27 – 29 March | Glasgow

Zone Priority Motion Submissions
Contents

Priority Zone Proposals .................................................................................................................. 3
Further Education Zone Proposals ............................................................................................... 4
Higher Education Zone Proposals ............................................................................................... 7
Society and Citizenship Zone Proposals ....................................................................................... 10
Union Development Zone Proposals ........................................................................................... 12
Welfare Zone Proposals ............................................................................................................... 14
Priority Zone Proposal

Proposal: Student Poverty

Submitted by: Priority Zone Committee

Conference Believes

1. The NUS Student Poverty Commission has told us something clear and simple – it is time to get real about student finance.
2. Nearly half of Britain’s students are worried about having enough money to buy essential groceries such as bread and milk from an average weekly food spend of £24.32, according to NUS research.
3. Research also found that almost half of all students are struggling to get together enough money to cover basic costs such as travel and textbooks.
4. Travel costs of £17.35 a week are also a cause for concern, with 43% of students worried about daily travel to university or college.
5. Almost three-quarters of students (71%) cite worries about money as a cause of mental health issues.
6. 23% have used non-government loans to extend their finances.
7. In 2015 student rents in London averaged £226 a week compared with £147 elsewhere, eating up their maintenance support before all other costs.
8. The current minimum wage rate for an apprentice is a shameful £3.50 per hour.
9. The Government is in denial about what is in reality a student poverty crisis. When challenged on the gap between maintenance and costs for university students in October 2017, the then Universities Minister Jo Johnson argued that students should “live more frugally”.
10. The Department for Education has repeatedly refused to publish research into Student Income and Expenditure carried out in 2014/15.
11. Universities, Colleges and Training Providers are also in denial - often making decisions on the way they run programmes that make the problem worse for students.
12. A large proportion of students simply can’t afford to participate in education- but are blamed for a “lack of aspiration”.
13. The intense focus on the £9k paid to universities means that the amount FE, UG and PG students actually have to live on rarely gets discussed, underlying issues rarely debated, and the impacts ignored.
14. Universities promoting first year accommodation as the only way to make friends that then profit from that rent should be banned from doing so.

Conference Further Believes

1. An NUS that believes in a Living Wage in wider society should develop proper proposals on a Living Income for Students.
2. So that all students benefit, proposals should ensure that help goes to those that need it most-where costs are higher, work is more scarce or where parents can’t help.
3. NUS should cause universities and colleges to make a commitment to working to reduce both direct and indirect costs that students face and expanding the number of opportunities to work within institutions.
4. As a movement, student discounts on core costs should be something we spend more time campaigning for and less time profiting from.
5. We should demand that detailed research on student income and expenditure for all our members is carried out, published and acted on by Government.
Further Education Zone Proposals

Proposal: This Story is getting old... time for investment in FE/College our voices to be heard!

Submitted by: Further Education Zone Committee

Conference Believes:

1. Further Education has been consistently cut since 2010. FE providers are at breaking point, funding per student has not risen in 6 years and colleges are running on bare minimum levels.
2. The Government are undertaking an expansive programme of reform that will change the face of further education provision forever.
3. The Government are currently consulting on T-Levels, with the first T-levels expected to be rolled out in 2019. NUS sits on the T-Level stakeholder group and this is a clear opportunity to ensure the reforms reflect the needs of students.
4. The Government refuse to adequately invest in the reforms. The £500 million announced in the Spring Budget 2017 doesn’t come close to restoring what the Conservatives have cut from FE.
5. The disruptive marketisation of education, combined with the extensive cuts, means more and more colleges are looking to support their income by providing Higher Education courses. Currently, one in ten HE students are also in FE environments.
6. Apprenticeships at a Higher Degree level are becoming increasingly popular, meaning that the number of universities expected to deliver Degree Level apprenticeships is expected to rise.
7. Further Education students are habitually forgotten about in discussions about funding in education; specifically tuition fees, maintenance loans and grants.
8. With the regional rules and shutdown of the learning skills council surrounding SEND/LLD colleges, specialised colleges face closure, and more and more students are blocked from accessing vital education.

