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## Contents

### Policy

Policy passed at National Conference 2014	11
Policy passed at National Conference 2015	8
Policy Passed at National Conference 2016	11

### Purpose of This Document

This document contains all the policy currently in effect for the Welfare Zone. This is the policy that the Vice-President Welfare and the Welfare Zone Committee are responsible for implementing and is sometime known as 'Live Policy'.

### Policy Lapse

Policy Lapses in 2 circumstances

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

Policy passed at National Conference 2013 will lapse at the end of National Conference 2016.

### What You Need To Do

If you are considering submitting policy to National 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 [executiveoffice@nus.org.uk](mailto:executiveoffice@nus.org.uk)

## Contents

Welfare Policy Passed At National Conference 2014.....	4
NC_W_14301: Homes Fit For Study .....	4
NC_W_14302: Local Public Services .....	7
NC_W_14303: Stand Up To Racism .....	10
NC_W_14304: Childcare For All And Not Just For One.....	11
NC_W_14305: Care Leavers In Education.....	11
NC_W_14306: Mental Health – Away From Awareness, Towards Action .....	12
NC_W_14307: Condemn “Student Rights” And Support Islamophobia Awareness.....	12
NC_W_14308: A New EMA .....	15
NC_W_14309: International Students.....	15
NC_W_14310: Access without Support Is Not Opportunity .....	16
NC_W_14311: Students and HIV/AIDS .....	17
Welfare Policy Passed At National Conference 2015.....	18
NC_W_15301: Supporting For Success: Getting the Most Out Of Student Support Services .....	18
NC_W_15302: No Room for Unfair Housing .....	20
NC_W_15303: Student Financial Support .....	23
NC_W_15304: Mental Health – Away From Awareness, Towards Action .....	26
NC_W_15305: Stand Up To Racism and Scapegoating .....	27
NC_W_15306: Dealing With Debt .....	29
NC_W_15307: Free Prescriptions For Students In England .....	29
NC_W_15308: Eating Equality: Improving the Catering Provisions for Students with Dietary Requirements .....	31
Welfare Policy Passed at National Conference 2016.....	33
Motion 401  NUS for the NHS .....	33
Motion 402   SOS – Save Our Services .....	34
Motion 403   #Grantsnotdebt .....	36
Motion 404   Anti-Semitism on Campus .....	37
Motion 405   Prioritise Students Mental Health – Now! .....	38
Motion 406   Preventing Prevent .....	41
Motion 407   Not for Profit Halls .....	45
Motion 408   Rent Strikes.....	45

Motion 409 | Rogue Landlords..... 46

Motion 410 | Graduation: the final hidden cost..... 47

Motion 411 | Educate all FE & HE students on the risks associated with taking legal highs and lobby the government to include all legal highs within the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 ..... 48

Policy Lapse..... 48

NC\_W\_13306: Mental Health Awareness and Challenging Discrimination..... 48

# Welfare Policy Passed At National Conference 2014

## NC\_W\_14301: Homes Fit For Study

### **NUS Conference Believes:**

1. Students live across a wide range of housing types including rented accommodation, halls, social housing and in their family home.
2. The private rented sector has recently come under increased scrutiny, following on from the revelation that the number of people living in the sector had doubled in the ten years to the 2011 Census.
3. Currently, anyone can set up as a letting agent, and as long as their fees are made clear, letting agents outside Scotland are allowed to charge whatever level of fees they like.
4. The NUS/Unipol Accommodation Costs Survey found that the proportion of purpose-built student accommodation under private ownership is now believed to be 42 percent. This has increased from just four percent ten years ago.
5. Private purpose built student accommodation is generally much more expensive than that owned by an institution, with the same research showing that on average it is 18 per cent more expensive per week (last year sitting at £140.07 per week compared to £118.49 for institutions).
6. In London, the average rent charged last year by a private provider was £220.97 equating to over £10,000 per year.
7. In addition to providing less affordable non-en suite or twin rooms than institutions, private providers are less likely to provide rooms for students with dependent children or accessible rooms for disabled students.
8. There are many students who live in the family home – either in the form of students who live with parents/carers or students who live with partners and/or dependents.
9. It is a legal requirement for money taken from tenants in the form of a deposit to be placed in a government approved tenancy deposit scheme that protects both tenants and landlords in how that money is returned or deducted.
10. There are three tenancy deposit schemes. In 2013 there was a fourth set up which ended up withdrawing putting students deposits at risk of being returned.
11. The Localism Act 2011 made changes to tenancy deposit protection, tightening up how landlords were required to have deposits protected and requirements to what tenants needed to be provided with in order to be informed about their deposit.
12. Fuel bills have risen over 37% since October 2010.
13. The provision of gas, electricity and other domestic fuels is a public good provided by liberalised markets.
14. Students belong to a broader category of consumers who are penalised because of issues with direct debits, landlords and a lack of general market knowledge.
15. Fuel poverty results from having to spend more than 10% of your income on energy and is at near record levels.
16. Students suffering from fuel poverty are at risk of academic failure and social stigma.
17. The government's unfair cut to welfare support for 18 year-olds in FE colleges means thousands of vulnerable students will be left without access to vital student welfare support.
18. Student housing rent increases year on year, whether students are living in university halls, privatised halls or private rented accommodation. In far too many cases student loans and grants barely cover the cost of accommodation.

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

1. All people have the right to a decent home in which they feel comfortable, safe and secure.
2. Housing provides the basis from which students can thrive in their studies, jobs and personal development.

3. The UK is in the midst of a serious housing crisis. This affects both students and non-students alike with the government failing to take any real action to generate affordable housing supply, and universities increasingly following a market-driven model for accommodation
4. The variety in student housing is significant, with no such thing as an 'average student house'.
5. Tenants are exploited by greedy landlords and letting agents and students are disproportionately affected by this, seen to be less worthy or more vulnerable tenants.
6. The Homes Fit for Study research provides an opportunity to influence the agenda around the private rented sector, taking advantage of a strong evidence base.
7. Article 4 Directions to limit increases in shared housing have now reduced the availability of shared housing for students in many places in England.
8. In Wales, there are signs that there is some appetite to extend Article 4 powers across the border.
9. True change in the private rented sector will only come with both tenants' better understanding their rights and legislation and enforcement being improved.
10. NUS should therefore aim to take simultaneously both a bottom-up (tenant empowerment) and top-down (influencing decision-makers) approach.
11. NUS should use its voice to condemn unfair practises in the private rented sector calling out those who wish to profit from tenant exploitation
12. There is, in particular, an absence of information, advice and guidance on housing in FE, both for students during their current course, and for making the progression to HE.
13. The student population using the private rented sector acts as an effective springboard for wider discussions about renting given many students will continue to rent after study.
14. There should be an open and honest relationship between accommodation providers, students' unions and students.
15. Students' unions should be actively and comprehensively engaged in the rent-setting, ongoing strategy and future development plans for purpose-built accommodation their members live in.
16. Currently it is not clear how students' unions can engage in these processes, as relationships between institutions and private providers can be unclear, making it difficult to know who to approach.
17. Students' unions are rarely invited to participate in conversations on rent-setting and strategy in purpose built accommodation.
18. Most of NUS' work around housing consists of aiming to support students who live in rented accommodation.
19. Students living in the family home can face huge barriers in feeling a part of both their academic and social community.
20. Since changes from the Localism Act were brought in in 2012, we haven't seen enough improvement in the amount of student tenants both understanding how deposits work and enforcement of action against unfair charges.
21. That anecdotally we have seen landlords and agents move away from taking deposits and instead charging non-refundable admin fees to cover costs of damage which is unfair to students.
22. That where a fee is being taken it is in students best interests for it to be a deposit that is protected in a tenancy deposit scheme, giving tenants protection when it comes to getting their money back.
23. With three different deposit schemes in place it can be difficult for students to find out if their deposit is protected.
24. Rising energy bills are a barrier to all students homes being fit for study.
25. Firms entering the market and explicitly targeting students with bill-splitting schemes represent a serious risk of mis-selling to students.
26. New rules from Ofgem (the energy regulator) forcing energy companies to use standing charges will hit students who only live in a property for part of the year or try to cut down on their consumption generally.
27. Many landlords insist on controlling students' energy supplier via their AST, despite this being an unenforceable contractual term.

28. The ever-increasing cost of energy threatens to make living away from home less of an option for many students.
29. Some new and unusual energy companies may reflect students' needs and lifestyle.
30. The crisis in student housing is related to both the corporatisation of universities and a broader housing crisis.
31. The Financial Times reports average student rents of £190 a week in London, £124 in Leeds, £119 in Manchester, £115 in Birmingham and £114 in Nottingham. The Telegraph reports £90 a week in Norwich, Exeter, and Cambridge.
32. Out-of-control prices and issues like quality of accommodation and facilities are often linked to privatisation or outsourcing of halls.
33. Private accommodation brings similar issues, as well as distinctive ones about contracts, bad landlords, maintenance, etc.
34. The crisis in student housing is related to both the corporatisation of universities and a broader housing crisis: lack of affordable housing, decline of council housing, soaring private rents, cowboy landlords.
35. A lack of well-paid part-time work, rising energy, rent costs and increasing travel costs means that many students are forced into taking multiple jobs or working excessive hours, hitting the welfare of students hard.

#### **NUS Conference Resolves:**

1. To lobby strongly for regulation of letting agents, including a banning of fees, and an amendment to the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill to ensure that tenants are awarded the same protection already awarded to homebuyers.
2. To call for compulsory smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in all rented housing.
3. To work with students' unions and other sector partners to assess the impact on access to affordable housing caused by Article 4 Directions.
4. To create, in collaboration with others in the sector, modules of Tenant Activist Training which could be rolled out to students' unions across the UK.
5. To ensure that the content of the above training is applicable to further education encouraging city-wide project collaboration across students' unions.
6. Support the creation of tenants' unions and the engagement of students' unions with tenants' unions in the community.
7. To support students' unions in the creation of letting agents and accreditation schemes locally, as well as to tackle the issues around rent guarantors.
8. To work with the sector to produce guidelines for how accommodation providers should engage respectively with students and students' unions
9. To continue to support students' unions to make the case for affordable and appropriate accommodation locally.
10. To use the Homes Fit For Study research to identify numbers and patterns of students living in the family home.
11. To provide guidance to students' unions on how to work effectively with students living in the family home.
12. To ensure students living in the family home are considered in all aspects of NUS' work, including how pastoral support services work for them.
13. To make the case that despite changes to tenancy deposit protection, many students are still unaware of their rights around protection and need to be empowered to take action where necessary to have their money rightfully returned.
14. To call for better enforcement of action being taken against landlords who fail to place deposits in tenancy deposit schemes.
15. To call for deposit protection to be logged on a national database that makes it easier for students to find out if their deposit is protected.
16. For any national databases to be separated and set up in the nations where required.

17. To develop relationships with tenancy deposit schemes to ensure that their information and services are student friendly and easy to use.
18. For Tenant Activist Training to include information about how tenants can be empowered to use the tenancy deposit scheme to get their money back.
19. To work with tenants unions to ensure that local housing markets respond to examples where landlords do not protect deposits and empower tenants to take action.
20. To lobby against Ofgem rules on standing charges alongside the broad consumer movement.
21. To investigate new companies offering bill-splitting services and assess what real service they provide.
22. To run an empowerment campaign to enable students to better use direct debit (the cheapest way of paying for energy) and challenge landlords' behaviour in this area.
23. To work with companies like Ebico (not for profit) and Co-operative Energy in marketing specific services for student households.
24. Encourage the creation of housing campaign groups as a step towards tenants' unions on every campus.
25. Develop a charter of demands also including universities acting as guarantors for international students; the abolition of letting agents fees; permanent tenancies; taxing empty and multiple homes; rent controls; a council house-building program.
26. To produce materials on how to organise rent strikes.
27. Encourage the creation of housing campaign groups as a step towards tenants' unions on every campus.
28. Develop a charter of demands also including universities acting as guarantors for international students; the abolition of letting agents fees; the introduction of permanent tenancies; taxing empty and multiple homes; rent controls; a council house-building program.
29. To produce materials on how to organise rent strikes.
30. To work with trade unions to launch a major campaign to tackle the student cost of living crisis - for reduction in energy bills and travel costs by renationalising these monopolies; for job creation and a living wage; for rent controls to take on rip-off landlords.
31. To organise major campaigns to reduce spiralling university accommodation costs and promote student tenant rights.
32. To fight all cuts facing student welfare services, including the proposed 17.5% cut facing colleges

## NC\_W\_14302: Local Public Services

### **NUS Conference Believes:**

1. There have been significant cuts to local authority budgets in recent years
2. The restructuring of the NHS in England has shifted decision-making power to new bodies and individuals.
3. In NUS polling, just 14 per cent of students felt that they could influence local public services in their area, compared to 69 per cent who felt that they should be able to.
4. Services are operating under increasingly tight financial imperatives.
5. Students don't always believe that they fit into the categories that services are designed to provide for, limiting their access to services.
6. The strength of local public services rely on those in power in Local Authorities to make good decisions, reject cuts and prioritise putting money into areas that help the most vulnerable.
7. Many councillors elected in the last set of local elections stood on platform full of anti-student rhetoric promising to 'save local areas from 'studentification'
8. Since then students have been villainised and blamed solely for issues relating to litter, anti-social behaviour, crime and poor upkeep of local neighbourhoods.
9. The fight to defend the NHS continues, including important victories like Save Lewisham Hospital and innovative campaigns like the 4:1 Campaign for guaranteed patient-staff ratios.

10. Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) procedures at HE and FE institutions require the student claiming to provide extensive evidence, applications can be stressful and distressing, often worsening the impact of the illness or other condition causing PEC.
11. Many GPs and other Healthcare providers impose charges for evidence, particularly sick notes for less than seven days and doctor's letters, charging for evidence may put further stress and strain on students, both mentally and financially.
12. Students may require evidence of illness early in their course, sometimes even before they have had the opportunity to register or meet with a GP in the area.
13. Charges within the NHS should be minimal and only where justified because services are outside the basic NHS package of care and/or to act as a deterrent to frivolous services, neither of which are applicable to charges for evidence.
14. Institutions and healthcare providers should attempt to minimise the impact of PEC applications on students, including where possible moving towards a system where students report PECs through online systems and establishing better links between healthcare providers and institutions.

