

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

Role: Student Officer Welfare

Name: Jess Hindley

Period Covered: November 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

- **University Management Board/SU Consultative Committee** – Delivered a presentation to the University Management Board members on the previous and upcoming 5-year strategic plan of the SU and gathered their feedback
- **SU Advice Catch Up** – Discussed emerging issues with SU Advice specifically regarding the digitisation of academic appeals, and concerns around academic offences, and the conduct offences review
- **NUS Officer meetings** – Met with the NUS Officer team discussing NI's role in NUS
- **QUB Safezone** – Met with a representative from the Safezone app, a personal safety app which can be set up for specialised use at individual universities to discuss how it could work at QUB
- **Student Council** – Attended the second student council of the year. Presented by work over the past 5 months to councillors for approval and discussed how best to go about working on the ideas which were submitted by students and approved by referendum.
- **Civic Activism** – Took part in a civic activism workshop with students learning about applying the theory of change to student campaigns
- **Food Audit Pilot** – assisted a QUB PhD student with a pilot of their food audit system which aims to determine the availability of healthy food on QUB campuses
- **Swapshop** – worked a few SwapShop shifts
- **NUS Campaigns Exchange** – Attended the new NUS Campaigns Exchange where I worked with Student Officers from across the UK in workshops around NUS Reform, the Liberation Collective, Transport and Housing.
- **Student Support Forum** – Met with members of staff from across the SU and University who are involved in supporting students to discuss the HE Belonging project, The #QUBeWell Action Plan, the Compassionate Communications project (which I was asked to co-chair), student safety and consent programme, and changes to the accessible learning department (previously Disability)
- **Neighbourhood Forum** – Attended a meeting between the university and representatives of the local South Belfast community to discuss updates within the area and how Queen's can be involved in improving the area

- **Digitisation of Academic Appeals workshop** – Participated in a workshop to finalise the design of the new digital academic appeals system. Suggested some changes which would make the system more accessible to students.
- **Management Board** – Attended Students' Union management board and presented the SU's 5-year strategic plan alongside my fellow officers
- **Student and Corporate Services Staff Engagement Event** – Attended and presented the SU's 5-year strategic plan to staff members within the Student and Corporate Services directorate

Drug and Alcohol Impact programme

- Monthly support call with SOS-UK to discuss promotion of the Student Drug and Alcohol survey, uploading evidence, communication with students, and criteria fulfilment
- Filmed some educational harm reduction videos for social media.
- Chaired a meeting of the Drug and Alcohol Impact Steering Group where we discussed survey promotion, action plan progress, uploading evidence, and preparation for student drug and alcohol awareness week
- Ran an awareness stand at the Volunteering and Wellbeing fair to promote awareness and education around harm drug and alcohol harm reduction
- Over 6 days, promoted the DAI survey and harm reduction information by running awareness stands in the SU, PFC, Reboot and the MBC, engaging hundreds of students and gaining a significant number of survey responses
- Prepared for press coverage of DAI following the results of the survey
- Digital Alcohol IBA cohort support catch-up to reflect on Student Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week progress and look forward to promoting moderation in the Christmas period

Events

- **Battle of the Bands** – I attended the 2024 SU Battle of the Bands as a judge – which was a very well attended and successful event
- **SU Festive events** – Participated in the SU Christmas events including the Christmas light switch on