

## Queen's Students' Union: Full-Time Student Officer Report

**Role:** Student Officer Welfare

**Name:** Jess Hindley

**Period Covered:** August 2024

### Introduction

As the Welfare Officer, my role is to represent the interests of students in all matters related to their welfare. This is a broad remit which includes improving issues related to housing, accommodation, student safety, physical health, sexual health, mental health, and wellbeing. To achieve this, I lobby relevant departments and people within the university and government; engage with external and internal groups; and lead the Drug and Alcohol Impact (DAI) programme

My main priorities this year are drug and alcohol harm reduction, the Belfast Student Housing Co-Operative, and improving student safety. Due to the intensity of running the DAI programme, I have listed all of its related activities under a separate section of these reports.

### General meetings and activities

- **Meeting with Limerick SU** – Ideas exchange with Limerick SU Officers and staff. Specifically relating to the SU building, building union community, and the 'welfare tent' which inspired our Freshers' drug and alcohol harm reduction tent.
- **Meeting with Director of Student and Campus Life** – The Student Officer team met with the Director of Student and Campus Life to discuss our priorities for the year
- **Riots Response** – worked with the student officer team, and wider union staff to develop our response to the racist riots which took place in Belfast in August. This included moving our personal safety alarms to a box behind reception and promoting for students to take them for free whenever they wanted them.
- **Belfast Student Housing Cooperative** – Attended a meeting of the Belfast Student Housing Co-operative where I was elected as a Director of the co-op alongside the Campaigns and Engagement Officer and NUS-USI President. We also discussed the upcoming trip to Geneva for the PESCHA (Pan-European Student Co-operative Housing Association) conference.
- **Welcome research and evaluation** – Discussion of plans for the pilot welcome programme where we began to finalise plans and learned about some of the research that went into the project and how it would be evaluated.
- **SU Freshers' plans** – SU staff and student officers discussed the plans for how our Freshers' activities would run including Freshers' Fair and core events throughout the Freshers' period
- **SO Induction completion** – Attended the last session of the SO inductions where we learned about the formal structure behind associations and the new University Senior Leadership Team reforms.

### Drug and Alcohol Impact programme

- Met with members of the conduct and appeals team to have a detailed preliminary discussion about ways forward for changing the disciplinary processes to be more in line with harm reduction principles. We concluded on a short-term fix and a long-term project of change to improve the process.

- Worked with the DAI Wellbeing lead to create general harm reduction information to be distributed through university channels (accommodation and neighbourhood engagement) as well as detailed, specific information for the wellbeing website and content for an SU booklet to be distributed during the Freshers' period.
- Met with the Head of Student Affairs to discuss the process for changing the university's policy on student drug and alcohol use. A detailed plan was developed including a process of drafting, consultation and presentation which should result in a new policy being developed for the 25/26 academic year
- Chaired a meeting of the Drug and Alcohol Impact Steering Group discussing information distribution; how other university's handle their disciplinary process in relation to student drug and alcohol use; and the possibility of a version of the Alcohol Education Initiative for drug use.
- Met with the Director of Student and Campus Experience to discuss the potential introduction of Naloxone at Queen's
- Held our Drug and Alcohol Impact On-Site Support Day – SOS-UK came to our campus to guide us through an all-day workshops which led to us creating our programme KPIs and brainstorming ideas for multiple innovative interventions.
- Met with the Welfare Officer from the University of Limerick to discuss plans for the 'welfare tent' and drug and alcohol harm reduction
- Attended the Digital Alcohol IBA catch-up where we heard from Drink Aware about their programmes; we were made aware of the year's timetable for alcohol harm reduction resources; and we discussed how best to measure effectiveness
- Accompanied the rest of the SO team to a sessions designed to introduce new SOs to the DAI programme

#### Events/Training

- **Insights Workshop** – Engaged in the insights workshop to better understand my own work style, those of my fellow SU staff and officers, and how best we can work together.
- **SUT+** - Attended two days of SUT+ (USI's Student Officer Training) where I participated in workshops on effective chairing; European Students Union (ESU) and the International Affairs Committee; and sustainability programmes as well as attending National Council.
- **Theory of Change Workshop** – Attended an all-day workshop in the Theory of Change process and learned how to effectively lead strategic projects that result in meaningful and impactful change as well as how to evaluate those changes.