

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

Role: Student Officer Welfare

Name: Jess Hindley

Period Covered: April 2025

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

- **Counselling Review** – Discussion with Head of Disability and Student Wellbeing and the Student Wellbeing Manager about proposed changes to the counselling service to better fit students need
- **US Study Abroad Advisors** – Sat on a panel with to present the Students' Union to Study Abroad advisors in the USA, encouraging US students to study abroad at Queen's
- **#QUBeWell Management Group** – Meeting to discuss updates on University Mental Health Week activity, the Find Your Movement campaign, PGR Gaps and Pressures, a future disordered eating project, Universal Design for Learning, and the Mental Health Principles
- **Compassionate Communications** – Pre-meet with my co-chair and the organisers of the project about changing staff perceptions, providing a toolkit of guidance, video case studies of good and bad practice with direct student examples
- **Strategic Plan Preparation** – Working with the officer team to shape up the Strategic Plan presentation, to be presented at SU Management Board and UMB/SUCC
- **SU Management Board** – Updates on staffing across the SU and Reboot, listened to guidance on how to improve the strategic plan presentation, questions over housing co-operatives
- **UMB/ Students' Union Consultative Committee** – Attended UMB/SUCC where the President presented the SU Strategic Plan and responded to relevant questions
- **Commercial Services Forum** – Meeting with the managers of the SU Shop and SU Bar/Mandela Hall to discuss emerging concerns and ideas

Drug and Alcohol Impact programme

- **Student Drug and Alcohol Conference** – Attended the Student Drug and Alcohol Conference and learned about building a more inclusive and sober curious campus, and the connections between substance use and neurodiversity, sexual violence, and mental health
- **ASCERT Understanding Alcohol Training** – Attended training to better understand alcohol use among young people and solutions to major problems within this area
- **Steering group meeting** – Chaired a meeting of the drug and alcohol steering group where we further discussed expanding the Alcohol Education Initiative to include drugs and presenting that as an option to conduct panels in place of fines, the finalisation of the student drug policy, a comparison of QUB data with national data, a review of the success of

St Patrick's Day plans, a reflection on training, and a reflection on the Student Drug and Alcohol Conference

- **Community of Practice Presentation** – Presented the DAI Programme and the completed proposed 'student drug use' policy changes to the Community of Practice for Staff supporting students in school-based roles.
- **QUB Drug and Alcohol Impact Support Call with SOS-UK** –
- **Drug and Alcohol Impact Support Day** – Attended an all-day online support day from SOS-UK including sessions on the relationship between neurodiversity and substance use, ketamine use on campus, preparation for welcome week, engaging with clubs and societies, evaluating events, and how to use harm reduction language effectively.
- **NUS-USI Membership Meeting** -

Events

- **Community volunteering event**– Attended an SU Volunteer event to meet with representatives of the local community and support Queen's C&S
- **NUS-USI Democracy Event (Conference)** – Meeting with SUs from across NI and our national union NUS-USI on topics including the HE Funding Review and NUS Liberation Collective