

Zone Report 2018

Welfare Zone

Vice President:
Eva Crossan Jory

Zone Conference Report

Vice President (Welfare)

Introduction

This paper sets out the accountability report from the Zone Vice President. It also contains a summary of Zone Policy 2016 – 2019.

Questions

Any Individual Student member of the National Union of Students' may ask a question of the Vice President. Questions must be submitted in advance of the Conference using the online form. You will be asked to state your name and Constituent Member (your Student Union or Association).

You can access the form to ask accountability questions at:

<https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/conferences/zone-conferences/accountability>

The deadline for submission of accountability questions is Wednesday 24 October at 12.30pm. Questions will be asked during the accountability sessions at Zones Conference.

Outgoing Committee

Last year's Zone Committee was:

Vice President: Eva Crossan Jory

Jessica Okwuonu	Welfare Zone Committee Member (NEC place)
Chloe Nichol	Welfare Zone Committee Member (FE place)
Naila Mansouri	Welfare Zone Committee Member (FE place)
ChuChu Nwagu	Welfare Zone Committee Member
Daisy Bow Du Toit	Welfare Zone Committee Member
Des Ibekwe	Welfare Zone Committee Member
Esther Dominy	Welfare Zone Committee Member
Molly-Jean Longden	Welfare Zone Committee Member
Rory Hughes	Welfare Zone Committee Member

Zone Committee 2018/19

Elections for the Zone Committee (including the NEC place) will be taking place at the Zone Conference. Any individual student member of the NUS can nominate themselves online to be a member of the committee. Nominations are online via a form and the deadline for nominations is 24 October 2018 at 12.30pm.

More details of the election and the nomination form can be found at:

<https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/zones/elections>

Dates of Committee Meetings 2018/19

Date of meetings for this Zone are: 15 November 2018, 24 January 2019, 20 March 2019, 30 May 2019

Welfare Zone

Summary of policy 2016-2019

The following document summarises policy active for 2018-19 in the Welfare Zone, covering policy passed at NUS National Conference in 2016, 2017 and 2018

Purpose built student accommodation

What NUS believes:

Universities are increasingly outsourcing their student accommodation to private providers. PBSA of all types, though especially private PBSA, is increasingly expensive, increasingly unaffordable and is limiting access to HE for students from middle and low-income backgrounds.

What NUS should do in this area:

NUS should create a report that demonstrates the value and necessity of university-owned halls. NUS should support SUs to hold PBSA providers to account. NUS should support SUs to engage in a range of campaigning tactics, included rent strikes, to achieve more affordable accommodation.

How should SU's be engaged?

SUs should be equipped with tools from NUS to support students who are on rent strike.

Related active policy:

Motion 407 Not for Profit Halls

Motion 408 Rent Strikes

Poor quality private rented homes

What NUS believes:

Students are living in privately rented homes that are damp, poorly insulated, insecure, and unaffordable. Rogue landlords let poor quality

properties to students. Access to fair and affordable housing is a priority for students.

What NUS should do in this area:

Support campaigns to have tenants' unions. Continue to cooperate with non-student campaigning organisations on shared priorities. NUS should campaign for better regulation in the sector at central and local government level. NUS should 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.

How should SU's be engaged?

SUs should be supported to further develop accreditation of private sector landlords. SUs should be supported to engage with local government on further regulation of the PRS. NUS should continue to promote Ready to Rent to SUs.

Related active policy:

Motion 409 Rogue Landlords

Motion 411 Housing

Maintenance Grants

What NUS believes:

Universalism is a core principle of NUS and we should fight to protect the financial assistance provided to all students. 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. Cuts to maintenance grants should be reversed and a

living grant should be introduced, funded by progressive taxation.

What NUS should do in this area:

Present an alternative vision of how student support should operate that supports those that need it when they need it - across the entire spectrum of post-16 education; from further education through to the post-graduate level. Produce a student mental health and welfare survey which can be rolled out to all Unions, including a section for unions to provide institution specific data.

How should SU's be engaged?

NUS to support SUs to lobby institutions on increasing hardship funds.