**NUS Conference Further Believes:**

1. Students are a part of their local communities and should be engaged in the design and delivery of local services.
2. Decision-making processes are often opaque and not accessible to students or students' unions, and students are too often ignored by those making the decisions.
3. Many local authorities have sought to cut costs on things which affect students, including a number who are turning off streetlights for large proportions of the night.
4. As decision-making and service providers become more fragmented, services could become detrimentally inadequate for students, particularly disabled students who have complex health needs.
5. The measures for a health levy for migrants contained within the Immigration Bill would represent a substantial cost for international students coming to the UK which is both immoral and economically imbalanced.
6. 15 years on from the Macpherson Report, there remains a problem with both the perception and reality of institutional racism within the police force. Students' unions should be able to determine whether and how they wish to engage with their local force in relation to the safety of their students.
7. Public transport is becoming increasingly expensive, and there are often no subsidies available to students.
8. Students on placement who receive support for this are often required to pay for transport costs upfront and there can be a long delay in them being reimbursed.
9. In addition, there is inadequate access to transport in many locations, especially rural areas, and services are often not accessible for disabled students.
10. NUS should create active partnerships with other organisations and bodies to campaign in this area for impact that goes beyond students.
11. Local services should be designed to meet the needs of people who live there. Local authorities should make decisions about students' and local people's access to services based not on their mode, place or level of study but on their need and means to pay.
12. All students should have access to services provided by local authorities, but current provision does not always reflect the needs of mature and part time students.
13. Students are being made a scapegoat for poor decisions and actions in Local Authorities.
14. If students were mobilised to vote they could be a huge swing in local elections, particularly in campus cities.
15. Local democracy outside of elections can also have a huge impact on matters of student welfare through consultations, authority plans and council recommendations.

### **NUS Conference Resolves:**

1. To reiterate its opposition to the restructure and the backdoor privatisation of the NHS in England and work with key partners to secure a better NHS across the UK in future.
2. To work with those expert organisations already leading on saving the NHS and lend our support to it.
3. To create a manifesto for partnership for students and public services.
4. To produce guidance for students' unions on how to engage with a range of different decision-makers and service providers on the full range of local service issues including health, transport, crime and policing and waste and recycling.
5. To support efforts to campaign against the switching off of streetlights.
6. To campaign against proposals for a health levy placed on migrants to the UK.
7. To call for automatic GP registration on enrolment.
8. To examine the 'joins' between community and mental health services provided by universities and colleges, to consider how these could work together more effectively.
9. To acknowledge the nuanced views amongst students and students' unions regarding the police and whether they should be welcome on campuses and work with the Society and Citizenship zone to support students' unions who wish to implement 'Cops off Campus' policies.
10. To unite in fighting against racism present in all public services.
11. To support students' unions in trying to get representation on local decision-making bodies which relate to key public services.
12. To lobby for a national transport subsidy to ensure that students can access discounted fares on buses and trains, prioritising groups with more acute needs in relation to transport such as FE and placement students.
13. To support students' unions in lobbying for their institution to offer loans for placement students who have a delay before receiving reimbursements, as well as transport bursaries for students who receive no support for the placement element of their course.
14. To ensure that work on local public services is inclusive of the Nations.
15. To call for inclusive provision of all local authority services, including sexual health and transport, ensuring all public services are delivered and funded in way that allows all those who need it to avail themselves of it.
16. To support students' unions in their efforts to have an impact on local elections in both 2014 and 2015.
17. To mobilise students to vote in local elections and condemn candidates standing on factually incorrect anti-student rhetoric.
18. To help make the case for the importance of sufficient health services, good transport links, rigorous and effective housing regulation and adequate waste management services in local areas and the impact this can have on students.
19. To provide support for students' unions on understanding cycles of local democracy and how to have an impact, such as through taking part in consultations, lobbying councillors, getting speaking rights at council meetings etc.
20. Organise a national activist event on defending the NHS and the issues implications for student welfare, working with welfare officers, the 4:1 Campaign, the Students for the NHS network and local campaign groups.
21. In the run to the election, campaign with trade unions for Labour to make clear commitments to reverse cuts, privatisation and outsourcing and rebuild the NHS as a comprehensive public service.
22. To lobby appropriate bodies, including national and regional NHS representatives, to first cap, then work to eliminate, charges for evidence.
23. To support students' unions in campaigning against charges by local practitioners.
24. To consult and seek the support of institutions, Healthwatch, The Kings Fund, and other bodies with regards to these objectives.

## NC\_W\_14303: Stand Up To Racism

### **NUS Conference Believes:**

1. NUS must actively campaign against racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and fascism as these are dangers which threaten the welfare of millions of students.
2. As the cuts bite politicians are increasingly calling for draconian 'anti-immigration' policies and whipping up hostility to migrant workers and Black communities in a bid to distract people from the real cause of falling living standards: the government's austerity agenda.
3. Our campuses are not immune from this racist climate. The Home Office has attempted to deport over 2,500 international students from London Met and the authorities at a Birmingham college attempted to ban Muslim women from their right to choose to wear religious dress. Both of these attacks were only stopped by big campaigns from NUS.
4. The student movement must never give a platform to fascists because fascism seeks to eliminate free, speech, democracy and annihilate its opponents and minorities.
5. The lesson of the 1930s was that the Nazis used violence to gain power and carry out a Holocaust. They slaughtered millions – in the gas chambers and concentration camps – of Jewish people, Eastern Europeans, communists, trade unionists, Romani, LGBT and disabled people.
6. Giving fascists a platform in the student movement destroys the safe spaces our campuses must be for the diverse student population.
7. While the far right is in disarray, there is no room for complacency.

### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. The conditions which have fed the far rights' growth are still there:
  - a. Widespread hostility to migrants, encouraged by a government and press promoting the idea that immigration is a problem;
  - b. Widespread anti-Muslim racism;
  - c. Huge cuts and perceptions of a struggle for scarce resources;
  - d. A Labour Party which has failed to challenge the Tory narrative on immigration and cuts;
2. While Unite Against Fascism is widely discredited for its lack of democracy, its manoeuvring with regard to local campaigns, recent sexual assault scandals and its wider politics, there is a need for a national anti-fascist network.
3. We need an anti-fascist network which;
  - a. is genuinely democratic, allowing activists to debate the way forward;
  - b. combines mass mobilisation with willingness to confront the far right;
  - c. fights for demands to the social demagoguery of the far right: black and white, all religions and none, British-born and migrant - unite for jobs, homes and services for all.

### **NUS Conference Resolves:**

1. To actively challenge racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and fascism.
2. To reaffirm NUS' No Platform for Fascists policy and continue to campaign for its full implementation within NUS and all Students' Unions.
3. Reaffirm our support for NUS organising an annual Anti-Racism/Anti-Fascism Conference and providing adequate resources for this work.
4. Work with trade unions and anti-racist organisations to mark UN Anti-Racism Day with 'Stand Up To Racism' events.
5. Mobilise for anti-fascists protests and campaigning.
6. Produce dedicated NUS anti-fascist materials including this perspective.
7. Not affiliate to UAF or any national anti-fascist campaign, but as appropriate work with a variety of local and national campaigns.

## NC\_W\_14304: Childcare For All And Not Just For One

### Conference Believes:

1. Students with children are lacking support in childcare.
2. Eligibility for part-time students to receive childcare funding or grants are not available.
3. Funding is only provided to those that have registered child-minders or nursery providers.
4. Student parents are made to pay initial deposits for nursery out of their own pockets.
5. Student parents are unable to attend lessons consistently because of childcare issues.
6. The outcome of having to withdraw from a course due to the lack of childcare provisions could impact on the mental state of the Student parent which could cause implications to their welfare.

### Conference Resolves:

1. Further access to funding made available for part-time student parents to contribute to childcare.
2. More funding made available for students parents to contribute to childcare.
3. Allowances to be made for unregistered child-minders (family and friends) to receive payment as incentives for looking after children whilst parents are studying or work placements.
4. Work placements and course learning hours to be combined together to make up the overall course hours as there is also a childcare cost in completing work placements.
5. More support provided to student parents in terms of childcare issues.

## NC\_W\_14305: Care Leavers In Education

### Conference Believes:

1. Children and Young People who have been looked after ("in care") are more likely to see the inside of a prison than the inside of a university.
2. The Scottish Government recently passed the Children & Young People Bill which includes for the first time a "Right of Return" for looked after young people to return to their care placement to the age of 21, providing parity with their non-looked after peers.
3. As of 24th broken down as follows: England – 73, Scotland – 9, NI – 1 and all 8 of the Universities in Wales. Many colleges have recently achieved or are working towards the Buttle Quality mark for colleges which was introduced in 2012.
4. The Who Cares? Trust has produced an HE handbook for care leavers, a guide which sets out exactly what universities and colleges across England and Scotland offer care-experienced students. As an example of best practice, Glasgow Caledonian University offers free 52 week accommodation to students coming from a looked-after background.
5. The care leavers grant provided by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) has been claimed 7 times in the last 8 years.
6. Buttle UK has been working closely with the Scottish Funding Council to embed the principles of the Buttle Quality mark into Outcome agreements.

### Conference Further Believes:

1. Looked after children face serious disruption in their education due to frequent moves.
2. Staff at our institutions are passionate about supporting care-experienced students but lack clear guidance on how best to do this.
3. If Glasgow Caledonian University can offer free 52 week accommodation to care-experienced students then so can Oxford University.
4. Education changes lives. OECD data indicates that life expectancy is strongly associated with education.

5. The Buttle Quality Mark provides a framework to improve and accredit support for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. This kind of support must become the statutory responsibility of our Universities and Colleges.
6. It is vital that NUS develops understanding of where people with care experience sit within our liberation campaigns.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. For the Vice-President HE and Vice-President Welfare to work with The Who Cares? Trust and ensure that all HE institutions in the UK are represented in future editions of the HE handbook.
2. NUS to collaborate with Buttle UK on promoting the Buttle Quality mark to all UK colleges and universities.
3. NUS to lobby all relevant funding bodies to embed statutory support for care leavers.
4. NUS to research and work to better the lives of care leavers across the UK. February 2014 there are 91 Universities in the UK with the Buttle Quality Mark

## NC\_W\_14306: 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 practitioners, institutional academic and support staff to discuss mental health and how we can improve it for students.

**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 with over 60 students’ unions and institutions signing up in the last year
3. That discussions from the summit provided some exciting suggestions for creating this change

**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)
3. Support students unions to develop joined-up approaches across institutions and external services

## NC\_W\_14307: Condemn “Student Rights” And Support Islamophobia Awareness

### **Conference Believes:**

1. That Student Rights is an organisation claiming to support 'freedom from extremism' [1]\* on UK university campuses and mostly criticises speakers it sees as 'extremists' who have been invited by Islamic and Palestinian societies [2, 23], but has in the past expressed opposition to student union 'no-platform' policy for the BNP [3] though it has since stated that its policy has changed and it now supports no platform for fascists.
2. That Student Rights was established in 2009 as a reaction to what it calls 'increasing political extremism' [1] on campus – which director Raheem Kassam is reported to have said is a reference to a wave of peaceful occupations that took place on UK campuses to protest Israel's bombing of Gaza in Operation Cast Lead [2].
3. That Student Rights' Director Raheem Kassam was also the Executive Director of the right-wing website, The Commentator, until recently [4] – known for publishing articles such as this [5]. He is the founder of Trending Central [6], another right-wing "news" website, and has held various positions in the controversial neoconservative think tank The Henry Jackson Society [7]. Press reports that he was setting up a UK arm of the Tea Party have so far failed to materialise [8].
4. That Student Rights has only recently confirmed that it is a project of The Henry Jackson Society – a neoconservative think tank whose associate director, Douglas Murray, has argued that "conditions for Muslims in Europe must be made harder across the board" and "all immigration into Europe from Muslim countries must stop" [9] – but is not transparent about its origins or funding on its website or materials.
5. That Student Rights' most recent report on gender segregation [10], focusing on Islamic society events, has been described as deeply flawed in its methodology [11], and failed in almost every case to determine whether segregation was enforced or if people were voluntarily choosing to sit where they want to, and presented the phenomenon as 'part of a wider, discriminatory trend' on campuses [10, p. 17] which resulted in headlines in the mainstream media associating gender segregation with 'extremism' [12].
6. That the Institute of Race Relations has noted with concern [13] that Student Rights' work and reporting has been used by far-right groups to target a Muslim student event [14] which led to reported threats of violence and the event subsequently having to be cancelled by the university [15].
7. That LSE, Goldsmith's, Birkbeck, Kingston and UCL Student Unions have voted in favour of condemning Student Rights for its overwhelming focus on Muslim students, the way its approach tends to bypass students themselves and its lack of transparency about its links to The Henry Jackson Society (16, 17, 18, 19).
8. That NUS President 2011-13, Liam Burns said that we need to "challenge the right wing bile that is spouted by groups like Student Rights and people like Douglas Murray"; and that NUS VP Welfare 2012-13, Pete Mercer, condemned Student Rights' approach as a "witch-hunt" [20].
9. That the grassroots student campaign 'Real Student Rights' which aims to expose and oppose Student Rights is supported by NUS Black Students Officer (2013-14) Aaron Kiely; ULU Black Students Officer (2013-14) Maham Hashmi-Khan; NUS VP Welfare Officers for 2012-13 and 2013-14 Pete Mercer and Colum McGuire; and ULU President (2012-14) Michael Chessum among others [21].
10. That due to the activities of groups like Student Rights, some Muslim students are often left feeling that university staff and even fellow students are insufficiently supportive of their rights on campus which is detrimental to their university experience as individuals and to universities as a whole in terms of equal political participation, good campus relations and cohesion in the student body.

### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. That the claims Student Rights makes to the press have often been sensationalist and misleading, designed to grab alarmist headlines about so-called 'extremism' on campus, regardless of the

impact on students; and Student Rights' director Raheem Kassam – who called students who voted for the 'Real Student Rights' motion in SUs voicing concerns about his organisation 'fools' – continues to show disdain for students [22].

