binary individuals face discrimination and marginalisation on the basis of their gender.
4. Without making inclusion explicit, feelings of exclusion can arise and last for long periods of time.
5. Trans students should have their pronouns respected, and not have to encounter transphobia and/or misgendering, especially within liberation spaces.
6. Transphobia in any form should not be tolerated within liberation spaces.
7. Currently we have a LGBT representative, and a Trans\* representative, while there is a NUS LGBT+ Campaign, and a NUS Trans Campaign.

#### **Conference further believes**



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1. We should rename our 'LGBT Representative' to 'LGBT+ Representative', to be in line with the NUS LGBT+ Campaign.
  2. We should rename our 'Trans\* Representative' to 'Trans Representative', to be in line with the NUS Trans Campaign.
  3. Non-binary individuals should not automatically be grouped with men unless they include 'man' in their gender identity, and they wish to be included in such a group.
  4. Non-binary individuals should not automatically be grouped with women unless they include 'woman' in their gender identity, and they wish to be included in such a group.
  5. Non-binary individuals come under the trans umbrella, and should continue to be represented by the Trans Caucus. However, there are still cases of non-binary individuals being/feeling excluded from trans spaces, and it is important that these voices are heard too. A Non-Binary Caucus would ensure that the voices of non-binary students are heard, and not spoken over, while allowing non-binary individuals to continue to be represented by the Trans Students' Caucus as well.
  6. The act of stating your pronouns should be the norm, and not something only expected of trans individuals
  7. The Steering Committee are responsible for the smooth running of conference, and should ensure that all publications are inclusive of trans (including non-binary) individuals, while taking a zero-tolerance stance on misgendering and transphobia.
  8. By creating a Women's Place and a Non-Binary place on Steering Committee, we would ensure that a variety of genders are represented on Steering Committee, and this would help ensure that the diversity of gender is considered when organising Conference, that gender-neutral language is used when talking about groups of people and/or unknown individuals, and that complaints of misogyny and transphobia are taken seriously.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To replace Standing Orders 101(c)(iii) with:
    - i. "iii. One LGBT+ representative"
  2. To replace Standing Orders 101(c)(ix) with:
    - i. "ix. One Trans representative"
  3. To replace Standing Orders 101(c) with:
    - i. "c. Up to 13 individual members with voting rights, elected from Conference and from caucuses:"
    - b. and add under 101(c):
      - i. "x. One Non-Binary representative"
  4. To ask the Disabled Students Steering Committee Review and report back inclusivity of the Membership of the Steering Committee.
  5. Mandate the Disabled Students Steering Committee and Disabled Students Committee to work and review other liberation campaigns and steering membership to look at best practice. This includes seeing new reserved spaces and how they should be elected, along with the duration of office. The
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potential reserved spaces being 1. Woman's and 2. Non- binary positions. The Steering committee is to review and put forward agreed rule changes to the next Disabled Students Conference.

6. To add after Standing Orders 353, under "Procedures and points of order during Conference", renumbering as necessary:
  - i. "354. The Chair, Steering Committee, and all other speakers shall not make any assumptions regarding the gender identity or pronouns of individual Members."

#### **Motion 404: Ace Rep for Disabled Students Committee**

##### **Conference believes**

1. Asexuality is defined as limited/lack of sexual attraction towards others
2. Ace people experience attraction and feelings of others differently
3. Ace identities are misunderstood by most in the student movement and among the liberation campaigns.
4. The term ace is used across NUS to refer to asexual and/or aromantic spectrum individuals, including but not limited to: asexual, demisexual, gray-asexual, aromantic, demiromantic, and gray-aromantic
5. Aromanticism is defined as limited/lack of romantic attraction towards others

##### **Conference further believes**

1. Those working around disability and LGBT+ areas have tried to distance themselves from the incorrect assumption that all disabled people are ace.
2. There is very minimal awareness, if any at all, of what ace is and the issues experienced.
3. With no specific Ace Rep on the committee, there is no guarantee that ace spectrum students are fully represented, nor their issues and experiences be broadly known by the wider student body.

##### **Conference resolves**

1. Amend the standing orders to mandate two LGBT+ reps, one defining as Ace, positions on the Disabled students committee, to add:
  - b. "101 Membership of the committee
  - C. Up to 15 members with voting rights, elected from Conference and from caucuses:
    - i. Two LGBT+ representatives, One reserved for Ace members, with one vote total."
2. The position to be elected annually at Disabled student's conference with a one-year term of office (a maximum of two).
3. To mandate the LGBT+ rep on DSC to work with the ACE rep on LGBT+ committee on issues affecting ACE disabled students.





# Policy Passed at Disabled Students' Conference 2019

## Zone 100: Society and Citizenship

### Motion 101: DSO is a Political Position


#### Conference Believes:


1. Disabled Student Officer (DSO) positions, and equivalents, are often used by student unions and education providers as a source of free labour.
2. DSO positions are often reduced to give solutions to access issues, as if a disabled people's representative is a de facto accessibility consultant.
3. Most disabled student's officers neither have the qualifications nor the experience to access audit buildings and facilities, nor should they be expected to do so.
4. It is incredibly difficult to be a DSO at a SU without the additional support network of a Disabled Student's Group
5. A DSO at a SU without a Disabled Student's Group becomes the only person feeding into the wider grassroots network of political campaigning, with little to no support at their own SU.
6. Because of the taxing nature of a Disabled Student's Group's campaigning, these groups if active at SUs will often go dormant very quickly.

#### Conference Further Believes:

1. Disabled students, and the barriers we experience, are inherently political due to the oppression we face within society.
2. Relegating a political representative position to access only is disablist.
3. DSO positions need to be recognised as political and provided the same support as other political campaigns.
4. Access auditing is work, and a disabled person with the necessary qualifications and experience should be employed to do this work for universities and colleges.
5. Ensuring provisions and support for Disabled Student's Groups is a key action for SUs to take to support their DSO.
6. Disabled Student's Groups also need to be recognised as political to adequately support a DSO.