Conference Further Believes:

1. NUS is a confederation of Student Unions, 65% of which are at Further Education institutions.
2. NUS supports the National Society of Apprentices, whose leadership team represent 250,000 apprentices.
3. FTOs have a remit to represent all affiliate members, not just those well-developed, well-funded Universities.
4. Educational providers are becoming multi-functional, and the lines between Further and Higher Education are becoming increasingly blurred.
5. NUS needs to provide crucial development and support to FE Students’ Unions and the National Society of Apprentices to enable all learners to express their voice.

Conference Resolves:

1. To mandate the NUS President, VPFE, VPHE and VPU D ringfence £2000 of their budgets to provide a travel bursary enabling FE, SEND and Apprentices the ability to attend our democratic events.
2. To mandate the VPFE to launch a priority campaign for investment in further education, working in ALL nations depending on each government’s rules.
3. The VPFE to dedicate a stream of this funding campaign to SEND/LLD Learners to fight closures and gain investment VITAL for these learners.
Conference Believes:

1. Transport costs mean students are currently, and have consistently been, excluded from or impoverished by their education.
2. During the Area Review Process, NUS held roundtables with student representatives from 124 FE institutions across England. It was found that in every area transport was an issue affecting student’s ability to access education.
3. NUS carried out research with FE students in 2015 and found that 51% of students said they cannot always afford their travel costs.  
4. In Wales, around six in 10 (62 per cent) further education students have costs associated with travel.  
5. The cost of travel, both in cash and time, is putting strain on students’ abilities to balance their commitments between work, study and family life. In Wales, 37% of students reported this, in Northern Ireland it was 49%. 
6. Apprentices struggle to afford their transport costs. Across the UK apprentices are paying an average of £24 per week in travel costs. This means that an apprentice on the apprentice national minimum wage of £3.50 lose an entire day’s pay each week in paying for their commute.
7. In Scotland, an apprentice on the apprentice minimum wage working 35 hours a week would earn £122.50 a week. While discounts are available to 16-18 year olds who hold a Young Scot card, apprentices over 18 face weekly ticket costs of up to £54.409 - almost half of their weekly wage.
8. Rail fares have risen by over 32% on average since 2010.
9. The discount offered by the 16-25 railcard and new “millennial railcard” announced in 2017 is not valid on a large amount of peak-time travel, when students are most likely to be travelling to college.
10. Student support for travel is inconsistent across local authorities and does not cover costs.
11. The removal of Education Maintenance Allowance and the Adult Learning Grant back in 2010 for students in England has made financial support a key issue for Further Education students when it comes to accessing their education.
12. That whilst the Government replaced EMA with a bursary, the overall budget of this fund and its discretionary nature means that it is inadequate at meeting the needs of FE students.
13. Only 17 per cent of FE students receive support from their college to pay for transport costs.
Conference Further Believes:

1. Students also suffer from poor, unreliable services on public transport such as buses, trains and trams.
2. One third of FE students spend between one and two hours getting to college.\(^9\)
3. Students in rural areas have limited services that are at risk of being cut or removed completely, limiting students’ access to college and activities outside the classroom. In cities, transport options are more numerous but the cost can be so prohibitive as to leave students’ transport options very limited.
4. Area reviews in England, college regionalisation in Scotland and mergers creating large regional colleges in Wales and NI are intended to create greater specialisation of subjects being taught on certain campuses.
5. Curriculum changes like this will lead to students having to travel further to access the course they want to study or choose a course or institution they may not want to study because it is nearer to their home.
6. Many students’ unions negotiate with local bus companies to provide a discounted rate for students, but as this happens at a local level it varies from institution to institution meaning not all students are getting a fair deal.
7. Anyone studying more than 15 hours per week may purchase a 16-25 railcard, but to discounted rail fares can be obtained using a 16-25 railcard before 10am and apprentices over 25 are not eligible.
8. Private rail companies should reverse the decision to scrap 16-25 Railcard holders being able to access discounts at peak times - a decision which penalises students and young workers who need to travel by train to study or access their place of work.
9. The Government should guarantee free bus travel for FE students and apprentices, just as older people do, to ensure equal access to opportunity, preventing them from falling behind due to financial barriers.