2. That whether intentional or not, it is deeply damaging that Student Rights' approach – which tends to bypass students themselves – should lead to a situation in which far-right groups come onto a campus, creating a climate in which students feel persecuted and threatened and potentially endangering students' welfare.
3. That Student Rights' activities fuel Islamophobia, by disproportionately and unfairly targeting Muslim students, contributing to their marginalisation and ostracisation, damaging campus cohesion and feeding into a growing trend of Islamophobic discourse in wider society which should always be challenged.
4. That sexism, racism and homophobia are problems not confined to certain sectors of society and should, like all forms of discrimination, be challenged and opposed without contributing to the marginalisation of particular groups.
5. That Student Rights legitimacy is wholly questionable given its limited or non-existent links to actual students, inconsistency on the issue of no-platform policies, creation in reaction to peaceful pro-Palestinian activism, and in particular its lack of transparency about its origins, funding, and links to The Henry Jackson Society – a think tank which has been widely criticised for comments made by its staff perceived to be Islamophobic [9].
6. That it is not the place of any external organisation – particularly one as non-transparent and dubiously connected as Student Rights – to undermine Student Unions' autonomy or interfere with co-operation between the union and university in their work to ensure that pre-existing guidelines regarding external speakers are followed.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. The NUS Officer to release a public statement/open letter addressed to Student Rights criticising their lack of transparency, sensationalism, divisive and counter-productive activities and disproportionate preoccupation with Muslim students and calling on them to drastically change their approach and mentality. The statement should also outline NUS' commitment to challenging Islamophobia along with all other forms of prejudice and discrimination.
2. The NUS Officer to write to the university Student Unions, making explicit students' concerns about the effect Student Rights' activities have on students' welfare, campus cohesion and freedom of speech on campus, as well as re-iterating the union's desire to maintain its autonomy in determining guidelines on external speakers in co-operation with relevant stakeholders such as the university, without undue outside interference.
3. The NUS Officer to maintain ongoing communication and to report back to the NUS on any developments including asking the Student Union's to inform NUS of any attempts by Student Rights to lobby them regarding any student groups' activities.
4. To circulate the 'Real Student Rights' petition via email / social media.
5. To write to the UUK and AOC, making explicit our concerns about the group Student Rights, and the effect that its activities have on students welfare, campus cohesion and on freedom of speech on campus as well as re-iterating the NUS policy of opposing and disallowing any form of hate speech on campus and its desire to maintain its autonomy in determining the boundaries of this remit without outside interference.
6. To encourage students unions, university management and university press offices to both resist unfair targeting of Muslim students, their events and political campaigns and encourage them to publicly condemn Islamophobia, Student Rights and any similar groups to the press when individuals students or their Muslim student population as a whole is unfairly singled out or targeted

\* Where there is a number in brackets e.g. [1] there is a footnote which has not been outlined here but the version with the footnotes is available on request

## NC\_W\_14308: A New EMA

### Conference Believes:

1. That the EMA in England was abolished by the Coalition Government in the 2010 spending review, despite widespread opposition and clear evidence of its impact on participation, retention, and attainment
2. That the decision was based on a flawed reading of one research report, and which the author said was the wrong conclusion to take from his work
3. That the EMA in England was replaced by the discretionary 16-19 Bursary Fund, with a total budget of £180m, only a third the size of the EMA budget
4. That duty on local authorities to ensure adequate transport in order for those aged 16-19 to access FE is routinely ignored
5. That research by Barnardo's has found that the 16-19 Bursary Fund is inadequate to meet the needs of learners and has created a 'postcode lottery' of support around the country
6. That the EMA has been retained in the three devolved nations, though with each making different policy changes over time
7. That the participation age will rise to 18 by 2015 – which will mean a need for more support, not less

### Conference Further Believes:

1. That an entitlement-based scheme for learners in FE is the fairest means of distributing resources
2. That the EMA system previously in place was imperfect and did not adequately take into account the needs of learners with larger families, or changing circumstances
3. That the £30 maximum rate of EMA was never increased over its lifetime and as it lost value it blunted the effectiveness of EMA
4. That simply restoring EMA without reform would be to miss an important opportunity to address its flaws
5. That any new scheme should retain a small discretionary fund for hardship and unexpected costs, as was the case prior to 2010
6. With the general election just one year away, it is vital that NUS builds a movement to press politicians to commit to bring back a weekly grant for students in Further Education.

### Conference Resolves:

1. To campaign for an EMA replacement that restores an entitlement to learners but addresses the flaws in the original scheme and to make it a major priority to press MPs and political parties to commit to ahead of the General Election.
2. To ensure that any proposed scheme remains as simple as possible to understand and administer
3. To make the case through our campaign that a new EMA is not simply an incentive scheme but a necessary means of support for learners in FE
4. To empower FE unions to make the case on a local level
5. To consider how the scope of a new EMA can be extended to learners older than 19
6. To continue to defend EMA in the nations and build a campaign for improvements in levels of financial support to students.

## NC\_W\_14309: International Students

### Conference Believes:

1. That education is a right to everyone, regardless of nationality.
2. That this government is using international students as a scapegoat to meet racist immigration targets.

3. That this government, as well as many of our institutions, treat international students as cash cows.
4. That international students have the right to work in the UK.
5. That international students should be treated with respect, and all monitoring should be low-impact.

**Conferences Resolves:**

1. That University fees for international students should be fixed.
2. That international students should not be charged for using the NHS.
3. NUS should run a campaign highlighting the non-economic benefits of having international students on our campuses bring.
4. For now, Universities should minimise the impact of UKBA by putting in place non-invasive monitoring, integrated with ordinary attendance procedures to comply with regulations.
5. NUS should campaign for UKBA to cease systematic monitoring of overseas students at all Universities and focus on institutions where there has been evidence of incompetence.
6. The government should abandon the plans of monitoring students through landlords.
7. The NUS should campaign to bring back post-study Visas for international students.

## NC\_W\_14310: Access without Support Is Not Opportunity

**Conference Believes:**

1. Our discourse around Higher Education funding and student debt is focused on tuition fees, not on student financial support.
2. NUS's 2012 Priority campaign was the 'Pound in your Pocket' survey.
3. Similar surveys are being conducted this year in Wales and Northern Ireland.
4. None of the 2012 priority campaign activity has yet translated into a sustained nationwide campaign on student financial support.
5. This year, the Scottish Government committed to above-inflation rises in student financial support. Other nations have yet to see the same.
6. Universities are increasingly exploring removing some institutional financial support to invest in outreach activity, and OFFA (the Office for Fair Access) appears to be encouraging them to do so.
7. Universities with strong records on access cannot possibly afford to offer all of their students the amount of support they really need.
8. The Access to Learning Fund is an emergency and discretionary hardship fund to provide local support to those students in the direst financial need and from the most vulnerable groups.
9. The Access to Learning Fund stood at £37m this year and faces uncertainty over its existence for next year and in the future in its current form.

**Conference Further Believes:**

1. Student financial support is a key priority for our Higher Education campaign if we are serious about wanting students to stay in education, succeed, and thrive.
2. Student financial support is equally as important as how university tuition is funded.
3. No condemnation of the current system of Higher Education funding is complete without critiquing the shoddy state of student financial support.
4. No discussion of student debt is complete without acknowledging the burden of maintenance loans.
5. It is the responsibility of national governments, not just our institutions, to ensure that students in Higher Education have the necessary financial support to succeed.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. To make fairer, better funded student financial support a key 'ask' in the 2015 General Election campaign, alongside similar calls for students in Further Education.

2. To conduct further national research on the impact of financial hardship on students' attainment, extra-curricular participation, and prospects after graduation.
3. To continue to fight for student bursaries, but to acknowledge that in properly-funded governments system of student financial support, universities could focus on more targeted support and outreach.
4. To extend this call for fairer and better funded financial support to students in postgraduate study, not just those students who currently receive support.
5. To campaign for reinstatement of any cuts to both Students Opportunities Fund and Access to Learning Fund.
6. To lobby for ring-fenced funding of hardship funds.

## **NC\_W\_14311: Students and HIV/AIDS**

### **Conference Believes:**

1. That HIV/AIDS exists, almost 100,000 people are HIV+ in the UK, and people of all gender identities and sexual orientations are affected.
2. For too long HIV/AIDS has been seen as a Gay mans issue, and that recently, even within this community; campaigning, awareness and action against the spread of the virus has decreased.
3. That stigma around HIV+ people is rife.
4. That testing for HIV is just a part of a full sexual health screening.
5. That HIV denialist exist, and that conspiracy films such as "House of Numbers" have no place on our campuses.

### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. According to the National AIDS Trust (2012) 48% of people living with HIV were probably exposed via Heterosexual Contact, while 43% were men who have sex with men.
2. 33% of HIV+ people in the UK are Women.
3. Black African, Caribbean and Asian people make up 48% of people living with HIV, yet are less than 10% of the UK population.

### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To champion HIV testing, research and campaigning outside of the LGBT community
2. For the Welfare Zone and others to create relevant resources for events such as World AIDS Day which will be promoted to all SUs and not just the LGBT Societies.
3. To denounce HIV denialist propaganda and conspiracy theories which spread stigma and mistruths about HIV+ people.
4. To actively work with NUS USI on their campaign to lift the blanket life time blood donation ban on MSM.

# Welfare Policy Passed At National Conference 2015

## NC\_W\_15301: Supporting For Success: Getting the Most Out Of Student Support Services

### Conference Believes:

1. The work of student support services is hugely important to access and retention, but is often undervalued within institutions.
2. Student support services can include but aren't limited: to advice, counselling, campus medical centres, disability services, mental health services and other types of pastoral care.
3. Recent years have seen a number of pressures on student support services including: increasing demand, insufficient funding, threats of cuts and the potential loss of Disabled Students' Allowance.
4. In addition to this, overstretched NHS services are resulting in increasing strain being placed on services provided by institutions.
5. The increasing marketisation of education is leading to prioritisation of more superficial services and expenditure linked to 'the student experience' rather than the vital services that students need.
6. Leadership within institutions, as well as sector bodies should place higher priority on delivering adequate, well-resourced services that support students who are struggling.
7. Students should be partners in the shaping of services, and students should be empowered to decide their own journey through services.
8. Students' experiences of services and support should be joined-up and coherent from pre-application through to completion and students should not be expected to disclose support needs at multiple points.
9. That student support services should not be profit making.
10. Services should be delivered by staff who are paid fairly for their work, and supported through proper training.
11. The student movement should stand in solidarity with student services staff fighting for fair pay and terms and conditions.
12. Academic staff should be trained on how to approach and to identify student welfare issues, as they can play an important role in signposting and acting as a consistent and trusted point of contact for students.
13. Attendance monitoring should not lead to the surveillance or singling out of international students. Where and if it is used, it should be for supportive and pastoral reasons to help identify vulnerable students across the board.
14. Institutions should ensure that services and support extend to bullying and harassment experienced in online spaces.
15. The hours support services are available often make them completely inaccessible to students whose modules occur during the evening and/or weekend periods.
16. As the demand for Student support services increase, institutions should review resourcing annually to ensure that advertised services are delivered and that student expectations are met.
17. Institutions should ensure the full complement of services is offered throughout the year including vacation periods.
18. That one of the key student support services provided by institutions is hardship funding.
19. Despite this, hardship funding has been seen as an easy target in recent years: the Westminster government scrapped the ring-fenced Access to Learning Fund in HE in England from 2014/15, whilst the budget for the 16-19 Bursary Fund in FE has not increased since 2012; the HE Financial Contingency Fund in Wales was saved for a year by an NUS Wales campaign but is under threat for 2015/16 as is funding in FE; whilst in

20. Northern Ireland and Scotland these budgets have been cut or are inadequate.  
Some SUs, such as Sheffield Hallam, have been successful at winning additional funds for their students, but in many cases this essential safety net has been cut to the bare minimum.
21. That students may need to take interruptions from their study for a number of reasons including but not limited to: health, mental health, financial and family
22. Students have the right to an informed decision as to whether an interruption would be more beneficial to their education instead of carrying on with that year's study
23. There are a number of inhibitive reasons other than the educational impact of taking an interruption including, but not limited to: visas, finances and poor information
24. That presently there is little consistency of information from institutions, Student Finance [England / Wales / NI], local councils and national government with respect to policy, procedures and support
25. Many academic institutions lack empathy and this can add stress to students during an already intensely stressful period
26. That students may need to take interruptions from their study for a number of reasons including but not limited to: health, mental health, financial and family
27. Students have the right to an informed decision as to whether an interruption would be more beneficial to their education instead of carrying on with that year's study
28. There's number of inhibitive reasons other than the educational impact of taking an interruption.

**Conference Further Believes:**

1. Student support services should be made available to all students outside of traditional office hours.
2. Hardship funds are by their nature targeted at precisely those students who need urgent financial help to continue their course and succeed.
3. Some of the most vulnerable groups who most rely on hardship – student parents and carers, disabled students, healthcare students, adult learners, care leavers and those estranged from their parents – are exactly those groups NUS research has demonstrated are under the most financial strain.
4. Hardship should be provided through ring-fenced budgets at a national level, with national criteria to ensure consistent decisions, but with enough local discretion to address unusual circumstances and needs.
5. Hardship funds are by their nature targeted at precisely those students who need urgent financial help to continue their course and succeed.
6. That students can find themselves in a financial limbo when taking a year from study, with respect to financial support from Student Finance, their institution or benefit office
7. That more can be done by institutions to make disruption to study easier
8. That finding a job short term is increasingly difficult
9. That financial support from family is never guaranteed
10. That international students taking a year out may find their visa revoked if declared as not on a full-time course.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. To call for restoration of funding cut from student support services in institutions
2. To commission a piece of work which looks at students' experiences of student support services and makes recommendations in relation to the distinction between academic and pastoral care services (in consultation with UCU and other sector groups), as well as plotting what students' journey through support services might look like.
3. Within this work, recommendations will also be made on the level of training that is appropriate for academic and other frontline staff to receive in relation to student support and mental health, as well as how best to communicate services so that they become a more prominent feature of institutions.