#### Conference Resolves:

1. To campaign on having DSO positions recognised as political and being given adequate support for work they do.
  2. To work with disabled students and activists to create a grassroots movement of political activity and recognition.
  3. To run a second political education tour on the politics of disability, and how to incorporate these politics into campus level campaigns.
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4. To continue to challenge the rhetoric that being disabled automatically makes you an expert on access and access legislation.
  5. To include training and resources on the political education tour on how to set up and maintain a strong Disabled Student's Group.
  6. For the disabled students that are campaigning to create a tool kit for SU in the understanding of disabilities and the adaptations in training delivered by SU's to create political officers.

## **Motion 102: Solidarity with Palestine**


### **Conference Believes:**

8. That the Disabled Students' Campaign has long running support for BDS and solidarity with Palestine, and the relevant motion lapsed in 2018 due to the guillotine falling before policy lapse could be discussed.
9. That NUS UK, over two dozen SUs and numerous national trade unions also have policy supporting BDS or BDS campaigns.
10. Having lost the political and moral argument against BDS, defenders of Israel have taken to attacking pro-Palestine activism through the tactic of 'lawfare' – SUs with BDS policy have been lobbied/intimidated by pro-Israel groups falsely claiming such activity as being ultra vires, or otherwise illegal.
11. Taking lead from this, the government announced moves this year to 'outlaw' procurement boycotts by local councils, explicitly targeting BDS-related boycotts.
12. The 'Policy Procurement Note' issued in February fell short of any such ban, but nonetheless represents a case of the government seeking to stifle and clampdown on pro-Palestine activism.

### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. The votes to support BDS by the NUS NEC in 2014 and 2018, led by the Black Students' Campaign and supported by the DSC, represented a breakthrough for an organisation with a long history of Israeli apologism.
2. Examples include then-NUS President Wes Streeting attending an anti-BDS working group in Jerusalem in 2009, future Israeli-Prime Minister Shimon Peres addressing a fringe session at NUS National Conference 2003, former President Jim Murphy formerly serving as Chair of Labour Friends of Israel and former President Lorna Fitzsimmons serving as CEO of BICOM, the Britain Israel Communications & Research Centre.
3. We are proudly antiracist, anti-colonial, anti-Zionist and thus support the Palestinian struggle for their liberation.
4. That BDS is a Palestinian-led campaign, and that as with any liberation struggle, we should take lead in our Palestine activism from the Palestinian people.

### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To reaffirm our support for BDS.
  2. To campaign against any future proposals to limit the ability of political bodies, including SUs, to conduct campaigns in line with BDS.
  3. To work alongside the BSC to develop guidance and advice on the legality of BDS campaigns and policy run by SUs, to disseminate to activists and unions.
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## Motion 103: Ending AIDS stigma and supporting free PrEP on the NHS


### Conference Believes:

1. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is an illness which over time unless treated leads to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), which causes the immune system to fail.
2. Being HIV+ classifies you as disabled under the Equality Act 2010, though not everyone who is HIV+ identifies as disabled.
3. Two groups especially at risk of becoming HIV+ are MSM (men who have sex with men) and black African communities.
4. Over 400 people died of AIDS-related illnesses in the UK last year Nearly 37 million people live with HIV globally, and the death toll is at over 1.1 million people.
5. PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is preventative treatment that is typically used among groups that are at high risk of becoming HIV+.

### Conference Further Believes:

1. Because of its relationship to the homophobia in the time it was discovered, those who are HIV+ are subject to a great deal of mistrust and discrimination on the basis of presumed risky sexual practices.
2. Serophobia is the manifestation of fear and aversion by certain people, towards people living with HIV. It lies at the intersection between homo/bi/transphobia and disablism.
3. HIV prevalence in the Global South, especially in sub-Saharan Africa is growing. 66% of new infections occurred in this region, bolstered by a lack of information, active misinformation and price gouging by drug companies in the West.

### Conference Resolves:

1. To encourage disabled student groups on campus to obtain information for their members on HIV/AIDS.
  2. To support the campaign to make PrEP free on the NHS.
  3. To lobby the US Government to maintain funding for PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief), which is the main programme funding lost-cost HIV treatment in Sub-Saharan Africa.
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## Zone 200: Welfare and Student Rights

### Motion 201: A Vision for Social Security

#### Conference Believes:

1. The Disabled Students' Campaign has policy to Stop and Scrap Universal Credit, and this year (18/19) has been running training days for students alongside Unite Community and campaigning with disabled people.
2. The Disabled Students' Campaign does not yet have a position on what should replace Universal Credit, or what a just and fair social security system looks like for disabled students and wider society.
3. Most parliamentary opposition parties holding a pause and fix position on Universal Credit.
4. Full time students who are carers do not currently have access to social security.
5. Social security caps and eligibility have severely tightened under welfare reform.

#### Conference Further Believes:

1. Poverty is bad whether someone is in work, study or training, or not currently in work, study or training.
2. Disabled students and apprentices should have access to social security to the same degree as disabled non-students and apprentices.
3. Students and apprentices who are carers should have access to social security to the same degree and non-students and apprentices who are carers.

#### Conference Resolves:

1. For the Disabled Students' Officer to run a series of focus groups with disabled students and other groups of claimants to put together a vision of social security that is just and fair for disabled students and claimants in wider society.
2. For the Disabled Students' Officer to take this vision of social security and lobby the government with it, and to lobby the opposition parties to both adopt a stop and scrap position and the vision for social security.
3. In the case of a General Election, for the Disabled Students' Officer to try and influence the manifestos of the different parties to adopt the vision for social security.