Related active policy:

Motion 403 Grants not Debt

Hate Crime

What NUS believes:

Reports of hate crime have been increasing in the UK, including (but not limited to) instances of Islamophobia, antisemitism and racism. NUS will campaign against all hate crime. All students deserve to have access to education, free from harassment, intimidation or violence; regardless of background

What NUS should do in this area:

Organise conferences, summits, demonstrations, and direct actions where appropriate, to raise the profile of our opposition to hate crime and hate speech, make clear to the victims of hate crime that they are not alone, and to challenge perpetrators. Work with interfaith groups on a major interfaith project. NUS should publish a bi-annual report detailing all incidents of racism, including anti-Semitic incidents and instances of anti-Jewish oppression. Provide educational training on antisemitism as part of the Sabbatical Officer Summer training and throughout the year and to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

How should SU's be engaged?

Support for SUs to become hate crime reporting centers. Support SUs to provide active bystander training. SUs should be supported to participate actively in anti-hate crime work, developing local reporting facilities, and responding to specific incidents through the development of clear national guidelines, networks and resources. SU should be supported to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

Related active policy:

Motion 404 Antisemitism on Campus

Motion 403 Hate Crime

Motion 404 Online Harassment

Motion 412 Its time to combat antisemitism

Prevent

What NUS believes:

The Prevent agenda is discriminatory, ambiguous, and inherently flawed and as part of the Government's 'anti-extremism' work has been used to create an expansive surveillance culture to spy on the public and to police dissent, systematically targeting minorities and vulnerable individuals.

The Government's counter-terrorism/security policy is ill-defined and open to abuse for political ends. Prevent has created a hostile environment for Muslims and other minorities on campus and must be resisted.

What NUS should do in this area:

Ensure students are aware of their rights. Support Islamophobia awareness month. Ensure Islamic Societies receive support from independent officials. develop guidance alongside the Black Students' Officer on SUs dealing with the Charity Commission and accusations of 'supporting extremism' levelled at SUs. Lobby universities and members of the NUS to be more open and transparent about how they are engaging with PREVENT and other similar initiatives. Develop FE specific anti-prevent guidance. Find a way to reinstate the faith and belief project at NUS. Target the private companies who profit from the implementation of Prevent, including direct action and shaming campaigns

How should SU's be engaged?

Educate SUs about Prevent. Support should be provided to SUs to enable them to help staff to resist the implementation of Prevent agenda and work with relevant trade unions.

Related active policy:

Motion 406 Preventing Prevent

Motion 401 We Do Not Comply: Preventing Prevent

Mental health

What NUS believes:

There is a crisis in student mental health. Student suicides have increased, as well as the number of students disclosing a mental health condition to their institution and demand for on-campus support services. Support services are chronically underfunded. Support services often lack cultural competency, specifically disadvantaging minority groups in FE and HE. There is a direct link between mental health and financial hardship which is exacerbated by the marketisation of education and increasing levels of student debt.

What NUS should do in this area:

Explore further the link between financial hardship, debt and mental health amongst students and use the findings to inform the campaign. Present an alternative vision of how student support should operate that supports those that need it when they need it - across the entire spectrum of post-16 education; from further education through to the post-graduate level. Introduce a mental health award scheme similar to Green Impact. Campaign to have appropriate mental health support as a condition of funding for HEIs and FEIs. NUS to lobby for the protection of government funding for IAPT and for it to be rolled-out fully. NUS to work with NUS BSC and DSC on working with NHS and Black Mental Health UK on conducting research into barriers and experiences of accessing mental health support and release guidance for SUs and lobby institutions on how to engage in addressing culturally competent mental health services. VP Welfare will work with officers to ensure that mental health funding is at the forefront of discussions with

the Office for Students, BIS, AoC and UUK. NUS will work with partners including UUK and Student Minds to support students' unions role in the UUK #StepChange strategy for a whole institution approach to student mental health.

How should SU's be engaged?

NUS to support SUs to challenge institutions to incorporate financial hardship into academic appeals, mitigating or extenuating circumstance and mental health support. NUS should produce a student mental health and welfare survey which can be rolled out to all Unions, including a section for unions to provide institution specific data. NUS to support SUs to access mental health first aid training. NUS should support SUs by running workshops on campuses to support with the development of meaningful mental health campaigns.

Related active policy:

Motion 405 Prioritise Student Mental Health Now!

Motion 402 Mental Health and Hardship

Motion 405 Student Mental Health

Motion 406 Mental Health a Culturally Competent Framework

Motion 407 Mental Health First Aid

Motion W101 Mental Health from the Roots Up

Sexual Violence

What NUS believes:

There is a problem of abuse and harassment by staff toward students, and by towards other staff, with young women being disproportionately affected.