4. This work should not be prescriptive, but should instead aim to provide a framework for reasonable student expectations, with details of service provision rightly determined and negotiated on a local level.
5. To incorporate examples of where services have innovated and established new ways of delivering support.
6. In order to ensure that services are fit for purpose for all students regardless of identity.
7. To consider and challenge structures that make it difficult for liberation groups (who may be particularly vulnerable) to access services
8. To encourage greater participation among other groups less likely to access services (e.g. men accessing mental health services, international students, distance learners)
9. To emphasise the importance of ongoing evaluation and an effective feedback loop between students (and particularly those using services), students' unions and institutions in relation to the delivery of services.
10. To consider the student services arrangements for students on years abroad, as well as part-time students and distance learners to ensure that all students can expect a minimum level of service at all times.
11. To push for parity of access to services for international students, both within institutions and outside (particularly within the NHS)
12. To fight outsourcing and cuts and the effects this can have on the position of staff, as well as the services delivered to students.
13. To emphasize that mature students often require differentiated services compared to traditional students.
14. To launch a commission of student hardship that calls on government across 4 nations to address the issue.
15. To survey SUs about hardship provision and identify where the cuts have been greatest and their effects.
16. To campaign to defend hardship funds in FE and HE from cuts.
17. To call for a reinstatement of hardship funds where it has been lost and to extend funding where it is inadequate.
18. To call on institutions to ensure that staff who manage appeals and complaint procedures are aware of how the provision of support services can be the vital lifeline for many students.
19. To call on institutions to conduct a detailed analysis of support service usage and relate it to access and retention.
20. To call on institutions to commit to ensuring that financial support lost when the Access to Learning Fund was scrapped are replaced by the institution and that allocation criteria are open and transparent, ensuring that Union officers are be part of the review of how funds are spent each year.
21. To lobby institutions to ensure that the right support services are available for students to make an informed decision about interruptions to their study
22. To work with institutions, students unions, NUS Liberation Campaigns, and other support bodies to ensure that staff and services are fully educated on the issues surrounding disruption to study
23. To work with the NUS Liberation campaigns to develop research and campaign to ensure that support services are able to cater to the different access needs of students who are facing interruptions to their study
24. To develop guidelines for students unions and academic institutions on how best to support students undergoing disruption to their studies and build bespoke, case by case support services for individual students
25. To campaign against institutionalised discrimination that prevents students accessing an accessible education

### **Conference Believes:**

1. A housing crisis is fast developing in Britain, particularly for young people and students
2. According to a NUS survey from 2013:
  - a. Average student rents doubled in just the 10 years from 2002 to 2012
  - b. Private sector housing costs students on average more than £1500 more than university accommodation
  - c. The number of private housing firms that provide no accommodation adapted for disabled people whatsoever has shot up to more than 1 in 4
  - d. At more than 1 in 5 universities students have no access to any system that can accredit the quality of privately rented accommodation
3. Paying extortionate rate for sub-standard housing is extremely detrimental to one's academic studies.
4. There has been a longstanding and false debate about students living in the private rented sector that pits students against other citizens on who is 'most deserving' for housing supply.
5. Article 4 Directions, a policy that aims to control where students can and can't live in communities, was introduced as a central government policy under Labour and pushed down to local decision makers under the Coalition Government.
6. There is currently a housing crisis in Britain.
7. The cost of student accommodation should be matched to student incomes, not the market.
8. That Universities increasingly seek to 'widen participation', yet do not offer halls at a price that working class students can afford
9. Some institutions heavily recruit international students, yet do not offer a guarantor scheme.
10. The housing crisis has led to spiralling rents in the private rented sector.
11. Weekly rent for students increased by 25% between 2009-10 and 2012-13 nationally with the average rent being £123.96.  
(<http://www.nus.org.uk/Global/Campaigns/Accommodation%20Costs%20Survey%20V6%20WEB.pdf>)
12. In 2009-10 the average non-ensuite self-catered single room in institution accommodation was £78.84 a week but by 2011-12 the cost was 23% higher at £97.08.  
(<http://www.nus.org.uk/Global/Campaigns/Accommodation%20Costs%20Survey%20V6%20WEB.pdf>)
13. Many universities across the country have relationships with private halls suppliers, in which their service is recommended to students.
14. Many students see living in halls as a central part of their university experience.
15. It is crucial that students are independently represented by their SU in relationships between private companies, institutions and students.
16. In some instances, the commercial nature of this relationship means the student voice can be unheard.
17. It is unacceptable for students to not be a partner in their housing.
18. There is a substantial amount of students within higher education who are; estranged from their family, who are fostered or live with parents who are disabled.
19. When graduated most of these students will be searching for the appropriate job. Some will find work locally; some will find work further away.
20. For those who find work further away, they will then need to find a place to live in order for them to accept the job.
21. However in order to rent a property you must provide at least one of the following; a guarantor, evidence of income or payment of up to six months' rent. (All major letting companies require this).
22. Some institutions heavily recruit international students, yet do not offer a guarantor scheme.

### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. Everybody has the right to a safe, affordable home whether studying or not.

2. The problem is not about who is most deserving of housing but that the government needs to build more homes and this debate will not cease until that happens.
3. Building more purpose built accommodation for students is not the solution. They are unaffordable, lack real choice and put students in the hands of greedy private accommodation providers seeking profit. Many students like living in homes in the private rented sector that sit within a wider community and the provision for student homes must reflect that balance.
4. NUS must place its work on housing in the context of wider communities and work to achieve success for everyone in order to win for students.
5. The student movement should care about wider housing campaigns in order to create a fair and sustainable future for students.
6. Student housing campaigns should unite both those living in university halls of residence and private accommodation, they could campaign around the following demands:
7. Rents paid to university accommodation should be capped and brought down to a genuinely affordable level
8. All privatised university housing and services must be brought back 'in-house'
9. University owned accommodation must be democratically run with a say given to students, student unions, and trade unions on campus
10. Set up Student Union run letting agencies that refuse to charge artificial fees and can blacklist dodgy landlords
11. Councils should use their legal powers to introduce rent control, so housing is something we can actually afford
12. Opposing the selling off of publicly owned council housing, which has been run down and depleted by successive governments – nationally just 840 were built by councils in the 2013-2014 financial year
13. Mass council house building would provide jobs in the construction industry, flood the market with extra housing stock, and drive down rents
14. Accommodation in halls and the private rented sector is too expensive and the result is that students are either put off from applying to institutions, have to reject offers from their chosen institution, or struggle to afford accommodation fees and take on an unsustainable amount of part-time work or debt to pay them.

### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To conduct a review on the effectiveness (or lack of) that Article 4 Directions has had on housing supply in local communities and call for their withdrawal.
2. To lobby the next government to ensure adequate spending is given to building new homes.
3. To join Shelter's call to extend the Affordable Homes Programme to 2020 and to build 250,000 a year with a diverse portfolio that includes adequate social housing.
4. To call for letting agency fees to be scrapped across the UK, longer and more flexible tenancies and an end to revenge evictions.
5. To show support and solidarity to local community housing campaigns that resist eviction and demolition of homes.
6. To support a range of initiatives that boost standards in student housing, including community tenants' unions and supporting those that already exist.
7. Student Unions should be encouraged to campaign on housing as a top priority in these several ways:
8. To campaign for their university and local council to work together to implement a mandatory accreditation scheme for all private landlords / letting agencies to subscribe to.
9. To set up democratically student-run Tenants Unions to serve as a genuine campaign organisation / platform for all students renting in private / university owned property (not a rubber stamp organisation for university management)
10. To break up the monopoly of housing controlled by private landlords by encouraging alternatives such as student union run letting agencies, student housing co-ops.

11. All 'housing fairs' should have all and any commercial aspects removed and turned into events that promote awareness on such matters as tenants' rights etc.
12. NUS should launch a housing campaign around the demands mentioned above
13. To lobby the Office for Fair Access in England and regional forums elsewhere to make affordable housing and guarantor schemes components in Access Agreements, and run training for SUs to influence locally.
14. To call for rent controls, organising with campaigns like the Radical Housing Network and Living Rent Campaign; and lobby for housing officers to be brought back to Local Authorities, with the power to cap rents and prosecute bad landlords.
15. For NUS to support and help create the development of progressive rent structures that students' unions can lobby their institution to implement, for example where 25% of bed stock is maintained at a level of 50% of maximum student finance grant, loan and bursary.
16. For NUS to organise with sabbaticals and activists and lead a campaign to reduce rents for students in the private rented sector, demanding sustainable rent control policies and ambitious long-term affordable accommodation building projects from government.
17. For NUS to provide resources to Students' Unions to enable students to campaign on affordable accommodation issues on their own campuses, including support for rent strikes, occupations and similar actions where necessary.
18. To mandate the NUS VP Welfare to establish a toolkit for working with external halls suppliers and universities, in order to strengthen the representation provided by Students' Unions.
19. To implement a university service where students can request the university to act as their guarantor if needed (estranged, care leaver)
20. Universities will act as a guarantor until the graduate receives their first six payments from their employer.
21. Graduates will then be able to provide evidence of income and will be credit checked by the letting agencies which would mean the university will no longer need to be a guarantor.
22. Graduates seeking support from the Universities to act as a guarantor would have to provide evidence supporting the situation in which they cannot provide a guarantor.
23. Graduates seeking support from Universities have to provide evidence of employment in which they are about to start (confirmation of job).

## NC\_W\_15303: Student Financial Support

### Conference Believes:

1. Student support in England has been under attack for too many years. Whether the disgraceful 'modernisation' of the DSA, the appalling abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance and Access to Learning Funds, or the slow decline in value of bursaries, grants and loans across FE and HE, we face a cost of living crisis.
2. The nations have had some success, such as securing greater support for the poorest HE students in Wales and Scotland and defending EMAs, but the threat of cuts is still real.
3. In England the student movement has secured some important wins – defending Care to Learn, stopping the worst cuts to DSA, and securing improved postgraduate funding – but these wins aren't nearly enough.
4. Too many students struggle to make ends meet.
5. NUS published Pound in Your Pocket (England) in 2012 but its response has been piecemeal and too many recommendations remain unaddressed.
6. Students are struggling to afford the cost of living whilst being at university.
7. The cost of living is increasing at a higher rate than student maintenance loans and grants, the increase between this academic year and the last equated to less than 1% (which is below inflation rate.)
8. Accordingly this means that there is an increasing gap between student income and the cost of living in the UK. The maximum grant based upon means tested measures that a student who lives

outside of London can receive is £3,387. The average expenditure for living costs across the year is £12,056 (based upon 2010 figures). This leaves a gap of £8,889.

9. There is evidence to suggest that the maintenance loan for most students does not even cover their student accommodation. For example the lowest price of accommodation per annum at Reading is £3,995.60, meaning that there is a difference of £608.60 which would have to be funded by the student.
10. Therefore students are reliant on parental support, yet 1 in 5 parents of students face financial pressures as a result of this.
11. This is assuming that parents are willing to support their child in such a way; some students may not have good relationships with their parents/ guardians.
12. It is now assumed that a student should get a part-time job to support the cost of living whilst being at university, this can affect negatively upon a student experience due to time poverty factors. Whereby students do not have the adequate time to fulfil their studies or extra-curricular activities.
13. Evidence shows that these factors are negatively affecting student well-being. Students unions are witnessing a rise in finance –related health issues.
14. There is generally an expectation that maintenance loans should cover student costs of living, so many new students are unprepared for the above factors.
15. The majority of UK students must apply for funding through Student Finance England (SFE).
16. The number of students not receiving their funding on time is increasing.
17. Although, some of these are complex situations, many of these are due to clerical/administration errors. For example: losing declarations three times even though they were sent signed for delivery and confirmed as received by the postal service. Another person was told not to send a photocopy of a birth certificate and then when the evidence arrived was told it needed to be the original document.
18. 1 in 3 students experience sleep problems due to financial worry.
19. The scrapping of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) has had a hugely detrimental impact, hitting the poorest families, women and Black students.
20. Government grants for 24+ FE students have been replaced with loans, with a disproportionate impact on women students who are the majority of adult learners in FE.
21. EMA was a lifeline to thousands of students that, in England, was cruelly scrapped by the government in 2010
22. This cut forced thousands of young people out of education and made college inaccessible to many more
23. NHS funded students receive a bursary and 'reduced-rate' student loan. In London this is just over £4k for students studying for 45 weeks a year. All other funding is means tested and the maximum someone could receive is just over £5000.
24. A survey conducted by the Medical Students Association at KCL shows that only 44% of students were aware of changes to finances in their final year and, of those who were aware, most found out via word of mouth.
25. In some multi-disciplinary Universities, up to 63% of expenditure of the access to learning fund goes on NHS funded students.
26. NHS funded students are more likely to access low and high risk debt funds and have more financial worries than non-NHS funded students.
27. 60% of the medical workforce are women, and in courses like nursing women far outnumber men.
28. That the current funding system for nursing and midwifery students is broken and too many students are struggling to pay for their final placement at the end of their final year.
29. The Student Finance England is abandoning those students whose academic year doesn't finish in June but actually the ends at the end of August.
30. That the NHS Bursary, which is meant to provide support for these students, isn't timed effectively to support nursing and midwifery students.

31. That because of these factors nursing and midwifery students are left without any financial support during their final placement, which is a requirement for registration.
32. That financial pressure on students can lead to poor performance and can be a cause for a student to leave their course.

**Conference Further Believes:**

1. We need to take radical action to secure greater investment in student support across the board.
2. Real progressive politics means ensuring that it is those most in need who receive the most support.
3. Simply making vague calls for living grants completely fails students and will do nothing to actually improve their situation.
4. The EMA and support for adult learners must be reinstated and improved.
5. Grants and loans – and the thresholds at which they are paid – must see their value restored and enhanced and the DSA must be defended.
6. The utterly inadequate support for NHS-funded healthcare students must be drastically improved.
7. Course costs support – particularly for childcare – needs to be provided to part-time students.
8. Urgent reforms must be made to the mechanisms of student support – monthly payments, abolishing the final year rate of student loan, and much easier online applications.
9. Student life is stressful enough and that money issues already play a large part in that, without the added stresses produced by misinformation and clerical errors.
10. Students' Union exist to support students in areas such as matter, however this is only tackling the 'symptoms' and not the 'cause'.
11. Tackling the root of the issue would decrease the pressure on our Advice Services.
12. That the next government should bring back EMA. We need a new, bigger and better EMA that provides greater levels of financial support to more students.
13. While EMA was an important lifeline, it was far from perfect
14. EMA was only available to a minority of 16-18 year olds and £30 a week is not enough.
15. NHS funded students are already underfunded and not well supported financially during their studies.
16. NHS funded students should have access to extra funding in the form of a living grant, not a loan.
17. The lack of financial support for NHS students disproportionately affects women.
18. The retention of NHS funded students will become harder (nursing student drop-out rates at some Universities is at 25%).
19. Wider issues affecting the NHS (such as pay freezes, pay caps and privatisation) impact on healthcare students now with funding and in their future careers with pay.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. That NUS lead a high-profile campaign that demands urgent action from the new government on all these areas and others arising from Pound in Your Pocket etc.
2. To reaffirm our commitment to targeting support at those most in need.
3. To resist any attempt at further cuts.
4. That the NUS should lobby the government for a more realistic student maintenance funding system.
5. This includes funds in the form of hardship funds/ grants/ bursaries which are not presented in a loan system, which creates additional student debt.
6. Any loan system should take into account parents who have multiple children who attend university.
7. The government should subsidise funds for universities to use for cost of living purposes to enable cheaper student accommodation, catered packages, extra-curricular activities and travel.
8. To campaign to raise awareness of the cost of living whilst studying.
9. Universities should publish any hidden course costs for example the cost of books, university trips and printing costs.