<https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/5-reasons-why-you-should-come-to-stop-universal-credit-training-days>

<https://labour.org.uk/issues/universalcredit/>

<https://www.snp.org/policies/pb-what-is-the-snp-position-on-universal-credit/>

[https://www.libdems.org.uk/cable\\_speech\\_calling\\_for\\_a\\_halt\\_to\\_universal\\_credit](https://www.libdems.org.uk/cable_speech_calling_for_a_halt_to_universal_credit)


<https://www.nus.org.uk/en/advice/caring-and-studying/benefits-for-student-carers/>

<https://www.housing.org.uk/topics/welfare-reform/benefit-cap/>

### Motion 202: Stand Up for Trans Healthcare

#### Conference Believes:




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5. The Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) is the only public trans healthcare provider in the UK that specialises in the treatment of trans young people.
  6. In 2017/18 there were 2,519 referrals received at GIDS - a 25% increase compared to the previous year.
  7. Gender Identity Clinics (GICs) are unable to cope with the demand for appointments with waiting list times stretching to over two years for a first appointment.
  8. In order to receive the appropriate healthcare such as hormones, hair removal, or surgery, service users often have to fulfil stereotypical and cissexist expectations of manhood or womanhood. This disproportionately affects nonbinary people, disabled people and people of colour.
  9. With private healthcare providers such as GenderGP and GenderCare often prescribing hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to bridge the gap while trans people are on the NHS waiting lists, there's often an issue with GPs either being unwilling or not knowing how to issue prescriptions under shared care agreements.
  10. Disabled people are subject to special discrimination in accessing transition-related healthcare, with mentally ill and/or autistic people reporting that their treatment is delayed for those reasons.

#### **Conference Further Believes:**

5. Trans and non-binary people should not be expected to conform to gender stereotypes to access treatment.
6. Transition-related healthcare in the UK should move to a model of informed consent, giving trans people autonomy over their own healthcare.
7. Bridging prescriptions for hormones should be widely used if requested while trans people are on the long waiting lists for GICs, including accepting shared care agreements between private healthcare services and GPs.
8. Other transition-related procedures such as breast augmentation, facial feminisation surgery, body contouring, and electrolysis should be covered by the NHS. Them not currently being suggests a lack of concern for trans women and transfeminine non-binary people.
9. DSC should support organisations which support trans people in their transition outside the pathologising confines of the state healthcare system.
10. Discrimination against disabled people in transition-related healthcare needs to end.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

8. To campaign for the transition-related procedures mentioned above to be covered on the NHS.
  9. To work with the NUS Trans Campaign and the UD Zone to support the creation and distribution of a guide to creating trans healthcare funds in Students' Unions.
  10. To lobby Healthcare Education England, the British Medical Association, GP Federations and Clinical Commissioning Groups, and relevant bodies in the Nations for training and awareness-raising for all GPs and Royal Colleges around treatment for trans and non-binary people, shared care arrangements, and referrals to GICs. For this training to explicitly include information on the diverse range of disabilities, such as physical, learning and hidden that are one part of a trans person.
  11. To campaign for the transition-related procedures mentioned above to be covered on the NHS.
  12. To support NUS Trans Campaign in attempts to lobby against the continued discrimination against disabled people in transition-related healthcare.
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## Zone 300: Education

### Motion 301: Disabled Students and Marketisation

#### Conference Believes:

1. The marketisation of education has been the prioritisation of profit within education at the expense of student services and education.
2. Our student, disability, and mental health services have been cut to fund inaccessible estates expansions and student enrollment projects.
3. There has been an increase in fitness to study policies both existing and being used in higher and further education institutions, and these policies discriminate against disabled students.

#### Conference Further Believes:

1. Our institutions have increasingly moved towards more policies based on a "cost effective" rhetoric, placing vital support staff in precarious positions, often attempting to pit students against those staff.
2. Longer wait times to access essential support are a direct result of marketisation, and disproportionately effects disabled students and the quality of support received.
3. Exploitative and extortionate student halls fees disproportionately impact disabled students due to scarcity of alternative accessible accommodation, and our HE institutions have rapidly expanded student halls and their fees under marketisation.

#### Conference Resolves:

1. The Disabled Students' Officer and Committee should continue to stand against the marketisation of higher and further education and apprenticeships, and campaign for a free and publicly funded education system.
2. The Disabled Students' Campaign should campaign against the respective tools of marketisation, for example the NSS, TEF, REF and Fitness to Study Policies.
3. The DSC should stand in solidarity with education workers and their trade unions, particularly but not exclusively their disabled members' caucuses.

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/drive-marketisation-puts-purpose-universities-risk>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09687599.2017.1375698>

<http://www.idras.ac.uk/designing-a-better-system-for-dealing-with-complaints/is-there-a-dispute/fit-to-study-dealing-with-problem-students/>

<http://clock.uclan.ac.uk/21539/1/21539%20IJOA-07-2017-1198.pdf>


<https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/nus-and-unipol-accommodation-cost-survey-2018-full-report>

### Motion 302: Online Accessibility

#### Conference Believes:

1. The European Union passed the EU Web Accessibility Directive in 2016, vastly improving the minimum accessibility standards of websites and digital content



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2. The UK government passed these new standards into law on 23rd September 2018 called "Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018".
  3. Our institutions are considered public bodies and will need to comply with these new regulations.
  4. Disabled students should play a key role in deciding how our institutions meet the new regulations and our rights to an accessible education.
  5. A sector wide UK group has been set up called Further and Higher Education Digital Accessibility Working Group (FHEDAWG).
  6. Currently, the new regulations give enforcement to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), in similar fashion to the Equality Act 2010.

#### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. Digital platforms and content is becoming an ever-increasing part of our education experience, from basic administrative functions, to hosting our course content, and information of our reasonable adjustments.
2. Inaccessible formats and course content is a frequent issue faced by disabled students, with a JISC average accessibility rating of 30.1% of Virtual Learning Environments.
3. Over the last decade, essential processes and content has been moved onto online platforms, with no significant improvement in access, resulting in disabled students being pushed further out of education.
4. All HE and FE institutions will be evaluating and/or updating their digital websites and platforms, providing a great opportunity to address the issues disabled students have faced, and a way to shape the conversation on how our institutions meet their new responsibilities.
5. Disabled students and the disabled students' campaign should be a part of any discussions on what disabled students need for us to have equal access to digital and web content.
6. Compliance with the new regulations should be enforced in a manner that's practical and doesn't put a disproportionate duty onto disabled students' nor onto teaching staff who would likely not be paid for the time to make materials accessible.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To create guidance and resources for disabled student activists around understanding the new regulations and how to shape discussions.
2. To continue being a member of the FHEDAWG.
3. To continue working with DPOs and other organisations to ensure disabled students voices are kept a key part of any future work.
4. To lobby and campaign for an independent ombudsperson or body to be able to enforce the new regulations, with practical powers for enforcement.
5. To collaborate with other unions, disabled people's groups, and DPOs to highlight what good practice is, and the importance of disabled people being able to choose their reasonable adjustment and/or alternative format provision.

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/web-accessibility>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/852/contents/made>

<https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A1=ind1812&L=DIGITALACCESSIBILITYREGULATIONS>

### **Motion 303: Updating Our Vision for DSA**





### **Conference Believes:**

1. Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is a vital grant for disabled students that helps fund essential equipment and services, and has been significantly cut and changed in recent years .
2. When DSA Band 1 and 2 was cut, institutions were supposed to fund and support disabled students, however provision and standards of support decreased as institutions prioritised cost over effectiveness.
3. DSA is required due to the institutional disablism and structures that result in expensive and costly adjustments for disabled students to be able to access and participate in education on an equal basis to their non-disabled peers.
4. There are ongoing changes to how DSA works in England, and a review into DSA in Northern Ireland.
5. The Disabled Students' Campaign wrote a response to the initial DSA changes in 2016/17 that established key principles in how we believe DSA should be provided.

### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. There is currently a £200 minimum charge for assistive technology which places an exclusionary charge on disabled students accessing education. Without essential assistive technology, accessing education becomes impossible for some disabled students.
2. Many Universities have outsourced contracts for Study Skill Tutors, Mentors and Assistive Technology Assistants, which removed a disabled students' choice of support, and transferred support staff onto exploitative agency-based precarious contracts.
3. The principles established in the DSC response to the 2016/17 changes to DSA are still sound and are:
  - a. The support should be high quality
  - b. The support should be timely
  - c. The support should be individualised
  - d. The support must be consistent across different types of institutions, main and satellite campuses, different faculties or different levels and modes of study (allowing for individual needs)
  - e. The student must have access to appropriate and speedy mechanisms for appeal and redress.

### **Conference Resolves:**


1. To continue to lobby and campaign for the immediate removal of the £200 minimum charge attached to Disabled Students Allowance.
2. For Disabled Students Campaign to research the most recent statistics, in relation to the institutions who have outsourced Tutor and Mentor contracts and make such information aware to the Disabled Student population
3. For the Disabled Students' Campaign to consult with disabled students in order to update the 2016/17 response in light of more recent changes to DSA, including those currently happening in Northern Ireland.

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas>

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/disability/allowances/dsachanges/>

<https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/exchange-blog/2018/november/disabled-student-allowances-dsas-procurement-of-it-hardware-software-specialist-equipment-and-training/>

[https://www.nus.org.uk/PageFiles/2161132/NUS%20response\\_%20targeting%20funding%20for%20disabled%20students.pdf](https://www.nus.org.uk/PageFiles/2161132/NUS%20response_%20targeting%20funding%20for%20disabled%20students.pdf)





# Zone 500: Rules Revision

## Motion 501: Ending Positive Parts

### Conference Believes:

1. At Disabled Students' Conference 2018, a lot of confusion was caused by one particular part of the standing orders known as "positive parts."
2. Positive parts effectively allows a delegate to amend a motion on the spot, adding new text to a motion without said text having been seen before that moment by other delegates.
3. This was extremely inaccessible to many delegates, and the ensuing confusion meant that not all the motions and policy lapse was heard.
4. No other liberation campaign has positive parts within their standing orders.

### Conference Further Believes:

1. Although there is a need for procedure in a democratic conference, this should be made as simple to understand as possible.
2. Delegates should be able to read any additions to the text of a motion in good time, so that as many people as possible have the chance to read and understand what the addition of text would change in a motion.
3. The Disabled Students' Campaign should have extremely high standards for its level of accessibility.

### Conference Resolves:

1. To delete point 378 within the standing orders:  
"378 Any request to make an addition, which has the support of one third of delegates on conference floor, shall be voted upon after a speech against the addition and a speech in favour of the addition. The vote will decide whether the text is added to the motion/amendment. If the addition is voted for then the text will be moved into the motions/amendment to be debated and voted on as a whole."





## Policy Lapse

### Motion 106: Don't You (Forget About Me)

#### **NUS believes**

1. That there are Disabled Students in further Education
2. That there is not a fair representation of FE at Disabled Students Conference.
3. That last year there were less than 10 FE at conference, this is not a fair representation of disabled students in FE

#### **NUS further believes**


1. That FE Unions making up the majority of NUS Union Membership and as such should be better represented, not only on conference floor but in campaigns as a whole in the disabled students campaign
2. That FE students should be able to feel as empowered and included as HE students within the structures on the Disabled students campaign.
3. Area reviews under way by this Tory Government, will see many disabled students have to drop out of education because of accessibility and travel costs
4. Scotland has seen massive cuts to FE institutions by the SNP, almost cutting the FE sector by a **third**.

