

Queen's University Belfast Students' Union

Full-Time Student Officer Report

Role: Student Officer Welfare and Community

Name: Jack Lydon

Period: July- October 2025

Introduction

As the Welfare and Community Student 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. I also represent students in relationships with local community groups and represent the Students' Union at key meetings.

My main priorities this year include, Drug and Alcohol Harm Reduction Initiatives, setting up a student Housing Co-operative, improving access to sustainable transport, women's safety and trans inclusion particularly in sport.

General meetings and activities

- Attended National Women's Council pre-budget priorities submission session
- Attended SOSUK Advisory Energy Efficiency meeting to learn about energy efficiency in student homes, sustainability and opportunities for students to audit student homes energy efficiency.
- Met with various departments, teams and management from around the university. We discussed collaboration, our goals and projects that we plan to complete during the year.
- Prepared officer plan of work
- Attended Belfast Pride on behalf of Queens Students' Union
- Met with UCL Students Union
- Met with Members of Birmingham Guild to discuss housing standards accreditations
- Shortlisted candidates and sat on the interview panel for the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator at Queens SU.
- Aided in the making of Queens Report and Support Video (doing voiceover)
- Contributed to NUS-USI working group day on Higher Education funding models and issues.
- Organised and ran two Pizza and Paint events during the Freshers events period as alcohol free event options.
- Helped with the operation of events ran by our Mental Health and Wellbeing Team.
- Represented Queens SU at Freshers Fair and Saint Marys Freshers Fair, Postgraduate Fair

Drug and Alcohol Impact programme

- Monthly meetings with SOSUK who advise on the Drug and Alcohol Impact Programme to better understand our priorities with the programme, what work needs to be done to further the aims of the programme and what the timeline for implementation is.

- Chaired monthly programme steering group meetings which is the working group that progresses the meeting of harm reduction criteria, such as harm reduction communications, information booklets, events, student engagement and policy changes.
- Hosted the SOSUK On-site support day in which SOSUK staff advised us on the roadmap to completing criteria for the drug and alcohol impact programme audit. This meeting brought departments from all around the university to be involved and discuss the changes they have made to be in line with drug and alcohol harm reduction.
- Presented the harm reduction programme and approach to Residential Assistants from the Accommodation team.
- Ran Multiple stalls with Harm Reduction information, advertising support organisations and safety measures for students. Two Days during fresher's fair, with student games to engage students in a fun way while also dealing with serious topics. Gave out 400+ booklets and z cards on harm reduction information.
- Presented on Queens' Students Union Harm Reduction Campaign to 100+ people at the Public Health Agency conference for drug and alcohol organisations.
- Liaised with QUB Neighbourhood engagement team on sharing the new Drink spiking initiative. More than thirty bars in city centre and south Belfast have signed up to allow customers to ask staff to test their drinks for spiking, which then can be alerted to security if necessary.

Other projects

- Met with Belfast Student Housing Cooperative on multiple occasions, also collaborating with UUSU, to discuss cooperatives and gain inspiration for what direction to take the project.
- Researched cooperatives including, financial, legal and governance models, as well as strategies for acquiring properties and presenting the cooperative model of housing.
- Attended the Green Dot Active Bystander training on training trainers, giving me the education to train people in giving Green Dot Active Bystander training. Green Dot is a form of active bystander training, which has consent and sexual violence as a core topic. The training advises in how to intervene in lower risk, but still damaging, incidents or social interactions which sit on the sexual violence pyramid.
- Met with Translink staff to discuss the transport project.
- Applied to Queens Annual fund for various projects funding.

Large events

Lead and Change NUS

Lead and change is a multi-day training event that was held in Birmingham during the summer. During the conference I met with other unions to discuss the feasibility of various projects, their experiences in working with universities and collaborated in workshopping ideas. I also attended many seminars on various areas of student officer work. I left with many valuable connections and ideas on how to better improve QSU.

SUT+

SUT+ is a supplementary training event for students' union officers operated by AMLÉ. During the conference we were involved in simulation activities, workshops and seminars

to better improve our knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities of student officers. During the event I also made valuable connections with other student officers who we now actively collaborate with on national and cross boarder campaigns.