Conference Resolves:

1. To invest in a community led campaign across the country, to bring together transport companies, local councils and students to fix cheaper, more affordable, more reliable travel for students.
2. To lobby locally and nationally for discounted and accessible travel for college students and apprentices across the UK.
3. To negotiate with national public transport provider to ensure NUS extra as the recognised discount card for travel.
4. To lobby private national rail companies to lift the peak time restriction on young person’s rail discounts.
5. To produce guidance for local unions to contact and lobby local franchised transport providers to introduce cheaper travel for students.

\(^9\) [https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/20127/a9921e89ec43a5c30c93230062098267/CTC_transport_briefing_-_FINAL.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNQ&Expires=1515431626&Signature=NjQAdwdXZGPZVK4f93p5w3vzLY%3D](https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/20127/a9921e89ec43a5c30c93230062098267/CTC_transport_briefing_-_FINAL.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNQ&Expires=1515431626&Signature=NjQAdwdXZGPZVK4f93p5w3vzLY%3D)
Higher Education Zone Proposals

Proposal: Tackling the Black Attainment Gap

Submitted by: Higher Education Zone Committee

Conference Believes:

1. The black attainment gap is a long-established issue with a trend as far back as national data was gathered.\(^{10}\)
2. The attainment gap exists along with other inequalities, including disparities in access, continuation and employment outcomes.\(^{11}\)
3. Over a decade ago the attainment gap was established to predominantly lie with the institutions, and exists after other factors such as socioeconomic background, discipline and institution choices, and entry grades, were accounted for.\(^{12}\)
4. Academic staff employed within higher education do not reflect the undergraduate or national population regarding race\(^{13}\), and in particular are missing at senior leadership levels\(^{14}\).
5. There is not parity within the sector on the courses and institutions attended by students of colour, or for black academics.\(^{15}\)
6. Black students are significantly more likely to become unemployed on graduation and less likely to experience the benefits of their degree\(^{16}\).

Conference Further Believes:

1. Systemic inequality undermines the real value of our degrees, as well as the whole higher education sector. Race inequity cannot coexist with the internationally leading system we want.
2. The causes of the attainment gap are multiple and systemic within our institutions\(^{17}\), and require broad approaches from both government and each individual institution.
3. Educational race inequality is further compounded by employer bias, leading to poorer employment outcomes nationally\(^{18}\).
4. Current regulation of universities via the Teaching Excellence Framework does not require improving the attainment gap; while the issues are sector wide, approaches significantly vary by and within each university and other providers.
5. The Teaching Excellence Framework has not been adequately analysed to understand whether it systematically suppresses race inequalities outcomes\(^{19}\).
6. Student-led initiatives to make improvements on the attainment gap and race inequity need to be sustainable over several years and adaptable for all member unions.
7. Specific challenges on attainment persist in specific disciplines and types of institution\(^{20}\).
8. The Equality Challenge Unit provides a Race Equality Charter which equips committed institutions with a framework to make change around race inequality, including improving the attainment gap\(^{21}\). The Equality Challenge Unit is currently undergoing significant changes to its governance and merging with other sector bodies.
9. The Higher Education Funding Council for England, due to wind down with the introduction of the Office for Students, has enabled projects to work on race inequity via the Addressing Barriers to Student Success funding\(^{22}\).

---

\(^{10}\) [www.hesa.ac.uk](http://www.hesa.ac.uk)
\(^{11}\) [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk) – Statistical Reports
\(^{12}\) DFES. Research Report RW92, S Broeke, T Nicholls, 2007
\(^{13}\) [www.hesa.ac.uk](http://www.hesa.ac.uk)
\(^{14}\) Aiming Higher: Race, Inequality and Diversity in the Academy, 2015, Runnymede Trust
\(^{15}\) [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk) – Statistical Reports
\(^{16}\) [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk) – Statistical Reports
\(^{17}\) Causes of differences in student outcomes, HEFCE 2015
\(^{20}\) Undergraduate retention and attainment across the disciplines, Professor Ruth Woodhead, HEA 2014
\(^{21}\) [www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/race-equality-charter/](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/race-equality-charter/)
\(^{22}\) [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/sas/barriers/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/sas/barriers/)
Conference Resolves:

1. Raise awareness of the black attainment gap institutionally and nationally, including discussing race inequalities throughout our education system.
2. Campaign for institutions to take responsibility for and lead on addressing the attainment gap.
3. Campaign for the government to intercede to ensure that the attainment gap and race inequality is a key issue for institutions as well as students.
4. Lobby for the entire sector’s attainment gap data to be released, to facilitate the discussion on how to address race inequality among the other factors.
5. Campaign for the government and/or relevant agencies to penalise institutions that do not close the attainment gap.
6. Equip students’ unions with models for institutional data gathering, good practice, and campaigning guides on the attainment gap and student experience.
7. Develop materials with the sector, led by black students and academics, relating to decolonising the curriculum across all disciplines.
8. Lobby for further investigation of race inequality in courses with supervision, e.g. nursing, practical arts, apprenticeships, or research.
9. Lobby for institutions to create interventions targeted at students who experience race inequity, including careers advice and scholarships.
10. Lobby for institution-wide and cross-sector approaches to addressing differential outcomes around race, with NUS leading other sector agencies in this work.
11. Lobby for membership of the Race Equality Charter to be a baseline requirement for all higher education institutions.
12. Lobby for HEFCE work and funding on differential outcomes, specifically around race, to continue after HEFCE has wound down.
13. Where possible, work with other student and activist groups and organisations including the Black Students Campaign to raise awareness, campaign and lobby on racial disparities in Higher Education.

Proposal: Protecting students during Brexit

Submitted by: Higher Education Zone Committee

Conference Believes:

1. On June 23rd 2016, a referendum that posed the question “Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?” resulted in a 51.9% to 48.1% result in favour of leave.
2. NUS had campaigned to remain members of the European Union in the interests of our student members as mandated by National Conference.
3. 74% of all UK voters aged 24 or under voted to remain.\(^\text{23}\)
4. Leaving the EU creates uncertainty around the position of UK students studying in EU countries and vice versa and also threatens access to European research funding and could damage long standing academic collaborations.
5. As it stands, in leaving the EU, the UK risks losing access to the Erasmus + exchange scheme for students and apprentices.
6. It is likely that, after leaving, EU students in the UK will be regarded as international students and as such, without a deal or a special arrangement, will be charged international student fees.
7. Whilst current arrangements for students stand until 2017/18 and students who have been accepted under the current arrangements will have their contracts honoured for 2017/18 there is no certainty for students beyond these dates.

\(^{23}\)http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/640yx5m0rx/On_the_Day_FINAL_poll_forwebsite.pdf
Conference Further Believes:

1. EU students are not and should not be treated as bargaining chips throughout the Brexit process.
2. EU students who are already here or who will begin courses in the UK before the UK has formally left the EU need urgent clarity about their status, and this should not be contingent on what the EU offers UK citizens.
3. The UK will prove in the future to be a less attractive partner for future research and collaborations if any new immigration policy restricts and deters high quality academics from across Europe from moving to the UK.
4. Student mobility around Europe is integral to transformational experiences for students studying in Europe, for EU students and for UK students studying alongside EU students.
5. Since the referendum, the hard line taken by many senior politicians on immigration has seen increases in xenophobic and hate crime incidences, with an increase of 42% just before and after the referendum.24
6. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has made it clear that many prominent politicians were responsible for this increase in hate crime, xenophobia and intimidation directed at ethnic minority groups in the UK. 25
7. EU and international students should not be made to suffer because of the increasingly harmful and dangerous rhetoric around Brexit.
8. A hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland will be detrimental to the lives, experiences and educational opportunities for students across the two countries and must be avoided.
9. The government and the Higher Education Sector should be in a position to reassure EU staff currently working in universities and colleges in the UK that they have the right to remain and contribute to the UK’s future and ensure employment rights developed during the UK’s EU membership are maintained.
10. The government must ensure that any losses in income that universities and colleges will experience because of Brexit will be made up.
11. Tertiary education should be exempt from forming part of any future trade deals that are negotiated once the UK has left the EU.