10. Campaign and lobby for better service within SFE.
11. Conduct research into the problems faced through SFE. This will enable NUS to gather research to decide further action.
12. Work with NASMA to conduct this research.
13. Bring the evidence Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. This would lead up to the improvement of services dependent on research, which could include, but not limit; staff training, quality of service and improvement in telephone services.
14. Campaign to end loans in FE.
15. Launch a major national campaign to bring back EMA with national days of action and a protest outside the Department of Education – demand the next Government brings back EMA.
16. To lobby the Government to secure more funding for NHS funded students.
17. To make clear the gendered gap in the funding of health students compared to other students.
18. To support local student campaigns to 'Defend our NHS' and 'Keep our NHS Public'.
19. For NUS and the Vice President Welfare to lobby Student Finance England to review their policy on payment wards for students on extended courses and cover the whole period of required study.
20. For NUS and the Vice President Welfare to lobby the NHS to review the NHS bursary payment schedules to better support health care students.

## NC\_W\_15304: 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 practitioners, institutional academic and support staff to discuss mental health and how we can improve it for students.

### 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 with over 60 students' unions and institutions signing up in the last year
3. That discussions from the summit provided some exciting suggestions for creating this change

### 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:
2. Lobby for relevant and appropriate training for all staff
3. Ensuring that academic policies do not cause undue additional mental distress for students experiencing mental health issues
4. 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
5. 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
6. 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)
7. Support students' unions to develop joined-up approaches across institutions and external services.
- 8.

## NC\_W\_15305: Stand Up To Racism and Scapegoating

### Conference Believes:

1. NUS must actively campaign against racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and fascism as these are dangers which threaten the welfare of millions of students.
2. As the cuts bite politicians are increasingly calling for draconian 'anti-immigration' policies and scapegoating migrant workers and Black communities in a bid to distract people from the real cause of falling living standards: the government's austerity agenda.
3. Our campuses are not immune from this racist climate: Nazi swastikas have been daubed on campuses; further attacks on civil liberties and divisive rhetoric surrounding the PREVENT agenda; and students have been assaulted and even killed in racist attacks.
4. The student movement must never give a platform to fascists because fascism seeks to eliminate free, speech, democracy and annihilate its opponents and minorities.
5. The lesson of the 1930s was that the Nazis used violence to gain power and carry out a Holocaust. They slaughtered millions – in the gas chambers and concentration camps – of Jewish people, Eastern Europeans, communists, trade unionists, Romani, LGBT and disabled people.
6. Giving fascists a platform in the student movement destroys the safe spaces our campuses must be for the diverse student population.
7. Campuses must be safe places for students to live and study
8. We have seen too many instances of hate crime taking place on campuses recently
9. Some students' unions have done work to become third party hate crime reporting centres.
10. There were 1,168 antisemitic incidents recorded in 2014, more than double the 535 antisemitic incidents recorded in 2013, and the highest ever annual recorded number of incidents since the Community Security Trust (CST) began recording them in 1984 (1).
11. 314 antisemitic incidents took place in July 2014 during the period of the summer conflict in Israel and Gaza. This acted as a trigger event for attacks on Jews in the United Kingdom. This is in contrast to the 59 incidents recorded the year before in July 2013, and is higher than the 304 antisemitic incidents which occurred in the first six months of 2014 combined (2). There were also 81 violent antisemitic assaults in 2014, whereas in 2013 there were none (3).
12. There were 19 incidents that took place on and off campus where the victims were Jewish students, academics or other student bodies (4).
13. During 2014, 239 incidents involved Nazi and/or Holocaust language and imagery, including swastikas and reference to the Holocaust (5), often using age-old antisemitic tropes and propaganda messages against synagogues; Jewish community centres, schools and individuals.
14. In recent months, there have been three major attacks in Europe targeting Jewish centres and individuals. Four Jews were killed in an attack on the Belgian Jewish Museum in May 2014; four Jews were killed during an attack on a Parisian Kosher supermarket following the Charlie Hebdo murders this January; and one Jewish volunteer security guard was killed in an attack on Copenhagen's Great Synagogue this February.
15. There has been a rise in neo-Nazi, fascist student-led groups such as National Action, who use social media platforms to promote and incite hatred against Jewish students, Jewish organisations, Muslim students, and anti-racism and anti-Fascism campaigners. National Action and affiliate students have been banned from Warwick University due to their action on campus, including giving Nazi salutes in lecture halls.
16. When National Action has been present in city centres, they have gone on to target university campuses, both with leafleting and physical intimidation. In September 2014, National Action targeted and attempted to intimidate a restaurant that sold Halal meat in Coventry and then the group targeted Warwick University. In September 2014, National Action targeted Rotherham with a far-right anti-grooming protest, after which the group travelled to Sheffield University and displayed a racist banner promoting "White Youth Against the Grooming Gangs". National Action has further been active at Swansea, Cambridge, Exeter, Nottingham, Chester, Aberdeen, Robert Gordon, Sunderland, Stirling and Glyndwr Universities.

17. National Action is an antisemitic group who have stated that "there is no legitimate reason to not be racist or an anti-Semite in 2014". The group have pushed the antisemitic claim that Jew run the financial sector and member Benjamin Raymond has openly proclaimed adoration for Adolf Hitler and stated that "I am not ashamed to say I love Hitler". Garron Helm, a member of National Action, was sentenced to 4 weeks in prison for sending antisemitic twitter abuse to Jewish MP Luciana Berger. National Action have also specifically targeted the Union of Jewish Students on one of their YouTube videos and appeared in Leeds performing a Nazi salute.
18. National Action is a racist group who directly target students; the group have said they want to send black and Asian students "home on a plane". National Action also praised the racist Norwegian killer Anders Breivik and one member stated that it is a "big no" for "coloured people" to come to the United Kingdom".
19. National Action is a homophobic group and stated that they are against the education of homosexuality in schools. Specifically, the National Action's North West branch has used social media to proclaim that "homosexuality is a mental illness" .

### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. There are innovative ways that students' unions can be a part of both tackling and preventing hate crime such as hate crime reporting centres.
2. It is unacceptable for any individuals or communities to become a physical target purely on the basis of their religious or racial identity.
3. That during times of conflict abroad, minority communities in the UK can be targeted by racist groups here.
4. Students unions and their academic institutions have a duty of care and protection to all their members' safety both on and off campus.
5. That building strong interfaith links between religious groups, and educating the wider community on different cultures and religions, will help to bring about long-term change, both on and off campus, which in turn will bring about a and more tolerant society which seeks to understand differences.
6. Surrounding the period of Holocaust Memorial Day 2015, campuses were targeted with Nazi imagery and graffiti which was daubed on campus walls, including at Birmingham.
7. Students unions, academic institutions and university security have a duty of care and protection to all their members' safety, both on and off campus.
8. The NUS has a long-standing precedent for standing up to fascist and racist groups that seek to divide students on racial, religious or ethnic lines. The British National Party and the English Defence League are both currently No Platformed by NUS.
9. That it has a responsibility to ensure that university campuses remain an open, tolerant and safe space for all ethnic and religious minorities and groups.

### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To actively challenge racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and fascism.
2. To reaffirm NUS' No Platform for Fascists policy and continue to campaign for its full implementation within NUS and all Students' Unions.
3. Reaffirm our support for NUS organising an annual Anti-Racism/Anti-Fascism Conference and providing adequate resources for this work.
4. Work with unions and anti-racist organisations to mark UN Anti-Racism Day.
5. To investigate the idea of students' unions acting as hate crime reporting centres
6. To ensure NUS remains committed to fighting hate crime on campuses and to work with liberation and faith groups to achieve this.
7. To ensure that long term, sustainable mechanisms exist to ensure that no student is targeted or harassed for their religious, national or racial identity.
8. Provide educational training on antisemitism as part of the Sabbatical Officer summer training and throughout the year.

9. To lobby institutions to provide additional support to students during times of higher tension to ensure that campus remains a fair, open and safe space to all students irrespective their religious, national, ethnic or racial identity.
10. To work with universities and students unions to improve hate crime reporting procedures.
11. To No Platform the neo-Nazi fascist group National Action, all its representatives and affiliate students from attaining a platform at any NUS or university events, and this will extend to all NUS and university officers and representatives.
12. To No Platform any future reincarnation or manifestation of National Action under any other name.
13. To ensure all Student Unions, academic institutions and university security teams are educated and briefed on the dangers of Neo-Nazi groups on campus, particularly National Action.

[1] <http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/Incidents%20Report%202014.pdf>

[2] <http://blog.thecst.org.uk/?p=5047>

[3] <http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/Incidents%20Report%202014.pdf>

[4] <http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/Incidents%20Report%202014.pdf>

[5] <http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/Incidents%20Report%202014.pdf>

## NC\_W\_15306: Dealing With Debt

### Conference Believes:

1. Many institutions have had longstanding regulations allowing them to apply academic sanctions to students to recover non-academic debt. This could mean students who have already paid thousands of pounds in fees being denied graduation, restricted access to services or even thrown off their course for falling behind on the rent or having unpaid library fees.
2. In 2013, NUS filed a complaint to the OFT (Office of Fair Trading), now CMA (Consumer and Markets Authority), against institutions who employed such regulations.
3. After an investigation, the OFT ruled in NUS' favour and ruled this practice as 'unfair, aggressive and probably illegal'.

### Conference Further Believes:

1. There is evidence that some institutions have not changed their policies in light of this ruling and are still placing unfair sanctions on students.
2. If institutions didn't charge such extortionate rent on their accommodation less students would fall into debt and behind on payments.
3. Institutions should treat students like individuals, providing support where needed, and not as a block number with a price tag attached to them.

### Conference Resolves:

1. To undertake a review of institutions in breach of the CMA ruling.
2. The name and shame institutions in breach of the ruling and report them to the CMA.
3. To provide students' unions with support to successfully lobby their institutions to implement a fair approach to handling non-academic debt.

## NC\_W\_15307: Free Prescriptions For Students In England

### Conference Believes:

1. The "Pound in your Pocket" research conducted by NUS found many students were at the "brink of dropping out" and that financial difficulties impacted on the wellbeing of around a third of students. This research also found that financial difficulties were the highest rated reason for considering leaving education in both FE students and HE undergraduates.

2. Students are under increasing economic and financial pressures with increased tuition fees, rises in rents, and reductions in government allowances and financial support, for example EMA cuts and DSA changes.
3. Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales all have universal free prescriptions.
4. Prescription charges in England have increased to £8.05 per prescription since April 2014 and are set to rise again next year.
5. Students particularly affected by these increases are those with long term and incurable illnesses and medical conditions who will often require several different medications, requiring payment of repeat prescriptions on a regular basis. This will result in additional costs to students who are already under financial pressure. .
6. Students can get free prescription if they are in education up until they are 19. This excludes the majority of students in HE and any mature FE students. Students' can fill in the HC1 form to help fund prescriptions, which is based on student's income
7. This form must be completed every year.
8. In England there exists a NHS Low income scheme which helps with prescription costs, dental costs, eye care costs and healthcare travel costs
9. The majority of students are eligible for this scheme (average student for full-time students in 2011/12 was £10,931 and £15,198 for part-time students and the limit for the support is an income of over £16,000)
10. To take part in this scheme you have to fill out a HC1, HC2 or HC3 form
11. These forms are several pages in length and require a lot of personal information including past proof of income
12. These forms are available on many university campuses
13. Support to complete these forms exists in many universities

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

1. The government's disregard for students has been already showcased in the raising of tuition fees and defunding of financial support programmes for students, namely its proposed cuts to DSA.
2. The government's defunding and continued privatisation of the National Health Service, has not only affected the quality of these services but also put these services out of reach for those who need them most.
3. Making prescriptions free for students in England is a real and achievable goal as shown by their removal from the nations.
4. Access to medical care is vital to students and the Government policies on funding should reflect this need.
5. Releasing the financial pressures students face will support student wellbeing.
6. Having something as vital as free prescriptions will not only alleviate some of these pressures but will also help to encourage more students to receive the medication they need and deserve.
7. Students should not be risking their health due to financial pressures and lack of awareness of support schemes.
8. NHS Low Income Scheme information and HC1 forms are buried information and the NHS do not provide clear guidance if students are eligible.
9. This also means students in need of immediate medication who haven't already completed a HC1 form and been accepted will have to pay for prescriptions to get their medication immediately. Although this can be reimbursed to them afterwards it still acts as a barrier to medicine.
10. Disabled students already face barriers in education and HC1 forms add another needless barrier.
11. Students are not accessing the NHS Low Income Scheme enough even though a large proportion of students can get free prescriptions but currently aren't due to this archaic system which dissuades students from claiming what they are entitled to.
12. Income should not be a barrier to healthcare

13. The length of these forms and the nature of the evidence that needs to be provided will cause many students to not complete them or not send them off, meaning that they do not get the support and that income will be a barrier to healthcare
14. That as the majority of students are eligible to receive the support it should be available for all students at point of contact

**Conference Resolves:**

1. For NUS to investigate and quantify the financial effects of prescription charges on students, particularly those with long term illnesses and medical conditions.
2. For NUS to lobby government to abolish NHS prescription charges and for NUS to support students' unions in lobbying for free NHS prescriptions.
3. For NUS to support students' unions in advertising the NHS Low Income Scheme, namely HC1 forms, to students.
4. To lobby the government for prescription costs, dental costs and eye care costs to be free under the NHS, possibly on production of a valid student ID card
5. To release a statement in support of the above resolves

**NC\_W\_15308: Eating Equality: Improving the Catering Provisions for Students with Dietary Requirements**

**Conference Resolves:**

1. 1 in 100 people in the UK suffer from coeliac disease, although only about 24% have a clinical diagnosis (Coeliac UK Fact Sheet 2014).
2. Coeliacs may experience a severe reaction from eating food contaminated by small amounts of gluten, such as breadcrumbs (Coeliac UK Fact Sheet 2014).
3. Approximately 15% of people in the UK suffer from lactose intolerance (<http://www.lactoseintolerant.co.uk/what-is-lactose-intolerance/lactose-intolerance-facts/> ).
4. Approximately 21 million adults in the UK suffer from at least one allergy (Mintel, 2010)
5. The UK is in the top three countries in the world for number of people with allergies.
6. Dietary requirements are a commonly occurring condition in modern society particularly among young adults, many of whom are students entering university and are either unaware that they have these conditions or are recently diagnosed.
7. Difficulties in finding suitable food can severely limit the quality of life and the student experience for sufferers. Social ostracism due to a lack of appropriate catering is a major cause of depression among sufferers (Addolorato et al. 1996).
8. For many sufferers, eating contaminated foods can lead to severe reactions and long – medium term illnesses severely impeding ability to study and risking life.
9. For many students, coming to university is the first time they will be catering for themselves.
10. Many university caterers do not provide sufficient catering for those with dietary requirements.
11. Free-from food is often more expensive to buy in consumer volumes than their normal counterparts.
12. Following a campaign by students at the University of Leicester, their university is now accredited with Coeliac UK and continues to work with students to improve their catering for dietary requirements.
13. Sourcing free-from foods to sell can be a difficult task for individual unions to undertake alone which could be made easier by coordinating sources nationally.
14. Some dietary requirements organisations and charities (such as Coeliac UK) provide offers and discounts to students.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. To launch a national campaign to improve the catering provisions for those with dietary requirements at universities and colleges and their surrounding areas. This campaign should also raise awareness of dietary requirements among those without requirements who may share living, cooking and eating spaces with those with requirements. It should also encourage those experiencing symptoms to seek diagnoses.
2. To support and promote the existing dietary requirements campaigns at local universities and colleges.
3. To work with the campaigners involved in successful local campaigns, such as at the University of Leicester, to share and disseminate best practice to those wishing to launch their own dietary requirements campaigns.
4. To work with NUS to ensure good provisions for dietary requirements are supplied to unions. Advice for sourcing free-from foods may be sought from relevant charities and unions who have successfully sourced free-from foods.
5. To work with dietary requirements charities (including but not limited to Coeliac UK) to produce an information pack detailing how best to live as a student with a dietary requirement and where best to seek support from. This information pack should be disseminated to all relevant students and promote student offers, discounts and specialist information from relevant charities and other organisations (such as Coeliac UK).

