

## **Drug & Alcohol Policy**

### **Drug Awareness Campaign**

Council notes that drug misuse can have a significant impact on a person's physical, mental & emotional health, as well as on their relationships and studies.

Council notes that harm reduction is as a fundamental part of the work of QUBSU, whether that is through mental health awareness and suicide prevention or sexual health education; it is an integral aspect of campaigns run throughout the academic year.

Council also notes that campaigns run in other universities and organisations, like drugs.ie (<http://www.drugs.ie/whatsinthepowder>), follow a very clear harm reduction approach to education on drugs; with services such as the 'Ana Liffey Drug Project' going as far back as 1982.

'Harm reduction' refers to policies, programmes and practices that aim primarily to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of the use of legal and illegal psychoactive drugs. Harm reduction takes a morally neutral stance to drug use, neither condoning nor opposing drug use. It focuses on actual harm and assumes that some people will continue to use drugs despite education and therefore they should be given the possibility to do so in an in a way that reduces the risks and causes least harm to themselves and others.

Council notes that the Public Health Agency (PHA) and National Health Service (NHS) take a clear harm reduction approach to drug misuse and identifies it as a key strategy for substance misuse.

[http://www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/harm\\_reduction\\_strategy\\_final\\_2009\\_10.pdf](http://www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/harm_reduction_strategy_final_2009_10.pdf)  
[http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Harm%20Reduction%20Advice%20GB%20\(2\)\\_0\\_0.pdf](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Harm%20Reduction%20Advice%20GB%20(2)_0_0.pdf)

Council further notes that there will always be a certain number of students, across the globe, who will take or continue to partake in drug use/misuse and believes that campaigns should reflect this.

Council believes that we as a Students' Union have the responsibility to educate our students on drugs to ensure that the number of students affected by the misuse of drugs at QUB, is at a minimum. Council therefore reinforces, for reasons above, that any campaigns must have a clear focus on harm reduction rather than complete drug use prevention.

Council therefore mandates the Student Officer Welfare to launch and run a campaign on drugs; focusing on different types of drugs and their effects, the long term and short term consequences of drug misuse and to work with outside organisations to ensure that the campaign is evidence based and reliable.