



BRISTOL SU
the best student life

The Richmond Building
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www.bristolsu.org.uk

Annual Members Meeting **23/02/2017**

Motion Name: Defend migrants and support free movement

Background:

1. Recently announced plans to restrict international students' visas, including linking universities' ability to accept international students to "teaching quality," most likely measured by TEF scores.
3. In recent years, the government scrapped the post-study work visa, introduced NHS charges for non-EU students and deported tens of thousands of international students.
4. Often the response by Vice-Chancellors and sections of the student movement to such attacks is insistence that international students are not migrants and should be treated differently,
5. The arguments often emphasise how much international students contribute to the British economy by "funding our universities" (justifying sky-high fees) or emphasise the differences between students and migrant workers instead of challenging prejudice against both.
6. The recent slide into anti-immigration, anti-free-movement politics by even some people on the left, including the Labour Party left.
7. That the University of Bristol currently offers a small number of places on a "Sanctuary Scholarship Scheme" to offer financial support to a refugees, asylum seekers and their dependents to support them studying here.

Purpose:

1. We must continue to defend free movement without shame, compromise or capitulation. Capitulating on free movement harms current and prospective students and university workers and lecturers who are migrants, harming our student community and education.

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2. Free movement is not against the interests of working class people. Migrant workers are part of the working class too; our politics of fighting for workers' rights does not respect borders imposed by our rulers. Furthermore, the evidence shows that immigration does not substantially depress pay or conditions. It is vital to challenge false narratives such as this about the sources of and solutions to our problems. This narrative simultaneously perpetuates the victimisation of current and prospective migrant students and university workers and presents an obstacle to tackling the real underlying causes of social issues, including the problems facing students in education and student housing.

3. Restricting immigration will therefore neither help UK-born nor migrant working-class people. Instead, such politics divide students and workers, damaging our ability to organise and fight against the common enemy that is actually responsible for low wages, shortages of housing and jobs, and overstretched public services – the rich and powerful, and the parties and politicians who serve their class interests.

4. That attacks on international students and other migrant groups are based on the same racist and xenophobic ideology, and can only be defeated through active solidarity, not creating further divisions.

5. We need to politically combat anti-migrant ideas, and advocate real solutions in their place, not concede the debate to right-wing lies.

6. That whilst we should support free education and living grants for all, until we win that we welcome the "Sanctuary Scholarship Scheme". However, the number of places is insufficient given the number of people eligible who wish to study.

Action:

1. To campaign to defend and extend freedom of movement and the right to free, accessible education for everyone, regardless of nationality. Blame not migrants, but the rich and powerful, the ruling class, for the problems facing working class people.

2. To argue and campaign for a programme of immediate real solutions to the problems facing working class students, including: encouraging migrant and British-born student workers to join trade unions and unite to fight for improved pay and

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conditions for all; reversing anti-union laws; raising and enforcing the minimum wage; decent housing accessible for all students; secure, decently-paid jobs, training and education for all students; serious taxes on the rich and their businesses in order to redistribute wealth and reverse cuts, fund decent public services and rebuild the NHS for the benefit of students.

3. To fight against any further attacks on international students, including through direct action if necessary.

4. To challenge the “students are not migrants” approach within the student movement and more broadly on the left, and to fight uncompromisingly against capitulation by the left and the student and trade union movements on migrant rights and free movement.

5. To campaign for a larger number of “Sanctuary Scholarship Schemes” to be offered at the University of Bristol whilst maintaining that we support free education and living grants for all.

Proposed by: Iz

Seconded by: Tyrone Falls

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