# Welfare Policy Passed at National Conference 2016

## Motion 401 | NUS for the NHS

### Conference believes

1. Our National Health Service is undergoing severe 'reforms'. The Government is cutting back on NHS budgets, privatising entire departments and enforcing changes on the workforce that has led to a scale of industrial action not seen in decades.
2. NHS services are the primary source of healthcare for all UK students. The NHS is currently not completely free for students: international students have to pay a fee, and prescriptions and other costs are incurred in some parts of the UK.
3. A&E, maternity and mental health services have been the first to be affected by closure and outsourcing.
4. Cuts have been proposed to vital funds which keep the profession accessible, including the NHS bursary for nurses, midwives and other allied health courses.
5. The removal of bursaries would see students burdened with at least £51,600. Loan repayments will mean a nurse, midwife or allied health professional will lose over £900 a year.
6. One of the reasons healthcare courses remain popular is that the funding arrangements are different and act as an incentive in comparison with other university programmes. Scrapping the NHS bursary is likely to discourage people from considering becoming a nurses, midwives or allied health professionals, exacerbating the current recruitment crisis.
7. Student nurses and midwives are expected to undertake clinical placements during non-term time, which means they have little time to do paid work. While other university students take part-time jobs to support themselves, this really isn't a viable option for nurses on such a challenging and intensive course.
8. That although the removal of the bursary is unfavourable, the retention and attrition rate for NHS Students are poor due to the financial burdens that they are faced with. Whilst the bursary relieved some of the strain, and although debt is not favoured, many students would be financially better off with a loan and wouldn't have to work an unsafe amount of hours alongside their studies and placement in order to make ends meet.
9. With better financial support in place this will see an improvement of retention and attainment whilst also enabling further access to other opportunities to enhance their student experience and personal development.
10. NHS students have compulsory placements as part of their course and are expected to pay for travel expenses on top of their tuition fees.
11. The costs that are incurred through travelling to placements, which are often far away from the University campuses, are hidden course costs.
12. That the momentum of the junior doctors' dispute about working conditions and the "Bursary or Bust" campaign to save NHS student bursaries gives us an opportunity to more actively oppose the Tories' dismantling and privatisation of the NHS.
13. That the NHS Bill, which when motions was submitted was about to return to Parliament, provides a rough outline of how to reverse the assault on the NHS.

### Conference further believes

1. The National Health Service should be free everyone at the point of use, it should be well funded and people of all backgrounds should be able to work for it. All healthcare provision should be brought back into public hands: reversing all privatization and internal marketization.
2. NHS staff should be paid a fair wage for the work they carry out, whether they are trained professionals or on placement.
3. Students studying medical/health care related courses need more sufficient financial support while they study: the NHS bursary should be significantly increased, not revoked.
4. Removing the NHS-funded bursary will remove an intrinsic and financial link between students and our public health service. It is a move to further normalise private sector employment.
5. Cuts to FE budgets will disproportionately impact providers of Access courses in nursing and other health related courses.
6. Students and their unions, as primary service-users, can be integral forces in defending our national health services and advocating free healthcare.
7. That health workers' struggles are an essential part of the fight to save the health service. If the junior doctors' and bursary struggles win, it will put us in a much stronger position to oppose the privatisation agenda.
8. That the NHS as its best has represented at least elements of planning and provision for need in the midst of an exploitative and unequal society – at least aspiring to the idea that everyone has an equal right to life and health regardless of wealth. We must save it.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To work with health trade unions and SUs who represent NHS and medical students to co-ordinate a national NHS Student Summit, bringing together all relevant campaigns and stakeholders to discuss the issues and propose a co-ordinated plan of action.
2. To provide political, practical and strategic support to campaigns by SUs and NHS students organising locally, with significant effort to support FE Unions with this work
3. To support calls made by health unions and national campaigns for relevant, targeted action in defence of the NHS, NHS bursaries and free healthcare for all
4. To call together students and students' unions to prepare and influence the direction of action taken, with particular focus on the involvement of FE students on health-related courses.
5. To support SUs campaigning to reverse NHS Bursary cuts and publicise how important bursaries are currently to nursing students.
6. For Students' Union's whose Universities have direct entry Health courses to lobby their university to help pay for students travel expenses whilst attending placement.
7. To support the junior doctors' strikes and the NHS bursary struggle.
8. To devote financial and other resources to helping students nurses and health professionals in this fight.
9. To support and campaign for an end to cuts, marketisation and privatisation in the NHS, and for a comprehensive, well funded, publicly owned, run and provided health service meeting clinical need. We support the NHS Bill and will lobby MPs to back it.

## **Motion 402 | SOS – Save Our Services**

### **Conference believes**

1. Cuts to welfare and support services are being made across the UK as a result of central government reductions in spending for local authorities. A total of £12.5 billion has been cut
2. Services most affected include health and social care, housing, childcare, fire and rescue, disability support, domestic violence and rape crisis centres as well as specialist support for vulnerable communities.
3. The impact of cuts to local services in turn affect students' reliance on those provided by their institution or students' union; services already strained by ever increasing student numbers

4. The effect of funding cuts varies in different areas across the UK: poorer boroughs are disproportionately affected.
5. We need local action to prevent and reverse cuts to services, and nationwide action to challenge the cuts to local authority budgets.
6. Relying on Council Tax increases to save services can end up squeezing those who cannot afford it.
7. We must also oppose outsourcing and privatisation, and campaign for public services to be publicly owned, under democratic control.

### **Conference further believes**

1. There is a strong need for clear research into the scale of cuts in funding for both national and local services, as well as targeted action to demand their reversal.
2. Student Unions require support in understanding budget cuts, responding to them and supporting students with the impact.
3. In particular, small and specialist and Further Education institutions need tailored support to address specific challenges where the institution does not have the capacity to provide its own support.
4. The impact of cuts to support services is compounded for students who experience multiple forms of oppression.
5. In order to campaign effectively, we need to collaborate with local and national organisations with a shared interest.
6. To ensure effective measures that cater for all students we need to work with Liberation campaigns to develop appropriate responses.
7. Stopping and reversing local service cuts usually requires action beyond awareness-raising, to create pressure on decision-makers.
8. Approaching elections we must put forward clear demands based on our democratic policies, use the election period to popularise them, and place pressure on candidates and parties to sign up to them using all effective methods.
9. In the past, it has been possible for local councils, with the support of their communities, to refuse to implement cuts passed down from central government. Historic refusals to implement local cuts have been incredibly powerful and have caused changes at the national level. This requires not only councillors willing to resist, but an organised local movement ready to back them up with mass action when central government responds to push cuts through against the elected councillors.

### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS will promote and support regional networks of students' unions to campaign locally, and develop a toolkit for students' unions to use to research the local provision of services, in good time for local elections scheduled for May 2017.
2. NUS will commission a national survey of students to establish the scale and impact of cuts in support services across the UK.
3. To support Unison, Unite and others' Save our Services (SOS) campaigns and co-ordinate actions, as well as providing SUs with local contacts to initiate partnerships with trade unions and grassroots community campaigns.
4. To propose targeted actions where some of the largest cuts are being made, with a particular focus on relevant Government Ministers; as well as producing a campaign pack detailing all appropriate ways to take action on service cuts, from petition and lobbying to protest where necessary
5. To offer specific support to Further Education organisations and small and specialist unions where needed, including campaign training support and specialised toolkits.
6. To lobby institutions, Universities UK and the Association of Colleges to vocalise their opposition to cuts to the welfare services that affect students.

7. To work with Union Development to enter consultation with FE and HE Unions, and their institutions, on the possible implications and impact of the proposed cuts upon their current service provisions in order to build an evidence base; also using this to lobby for increased funding and resource to these areas where possible.
8. Mandate the VP Welfare to develop a coherent strategy working with SUs and allies to defeat cuts to local services and win decently funded, publicly owned services, including:
  - a. Campaigns in the run-up to all relevant elections that put forward clear demands to protect services and place pressure on candidates and parties to meet those demands, including lobbying, media, protest and direct action.
  - b. Complete support for organising efforts and industrial action by service workers against attacks on their pay, working conditions and jobs.
  - c. Local lobbying, protest and direct action as appropriate in defence of specific services.
  - d. Cooperating with NUS liberation campaigns to provide information, assistance and encouragement for campus liberation groups to campaign against service cuts that are relevant to their members.
  - e. Exploring the potential for building local alliances that could effectively support councillors outright refusing to implement cuts, and for convincing councillors to take this route.
  - f. Campaigning on the national level to reverse local authority budget cuts, funded by progressively taxing the rich and business and placing the banking system under democratic public control.

## Motion 403 | #Grantsnotdebt

### Conference Believes

1. Despite our protests, this Conservative government has abolished the poorest undergraduates' maintenance grants. Before it, the Coalition scrapped the FE Education Maintenance Allowance. Cutting these was shameful, but they weren't even enough in the first place. NUS previously supported universal living grants to support all students.
2. We need to ensure every student can afford to live decently during their studies – the fight for living grants is a fight for accessible, liberated education.
3. Many people fall through the gaps in any means-tested system that assumes parental support - in particular those with unsupportive families, such as many LGBT+ people. The "estrangement" system is broken, but even if we can improve it, it can only help those students who cut themselves off completely from their families. That's why NUS LGBT+ campaign voted last year to campaign for universal living grants.
4. Universalism – public services available to absolutely everyone – is a core progressive principle for our movement.
5. There is plenty of money in society to restore universal grants, plus fund good public services – it's in the bank accounts and businesses of the wealthy. That wealth should be used to pay not just for their education, but for everyone else's too.

### Conference Resolves

1. Take up the #GrantsNotDebt campaign to first reverse the cuts to maintenance grants, and then to increase them to a decently live-able level, with additional supplements reflecting the needs of student carers and disabled students, and extend them to all students in FE and HE.
2. Demand this is funded through progressive taxation such as an increase in corporation tax and taxes on the richest, not by raising taxes on the poorest or cutting public services.

## Motion 404 | Anti-Semitism on Campus

### Conference Believes

1. Anti-Semitism is a major problem in Britain, with increasing numbers of anti-Semitic incidents reported.
2. Anti-Semitism is a particular problem on campus, where Jewish students are often left feeling threatened and vulnerable, and with insufficient support from SUs.
3. Jewish students are the only minority group which is not directly represented by any of the NUS liberation campaigns.
4. There is a history of anti-Semitism occurring within the NUS.
5. The Holocaust, the genocide perpetrated by Nazi Germany, killed 6 million Jews and 5 million others including disabled and LGBTQ individuals, people of Roma descent and political opponents.
6. The Nazis who came to power in Germany in January 1933 believed that Germans were racially superior and deemed other groups including Jews were racially inferior.
7. Groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioural grounds, among them Socialists and the LGBT community.
8. Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) takes place every year on the 27th January. This marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest of the Nazi death camps.
9. It was created in 2000, when representatives from 46 governments signed a declaration committing to preserving the memory of those who have been murdered in the Holocaust.
10. HMD is the day for everyone to remember the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, and the millions of people killed by Nazi persecution and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.
11. HMD is a day to not only remember, but to honour the survivors of these hateful regimes and challenge ourselves to use the lessons of their experience to inform our lives today.

### Conference Further Believes

1. Anti-Semitism is a form of racism that is under no circumstances acceptable.
2. Anti-Semitism is best defined by the 'Working Definition of Anti-Semitism' adopted by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency in 2005.
3. More needs to be done by institutions of higher and further education and by students' unions to tackle anti-Semitism on campus.
4. Fighting racism and fascism should be an important part of NUS' work.
5. There is still evidence of racism and fascism on campuses throughout the UK, resulting in hate crimes including the poster that appeared on University of Birmingham campus that displayed a picture of Adolf Hitler with the words "Hitler was right".
6. Antisemitism, racism, and xenophobia still exist in society, and it is the responsibility of the generations following the Holocaust to fight those evils.
7. There are very few Holocaust survivors still alive, making it vital that students hear as many testimonies as possible about the atrocities that occurred.
8. Holocaust education is vital, especially in a time when Holocaust trivialisation and revisionism is happening in society.
9. It is important to remember what happened during the Holocaust to ensure that it can never happen again.
10. NUS should assist in the coordination of Holocaust Memorial Day events on UK campuses, including, but not limited to campus tours with Holocaust survivors.

## Conference Resolves

1. To re-affirm its commitment to tackling anti-Semitism, particularly anti-Semitism on campus.
2. To widen the probe into institutional racism in the National Union of Students to include institutional anti-Semitism.
3. To lobby Student Unions to have clearer policies on responding to anti-Semitic incidents and situations in which Jewish students feel threatened.
4. To mandate the NUS to provide resources to help Student Unions to formulate these clearer policies.
5. To officially commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day each year.
6. To work with organisations such as the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) and Holocaust Educational Trust (HET) to provide educational resources for students' unions about the Holocaust.
7. To coordinate with the above organisations and the Union of Jewish Students in organising events to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day.
8. To provide Holocaust education to sabbatical officers

## Motion 405 | Prioritise Students Mental Health – Now!

### Conference Believes

1. NUS Policy on mental health is due to lapse.
2. One in four people will suffer from mental health problems in any given year.
3. Severe cuts are being made to psychiatric and mental health services up and down the country, with little indicating any progressive change.
4. Mental health trusts in England have seen their budgets fall by £600m according to Community Care; young people's services were cut by £35 million in 2015.
5. Students face particular mental health issues. In line with national trends, mental health problems amongst students are on the increase; the proportion of disabled students who declared a mental health condition increased from 6% in 2007-09 to 9.6% in 11-12; from 0.4% to 0.8% of the entire student population
6. Demand for mental health services at University is increasing. Counseling services are experiencing a 10% year on year usage increase according to the chair of Universities UK mental well-being working group.
7. Financial, employability and housing concerns place a huge pressure on students, with rents rising by 25% alone between 2010-2013 (according to Unipol). The internet is also increasingly becoming a dangerous environment for mental health. 66% of people aged 17-22 will experience some form of online bullying according to Ditch the Label. All of these elements have been linked to a potential rise in mental health issues and stress related illnesses.
8. NUS surveyed 1,093 students in further and higher education in November and December 2015. It found:
  - a Eight out of ten students (78%) say they experienced mental health issues in the last year.
  - b A third (33%) also said they had had suicidal thoughts.
  - c Among those who did not identify as heterosexual, the figure was higher at 55%.
  - d More than half (54%) of respondents who reported having experienced mental health problems said they did not seek support.