Conference Resolves:

1. To negotiate for special immigration status for EU and UK students and academics, to ensure that they remain able to move across the EU freely for work and study.
2. To campaign for the UK to remain a full member of the Erasmus+ scheme and to secure a commitment from MPs that the UK will be a member of any similar schemes in the future.
3. To campaign to remove international students from net migration targets.
4. To lobby stakeholders in the UK, including MPs and MEPs, to protect student mobility after Brexit.
5. To collaborate with activist groups and organisations across the UK to make the case for student mobility after Brexit.
6. To collaborate with allies across Europe, including the European Students’ Union and the Erasmus Students’ Network.
7. To support students unions to campaign locally and nationally to protect student mobility after Brexit.
8. Work with USI through NUS USI to ensure that students in Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland do not face any new restrictions when travelling, working and studying across the two countries.

---

Society and Citizenship Zone Proposals

Proposal: Ending single use plastics

Submitted by: Society and Citizenship Zone Committee

Conference Believes:

1. That in 2015 alone, new plastic production stood at 322 million tonnes globally.
2. At least 8 tonnes of plastic is leaked into the ocean.26
3. That the UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.8 aims to ensure that by 2030 ‘people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature’.

Conference Further Believes:

1. The amount of packaging waste in society, and single-use plastic packaging in particular, is excessive.
2. That single-use plastic packaging in particular is having a significant negative effect on aquatic ecosystems - as illustrated by BBC’s Blue Planet II.
3. That the long-term impact of plastic in the food chain on humans is still poorly understood.
4. That in the absence of that understanding and given the known negative impact on aquatic ecosystems, society should adopt the precautionary principle in minimising plastic waste entering our oceans and waterways.
5. That constructive engagement with suppliers and companies by NUS and Students’ Unions can lead to practical alternatives to reduce or eliminate excessive packaging.
6. That Students’ Unions have an important role to play in raising environmental awareness and in encouraging pro-environmental behaviour change.
7. That environmental engagement campaigns can lead to changes in environmental values, attitudes and behaviours of students that can last well beyond their time in education.
8. That Students’ Unions have an important role to play in engaging with their local communities on environmental issues – particularly with local schools.
9. That the Government’s recent 25 year environment plan27 was positive in its general outlook but was far too long-term and didn’t include anything that was binding.

Conference Resolves:

1. NUS should investigate possibilities for finding alternative options within its commercial supply chain, or to constructively engage existing providers, to identify and use lower or no packaging options – specifically focussing on reducing plastic packaging.
2. NUS should develop a plan for phasing out products which use no recycled content, or overuse packaging.
3. NUS should support and advise students’ unions on how to seek alternative suppliers, or engage with existing suppliers, where possible to limit and reduce single-use packaging waste.
4. NUS should build a campaign for students’ unions to bring to their campuses, to reduce the use of single-use plastics in particular.
5. NUS should provide a toolkit for students’ unions for Go Green Week on mitigating local pollution by running activities such as plastic clean-ups, in partnership with local and national organisations such as the Marine Conservation Society where relevant.
6. NUS should partner with other organisations, such as the Eco Schools network, to support students to deliver sustainability education in schools.

26 United Nations Environment, 2016 http://cleanseas.org/get-informed
7. To lobby the government to ensure that the 25 Year Environment Plan is translated into meaningful policy and that more ambitious, shorter-term targets, are set for reducing plastic waste.

Proposal: International not isolationism

Submitted by: Society and Citizenship Zone Committee

Conference Believes:

1. In 2016, there were around 39,000 applications for asylum in the UK. Less than half of these were accepted\(^{28}\).
2. That only around 1\% of the world’s refugees live in the UK.\(^{29}\)
3. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported in 2016 that there were around 22 million refugees and 2.3 million people were seeking asylum globally.
4. Turkey, Pakistan and Lebanon host the largest amount of refugees globally; Turkey hosts 2.7 million refugees. Lebanon, a country the size of Wales, now hosts over a million refugees.\(^{30}\)
5. That the International Rescue Committee (IRC) currently runs the Together for Refugees campaign, calling on EU countries to resettle and support refugees and asylum seekers.
6. People who have sought refuge in the UK do not have equal access to university; most are classed as international students which mean they are charged higher fees. On top of this most cannot get a student loan and do not have the right to work to earn money to pay their fees and living costs.
7. That the NUS Society and Citizenship Campaign and the International Students’ Campaign have been working with Student Action for Refugees (STAR) to campaign for better access to education for refugees and asylum seekers.