#### **NUS resolves**

1. For the DSO to work with the Vice President further Education to help develop student unions in further Education institutions
2. For the DSO to work with Vice President further Education to look at ways to support disabled students who will be affected by the area reviews and create local campaigns to lobby FE institutions for better provision around access for disabled students
3. For the DSO and committee to create resources and guidance specifically for FE institutions around disabled activism and how to fight the cuts
4. For the DSO and Committee to create specific materials to ensure that we are talking to as many FE institutions as possible and increasing FE representation
5. For the DSO to work with the Nations DSO and Full time officers to ensure that we are tackling specific cuts to the nations that have devolved education policies

### Motion 201: Disabled International Support Now

#### **Conference believes**

1. International students are underrepresented in the Disabled Students Campaign.
  2. International students have been under attack from the current government, putting more stress on disabled international students.
  3. International students are not eligible for DSA, and only some institutions provide information and/or support for International Disabled students, putting them at disadvantage.
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### **Conference further believes**


1. International students who are disabled face attacks from the government on multiple faces including visa restrictions and a lack of support for disabled international students.
2. This leads to differences in levels of support available, depending on what institution the student attends. This puts international students at a disadvantage compared to home students both within their own institution and all home students in HE and FE.
3. Under the Equality Act, all disabled students should be entitled to reasonable adjustments and adequate support.
4. There should be a framework for supporting disabled international students created by the government.
5. This has economic, social and academic benefits by being able to attract more disabled international students.


### **Conference resolves**

1. The Disabled Students Campaign should carry out research on disabled international students to find out:
2. the number of disabled international students in the total of international students in the UK
3. what types of impairments are most common among international disabled students
4. what support they get and if it is sufficient
5. how much it would cost to provide adequate support at the same costs as home students DSA
6. the academic and socio-economic benefits of creating an accessible HE and FE environment for disabled international students
7. To work with the International Campaign to create an action plan for representing disabled international students effectively and to ensure that disabled international students feel they can work with the Disabled Students Campaign.
8. To use the results of the proposed research to recommend better support levels to institutions and seek assurances that institutions will attempt to meet these standards, and to show institutions the socio-economic and academic benefits of creating an accessible HE and FE environment for disabled international students.

## **Motion 202: Accessible Apprenticeship and Work Placements**

### **NUS believes**

1. Many disabled students who are on courses with placement or are apprentices are either unable to access the learning environment or are unable to be placed.
  2. A common barrier is employers' assumption that they will not be able to meet the disabled students' support needs, or that this will be too expensive.
  3. Another common problem is the idea that the disabled student will put themselves or others at risk in the work place, often without any impartial assessment of the situation.
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4. Many students and apprentices are receiving no or very little support or information from their teaching institution or student support services to overcome these barriers.
  5. That often Students Unions are not equipped to deal with employment rights cases, and trade unions are not equipped to deal with students' rights cases, leaving an apprentice or student on placement with no real union backing.

#### **NUS further believes**

1. That disabled students are at a disadvantage due to the lack of accessible placements and lack of understanding of student's needs.
2. That the exclusion of disabled students has a detrimental impact on their learning and skills now and in their future education or employment
3. Mandatory equal opportunities training does not highlight inclusivity with regard to different forms of disabilities and support needs and that many requests for advice are not adhered to or given.

#### **NUS resolves**

1. To develop training for Student Unions, student support workers and disabled students on Equal Opportunities and employment law.
2. To encourage and support Students Unions to lobby their institution to make work placements inclusive, as well as offering support to disabled students who want to get involved.
3. To work with the National Society of Apprentices on this issue.
4. To work with all relevant trade unions on this issue.

### **Motion 203: For more accessible examination conditions**

#### **Conference believes**

1. At present, there is a presumption towards an upper limit of 25% extra time in assessments
2. Under current arrangements, many disabled students are left unable to complete these assessments

#### **Conference further believes**

1. The current standards for extra time are insufficient to allow many disabled students to achieve their full potential under examination conditions
2. This has a knock-on effect on our ability to complete our degrees and enter into the job market on an even footing


#### **Conference resolves**

1. To demand that the current standard for extra time in closed assessments is reviewed, with an expectation that the presumed cap on extra time will be substantially raised

### **Motion 301: Defending our Human Rights**

#### **NUS believes**



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1. The Human Rights Act (1998) reflects the minimum standards necessary for people to live with dignity.
  2. The Human Rights Act (1998) gives people the freedom to choose how they live, how they express themselves, and what kind of government they want to support, amongst many other vitally important safeguards.
  3. By guaranteeing life, liberty, equality, and security, The Human Rights Act (1998) protects people against abuse by those who are more powerful than themselves.
  4. It also ensures basic protections for disabled people as well as other oppressed groups that NUS represents.

#### **NUS further believes**

1. The current government wants to replace The Human Rights Act (1998) with a British Bill of Rights; however we currently do not know what it would contain, how it might work, and how – if at all – it would relate to The European Convention on Human Rights.
2. Polls show that the public in Britain are against any changes to the current legislation on human rights, therefore the government has no mandate for this Bill.
3. Any changes to current legislation could severely affect the rights of disabled people and other oppressed groups, whom we stand in solidarity with.

#### **NUS resolves**

1. To oppose and actively campaign against the proposed changes in human rights legislation.
2. To work in partnership with other liberation groups to oppose the changes to human rights legislation.
3. To make disabled students aware of the proposed changes and the impact they may have on them, through blogs and other NUS communications.
4. To use direct action where necessary to express our opposition to this proposal
5. To lobby NUS to seek legal advice and support on this matter.


### **Motion 401: Mental Health and Suicide Prevention**

#### **NUS believes**

1. The Disabled Students Campaign has campaigned on issues of mental health for a long time
2. In the year 2015/16 the focus broadened to include projects aimed at the prevention of suicide in the student population
3. This project has included building relationships with organisations with similar goals, the beginnings of a research partnership with the University of Worcester, and the production of an in-depth guide for student unions and activists

#### **NUS further believes**

1. That it is vitally important this work continues
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2. That the work this year, and the sector in general, has been too HE specific and must become more relevant to the needs of FE students.
  3. That research is a vital method of understanding these issues in the long-term.