What NUS should do in this area:

Produce resources to support students facing sexual violence perpetrated by staff, and to support existing campus campaigns. Lobby for universities to record and make public all data on sexual violence, including that faced by staff.

How should SU's be engaged?

NUS will produce guidance for SUs on student-staff misconduct and support them in

developing campaigns and policies within their institutions.

Related active policy:

Motion 409 It Stops Here: Sexual Violence

Hidden Costs

What NUS believes:

Additional and hidden course costs are bad. Hidden course costs include the cost of a gown, which is mandatory in order to attend the graduation ceremony. Hidden course costs prevent students from participating fully in their education. The cost of transport, particularly for FE students is prohibitively high. Rail fares are increasing. Discount travel cards are not valid at peak times. Apprentices cannot purchase a 16-25 rail card.

What NUS should do in this area:

Research the average cost of attending graduation in the UK and work to reduce the cost. NUS should campaign to Department of Transport, ATOC & Transport Focus for lower rail fares for students and for the lifting of peak restrictions when using a 16-25 railcard. NUS to campaign for all apprentices to be able to purchase a 16-25 railcard.

How should SU's be engaged?

n/a

Related active policy:

Motion 408 Ticket to Ride

Motion 410 Graduation the Final Hidden Cost

NHS funding and bursaries

What NUS believes:

The NHS is under huge financial pressure due to chronic underfunding and as a result to cuts to other funding in support services, leading to more people than ever before accessing acute and emergency care. NHS cuts at a national and local level are putting lives at risk. Cuts have also meant that funding for NHS bursaries for allied healthcare students has been cut. Healthcare students face a range of additional and hidden costs which are not met by the financial support available to them. Retention of

these students is an issue. The NHS is a national treasure and we must fight for it.

What NUS should do in this area:

Campaign for the reinstatement of NHS bursaries, that meet the financial needs of students. Campaign for massive investment in the NHS. Work with external organisations like Save Our NHS. To organise a multi-agency national NHS Student Summit. Lobby for simultaneous GP registration for students, so they can register on campus and at home.

How should SU's be engaged?

NUS to support SUs campaigning to reverse NHS Bursary cuts and publicize how important bursaries are currently to nursing students. Students' Union's whose Universities have direct entry Health courses to lobby their university to help pay for students travel expenses whilst attending placement

Related active policy

401- NUS for the NHS

402- Save Our Services

410 – NHS bursaries

413- Dual GP registration for students

Legal Highs

What NUS believes

'Legal highs' are not fit for human consumption and pose a serious risk to health.

What should NUS do in this area

NUS should educate students on the dangers of legal highs and lobby central government for them to be made illegal

How should SUs be engaged

n/a

Related active policy

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

Zone Conference Accountability

Vice President (Welfare) Zones Report

Author: Eva Crossan Jory

Date Produced: October

Priority Aims
<p>Housing- Affordable housing for all, redefining the meaning of affordability in the sector, ensuring students have access to safe and affordable accommodation.</p> <p>Mental Health- Politicising Mental Health- looking at the real issues causing the Mental Health crisis, creating support networks and materials for offices + support for mental health campaigns. Campaigning for properly funded and culturally competent counselling services on campuses.</p> <p>Faith and Belief working with student faith groups up and down the country to support them, working with the interfaith network, creating more inclusive spaces on campuses.</p>
Strategy

Breakdown/Update

Area of work	Progress
Housing & Affordability.	<p>I have commissioned NUS' biggest survey into student housing, looking specifically at students living in the private rented sector. This research will examine the conditions that students are living in, as well as the relationship they have with their landlord or letting agent, and importantly- give us genuine insight into the costs of rent and bills. For the first time, my research will ask students what <i>*they*</i> think is an affordable rate to pay for somewhere to live. I'm going to use this research to lobby the government and other political parties to get serious about the costs and conditions in the private rented sector.</p> <p>To continue on my key priority of affordable housing I have also commissioned another round of the accommodation costs survey. Now in its 50th year, this longitudinal study shows how the costs and provision of purpose built student accommodation, or halls, has changed over the years. For the last decade we have seen rents rising above inflation, driven by greedy private providers and universities outsourcing their responsibilities for students. The results are out in December and you can expect to see me in the media and on campuses supporting grass roots campaigns demanding rent cuts.</p> <p>In order to truly support local activism for SUs I'll be hosting a one-day housing activism event, where we will discuss the results from my research and share ideas and advice on how to build strong and effective housing campaigns. Drop me a message if you'd like more information, or keep an eye out for details on social media soon.</p> <p>I've also been in talks with the Ministry of Housing discussing the need for indefinite tenancies in the private rented sector and the abolition of 'no fault' evictions, which are the leading cause of homelessness in the UK. I've also directed NUS to engage in a working group at the Ministry to look at the future of deposits in the PRS, making renting fairer and more affordable for everyone.</p>
Mental Health	<p>Policy passed at national conference compelled NUS to support the Universities UK programme for improved mental health services in HE, by implementing a whole-institution approach to mental health. I have met with UUK and other stakeholders to</p>