Conference Further Believes:

1. That the UK, as well as the rest of Europe, should commit to resettling and supporting far more refugees than it currently does.
2. That everyone, including refugees and asylum seekers, should be able to access and succeed in education.
3. That, particularly since the EU referendum, the mainstream media have vastly over exaggerated the number of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.
4. This has led to a rapid increase in reported incidents of hate crime aimed at black and Muslim people in the UK.
5. That refugees and asylum seekers in the UK should be able to access work that is fairly paid, safe and secure.

Conference Resolves:

1. That the NUS Society and Citizenship campaign should work with the International Rescue Committee to campaign for the UK to increase the number of refugees it resettles each year.
2. That the NUS Society and Citizenship campaign should support the International Students’ Campaign with its work with Students Action for Refugees, campaigning for better access to education for refugees and asylum seekers through the Equal Access campaign.
3. To collaborate with the trade union movement to campaign for better employment rights for asylum seekers and refugees.

---

\(^{29}\) http://www.redcross.org.uk/~/media/BritishRedCross/Documents/What%20we%20do/Refugee%20support/Mythbuster%20booklet%202016.pdf
\(^{30}\) https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/refugee_services/resettlement_programme/refugee_resettlement_the_facts
Conference Believes:

1. The NUS is increasing its members, relationships and interaction with disability specialist institutions and Students’ Union’s from across the country.
2. We are seeing educational institutions under strain from increasing pressure on resources for disabled students. With an increase of demand on services, the Government has been inadequate in ensuring the required funding reaches the necessary institutions.
3. The United Nations has criticized the UK’s ‘failure to uphold the disabled people’s rights across a range of areas’ including education.\(^{31}\)

Conference Further Believes:

1. We need to ensure all of our resources and support mechanisms are fit for purpose and accessible by disabled students and specialist institutions and students’ unions.
2. We must ensure our conferences; training programs and events are accessible by all of our members.
3. To accomplish this, we must think holistically about a new strategy surrounding our engagement with disability specialist Students Union’s.

Conference Resolves:

1. To work with the Disabled Students campaign to create a new strategy of how we better engage disabled students and specialist Students Union’s.
2. To make available specific resources to ensure our conferences, training programs and events can be accessed by all of our member Students Union’s.
3. To work with the disabled students campaign, local students’ unions and any other parties to campaign on better local services and funding made available to students with visible and not visible disabilities.

Proposal: Our Unions have, and always will be, Political.

Submitted by: Union Development Zone Committee

Conference Believes:

1. Student unions have a long history of engaging in political campaigns and activity: from student-organised boycotts of South African apartheid, to the fight over vice chancellors’ pay, we are proud of our tradition of changing political landscapes and fighting for a better world.

2. In 1994, the Conservative government introduced the Education act. A piece of legislation that aimed to limit the scope and remit of Students Union’s.\textsuperscript{32}

3. Since then, we have had the Charities Act 2006 which has meant most Students Unions are required to register with the Charity Commission and have had legal restrictions placed on what they can do.\textsuperscript{33}

4. The increasing willingness for the Charities Commission and Government to encroach on the freedom of activity of Students Union’s is dangerous and attempts to clamp down on important work Students Unions have been doing.

**Conference Further Believes:**

1. The commission has gone as far as questioning the existence and structures of political societies on campuses - such as Labour, Greens, Liberal Democrat Societies etc.

2. We have seen unions decide to abolish liberation groups representing women, Black students, LGBT members, mature and disabled students when faced with pressure from the regulatory bodies and their hardline interpretation of legislation.

3. The ability of Union’s to take political action and run political campaigns is both consistent with our history and a requirement for our future.

4. We will only and can only change the Further and Higher education landscape through, collective and powerful, political action and negotiation. This must be done with our Students Unions at the very forefront.