- e A third said they would not know where to get mental health support from at their college or university if they needed it, while 40% reported being nervous about the support they would receive from their institution.
- 9. Periods of transition can be particularly problematic. Students, who often have multiple addresses for different parts of the year or who move to new areas for university, are particularly susceptible to falling through the cracks in public services.
- 10. The vast majority of students do not have the resources to afford private counselling, therapy etc.
- 11. That campaigning on mental health and suicide prevention has traditionally been a collaboration between the Welfare Zone and Disabled Students' Campaign (DSC), with feed in from other Zones and Campaigns.
- 12. In the year 2015/16, this work 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, as well as the marking of key dates and supporting external campaigns.
- 13. That the work this year has aimed to politicise the issue of poor mental health and suicide in the student population as a result of marketization, competition, lack of support and the deprioritisation of wellbeing as a concern of colleges and universities.
- 14. That there is a growing sense in the movement that we need to look at both the mental health of students as students, but also the wellbeing of activists and student union officers involved in campaigning.

### **Conference Further Believes**

1. Stress, unhappiness, lack of motivation, anxiety and depression continue to take a toll on students nationwide.
2. The combination of greater financial and workload stress and the lack of adequate mental health services on campuses means more students suffering from mental health problems will be at risk of dropping out of education and become more vulnerable.
3. Too few Colleges and Universities have comprehensive strategies in relation to mental health and wellbeing.  
This is unacceptable.
4. Mental health has become an increasingly growing concern not only amongst the student population, but nationwide. Incoming students and their families are worried and nervous about mental health support provided at their future college or university.
5. Stigma around mental health issues deemed severe, such as personality disorders, psychosis and paranoia are often sidelined and not addressed amongst other mental health struggles.
6. Universities and Students' Unions need to continue to create an environment where there is no shame in talking about mental ill health or seeking help.
7. The first point of contact for students who are struggling with mental health issues is often an academic staff member. The level of understanding a student gets from a staff member is subject to that staff member's understanding of mental health, which varies greatly.
8. This variety puts students off contacting their academic adviser for fear of being stigmatised which can have a significant impact on their university experience.
9. That mental health and wellbeing services in every FEI and HEI should be adequately resourced and the operation and capacity of services should be regularly assessed in relation to demand and effectiveness.

10. That robust arrangements should be put in place for any student with mental health difficulties who is required to undertake a period of time studying off campus, including those studying or working abroad.
11. Treatments such as counselling can be effective and help many suffering from mental ill health but both NHS and university services tend to be woefully inadequate with substantial waiting lists.
12. We need a national campaign for mental health, which must be led by NUS and implemented at all Higher Education and Further Education institutions.
13. That for collaborative work to be effective, it's important to lay out shared aims and plans as early as possible.
14. 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.
15. That tackling the issue of activists' and officers' wellbeing involves a deeper understanding of the pressures and strains we face - including on time, relationships, and identity - as a result of our workloads, institutions, social media and oppression.

### **Conference Resolves**

1. To prioritise mental health in the Welfare Zone in the year ahead.
2. To work with Universities to ensure that students have access to the services they need and that they are appropriately funded. For example ensuring institutions will address the gap created by the DSA cuts.
3. To lobby BIS, AoC and UUK to form a national student mental health task force, with student representation.
4. To work with institutions to reduce the strain on student support services by improving internal signposting so students access the right services, as well as raising awareness of what support is available externally.
5. To call for SUs to recognise the mental health of students as a priority.
6. To develop ways that mental health support and understanding can be embedded into the structures of SUs by supporting unions to:
  - a Lobby for relevant, well-supported and appropriate services for students at a University, Local and National level. These services must be responsive to feedback and be flexible to the needs of students, both in terms of 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).
  - b To develop joined-up approaches across institutions and external services.
  - c Ensure that academic policies are clear with fair expectations set in order to avoid undue mental stress upon student populations.
7. To campaign for:
  - a Mandatory employment of mental health staff/counsellors in all educational institutions. These staff would be separate to safeguarding staff and their roles within the institution. .
  - b A specific student wellbeing duty to be placed on Colleges and Universities as a condition of funding.
  - c Mandatory mental health training for academic and frontline staff, for example Mental Health First Aid Training.
8. To ensure the above campaigns address a full range of mental health conditions.

9. To ensure that Universities and Colleges work closely with SUs and student groups when formulating and implementing student mental health-related policies
10. To continue fighting against the DSA cuts and highlight the connection between disability cuts and the strain on student mental health by encouraging openness.
11. To support students to bounce back from difficult situations by building student resilience nationally and to create a positive campaigning atmosphere around mental health.
12. To report at the 2017 NUS Conference on the specific steps taken to achieve the above resolutions.
13. That the VP Welfare should work in conjunction with the Disabled Students' Officer to draw up a joint plan of action for the year 2016/17.
14. That a proportion of Welfare Zone budget is allocated to carrying out that plan.
15. That the VP Welfare should use all platforms at their disposal to increase the politicisation of this issue and embed these concerns into other issues across the Zone – such as; education funding, the welfare state, and housing.
16. That the VP Welfare should support DSC in following up on the recommendations of this year's guide with further training and campaign support for students unions and activists.
17. To ensure the policy focus of the Welfare Zone 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.
18. That the VP Welfare should look to innovate guidance and structures that support and protect the wellbeing of officers and activists in our movement.

## Motion 406 | Preventing Prevent

### Conference believes

1. The Government's Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a statutory requirement on public bodies and 'specified authorities' – including universities –to implement the PREVENT agenda.
2. PREVENT is vague, assumptive and discriminatory.
3. The PREVENT agenda, as part of the Government's 'anti-extremism' work has been used to create an expansive surveillance architecture to spy on the public and to police dissent, systematically targeting minorities and vulnerable individuals.
4. The Government's counter-terrorism/security policy is fundamentally flawed in its approach; its operant concepts of 'extremism' and 'radicalism' are ill-defined and open to abuse for political ends.
5. Under PREVENT, lecturers have been known to report students as being 'at risk of radicalisation' for merely taking an interest in political affairs in class, or for observing their religion more closely, whilst politically active students have found themselves visited by counter-terrorism officers. Lecturers and academics are also expected to have "training" to make them suitable for the role of reporting, yet when the approach is fundamentally flawed the results of such reports cannot be trusted.
6. Multiple University Vice Chancellors have spoken out against PREVENT, including those from Oxford University, Portsmouth University and Winchester University. (awaiting reference)

7. However we cannot get past the fact that our institutions are legally bound by the Government to follow PREVENT. We need to build on the great work we have already done by targeting the root of the problem.
8. The Government implementation of PREVENT policies on university campuses tackling "extremism" and "radicalisation".
9. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a duty for public bodies, including FE and HE institutions, to engage with the PREVENT agenda.
10. FE and HE institutions must ensure staff are trained on PREVENT, to monitor the behaviour of their students and report concerns of "extremism" and restrict external speakers.
11. Already students are being questioned by the Police and PREVENT officials, whether for taking out a book on terrorism at Staffordshire or accessing materials on their reading list at UEA.<sup>4</sup>
12. SUs are affected differently depending on their legal status, if they are FE or HE, and their relationship with their parent institution.
13. Despite relentless attack, the student movement has taken a principled position opposing the PREVENT agenda.
14. The Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 made the PREVENT agenda a statutory obligation upon 'specified authorities', including FE colleges – this is known as the Prevent duty
15. The requirements for Colleges under the Prevent duty are most stringent and burdensome.
16. This includes, for example, the aggressive promotion of 'British values' in all aspects of teaching and learning
17. Meanwhile the few safeguards for Academic Freedom assured for HE institutions, do not apply to FE under the duty.
18. Given how many FE student unions are constituted as part of their institutions, and not as legally autonomous, the Prevent duty does in some cases apply to FE Unions.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Islamophobia is massively on the rise across Europe, is state-sponsored and legitimised by the mainstream media.
2. Islamophobia is further perpetuated and heightened in this climate as well, and 'reprisal' attacks against Muslims increased sharply in the immediate aftermath of the Paris attacks in November 2015
3. Alienating minority groups and those targeted by PREVENT is actually counter-productive in the war on terror.
4. November has been marked as Islamophobia Awareness Month since 2012, initiated by a range of organisations
5. The government's identified 'warning signs' of "radicalisation" are highly problematic and renders suspect those with mental health difficulties. PREVENT measures therefore not only encourage racial profiling but also put vulnerable groups at risk.
6. Over half of referrals to Channel are now for school-age children, and there were more referrals within the first 5 months of 2015 than for the whole of 2014, or any year since its introduction.
7. The Act discourages free expression and analysis of ideas. Academics, as well as anyone in a public sector job, should not have to be part of this surveillance.
8. We fundamentally believe that universities and colleges are places for education, not surveillance
9. The implementation of the PREVENT Strategy on campus will not only isolate Muslim students but undermine the civil liberties of other groups such as environmental, political and humanitarian activists

10. The Students not Suspects tour brought together students alongside academics in opposition to PREVENT and showed an appetite for action against it although not always clear direction as to how to do so.
11. That the National Union of Students (NUS) and University and Colleges Union (UCU) have both passed motions at their conferences opposing the Act and PREVENT.
12. As charities, student unions are not legally bound to engage with PREVENT and should seek to boycott it.
13. We can beat PREVENT with collective, democratic action that disrupts its functioning and workers responsible for PREVENT duties are particularly well-placed to take such action.
14. It is unclear what definitions are used and which beliefs make a person "extremist" or "radical".
15. This lack of definition makes students wary of their beliefs, despite fundamental rights to practice beliefs and values.
16. PREVENT encourages greater scrutiny and monitoring of Muslim students, and Islamic Societies.
17. PREVENT alienates Muslim students from wider community. This scrutiny suggesting that benign activities may lead to criminal acts, with no presumption of innocence.
18. This monitoring promotes concept that Muslim students are potential terror suspects and prone to radicalisation.
19. Institutions and Students' Unions supporting PREVENT condone this rhetoric that radicalisation and terrorism are directly linked to specific groups.
20. Islamic societies are productive members of students' unions and have contributed to charity and welfare of students.
21. Unions should not resort to underhanded methods of preventing Islamic Societies operating with autonomy, or put unnecessary barriers in place that inconvenience societies, their events and their members.
22. Many students are afraid that association with Islamic Societies puts a mark on their record, which might affect employability, e.g. International or medical students.
23. PREVENT opposes constitutional rights; which is a dangerous zone, that will lead to widespread discrimination. Islamic societies should not have more scrutiny than other societies.
24. All Students' Unions should actively and publicly oppose PREVENT.
25. The government must clarify what constitutes the 'radicalisation' that PREVENT monitors.
26. That much of the PREVENT agenda is knee-jerk pandering to the right-wing media and political posturing by a Government desperate to look tough.
27. That the concept of "extremism" is so ill-defined that the Government could call into question almost any critique of the status quo, including climate change activism and anti-capitalist protests.
28. Opposition to PREVENT and concern about its impact is growing: from trade unions to the Government's independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, David Anderson QC, who has called for a complete review of PREVENT.
29. The PREVENT agenda actively targets Muslim and Black people in the UK, making them a convenient scapegoat and demonising and alienating those communities.
30. In FE and HE, the PREVENT duty stifles freedom of speech and academic freedom, forces institutions to spy on their own students and undermines the trust of Muslim and Black students in particular.

31. Violence is no solution to political problems, but the causes of violence are rarely as simplistic as PREVENT suggests.
32. The priority should be creating cohesive campuses and a cohesive society and this cannot be achieved through surveillance, silence, racism and Islamophobia.
33. This argument must be taken directly to those in positions of power: we cannot simply talk to ourselves.
34. That NUS desperately needs to support SUs to understand how PREVENT affects them and how to campaign against it.
35. Our opposition to the Prevent agenda is undermined by working with organisations whose values run counter to our own.
36. NUS and dozens of Unions have passed policy opposing the Counter terrorism and Security Act, and PREVENT on the whole, rightfully condemning the strategy as Islamophobic, discriminatory and as having a stifling effect on education, activism and democracy.
37. This past year the Black Students' Campaign alongside the Welfare Zone and Society and Citizenship Zone cohosted the 'Students not Suspects tour' across institutions raising awareness about PREVENT.
38. Work campaigning against PREVENT in FE however, remains more limited, and due to the reasons outlined in the Notes some FE Unions remain reticent to challenge it within their institutions.
39. PREVENT must be opposed fully and cannot be allowed to flourish in any sector.

### **Conference Resolves**

1. To educate students on the details and dangers of the PREVENT Strategy through Student Unions and their Officers.
2. Ensure students are aware of their rights, and what help is available if they are concerned about PREVENT.
3. Ensure Islamic Societies receive support from independent officials with the role to assist these societies, and aid them in dealing with disputes.
4. To support Islamophobia Awareness Month as an annual initiative and encourage member SUs to mark it
5. To work alongside the Black Students' Campaign in calling for and organising a range of actions against the PREVENT duty, from direct actions by membership to possible legal action.
6. To develop guidance alongside the Black Students' Officer on SUs dealing with the Charity Commission and accusations of 'supporting extremism' levelled at SUs
7. Help student unions and students to work with campus trade union branches to encourage, concretely assist and support such action and defend workers against victimisation.
8. Fully support the initiative of education workers, through their trade unions, boycotting PREVENT duties.
9. Work with education trade unions to facilitate branches taking such action.
10. Work also with NUS Postgrad Section, as representatives of postgrads who teach, on how casualised student workers can contribute to such action.
11. To lobby universities and members of the NUS to be more open and transparent about how they are engaging with PREVENT and other similar initiatives. This involves:
12. Demanding publications of how the policy is operating within the university and Students' Union.
13. This includes access to materials used to train staff and students.