	<p>feedback on their proposals and I will continue to work with them to improve their framework and support greater buy-in from institutions.</p> <p>However, I know that solving the mental health crisis affecting our students is not going to be solved with a framework. Our Mental Health is political and part of my work this year involves intervening and reframing sector work to politicise the understandings of mental health. This includes campaigning for better counselling and support services as just wellbeing activities along are not enough and institutions must do more to support students through real means that make a difference not just so they can tick some boxes. This includes work with BCAP to campaign for more funding for support services and trained counsellors.</p> <p>Work is also ongoing in regards to PG Mental health, which is extremely high and often not spoken about, I am working with the PG campaign on a series of workshops that are exploring the link between mental health crisis' within our institutions and the marketisation of education more generally.</p> <p>Any student suicide is an unacceptable tragedy, but the sheer scale of the numbers of students taking their own lives points to a severe crisis, that all educational institutions need to take urgent action on. I have worked with UUK and Papyrus as a critical friend on their Suicide Safer guidance for VCs, but frankly it didn't go far enough and so I'm going to be creating my own guidance, for sabbatical offices, to support your Mental Health campaigns and to cope with student suicide through communities of care within your unions but also to support you at difficult times- NUS should be here to support you in difficult times and times of crisis not just good times.</p>
Faith and Belief	<p>I have sent out multi faith calendars to every campus in the UK! These calendars will be useful when you consider union democratic events and socials. It is at the very least an education and events tool, but more importantly, it could be an opportunity for your union to celebrate the diversity of its membership.</p> <p>One of the simplest but most effective things we can all do to support students of faith on campus, is understand key dates of celebration and observance across the year, to help plan our engagement and activities ensuring no one is excluded.</p> <p>As we're sure you're aware, the activities of faith groups on campus are a core part of the student experience and wider student involvement with the local community. Having a community which shares your values and helps provide for your spiritual needs is an essential source of support for many students. This is one of the reasons why avoiding holding your events on major religious holidays is so important.</p> <p>I have also been meeting with various student faith groups such as UJS and FOSIS to discuss how the welfare zone can support them as well as meeting with the interfaith network around events for interfaith week. We are also looking into how we can help apprentices join their local union faith groups.</p>
Other Key Projects	<p><u>Gambling</u></p> <p>We are working with gambling commission to get safer ways of gambling and supporting students in debt. We have been publishing support networks for those suffering with addiction or who need financial support. There is an inherent link between the broken student funding model & debt and the rate at which young people are gambling. This work hasn't really been done before so it's exciting to be pioneering this partnership.</p>



	<p><u>Alcohol Impact, Students & Drugs</u></p> <p>Alcohol impact results looking at changing drinking cultures and practices on campuses; harm reduction which links to the work done by the welfare zone previously on the student drug survey. Part of the recommendations from that involve Working towards getting drug testing kits on the purchasing consortium.</p>
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Membership Visits/Engagement:

- SUs 18
- National Society of Apprentices Training Day
- Manchester College
- Lead and Change Hertfordshire
- Lead and Change Leeds
- Leeds Beckett
- Met with BCAP
- Central SU
- Royal Holloway SU
- UWE
- Bristol SU
- Wrexham SU
- NUS NEC
- Northumbria SU
- Sheffield SU
- Sheffield Hallam SU
- Sheffield College SU
- Newham College

Sector Meetings/ Stakeholder Engagement:

- Met with the Gambling Commission
 - Met with Interfaith Network UK
 - Met with FOSIS
 - Met with UJS
 - ANUK Unipol Tribunal & Training
 - UUK Suicide Safer Project Group
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