5. The protection of political activity and campaigning of Students Union’s is pivotal to the future of the Student movement more broadly.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. For the Union Development Zone to better support student unions in response to the Charity Commission’s clamp down on political activity and campaigns by running specific support sessions at its training conferences.

2. To resist attacks on our Union’s political rights and freedoms, including the disarming of our collective organisations through anti-union laws

3. To work with and support UCU, TUC and other trade unions that have also been subject to legislation limiting their ability to organise.

\textsuperscript{32} http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/30/contents

\textsuperscript{33} https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/50/contents
Welfare Zone Proposals

Proposal: Mental Health – From The Roots Up

Submitted by: Welfare Zone Committee

Conference Believes:

1. There is a crisis in student mental health.
2. Universities and Colleges are failing a generation of students by failing to prioritise mental health.
3. Government cuts to NHS budgets has led to mental health services being scaled back or withdrawn across the UK34.
4. Since 2007 there has been a fivefold increase in the proportion of students who disclose a mental health condition to their university and services on campus are not keeping pace with demand35.
5. 94% of Universities report an increase in demand for counselling services, while 61 per cent report an increase of over 25%. In some universities, up to 1 in 4 students are using, or waiting to use, counselling services36.
6. The lack of adequately funded, culturally competent, and easily available mental health services on campus or through the NHS is has serious consequences. A record number of students died by suicide in recent years: between 2007 and 2015, student suicides increased by 79%. In 2014/15, a record number of students (1,180) who experienced mental health problems dropped-out of university, an increase of 210% compared to 2009/1037.
7. 85% of FE colleges reported an increase in students with disclosed mental health issues since 2014, with 54% reporting the increase as ‘significant’38.
8. 23% of FE colleges have no mental health support workers whatsoever, and 60% only have part-time provision for their students39.
9. Research conducted by the AoC (Association of Colleges) in 2017 found that 100% of colleges reported having students diagnosed with depression. 99% reported having students diagnosed with severe anxiety, 97% with bipolar disorder and 90% with psychosis.40
10. We reject any assertions that improving student mental health is simply a case of building ‘resilience’ amongst the student population.
11. Universities all around the country are posting record surpluses and engaging in huge Capital Investment Projects, the money is available to fund our Mental Health Support Services.
12. Tackling the Student Mental Health crisis is a priority for hundreds of sabbs around the country every year- we must do more to share knowledge and network the movement on tactics and experiment with new methods of big organising.

Conference Further Believes:

1. There are numerous causal factors that impact on student mental health, including but not limited to: poor quality and overpriced accommodation, lack of diversity in student halls, lack of appropriate provision for trans students in halls, isolation experienced by international students, students of faith, students that live at home and student parents and carers, and