### **NUS resolves**

1. To follow up on the recommendations of this year's guide with further training and campaign support for students unions and activists
2. To commit to the research partnership with the University of Worcester by guiding their work and ensuring the outcomes are used productively.
3. To ensure the policy focus of the Campaign in the year 2016/17 is on FE students' experience of mental health and suicide and that this work should be carried out in conjunction with FE students unions

### **Motion 402: Black Disabled Students**

#### **NUS believes**

1. The NUS Disabled Students' campaign aims to remove the stigma from all disabilities, challenge perceptions and encourage all members of our society to take a positive attitude towards understanding the nature of disability and overcoming prejudices.
  2. It has been questioned as to what it means to be young, Black and disabled.
  3. Scope's Report, 'Overlooked Communities, Overdue Changes' highlights important matters ;
    1. Although there is no specific reference to students, there are at least one million black and minority ethnic (BME) disabled people in the UK.
    2. Stigma appears to be a particularly problematic area for black disabled people, especially those with mental health needs.
    3. There are many misunderstandings of disability which can lead to negative attitudes toward disabled people.
    4. The stigma of being disabled can lead to people being 'invisible'.
    5. It can affect the consistency of support being provided, i.e. care was only provided when it was absolutely necessary
    6. Stigma can also affect those associated with disabled people, as well as disabled people themselves.
    7. Social isolation is widespread for black disabled people.
    8. Women's experience of being disabled can be compounded by expectations about domestic labour.
    9. Immediate family is the primary resource for managing the impact of long-term ill-health.
    10. Over-protection can be a problem for young black disabled people. The desire to live independently can be a source of conflict between young people and their relatives, who may be reluctant to allow young people space to explore their own identities.
    11. Family can also be a primary source of stigma.
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### **NUS further believes**

1. That understanding the experiences of intersectional disabled people is vital to the strength and legitimacy of our Campaign
2. We need to look more into how culture, heritage, race and ethnicity influence the lives of disabled people.
3. NUS resolves
4. To raise awareness in the student movement of the experiences and particular barriers faced by black disabled people.
5. To ensure greater advocacy and visibility by seeking out black disabled speakers for Disabled Students Campaign events
6. To reach out to black disabled students so they are able to meet people with similar experiences and also talk about their personal experiences.
7. To conduct a research with specific reference to the problems faced by black disabled students.

### **Motion 403: Disabled Women and Domestic Violence**

#### **NUS believes**

1. Disabled women are twice as likely to experience gender-based violence than non-disabled women
2. Disabled women are also likely to experience abuse over a longer period of time and suffer more severe injuries as a result.
3. Disabled women are less likely to seek help and often the help is not appropriate.
4. Financial abuse is widely experienced by disabled women.
5. Abuse is often more acute where the abusive partner is the carer.

#### **NUS further believes**

1. Disabled women can experience violence in many form such as physical violence, sexual violence and emotional/Psychological Violence.
2. Sometimes the person who is abusing the woman is also disabled. This can cause even more problems and can be perceived as an additional barrier in reporting and being believed.
3. Women who have experienced violence from disabled men report difficulties in being taken seriously by the police and social services.
4. It is vital that service providers and statutory agencies, and campus welfare services are aware of, and respond appropriately to violence against disabled women, including when it is perpetrated by another disabled person.

#### **NUS resolves**

1. To work with the women's campaign and other relevant organisations produce a briefing with resources about how to support disabled women who are survivors of or are currently in abusive relationships.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> <http://www.niaendingviolence.org.uk/perch/resources/double-oppression-violence-against-disabled-women.pdf>





## Motion 405: Accessibility of HE Careers Services

### NUS believes

1. That some schemes, programmes and resources provided by Careers services are not suitably accessible to disabled students;
2. That content aimed towards disabled students is often limited to material surrounding the disclosure of disabilities when job-seeking.
3. That many H.E. and F.E. institutes career services, job centres and recruitment agencies are failing disabled students.
4. That many of these only offer or give limited services and these are only available when booked in advance.
5. Not all buildings (public or private) that house these services are physically accessible for disabled students, nor have on hand accessible information.

### Conference further believes


1. When requesting or booking additional support, no matter what it is, is not promoting independence and in many instances can result in longer waiting times than those of non- disabled students.
2. That there are inequalities within the services dependant on location or even different campuses.
3. That the Disabled Student's Campaign has live policy that incorporates non accessibility and support the services within both F.E and H.E.


### NUS resolves

1. To push Careers services provided by HE institutions to make sure their content and schemes are accessible to all disabled students wherever possible;
2. To lobby Careers services to provide a wider range of extra-curricular activities so that disabled students can as engage equally as able bodied students with services to improve employability;
3. To lobby Careers services to take into account the access needs of disabled students when communicating the need for students to take part in a range of employability schemes and programmes.
4. To mandate the disabled students campaign to work with these services to enhance and encourage disability awareness and support.
5. To support all disabled students within H.E. and F.E. who are using the service now and in the future.
6. To campaign against the cuts to such services and support mechanisms disabled students rely on.

## Motion 406: Self-certification Policies

### NUS believes

1. That different HE institutions have different policies governing the time one can self-certify as ill to account for absences from academic requirements, before medical proof is required;
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2. That such policies often don't take into account the needs of students with long-term disabilities or chronic illnesses.

### **NUS resolves**

1. To lobby institutions to standardise their self-certification policies in line with best practise in Higher Education;
2. To lobby HE institutions to allow students with long-term disabilities and illnesses to have extra discretionary arrangements with regards amount of time one can self-certify as ill before medical proof is required

### **Motion 408: Support for funding specialist FE provision**


#### **NUS believes**

1. NUS is the self-professed national voice of students, with around 600 affiliated students' unions
2. NUS members include higher education institutions, further education institutions and apprenticeship providers. Within our members are specialist institutions, such as Derwen College (a specialist residential FE college for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities) and other FE colleges that include specialist provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.
3. NUS liberation campaigns are at the heart of our work, fighting for liberation from oppression
4. That the Disabled Students' Campaign has live policy that aims for 'free and inclusive education'

#### **NUS further believes**

1. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are entitled to a voice within our structures, entitled to have their views listened to and their voices heard
2. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are very limited in their choices for further education and it is essential that their rights are promoted, defended and extended
3. That cuts to funding are failing learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and the places available at specialist colleges
4. That disabled students should have the choice between high quality mainstream and high quality specialist education and that these choices should be supported.

