



**BRISTOL SU**  
the best student life

The Richmond Building  
105 Queens Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8  
1LN  
Tel (0117) 331 8600  

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www.bristolsu.org.uk

## Student Council 06/06/2016

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### Motion Name: Safe Space Policy Reform

#### Background:

1. The Bristol SU 'Safe Space Policy' (SSP) has been spoken about in a large selection of student media over the last year, has been the subject of one of the motions at AMM and appeared as a priority in many of the manifestos that officer candidates ran on in the elections in April.
2. As well as the SSP there have been doubts over the effectiveness of our complaints procedure, and our current code of conduct has not been recently updated and is geared towards sports clubs.
3. There is no straightforward way in which a student, student group, user of the building, staff member or any other participant in SU activities can check all the policies in which they are held to.
4. There are certainly not clear measured actions and procedures for breakages of these policies and it is unclear how they work together, especially alongside University policies.
5. The current Equality, Liberation and Access Officer has since organised an investigation into opinions on the SSP, whilst co-reviewing the code of conduct with the Sport and Student Development officer as part of a wider piece of work surrounding our complaints procedure.
6. Currently the SSP, whilst democratic in place, splits opinions amongst the student body. Through the consultations this is mainly due to doubts about its effectiveness without clear actions for breakages, its ambiguity about whether it grants the right to ban speakers from talking on campus, and finally its name being the same as some 'no-platform' policies that other SUs have, which **are** used to ban speakers.
7. After reading the responses of the survey on our SSP the Equality, Liberation and Access officer is suggesting the changes listed below in the actions.

#### Purpose:

1. To respond to the many calls for the SSP to be reformed.

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2. To create a policy that more students feel ownership of, and are able to use practically.
3. To better link up the Code of Conduct and the clear parts of the SSP in order to have a more comprehensive and easily understandable complaints process.

**Action:**

1. To abolish the SSP as it currently stands and engulf the anti-discrimination and not-threatening spirit of it into the revised Code of Conduct.
2. To create an **'Anti-discrimination and Harassment statement'** that should be displayed and read out at the beginning of all large SU activities. This will be both clear and concise, and will quickly explain the procedure if someone feels that the activity hasn't fulfilled the spirit of the statement. All complaints of breakages of this will go through our new complaints procedure and the SU will refer to our revised Code of Conduct for clear actions.
3. To include these altered sentences from the current Safe Space Policy into the revised Code of Conduct **'each and every member should feel welcome to participate in, non-judgemental and non-threatening discussions, activities, services or events.'** and **'Members should be free from fear of threats, intimidation, harassment.'**
4. To include an expectation in the revised Code of Conduct that all SU events and activities (including those delivered by student groups) be clearly advertised to all welcome to attend them, but will have clear descriptions of what to expect if at attendance. E.g. events that may have upsetting content must be clearly signposted. This is to ensure all can make a well informed choice about whether they wish to attend any activity.
5. To state clearly on our website the process for approving external speakers at the SU.
  - a. Ensuring that it explains that the SU has no policy which approves its officers preemptively banning a speaker/s due to political disagreement (unless another motion goes through Student Council or our AMM mandating them to do so).
  - b. Ensuring that it explains that due to the SU being a charity it is held accountable to the Charity Commission and must follow charity law, and therefore has to have a [process](#) (overseen by the Trustee Board) to record and approve external speakers.

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6. The revised code-of-conduct and overarching Bristol SU complaints procedure will come to the next student council for discussion and approval.

**Proposed by:**

Proposer: Jamie Cross - Equality, Liberation and Access Officer

Seconder: Stephanie Harris - Sport and Student Development Officer

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