14. Holding consultations with the student body regarding how this affects students
15. For NUS to demand that Ministers and civil servants in charge of PREVENT engage with and meet students and their representatives to ensure they understand why PREVENT is so damaging.
16. To have the overall aim of tackling the problem at the root and stop PREVENT from being a legal compliance for our institutions to follow.
17. To obtain legal advice to clarify what constitutes 'radicalisation.'
18. To continue to oppose the PREVENT duty and the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and to demand a complete overhaul of the entire PREVENT strategy from first principles.
19. For the relevant NUS officer to work support HE and FE students' unions with campaign materials and in understanding what the PREVENT duty means for them and their students.
20. For NUS to identify a means of restarting the Faith and Belief project, with a focus on campus cohesion and dialogue between faith groups and others.
21. For NUS conduct research into the impact of Prevent in FE and HE and the effectiveness of alternatives.
22. Work with Fe Zone and the Black Students Campaign to develop specific FE-focussed anti-Prevent material.
23. Encourage Student Unions to approach local unions (such as UCU, UNISON, UNITE) community groups, and campaigns to build broad based opposition to the duty.
24. To lobby to decouple 'British Values' from FE teaching and learning.

## Motion 407 | Not for Profit Halls

### Conference Believes

1. Nationally we are seeing students getting priced out of accommodation due to privatisation of university halls.
2. Contracts Universities have with private companies, such as UPP, reduces the control of new builds and the pricing of current accommodation.
3. Halls fees are rising year on year as Universities lose control of their halls and they become profit machines.

### Conference Further Believes

1. There are huge benefits of living in University halls, from first years settling into University to accessibility for disabled students and safety for international students.
2. Privatisation of our halls means that our Universities have less control over our halls pricing and development of new builds.
3. Marketization of University accommodation means that halls prices will continue to rise.

### Conference Resolves

1. NUS must lobby the Government to stop pushing pressure on Universities to choose private accommodation providers.
2. NUS VP Welfare to create a report that gives Universities more incentives to develop and maintain their own accommodation.
3. NUS to support SUs to hold their accommodation providers to account.

## Motion 408 | Rent Strikes

### **Conference Believes**

1. NUS has already committed to campaign for demands including scrapping letting agents' fees, taxing empty homes and multiple homes, scrapping council tax, permanent tenancies, a council house building program, and rent controls.
2. The housing crisis is only getting worse for both students and the rest of society.
3. The new Housing & Planning Bill is a huge further attack on social housing and will:
4. Force councils to sell off good quality council housing to private landlords.
5. Remove secure tenancies from council housing residents.
6. Push up rents for many council tenants.
7. Cut investment in social housing.
8. Undermine the rights of travellers and gypsies.

### **Conference Further Believes**

1. Affordable, decent housing is of huge importance to student welfare and to access to education.
2. Students at SOAS and UCL have shown that rent strikes are a powerful weapon against exploitative landlords.

### **Conference Resolves**

1. Reaffirm existing housing campaigning commitments
2. Oppose the Housing & Planning Bill
3. Work with the "Kill the Housing Bill" campaign, which is a coalition of trade unions, local tenants' federations, activist groups and gypsy & travellers associations.
4. Produce and promote useful information about how to campaign for decent, affordable housing and how to organise rent strikes, and provide support and assistance to student rent strikers.
5. Continue our commitment to cooperating with non-student housing campaigns and tenants' organisations, aiming in the end to have unified democratic tenants' unions for all in every town, city and region.

## **Motion 409 | Rogue Landlords**

### **Conference Believes:**

1. The demand for Accommodation for students within the local community in many areas exceeds the level of supply.
2. There is no regulatory or statutory body designed to protect students against rogue landlords.
3. Students occupy more HMO properties than any other group in society.
4. Average rents across Britain went up by 4.9% between 2014 and 2015 , this rate is far higher in urban areas with Brighton and Bristol seeing an 18% increase. These increases are much higher than the average increases to wages and the increase in student loans.
5. In the 2015, 17,000 tenants called Shelter's hotline for advice on landlord harassment.
6. More than three-quarters (76 per cent) of respondent to the NUS Homes fit for study survey had experienced at least one problem with the condition of their rented home – most commonly this

was condensation (52 per cent), mould (47 per cent) or damp (41 per cent). Almost a quarter of respondents (24 per cent) reported having slugs, mice or another infestation in their home.

7. Half of respondents (52 per cent) reported that they have felt uncomfortably cold in their home and, related to this, 48 per cent felt that their accommodation was poorly insulated and/or draughty.

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

1. Landlords should be subject to regulatory policy to ensure students are never taken advantage of due to lack of experience.
2. Rogue Landlords inflate the price of their properties in the face of growing demand and limited supply.
3. The local and national government should do more to deter landlords from exploiting students.
4. Students should have access to fit for purpose and affordable privately rented accommodation
5. Agency fees are unjustified and the cost should be absorbed by the landlord without being passed on to the tenant through rent increase.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To work alongside students unions to further develop The Code Landlord accreditation scheme delivered by Unipol to introduce the scheme to more student towns and cities.
2. To Challenge the government on rogue landlords and campaign that they do more to develop legislation around landlords and vulnerable groups of society, specifically students.
3. To give student unions the support and guidance to tackle the issue on a local level.
4. To organise a national campaign working alongside relevant national and local charities and civil society organisations to raise awareness of the costs of an unregulated rental sector.
5. To call for Students' Unions to lobby their local governments to improve local rental markets in favour of tenants

## **Motion 410 | Graduation: the final hidden cost**

#### **Conference Believes**

1. Most people go to university hoping to graduate
2. The moment of physically collecting a degree is a central part of the myth and rhetoric which surrounds education
3. There are only two providers of most graduation gowns
4. Graduating in front of a students parents can cost 100s of pounds

#### **Conference Further Believes**

1. Having paid so much to get a degree students shouldn't have to pay to collect it
2. Like all hidden course costs graduation costs are bad

#### **Conference Resolves**

1. To conduct research into the average cost of graduation in the uk
2. To work to reduce this cost

## **Motion 411 | Educate all FE & HE students on the risks associated with taking legal highs and lobby the government to include all legal highs within the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971**

### **Conference Believes**

1. Legal Highs are not yet controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
2. Legal highs' contain one or more chemical substances which produce similar effects to illegal drugs
3. Legal highs first became popular in 2009, when Mephedrone became one of the most fashionable party drugs in the UK, as it simulated MDMA which is illegal
4. Legal doesn't mean that it is safe.
5. You can't really be sure of what's in a 'legal high'
6. There has been little or no useful research into the short or long-term risks associated from human consumption of legal highs

### **Conference Further Believes**

1. There is an increased mortality rate related to legal highs being so easily accessible
2. Many of these risks are increased if the 'legal high' is combined with alcohol or with any another psychoactive drug.
3. Legal highs, can be described using three main categories; Stimulants, Downers and Psychedelics or Hallucinogens.
4. Many substances that have been found in substances sold as 'legal highs' have already been made illegal.
5. 'Legal highs' cannot be sold for human consumption so they are often sold as incense, salts or plant food to get round the law
6. We know that many 'legal highs' are sold under brand names such as: "Clockwork Orange", "Bliss" and "Spice"

### **Conference Resolves**

1. To educate all students via awareness campaigns on the dangers of taking legal highs and the implications it could potentially have.
2. Lobby and campaign the government to change the law on the sales of legal highs within shops to prevent it being so easily accessible.

## **Policy Lapse**

### **NC\_W\_13306: Mental Health Awareness and Challenging Discrimination**

#### **Conference Believes:**

1. Policy on mental health is due to lapse.
2. Mental health has become an increasingly growing concern among the student population.
3. It is reported that 1 in 4 people will suffer from a mental health condition in their life time.
4. Between 2007 and 2011 suicides by male students in full-time higher education grew by 36%, while female student suicides almost doubled.
5. NUS Scotland has carried out extensive work on mental health, notably the 'Silently Stressed' research and 'Breaking the Silence' report in 2010 and 2011, respectively.

6. The NUS Disabled Students' Campaign has also carried out a lot of work in mental health in the last year.
7. One in four adults and one in ten children suffer a Mental Health issue.
8. Severe cuts are being made to psychiatric and mental health recovery services up and down the country.
9. Financial and housing concerns places additional pressures on students and this has been linked to a potential rise in MH issues/stress related illnesses.
10. That businesses could be doing more to address the issues and pressures students and community member's face in the current environment.
11. NUS Scotland has run a student orientated Mental Health project called Think Positive, which has led to some very informative and successful research into the area, including Silently Stressed (2010) and Breaking the Silence (2011).
12. There needs to be a national campaign for Mental Health training to be implemented at all Higher Education and Further Education Institutions across the country.
13. Undertaking of this training by staff will mean they will be able to better differentiate between varying student welfare demands as well as having a clearer understanding of how mental health conditions can impact upon students, their studies and the relationship of staff and students with each other.
14. This brings numerous benefits to the student experience, because if universities are better trained in Mental Health awareness, then they will be able to better meet the needs of struggling students.
15. Administration of this training to all university and student union staff will increase their knowledge of policies and procedures that are in place to help staff understand boundaries, safe-working practices and communicating clearly with students suffering mental health difficulties.
16. That this training will be informative and helpful, as well improving staff confidence in supporting struggling students.
17. That the University of the West of England, in the partnership with the Students' Union has been working to implement such training and seriously challenge Mental Health discrimination within the student and staff population, which has included both parties signing the Time To Change pledge to end Mental Health Discrimination.
18. More can be done to promote Mental Health awareness and anti-stigma campaigns at the level of the National Union of Students (NUS).
19. Stigma surrounding Mental Health and active Mental Health Discrimination is beginning to decrease.
20. Although stigma is decreasing, more still proactive campaigning needs to be done to ensure a continuing positive decrease.
21. The existence of campaigns like Time To Change is very important to challenging Mental Health discrimination in general, but also specifically in the workplace and in education institutions.
22. That liberation groups are at particular high risk of experiencing Mental Health issues and also the discrimination that goes with it.
23. There is the existence of 'fit to sit' policies surrounding exams.
24. This conference believes that some companies actively discriminate against people with mental health issues
25. 'Fit to Sit' is a system that for assessments that prohibits the submission of extenuating (or mitigating) circumstances if a student has attended their exam, or submitted their assignment. This is because the student is deemed to have declared themselves 'Fit to Sit' that assessment.
26. A growing number of institutions are introducing, or considering introducing, such policies to replace the traditional post-assessment extenuating (or mitigating) circumstances procedure.
27. The consequences of 'Fit to Sit' policies include students sitting assessments when they are unwell (physically or mentally) or missing assessments in order to be eligible to submit extenuating (or mitigating) circumstances, which may then not be accepted by the institution.

28. Students with reasonable, and potentially acceptable, extenuating circumstances, may not submit a claim, despite having evidence, believing they have no choice other than to go ahead with the assessment, unable to cope with the uncertainty of whether their claim would be accepted.
29. Institutions say that 'Fit to Sit' policies reduces red tape and 'game playing' and means that less extenuating (or mitigating) circumstances are submitted (including a reduction of 'fake' claims). In turn this reduces administration costs for the institution.

**Conference Further Believes:**

1. Given the climate of stress faced by students; academic pressures, financial hardship, concern on graduate debt & employment, a change of environment and a total shift of support networks – students are in a far more vulnerable position to suffer from a mental health issue.
2. In a climate of mass cuts to budgets of Colleges and Universities we cannot assume key wellbeing services are safe from cuts.
3. Institutions and Students' Unions have a responsibility to work in partnership on mental health.
4. Work carried out on mental health must take a pragmatic shift from just running awareness campaigns to winning adequate service provision on our campuses to help those in need, and a serious commitment from a cross section of institutions to recognise and tackle mental health.
5. Whilst activities like 'mental health weeks' can be a useful tool for success, we shouldn't minimise the issue into a week of action as a way to tick a box of tackling the issue. We must discover the next platform for mental health.
6. 'Fit to Sit' policies are unfair on students and put students in positions that may have a detrimental effect on their assessments and wellbeing.
7. Students should not have to choose between sitting an assessment, and submitting extenuating (or mitigating) circumstances.
8. Not all students are able to accurately assess their own fitness to sit an exam or submit an assessment.
9. Many students' will 'solider on' and are reluctant to miss an exam or a deadline. Some students' believe this shows dedication to their degree.
10. Institutions should not put reducing costs and red tape ahead of students' rights and the fairness of assessments.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. To ensure that any training or workshops given on mental health give explicit tangible outcomes that can be won on campuses.
2. That the autonomy of the NUS Disabled Students Campaign on this issue is vital and to ensure leadership is derived as such.
3. To work with organisations such as Mind and Mental Wealth UK to increase NUS' presence on work in mental health taking us from the side lines to the forefront.
4. To continue to promote the effectiveness of peer mentoring schemes on campuses and make the case for the positive effect it can have on wellbeing.
5. To lobby all Higher Education and Further Education institutions up and down the country to introduce and send staff on Mental Health Awareness Training to better understand how they can support students facing difficulties and know where the boundaries are.
6. To recognise the positive work that has been done by NUS Scotland and commission similar research to take place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
7. To actively declare its support for The Time to Change Campaign and work with them to promote the auditing of educational institutions and businesses on Mental Health awareness practices.
8. To raise awareness of how Mental Health affects individuals from liberation groups and to work with these groups to implement targeted campaigns that address the issues they face.
9. To lobby the government to U-turn on its planned cuts to welfare services and Mental Health wards.

10. To lobby the government to review the Mental Health Act 2007 to provide more protection for individuals committed to wards.
11. To continue to lobby to reduce public stigma surrounding Mental Health Discrimination and build upon the work started through the Mental Health Discrimination Bill.
12. To reduce and dispel the stigmas surrounding individuals with mental health issues and ensure they are not discriminated against in the workplace.
13. To call for 'fit to sit' policies and any similar practices to be abolished by educational institutions and review its provisions and practices for students affected by Mental Health issues.
14. To lobby universities to include relevant information on extenuating/mitigating circumstances to help students get through their studies and not slip through the net.
15. To lobby universities to actively oppose companies which display discrimination to students and individuals affected by mental health issues and to work with them to improve their practices.
16. That 'Fit to Sit' is unfit for purpose.
17. To support Students' Unions in their work against such policies by providing evidence of the impact of their introduction.
18. To provide Students' Unions with resources to campaign against the introduction of 'Fit to Sit' at their institutions.
19. To lobby Universities UK on this issue. To persuade their members to not introduce, or to abolish current, 'Fit to Sit' policies.
20. To support Students' Unions in any campaigns to revoke current and/or implemented 'Fit to Sit' policies.



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