#### **NUS resolves**

1. To endorse NATSPEC's 'A Right, not a Fight' campaign for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, demanding that all students with special educational needs have access to specialist support
  2. For the Disabled Students' Officer to provide advice and support to learners with learning difficulties and disabilities in order for them to campaign for funding for appropriate specialist further education provision
  3. That alongside this, we should continue to campaign for mainstream education to be as accessible as possible for all learners
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## Motion 409: Disabled People and the Welfare State

### Conference believes:

3. The last six years of first the Coalition government and now the Tory majority government have seen a sustained attack on disabled people and the welfare state which was created to support them and others in society who need it.
4. There have been savage cuts to disabled people's benefits, often under the heading of 'modernisation'.
5. The policies and comments of Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Iain Duncan Smith referred to "normal, non-disabled people" in a debate in Parliament in September 2015.<sup>69</sup>
6. There are plans to devolve some control over benefits policy in Scotland, whilst Northern Ireland has a separate benefits system.

### Conference further believes:

2. Society should support disabled people via a strong welfare state.
3. With a Tory Government in Westminster until 2020 at least, committed to further austerity, there is the threat of further cuts.
4. Comments like those made by Iain Duncan Smith are a disgrace, especially given his position.
5. That the central NUS 'Cut the Costs' campaign was an inadequate response to these government attacks, focussing solely on Higher Education funding, that failed to represent disabled students' voices and needs due to a lack of political will or consultation with the Disabled Students' Committee.
6. We must not forget the devolved administrations in our campaign work.

### Conference resolves:

1. For the DSO to work with the Vice President Welfare to oppose these cuts.
2. For the DSO to support the disabled students' officers in the Nations on campaigns that target MSPs, AMs and MLAs.
3. For the DSO and committee to plan local direct action and other lobbying activity across the UK, involving SUs and activists, to persuade MPs to not vote for further austerity and to restore the welfare state.
4. That the Disabled Students' Officer should hold the NUS President accountable for the failings of the 'Cut the Costs' campaign and encourage all NUS Officers to consult the Disabled Students' Committee when launching campaigns

## Motion 503: Housing for all

### Conference believes

1. Some students for whatever reason may require "more" accessible housing than others, such as with level access, adapted bathrooms, better lighting or wiring for vibrating pillows in addition to audible fire alarms.
2. Other students may require accommodation of a more private nature or away from the often "loud

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<sup>69</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/09/09/ian-duncan-smith-pmq-s-disabled-people\\_n\\_8110754.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/09/09/ian-duncan-smith-pmq-s-disabled-people_n_8110754.html)





and vibrant" nature of university halls accommodation for anxiety or mental health reasons.

3. The provision of suitable accommodation in both cases is often limited.
4. In some areas accessible accommodation not of a "halls" nature - be it that provided by a university, affiliated entity or commercial company may not exist at all or be as scarce as to be considered non-existent.
5. Students with anxiety or mental health concerns may be particularly disadvantaged due to the cost of securing private [single-occupancy] accommodation, or the refusal of landlords to let "non-student" properties to students, on the basis of a perceived greater risk of damage or anti-social behaviour.
6. Students with physical difficulties in particular are often unable to live with their friends or course-mates due to the inaccessibility of their preferred accommodation.

#### **Conference further believes:**

1. Inclusion is preferable to segregation or specialism - any student should be free to live in any area and with the friends or course-mates of their choice.
2. No student should be forced to remain in "halls" style accommodation or live with their parents throughout the duration of their course if they do not wish to do so.
3. The ability of a disabled student to live in a non-halls environment should be considered a positive, and that for some it may be their first experience of living independently or at least more independently than previously - most if not all disabled students would prefer to be as independent as possible.
4. Private landlords are often reluctant to make even modest changes to the physical fabric of their properties (for example, changing the colour of railings, or painting the edges of steps - to make them safer for vision-impaired students) on the grounds of cost or inconvenience - often founded on the belief of students being a "captive market".

#### **Conference resolves**


1. To encourage University run accommodation services to be aware of housing providers offering accessible accommodation to their students, and to retain at least general information about the accessibility of such accommodation.
2. To encourage universities to recognise that not all students necessarily wish to share accommodation in the form of halls of residence, and to encourage them to provide alternative accommodation styles.
3. That NUS develops and publishes an "inclusive housing strategy" aimed at improving the freedom of disabled students to live wherever they want, in relation to the points raised above.

### **Motion 504: Fair housing and accommodation policy**

#### **Conference believes**

1. That students with mental health conditions beyond their control have been forced to leave university and as a result have been left to foot the bill of their student accommodation for the duration of the academic year.
2. That 1 in 4 people will have a mental health condition throughout their lives



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3. That very few accommodation providers/landlords provide a 'Get out Clause' allowing students who run into difficulties (e.g. being sectioned under The Mental Health Act) a chance to be excused from their contracts
  4. That student advice services are unable to offer help to students in these situations due to the way the housing contracts are written.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. That no student should be discriminated against on the basis of their Mental Health or any Disability
2. That the financial burden students in this position are forced to bear can be detrimental to their health
3. That universities and student unions should be able to hold university indorsed accommodation providers/landlords to account
4. That student unions and universities should have an obligation to act on behalf of students who face these difficulties

#### **Conference resolves**


1. That contracts should contain a 'Get out Clause' stating that in exceptional circumstances (including being sectioned under The Mental Health Act) Students will be allowed to leave the contract
2. That Accommodation agencies such as Unipol should advertise student accommodation providers and landlords that do provide a 'Get out Clause'
3. Each student who encounters difficulties should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis with appropriate support
4. That the NUS should take action against student accommodation providers and landlords that have been seen to operate using unfair accommodation contracts.