---

36 ibid
37 ibid
38 https://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/AoC%20survey%20on%20students%20with%20mental%20health%20conditions%20in%20FE%20%20summary%20report%20January%202017.pdf
39 ibid
40 AoC, Survey on students with mental health conditions, 2017
specific challenges of oppression faced by Black students, Disabled students, Women students and LGBT+ students.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. NUS must to equip sabbs with the skills and resources to enable them to carry out their own grass roots campaigns to increase mental health funding on their campuses.
2. The VP Welfare will arrange a grassroots campaign and badged roadshow across the UK to deliver mental health and campaigns training.
3. NUS Welfare Zone Committee will help contact student officers who have an interest in mental health and signpost them to the available resources and training.
4. The VP Welfare will ensure there will be a strong focus on mental health in all NUS sabb and student officer training and specifically in Lead and Change summer training and FEstival, and work with the Nations to deliver equivalent regional training events. This training will address cultural sensitivities include specific information on the experiences of different liberation groups and students from different backgrounds.
5. Training will feature discussion of the real issues affecting student mental health, looking at all the contributing factors to poor mental health including the university and college systems themselves.
6. The VP Welfare will work with the VP Society and Citizenship to ensure that the Society and Citizenship's campaigning and activist training through the activist academy can be adapted for specifically campaigning on mental health funding, awareness and provisions. This includes theories of change, effective campaigns, measuring impact in campaigns, as well as practical aspects of campaigning.
7. NUS will provide a set of research tools for SUs to use to study their own student populations to collect relevant data which can be used as part of their lobbying activities.
8. NUS will create a guide for SUs to lobby their institutions effectively for enhanced block grant with funds ringfenced for mental health and for SU advice centres, specific to HE and FE
9. NUS will create and provide resources for SUs to lobby their institution to ensure they implement a fully funded and thorough university or college mental health strategy, with significant input from students.
10. NUS will provide guidance and resources to FE to support them in ensuring that there is a trained Mental Health lead in every college. This guidance will also include ensuring that college tutors and staff who have regular contact with students are trained in Mental Health First Aid and that all college staff are trained in mental health awareness.
11. NUS will support FE unions in ensuring that their colleges build stronger links with local mental health services and should prioritise a smooth transition from CAMHS to AHMS to certify that no student is lost in this transition.
12. NUS will support and provide guidance for SU’s in ensuring their and their institutions’ mental health and support services are culturally competent.
13. NUS will lobby at a national level for increased NHS funding, and ringfenced mental health funding from within the NHS.
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. VP Welfare to continue to roll out Mental Health First Aid Training through the Learning Academy, and make this more sustainable by delivering it through internal means.
17. NUS to work with external representative organisations to further understand the needs of students from minority and oppressed backgrounds and the additional factors that may affect their mental health. NUS will work together with them to ensure NUS’ campaigning is inclusive of these issues and to campaign for culturally competent campus mental health services.
18. NUS will introduce a minimum standards for mental health provision to be included in the NUS Quality SUs framework
19. NUS will work with representative student organisations that represent marginalised and minority groups in helping them to continue to break down the stigma around mental health in their communities.
Conference Believes:

1. There has been a surge in reports of hate crime both in the real world and online following the EU referendum in June 2016, while police figures show another spike around the terrorist attacks in the UK in 2017. Online hate crime accounts for 2% of all recorded hate crime in the UK, however, rates of reported online hate crime are estimated to be substantially lower than actual occurrences.

3. Hate crime via social media is just as serious, and has consequences just as damaging, as hate crime perpetrated in real life.

4. All students deserve to have access to education, free from harassment, intimidation or violence; regardless of background.

5. Online hate speech threatens to disrupt good campus relations and can create an environment, both publicly and virtually, in which hate crime flourishes.

6. In October 2017, the Government released a National Hate Crime Reporting Hub to channel all reports of online hate crime and reduce burden on frontline officers. This amount averages out to £3 per incident recorded, and has been widely condemned as insufficient.

Conference Further Believes:

1. Fighting hate crime is rightly at the centre of NUS’ political actions and it is time to extend that fight online.

2. The rise in online hate crime, including racism, islamophobia, antisemitism, homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny must be fought at all costs.

3. Freedom to express views can sometimes be tempered by the need to secure freedom from harm for students and communities, which is why NUS proudly operates a No Platform for fascists policy.

Conference Resolves:

1. To publicly reaffirm NUS’ zero tolerance approach to Islamophobia, antisemitism, and all forms of racism and discrimination in real life and online.

2. To extend the principles of the NUS No Platform policy into online spaces and issue guidance to SUs on how to practically implement the policy online.

3. NUS will lobby the Office for Students and others to provide clearer guidance to universities on balancing the freedom to speak with freedom from harm.

4. To support SUs to ‘win the argument’ with their institutions and to work collaboratively to protect both freedom of speech and online student safety.

5. NUS will provide support for students’ unions to create appropriate policies to address online hate crime.

6. NUS will share anonymous data, only with the informed consent of victims, with the relevant SU where they have received reports of hate crime through NUS’ hate crime reporting centre.

7. NUS will compile and distribute a set of resources for SUs, alongside the guidance on how to set up a hate crime reporting centre in an SU.

8. NUS to use Hate Crime Awareness Week to call for greater funding for the National Hate Crime Reporting Hub from the Home Secretary and support SUs to engage with their Police and Crime Commissioners.

9. NUS will work with the relevant third sector organisations tackling online hate crime and harassment, such as Community Security Trust and others.

---

43 https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/oct/14/government-criticised-for-low-funding-level-to-tackle-online-hate