

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

Role: Student Officer Welfare

Name: Jess Hindley

Period Covered: October 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

- **NUS-USI Membership meetings** – Meeting with NUS-USI and representatives from members of unions within NUS-USI. The meeting mostly focused on the Housing Rights campaign and student survey
- **NIPSO Presentation** – We met with members of the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsmen (NIPSO) to learn more about their services and what happens to student appeals after the internal QUB process has concluded
- **Suicide Prevention campaign** – Early conversations with the university about a suicide prevention campaign and Here2Help App promotion
- **Commercial Services Forum** – Met with the managers of the SU shop and SU bar to discuss the commercial services and how we can improve the student experience of them
- **Battle of the Bands shortlisting** – worked with the marketing team and fellow student officers to shortlist bands for the 2024 Battle of the Bands. Narrowed it down to 5 bands.
- **Spiking awareness** – Wrote a student media piece on the prevalence of spiking and how it can be tackled
- **Cooperative Housing plans** – early discussions within the SU team about the future of co-operative housing at Queens

Drug and Alcohol Impact programme

- Worked with the SU Policy and Engagement Manager to begin writing the first draft of the proposed new student drug and alcohol policy.
- Monthly support call with SOS-UK to discuss the success of our drop-in service, the reach of our statement, best practice examples of harm reduction policies, the alcohol IBA programme, and plans for Student Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week (SDAAW)
- Met with the SU DAI team to discuss staff training, departmental engagement, mental health policy, evidence collection and plans for SDAAW
- Chaired a meeting of the Drug and Alcohol Impact Steering Group where we discussed policy change, debriefed from Freshers', reflected on our progress so far, and planned out future actions

- Discussed plans with the DAI Wellbeing lead for our presentation to the Community of Practice meeting in December
- Worked on an annual fund application for DAI campaigns
- Met with the SU DAI time for an in-depth discussion around uploading evidence, plans for SDAAW, survey promotion, the digital IBA programme, ideas for criteria fulfilment and alcohol-free events, KPI discussions
- Met with the Bar Manager to discuss emergency training for bar supervisors and security, ideas for alcohol-free events and harm reduction additions to other events, 0% options at the bar
- Met with members of the SU and Wellbeing marketing teams to discuss plans for survey promotion across the three weeks of the survey
- Attended a workshop on understanding ketamine use among student and emerging trends in the population
- Filmed social media to promote the DAI survey and encourage engagement with SDAAW

Events

- **Pan European Student Co-operative Housing Association (PESCHA) conference** – I attended the PESCHA 2024 conference in Geneva with the Campaigns and Engagement Officer, and the NUS-USI President in our capacity as co-directors of the Belfast Student Housing Co-operative. We networked with co-operative directors and residents from across Europe, learning about their experience of student co-operative housing. On the first full day of the conference, we toured several co-operatives in Geneva including student co-operative housing. There was a lot of variety in how they were set up and ran, with lots to learn and consider from the different methods. On the second day we had presentations from the existing student housing co-operatives across Europe. Again, there was a lot of variety. Some were not very relevant for us but others inspired a lot of ideas for a Belfast co-operative and talking with people who have already achieved what we aim to do was incredibly useful. We left with a clear 'next steps' plan and the conference was incredibly useful.
- **Big Night In** – I attended and ran an activity stand QSU's annual Freshers' movie night. This year the movie of choice was Shrek
- **PAPYRUS Hope Walk** – Did a walk with the SU and University around South Belfast to raise money for suicide prevention
- **Pumpkin Painting Party** – I helped to lead the pumpkin painting event to bring people together for relaxed Halloween crafting