### **Motion 507: The Courtesy Campaign**

#### **Conference believes:**

1. That many of the doors at university buildings can be difficult to open, especially for those who have a physical disability or are recovering from surgery.
2. Getting through such doors can be difficult, discomforting or even impossible for some students, unless they are helped.
3. Universities should comply with the Equality Act (2010).

#### **Conference further believes:**

1. All students, staff, and visitors to universities should be able to get around with ease and comfort.
  2. In many cases, it is difficult or impossible for all for all doors to be replaced and made accessible in the foreseeable future.
  3. However, a simple act, such as holding a door open for the person behind you, could make all the difference.
  4. A courtesy campaign is not a substitute for making universities more accessible, and universities will still have to work on this issue.
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### **Conference resolves:**

1. To look into the possibility of establishing and supporting a "Courtesy Campaign" at universities. Such a campaign can be simple, e.g. by putting up signs reminding people that it is polite hold the door open for the person behind them.

### **Motion 508: Uniform Transport Concessions**

#### **Conference believes**


1. A motion in relation to concessionary travel passes for disabled persons (often referred to simply as "disabled bus passes") was passed at last year's conference.
2. That the previous motion concerned the times at which disabled bus passes could be used, and not the modes of transport of which they may be used on.
3. That many disabled students may prefer or be better able to use forms of transport (where available) other than buses, such as trams/light rail systems, underground/metro networks and National Rail network trains.
4. That having the option to use any available method of transport otherwise available to such students (on the basis that cost wasn't an issue) may reduce the journey time experienced by such students and possibly provide for a less stress-inducing and safer journey overall.
5. That while not all disabled students will study at institutions where there is a choice of travel options other than buses, many alternative systems such as trams often incorporate a stop/halt/station in close proximity to academic institutions.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Some disabled bus pass issuing authorities include the use of alternative systems as part of the entitlement of a disabled bus pass holder.
2. Use of non-bus travel options, however, is often restricted to persons holding disabled bus passes issued in the local area; for example, only passes issued by Nottingham City or County Councils are valid for use on the Nottingham Express Transit [tram] system, and only those issued by a London authority are valid for use on the London Underground.
3. Disabled students, like any other "group" of student may wish or need to travel at "peak" times - during these times in particular, travel options such as trams may potentially offer faster journey times.
4. Some disabled students may be faced with a choice of a longer, possibly less comfortable, less accessible and less safe journey by bus as they cannot afford any other options otherwise available to them.
5. That it is important to recognise that other travel options may be more accessible or safer;
6. for instance, many tram systems - the Sheffield Supertram, Nottingham Express Transit, Croydon Tramlink and Manchester Metrolink all have level or negligible-step boarding at stops/stations.

### **Conference resolves**



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1. That concessions beyond bus travel alone, which are available to local residents, should be available to students studying in areas where these concessions are provided.
  2. That disabled students have the right to concessionary travel in their home residence as well as at their place of study if these locations differ.

To campaign for equality in the provision of concessionary travel, and an end to the effectual imposition of a "postcode lottery" in relation to the provision of concessionary travel

### **Motion 509: Accessible sports and societies**

#### **Conference believes**

1. The Paralympics at London 2012 were an enormous success and inspired many young disabled people to get involved in sports
2. Most sports and societies in universities do not have accessible facilities
3. Government cuts means there is less funding to sports and societies
4. Sports and societies do not have big budgets
5. Bradford University has an amazing cycling group that has worked hard at promoting inclusion within sport

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Accessible sports are not a priority for existing sport societies
2. Sport is an area where often disabled students are excluded
3. Regular physical activity can help minimize mental health issues
4. It would be beneficial for societies to have accessible elements to their sports clubs


#### **Conference resolves**

1. Provide best Practice guidelines for setting up accessible sports groups e.g. Cycling 4 All
2. Help with funding applications
3. Lobby student unions to prioritize providing accessible sports facilities and clubs
4. Run a campaign on the benefits of regular exercise on mental health

### **Motion 510: Non-academic personal assistance**

#### **Conference believes**




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1. Some students may require the provision of personal assistants for the purpose of assisting with mobility and/or communication while at university.
  2. Such assistance may include (but is not limited to); physical assistance with pushing wheelchairs or carrying textbooks, British Sign Language interpretation, or physical guidance for vision-impaired students.
  3. Staff provided as part of a DSA award along the lines of CB2 are normally only funded for times during which the student is participating in academic activities, such as attending lectures or seminars.
  4. Consequently, a student requiring *staffed* assistance for participation in activities of a non-academic nature, such as engaging in a student union society or membership group would be faced with significant funding difficulties.

### **Conference further believes**

1. All students regardless of any disability should be free and able to participate in any social activity of whatever nature to the extent to which they feel comfortable and otherwise able, to do so.
2. An important part of the university experience is gaining independent living skills, socialising with friends (particularly on the same or similar courses), and participating in a broad spectrum of social, in addition to academic activities.
3. There are often significant difficulties faced by a student seeking to participate in these kinds of activities who requires *staffed* support, commonly exacerbated by arguments between different Social Services departments and the inability of academic institutions or student unions to provide or fund such support.
4. That budgetary constraints on the part of academic institutions, local or central government or their executive agencies alone, can never and should never be seen as justification to deny support to any disabled student.
5. That most (if not all) student unions are keen to involve and include all students in all the activities and services they provide, but may face significant difficulties in terms of funding or lack of knowledge or experience in this area.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To recognise that a student's experience at university should include the entire "university experience", and not just lectures and seminars.
  2. To affirm support for CFB1.
  3. To lobby central government to resolve the issue of the "DSA funding hole" faced by students wishing to participate in social activities of a non-academic nature.
  4. To liaise with, and produce guidance for, student unions in terms of seeking and acquiring funding to enable them to provide support staff for those students who require it.
  5. To produce guidance for student unions in relation to CR4.
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